

Site Allocations and Development Management Policies

Local Plan



Adopted July 2014

In order to maximise opportunities for walking and cycling:

- Development will protect the function and amenity of existing Greenway routes.
- Development which contains proposed Greenway routes should incorporate and provide the proposed route contained within the development site.
- Development which is adjacent to the Greenway network should, where possible, provide spurs to connect with existing or proposed routes.

Any new sections of Greenway routes or spurs should be appropriately designed and landscaped to optimise use by pedestrians and cyclists, ensure the safety and security of users and protect or enhance the location's character and nature conservation value.

2.25.2 Any new sections of Greenways routes or spurs will be achieved either as an integral part of the scheme's design or through planning obligations.

2.25.3 The network of existing and proposed routes will be shown on the council's website: <http://www.bristol.gov.uk/explore-bristol> under the 'Transport' mapping layer.

Policy Links

Bristol Local Plan Core Strategy – Lead Policy

- BCS10: Transport and Access Improvements

Other key Core Strategy policies

- BCS9: Green Infrastructure

Application Information

Design and Access statements should show how access to Greenways is addressed.

Design Policies

2.26.1 The Core Strategy establishes the overarching aim that all new development in Bristol achieves high standards of urban design, whilst safeguarding or enhancing the historic environment. Policies BCS21 and BCS22 of the Core Strategy express this aim as a series of key urban design objectives for new development.

2.26.2 The following suite of policies take these key design objectives forward by providing additional detail on how quality urban design is to be achieved. The policies represent a layered approach to the design of places, in which each of the policies represents a different layer of the built environment, organised to help inform the process that designers are encouraged to follow in designing new development. The policies apply to development in all parts of the city, and should be used collectively, at a level appropriate to the scale of development proposed, to achieve the best urban design solution possible in each case.

Policy DM26: Local Character and Distinctiveness

2.26.3 Policy BCS21 of the Core Strategy states that development should contribute positively to an area's character and identity, creating or reinforcing local distinctiveness. This policy expands upon this requirement by setting out the criteria against which a development's response to local character and distinctiveness will be assessed.

General Principles

The design of development proposals will be expected to contribute towards local character and distinctiveness by:

- i. Responding appropriately to and incorporating existing land forms, green infrastructure assets and historic assets and features; and
- ii. Respecting, building upon or restoring the local pattern and grain of development, including the historical development of the area; and
- iii. Responding appropriately to local patterns of movement and the scale, character and function of streets and public spaces; and
- iv. Retaining, enhancing and creating important views into, out of and through the site; and
- v. Making appropriate use of landmarks and focal features, and preserving or enhancing the setting of existing landmarks and focal features; and
- vi. Responding appropriately to the height, scale, massing, shape, form and proportion of existing buildings, building lines and set-backs from the street, skylines and roofscapes; and
- vii. Reflecting locally characteristic architectural styles, rhythms, patterns, features and themes taking account of their scale and proportion; and
- viii. Reflecting the predominant materials, colours, textures, landscape treatments and boundary treatments in the area.

Development will not be permitted where it would be harmful to local character and distinctiveness or where it would fail to take the opportunities available to improve the character and quality of the area and the way it functions.

Development should retain existing buildings and structures that contribute positively to local character and distinctiveness. Where the loss of an existing building or structure is acceptable due to the wider planning benefits of a development proposal, opportunities should be sought to reuse any materials that contribute to local character and distinctiveness.

Specific Development Types

Infill development will be expected to have regard to the prevailing character and quality of the surrounding townscape. The higher the quality of the building group and the more unified the character of the townscape, the greater the need to reproduce the existing pattern, form and design of existing development. Infill developments on return frontages should be compatible with the open character of corner sites and be subservient in height, scale and massing to the primary frontage building.

Backland development will be expected to be subservient in height, scale, mass and form to the surrounding frontage buildings. It should not prejudice the opportunity to develop the adjoining land of similar potential nor should the proposed access arrangements cause adverse impacts to the character and appearance, safety or amenity of the existing frontage development.

In forms of existing development that relate poorly to the surrounding development or lack a coherent and integrated built form, development will be expected to take reasonable opportunities to improve the area's character, enclosure, permeability, public realm and appearance and better integrate the area with its surroundings.

General Principles

- 2.26.4 An appropriate response to local character and distinctiveness will be based on a robust character assessment, taking into account views of the local community and other stakeholders, and explained in the Design and Access Statement. Where available, existing council documents that have undergone robust public consultation such as conservation area character appraisals, the City Centre Context Study, supplementary planning documents, design briefs and neighbourhood plans will form an important part of the assessment. The factors that influence local character may extend beyond the immediate context, depending on the scale of the development proposed.
- 2.26.5 To respond effectively to local character and distinctiveness development should not, for example, have a detrimental impact on existing important views by reason of its siting or design, or fail to conserve green infrastructure and heritage assets that could, if retained and integrated into the design, provide a better relationship between the proposed new development and the historic environment.
- 2.26.6 It is sometimes most appropriate for new development to reproduce the pattern and design of existing development. In most contexts, however, there is scope for innovative and contemporary design solutions where they would complement the existing development.
- 2.26.7 Sustainable design is not necessarily incompatible with local character and distinctiveness. Designing for local distinctiveness involves reconciliation of local practices on the one hand with latest technologies, building types and needs. If designed appropriately, new and old buildings can coexist without conflicting with or disguising one another.
- 2.26.8 Where there are no significant local traditions, the challenge but also the flexibility to create distinctive places will be greater. In such situations, innovative contemporary design solutions are encouraged. Regard should however be had to characteristic features of the wider Bristol area such as local materials and characteristic urban forms.
- 2.26.9 Landmarks form an important aspect of local character and distinctiveness and the role and setting of existing landmarks should be respected. However, it will not be appropriate for all new development to create new landmarks. New landmarks should only be located at appropriate locations within the townscape that are also focal points for activity where they would contribute positively to the legibility of the area.
- 2.26.10 An effective response to local character and distinctiveness will draw on the positive characteristics of the area. Where there are local features or characteristics that are considered to undermine the overall character of the area, particularly those identified in conservation area character appraisals or other relevant context appraisal documents, these should not form the basis for the response to local character and distinctiveness.

2.26.11 For the purposes of this policy:

- Infill development is defined as development in a small gap in an otherwise built-up frontage, usually consisting of the frontage plots only;
- Backland development is defined as development to the rear of existing buildings, usually with no street frontage of its own.

Policy Links

Bristol Local Plan Core Strategy – Lead Policy

- BCS21: Quality Urban Design

Other key Core Strategy policies

- BCS9: Green Infrastructure
- BCS22: Conservation and the Historic Environment

Application Information

The following should be submitted with planning applications to show how the proposal addresses this policy:

- The Design and Access Statement should contain evidence of a detailed analysis and response to local character and distinctiveness, proportionate to the nature and scale of the proposed development, with reference to the above criteria.
- Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments should be submitted for applications for tall buildings and for other schemes that are likely to have a significant visual impact within the landscape.

Policy DM27: Layout and Form

2.27.1 This policy is concerned with the successful arrangement and form of buildings, structures and spaces. The layout of the built environment makes a key contribution to creating quality urban design as required under the Core Strategy, and as such the policy relates to all aspects of Core Strategy policy BCS21.

The layout, form, pattern and arrangement of streets, open spaces, development blocks, buildings and landscapes should contribute to the creation of quality urban design and healthy, safe and sustainable places. It should make efficient use of land, provide inclusive access and take account of local climatic conditions.

Proposals should not prejudice the existing and future development potential of adjoining sites or the potential for the area to achieve a coherent, interconnected and integrated built form. Where such potential may reasonably exist, including on sites with different use or ownership, development will be expected to either progress with a comprehensive scheme or, by means of its layout and form, enable a co-ordinated approach to be adopted towards the development of those sites in the future.

Streets and Spaces

Development will be expected to:

- i. Create or contribute towards a simple, well-defined and inter-connected network of streets and spaces that allows for convenient access to a choice of movement modes and routes, as appropriate to the size of the development and grain of the surroundings, without compromising the security of the development; and