

Design and Access Statements

The Minister for Environment, Sustainability and Housing has agreed to introduce Secondary Legislation to require a Design (and Access) Statement to accompany specified planning applications from 1 June 2009.

The Assembly Government considers that design statements are a useful tool for ensuring that the sustainability and other design implications of proposed new developments are expressly outlined when the application for planning permission is made. The existing requirements for access statements will be carried forward.

This secondary legislation came into force on 1st June 2009 and a replacement [Technical Advice Note 12](#), which includes further guidance on design and access statements, has also been issued. A short introductory leaflet on "[Design and Access Statements](#)" is available from the Welsh Assembly Government Website.

You are required to submit a [Design and Access Statement](#) as set out in "The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Wales) Order 2012" as part of your planning application **unless** your application is for:

- Applications for a material change of use of land or buildings (provided the new use will not necessitate access by employees or offers goods and services to the public)
- Applications for Engineering or mining operations.
- Advertisement consents, tree preservation orders and storage of hazardous substances
- Householder applications

We, as the local planning authority have a dual role to ensure effective stakeholder involvement in developing design policies and guidance and providing information on design issues. We also help applicants and potential applicants to respond effectively to the planning and design process, through an advisory as well as regulatory role. Pre-application discussions and advice on preparing a design and access statement can create clarity for applicants.

Your statement should explain your reason for the way you have chosen to design your proposal, we will be looking for a good understanding of local character and circumstances, and that you have followed a design process that includes, assessment, involvement, evaluation and design.

The following advice will, we hope, explain the requirements so that your Design and Access Statement will be accepted as part of your planning submission.

We have tried in the advice given below to tailor our advice to those submitting statements for minor developments. If your proposal is for a larger scale of development we hope the advice below will be helpful but you may also wish to visit the [Design Commission for Wales](#) website which has detailed advice on preparing statements and also guidance notes from [Brecknock Access Group](#) which are available to download from our website at www.beacons-npa.gov.uk.

Your statement does not need to be long (in most simple cases the statement should not be more than one side of A4) however it must explain the processes you have been through to achieve your design solution. The guidance indicates that the issues below must be adequately considered in your statement:

Context

Planning Policy Wales provides national policy on good design, and the [Development Plan](#) and Supplementary Planning Guidance should provide a clear context for design requirements in the local area.

In appraising context for a plan or a project, it will be important to refer to the objectives of good design and test how proposals reflect local policy requirements.

Your Design and Access Statement must explain how you have appraised the physical, social, economic and policy context of the development, and how their choice of design principles and concepts takes that context into account.

Access

The TAN 12 objective in terms of access is 'ensuring ease of access for all'. As a result, your Design and Access Statement should, as a minimum, address the following access related issues:

- The policy or approach to access (adopting inclusive design principles that ensures ease of access for all people including those with mobility impairments, sensory impairments, and learning difficulties);
- **How** Statutory Development Plan policies have been taken into account;

- **How** specific issues relating to access to the development have been addressed;
- **How** features which ensure people's access to the development will be maintained;
- **How** the development could adapt to varying contexts and requirements of inclusiveness over time; and
- **How** the development/layout meets practical requirements (access for emergency vehicles, ease of access for pedestrians and cyclists)

Character (to include Amount, Appearance, Layout, Scale and Landscaping)

The TAN 12 Objective here is:

- Sustaining or enhancing local character
- Promoting legible development
- Promoting a successful relationship between public and private space
- Promoting quality, choice and variety
- Promoting innovative design

Amount

Detail the number of proposed residential units or the floor space for each proposed use forming part of the development: how the proposed density and mix will encourage different uses by various sectors of the community. Anticipate potential change in the make up and needs of occupiers and how the proposal anticipates, in the short and longer term, efficient use of land whilst safeguarding the quality of life. Where applicable, consider how the development provides innovative solutions to accommodate higher density whilst considering the outcome of higher density on its surroundings;

Appearance

Detail the aspects of a building or place within the development which determine the visual impression of the building or place makes, including external built form of the development, its architecture, materials, decoration, lighting, colour and texture.

Layout

Detail how the layout makes the development integrate with its surroundings whilst taking into consideration the orientation of the building to maximise energy efficiency and connectivity (the ways in which routes and open spaces within the development are provided, situated and orientated in relation to each other and to buildings and spaces outside the development); how the external area contributes towards the development and is used to make the development a more sustainable development; how is the chosen site the best location and how it links into adjacent uses.

Scale

Assess the scale of development in relation to surroundings, including height, width and length of each building proposed within the development; how the massing of the proposal contributes to the existing hierarchy of development to reinforce character; how the mass and height impacts on

privacy, sunlight and microclimate; and how height impacts on the attractiveness and safety of neighbouring public space.

Landscaping

Landscape design is often seen as something to think about after you get planning permission. It is understandable that you don't want to finalise exact details but to ignore landscaping until the end of the process is **not** appropriate. The Design and Access Statement should explain the principles that will be used to draw up the landscape details should permission be granted. We must be able to look at the proposal in the context of its future surroundings so it makes sense to provide information on the expected landscape principles.



What to include:

- Landscape design is more than just plants; it is about the treatment of outdoor spaces, including street furniture, water features and "hard" materials and also boundary treatment.
- The statement should explain how the landscaping will work with other design decisions. The statement should explain how the planned landscape design is based on long-term maintenance and management.
- Reference should be made to existing landscape and vegetation and how existing trees might be retained.
- The statement should show how the needs of disabled or older people will be met, for example by using level surfaces, non slip materials and providing resting places

Community Safety

The objective here is:

- Ensuring attractive, safe public spaces
- Security through natural surveillance

Following your appraisal of context the design response should be to a high public realm quality (routes which are fit for purpose and provide opportunities for safe physical activity and recreation, a sense of ownership and responsibility) and crime prevention (how the proposal is designed to protect property by allowing for natural surveillance).

Environmental Sustainability

The TAN 12 Objective here is achieving efficient use and protection of natural resources, enhancing biodiversity and designing for change.

Accordingly, the design response following the appraisal of context should be to include:

- sustainability measures to reduce the environmental impact associated with buildings and minimising the demand for energy (low and zero carbon sources), water, and materials and creation of waste
- approaches to development which create new opportunities to enhance biodiversity
- adaptable and flexible development that can respond to social, technological, economic and environmental conditions/changes (e.g. the current and future effects of climate change) over time to minimise the need to demolish and rebuild.

The design solutions to detail are:

- **Landscape/townscape setting** - the way in which a new development will work with the site and its landscape context. Including key features and qualities such as pattern, form, grain, appearance, colours and elements to also meet the objective of sustaining character and reinforcing legibility;
- **Biodiversity and local environment** - includes aspect of layout/planting) the way in which the development will maintain/enhance opportunities for species to inhabit the area and building fabric and how will the development maintain and improve habitat connectivity and illustrate how the development will integrate with open spaces,6 including management and aftercare;
- **Energy efficiency/carbon reduction** - the way in which new development seeks to minimise the energy demand and carbon emissions associated with the development through implementation of the energy hierarchy, or deliver zero carbon standards;
- **Sustainable materials** - use of materials with a low environmental impact (embodied energy), reduced energy inputs, sourced sustainably (i.e. Forestry Stewardship Council timber), locally sourced (to reduce transport emissions), and the use of used, reclaimed and recycled materials;
- **Water** - sustainable approach to water supply (rainwater harvesting), demand management (water efficiency) and drainage (e.g. permeable surfaces for pavements/traffic) and its effect on the local water table;
- **Waste management** - the way in which waste will be dealt with during and after construction (re-use and disposal), including the provision of appropriate facilities for sorting, storing and recycling of waste in buildings and across the site;

- **Climate resilience** - the way in which the development is climate proofed to take into account the climate the development is likely to experience over its expected lifetime by managing and minimising climate change effects (e.g. extreme temperatures); and
- **Sustainable building standards** - the use of nationally recognised and quality assured standards to demonstrate that environmentally sustainability design solutions (as set out above) have been incorporated into new developments.

Movement (to, from and within the development)

The TAN 12 Objective in this case is to promote sustainable means of transport by maximising:

- safe and clear connections
- the potential to cycle, walk and use public transport safely, and reducing the reliance on the car
- the connection to the existing transport infrastructure by integrating development with existing footpaths, cycle ways and public and private transport infrastructure
- the integration of different transport types whilst minimising the adverse effects on the network
- the ease of movement to, from and within the development for sustainable forms of transport by creating a safe and attractive environment
- the provision of onsite facilities for sustainable forms of transport.

Accordingly the design solutions to address within the Design and Access Statement are:

- **Connections** - The way in which the proposed layout contributes to or improves the existing framework of connecting routes and spaces and waterways to achieve a successful relationship between private and public space;
- **Modes** - The way in which the development accommodates for different transport modes;
- **Servicing** - The suitability of the servicing arrangements exist to transport freight required by the development; and
- **Parking** - The way in which the development has considered the requirements for parking and whether this will be managed appropriately.

For further information contact:

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