

Environment and Sustainability Assessment

Birmingham City Council is required to assess any positive or negative impacts that any policy/strategy/ decision/development proposal is likely to have on the environment. This assessment must be completed for CLT and Cabinet reports where appropriate. It is the responsibility of the Service Director signing off the report to ensure that the assessment is complete.

To complete the assessment, you should consider whether the proposal will have a positive or a negative impact on each of the key themes by placing a (✓) for positive, (x) for negative and (?) for unclear impact, and (N/A) for non-applicable impact. Further guidance on the completion of the template is available on page 3 below.

Project Title:	Adoption of Birmingham Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)			
Directorate: Place, Prosperity and Sustainability	Team: City Design Team		Person Responsible for assessment: Stuart Wiltshire	
Date of assessment: 22-04-22	Is it a new or existing proposal? NEW			
Brief description of the proposal: The Birmingham Design Guide SPD will provide guidance on the design of development across the city. Once adopted, it will be a material consideration in the determination of all planning applications, replacing 14 existing SPDs.				
Potential impacts of the policy/development/ decision on:	Positive Impact	Negative Impact	No Specific Impact	What will the impact be? If the impact is negative, how can it be mitigated, what action will be taken?
Natural Resources - including water, soil, air		X		The Design Guide itself does not have an impact on natural resources, but the development it is seeking to influence will have a negative impact on natural resources through their construction and use. The Design Guide seeks to minimise and mitigate the impact development will have on these resources, via the guidance in the Efficient & Future-ready section which encourages the creation of efficient buildings that have a low resource burden and utilise sustainable and recycled materials.

				The Design Guide supports and promotes sustainable and active forms of travel, via the guidance in the Streets & Spaces Theme. This seeks to ensure development prioritise pedestrians and cyclists over motor vehicles in the design of buildings and spaces. It also promotes the creation of 'green' streets via tree planting and the integration of rain gardens. The important of soil resource is recognises in the Landscape & GI City Manual, which states the following: '1.5. Soil is a finite, non-renewable landscape resource which must be appropriately protected and managed during construction activity. The City supports the application of the guidance contained in the Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA) <i>'Construction Code of Practice for the Sustainable Use of Soils on Construction Sites'</i>.
Energy use and CO ₂ emissions		X		The construction of buildings and their use are energy intensive, but the Design Guide encourages the creation of low carbon, efficient buildings that reduce their energy burden across their lifetime. The Efficient & Future-ready design principle and city manual provide guidance on how development could achieve this, considering the construction method and materials used, the potential to harness natural resources and the use of efficient infrastructure and appliances.
Quality of environment	X			The overarching aim of the Design Guide is to improve the quality of development across Birmingham. As detailed within the Birmingham ID section of the Design Guide, a fundamental element in achieving this is for developers to have a clear understanding of the surrounding area via a

				character assessment. Effectively undertaken, this will provide design cues and criteria that should inform the proposed design of the development, helping it integrate and enhance its surroundings.
Impact on local green and open spaces and biodiversity	X			The Design Guide places great importance on the creation of landscape-led developments, with a design theme and city manual devoted to landscape and green infrastructure. This guidance seeks to ensure soft landscape is a fundamental element of any development providing amenity to building uses and the adjacent environment, and biodiversity and GI gains. The protection and planting of trees has specific focus, with the overarching aim to protect existing trees and increase canopy coverage across the city. The guidance also supplements policy DM4 of the DMB, with details of the CAVAT system utilise to value (£) trees.
Use of sustainable products and equipment	X			As above, the Future and Efficient-ready theme and city manual, provides the creation of low carbon, efficient buildings. An element of this, relates to the use of sustainable materials and building techniques.
Minimising waste	X			The Future and Efficient-ready theme and city manual encourage the re-use of existing built fabric and construction materials. It also promotes the use of prefabricated / factory built construction methods to help reduce waste and resource use.
Council plan priority: a city that takes a leading role in tackling climate change	X			The Design Guide aims to enhance the quality of buildings, places and environments for Birmingham's residents. A key element of this is creating sustainable places that help mitigate and reduce the impacts of climate change. As reflected in the 5 Themes of the Design Guide, it

				recognises the role different elements of development play in achieving this. The Streets & Spaces Theme promotes the use of active and sustainable travel, and the creation of high quality, green public environments that encourage use by pedestrians and cyclists. The Healthy, Living & Working Theme promotes the creation of sustainable neighbours and well designed buildings (form and function) that support the health and well-being of its occupants. And the Efficient and Future-ready Theme promotes the application of low carbon, efficient design in the architecture of these buildings.
Overall conclusion on the environmental and sustainability impacts of the proposal	There are numerous environmental and sustainability impacts of development, but within the scope of current local and national planning policy, the Design Guide aims to reduce these impacts where possible. It seeks to do this via the creation of sustainable places and neighbours that place pedestrian and cyclist environments at the heart of the public realm and give greater weight to landscape and trees. It also focuses on the human experience of places, with increased emphasis on amenity and quality, functional buildings and places.			

Guidance for completing the template

Theme	Example
Natural Resources - Impact on natural resources including water, soil, air.	Does the decision increase water use? Does the decision have an impact on air quality? Does the decision discourage the use of the most polluting vehicles (private and public) and promote sustainable modes of transport or working from home to reduce air pollution? Does the decision impact on soil? For example, development will typically use water for carrying out various operations and, once complete, water will be needed to service the development. Providing water to development and treating affluent water requires energy and contributes to climate change. Some of the activities including construction or disposal of waste may lead to soil pollution. The decisions may lead to more journeys thereby deteriorating air quality and thus contribution to climate change and greenhouse gases.
Energy use and CO ₂ emissions.	Will the decision have an impact on energy use? Will the decision impact on carbon emissions? Most day-to-day activities use energy. The main environmental impact of producing and using energy such as electricity, gas, and fuel (unless it is from a renewable source) is the emission of carbon dioxide.
Quality of environment.	Does the decision impact on the overall quality of the built environment? Decisions may have an impact on the overall setting, character and distinctiveness in the area. For example, if development involves ground digging and excavations etc. it may have an impact on the local archaeology.
Impact on local green and open spaces and biodiversity	The proposal may lead to localised impacts on the local green and open spaces which may have an impact on local biodiversity, trees and other vegetation in the area. Will the proposal lead to loss (or creation) of green and blue infrastructure? For example, selling an open space may reduce access to open space within an area and lead to a loss of biodiversity. However, creating a new open space would have positive effects.
Use of environmentally sustainable products, equipment and packaging'	Will the decision present opportunities to incorporate the use of environmentally sustainable products (such as compostable bags, paper straws etc.), recycled materials (i.e. Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) Timber/wood), non-polluting vehicles, avoid the use of single use plastics and packaging.
Minimising waste	Will the decision minimise waste creation and the maximise recycling during the construction and operation

	of the development/programme/project? Will the decision provide opportunities to improve recycling? For example, if the proposal involves the demolition of a building or a structure, could some of the construction materials be reused in the new development or recycled back into the construction industry for use on another project?
Council plan priority: a city that takes a leading role in tackling climate change and deliver Route to Zero.	How does the proposal or decision contribute to tackling and showing leadership in tackling climate change and deliver Route to Zero aspirations?

If you require further assistance with completing this template, please contact: ESAGuidance@birmingham.gov.uk