

2 Design Principles for New Development

150 The Council encourages innovation and well designed developments that relate sensitively to the existing quality and character of the local and wider environment, generate distinctiveness and a sense of place, and help build stronger communities. Policies Des 1–Des 13 will be used to assess planning applications to meet the following objectives. More detailed advice on how to interpret and apply these policies can be found in Council guidance including in the Edinburgh Design Guidance document.



Objectives

- a) To ensure that new development is of the highest design quality and respects, safeguards and enhances the special character of the city
- b) To ensure that the city develops in an integrated and sustainable manner
- c) To create new and distinctive places which support and enhance the special character of the city and meet the needs of residents and other users

Policy Des 1 Design Quality and Context

Planning permission will be granted for development where it is demonstrated that the proposal will create or contribute towards a sense of place. Design should be based on an overall design concept that draws upon positive characteristics of the surrounding area. Planning permission will not be granted for poor quality or inappropriate design or for proposals that would be damaging to the character or appearance of the area around it, particularly where this has a special importance.

151 This policy applies to all new development, including alterations and extensions. The Council expects new development to be of a high standard of design. The Council's policies and guidelines are not to be used as a template for minimum standards. The purpose of the policy is to encourage innovation in the design and layout of new buildings, streets and spaces, provided that the existing quality and character of the immediate and wider environment are respected and enhanced and local distinctiveness is generated.

Policy Des 2 Co-ordinated Development

Planning permission will be granted for development which will not compromise:

- a) the effective development of adjacent land; or
- b) the comprehensive development and regeneration of a wider area as provided for in a master plan, strategy or development brief approved by the Council.

152 This policy applies to all development involving one or more new buildings. The Council encourages a comprehensive approach to redevelopment and regeneration wherever possible, and the preparation of development frameworks or master plans, to identify the full design potential for creating successful places. Piecemeal development is less likely to lead to the creation of well-defined and cohesive networks of streets and spaces. In exceptional cases, it may be necessary for the Council to use its powers of compulsory purchase to assemble a site for development and enable a satisfactory outcome to be achieved.

Policy Des 3 Development Design - Incorporating and Enhancing Existing and Potential Features

Planning permission will be granted for development where it is demonstrated that existing characteristics and features worthy of retention on the site and in the surrounding area, have been identified, incorporated and enhanced through its design.

153 This policy is relevant for all new development involving one new building or more. Its aim is to ensure that development proposals are informed by a detailed analysis and understanding of the site. The incorporation of existing features including built structures, archaeology, trees and woodland, landscape character, views and biodiversity can enhance a development's sense of place and contribution to the wider habitat and green network. Where practicable, proposals should provide new habitat to further the conservation of biodiversity.

Policy Des 4 Development Design – Impact on Setting

Planning permission will be granted for development where it is demonstrated that it will have a positive impact on its surroundings, including the character of the wider townscape and landscape, and impact on existing views, having regard to:

- a) height and form
- b) scale and proportions, including the spaces between buildings
- c) position of buildings and other features on the site
- d) materials and detailing

154 This policy applies to all new development of one or more buildings. Where the built environment is of high quality and has a settled townscape character, new development proposals will be expected to have similar characteristics to the surrounding buildings and urban grain. Where the surrounding development is fragmented or of poor quality, development proposals should help repair the urban fabric, establish model forms of development and generate coherence and distinctiveness – a sense of place. The siting and design of development should also be guided by views within the wider landscape and an understanding of local landscape character, including important topographical features, e.g. prominent ridges, valleys and patterns of vegetation.

Policy Des 5 Development Design – Amenity

Planning permission will be granted for development where it is demonstrated that:

- a) the amenity of neighbouring developments is not adversely affected and that future occupiers have acceptable levels of amenity in relation to noise, daylight, sunlight, privacy or immediate outlook
- b) the design will facilitate adaptability in the future to the needs of different occupiers, and in appropriate locations will promote opportunities for mixed uses
- c) community security will be promoted by providing active frontages to more important thoroughfares and designing for natural surveillance over all footpaths and open areas
- d) a clear distinction is made between public and private spaces, with the latter provided in enclosed or defensible forms
- e) refuse and recycling facilities, cycle storage, low and zero carbon technology, telecommunications equipment, plant and services have been sensitively integrated into the design

155 This policy applies to all new development for one or more new buildings. Buildings must meet the needs of users and occupiers, with consideration given to impacts on neighbouring properties to ensure no unreasonable noise impact or loss of daylight, sunlight or privacy. Buildings should be designed to be flexible in use and interact closely with the street, providing continuity of urban frontage and natural surveillance. Cul-de-sac and single access residential layouts and gated communities should be avoided to help the integration of new development into the wider neighbourhood. Ancillary facilities must be sensitively integrated into the design of buildings to avoid impacting upon the surrounding townscape.

Policy Des 6 Sustainable Buildings

Planning permission will only be granted for new development where it has been demonstrated that:

- a) the current carbon dioxide emissions reduction target has been met, with at least half of this target met through the use of low and zero carbon generating technologies.
- b) other features are incorporated that will reduce or minimise environmental resource use and impact, for example:
 - i. measures to promote water conservation
 - ii. sustainable urban drainage measures that will ensure that there will be no increase in rate of surface water run-off in peak conditions or detrimental impact on the water environment. This should include green roofs on sites where measures on the ground are not practical
 - iii. provision of facilities for the separate collection of dry recyclable waste and food waste
 - iv. maximum use of materials from local and/or sustainable sources
 - v. measures to support and encourage the use of sustainable transport, particularly cycling, including cycle parking and other supporting facilities such as showers.

156 This policy applies to all development involving one or more new buildings. The purpose of this policy is to help tackle the causes and impacts of climate change, reduce resource use and moderate the impact of development on the environment.

157 Buildings account for a substantial proportion of total carbon emissions through the energy they consume. Local authorities, through their planning and building standards responsibilities have a key role in helping to meet the Scottish Government's target for nearly zero carbon homes and buildings by 2016. Scottish Building Standards set carbon dioxide emissions reduction targets. At March 2013,

Policy Des 11 Tall Buildings – Skyline and Key Views

Planning permission will only be granted for development which rises above the building height prevailing generally in the surrounding area where:

- a) a landmark is to be created that enhances the skyline and surrounding townscape and is justified by the proposed use
- b) the scale of the building is appropriate in its context
- c) there would be no adverse impact on important views of landmark buildings, the historic skyline, landscape features in the urban area or the landscape setting of the city, including the Firth of Forth.

166 Proposals for development that would be conspicuous in iconic views of the city will be subject to special scrutiny. This is necessary to protect some of the city's most striking visual characteristics, the views available from many vantage points within the city and beyond, of landmark buildings, the city's historic skyline, undeveloped hillsides within the urban area and the hills, open countryside and the Firth of Forth which create a unique landscape setting for the city. In addition, the height of new buildings may need to be suppressed where necessary so that the city's topography and valley features continue to be reflected in roofscapes. This policy will play an important role in protecting the setting of the World Heritage Sites.

167 A study undertaken for the Council identifies key public viewpoints and is used in assessing proposals for high buildings. Further advice is provided in Council guidance.

Policy Des 12 Alterations and Extensions

Planning permission will be granted for alterations and extensions to existing buildings which:

- a) in their design and form, choice of materials and positioning are compatible with the character of the existing building
- b) will not result in an unreasonable loss of privacy or natural light to neighbouring properties
- c) will not be detrimental to neighbourhood amenity and character

168 Every change to a building, street or space has the potential to enrich or, if poorly designed, impoverish a part of the public realm. The impact of a proposal on the appearance and character of the existing building and street scene generally must be satisfactory and there should be no unreasonable loss of amenity and privacy for immediate neighbours.

Policy Des 13 Shopfronts

Planning permission will be granted for alterations to shopfronts which are improvements on what already exists and relate sensitively and harmoniously to the building as a whole. Particular care will be taken over proposals for the installation of illuminated advertising panels and projecting signs, blinds, canopies, security grills and shutters to avoid harm to the visual amenity of shopping streets or the character of historic environments.

169 Shopfront design, shop designs and shopfront advertising play an important role in the visual environment of the city. Important traditional or original features on older buildings, such as stall risers, fascias and structural framing of entrances and shop windows, should be retained and incorporated into the design. In conservation areas and on listed buildings, design and materials used will be expected to be of a high standard, and not damaging to existing fabric of buildings or wider character. Detailed advice on shopfronts is provided in Council guidance.

Policy Env 3 Listed Buildings - Setting

Development within the curtilage or affecting the setting of a listed building will be permitted only if not detrimental to the architectural character, appearance or historic interest of the building, or to its setting.

Proposals to alter or extend a listed building will be permitted where

- a) those alterations or extensions are justified;
- b) there will be no unnecessary damage to historic structures or diminution of its interest; and
- c) where any additions are in keeping with other parts of the building.

173 In determining applications for planning permission or listed building consent, the Council is required to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building, its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest that it possesses. Applications for the demolition or substantial alteration of a listed building must be accompanied by a thorough structural condition report demonstrating that the proposals are necessary or justified. Information must be provided on the proposed replacement building; these should be of comparable quality in terms of construction and design. The loss of a listed building will only be justified in exceptional circumstances. Scottish Historic Environment Policy (SHEP) and Council guidance provide further advice for applications relating to Listed Buildings.

Policy Env 6 Conservation Areas - Development

Development within a conservation area or affecting its setting will be permitted which:

- a) preserves or enhances the special character or appearance of the conservation area and is consistent with the relevant conservation area character appraisal
- b) preserves trees, hedges, boundary walls, railings, paving and other features which contribute positively to the character of the area and
- c) demonstrates high standards of design and utilises materials appropriate to the historic environment.

Planning applications should be submitted in a sufficiently detailed form for the effect of the development proposal on the character and appearance of the area to be assessed.

Policy Env 14 Sites of National Importance

Development which would affect a Site of Special Scientific Interest will only be permitted where an appraisal has demonstrated that:

- a) the objectives of the designation and the overall integrity of the area will not be compromised or
- b) any significant adverse effects on the qualities for which the area has been designated are clearly outweighed by social or economic benefits of national importance.

189 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) are areas of land (including land covered by water) which are considered by Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) to be of special interest by reason of their natural features, i.e. their flora, fauna or geological or geomorphological features. Development which could harm an SSSI will be required to demonstrate reasons which clearly outweigh the nature conservation interest of the site and justify a departure from the national policy to protect such sites.

Policy Env 15 Sites of Local Importance

Development likely to have an adverse impact on the flora, fauna, landscape or geological features of a Local Nature Reserve or a Local Nature Conservation Site will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that:

- a) the reasons for allowing the development are sufficient to outweigh the nature conservation interest of the site
- b) the adverse consequences of allowing the development for the value of the site have been minimised and mitigated in an acceptable manner.

190 The purpose of this policy is to protect sites of local nature conservation value and designated Local Nature Reserves from damaging development. The network of Local Nature Conservation sites and Local Nature Reserves is shown on the Proposals

Map. Many of these provide connectivity between internationally and nationally important sites and contribute to green networks. A Site Report has been prepared for each LNCS.

Policy Env 16 Species Protection

Planning permission will not be granted for development that would have an adverse impact on species protected under European or UK law, unless:

- a) there is an overriding public need for the development and it is demonstrated that there is no alternative
- b) a full survey has been carried out of the current status of the species and its use of the site
- c) there would be no detriment to the maintenance of the species at 'favourable conservation status'
- d) suitable mitigation is proposed

191 European Protected Species (EPS) are covered by the Habitats Regulations. EPS found in the Edinburgh area are bats, otters, and great crested newts. Other species-specific legislation to be taken into account includes the Protection of Badgers Act 1992 and those species listed in the Schedules of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. If the presence of an EPS or other protected species is suspected, appropriate survey work must be carried out to enable the Council to assess the likely impact of development on the species.

* *The EU Habitats Directive defines 'favourable conservation status' as the distribution and population of the species being at least the same as when the Directive came into force in 1994.*

Countryside Access and Open Space

Policy Env 17 Pentlands Hills Regional Park

Development which supports the aims of the Pentlands Hills Regional Park will be permitted provided it has no unacceptable impact on the character and landscape quality of the Park.

192 This policy aims to ensure that proposals for outdoor recreation activities, whilst likely to be supported in principle, do not detract from the special rural character of the Regional Park. Proposals will also be assessed in terms of other relevant policies such as Env 10 Green Belt and Env 11 Landscape Quality.

Open Space

193 The Proposals Map shows the significant areas of open space identified in an audit of the city. The criteria in Policy Env 18 will be applied to development proposals affecting all such open spaces citywide. Proposals affecting a playing field will be considered against relevant criteria in both Policy Env 18 and Policy Env 19.

Policy Env 18 Open Space Protection

Proposals involving the loss of open space will not be permitted unless it is demonstrated that:

- a) there will be no significant impact on the quality or character of the local environment and
- b) the open space is a small part of a larger area or of limited amenity or leisure value and there is a significant over-provision of open space serving the immediate area and
- c) the loss would not be detrimental to the wider network including its continuity or biodiversity value and either

- d) there will be a local benefit in allowing the development in terms of either alternative equivalent provision being made or improvement to an existing public park or other open space or
- e) the development is for a community purpose and the benefits to the local community outweigh the loss.

194 This policy aims to protect all open spaces, both public and privately owned, that contribute to the amenity of their surroundings and the city, provide or are capable of providing for the recreational needs of residents and visitors or are an integral part of the city's landscape and townscape character and its biodiversity. The Council will only support development on open space in exceptional circumstances, where the loss would not result in detriment to the overall network and to open space provision in the locality. Such circumstances tend to exist where large areas of residential amenity space have been provided without a clear purpose or sense of ownership. The Council's Open Space Strategy sets the standards to be met for open space provision across Edinburgh and will be used to assess whether there is an over provision of open space in the immediate area (criterion b). To accord with criterion d), proposals for alternative provision or improvements to open space should normally address an identified action in the Open Space Strategy.

Policy Env 19 Protection of Outdoor Sports Facilities

In addition to the requirements of Policy Env 18, the loss of some or all of a playing field or sports pitch will be permitted only where one of the following circumstances applies:

- a) The proposed development is ancillary to the principal use of the site as outdoor sports facilities
- b) The proposed development involves a minor part of outdoor sports facilities and would not adversely affect the use or potential of the remainder for sport and training
- c) An alternative outdoor sports facility is to be provided of at least equivalent

sporting value in a no less convenient location, or existing provision is to be significantly improved to compensate for the loss

- d) **The Council is satisfied that there is a clear excess of sports pitches to meet current and anticipated future demand in the area, and the site can be developed without detriment to the overall quality of provision.**

195 Outdoor sports facility provision must be considered as a city-wide resource and in terms of its contribution to local needs. The Council's assessment of provision in the city as a whole has concluded that the amount of pitches, whether or not in public ownership or publicly accessible, is equivalent to the need. However, there needs to be significant improvements in quality. On this evaluation, the loss of pitches to development cannot be justified in principle. However, the loss might be acceptable if alternative equivalent provision is to be made in an equally convenient location. Development has been allowed where other pitches serving the local community are to be equipped with all-weather playing surfaces. The Open Space Strategy identifies the locations where such investment is to be concentrated in multi-pitch venues.

Policy Env 20 Open Space in New Development

The Council will negotiate the provision of new publicly accessible and useable open space in new development when appropriate and justified by the scale of development proposed and the needs it will give rise to. In particular, the Council will seek the provision of extensions and/or improvements to the green network.

196 This policy ensures that development proposals (other than housing which is covered by Policy Hou 3) include appropriate open space provision and, where the opportunity arises, contribute to Edinburgh's green network. The term 'open space' covers green space and civic space.

Protection of Natural Resources

Policy Env 21 Flood Protection

Planning permission will not be granted for development that would:

- a) increase a flood risk or be at risk of flooding itself
- b) **impede the flow of flood water or deprive a river system of flood water storage within the areas shown on the Proposals Map as areas of importance for flood management**
- c) **be prejudicial to existing or planned flood defence systems.**

197 This purpose of this policy is to ensure development does not result in increased flood risk for the site being developed or elsewhere. Identified areas of importance for flood management are identified on the Proposals Map. It is essential to maintain strict control over development in these areas. Proposals will only be favourably considered if accompanied by a flood risk assessment demonstrating how compensating measures are to be carried out, both on and off the site, and that any loss of flood storage capacity is mitigated to achieve a neutral or better outcome. In some circumstances, sustainable flood management or mitigation measures may not be achievable.

198 Culverting of watercourses can exacerbate flood risk and have a detrimental effect on biodiversity. Any further culverting across the city will be opposed, and the removal of existing culverts will be sought when possible.

199 New development can add to flood risk if it leads to an increase in surface water run-off. It is also at risk from water flowing over land during heavy rainfall. Policy Des 6 states that these risks should be avoided by the use of sustainable drainage techniques (SUDs).

5 Housing and Community Facilities

221 Edinburgh needs more housing to provide homes for an increasing population and support economic growth. More housing increases the need for community facilities such as schools, health care facilities and community centres in easily accessible locations. This plan looks beyond the amount of housing to be provided. It also aims to address issues of quality, affordability, environmental quality in existing housing areas and the housing needs of particular groups such as students, gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople. Policies Hou 1 – Hou 10 will be used to assess planning applications to meet the following objectives



Objectives

- To meet the requirement for additional housing in Edinburgh whilst protecting environmental quality in established housing areas
- To promote more sustainable, better balanced communities
- To ensure that provision is made for necessary community facilities

Policy Hou 1 Housing Development

- 1 **Priority will be given to the delivery of the housing land supply and the relevant infrastructure* as detailed in Part 1 Section 5 of the Plan including:**
 - a) sites allocated in this plan through tables 3 and 4 and as shown on the proposals map
 - b) as part of business led mixed use proposal at Edinburgh Park/South Gyle
 - c) as part of the mixed use regeneration proposals at Edinburgh Waterfront (Proposals EW1a-EW1c and EW2a-2d and in the City Centre)
 - d) on other suitable sites in the urban area, provided proposals are compatible with other policies in the plan
- 2 Where a deficit in the maintenance of the five year housing land supply is identified (as evidenced through the housing land audit) greenfield/greenbelt housing proposals may be granted planning permission where:
 - a) The development will be in keeping with the character of the settlement and the local area
 - b) The development will not undermine green belt objectives
 - c) Any additional infrastructure required* as a result of the development and to take account of its cumulative impact, including cross boundary impacts, is either available or can be provided at the appropriate time.
 - d) The site is effective or capable of becoming effective in the relevant timeframe.

e) The proposal contributes to the principles of sustainable development.

* This should be addressed in the context of Policy Del 1, Tra 8 and the associated Supplementary Guidance.

222 Policy Hou 1 reflects the emphasis on delivery of the identified land supply. However, it also sets out a mechanism through which to bring forward additional land if a 5 year supply is not maintained. The criteria which apply reflect the considerations already established through SESplan (Policy 7) as well as the Scottish Planning Policy presumption in favour of sustainable development. Whilst the green belt is established by the plan this should not automatically preclude housing development where the relevant balance of considerations points to approval and the objectives of the city wide designation of green belt are maintained.

Policy Hou 2 Housing Mix

The Council will seek the provision of a mix of house types and sizes where practical, to meet a range of housing needs, including those of families, older people and people with special needs, and having regard to the character of the surrounding area and its accessibility.

223 It is important to achieve a good mix of dwelling types and sizes to avoid the creation of large areas of housing with similar characteristics. This approach supports more socially diverse and inclusive communities by offering a choice of housing and a range of house types to meet the needs of different population groups, from single-person households to larger and growing families.

Policy Hou 3 Private Green Space in Housing Development

Planning permission will be granted for development which makes adequate provision for green space to meet the needs of future residents.

- a) In flatted or mixed housing/flatted developments where communal provision will be necessary, this will be based on a standard of 10 square metres per flat (excluding any units which are to be provided with private gardens). A minimum of 20% of total site area should be useable greenspace.
- b) For housing developments with private gardens, a contribution towards the greenspace network will be negotiated if appropriate, having regard to the scale of development proposed and the opportunities of the site.

224 This policy ensures an appropriate level of greenspace provision in new housing developments.

225 This policy applies to mainstream housing, whether flatted or otherwise. All mainstream housing should be provided with either individual private gardens or communal areas of greenspace, or a combination of both. In some sites, some of the greenspace provision should be in the form of publicly accessible space to connect with the wider network. The site briefs for the new strategic housing proposals in West and South East Edinburgh show this type of provision.

226 The Council expects most housing development to meet these greenspace requirements in full within the site. However exceptions may be justifiable if there are good reasons why this cannot happen, for example where justified by the following policy on density. The Council's Open Space Strategy sets standards for publicly-accessible large and local greenspace and play space and identifies actions to address any deficiencies or meet other needs. A proposal which does not meet the full requirements of policy Hou 3 on-site may be supported if appropriate provision or financial contribution is made to implement an identified action in the Open Space Strategy which will address a deficiency in the area.

227 The policy does not apply to housing built for occupation by particular groups such as students or the elderly. In these circumstances, provision appropriate to their particular needs will be negotiated.

Policy Hou 4 Housing Density

The Council will seek an appropriate density of development on each site having regard to:

- a) its characteristics and those of the surrounding area
- b) the need to create an attractive residential environment and safeguard living conditions within the development
- c) the accessibility of the site includes access to public transport
- d) the need to encourage and support the provision of local facilities necessary to high quality urban living.

Higher densities will be appropriate within the City Centre and other areas where a good level of public transport accessibility exists or is to be provided. In established residential areas, proposals will not be permitted which would result in unacceptable damage to local character, environmental quality or residential amenity.

228 The aim of this policy is to promote an appropriate density of development, taking account of site characteristics and location. There are many benefits of higher density development – it makes efficient use of urban land, helps maintain the vitality and viability of local services and encourages the effective provision of public transport. However higher densities are not always appropriate. Particular care will be taken in established residential areas to avoid inappropriate densities.

Policy Hou 5 Conversion to Housing

Planning permission will be granted for the change of use of existing buildings in non-residential use to housing, provided:

- a) a satisfactory residential environment can be achieved
- b) housing would be compatible with nearby uses
- c) appropriate open space, amenity and car and cycle parking standards are met
- d) the change of use is acceptable having regard to other policies in this plan including those that seek to safeguard or provide for important or vulnerable uses.

229 A significant contribution to housing needs has been made over the years by the conversion of redundant commercial buildings to housing. This has included office buildings in the New Town which were originally houses, warehouses in Leith and vacant hospital and school buildings. The recycling of buildings achieves sustainability goals and provides the essential means by which the historic character of different localities can be maintained. It can help to create the high density, mixed use environments which are appropriate for central sites. It is an objective of the Plan to resist the conversion of empty shop units to residential use, and to safeguard these for shopping and small business use (see Policy Ret 10). However, conversions to residential use could be supported where the shop unit has been vacant for a significant period of time and been actively marketed, where there is local need and demand for a range of housing types and for town centre living.

Policy Hou 6 Affordable Housing

Planning permission for residential development, including conversions, consisting of 12 or more units should include provision for affordable housing amounting to 25% of the total number of units proposed. For proposals of 20 or more dwellings, the provision should normally be on-site. Whenever practical, the affordable housing should be integrated with the market housing.

- 230 Government policy states that where a shortage of affordable housing has been identified, this may be a material consideration for planning and should be addressed through local development plans.
- 231 Affordable housing is defined as housing that is available for rent or for sale to meet the needs of people who cannot afford to buy or rent the housing generally available on the open market. Affordable housing is important in ensuring that key workers can afford to live in the city as well as helping meet the needs of people on low incomes.
- 232 A key aim is that affordable housing should be integrated with market housing on the same site and should address the full range of housing need, including family housing where appropriate. Provision on an alternative site may be acceptable where the housing proposal is for less than 20 units or if there are exceptional circumstances. Where planning permission is sought for specialist housing an affordable housing contribution may not always be required depending on the nature of the specialist housing being proposed and economic viability considerations.
- 233 Further information on affordable housing requirements is provided in planning guidance. The details of provision, which will reflect housing need and individual site suitability, will be a matter for agreement between the developer and the Council.

Policy Hou 7 Inappropriate Uses in Residential Areas

Developments, including changes of use, which would have a materially detrimental effect on the living conditions of nearby residents, will not be permitted.

- 234 The intention of the policy is firstly, to preclude the introduction or intensification of non-residential uses incompatible with predominantly residential areas and secondly, to prevent any further deterioration in living conditions in more mixed use areas which nevertheless have important residential functions. This policy will be used to assess proposals for the conversion of a house or flat to a House in Multiple Occupation (i.e. for five or more people). Further advice is set out in Council Guidance

Policy Hou 8 Student Accommodation

Planning permission will be granted for purpose-built student accommodation where:

- a) The location is appropriate in terms of access to university and college facilities by walking, cycling or public transport
 - b) The proposal will not result in an excessive concentration of student accommodation (including that in the private rented sector) to an extent that would be detrimental to the maintenance of balanced communities or to the established character and residential amenity of the locality.
- 235 It is preferable in principle that student needs are met as far as possible in purpose-built and managed schemes rather than the widespread conversion of family

Alternative Use of Shop Units

Policy Ret 9 Alternative Use of Shop Units in Defined Centres

In the City Centre Retail Core and town centres, change of use proposals which would undermine the retailing function of the centre will not be permitted. Detailed criteria for assessing proposals for the change of use of a shop unit to a non-shop use will be set out in supplementary guidance. Supplementary Guidance will detail an approach tailored to different parts of the city centre retail core and each town centre to be informed by town centre health checks which will assess the centres strengths, vitality and viability, weaknesses and resiliencies.

The change of use of a shop unit in a local centre to a non-shop use will be permitted provided:

- a) the change of use would not result in four or more consecutive non-shop uses and;
- b) the proposal is for an appropriate commercial, community or business use, which would complement the character of the centre and would not be detrimental to its vitality and viability.

259 This plan aims to protect the important retailing function of defined centres but recognises the benefits of a wide range of complementary service, leisure and other community uses. The right mix of shopping and other uses will vary in the different centres and in the case of the city and town centres, in different parts of the centre. The policy applies to ground floor units only or basement/first floor units that are directly accessed from the pavement.

260 Within the City Centre Retail Core, a strong, high quality retail offer is a key aspect of sustaining and enhancing the city centre and policies are required to ensure that shopping continues to be the predominant use. However in order to achieve a diverse, thriving and welcoming city, a more flexible approach to the introduction of

complementary uses that support the main shopping function and encourage use into the evening is proposed. Supplementary guidance will be prepared to guide the mix of uses in different parts of the City Centre Retail Core and set out criteria for assessing proposals for uses other than shops.

261 Previous local plans incorporated a standard approach to change of use applications in town centres based on identifying primary frontages where there should be a greater proportion of units in shop use. However, each town centre is different in terms of the current mix of uses and how well it is meeting the needs of those who live, work and shop in the surrounding area. In order to take account of these differences, this plan proposes a tailored approach for each town centre. Separate supplementary guidance will be produced to guide change of use applications in each of the nine town centres. The supplementary guidance may also recommend changes to the town centre boundaries to be included in the next Local Development Plan.

262 The policy aims to avoid areas of 'dead frontage' and reduced pedestrian flow which would detract from the character and vitality of the centre by requiring that at least one unit in every four is in shop use. Beyond this requirement, the policy applies a flexible approach to change of use applications in local centres provided the use will be beneficial to the local community such as providing services, hot food or entertainment facilities. In local centres, former shop units may also be suitable for business use, providing a beneficial use for vacant properties and opportunities for small start up businesses and job creation close to where people live.

Policy Ret 10 Alternative Use of Shop Units in Other Locations

Outwith defined centres, planning applications for the change of use of a shop unit will be determined having regard to the following:

- a) where the unit is located within a speciality shopping street (defined on the Proposals Map and in Appendix B), whether the proposal would be to the detriment of its special shopping character
- b) where the unit is located within a predominantly commercial area, whether the proposal would be compatible with the character of the area
- c) whether the proposal would result in the loss of premises suitable for small business use
- d) whether there is a clear justification to retain the unit in shop use to meet local needs
- e) where residential use is proposed, whether the development is acceptable in terms of external appearance and the standard of accommodation created.

263 The purpose of this policy is to guide proposals for change of use involving shop units not located within defined centres.

264 Independent and specialist retailers may be found in secondary locations throughout the city. But their concentration in some streets in the Old Town and on the fringes of the City Centre has given these a distinctive shopping character and interest worthy of protection. The defined speciality shopping streets are Cockburn Street; High Street (parts) Lawnmarket and Canongate; Victoria Street and West Bow, Grassmarket; Jeffrey Street and St Mary's Street; Stafford Street, William Street and Alva Street in the New Town. More detailed information on the frontages to which Policy Ret 10 applies is provided in Appendix B.

265 In parts of the city, mainly the City Centre and Leith, there are concentrations of commercial uses including retail, food and drink, and entertainment uses which, although not fulfilling the role of a local centre, do make a positive

contribution to the vibrancy of the city. Proposals incompatible with the commercial character of such areas will be resisted.

266 Single convenience shops and parades of small shops play an important role in meeting neighbourhood shopping needs and creating a sense of community, particularly in areas not well served by the network of shopping centres. It may be necessary to resist the loss of shop units to ensure local needs, particularly for people without access to car, are met

267 The Council's Guidance for Business provides advice on relevant design and amenity considerations for the conversion of shop units to residential use.

Policy Ret 11 Food and Drink Establishments

The change of use of a shop unit or other premises to a licensed or unlicensed restaurant, café, pub, or shop selling hot food for consumption off the premises (hot food take-away) will not be permitted:

- a) **if likely to lead to an unacceptable increase in noise, disturbance, on-street activity or anti-social behaviour to the detriment of living conditions for nearby residents or**
- b) **in an area where there is considered to be an excessive concentration of such uses to the detriment of living conditions for nearby residents.**

268 The provision of food and drink establishments in areas where people live is a recognisable component of urban living. However, such uses can cause a number of problems for local residents. Particular care will be taken to prevent an excessive concentration of hot food shops, pubs and bars in areas of mixed but essentially residential character. The Council's Guidance for Businesses identifies sensitive areas in this regard namely Tollcross, Grassmarket, Nicolson/Clerk Street and Broughton Place/Picardy Place and their environs.

taken to mitigate any adverse effects on networks and bring accessibility by and use of non-car modes up to acceptable levels if necessary.

- 271 The policy applies to major offices, retail, entertainment, sport and leisure uses and other non-residential developments which generate a large number of journeys by employees and other visitors. These developments should be accessible by a choice of means of transport which offer real alternatives to the car. For this reason, a location in the City Centre will normally be preferable. Major travel generating developments will also be encouraged to locate in the identified town centres and employment centres, provided that the scale and nature of the development is such that it can be reached conveniently by a majority of the population in its catchment area by walking, cycling or frequent public transport services.
- 272 Out-of-centre development will only be acceptable where it can clearly be demonstrated that the location is suitable, and that access by sustainable forms of transport and car parking provision and pricing mean that the development will be no more reliant on car use than a town centre location. This means that good public transport, walking and cycling accessibility will still need to be assured.
- 273 Applications should be accompanied by travel plans to demonstrate how development, particularly in out of centre locations, will meet the requirements of Policy Tra 1. Travel plans should accord with Scottish Government guidance and will be monitored to assess their impact on reducing demand for car travel and maximising use of existing and new transport infrastructure. Travel plans may also be relevant when assessing residential applications in terms of Policy Hou 4 Housing Density or Policy Tra 2 Private Car Parking.

Car and Cycle Parking

Policy Tra 2 Private Car Parking

Planning permission will be granted for development where proposed car parking provision complies with and does not exceed the parking levels set out in Council guidance. Lower provision will be pursued subject to consideration of the following factors:

- a) whether, in the case of non-residential developments, the applicant has demonstrated through a travel plan that practical measures can be undertaken to significantly reduce the use of private cars to travel to and from the site
- b) whether there will be any adverse impact on the amenity of neighbouring occupiers, particularly residential occupiers through on-street parking around the site and whether any adverse impacts can be mitigated through control of on-street parking
- c) the accessibility of the site to public transport stops on routes well served by public transport, and to shops, schools and centres of employment by foot, cycle and public transport
- d) the availability of existing off-street parking spaces that could adequately cater for the proposed development
- e) whether the characteristics of the proposed use are such that car ownership and use by potential occupiers will be low, such as purpose-built sheltered or student housing and 'car free' or 'car reduced' housing developments and others providing car sharing arrangements
- f) whether complementary measures can be put in place to make it more convenient for residents not to own a car, for example car sharing or pooling arrangements, including access to the city's car club scheme.

- 274 The purpose of this policy is to ensure car parking provided as part of development proposals accords with the Council standards which are tailored to local circumstances, including location, public transport accessibility and economic needs, but generally fulfil the wider strategy of encouraging sustainable, non-car modes. The standards express the maximum amount of car parking that different types of development may provide.
- 275 The policy sets out the circumstances in which a lesser amount of car parking than the standards require may be appropriate to help reduce car use. This is only likely to be acceptable in locations where there are existing or planned on-street parking controls.
- 276 At least half the space saved by omitting or reducing car parking should be given over to landscape features and additional private open space (see Policy Hou 3), so that residents will have the amenity benefits of a car-free environment.

Policy Tra 3 Private Cycle Parking

Planning permission will be granted for development where proposed cycle parking and storage provision complies with the standards set out in Council guidance.

- 277 The provision of adequate cycle parking and storage facilities is important in meeting the objective of the Local Transport Strategy to increase the proportion of journeys made by bicycle. The Council's parking standards set out the required levels of provision of cycle parking and storage facilities in housing developments and a range of non-residential developments.

Policy Tra 4 Design of Off-Street Car and Cycle Parking

Where off-street car parking provision is required or considered to be acceptable, the following design considerations will be taken into account:

- a) surface car parks should not be located in front of buildings where the building would otherwise create an active frontage onto a public space or street, and

main entrances to buildings should be located as close as practical to the main site entrance

- b) car parking should preferably be provided at basement level within a building and not at ground or street level where this would be at the expense of an active frontage onto a public street, public space or private open space
- c) the design of surface car parks should include structural planting to minimise visual impact
- d) the design of surface car parking or entrances to car parking in buildings should not compromise pedestrian safety and should assist their safe movement to and from parked cars, for example, by the provision of marked walkways.
- e) Space should be provided for small-scale community recycling facilities in the car parking area in appropriate development, such as large retail developments.

Cycle parking should be provided closer to building entrances than general car parking spaces and be designed in accordance with the standards set out in Council guidance.

- 278 This policy sets out important design considerations for car and cycle parking provision including environmental quality, pedestrian safety and security. Poorly located or designed car parking can detract from the visual appearance and vitality of the surrounding area. Car parking in front of supermarkets which widely separates entrances from main roads, is an added discouragement to public transport use and walking, and detracts from urban vitality and safety. A high standard of design for surface car parking will be sought, with landscaping to soften its visual impact, and in larger car parks the provision of marked walkways for ease of pedestrian movement and safety. New off-street car parking provides an opportunity to expand the city's network of small recycling points to complement larger community recycling centres. Provision of well located high quality cycle parking suitable to the type of development and to users is an essential component of the Council's efforts to encourage cycling.