



This Supplementary Planning Guidance on Community Safety has been prepared to set out how we can, through the careful planning of developments and environments, try and make a contribution to ensuring that Sandwell is a place in which we can feel safe, secure and free from the fear of crime.

This document has been the result of partnership working with the Police and other agencies, and has been the subject of a public consultation programme. Comments arising from the consultation process have been incorporated into this document, which has been adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance to the Unitary Development Plan.

I consider this document to be an important step forward for Sandwell in developing a positive approach to the planning of the Borough. I hope you find this document both informative and useful in ensuring that Sandwell becomes a safe and secure place to live, work and visit.



Councillor R.S Badham
Cabinet Member for Urban Form.

Supplementary Planning Guidance on Community Safety

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Many people aspire to live in an environment where they can carry out their day-to-day activities in the knowledge that they are safe, secure and free from crime. It is the desire of Central and Local Government to provide this sort of environment, although it is generally acknowledged that this can only be achieved through the co-operation of many different agencies in sharing responsibility to reduce crime and disorder.

Community safety is not just the issue of criminal activity but is concerned with wider issues that may affect the day-to-day lives of people in an area.

The perception of crime and the level at which anti-social behaviour is tolerated varies from one individual and area to another. The physical environment may influence the level of crime and anti-social behaviour. A high quality environment, which is managed and maintained, will convey a sense of pride and ownership making the inhabitants feel safe, whereas a poor environment is often linked with low morale and ownership, with less pride taken in the environment around. Safety, good design, management and maintenance are the key attributes of successful places.

The planning system aims to improve the quality of life for all sectors of the community which may be achieved through well-designed and maintained environments. The Government's White Paper "Our Towns and Cities", promotes the need for high quality urban living.

Although there are many more factors that need to be considered, such as social or economic issues, these are out of the realms of the planning process. These issues need to be addressed by a range of different organisations of which planning authorities are just a part. Under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, it is the duty of the responsible authorities, namely the Local Authority and Police, to consider crime and disorder reduction and prevention in the discharge of all their functions. From a Local Authority perspective, planning is just a part of this.

The statutory land use plan, Sandwell Unitary Development Plan, provides policies which will help guide the future development of the Borough. One of the main themes throughout the Plan is the promotion of a safe and secure quality environment in which people would be happy to work, shop, play or live. This issue has been addressed through the various policies and proposals of the Plan to build on the aims of National Planning Policy. Above that, the all encompassing Sandwell Plan, which guides all strategic activity in the Borough, has also highlighted safety as one of the Key Priorities for Action. It emphasises the need to tackle the causes of crime as well as the effects.

As part of the Unitary Development Plan Review, the Local Authority proposed to prepare Supplementary Planning Guidance on a range of topics with Community Safety being one of them. This Supplementary Planning Guidance for Community Safety will provide additional information and guidance for developers and others when considering new developments or adaptations to existing ones. It supports the policies contained in the Unitary Development Plan, emphasising the need for consideration of community safety issues and the reduction in crime and disorder and also the fear of crime. The purpose of this Supplementary Planning Guidance is to highlight the areas which need to be considered and to raise awareness with developers, residents and business owners to take account of the need to consider community safety as an integral part of new development proposals.

The Planning division have a duty to consult with a range of other bodies such as the local police, communities and businesses and engage them in active participation with regard to how the design of new developments can influence crime and disorder prevention and aid reduction. The input of other groups would also be welcomed. Groups such as the elderly and youth of an area, ethnic minority and interest groups that may provide a more tailored approach to crime reduction measures to address their particular concerns.

There are many topics covered by this SPG, each with the primary aim of reducing crime and the fear of crime which in turn will lead to a safer environment in which to work, live and play. Some of the areas will be cross-referenced to other documents and other Supplementary Planning Guidance, the aim of which will provide more detailed guidance of the particular issue covered.

Introduction

National Planning Guidance

Central Government issue planning guidance in the form of Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPG's). Local Authorities need to take account of these PPG's in formulating their policies and proposals for their statutory land use plans for their areas. Many planning decisions are based on the Adopted Development Plan unless there are material considerations which allow for a departure from the provisions of the Plan.

In considering the content of their plans, Local Authorities pay regard to the guidance issued by Central government and tailor their policies and proposals accordingly. Many of the PPG's have been reviewed over recent years and have taken on board many of the issues relating to Community Safety and the fear of crime. In respect of this SPG, the most relevant Planning Policy Guidance Notes to be referred to are;

- Planning Policy Guidance Note 1 (PPG1) - General Policy and Principles.
- Planning Policy Guidance Note 6 - Town Centres and Retail Developments
- Planning Policy Guidance Note 12 - Development Plans

Further details of these and other government advice is given in Appendix 1.

Unitary Development Plan

The statutory land use plan for the borough is the Unitary Development Plan (UDP) which was adopted in April 2004.

One of the main themes throughout the Plan is the need to provide a safe environment in which people can work, live and play. It is further underpinned by the continual reference of the need for safety and security issues to be considered in any matter which relates to the use of land and buildings. The main policy which is relevant is Policy UD3 which refers to the need for the Local Authority and local police to work together under the requirements of Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to consider crime and disorder implications. This will also include any planning matter. The policy states;

Policy UD3 - Security and Safety

All applications for new development will be assessed in accordance with the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, and against the guidance contained in Government Circular 5/94 and other policies within the Development Plan. Applications for new or refurbished schemes for residential or commercial properties will need to be considered against the criteria set out in "Secured By Design", a guidance document produced by the Association of Chief Police Officers.

The Council will also work in conjunction with the Police, in particular, the Police Architectural Liaison Officer, when considering any proposals for new development.

As set out by Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, the Council and Police have a duty to work together to take into account the reduction of crime when considering all planning matters. The Council will also work with the Sandwell Community Safety Unit to prepare Supplementary Planning Guidance on Community Safety.

General advice on layout and design of new developments is provided in Policy UDI – General Urban Design Principles (see Appendix 2) and more comprehensively in the Supplementary Planning Guidance on Design of New Residential Areas.

Policy Context

The support of the Police and Local Authority is pertinent in considering any proposals which may have an implication for security and safety of those living, working or playing in their area. As the 'Responsible Authorities' identified in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, it is the duty of the Police and Local Authority to tackle crime and disorder and to promote community safety.

The Police and Local Authority, in the discharge of all their functions, have a role in assessing the safety and security implications in planning terms, of any new schemes or developments being proposed. Some of these may include major sites, but smaller proposals will also benefit from advice and guidance. Attempts to reduce the incidents of crime and improve community safety will be carried out with cost effectiveness in mind.

The Local Authority and Police have experience in assessing the safety and security implications of schemes, especially in relation to the layout and design of buildings, access arrangements and materials used. They are able to evaluate how these may be improved to reduce the likelihood of criminal activity and in improving personal safety. The extent of knowledge and advice from these authorities is wide and encouragement should also be given where possible, for developers, communities and businesses in the area to contact the Police Architectural Liaison Officer when considering changing, upgrading or purchasing any security equipment. The Police will also be able to give guidance and advice on Secured By Design and Secured Car Parks initiatives.

Consultation & Advice

Design and Layout

The design and layout of many areas can influence the quality of life for people who work, live or visit the area. Poor quality and poorly designed places increase the opportunity for crime. Good design of both layout and materials will contribute to reducing the incidents of crime and disorder. Regard should be given to the Urban Design policies contained in the Unitary Development Plan and any other subsequent publications such as Supplementary Planning Guidance on New Residential Areas or Play Areas.

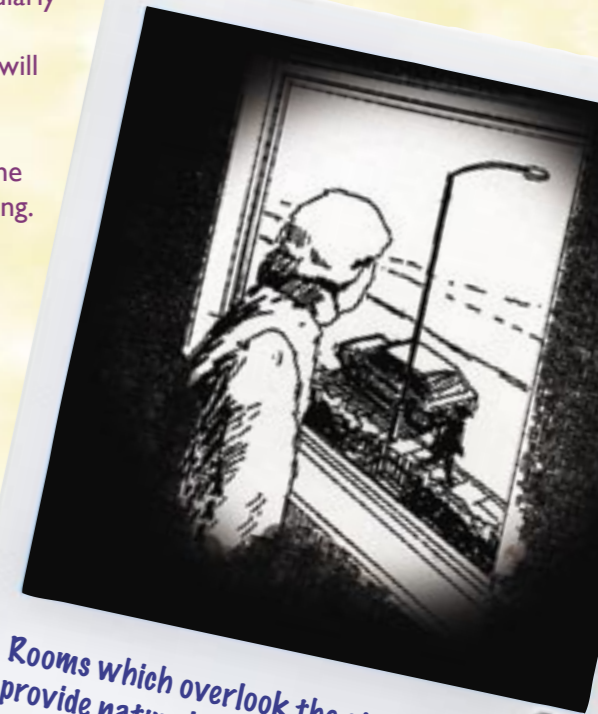
Early pre-application discussions with developers on new schemes help to reduce or eliminate hot spots where crime is likely to be committed. Consultation with the Local Authority, police and where appropriate, statutory consultees, will be actively encouraged. Engaging the community in discussions for new developments is also beneficial in gauging opinions and objections before planning applications are prepared.

General Principles

Natural Surveillance

Active places provide their own security in the form of natural surveillance. Locations which are prone to dereliction and which are underused, especially at night, project a neglected appearance and can become hot spots for crime due to lack of surveillance from passers-by. People will also be disinclined to use them for fear of their own safety.

In order to achieve the feeling of ownership, the design of developments will promote 'overlooking' onto streets. Primary access points should be from the street and habitable rooms at ground floor level facing onto the street, particularly kitchens and living rooms, will assist natural surveillance throughout the day and evening.



Rooms which overlook the streets provide natural surveillance.

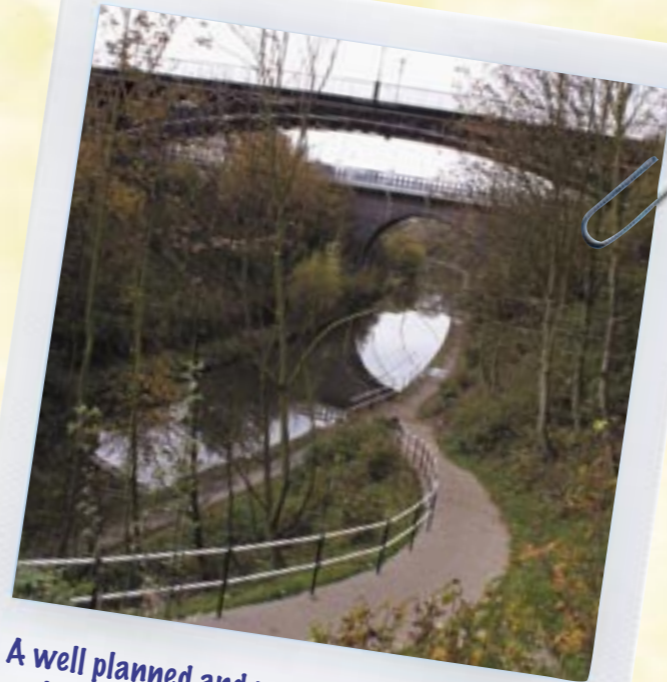
Surveillance of the street will also be improved further in the evening by the use of appropriate lighting.

Encouragement should also be given to mixed uses in areas such as town centres which will ensure active streets, especially at night. The introduction of a range of uses such as pubs, café's, restaurants and leisure uses such as cinemas will increase the evening activity and help to reduce the opportunity for crime. Obviously such proposed usage should be of a careful balance and design so as not to actually increase the potential for crime and disorder.

Footpaths and Cycleways

Footpaths and cycleways should be provided to encourage active use and the linking of areas. They should be located where they will be most utilised, providing direct and functional routes between places - the provision of unnecessary roads and footpaths should be avoided. Layouts will not locate footpaths to the rear of properties. Footpaths and cycleways should be integrated into development, being included into the highway network where at all possible and be overlooked, not cast adrift so that they become unused. Footpaths and cycleways should be separated to ensure the safety of pedestrians and cyclists alike, and should be incorporated within developments. Shared use cycle/walkways should only be created where a segregated cycleway and footpath cannot be provided due to limited space and all alternatives have been considered and discounted.

Where they are provided, footpaths should be wide enough to accommodate the comfortable passage between at least two people.



A well planned and useable cycleway adjacent to the canal.

Appropriate measures should be taken to ensure that lighting along footpaths, whether adopted or unadopted, should be provided and maintained to a good standard. Lighting is very important along footpaths, especially those which will be less used and serve a limited number of people. Lighting may encourage more active use of areas in reducing the fear of crime, especially at night.

Although linkages between residential areas and local facilities will be considered, these linkages should be safe to use, avoiding the need for 'dogleg' passageways which provide an opportunity for attackers to hide. Good visibility is required from both ends of the footpath, providing a direct visual connection with the street network.

Footpaths within a residential development, or which are being used to access public transport, should be safe, easy and with direct connections that fit in to the context of the area and adhere to pedestrian desire lines. The positioning and design should be considered in respect of the safety and security of the users.

The use of landscaping along footpaths should be considered in the initial stages of design of new developments to provide an attractive route without compromising the need to address safety of the users. Where footpaths are positioned adjacent to properties, blank gable walls onto these spaces will be avoided. Appropriate forms of buffer treatment could provide suitable security for the buildings as well as delineating the areas of defensible space. Areas of left over land should be avoided as they promote uncared for spaces.



A designated cycleway which appears unsafe and uninviting.

Further details for cycleways will be included in the forthcoming Supplementary Planning Guidance - Towards a Cycle Friendly Sandwell.



Good visibility at both ends of passageways is required. 'Doglegs' should be avoided.



The use of appropriate boundary treatment can help differentiate between public and private space.

Boundary Treatment

It is important to differentiate between the private and public realm by the use of different materials. This can be achieved in a variety of ways including walls, hedges or fences and should be assessed on their merits for their suitability at the particular location. The use of boundary treatment should not be to the detriment of adjoining occupiers and particular care should be taken in sensitive areas such as Conservation Areas.

Most residential developments have a mixture of walls and fences around private properties, some hedges or other landscaping treatments can also be found.

Appropriate use of materials should be considered prior to applications in order that fortress style residential areas are not developed. This results in the creation of isolated areas which appear unfriendly and unwelcoming. Palisade fencing, more suited to industrial developments will not be acceptable in residential areas. Tall, solid walls or hedges may reduce natural surveillance and result in areas becoming crime generators. A careful balance is required.

Access

Any development should consider the need for safe, direct and easy access for all people, including those with mobility difficulties or those in wheelchairs. Obstacles which prevent the easy movement of people should be removed. The provision of suitable lighting and surfaces should also be considered.

Vehicular and pedestrian accesses to car parks should be safe, well lit and clear. Any area within car parks that is allocated for pedestrian activity, i.e. pedestrian priority, should be well defined and suitably spacious to allow the safe and comfortable passing between two people.

Any new developments should pay due regard to the provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. Access arrangements should be made for those with mobility difficulties with, for example, the installation of ramps.



Appropriate lighting improves natural surveillance which reinforces community safety.

Lighting

Appropriate lighting can contribute to improving the environment, which in turn leads to a sense of ownership and pride. Illumination in residential areas, town centres and open spaces reinforces community safety by providing improved surveillance which limits opportunities for attacks on property or people.

Regard should be had to the type of lighting which is most appropriate for its setting. The effect on adjoining properties should be taken into consideration for any lighting scheme. Floodlighting, although beneficial in the protection of property and businesses may have a detrimental affect on adjoining residential areas.

Particular attention should be paid in the more sensitive areas such as Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings for the most suitable lighting.

Areas which should receive particular attention are car parks, footpaths, town centres and segregated pedestrian cycle routes. Suitable lighting in car parks reduces the fear of crime which in turn leads to greater activity, increases confidence and thereby promotes community safety. Town centres are reliant on visitors both during the day and at night to retain or increase, their vitality and viability and should, therefore, be attractive and safe. Illumination of streets, buildings and roads can add to the attractiveness of the area. High-pressure (white) lighting which enhances CCTV images may be preferable in town centre locations. For CCTV images to be effective, lighting should be at face height, of good quality and targeted. Providing an even coverage will reduce the number of potential hiding places. Further guidance relating to CCTV can be found later in this document. Additional lighting may be appropriate at certain locations such as bank cash point machines, narrow passageways, entrances to car parking areas, public transport interchanges and main thoroughfares to provide added security, especially at night.

Shops and businesses may also benefit from additional lighting, especially after closing hours. Where shutters are proposed, perforated shutters with internal shop lighting can contribute to the attractiveness of a town centre at night as well as enhancing surveillance, both for the business premises and surrounding areas. Complementary lighting may be appropriate in centres to illuminate buildings of special or architectural interest, which provide landmarks for visitors and pedestrians to navigate their way around the centre.

The use of landmarks may also provide a sense of security. The design of all these areas should seek to make best use of natural lighting and avoid creating dark areas, in the interests of energy conservation and sustainable development, so that artificial lighting is only used where it is essential.

Landscaping

The introduction of suitable hard and soft landscaping within residential, business or shopping areas can improve the environment and quality of life for those using them as well as identifying the boundaries between the public and private realm. Schemes which contribute to a high quality environment and which are appropriate to their setting should be considered. The provision of landscaping within sensitive areas, such as Conservation Areas, should be sympathetic in design and not detract from the character of that area.

Within residential developments and town centre locations, appropriate measures should be taken to include landscaping schemes and other street furniture which provide attractive settings and break up or decorate the street scene. Consideration should be given for the positioning and height of planters, trees and street furniture to allow for easy accessibility and manoeuvrability in and around the area and to give clear vision across a space. Regard should be had to the different types of trees available and the impact they may have on the surrounding area with regard to overshadowing and access to light. Tree planting should be of a heavy

standard/semi mature nature. Over provision of such objects which may cause unnecessary cluttering of the street scene will be avoided.

In certain locations, such as surface car parks, landscaping is welcome as it breaks up the monotony of tarmac and provides more attractive surroundings. Planting which is low growing is best suited for this use as it provides an attractive environment as well as good visibility and necessitates low maintenance.

Clear-stemmed trees are also acceptable in these locations.



Low growing landscaping provides good visibility and an attractive environment.

In open space areas safety should be a consideration in ensuring the location and design of any new, or the maintenance of any existing landscaping, with regard to the safety of those using the facilities. Inappropriately located trees and shrubs may obstruct clear passageways or views and contribute to the fear of crime and the reduction in community safety. A balance needs to be struck between the provision of suitable landscaping which will not compromise the safety of those using the facilities.

Ownership should be established to ensure that any landscaping benefits from continued maintenance. The plant species included in any landscaping scheme should be appropriate to the surroundings in which they are to be located and maintained to an approved specification. There is a need to ensure that shrubbery is cut back, especially near to paths as overgrown areas may cause either injury to passers by or could be ideal for concealing potential attackers.

CCTV

Properly planned and managed closed circuit television systems can be used as part of a wider approach to community safety. The introduction of Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) within centres is becoming increasingly important in promoting community safety, improving consumer confidence and in the fight against crime, but should only be viewed as part of an integrated package of crime reduction measures.



CCTV will only be effective if part of a monitored system.

In order for CCTV to be effective, cameras need to be situated at appropriate locations for a continuous, 24-hour coverage of the area. Cameras should ideally be linked into a supervised control room or part of a monitored alarmed system which will be activated when premises are closed. When connected to monitoring centres, commuted sums to meet costs of maintenance and monitoring will usually be necessary. In sensitive areas, such as Conservation Areas or Listed Buildings, regard should be had to the effect that cameras may have on their setting and character.

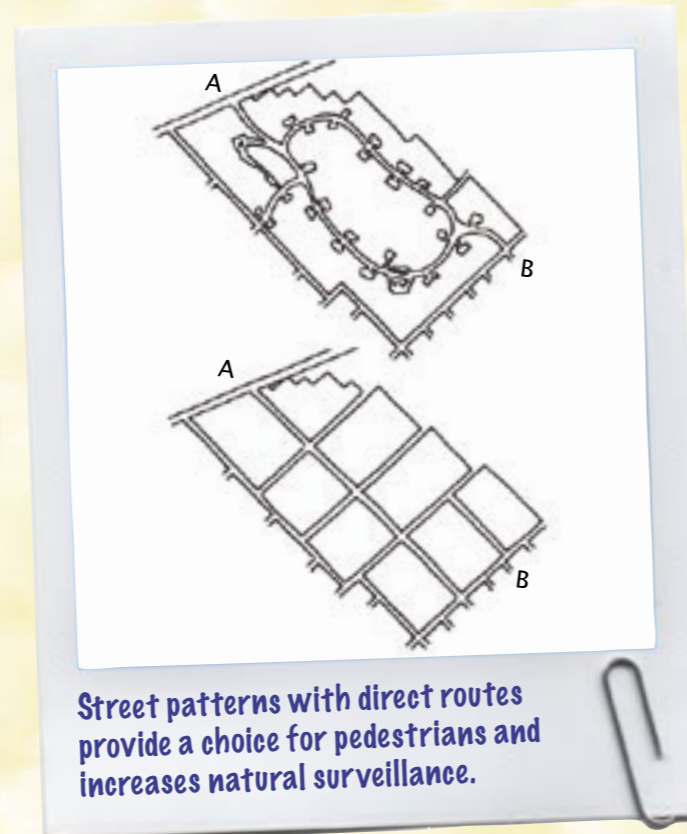
Planning permission is required for pole mounted stand-alone cameras. Annex C of PPG15 – Planning and the Historic Environment, provides further guidance on this issue. The provision and type of lighting will be important in the effectiveness of any CCTV system. Lighting should be even in coverage and targeted to enable the CCTV images to be clear, especially at face height in order for the system to be beneficial.

The use of CCTV in residential areas is limited at present. CCTV may be regarded as an invasion of privacy and therefore its use should be subject to wider consultation in the community. Closed Circuit Television is beneficial in the protection of industrial and business premises. However, CCTV will only be an effective crime prevention tool if the system is properly managed, monitored and regularly maintained. With this in mind it should be acknowledged that there will be ongoing costs and this will require careful consideration in the planning costs.

The use of CCTV is subject to the Data Protection Act 1998 and Human Rights Act 1998. Systems need to be registered with the Information Commissioner, stating its purpose for installation. The Data Protection Act requires that any information obtained, has been done so fairly and lawfully and also includes a code of practice such as the installation of appropriately sized signs where CCTV is operating stating its purpose, any information captured should be solely used for its initial intention and that cameras are located in such a way, that irrelevant or intrusive information is not captured.

The code of practice also states that individuals have access to a copy of any personal data held about them.

Article 8 of the Human Rights Act 1998 also places a duty on Local Authorities, Police, prisons, government departments and courts in respecting the private and home life of an individual. It stresses that there shall be no interference unless it is deemed necessary in the interests of national and public safety or for the prevention of crime and disorder. Public Authorities should consider whether or not CCTV is required or whether there may be other measures which may be implemented which would reduce crime without infringing the privacy of the public.



One of the factors that may contribute to an increase in crime and disorder is the design and layout of many developments. In the past, developments have been designed for their functionality in respect of cost and need, with little regard to issues such as the provision of building security and natural surveillance and the identification and elimination of crime generators. The different approaches to residential design and development have, over the years, brought their own problems related to community safety issues.

We can learn from past mistakes by providing good quality well thought-out and designed residential areas for the future, which serve the residents needs without detriment to community or personal safety. The urban renaissance work of the white paper, “Our Towns and Cities” underpins the concept of urban living with quality environments and guidance contained in Planning Policy Guidance Note 1. This stresses the need for residential developments to take account of the need for good design and to pay regard to safety. Supplementary Planning Guidance on Design of New Residential Areas has been prepared by the Local Authority which addresses key issues developers will need to consider when designing new housing developments, including the safety implications of layout and design.

New Housing Developments

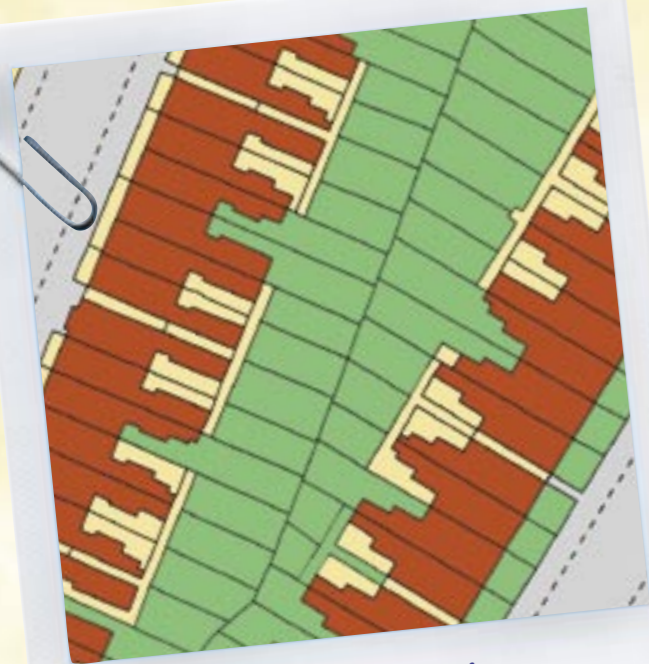
However, it is important to recognise that crime and disorder reduction in residential areas is a highly important issue. The fear of crime experienced by people in their own communities will have an impact on their quality of life.

There are many issues which need to be addressed in residential areas such as criminal activity and anti-social behaviour, including reduction in noise levels and the control of vandalism. A solution is required as to how these things can be alleviated and dealt with by the different agencies involved. The planning system, through its policies and proposals for the future use and development of land, will introduce guidance and criteria by which developments will be assessed in respect of the design and layout and which may positively contribute to community safety.

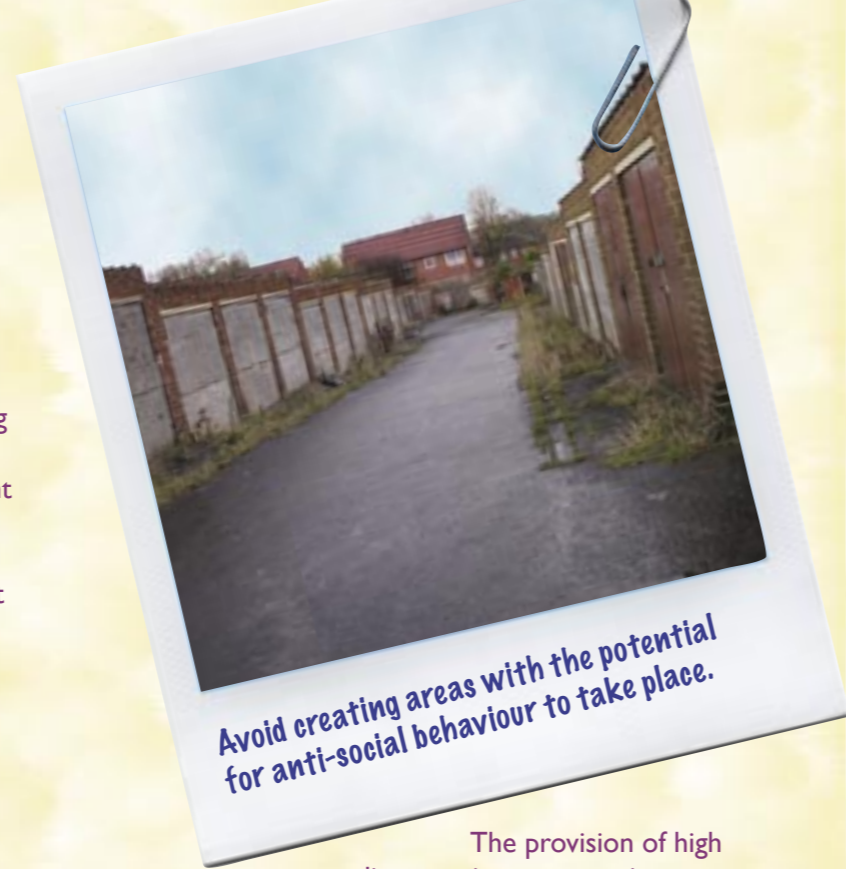
Neighbourhood Watch schemes operate with the co-operation between the Police and the local community in the general policing of the local area. Neighbourhood Watch, as well as helping to develop community cohesion, relies on the vigilance of residents to report suspicious actions to the Police and providing surveillance of neighbour’s properties which is valuable, especially when properties are vacant. This in turn contributes to the reduction in criminal activity and anti-social behaviour. The Local Authority will encourage the setting up of Neighbourhood Watch and other such schemes and work with the Police in promoting a wider awareness of them.

Layout & Design

The layout and design of new developments is extremely important in addressing the need for the reduction of crime and improving community safety. The Local Authority and the Police can influence the way in which developments evolve. They can give guidance to developers on environmental and housing design which will contribute to the reduction in criminal activity. Natural surveillance is very important in this respect. Areas which are overlooked provide less opportunity for criminal activity and anti-social behaviour to take place. Active rooms which face out onto the street, such as living rooms and kitchens, provide natural surveillance.



Grid block arrangements provide a safer option.



Avoid creating areas with the potential for anti-social behaviour to take place.

The provision of high quality security measures in new housing, such as locks and alarms, will be encouraged. National Guidance emphasises the need for increasing densities of housing and re-using previously developed sites (PPG3 – Housing). A balance needs to be struck between high density and new residential developments which produce sustainable, quality, living environments without compromising the privacy of residents. Higher densities encourage a more active environment, which tend to lessen the opportunity of crime.

Designing residential areas, whether high or low in density, should take account of the opportunity for natural surveillance to be incorporated in the layout.

Residential properties which are arranged in a gridblock with rear back gardens provide a safer and more viable option and provide definitive areas of public and private space. Where garages are not provided within individual plots, developments should be designed to enable car parking areas to be overlooked. Regard should be had to the provision of safe routes to bus stops and illuminated bus shelters within residential areas. Advice from the Police and Local Authority should be sought at the design stage, as it is more difficult to introduce crime reduction measures when plans are well advanced.

Play Spaces/Open Spaces

Open space and play space within residential areas is covered more thoroughly in Policy DC9 – Provision of Community Open Space and Play Space in New Residential Areas in the Adopted Unitary Development Plan and SPG - Design of New Residential Areas. The provision of play space will be considered appropriate on major residential sites. Smaller sites may generate the need for off-site provision via a commuted sum by prior negotiation with the Local Authority.

However, the size, function, layout and position of play areas for children, especially within new residential areas, should be designed so they are integrated within the development, overlooked by nearby residential properties and located sufficiently far away from roads or any other potential sources of danger. They should not be isolated but be located far enough away from houses to reduce the likelihood of general disturbance.



Play spaces should be designed so they are overlooked by nearby properties.

Consideration should be given to the inclusion of home zones within residential areas where traffic calming measures enable children to play in the street with relative safety. Thought should also be given to appropriate use of fences and gates relative to the individual play areas and the age range for which they have been designed.

Key Issues

- The Local Authority will endeavour to work with developers in pre-application discussions to consider the layout and design of new residential developments. Regard should be had to Supplementary Planning Guidance for Design of New Residential Areas.
- Applicants will be informed to contact the Police Architectural Liaison Officer prior to the submission of applications.
- Applications for new developments will be assessed with regard to their contribution to crime reduction and promotion of community safety.
- Consideration should be given to the design, layout and siting of play areas within new residential developments and the inclusion of home zones in appropriate locations. Regard should be had to Policy DC9 - Provision of Community Open Space and Play Space in New Residential areas.
- Support will be given to the Police in the establishment of Neighbourhood Watch Schemes within the Borough.

The Borough of Sandwell has many town and local centres, each having their own characteristics and attractions. Many of the town and district centres have a wide catchment, especially the town centres of West Bromwich and Oldbury. The local centres also have an important role to play in providing for the day-to-day top up shopping required by the local residents.

The continued vitality and viability of these centres depends very much on the shops and services they provide, and the ease and relative safety with which shoppers can access these facilities. A shopping environment which is attractive and is perceived as safe will encourage more visitors and therefore more active streets and public spaces. The more active the street, the less opportunity for crimes to be committed, strengthening the community and reducing anti-social behaviour. The provision of car parking which is perceived as being safe will be an important factor in attracting visitors to a centre. The implementation of a co-ordinated monitored CCTV system will also help in reducing the incidents of crime and improve community safety in centres. Other measures, such as communications linkage between centres, may be appropriate, subject to funding, to enable the sharing of information of criminal activity and assisting in quicker response times. Consideration should be given in any new development to the implementation of Section 106 agreements for the formulation of a linked system for the centre.

The evening economy of a centre may sometimes suffer due to the fear of crime and the perception that centres are unsafe. It is important to encourage greater use of centres, especially in the evening, by promoting the re-use of vacant buildings, in particular, upper storeys for residential use or introducing mixed uses such as leisure. These uses are usually easily accessible by public transport when located in or adjacent to town centres and contribute to the vitality and viability of the area. In addition to the financial benefits, boosting the evening economy encourages more active use of the streets which in itself increases community safety through the reduction in opportunity for crime.

However, a balance needs to be struck between an increased evening economy and the adverse problems it may generate with regard to crime and disorder, through, for example, drunken and violent behaviour. Liaison between the Local Authority and the Police will be necessary to overcome any problems associated with extending the hours of business within the Borough's centres and avoiding large scale clusters of clubs and pubs which may generate significant crime and disorder. Any consideration of such issues must be specific to the particular site.

Centres

Car Parking in Town Centre Locations

The Local Authority and Police will be able to provide advice and guidance on the design and quality of car parking facilities in town and district centres and will be the subject of future Supplementary Planning Guidance. Incidents of crime within car parks are common, in many cases due to lack of surveillance and security. The design of car parks and introduction of preventative measures such as good lighting, monitored CCTV and security patrols will reduce the opportunity for criminal activity to take place.

Guidance should be sought from the Secured Car Parks publication for the provision of appropriate measures to improve community safety for all users of the car parks, particularly the most vulnerable in the community, such as the elderly, women or those travelling alone.



Bus stations and other transport interchanges should be designated with safety in mind.

Design of New Buildings in Centres

New developments within centres should integrate with the context of the existing area. Where new buildings are proposed within centres, regard should be had for the implications of any design features which may compromise community safety.

For example, recessed doorways, although attractive in the right setting, may provide a suitable place to conceal criminals. The type of materials used and details such as location and size of windows should be considered with regard to likely intrusions. Appropriate use of lighting should be considered for town centre locations. Lighting will contribute to the street scene, especially at night, and make the centre more active and appealing for the evening economy.

Shop Front Design

Design of shop fronts should be of good quality and using a high standard of materials. In addition to this, they should be designed to fit within the context of an area. Care should be taken with regard to the sympathetic design of shop fronts and security measures which are located in sensitive areas such as Conservation Areas and on Listed Buildings. The criteria in Policy DC13 – Shop Front Design (see Appendix 2), should be taken into consideration.

The design of new shop fronts should incorporate security measures as part of their initial design to prevent the need for shutter boxes to be added at a later stage. Their design should also pay due regard to features which may hinder community safety or contribute to criminal activity. The location of window openings and the types of materials used should be to an approved design standard which help to prevent unauthorised intrusion. Display windows should incorporate stall risers and avoid floor to ceiling designs. Additional security, such as grilles and lights, should be provided to safeguard shop premises and their customers. Consideration needs to be given to the design of roller shutters and the implications of Policy DC12 – Design and installation of shop front roller shutters (Appendix 2). The criteria attached to this policy ensure good design in respect of shop front roller shutters to prevent a solid, unwelcoming appearance especially at night when most businesses are closed.

The introduction of perforated shutters, which are illuminated from the interior, provide additional lighting of the street scene, prevent dead frontages in addition to allowing natural surveillance into the shop as well as the goods on display to be viewed. Galvanised shutters will be unacceptable as they have a detrimental effect upon the street scene, creating dead frontages and intimidating environments.

The above guidelines can also be applied to other buildings where shutters are required such as health centres.



Recessed doorways provide potential hiding places.

Splayed entrance improves visibility.

Key Issues

- The Local Authority and Police will provide advice and guidance on request with regard to the safety and security of car parks in town centres.
- The Local Authority will endeavour to work with trader's forums and police in the provision of safe and attractive car parking and shopping areas.
- CCTV will be encouraged in appropriate locations and where there is a system for the centre concerned, linkage to this, with sufficient revenue funding for its monitoring and maintenance.
- Encouragement will be given to the provision of suitable safety measures to improve the Boroughs centres.
- Applications for new shop fronts will be assessed with regard to their design, materials and the criteria attached to Policy DC13 – Shop Front Design.
- The Council will assess applications for Roller shutters on the criteria in Policy DC12 – Design and installation of shop front roller shutters.
- Encouragement will be given for the promotion of the evening economy in centres which in turn will contribute to more active streets.

Security Measures for Business Premises

Industrial and business premises also need to consider crime related issues, both for visitors and staff and in the protection of their contents. Appropriate steps should be taken to ensure that personnel both visiting and working at premises within the Borough are suitably protected while inside or outside the site. Discussions with the Local Authority and the Police Architectural Liaison Officer will identify areas where attacks on personnel or property are most likely. These problem areas can be redesigned or preventative measures put in place to help reduce the risk of crime.

Serious consideration should be given to appropriate security measures for any industrial or business premises, especially where there is an element of storage of finished goods. Many premises are prone to burglary, which would be reduced if suitable security systems were put in place. In high profile locations the quality of security treatments need careful consideration because of their negative impact on environmental quality.

To promote community safety in, around or near to industrial or other business premises, consideration should be given to the introduction of appropriate security measures. The use of lighting within industrial estates is very important in reducing the incidents of crime and unauthorised entry at night. It allows the premises to be observed more easily from the road, providing added surveillance, reducing the opportunity for crime and is beneficial in the safety of staff and visitors. Siting and design of buildings should also be taken into consideration, taking care not to disassociate entrances from visibility by over dominant car parking designs.

Closed Circuit Television is becoming more popular in these areas, the prominent location of CCTV cameras acting as a visual deterrent as well as a useful tool in reduction of criminal activity. Properly managed and monitored CCTV is most useful as part of an integrated package of crime prevention measures which could be provided by the implementation of Section 106 agreements.

Industrial/ Business Premises

Other basic security measures such as fences, gates and alarms may be required where criminal activity is likely to occur. The use of fences and gates should be appropriate to the location and premises to be protected. There will be certain restrictions due to planning law on what may be permitted development or those which may require planning permission. Pre-application discussions will ensure that the most suitable protection and quality designs in high profile locations and mixed-use areas are provided.

Alarm systems are also useful deterrents when considering the security of business or industrial premises. There are many different types to choose from and consideration should be given to the most appropriate alarm for the type of business. Contact should be made with the Police Crime Prevention Section where advice and guidance can be provided on the most suitable systems to be used.



Direct and open access to newer businesses provide a safer option.



Poor pedestrian access and lack of natural surveillance in older developments.

Key Issues

- Advice and guidance should be sought with regard to the layout and design of new industrial or business premises and their contribution to promoting community safety. Pre-application discussions will be actively encouraged with the Police and Local Authority.
- Any security measures which are introduced should be relevant and appropriate and without detriment to adjoining occupiers.
- Consideration should be given to the introduction of CCTV where appropriate and where funding for its continued maintenance is available. Linked systems should be encouraged and funded by the implementation of Section 106 Agreements.
- The use of CCTV should not be intrusive to adjoining occupiers.
- Siting and arrangement of buildings.

Sandwell is a densely built up area with certain locations offering little in the way of relief by the provision of open space. The North eastern quadrant of the Borough boasts the largest expanse of Open Space with the Sandwell Valley, an area of designated Green Belt. There are a number of parks throughout the Borough and areas of community open space, varying in size and quality. Open space is very important to the well being and quality of life for people who work, live and play in the Borough by providing areas in which people of all ages are able to enjoy leisure and recreational pursuits. Good quality open spaces improve the urban environment.

However, there is the perception that some areas of open space, particularly parks and canal towpaths, are vulnerable to crime and are considered no-go areas, especially at night. This is a circulative problem as the perception of an unsafe area will result in less usage by the majority of the population. Limited surveillance can present problems in that lack of activity provides a greater opportunity for an area to become a crime generator.

One main aim is to encourage greater usage of the open spaces Sandwell has to offer, to improve the facilities that are provided by making them attractive and safe and easily accessible to all sectors of the community to enable them to carry out their leisure and recreational pursuits. The following points need to be taken into account for the continued and improved use of open spaces in the Borough.

Additional guidance is given in General Principles.



Parks should provide a range of equipment and facilities to suit all ages.

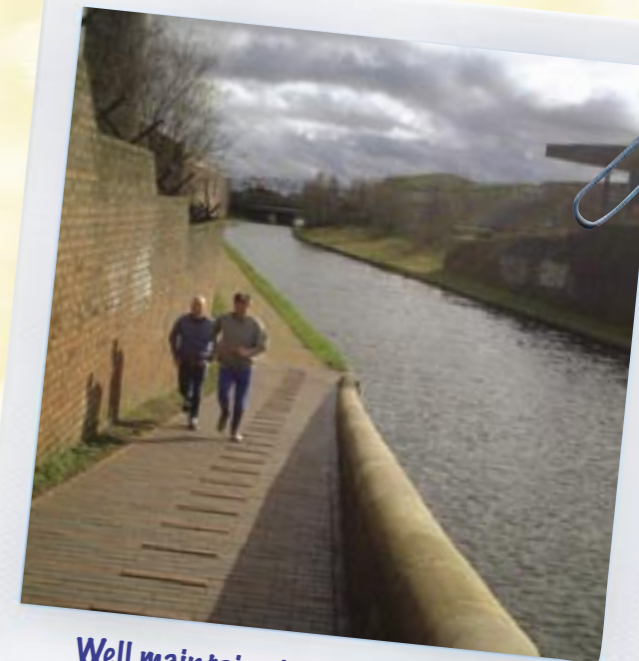
Open Spaces/Parks

Play Areas

Play areas may be situated in a range of different locations, some can be found close to existing residential areas or placed in organised parks. Play areas should be provided with a suitable range of equipment appropriate to the age and ability of children it is meant to serve. Larger areas, such as those located in parks, should have a wide range of equipment to suit all ages. Consideration should be given to consulting the youth and wider community of an area in the design and installation of youth shelters in appropriate locations. They should be located where they will not cause annoyance to the local community. Youth shelters provide a meeting place for teenagers and if developed through consultation, provide a sense of ownership and pride for the facility which reduces vandalism.

In the design of new play areas, consideration should be given with regard to the layout and location of the play area as well as the age range it is to serve. The use of natural surveillance, by overlooking from nearby houses, can be instrumental in contributing to community safety and their success as viable spaces. The design of housing developments should incorporate urban design principles which integrate the play area with the residential units without detriment to the privacy or annoyance of the nearby residents. Play areas should not be located near to perceived dangers, such as major roads or driveways or in any isolated location.

To ensure their continued use, play areas need to be maintained to guarantee their safety. Funding for maintenance needs to be secured by appropriate means, such as the Local Authority, a Section 106 agreement or a commuted sum from proposed residential development. Inappropriate use of play areas is beyond the powers of the planning system but may be monitored and addressed by other agencies.



Well maintained towpaths can be promoted as important and safe pedestrian routes.

Buildings and Facilities Related to Open Spaces

Many areas of open space such as parks and playing fields also provide facilities for use by the general public. These facilities, for example toilets, changing rooms and community buildings are important in their contribution to the recreational activities of the Borough's population and it is imperative that they are safe, clean and accessible to their users.

Premises in certain locations such as parks are particularly vulnerable at night, when activity levels are low and premises are left unstaffed. They can be vulnerable to vandalism and abuse.

Regard should be had to the safety aspects of their design, layout and the effectiveness of any other security measures. Appropriate steps should be taken to ensure community safety issues are addressed through the installation of CCTV where appropriate and to ensure satisfactory monitoring and maintenance. CCTV may not always be the preferred, or most appropriate option for surveillance, therefore, the opportunity for natural surveillance to be undertaken easily and safely should be adopted.

Suitable lighting will aid natural surveillance from passers by although it will only be effective as part of a wider programme of security measures which may include alarms, shutters and locks.

Maintenance of Open Space Areas

The maintenance of open spaces is important for their continued use. Any ancillary surfaces such as grass, paths or play areas should be regularly maintained to ensure that community safety is protected. Poorly maintained and uneven paving or overgrown shrubbery can hinder the safe and secure movement of people through an area. Overgrown shrubbery is also a potential danger as it may cause injury as well as providing potential hiding places for criminals. Agreements, such as a Section 106, may be necessary to secure the continued maintenance of open space.



Poor maintenance and overgrown landscaping discourages use of towpaths.

Water Recreation and Safety

Lakes, rivers and canals provide important areas for recreational activity in the form of boating, walking and cycling and can relieve the dense urban fabric which is especially found in the Borough of Sandwell. They are also important sources for nature conservation and habitats. The very character of these areas can often mean that they are rarely used in the evenings, making them potential locations for criminal activity to take place. Canal towpaths also provide important pedestrian routes. However, poorly maintained towpaths and landscaping adjoining these areas can cause injury. It also discourages usage and any reduction in natural surveillance increases the potential for crime to take place.

Canal side development should be designed so that they face the water frontage with rooms or active spaces taking advantage of the positive views of the water. Access roads should be provided in appropriate locations alongside the waterway which will promote active use and encourage recreation. Consideration should be given to the most appropriate type of fencing to provide security and visibility to the canal without creating a fortress style environment.

The provision of suitable lighting should be considered, especially in certain locations such as near to entrance or exit points and underneath bridges and tunnels. This will improve the environment and promote more active use of these facilities in the evening. It would also allow more effective natural surveillance to take place. Where CCTV is installed for canal side premises, the ability for this to overlook the canal side will aid the security of premises and safety of users.

Landscaping adjacent to towpaths should be regularly cut back to improve accessibility and visibility for pedestrians and cyclists, and surfaces should be maintained to an acceptable level. Regard should be had to the appropriate use of structures along the towpath, such as bins, bollards or benches as they may cause obstruction to those with mobility difficulties. However, improved signage will improve access and the use of safe ties near to shops or services will encourage more boat traffic and therefore increase activity and natural surveillance. Visibility lines adjacent to bridge underpasses should be kept clear to avoid collisions between cyclists and pedestrians. Where this is not possible, warning signs may be necessary.

Key Issues

- Encouragement will be given for open space provision which has a definite function or contributes to improving the environment.
- Measures to promote community safety such as the provision of lighting, will be required as part of any redevelopment proposals for open spaces or areas for water recreation.
- It will be necessary to provide for the continued maintenance of play areas and other open spaces through a planning condition or Section 106 Agreement.
- Regard should be had for the design and layout of buildings and structures and the contribution they make to community safety in terms of overlooking and promoting feelings of ownership.
- Where possible, canalside development should face the canal or where this is not possible, the architectural design of the building should make a positive contribution to improve visual connections.

Secured Car Parks

Many of the public car parks in the Borough, excluding West Bromwich Town Centre, are free, providing a useful facility for the residents and visitors to the area. In addition, some car parks operated by supermarkets allow limited free usage for customers visiting the store. More recently, car parks operated by supermarkets have entered into car parking agreements which allow a wider usage of the car parks for all users to a centre.

However, in order for car parks to be used effectively, they need to be safe and secure with easy access and direct pedestrian connections within the layout. The safety of users is important to ensure the continued use of centres and their facilities. The fear of attacks in multi storey car parks, especially if travelling alone, will be reduced with simple, but effective, alterations such as improved lighting or security patrols. Car parks that have obtained Secured Car Park status (See below) have shown a reduction in car crime of up to 70%.

Appropriate safety standards should also be applied in car parks which serve other developments such as retail parks and leisure developments.

In particular, attention should be given to Park and Ride sites where the provision of suitable lighting, CCTV, and any other appropriate measures is essential for the safety of its users.

Further detailed guidance will be provided in the forthcoming Supplementary Planning Guidance for Car Parking.

The British Parking Association are the administrative body for the national Secured Car Parks scheme which is supported by the Association of Chief Police Officers. It involves the implementation of certain measures which contribute to the safety of its users such as good design and management, good lighting and security patrols which will help in the reduction of incidents of crime. Should the criteria be met, the car park may be considered worthy of being granted Secured Car Park status. Such car parks are now located in numerous town centres and have proved very successful in providing a safe, well used facility. This is especially important for those that feel vulnerable as it reduces the fear of crime and they are more willing to use the available facilities.

The layout of the car park should also be considered in order to prevent areas which are hidden from general view. Care also needs to be taken in the circulation area which serves any stairs or lifts, to identify ways which may help in the reduction for criminal opportunity, for example, improved lighting, monitored CCTV, public address and help points.

The provision of appropriate landscaping may help in improving the attractiveness of car parking areas although care should be taken in the siting and size of the landscaping to be used to reduce the possibility of concealment of potential attackers.

Issues such as lighting and landscaping are dealt with in General Principles.

Car Parking

Key Issues

- Proposals for new car parks should incorporate measures to help in the reduction of crime and the improvement to personal and community safety such as lighting and patrols.
- Encouragement will be given for the Secured Car Parks standard to be obtained.
- Applications for new car parks will need to demonstrate that the issue of lighting, landscaping, layout and ease of access has been addressed.
- Regard should be had to the forthcoming Supplementary Planning Guidance on Car Parking.



Good design and management of car parks will contribute to the safety of its users.

Government Advice for Community Safety and Crime Prevention Issues.

Planning Policy Guidance Note 1 (PPG1) - General Policy and Principles

This PPG outlines the Governments intentions of using the planning system in delivering ways to improve the natural and built environment to meet the needs of a growing and competitive economy. Annex A of the Guidance states that

“In considering the design of proposed new development, local planning authorities, developers and designers should take into account the advice contained in DOE Circular 5/94, “Planning out Crime”. In doing so, the approach adopted should be sufficiently flexible to allow solutions to remain sensitive to local circumstances”.

Planning Policy Guidance Note 6 - Town Centres and Retail Developments

A safe environment in which to shop or relax is important in the revitalisation of town centres, especially to increase the night economy of these areas. The provision of safe streets and car parks will encourage the further use of centres as well as the provision of town centre residential areas. Living above the shops provides an active use throughout the day which provides its own natural surveillance. PPG6 recognises the need for these issues to be addressed when referring to proposals which affect town centres.

Planning Policy Guidance Note 12 - Development Plans

In preparing any land use plan for the area, a Local Authority should consider and take on board the advice given in PPG12. This PPG was reviewed in December 1999 and takes account of the new 2 stage deposit process. It also provides guidance on the form and content that a Development Plan should take, including the subject areas. Paragraphs 4.13-4.14 outlines the need for Local planning authorities to consider the social needs and problems when preparing their policies and proposals. It states:

“Social considerations will be relevant in looking at measures for crime prevention (including through better urban design).”

Circular 1/84 - Crime Prevention

The main thrust of this Circular is to raise awareness of the need for preventative measures to be considered by agencies other than the Police which will contribute to the reduction in crime. Consultation on the individual needs of businesses and residents in crime prevention will aid in reducing the opportunities for crime but this needs to be as part of a co-ordinated way with the involvement of all concerned.

Appendix 1

Circular 5/94 - Planning Out Crime

This Circular provides guidance for a range of interested parties in the provision and design of developments and how measures for crime reduction can be introduced to reduce crime or the fear of crime. It also addresses the need for a balance between good design and the need for security issues to be taken into consideration also. The role of the planning authority in crime reduction is an important one and should be part of a wider agenda involving many more agencies. Paragraph 2 states that “Good planning alone cannot solve the problem of crime but when co-ordinated with other measures, its contribution can be significant”

Circular 5/94 highlights the different types of approaches which may be taken in crime reduction and also the need to look at the strategic approach as well as in identifying particular areas which are more prone to crime than others. As stated in Paragraph 3, “the approach adopted by local planning authorities should be sufficiently flexible to allow solutions to remain sensitive to local circumstances”

Development Plan policies and proposals which allow for a greater mix of land uses provide areas which are well used and therefore active environments which prevents an area falling into the situation of becoming a no-go area. This is especially true in town centres whereby the provision of mixed use, especially at night, can lead to a more vibrant centre, aiding the local and evening economy and breaking down the barriers between the need for leisure pursuits and the fear of crime.

Relevant Unitary Development Plan Policies

Policy UD1 - General Urban Design Principles

The Council will expect all new developments to be of good quality design and constructed of high quality materials. The Council will reject poor designs, particularly those designs that are inappropriate in their locality, for example, those clearly out of scale or incompatible with their surroundings.

Particular regard will be paid to how the development relates to the street, its relationship with the public realm, the ease with which the public are able to move through and around the development, and the nature and height of any buildings and their effect on the surrounding urban area. The Council will also encourage the innovative use of greenspace and the natural habitat where appropriate.

The Council will produce and adopt relevant design guidance to assist all applicants when applying for planning permission. In addition, the design of the urban form must incorporate appropriate security and safety measures in accordance with Policy UD3 – Security and Safety, and the Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) – Community Safety.

Policy DC12 - Design and Installation of shop front roller shutters

Planning permission is required for the installation of all permanent roller shutters. All applications for the installation of roller shutters will be assessed using the following criteria.

- Encouragement will be given to the integration of roller shutters as part of development proposals for new shop fronts, through the planning application process and pre-application discussion.
- The applicant must satisfy the local planning authority that the type of security shutter they are proposing is the most appropriate.
- Roller shutters should, wherever possible, not project across the pilasters of the shop front, or obscure any architectural detail or historic interest. The submitted plans should indicate this.
- Roller shutter boxes should, wherever possible, be hidden within the structure of the building or behind shop fascias, so as not to affect the character and architecture of the building.
- Metal roller shutters should be perforated and be colour powder coated or painted. Details of materials should be submitted with the planning application.
- No more than 50% of the shutters should be solid.

Appendix 2

- Roller shutters which are totally solid will not be acceptable.
- Special consideration will be given to the installation of roller shutters in Conservation Areas and Areas of Townscape Value.

Policy DC13 - Shop Front Design

All planning applications for the installation of shop fronts will be assessed against the following criteria.

- All shop fronts should be designed within the scale and architectural character of the building within which they are to be contained.
- The design of shop fronts on Listed Buildings and within Conservation Areas and Areas of Townscape Value should be designed sympathetically to reflect the heritage value of the area, in addition to the principles outlined in this policy, (see also, Policy DC8 - Development in Conservation Areas and Areas of Townscape Value).
- All shop fronts should remain within their existing structural openings and be fully framed with fascia signs. Shop fronts and fascias must also be recessed behind pilasters.
- Adjacent shop fronts should be separated by a pilaster, matching the building. However, original pilasters should be retained where they exist.
- Original features, such as iron columns, ornamental brackets or carved stonework, should be preserved or restored.

- Canopies should be retractable and sited below the fascia. (See also Policy DC12 – Design and installation of shop front roller shutters).
- In order to ensure a high standard of shop front design, all applications for planning permission will require a detailed evaluation of the proposed shop front in relation to the building within which it is to be contained, as well as adjacent shop fronts.
- Retention of facades above shop fronts that are considered to be of good quality, or have special, architectural or historic interest should be encouraged. Wherever possible, the facades above shop fronts within Conservation Areas and Areas of Townscape Value should be protected and enhanced.
- Whilst the attractiveness of a building should not be compromised, consideration should be given to the natural surveillance and safety and security when designing new shop fronts.

Supplementary Planning Guidance on Residential Areas

This Residential Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) is a detailed document, which will guide the design of new residential so that better quality development is provided across the Borough. It seeks to ensure that residential areas are attractive, integrated, accessible, flexible, comfortable and identifiable for those people who live in the Borough. It is also anticipated that the document will improve the perception of housing in Sandwell and contribute to improving security and safety.

The document looks at general design issues as well as density and local character. It is intended that the SPG will be a working document to be used by planning officers, developers and anyone else involved with the built environment.

The document has undergone a thorough programme of public consultation and will be confirmed as supplementary planning guidance on adoption of the Unitary Development Plan.

Contact telephone numbers within Sandwell MBC:

Development Control

(Wednesbury, West Bromwich and Great Barr)
(Smethwick and Cradley Heath)
(Tipton and Oldbury)

0121-569 4269

0121-569 4043

0121-569 4039

Planning Policy

0121-569 4254

Urban Design

0121-569 4087

Community Safety Development Officer

0121-569 3892

Other contact telephone numbers:

West Midlands Police - Architectural Liaison Officer

0845 113 5000

Contact Numbers



Supplementary
Planning Guidance
on
**Community
Safety**

For more information contact:

Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council,
Planning and Development Services,
Development House, P.O. Box 42,
Lombard Street, West Bromwich,
West Midlands, B70 8RU.

Telephone: 0121-569 4254