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Greening Blackpool supplementary planning document

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December 2024

1.0 Objectives of the SPD

- This Greening Blackpool SPD sets out the council’s requirement for green infrastructure provision as part of development. It covers requirements for biodiversity net gain, identifies where public open space and tree planting will be required, and outlines general requirements for landscaping provision
- The SPD seeks to build upon the requirements set out in Policies CS6 and CS7 of the Blackpool Local Plan Part 1: Core Strategy 2012-2027 and Policies DM21 and DM35 of the Blackpool Local Plan Part 2: Site Allocations and Development Management Policies 2012-2027. It will set out requirements in more detail to provide greater certainty for developers and support the council in robust decision-making

2.0 The importance of green infrastructure

What is green Infrastructure?

2.1 Green infrastructure is essentially what most people think of as greenery. It is a network of multifunctional green space, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities. It can range from large-scale areas of public open space to smaller scale provision in the form of landscaped areas within hard-surfacing, trees, allotments, domestic gardens, green roofs and walls and sustainable drainage systems (SuDS).

2.2 Trees are an integral part of green infrastructure and the largest natural living elements in the landscape. They are landscape features in their own right providing infinite varieties of colour, form and textural interest. Trees can soften the hard lines of built development, frame views and provide a visual focal point. They can also assist greatly with temperature control, drainage, air quality improvement, climate change mitigation, noise attenuation and biodiversity value.

2.3 Green infrastructure has proven benefits for mental and physical well-being, providing vital ready contact with the natural world. There is ample evidence that an attractive landscape and local environment really matters to the people that live and work there.

2.4 The Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (s197(viii)) requires the planning system to include appropriate provision for the preservation and planting of trees. The protection of trees is also enshrined in planning legislation and trees are considered material to all planning applications. Blackpool Council is therefore statutorily obliged to consider the welfare of trees in the development process including the requirement to plant more trees.

The need to green Blackpool

2.5 In 2018, Blackpool ranked as the seventh most densely populated area in England outside of Greater London. Blackpool's inner area in particular is intensely compact and characterised as a very dense and grey urban environment.

2.6 At the heart of Blackpool is the town centre and resort core, both with little green infrastructure. Elsewhere in the inner area, there is very little open space apart from the promenade and beach. The town centre is the main retail and cultural centre for the Fylde Coast, employs over 6,000 people and generates a retail turnover of around £300 million per annum.

2.7 Employment in Blackpool is generally seasonal and low skilled. Blackpool attracts low income and vulnerable households and struggles to achieve stable and cohesive communities. The high levels of crime, antisocial behaviour, worklessness and low educational attainment coupled with significant transience presents one of the most testing social and economic challenges in the country.

2.8 The health of people in Blackpool is generally worse than the national average. The town records one of the lowest life expectancy rates nationally and there are inequalities by deprivation and gender. Health priorities in Blackpool include tackling alcohol and drug misuse, improving mental health, and reducing smoking and obesity. A high percentage of working age residents claim Incapacity Benefit (over 12%), which is almost double the national average. Public health in Blackpool is within the remit of Blackpool Council.

2.9 Nine out of the 21 wards in Blackpool fall significantly short of the standard of 4 hectares of open space per 1,000 population (or 40 square metres per person) as recommended in the 2019 open space assessment. The open space assessment confirms that there are few opportunities for providing additional open space in the inner area due to the high density of development.

2.10 Blackpool has the lowest tree canopy cover in the UK at just 4.8%^[1] despite the council having recently planted 3,000 trees in streets and parks and in creating woodland at Low Moor Road, Mossom Lane, Deerpark Road and Kingscote Park. The national average for an authority is around 16%.

2.11 Green infrastructure has a vital role to play in Blackpool's development by enhancing the quality of arrival for visitors, providing places for cultural events and a high quality setting for the town's heritage buildings and conservation areas, increasing physical activity, creating opportunities for community activity, tackling stress and mental health problems and enhancing biodiversity and landscape quality.

2.12 Blackpool is going through a period of sustained transformation with numerous successful environmental, economic and social regeneration projects either delivered or in the pipeline. Continued regeneration within the Town Centre, the Resort Core and the Inner Area is crucial to strengthen the economy, balance the housing market and address the challenges associated with the high levels of deprivation and poor health in the town.

2.13 The economic, social and environmental benefits that come from providing and enhancing green infrastructure have long been acknowledged and understood. High quality green infrastructure, promotes economic growth and investment and health and well-being as well as increasing biodiversity and helping to mitigate against climate change.

Economic benefits

2.14 Green infrastructure adds value. It improves the town's image combating the sometimes poor perceptions of Blackpool from outside, and helps to attract and retain high value industry, businesses, entrepreneurs and skilled workers. Green infrastructure enhances the appeal of a location for investment which can help to attract, create and safeguard new jobs and start-up businesses.

2.15 Blackpool suffers from a lack of future development land making it essential to provide better quality employment sites. Providing green infrastructure raises land and property values, attracts and retains investment and stimulates economic activity. Also, working in or near to green spaces motivates staff and improves their health, resulting in fewer sick days and increased productivity.

2.16 Greening Blackpool town centre and providing public art and improved civic spaces will make the town centre more attractive to visitors and shoppers and will attract private investment, new shops and businesses and boost tourism, which is the lifeblood of the town's economy.

Social benefits

2.17 Blackpool experiences high levels of transience in and around the town, with people struggling to put down roots and settle. Providing good quality green spaces and places with sufficient green infrastructure encourages more frequent and longer visits to those places, which can create strong attachments, foster a sense of pride of place and support positive social interactions, assisting the social integration between different social groups. Open space and green infrastructure both in and close by to new housing

development is important to create healthy and resilient communities, to create community resources and contribute towards the provision of good quality homes where people want to live.

2.18 Green infrastructure can be used as a valuable education resource for schools and parents to teach children about the environment, habitats, food production and healthy activities.

2.19 The mental and physical health of people in Blackpool is generally worse than the national average and the town records one of the lowest life expectancy rates nationally. The lack of green infrastructure in the Inner Area correlates strongly with wards suffering the worst levels of poor mental and physical health. Health priorities in Blackpool include reducing obesity and improving mental health. It is recognised that access to good quality landscapes and green infrastructure has a positive impact on health and well-being.

2.20 Exposure to high air pollution can cause and exacerbate respiratory problems, heart disease and cancer. Trees and vegetation can reduce air pollution directly by trapping and removing fine particulate matter and indirectly by reducing air temperatures.

2.21 Traffic calming measures can take on many forms, but use of green infrastructure is by far the best method as it delivers multiple benefits and added value. Slower traffic is safer for pedestrians and cyclists. Having green and pleasant streets and green corridors encourages walking and cycling and can assist in reducing obesity, can improve physical and mental health and reduce social isolation and health inequalities in Blackpool.

2.22 Landscaping can assist with drainage and reduce flooding, which has clear benefits in terms of reduced damage to property and public inconvenience.

2.23 Green infrastructure can conserve and enhance the setting of the towns cultural and heritage assets and provide good quality links between them. These assets are fundamental to the town as a tourist destination and are cherished by local people.

Environmental benefits

2.24 Climate change is a global challenge which requires action at every level. Blackpool Council declared a climate change emergency on 27 June 2019.

2.25 Providing green infrastructure can assist in absorbing carbon dioxide and can mitigate the effects of climate change. It can cool the urban environment during heat waves. Landscaping and sustainable urban drainage systems (SuDS) are able to intercept and store water, reducing the volume of surface water run-off and flooding, and can filter out pollutants preventing contamination of water bodies.

2.26 Blackpool's sewerage system is a combined system (one carrying both foul and surface water), resulting in large volumes of rainwater finding its way into the sewer network. The combined pressures of population growth and more intense storm events are likely to increase the load on existing infrastructure, leading to more frequent spills from the combined sewer overflow pumping stations in to the sea. Given the importance of the waters around Blackpool for sea bathing, the impact of these events must be reduced.

2.27 Green infrastructure and trees can have a positive impact on air quality by removing common pollutants such as ammonia, carbon dioxide, nitrogen oxide, ozone, particulate matter and sulphur dioxide. Tree planting and greening the town centre would assist in improving the air quality. This can have positive impacts in terms of climate change mitigation, carbon capture and storage and human health.

2.28 Greening contributes significantly to the preservation and protection of rare and vulnerable species. Parks and woodlands are able to support the widest range of species, but even small areas of vegetation such as in residential gardens, roundabouts, grass verges and green roofs can support a range of plants, insects and birds, including pollinators. Green infrastructure can create wildlife corridors, facilitating the movement of animals, birds and insects and preventing the fragmentation of habitats which can be detrimental to biodiversity.

3.0 Relevant planning policy, legislation and other documents

3.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

3.1.1 This document was last updated in December 2024. The NPPF aims to ensure that development is sustainable, recognising that economic, social and environmental matters are mutually dependant. It requires local authorities to set out an overall strategy for the pattern, scale and quality of development, and make sufficient provision for the conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment. These measures include landscaping and green infrastructure and planning measures to address climate change mitigation and adaptation.

3.1.2 The NPPF confirms that planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which enable and support healthy lifestyles, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs – for example through the provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure, sports facilities and open space. Policies and decisions should ensure that

developments will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development.

3.1.3 Paragraph 136 of the NPPF confirms that trees make an important contribution to the character and quality of urban environments and can help mitigate and adapt to climate change. Paragraph 136 requires planning policies and decisions to ensure that new streets are tree lined and that opportunities are taken to incorporate trees elsewhere within developments and that existing trees are retained wherever possible.

3.1.4 Paragraph 187 of the NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by recognising the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystems, including the economic and other benefits of trees. Paragraph 180 also confirms that development should minimise impacts on and provide net gains for biodiversity and wherever possible, should help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality. Paragraphs 188-189 seek to protect and enhance habitats and biodiversity.

3.2 The National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

3.2.1 The NPPG was first published in March 2014. It is periodically updated and expands upon the NPPF. It defines green infrastructure, as a network of multifunctional green space, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits. It goes on to state: “Green infrastructure is not simply an alternative description for conventional open space. As a network, it includes parks, open spaces, playing fields, woodlands, but also trees, allotments and private gardens. It can also include streams, canals and other water bodies and features such as green roofs and walls”.

3.3 The National Design Guide and Model Design Code

3.3.1 In January 2021, the government published the [National Design Guide](#) which identifies the ten characteristics of good design. This document identifies landscaping and green infrastructure as an intrinsic indicator of a well-designed and sustainable place. The code confirms that development in urban areas should have tree lined streets, planned open spaces, SUDs and other green infrastructure such as green roofs and walls, lower density areas for more natural green spaces and habitats and utilise urban greening factor tools. Further details and guidance on the ten characteristics of good design are set out in the [National Model Design Code](#) (2021).

3.4 The Environment Act (2021)

3.4.1 This act amended the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and [introduced a requirement for development \(with some limited exceptions\) to deliver 10% biodiversity net gain](#). This seeks to ensure that development will result in more or a better quality of natural habitat.

3.5 Blackpool Local Plan Part 1: Core Strategy 2012-2027

3.5.1 This [document was adopted in 2016](#). The following policies are particularly relevant:

- Policy CS6 Green Infrastructure
- Policy CS7 Quality of Design
- Policy CS9 Water Management
- Policy CS10 Sustainable Design and Renewable and Low Carbon Energy
- Policy CS11 Planning Obligations

3.6 Blackpool Local Plan Part 2: Site Allocations and Development Management Policies 2012-2027

3.6.1 [This document was adopted in February 2023](#). Relevant policies in the Local Plan Part 2 include:

- Policy DM1 Design Requirements for New Build Housing
- Policy DM17 Design Principles
- Policy DM21 Landscaping
- Policy DM31 Surface Water Management
- Policy DM35 Biodiversity

3.7 Other relevant documents

3.7.1 The council declared a climate change emergency on 27 June 2019. [Details of this declaration and the associated commitments made by the council](#).

3.7.2 [The council’s Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy 2024 to 2034](#)

3.7.3 [The council’s Green and Blue Infrastructure Action Plan 2024 to 2034](#)

4.0 Requirements for green infrastructure in Blackpool

Biodiversity

4.1 All development proposals should be able to demonstrate that the biodiversity hierarchy of avoid, mitigate and compensate has been followed.

4.2 All development proposals will be required to demonstrate biodiversity net gain. This should either be in accordance with statutory requirements where they apply, or should otherwise take full advantage of the opportunities available with due regard to the nature of the proposal and site. For householder and minor planning applications, this is likely to require the provision of enhancement measures including but not limited to bird and/or bat boxes and hedgehog holes in fences, and the planting of some soft landscaping such as native shrubs, trees or hedgerow.

Tree protection

4.3 All proposals that could affect trees, either within the site or on neighbouring land, shall be accompanied by a tree survey carried out by a suitably qualified and experienced arboriculturalist.

4.4 All category A, B or C trees should be retained as part of development proposals wherever practicable.

4.5 If the loss of trees is unavoidable, replacement planting of heavy-standard trees^[2] at a ratio of 2:1 shall be provided:

- (a) wherever practicable on site, or if on-site planting is not practicable
- (b) through financial contribution at a cost of £1,000^[3] per tree

4.6 If it is not possible to provide replacement trees on site, alternative green infrastructure should be provided wherever practicable even if a financial contribution towards off-site tree planting has been made. This could comprise native shrub or hedgerow planting. Replacement greening to mitigate the loss of existing infrastructure generally will not count towards biodiversity net gain requirements.

New green infrastructure (applicable in all cases)

4.7 In all instances, where it is possible to provide green infrastructure on site, the provision of appropriate soft landscaping will be expected. This could take the form of trees, shrub or hedgerow planting, or provision of green roofs or walls. Priority will be given to use of the species listed in the council's approved planting list. New on-site green infrastructure provision can count towards biodiversity net gain requirements.

New tree planting (required in some cases)

4.8 All new tree planting should be provided on site wherever practicable. All trees must be planted in the ground and not in planters. Trees should not be planted directly over water or wastewater assets, or where excavation to access those assets would require the removal of the tree. New on-site tree planting can count towards biodiversity net gain requirements. Trees used should be listed in the council's approved planting list species wherever practicable^[4]. Where it is not reasonably possible to provide new tree planting on site, a financial contribution towards off-site provision at a cost of £1,000 per tree will be required.

4.9 Development will be expected to provide new tree planting as follows:

Residential development

- The requirements will apply to new provision, including extensions to existing floorspace, but excluding change of use proposals:

Table 2: Residential development tree requirements

Development type	No of trees required
C1 – hotel	1 per 5 guest bedrooms (or part thereof)
C2/C2a – residential institutions (dwelling)	1 per dwelling

C2/C2a – residential institutions (communal living)	1 per resident bedrooms
C3 – dwelling-houses (Defined Inner Area)	2 per dwelling where 3 or more dwellings are proposed
C3 - dwelling-houses (outside of Defined Inner Area)	2 per dwelling
C4 – houses in multiple occupation (3-6 persons)	2 per dwelling
Sui generis - houses in multiple occupation (6+ persons)	1 per resident bedroom
Sui generis – holiday houses* (i.e. entire building)	1 per resident bedroom
Sui generis – holiday flats* (i.e. part of building)	2 per dwelling (flat)

* or any other future use class that these uses fall into

Non-residential development

- The requirements will apply to new floorspace, including extensions to existing floorspace, but excluding change of use proposals (where no new floorspace is created)
- A threshold of 100sqm floorspace shall apply, below which no tree obligations will be sought
- Above 100sqm, tree planting will be required at a rate of 1 tree per 500sqm floorspace, as illustrated in the table below:

Table 1: Non-residential development tree requirements

Floorspace in m ²	No of trees required
0 to 100	0
101 to 500	1
501 to 1000	2
1001 to 1500	3
1501 to 2000	4
2001+	1 additional tree for every 500sqm

4.10 Where it is possible to provide some but not all trees on site, any shortfall can be covered through payment of a financial contribution towards off-site provision. For example, if a scheme for 3 flats could only provide two tree on site, the shortfall would be four trees and so a payment of 4 x £1,000 would be required.

Public open space

- Public open space should be provided on site where practicable because it provides residents with better and more immediate access to public open space. It also improves community cohesion and avoids placing additional pressure on existing provision. However, provision of public open space must be meaningful and effective. Consequently, on-site provision is only considered appropriate on larger sites as part of larger schemes
- All residential development (including change of use) providing 15 or more units for occupation on a permanent basis should provide public open space in accordance with the requirements set out under table 3 on site if at all practicable. If it is not possible to provide full open space provision on-site, a financial contribution towards upgrading open space off-site will be required. This would be calculated at a rate of £24.63^[5] for every square metre shortfall
- Residential development (including change of use) of between 3 and 14 units (inclusive) intended for occupation on a permanent

basis should contribute to the upgrading of off-site public open space in accordance with the costs per dwelling set out under table 3 below:

Table 3: Residential development public open space requirements*

Size of dwelling	Average occupancy	POS requirement (40sqm per person)	Commuted sum requirement
1 bedroom	1.2 people	48sqm	£1,182.24
2 bedroom	1.7 people	68sqm	£1,674.84
3 bedroom	2.3 people	92sqm	£2,265.96
4+ bedroom	3.0 people	120sqm	£2,955.60

* These requirements would apply to all applications creating new permanent residential accommodation. A proposal to convert a C3 dwelling into a C2 or C4 dwelling, for example, would not be liable.

Car Parking

- Surface level car parking areas must have permeable surfaces and be well-screened and landscaped with green infrastructure wherever possible

5.0 Related matters to consider

Protected species, ecology information and problematic species

5.1 Many species of both flora and fauna receive special protection in law. On sites that offer habitat potential, it is essential that the presence or otherwise of protected species, and the extent that they may be affected by a proposed development, is established by suitably qualified and experienced professionals before the planning permission is granted.

5.2 The government's 25 Year Environment Plan commits to a national Nature Recovery Network (NRN) to restore and enhance a network of wildlife rich places. It is important that development that takes place in Blackpool contributes to the aims and objectives of the NRN where possible and contributes towards an enhanced Lancashire ecological network.

5.3 Green infrastructure provision should support local biodiversity populations. Lancashire's ecological network maps can be obtained from the Lancashire Environment Record Network (LERN). The LERN feeds information about local biodiversity into the [National Biodiversity Network Atlas](#) which contains details of the presence of different species in and around a postcode area. This should be used to identify appropriate measures to encourage and support local biodiversity in development.

5.4 Whilst some non-native trees can be beneficial with urban areas, the introduction of non-native or invasive species can also be devastating to local ecosystems. For example, the Rhododendron was introduced to the UK in the 18th century and is a common feature in residential gardens. However, although it produces attractive flowers, it has a negative impact upon biodiversity. The council has produced an approved planting list of suitable species and this is available.

Trees and hedgerows

5.5 Wherever possible, existing trees and hedgerows should be retained. Furthermore, layouts should retain groups of trees and stretches of hedgerow rather than fragment them. This is important because groups of trees shelter each other in high winds and linear groups of trees and hedgerows act as navigational aids for bats and other wildlife.

5.6 All development should include new tree and/or hedgerow planting where it is practicable. The 'right tree in the right place' approach should be taken to allow for longevity and prevent trees becoming a nuisance when they reach maturity. The following factors should be considered:

- Purpose, e.g. trees proposed as part of a SUDS system would need to thrive in boggy ground
- Potential to provide wildlife links and habitat enhancement
- Space for trees to reach maturity without causing nuisance or damage to structures
- Propensity of a tree to shed seeds and/or fruits or exude honeydew, etc.
- Character of environment, e.g. a Silver Birch would not stand out against a light backdrop
- Suitability in relation to predicted future changes in temperature and climate

- Potential to deliver benefits to health and well-being and urban cooling from canopy cover
- Suitability of soil volume and drainage

5.7 Useful advice on this subject is contained in the DEFRA publication [‘Protecting Plant Health – A Plant Biosecurity Strategy for Great Britain’: April 2014](#) and the Council’s [Tree Strategy 2020-2030](#).

5.8 The practice of netting trees or hedgerows in or around a development site to prevent nesting birds and bats is not acceptable as it is not an ethical approach and has high potential to harm protected species.

Surface water management and drainage

5.9 Sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) are an increasingly important part of green infrastructure and, when done well, can have multiple benefits for amenity, biodiversity and reducing flood risk. SuDS minimise surface water run-off and flood risk in an environmentally friendly way by mimicking natural water systems such as ponds, swales and basins. SuDS can integrate seamlessly in wider green infrastructure such as rain gardens, green roofs and infiltration trenches in order to slow water flow rate to reduce flood risk.

5.10 Localised flooding can be reduced through green infrastructure and more directly through SuDS. Their integration and retrofitting can improve water quality, mitigate the impacts of climate change, reduce flooding and support biodiversity.

5.11 Paragraph 182 of the National Planning Policy Framework is clear that applications which could affect drainage on or around a site should incorporate sustainable drainage systems which provide multi-functional benefits wherever possible. Applicants will be required to prioritise multi-functional SuDS features that include opportunities for landscaping, outdoor activities and play and which provide net gains in biodiversity, whilst helping to ensure local adaptation to climate change. Underground attenuation and flow control systems alone should only be considered on constrained sites where there are no opportunities to incorporate SuDS as green infrastructure. Where opportunities exist, the Council will expect watercourses to be de-culverted where appropriate.

5.12 Flood risk activities and works (including tree planting) within 8 metres of the top of the banks of a designated main river watercourse (16 metres if it involves quarrying or excavation or if it is a tidal main river) require a [permit](#) from the Environment Agency. Main rivers can be identified on the Environment Agency’s [‘Main River Map’](#). Works affecting ordinary watercourses (non-main rivers) require the prior consent of the Lead Local Flood Authority.

6.0 Further information

Pre Application advice

6.1 It is strongly recommended that developers have early consultation through the pre-application service with the planning department in order to ascertain exactly what supporting information is required to accompany a planning application.

6.2 With respect to the requirements set out in this SPD in relation to trees and hedgerows, a professional arboriculture and ecology consultant would be able to provide the documents and plans where required. This information would identify significant trees and the constraints that they impose, which should in turn inform the design of the development. The consultant should also be able to provide details of protection and mitigation measures for the development. If such information is provided as part of pre-application advice requests, the council’s tree officer would be able to provide feedback at that stage.

6.3 In addition to ensure high quality landscaping which meets the requirements of this SPD it is recommended that a suitably qualified landscape architect should also be engaged where appropriate.

Validation requirements

6.4 Where application sites offer areas of habitat, and/or trees/hedgerows are present on or close to the boundary of a development site, any application may need to include:

- Phase 1 habitat survey
- Protected species survey
- Pre-development tree survey
- Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA)
- Arboricultural Method Statement (AMS)

Legal agreements and the use of conditions

6.5 The NPPF identifies that local planning authorities should consider whether otherwise unacceptable development could be made acceptable through the use of conditions or planning obligations. It highlights that planning obligations should only be used where it is not possible to address unacceptable impacts through a planning condition.

6.6 Conditions, legal agreements and developer contributions will be used to secure green infrastructure and public open space associated with development. The Council will endeavour to commit to spend any obligations paid towards tree-planting within 5 years of receipt.

6.7 It is recognised that the draft of legal agreements can be a lengthy and expensive process. As a planning permission cannot be issued until the relevant agreement has been completed, this can present an issue for applicants. Blackpool Council therefore offers a standardised unilateral undertaking that applicants can submit in respect of smaller financial planning obligations (currently limited to £3,000). This would attract a much lower legal fee of £425 and enable a more streamlined process. However, if an applicant would prefer to proceed by way of a more traditional bilateral legal agreement, this will still be possible upon request.

Viability and deliverability

6.8 The council will seek to secure a fair and reasonable developer contribution without adversely affecting the viability of development in Blackpool. The NPPF states that where up-to-date policies have set out the contributions expected from development, planning applications that comply with them should be assumed to be viable. It is up to the applicant to demonstrate whether particular circumstances justify the need for a viability assessment at the application stage.

6.9 Applicants should take account of policies in development plans and other relevant documents when developing proposals and acquiring land. However, it is recognised that some development proposals may be unable to meet all of the relevant policy and planning obligation requirements whilst remaining economically viable and deliverable. The council recognises the wider benefits of development, such as regeneration, housing need and employment and will consider requests to reduce the level of planning obligation in viability terms on a case by case basis.

6.10 Such requests must clearly demonstrate to the council what contributions can be made and the reasons why the development cannot support the full planning obligation requirements. It must take the form of an open book viability assessment in order for the council to take it into account as a material consideration. The information should be submitted with the application at validation stage. It is likely that such information would need to be independently assessed on behalf of the council and this would be at the applicant's expense.

6.11 Green roofs and walls can have significant structural implications and require significant management and maintenance in order to provide effective green infrastructure. Any proposal for the installation of a green wall or roof must be accompanied by a detailed Maintenance Plan explaining how the green wall or roof would be maintained long-term. Applicants interested in such provision are recommended to research the various options available.

Public consultation

6.12 This document was subject to six weeks of public consultation.

Sustainability appraisal

6.13 The Blackpool Local Plan Part 1: Core Strategy and Blackpool Local Plan Part 2: Site Allocations and Development Management Policies 2012-2027 have been subject to a sustainability appraisal. As such, no separate sustainability appraisal has been carried out for this advice note.

Habitats regulations assessment

6.14 Given the purpose, content and scope of this SPD, it is not considered to trigger a requirement for a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA).

Useful numbers/contacts

6.15 Development management (planning) – 01253 476193

[1] [GB Ward Canopy Cover WebMap \(arcgis.com\)](#)

[2] A heavy standard tree is considered to have a minimum girth of 12cm and a minimum height of 3.5m

[3] This figure has been taken from the Blackpool Tree Strategy and is based on a benchmarking exercise that revealed the average cost of tree planting to be £700-800 where no tree-pit is required and £2,000-£3,300 where a tree pit is required. More complex planting involving use of tree crates or incorporation into a SuDs system can cost £12,000-£16,000. As a significant proportion of pooled contributions expenditure in Blackpool would be directed towards tree planting within hard-surfaced areas, the figure of £1,000 was considered to be reasonable, representative and proportionate.

[4] [A list of appropriate tree species is available](#)

[5] The cost per sqm has been carried forward from the council’s 1999 SPG11 Open Space: provision for new residential development and the funding system. Contributions will be spent in accordance with the priorities set out in Blackpool’s Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy, Action Plan and Tree Strategy.

[6] Occupancy rates are based on average levels taken from the 2021 census. Rates for 4+ bedroom dwellings have been increased by 0.2 to allow for the fact that household sizes above 4 persons are combined in census reporting

[7] The council’s 2019 open space assessment recommends 40sqm provision per head of population and this is the adopted benchmark for Blackpool.

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