

# Draft Supplementary Guidance 29 Landscape and planting requirements in new developments







## Draft Supplementary Guidance 29

# Landscape and Planting Requirements For New Developments

## Introduction

This supplementary guidance supports the Council's Local Development Plan Policies in respect of ensuring all new developments include an appropriate level of high quality landscape and planting works in order to maintain and/or enhance local amenity.

It is intended for developers preparing planning applications and provides guidance on the standards of landscape and planting works expected on new developments - its design, establishment and maintenance. It sets out the levels of information to be submitted with applications and who to contact for further advice.

Less stringent requirements apply to householder applications - for which a separate short note is appended.





Related supplementary guidance, which should be referred to where relevant, includes:

- SG01 - Placemaking
- SG02 - Green Infrastructure
- SG31 - The protection and management of trees on development sites (link tbc):

Relevant to all sites with established trees within or close to the site boundaries. Sets out the standards of survey and assessment of existing trees and vegetation, the implications for layout of development and levels of information required to demonstrate the active protection and management of retained trees on development sites.

## Introduction

Stirling Council is committed to raising the quality of all new developments and enhancing wider environmental quality. As with siting, layout and building design the Council expects good standards of landscape and planting design to be achieved on all new developments - although the extent and character of landscape and planting works will vary, depending on the location, scale and type of development.

In all cases the Council expects the context of a site, its relationship to surrounding townscape or countryside and existing site characteristics and landscape features to have been assessed and taken into account when preparing proposals. Retaining and protecting appropriate existing landscape elements, complemented by new features and planting are important factors in creating a sense of place and in maintaining and enhancing environmental quality. Where there are no existing landscape features or trees of note, new planting and a well-designed external environment take on a special importance.



Other circumstances where additional attention should be paid to these issues and higher standards will be expected include developments within conservation areas, the setting of listed buildings, woodland or designated landscapes and adjacent to green networks and valuable wildlife sites or habitats.

However, the Council recognises that poorly sited or designed developments cannot always be redeemed by good landscape design. As such it is not appropriate to use planting to hide what is an inherently unacceptable site or form of development; nor is it acceptable for new planting, however generous, to be offered to replace the loss of significant existing landscape features or trees, especially when these are mature and structurally sound. In addition 'landscaping' which simply consists of bits of residual land given over to grass or token planting is unacceptable.

## How we will assess your proposals

On all developments Stirling Council expects consideration to have been given to:

- the wider landscape setting of a site and opportunities for enhancement of local character and amenity and, where relevant, biodiversity and green networks
- creation of an attractive, coherent landscape and open space structure for the development
- appropriate, high quality treatment of individual areas or elements
- good standards of implementation
- arrangements for and resourcing of aftercare and maintenance

To allow key issues to be identified and clarify standards to be met the Council encourages pre-application discussions before a planning application is made. These can be invaluable even on small-scale developments in sensitive locations and are essential on major applications.



Design statements ensure that site context and design issues, including landscape design, are considered in a structured way from project inception. Design statements are particularly relevant for larger and/or sensitive sites and in some cases are obligatory. (Add link to relevant section of Place-making SG)

If a design statement is not appropriate to your development you are still encouraged to put a note about the aims and objectives of the landscape and planting design on the relevant plans. This is particularly helpful to members of the public inspecting plans who may not recognise the Latin names normally used for planting references.

All these factors will be taken into account when determining planning applications. We will also assess landscape proposals against the criteria for successful places given in PAN 67 and PAN 68:

- **Distinctive:** Do the proposals create or enhance a sense of identity? Has the development been designed to make the most of its setting and do the landscape and planting proposals respect and reflect this wider site context? Is there a cohesive landscape structure that creates a sense of place?
- **Safe and pleasant:** Are new spaces safe, attractive, useable and at the right scale? Is there a clear distinction between public and private spaces? Will footpaths, open spaces and play areas feel secure? Does new planting enhance amenity and provide delight? Are there arrangements in place to ensure communal landscape and planting areas are properly monitored and maintained?
- **Welcoming:** Have good landscape features or views etc. been retained and made the most of? Have new landmarks or gateways been created which will help people to find their way around? Have opportunities been taken for creating distinctive art works or allow for community growing initiatives?



- **Easy to get to and move around:** Is there a well designed network of paths and cycle routes linking open spaces and facilities within the development and the surrounding area? Will there be access for people with disabilities?
- **Adaptable:** Will there be opportunities to make external areas adaptable to a variety of future uses?
- **Resource efficient:** Has the opportunity been taken to minimise energy use e.g. exploiting solar gain, using existing landform or planting to provide shelter or creating new shelterbelts? Have existing landscape features of value been retained and safeguarded? Have opportunities been taken to improve habitats and support wildlife? Are the materials specified for external works available from local or sustainable sources? Have ongoing maintenance costs been carefully considered and funding secured?





## What information should you submit with your application?

The level of information required by the Council will depend on whether your application is for permission in principle (PPP) or a full planning application. You may also find it helpful to refer to the design process flow chart in 'Place-making' SG. (Add link to relevant section of Place-making SG)

TYPE OF APPLICATION	SITE APPRAISAL	DETAILED LANDSCAPE AND PLANTING PROPOSALS
Permission in principle (PPP)	Yes	No
Matters specified in conditions (MSC)	-	Yes - if specified in conditions
Full planning permission	Yes	Yes





## Site Appraisal:

Unless agreed in advance all PPP and full planning applications should include a site appraisal based on an accurate site plan and showing how the site relates to its wider surroundings. The detailed content of an appraisal will depend on the location and nature of the site together with the scale, type and complexity of development proposal. However, an appraisal should generally include the following:

- **A context assessment:** An essential tool in achieving a design that respects and enhances the local landscape or townscape character. It should show how the site relates to its wider surroundings and considerations include: any natural or cultural heritage designations; surrounding land uses and existing landscape/townscape character, patterns and local landmarks; links with or barriers to movement between open spaces and community facilities; habitat networks and linkages; views into, out of and within the site; opportunities for enhancement or restoration of degraded landscapes etc.
- **For the site itself and its immediate surroundings:**
- Topographical details: including spot heights and/or contours
- Existing site drainage: e.g. natural drainage (watercourses, ponds, and wetlands), field drainage, pipes and sewers.
- Physical constraints on the design of the development, such as areas liable to flooding and steep slopes overhead cables and any major underground utilities.
- On-site landscape features and vegetation: e.g. walls, structures, paths, hedges, areas of grass, shrubs and trees, identifying landscape asset to be retained and protected.



- A tree survey: accurately locating and assessing existing trees. Established trees within 12m of the proposed site boundary should be included as they may affect or be affected by development.
- Wildlife and nature conservation: assessment of the value of the site as a wildlife habitat and/or potential to strengthen existing local green networks.

For PPP applications the site appraisal will enable a meaningful dialogue between the developer and the planning authority on relevant landscape and tree issues. Once you have been granted PPP it will help you to develop your detailed proposals and an appropriate landscape scheme.

For full planning applications the site appraisal is essential to demonstrate how you have developed your proposals

## Detailed Landscape and Planting Proposals

Applications for Matters Specified in Conditions: If PPP conditions require the submission of landscape proposals, these must be included in your MSC application or the Council will not accept it.

Applications for Full Planning Permission: If the Council decides that landscape issues are of particular importance to your development, we may not accept an application for Full Planning Permission unless it is accompanied by a site appraisal and fully developed landscape proposals





Generally, in addition to the site appraisal described above you should provide:

- A plan showing the landscape structure for the site as a whole and the detailed treatment of individual areas or elements.
- Topographical details: a plan with accurate contours showing existing and proposed levels together with cross-sections to illustrate any proposed changes in ground level. This plan should clearly demonstrate how proposed site levels will relate to surrounding landform/topography.
- Proposed removal and/or retention of existing trees: trees to be felled or retained should be indicated and details given of protection measures to safeguard retained trees during the construction period.
- Drainage: details of proposed changes to surface water drainage patterns and SuDS proposals e.g. swales, ponds, detention basins etc.
- Hard landscape: areas of hard surfacing and proposed materials and construction must be clearly identified on a plan (e.g. paths, roads, parking areas, hard standings, external lighting and signage).
- Boundary treatments: location, design and finish of all boundary elements; e.g. hedges, timber fences, walls, retaining walls and metal railings. If existing landscape features are to be retained, they should be identified together with a note on how they will be protected during construction.
- Ground preparation: details of areas of topsoil or subsoil to be stripped for re-use; soil storage arrangements; specifications for breaking up areas of soil compaction, cultivation grassing and planting, including chemical spraying, fertilisers and additives.
- Soft landscape: detailed landscape layouts showing trees (structure planting, specimens) planting beds and grass areas. Planting densities may be indicated as numbers of plants per square metre (e.g. 4/m<sup>2</sup>) or as planting centres (e.g. 600 mm ctrs.) The botanical name and stock size (height/spread, pot size, number of breaks) must be provided for all plants, and the total numbers clearly identified on the plan(s). For larger trees, the method of support must



be specified. Type, depth, and extent of surface mulches should also be noted.

- Grass areas: the proposed seed mixture and sowing rate or turf specification.
- Play provision: play provision may be required within family housing. If so, play facilities, including those for disabled children, must be identified on the plan with details of equipment, surfacing, planting, signage, fencing and access, including measures to prevent entry by dogs. (Add link to relevant section of ‘Green infrastructure...etc’ SG)

## Additional Considerations

On larger scale developments the landscape strategy should be one of the main organising elements of the development with an open space hierarchy, clear landmarks, linkages and focal points etc.

On phased developments a landscape/planting masterplan must be produced and agreed at the outset of a scheme. This plan should establish the principles that will be applied to the whole development, even though the finer details of later phases may not be brought forward until later. The Council may require some areas of structural planting to be established in ‘advance’ of building construction and/or temporary treatment and maintenance of areas awaiting development

The Council is particularly concerned to secure appropriate landscape and planting works for developments in rural areas. Advice should be taken at an early stage, particularly for larger tourist/commercial developments or those that will be highly visible to the public. For housing in the countryside refer to the ‘Housing in the Countryside’ SG. (Add link to ‘Housing in the Countryside’ SG)

Care must be taken, especially when the development site is adjacent or close to a site designated for its nature conservation value and interest, or to a watercourse leading to a designated site, that the planting scheme proposed does not include



plant species not native to the area and which are invasive. Alien invasive species such as Giant Hogweed, Japanese Knotweed, Himalayan Balsam, and Canadian Pondweed can take over from native flora in some circumstances to the detriment of biodiversity. The Council has a duty to promote biodiversity, and in particular to protect through the planning system the internationally important sites in the area (see SG26 and <http://www.snh.gov.uk/protecting-scotlands-nature/protected-areas/international-designations/natura-sites/> )

It also has duties in relation to maintaining and enhancing the water environment. Many invasive plants are spread by floating seeds and the problem has been recognised (and will be tackled) through the River Basin Management Planning process (led by SEPA – see SG34).

For further information see <http://www.invasivespeciesscotland.org.uk/>

#### With specific regard to new planting:

- Look at the wider landscape setting of the development - planting should respond to and respect the site context. This principle has implications both for the overall approach to new planting and detailed planting design and species selection. For example in rural and edge of settlement locations there is particular scope for the use of appropriate native species; as well as helping to ‘fit’ a development into its setting such planting can provide/restore wild life habitat and enhance bio-diversity.
- Trees are generally the most important structural planting element in a new development and can provide significant long-term public benefit and a strong visual framework within the site. We look for appropriate new trees on all developments, except where serious site constraints make this impractical. Think ahead at an early stage and ensure adequate space is provided, especially for new trees at key locations - for example at site entrances and focal points. Where large growing trees and belts of screen planting are required it is important to ensure buildings are kept far enough away to avoid future problems, such as shading or damage to surfaces and foundations.



- It is not acceptable for plans to be submitted simply stamped with tree symbols; these invariably give a false impression of where new planting will be accommodated.
- Hedges, shrubs and ground cover plants should be used to define space, provide shelter or privacy, pleasure and enjoyment. Careful thought needs to be given to site context and conditions, purpose/function of planting and relationship to buildings, paths and roads before selecting and specifying shrub and ground cover species.
- Residential/care homes and sheltered accommodation are special cases where more 'garden-like' planting may be appropriate, especially within courtyards or adjacent to sitting areas. Here herbaceous plants as well as ornamental shrubs and ground cover may be desirable and detailed planting design should respond accordingly.
- In appropriate locations Developers may be encouraged to consider environment-friendly approaches, such as the creation of wild flower meadows, planting of fruit trees/orchards, native/species-rich hedgerows or areas of coppice.
- The Council expects a strong landscape/planting framework to be created for commercial or industrial developments, with significant amounts of structural and tree planting in scale with the infrastructure and buildings - wherever possible making a positive contribution to strengthening or extending green networks. Such sites often include extensive areas of parking and special attention should be paid to appropriate paving/planting around parking bays.
- Services: give serious consideration to location of overhead and underground services. If these are not known at the outset then 'service-free' areas should be designated in key locations where planting is essential to the character or appearance of a new development. The Council may consider applying planning conditions to secure 'service-free' areas for planting in key locations.
- Plants are living things: plants must have adequate resources to establish and thrive. Compacted or polluted soil is detrimental to both new and existing trees/shrubs and in some cases we may ask for a method statement on the

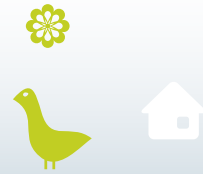


protection or restoration of soils.

- Plant quality is important: plants must be obtained from a reputable nursery, and delivered, handled and planted in an appropriate way. Conditions will be imposed to secure replacement of failed planting for up to 5 years to ensure planting becomes established.
- Protection of new planting (from rabbits, deer or vandals etc.) is sometimes necessary and we will ask for details of protective measures where relevant.
- Maintenance and management information as detailed in the separate section below.
- We are primarily concerned that good planting design addresses essentials such as site context, soil type, aspect/exposure, sight lines, services and relationships with buildings etc. If these are properly identified and respected it is accepted there may be a degree of personal preference in the final selection of plant species/ varieties. It is not appropriate for the Council to make unreasonable demands regarding these choices except in very specific circumstances, for example if the Council is adopting an area on completion or where a site is adjacent to an important wildlife habitat etc. However, in general a simple bold approach is recommended and the Council may ask for schemes to be simplified where they are overly fussy.

**NOTE:** It is accepted that some of this information may be indicative at the time the application is initially lodged.





## Maintenance and Management

The importance of appropriate long-term maintenance cannot be over stressed if planting is to establish and fulfil its potential. This must be considered at the outset when a development is being planned and planting designed.

- You must provide short and long-term maintenance schedules for planting (except within private gardens), open spaces (hard and soft landscape) and SuDS schemes etc.
- In some circumstances the Council may require a developer to produce a resident's handbook or guidance notes on the appropriate maintenance of important trees and shrub groups within gardens.
- You must confirm in writing not only who will be responsible for maintaining these areas but also who will make and monitor the arrangements, undertake annual risk assessments of play areas and maintain appropriate insurance cover.
- Proof may be required that title deeds include clear and proper reference to who is legally and financially responsible for maintenance of communal areas and the standards to be met.

You can apply for the Council to adopt open space and / or play areas within residential areas. If so, you will have to meet our standards on design and implementation and comply with the policy on financial arrangements. If you are considering this approach, contact the Land Services Manager early in the design process.



## Getting the right advice

In developing landscape proposals for Council approval, you need the best advice. All too often, we see plans that ignore or undervalue the landscape qualities of a site and a Landscape Architect can help you to bring out the best, especially on larger or more complex sites.

The Landscape Institute has a directory of registered landscape practices for this area it also provides guidance on appointing a Chartered Landscape Architect and on fees. You can contact the Landscape Institute at Charles Darwin House, 12 Roger Street, London, WC1N 2JU, Tel: 020 7685 264033 or access information at [www.landscapeinstitute.org](http://www.landscapeinstitute.org)





## Further information

Help and advice from Stirling Council:

**Landscape and tree matters:** Contact Tree & Landscape Officer in Development Management (Tel: 01786 442 772).

**Play areas and adoption of planting and open spaces:** Contact Land Services Manager (Tel: 01786 443820)

Other supplementary guidance available from Stirling Council:

- SG01 'Place-making'
- SG02 'Green infrastructure: green network and open space'
- SG31 'Protecting and managing trees on development sites'
- SG10 'Housing in the Countryside'

**The Landscape Institute: Making it Home - the power of landscape to create good housing:**

Aiming to inspire everyone in the business of creating homes and communities to adopt an integrated landscape approach, this policy statement sets out the Landscape Institute's ten point plan for housing. <http://www.landscapeinstitute.org/PDF/Contribute/MakingithomeA4final.pdf>





National planning advice notes, available from the Scottish Government:

- PAN 44 'Fitting New Housing into the Landscape' <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2005/04/01145231/52326>
- PAN 60 'Planning for Natural Heritage'  
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2000/08/pan60-root/pan60>
- PAN 67 'Housing Quality'  
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2003/02/16489/18787>
- PAN 68 'Design Statements'  
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2003/08/18013/25389>
- PAN 72 'Housing in the Countryside' <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2005/02/20637/51640>





## Further Information

### **Please contact:**

Economy, Planning and Regulation  
Planning Services  
Stirling Council  
Viewforth  
Stirling  
FK8 2ET

Telephone: 01786 442522

E-mail: [LDP@stirling.gov.uk](mailto:LDP@stirling.gov.uk)

[www.stirling.gov.uk/localdevplan](http://www.stirling.gov.uk/localdevplan)

If you need help or this information  
supplied in an alternative format  
please call 0845 277 700.

