



Residential Amenity Space & Place Quality

**Draft Supplementary
Planning Document**

February 2023



Planning Policy Team
Communities & Regeneration
planningstrategy@brent.gov.uk

Brent Council www.brent.gov.uk

Acknowledgements

The Place Quality Framework and Toolkit has been developed by Natasha Reid, on behalf of Brent Council, as a version of her “Human Performance Framework” that centres human experience as the driver for design:

Reid N. Compassionate Spaces. Conscious Cities Anthology 2019: Science-Informed Architecture and Urbanism. 2019” ©2019

The Residential Amenity Space and Place Quality SPD has been developed with the input of many people and we would like to thank all contributors for their advice, support and feedback.

Consultation Statement

This draft Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) will be subject to a six week period of consultation. This will take place between 16th February and 30th March 2023. Consultation will be consistent with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 and the council's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI).

The document will be made available on the council's website, as well as in Brent Council libraries. The Council will promote it through general awareness raising undertaken through media releases, its social media pages and on its website. In addition, the council will notify all relevant people and organisations on its planning policy consultation database.

Representations on the document can be made to: planningstrategy@brent.gov.uk. Alternatively, you can write to: Paul Lewin, Team Leader Planning Policy, Brent Council, Civic Centre, Engineers Way, Wembley HA9 0FJ. Representations should be received by the council by midnight 30th March 2023. Please reference the appropriate section and paragraph of the document for each individual comment that you make. Please note that the council will not register anonymous responses. You should provide your name and if relevant, the organisation that you are working for, and that which you might be representing.

When reporting the consultation responses, organisation names will be referenced by the council. However, no individual's name or personal details of respondents will be made publicly available. Please can you indicate with your response whether you wish to be informed by the council of whether this document is adopted. Please also indicate if you would like to be informed of other planning policy consultations by having your details put on our planning policy consultation database. This information will only be used in relation to consultations on the council's planning and associated documents. Unless you indicate that you want to be put on this database, your personal details will only be kept until the council makes a decision on whether to proceed with the adoption of the SPD or not and has subsequently issued the appropriate notifications. Please see our [privacy policy](#) for more details.

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1. Introduction

1.1

Overview

- 1.1.1 The Residential Amenity Space and Place Quality Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) sets out further guidance on the implementation of two Brent Local Plan 2022 policies: BH13 Residential Amenity Space and BD1 Leading the Way in Good Urban Design.
- 1.1.2 It clarifies the borough's expectations for well-designed places. It supports the Brent Local Plan's objectives to ensure that new homes and neighbourhoods are designed to provide a high quality of life.¹ This is for existing and future residents across the borough's different environments, scales of development and densities.
- 1.1.3 It covers a wide range of amenity space types and sizes. It addresses:
- Outdoor private amenity space;
 - Outdoor shared amenity space; and
 - Indoor shared amenity space and common spaces.
 - It may also be used to determine the quality of public space where relevant to the assessment of a scheme.
- 1.1.4 Its application will depend on the scale and nature of a development. It relates to spaces including, but not limited to: balconies; terraces; gardens; landscaped areas; courtyards; roof terraces; communal gardens; entrance lobbies; internal shared spaces and corridors.
- 1.1.5 As such it has the scope to impact the majority of shared spaces within new residential developments. These spaces are a significant factor in the quality of development. They are key in the way new and existing residents experience their homes, neighbourhoods, and a sense of community.
- 1.1.6 People's quality of life is directly affected by their environment. High quality environments are beneficial to health, wellbeing, social cohesion. Poor environments are not; they exacerbate existing inequalities.²
- 1.1.7 There are six sections in this SPD:
- Sections 1, 2 and 3 address technical and qualitative principles relevant to all development;
 - Section 4 addresses minor development;
 - Section 5 sets out a new Place Quality Toolkit, for major and strategic development.
 - Section 6 addresses specific typologies such as high-rise, high density development and Build to Rent.

Assessing Design Quality Through Quality of Life Outcomes

- 1.1.8 There is already an established understanding of the relationship between the built and natural environment and people's physical and mental health and wellbeing.³ Strong evidence demonstrates that place matters when it comes to quality of life.⁴
- 1.1.9 This guidance sets out a new 'Place Quality Framework and Toolkit' for major development. This purposefully frames the assessment of design quality through quality of life impacts related to health, wellbeing, social sustainability and inclusivity. It has been shaped to reflect Brent's priorities and emphasise principles of equity through Good Growth in Brent.
- 1.1.10 This SPD draws on local, national and international guidance focused on the relationship of spatial planning and design to health, wellbeing and quality of life. A list of reference documents can be seen in **Section 7**.
- 1.1.11 The Place Quality Framework provides an overarching reference point for good design. It goes beyond physical form and visual aesthetics to prioritise people-focused outcomes. These include: supporting people's physical and mental wellbeing; building strong and integrated communities across new and existing places; encouraging vibrancy and intergenerational mixing; supporting a sense of place and belonging; and fostering a sense of ownership.
- 1.1.12 It helps shift expectations for development, by offering a series of qualitative considerations in relation to the human experience of the built and natural environment, and its impacts on lives. In this way, the framework and toolkit enables a greater clarity when identifying the qualities (or deficiencies) of development proposals and how the benefits of growth are balanced more equitably.
- 1.1.13 The toolkit sets out specific design considerations, directly related to people-focused and socially-conscious outcomes. This assists the work of designers, planners and decision-makers. It allows for a clearer consideration of the complex impacts of the built environment and its importance in improving health inequalities, isolation, social cohesion, community participation and inclusivity.
- 1.1.14 The higher the density of development, typically the more challenging quality of life outcomes are to achieve. Similar to the London Plan⁵, this SPD puts emphasis on greater scrutiny and expectation, the denser a development is. It also emphasises the importance of considering quality of life impacts for groups who may experience greater challenges to their health and wellbeing. It encourages a contextual response to high levels of multiple deprivation⁶ and different demographic groups. This aims to maximise the positive impact that equitable access to high quality shared spaces can have for individual and social wellbeing.



Figure 1: Place Quality Framework and Toolkit

Source: Based on Natasha Reid 2019⁷

1.2 Using this Guidance

Who Does this Guidance Impact?

- 1.2.1 The beneficiaries of this guidance are primarily the households, families and individuals that will occupy the living accommodation associated with residential amenity space. It also sets out wider considerations to ensure the impacts and benefits of new development are understood for all those who may be affected in a community; this can contribute to addressing inequalities.
- 1.2.2 **Section 2** sets out the diversity of Brent's population and key challenges for the borough. There will be an expectation of an understanding of who the amenity space is being provided for. There should be a recognition that households and communities contain a variety of different people. E.g. different age groups, disabled people, people with a variety of sensory requirements as well as different socio-economic factors and race.
- 1.2.3 Innovation and careful attention to these factors is welcomed. The Place Quality Framework supports the users of this guidance to take a holistic and tailored approach to design solutions. It considers the specific needs of people in the context of specific places.

Who Uses this Guidance?

Applicants and agents: This SPD is to be used by developers, design teams and consultants in shaping development proposals and preparing planning application submission material.

Local Authority officers and decision-makers: This SPD will inform pre-application discussions and be used to assess planning applications to ensure the relevant design principles have been incorporated.

The Brent Quality Review Panel (QRP): This SPD can help support design quality discussions and feedback during QRP reviews.

When to Use this Guidance

1.2.4 This SPD is to be used as early as possible in the design process. This will help to ensure schemes are developed in line with requirements and avoid re-designs.

- **Pre-Application**

- Minor development: provide a preliminary Amenity Space Quality Statement (see **Section 4**);
- Major and strategic development: provide a preliminary Amenity Space Quality Statement and evidence base using the Place Quality Toolkit (see **Section 5** and **Section 6**);

- **Planning Application**

- Minor development: provide an Amenity Space Quality Statement (see **Section 4**);
- Major and strategic development: provide an Amenity Space Quality Statement and evidence base using the Place Quality Toolkit (see **Section 5** and **Section 6**);

- **Post-Planning**

- Planning conditions and potentially S106 obligations may be required to ensure that high quality design is secured.

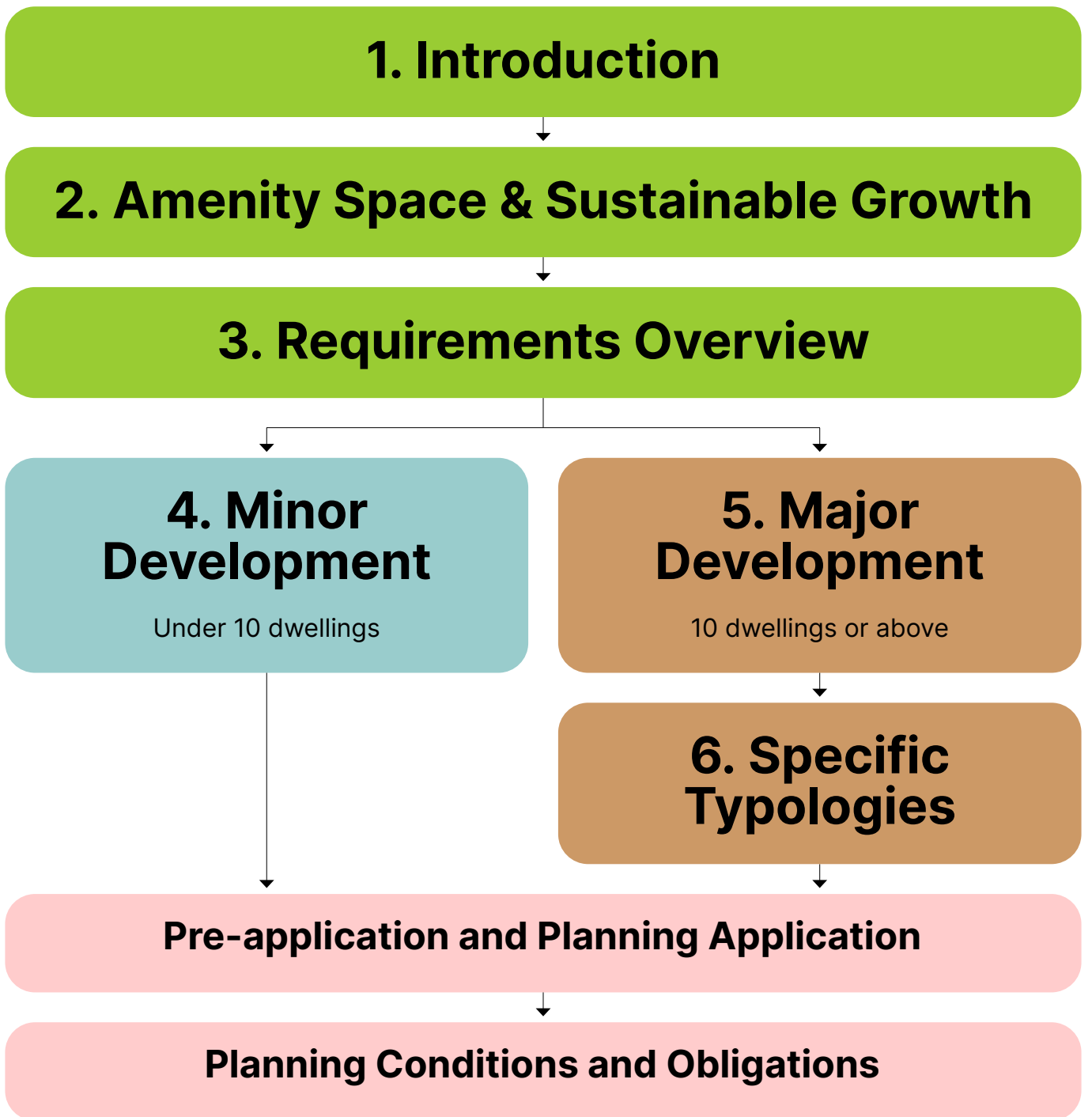
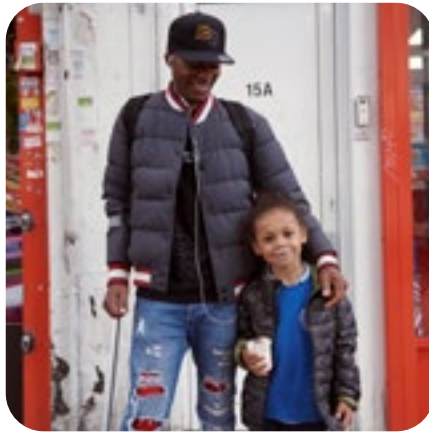


Table 1: Document road map for different sizes of scheme

2. Amenity Space & Sustainable Growth



2.1 Good Growth and Quality of Life

- 2.1.1 In common with much of London, Brent's population has grown significantly. Between 2001 and 2021 it grew by 25% to 329,800. It is anticipated that it will grow by another 56,000 by 2041. Brent's population density is the highest of any outer London borough and the 14th highest in England.⁸ With a limited land supply, and competing demand, space is becoming more of a premium. Development needs to be a higher density to meet the need for homes. The council has placed a greater emphasis on improved design in recognition of this challenge and the value good design creates in improving quality of life.⁹ It has led by example on its developments, such as the award-winning regeneration of South Kilburn.
- 2.1.2 The borough has other challenges. It is the most diverse borough in the country¹⁰ and to address the inequalities affecting this demographic, the borough established the Black Community Action Plan in 2020. Overall, Brent is also one of London's more deprived areas, but, like many London boroughs, there are areas of both affluence and deprivation.
- 2.1.3 Whilst the population profile of Brent is relatively young (67% of the population are of working age), poverty rates are particularly high for young Brent residents. One study has found that for every five children in Brent, two will be in poverty.¹¹
- 2.1.4 Health is another key challenge. For example, 38% of children aged 10-11 are classified as overweight or obese. 33% of the population are inactive, which is amongst the highest in England.¹² Currently when compared to London standards, overall the borough lacks open space, particularly in the south. The quality of provision also varies and the growth in population will provide additional challenges with regards to accessibility standards.¹³ The Brent Local Plan identified that there will be a need to provide mixed and balanced communities. This will build better social cohesion and improve resident health and quality of life.¹⁴
- 2.1.5 The Brent Local Plan Development Vision of Good Growth includes "Creating a healthy borough" and "Strong and inclusive communities" with identified objectives such as;
- Improving physical and mental wellbeing for residents by adopting a health-integrated planning approach;
 - Reducing health inequalities through focusing on narrowing the gap between the most affluent and the most deprived areas of the borough; and
 - Reducing spatial inequalities within Brent and incidences of areas with high levels of multiple deprivation by promoting mixed and balanced communities.

- 2.1.6 This SPD provides further guidance to help the council deliver its vision and policies. It will support existing communities and new residents to make their home within liveable, mixed, inclusive and cohesive neighbourhoods. This will contribute to a higher quality of life.
- 2.1.7 Amenity space and shared public spaces can contribute significantly to the quality of built environments. This is because the spaces between buildings and homes affect people’s experience of a place.¹⁵ The quality of shared spaces can contribute to sharing the benefits of development. Both their design and the activities they support can help address deprivation, health inequalities and tackle social segregation.
- 2.1.8 To achieve this, the guidance sets out how new development can support Good Growth in Brent by contributing to the creation of environments focused on quality of life. With Brent’s diversity of population, increased interaction between people from different cultural backgrounds can contribute towards strong and inclusive communities. It can also support social cohesion.

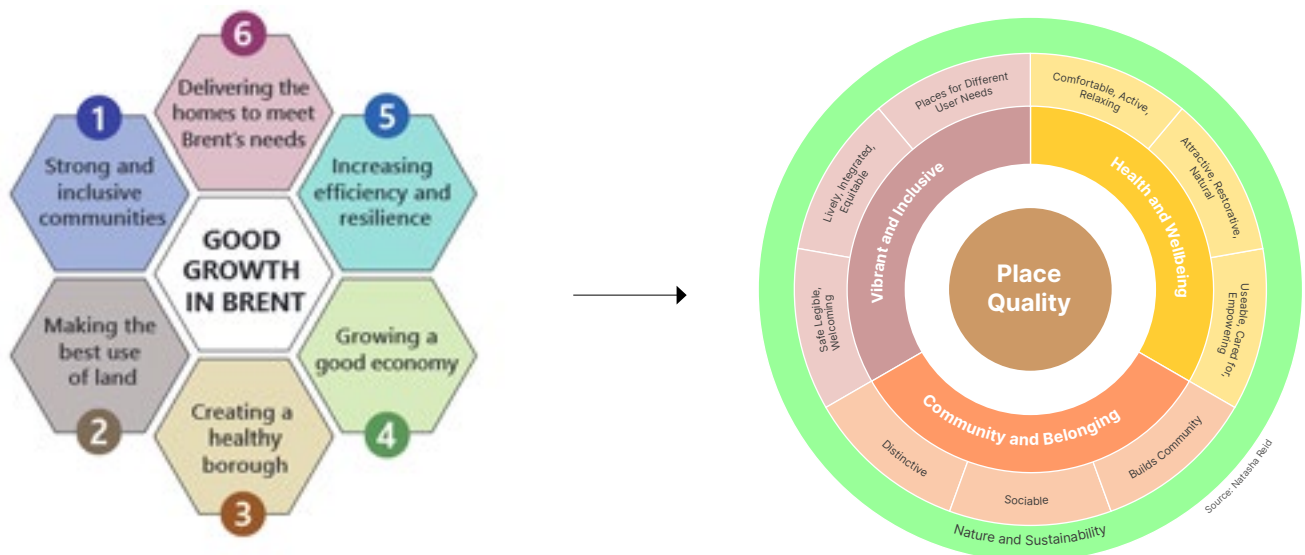


Figure 2: Good Growth in Brent implemented through the Place Quality Framework and Toolkit

2.2

Reducing Health Inequalities Through Design

- 2.2.1 Development will be expected to respond to local challenges of inequalities and the potential opportunities in Brent. An informed understanding of the levels of needs of different communities and specific groups must be reflected in the design, quality and provision of amenity space in major development.
- 2.2.2 The planning and design of the built and natural environment can reduce health disparities between different groups and health outcomes. This is particularly important for those affected by socio-economic status and deprivation, protected characteristics, and the more vulnerable groups of society.¹⁶
- 2.2.3 Those living in the most deprived neighbourhoods are exposed to a greater set of socio-economic and environmental conditions detrimental to health.¹⁷ There, poorer health status is generally observed.¹⁸ People living in less or more deprived communities within a few miles of each other can experience over 10 year differences in life expectancy.¹⁹ These effects can be more profound for those most vulnerable with less influence, who are often disproportionately disadvantaged by a poor built environment.²⁰
- 2.2.4 To achieve equitable outcomes for all, design must address the levels of need for specific places, communities or populations. This must be in a way that is proportionate to the level of disadvantage and depending on need.²¹ (See **Section 5**)
- 2.2.5 It is important to consider how the design of places influences how different people and groups experience the environment. This can help to understand how the environment impacts differently on people's behaviours, resulting in different health outcomes.²² Community involvement can help identify the requirements of a specific area or cultural context. It is strongly encouraged, particularly in areas of deprivation and for groups affected by socio-economic inequalities, including the Black community.
- 2.2.6 This wider socio-economic and cultural context would usually be expected to be considered in decision making (see **Section 5.7**).

2.3 Sustainability and Green Infrastructure

- 2.3.1 Green spaces and other green infrastructure is fundamental for both sustainability and people's quality of life. The provision and quality of external amenity space supports the delivery of these key objectives.
- 2.3.2 The Brent Local Plan sets out the role of green infrastructure in providing multifunctional benefits. It can improve physical and mental health, increase biodiversity, provide recreation, assist in supporting environmental resilience and address the impacts of climate change.²³ National policy recognises the importance of access to outdoor open space for health and wellbeing benefits.²⁴
- 2.3.3 London Plan 2021 Policy GG3 'Creating a healthy city' outlines how those involved in planning and development must ensure the wider determinants of health are addressed in an integrated and coordinated way. It sets out the need for a systematic approach to improving the mental and physical health of all Londoners and reducing health inequalities (Part A). They must also assess the potential impacts of development proposals and Development Plans on the mental and physical health and wellbeing of communities. This is to mitigate any potential negative impacts and maximise potential positive impacts, to help reduce health inequalities (Part D).

High Quality Amenity Space

- 2.3.4 Green space can be a community resource that encourages social interaction, contact with nature and active outdoor participation. It can help create safer and stronger communities, improve the image of an area and instil sense of pride through many co-benefits that help to support quality of life.
- 2.3.5 The borough's urban character, limited land availability and significant population growth²⁵ means that green infrastructure is of great importance and benefit to new and existing communities. The provision of high-quality amenity space can contribute to this.
- 2.3.6 Amenity space can accommodate a range of cultural activities such as, outdoor eating, performance space, various visual and sculptural art forms, and water features.

Food Growing and Community Gardening

- 2.3.7 There are many cross-cutting benefits attached to food growing opportunities. Such opportunities are likely to exist in many amenity spaces and the provision of areas that support these are therefore encouraged. The benefits include improved food security, education, biodiversity, social interaction and mental and physical wellbeing.²⁶ The emerging Sustainable Environment and Development SPD sets out further details as a key policy consideration (Section 3.8) to encourage the development of food growing and community gardening projects. This is in line with the Brent Poverty Commission recommendations²⁷ and guidance on stewardship in **Section 3.5** of this SPD.
- 2.3.8 This can also provide opportunity to include a sensory garden with smell, taste, touch, sound and visual senses all being triggered. The design of inclusive, sensory-friendly environments to respond to a variety of needs is encouraged.

Please refer to the emerging Sustainable Environment and Development SPD for full technical guidance on green infrastructure requirements.



3. Requirements Overview

3.1 Policy Requirements

Policy BH13 Residential Amenity Space

All new dwellings will be required to have external private amenity space of a sufficient size and type to satisfy its proposed residents' needs. This is normally expected to be 50sqm per home for family housing (3 bedrooms or more) situated at ground floor level and 20sqm for all other housing.

Para 6.2.98 New developments should provide private amenity space to all dwellings, accessible from a main living room without level changes and planned to take maximum advantage of daylight and sunlight.

Where sufficient private amenity space cannot be achieved individually for each dwelling to meet the full requirement of the policy, the remainder should be supplied in the form of communal amenity space.

In some locations, such as town centres, in high density developments the council understands that meeting the overall minimum might be challenging. Whilst amenity space will assist in achieving the urban greening factor targets, other requirements such as renewable energy sources may compete for areas that might otherwise accommodate amenity areas, such as roof space. As such flexibility could be allowed where it can be shown that all reasonable options for provision have been considered.

In these cases, the quality of any communal space will need to be particularly high to show it can meet residents' needs. Where not meeting the standards, developments will need to demonstrate how the level of amenity space provided is considered to be acceptable taking into account factors such as, accessibility of dwellings to their own amenity space and its quality, the amount and quality of communal space, proximity to other areas of open space nearby and internal amenity spaces.

The calculation of amenity space does not include any parking, cycle or refuse and recycling storage areas.

Refer to the [Brent Local Plan](#) for further details

LONDON PLAN POLICY

5sqm per 1-2 person dwelling
Extra 1sqm per additional person

5sqm

5sqm

20sqm

20sqm

50sqm

50sqm

BRENT LOCAL PLAN

50sqm per family home (3
beds or more) at ground level
20sqm above ground level

Figure 3: London Plan and Brent private amenity space standards comparison

Residential Amenity Space and Place Quality SPD

3.2 Private Amenity Space Requirements

3.2.1 Outdoor private amenity space contributes to a sense of space and openness in the home and provides usable area for enjoyment. It is expected that each home's private amenity space complies with Brent Local Plan Policy BH13. Where the full area requirement cannot be provided, at least part of each dwelling's required amenity space will be private space and comply with London Plan policy as a minimum.

3.2.2 Requirements:

- Private amenity space to all dwellings;
- Accessible from a main living room;
- No level changes;
- Planned to maximise daylight and sunlight;
- Minimum depth and width of 1.5m²⁸ if not compromised by door swings;
- Practical in terms of its shape and utility²⁹; and
- Have a balance of openness and enclosure, appropriate for its outlook and orientation³⁰.

3.2.3 Expectations:

- **Environmental requirements:** With regards to light, noise and pollution (see **Section 3.4**);
- **Usability:** Sufficient size and shape to lay out tables and chairs or to make use of the spaces comfortably, taking into account door swings and circulation;
- **Privacy:** Provides a sense of enclosure;
- **Outlook, visual amenity and drainage:** Where possible, orientated towards open spaces and natural views. Enclosed spaces with no outlook, such as small light-wells, are not usually acceptable. Avoid flooding and dripping onto balconies below to support the occupants' use and enjoyment of the space; and
- **Orientation to communal amenity and outdoor spaces:** Where possible, for natural surveillance and sense of community.

Contextual and Qualitative Assessment

- 3.2.4 All assessments are made in the context of the site, scheme and wider area. They will need to balance the benefits and the specific factors that are relevant on a case-by-case basis. In exceptional cases, it may not be possible to provide external amenity e.g. where balconies would impact daylighting, urban form or cause other adverse impacts.
- 3.2.5 Where external private amenity space cannot be provided, this may be mitigated by a higher provision and quality of internal space, above minimum nationally described space standards. Additional internal space is usually expected to be equivalent to London Plan private amenity area requirements as a minimum. In such cases, the overall living conditions will be considered on balance. A lack of external private amenity space may also be mitigated by the provision and quality of communal amenity.

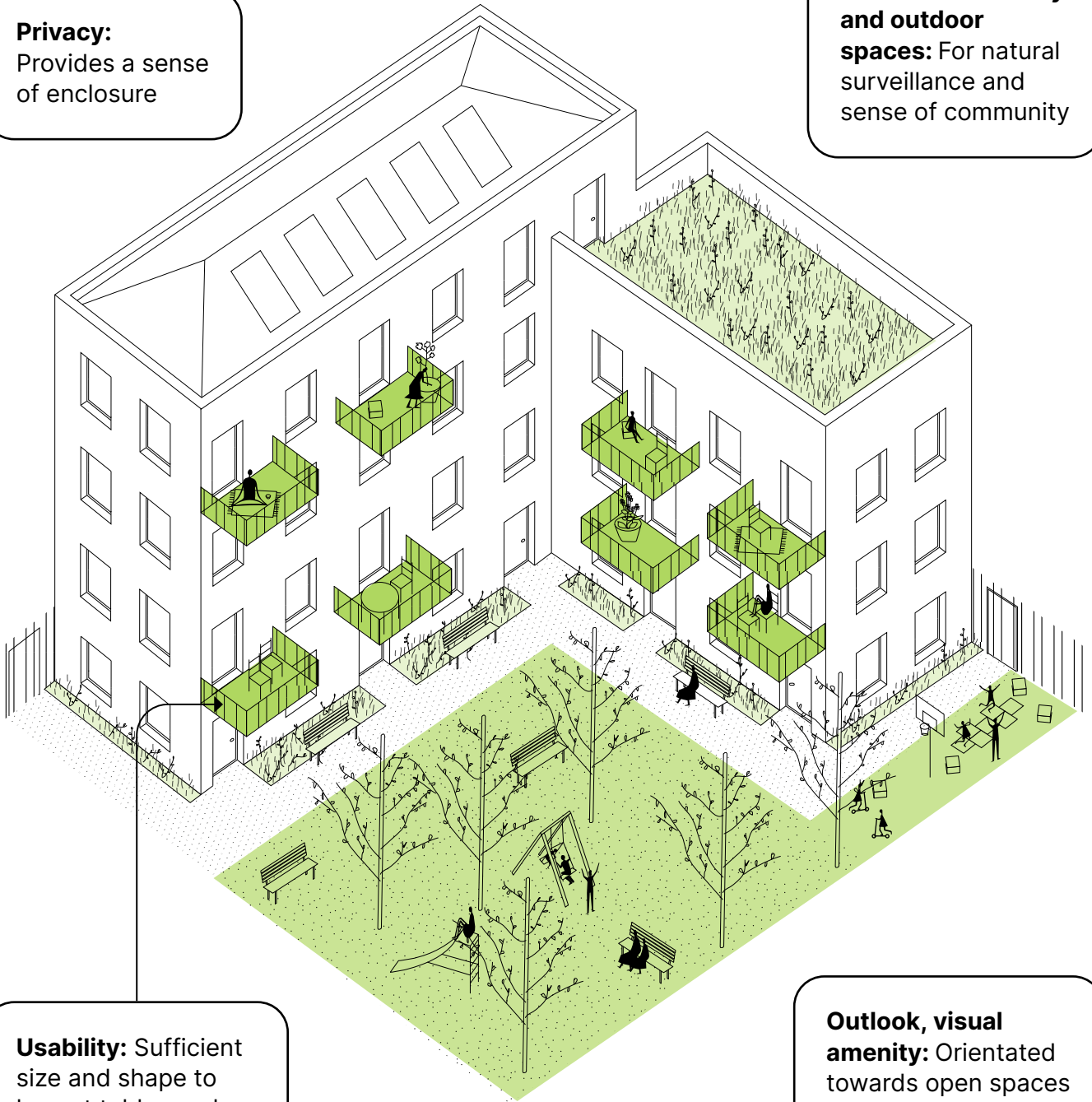
Private Amenity

Privacy:

Provides a sense of enclosure

Orientation to communal amenity and outdoor spaces:

For natural surveillance and sense of community



Usability: Sufficient size and shape to lay out tables and chairs or to make use of the spaces comfortably

Outlook, visual amenity: Orientated towards open spaces and natural views

Figure 4: Private amenity space

3.3 Communal Amenity Space Requirements

- 3.3.1 In certain cases, schemes may be reliant on high quality communal amenity space to reach the full area policy requirement. This section defines what counts as communal amenity space as a minimum threshold for all schemes. Further guidance for different sizes and types of development is found in **Section 4** and **Section 5**.
- 3.3.2 Well-designed shared amenity spaces feel safe and secure for their users. They are social spaces providing opportunities for comfort, relaxation and stimulation (including play) for residents, regardless of the type or tenure of homes. They are well-overlooked and easily accessible for all the residents who share them.³¹

Design Quality Principles

- 3.3.3 Communal amenity space should:
- Be usable, beneficial and enjoyable to residents;
 - Meet residents' changing and diverse needs, such as outlook, privacy, and providing a safe and attractive environment;
 - Provide sufficient space to meet the requirements of the number of residents;
 - Be easily accessed from all related dwellings;
 - Be located to be appreciated from the inside;
 - Be positioned to allow overlooking;
 - Support an appropriate balance of informal social activity and play opportunities for various age groups;
 - Be inclusive and accessible for all, including wheelchair access; and
 - Meet environmental requirements regarding light, noise and pollution (see **Section 3.4**)
- 3.3.4 London Plan Policies D5 and D6 give further details on communal amenity space and inclusive design requirements. It is expected that all amenity spaces are accessible to residents regardless of tenure, in line with the National Design Guide.³²

What Is Not Included?

- 3.3.5 Spaces that are not usable, beneficial and enjoyable to residents are not typically included as amenity space. Typical exclusions from area calculations may include, but not be limited to:

- Unusable space e.g. thin strips of planting, though these may contribute to visual amenity;
- Inaccessible, isolated or hard to reach spaces;
- Enclosed space without outlook e.g. light-wells;
- Space abutting residential windows and facades;
- Defensible space and planted buffers, though these may contribute to visual amenity;
- Paths or circulation space bounding an amenity space;
- Sloped areas, though these may contribute to visual amenity; and
- Exposed areas e.g. areas that are exposed to high levels of traffic movement and thus poor noise and air quality unless that can be adequately mitigated

3.3.6 Buffer zones and thresholds between private and communal amenity spaces are not counted in the qualifying area. They will however, be considered in determining the privacy and quality of the spaces they bound.

Visual Amenity

3.3.7 Areas considered as visual amenity are not included in communal amenity space area calculations. They may contribute to the overall visual amenity if details are provided to evidence the quality of these spaces.

Privately Owned Public Space

3.3.8 Privately owned public space (POPS) is not counted in the communal amenity space calculation. It may however be used to support the justification for a lower provision of amenity space. It has potential benefits for quality of life, community and green infrastructure (see **Section 5.4**).

Contextual and Qualitative Assessment

3.3.9 All assessments are made in the context of the site, scheme and wider area. They will take account of the benefits and the specific factors which are relevant on a case-by-case basis.

3.3.10 Examples of areas not typically included, but that may be considered acceptable subject to the design are:

- Front gardens: if deemed sufficiently private and of suitable quality, through factors such as; significant separation from the street, positions of entrances and access routes and boundary treatment e.g. the height of walls; and
- Spaces within proximity of highways: dependent on noise and privacy.

London Plan Policy D6 Housing quality and standards

Communal outside amenity spaces should:

- Provide sufficient space to meet the requirements of the number of residents;
- Be designed to be easily accessed from all related dwellings;
- Be located to be appreciated from the inside;
- Be positioned to allow overlooking;
- Be designed to support an appropriate balance of informal social activity;
- Provide play opportunities for various age groups; and
- Meet the changing and diverse needs of different occupiers.

London Plan Policy D5 Inclusive design

Development proposal should achieve the highest standards of accessible and inclusive design. They should:

- 1) Be designed taking into account London's diverse population
- 2) Provide high quality people focused spaces that are designed to facilitate social interaction and inclusion
- 3) Be convenient and welcoming with no disabling barriers, providing independent access without additional undue effort, separation or special treatment
- 4) Be able to be entered, used and exited safely, easily and with dignity for all; and
- 5) Be designed to incorporate safe and dignified emergency evacuation for all building users.

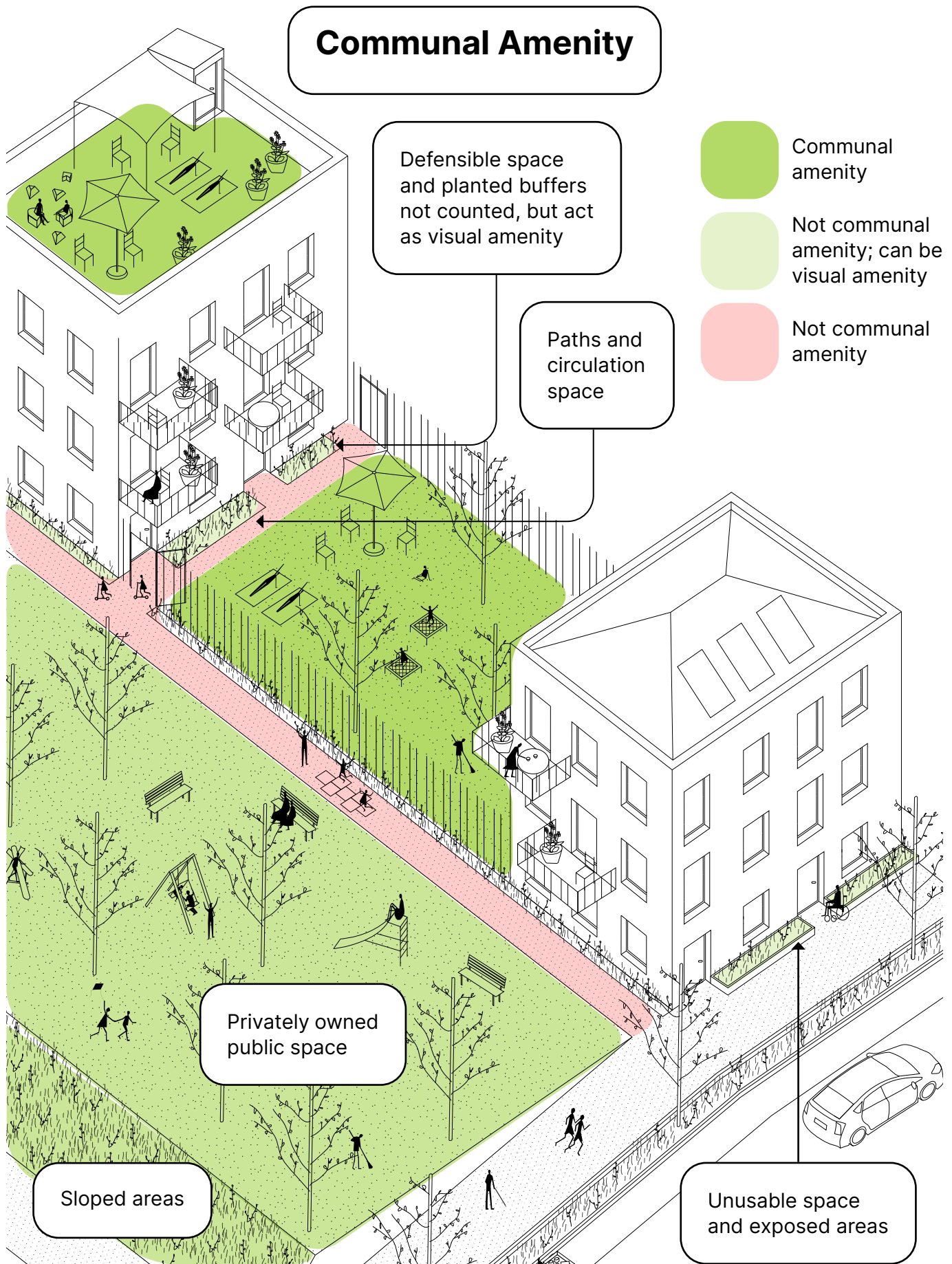


Figure 5: Examples of what is and is not communal amenity space

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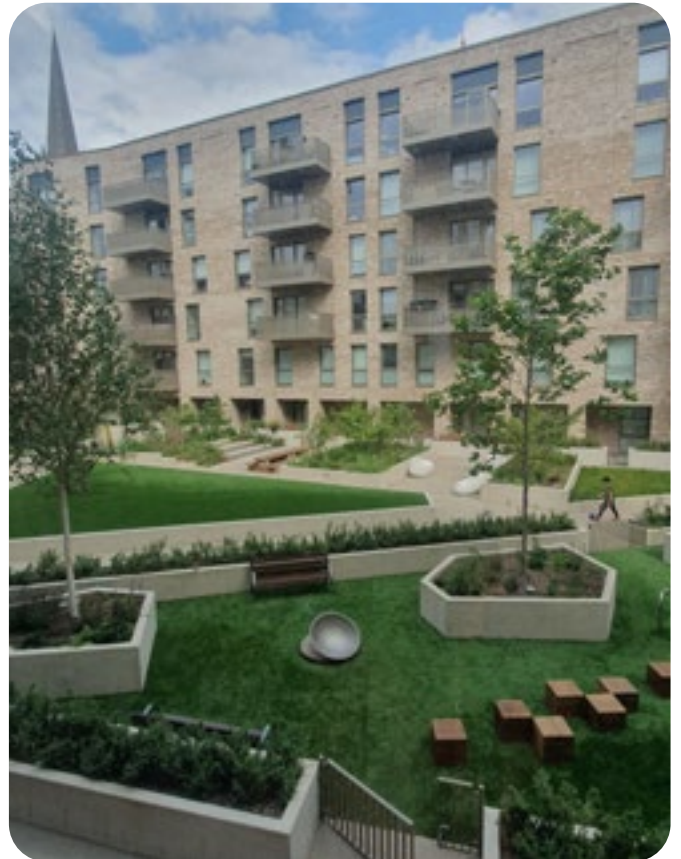


Figure 6: Examples of privately owned public space and communal amenity space

Privately owned public space:
Visual appeal, sensory and active design, and play

Views to communal space from a balcony; balconies have a slatted balustrade to provide screening and privacy

Private and Communal Amenity

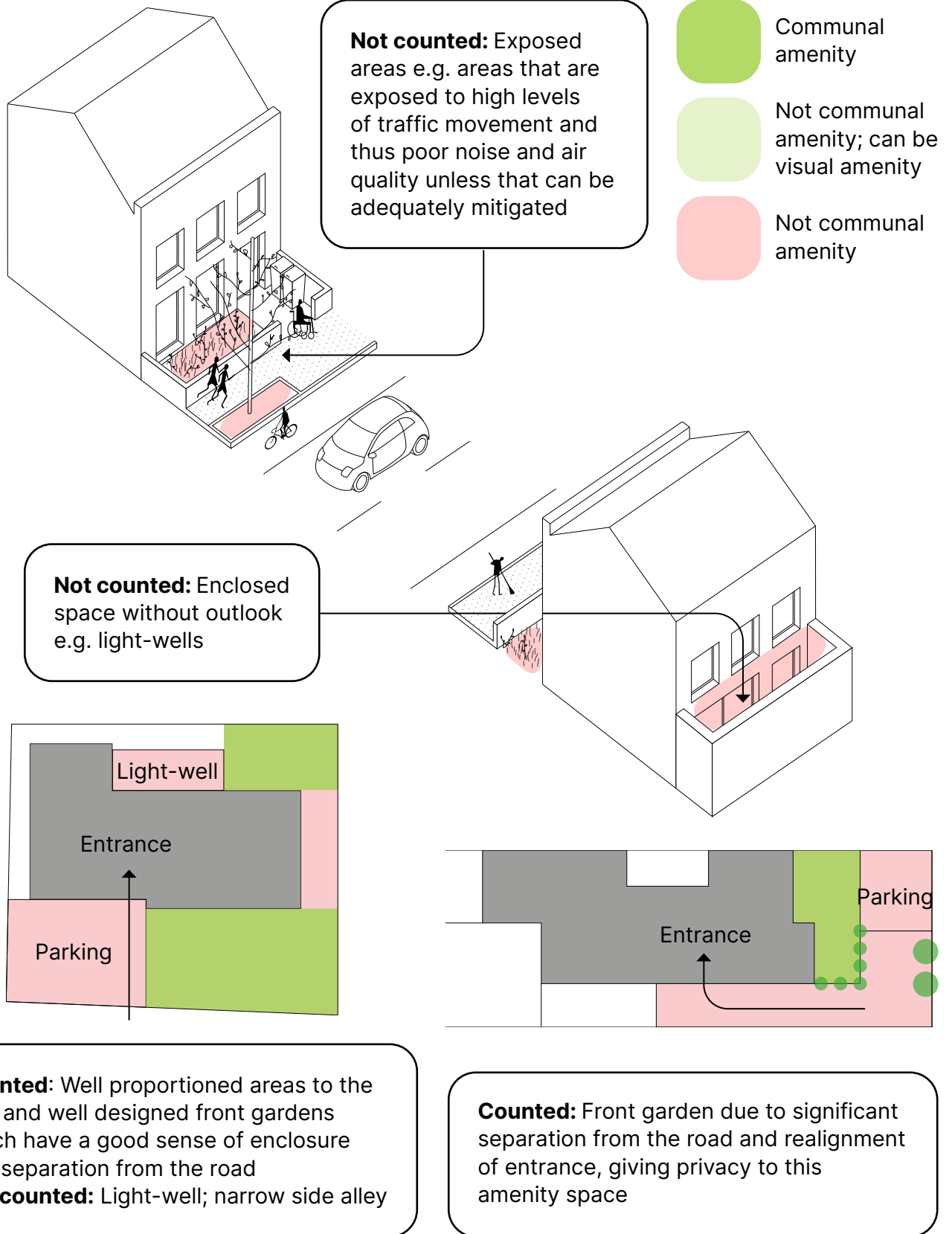
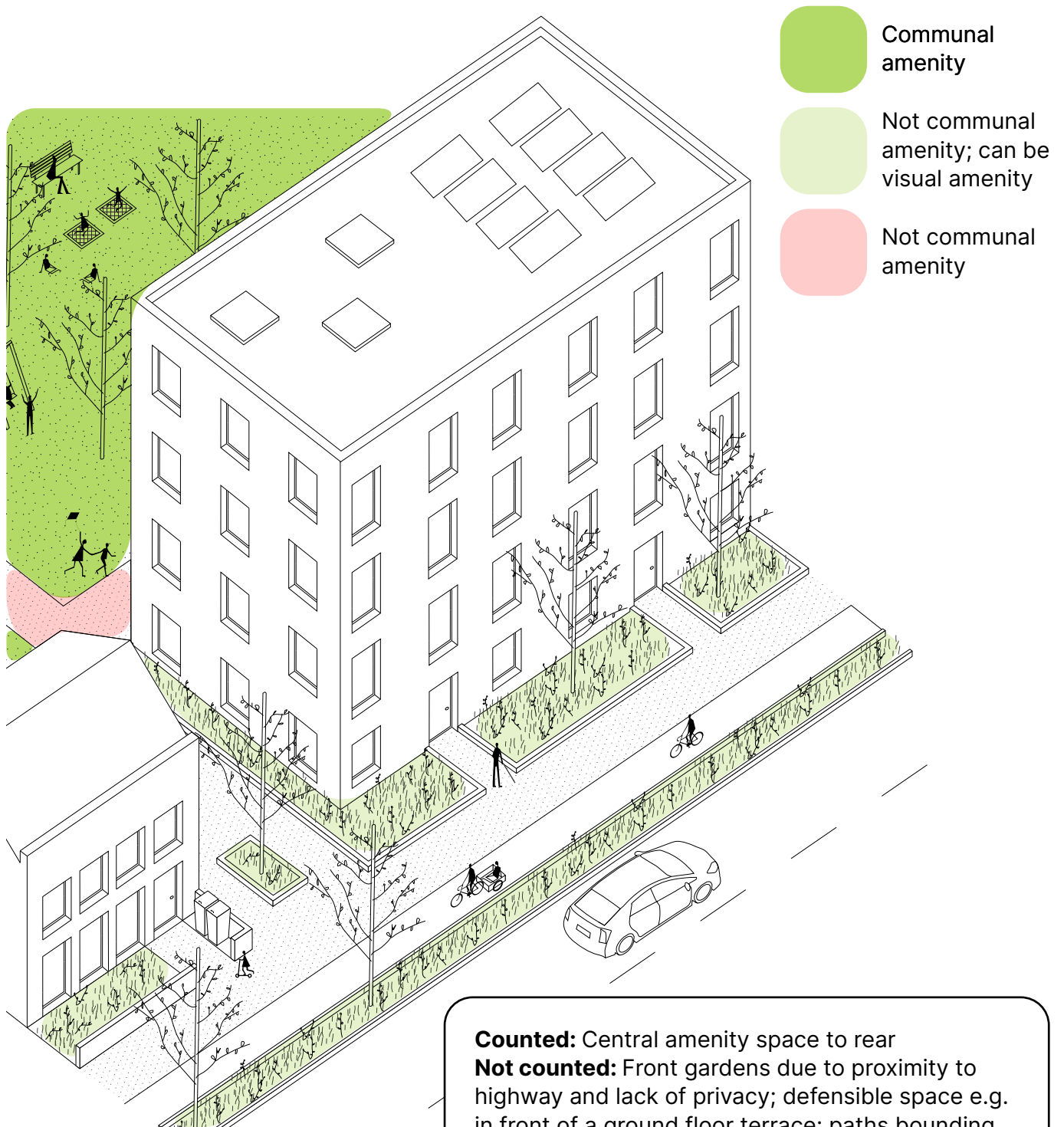


Figure 7: What counts as private and communal amenity space?

Private and Communal Amenity



Counted: Central amenity space to rear
Not counted: Front gardens due to proximity to highway and lack of privacy; defensible space e.g. in front of a ground floor terrace; paths bounding a central amenity space; and spaces abutting windows - this is considered defensible space, but could contribute to visual amenity and biodiversity/urban greening

Figure 8: What counts as private and communal amenity space?

3.4 Environmental Requirements

- 3.4.1 Environmental factors, such as light, noise and air quality affect the usability of private and communal amenity spaces. They should help define the appropriate size, shape and position of these spaces.³³

Daylight and Sunlight

- 3.4.2 There is a strong body of research supporting the benefits of natural light for healthy living. Light has been shown to have direct effects on mood, cognition, alertness, performance, and sleep.³⁴ Brent Local Plan Policy BH13 states that amenity space should be designed to take maximum advantage of daylight and sunlight. It is expected to be sufficient to allow comfortable use and enjoyment of private and communal amenity spaces. Where the design of development has the potential to restrict light to amenity spaces e.g. if the amenity space is constrained or enclosed by high walls, a daylight and sunlight assessment may be required to demonstrate the quality will be sufficiently high.

Minor Development (under 10 dwellings)

- 3.4.3 Private and communal amenity spaces should be optimised for daylight and sunlight.

Major and Strategic Development (10 or above dwellings)

- 3.4.4 Brent supports the use of 'Site Layout planning for daylight and sunlight: a guide to good practice' produced by the BRE (BRE209). These guidelines recommend that at least half of a garden or open space can receive at least two hours of direct sunlight on March 21st. This is a minimum expectation and developments that exceed this target are encouraged.
- 3.4.5 The design of external communal amenity space should be planned so that seating areas or play spaces are located in the areas most likely to receive sunlight.

Noise

- 3.4.6 Exposure to noise pollution can have detrimental effects on health and the enjoyment of amenity spaces. Research has shown that noise levels below the hearing damaging criterion can still cause annoyance, sleep disturbance, cognitive impairment, stress reactions and cardiovascular disorders.³⁵ The acoustic environment of amenity spaces should be considered so that they can be used and enjoyed as intended.

- 3.4.7 Design principles to mitigate noise³⁶ can include:
- Reducing the impact of adjoining activities or the local environment's noise e.g. the orientation and/or location of amenity space;
 - Incorporating noise barriers and screening;
 - Optimising the sound insulation provided by the building envelope or green infrastructure; and
 - Glazed, ventilated winter-gardens or recessed balconies.
- 3.4.8 The adverse impact of noise on any private external amenity space may be partially offset if residents are provided with access to a relatively quiet³⁷ alternative or additional external amenity space. This can either be for sole use by a dwelling or group of dwellings. Acceptable alternatives include a garden, roof garden or large open balcony in a different, protected, location.
- 3.4.9 A planning condition may be required for external amenity spaces to be designed in accordance with BS 8233:2014 'Guidance on sound insulation and noise reduction for buildings'. This will seek to attain a maximum noise level of 55dB LAeq (1hr) between 07:00 and 23:00.
- 3.4.10 However, the BS 8233:2014 guideline values may not be achievable in all circumstances. In these cases, outdoor noise levels should not necessarily be a reason to not provide external amenity space, but it should be designed to achieve the lowest practicable noise levels.
- 3.4.11 Where a development is likely to be exposed to high levels of noise, applicants are encouraged to engage with the council at pre-application stage.

Air Quality

- 3.4.12 London Plan 2021 Policy SI 1 (B) requires that development proposals use design solutions to prevent or minimise increased exposure to existing air pollution. This should address local problems of air quality at the outset in preference to post-design or retrofitted mitigation measures. All major developments are required to carry out an Air Quality Assessment.
- 3.4.13 Green infrastructure can be used to protect residents from ambient pollution.³⁸ Careful consideration of orientation and location of amenity spaces can also minimise exposure to air pollution.
- 3.4.14 Children are especially vulnerable to the health effects of poor air quality. Play spaces, especially for younger children, should therefore be located to minimise exposure to pollution.

Environmental Requirements

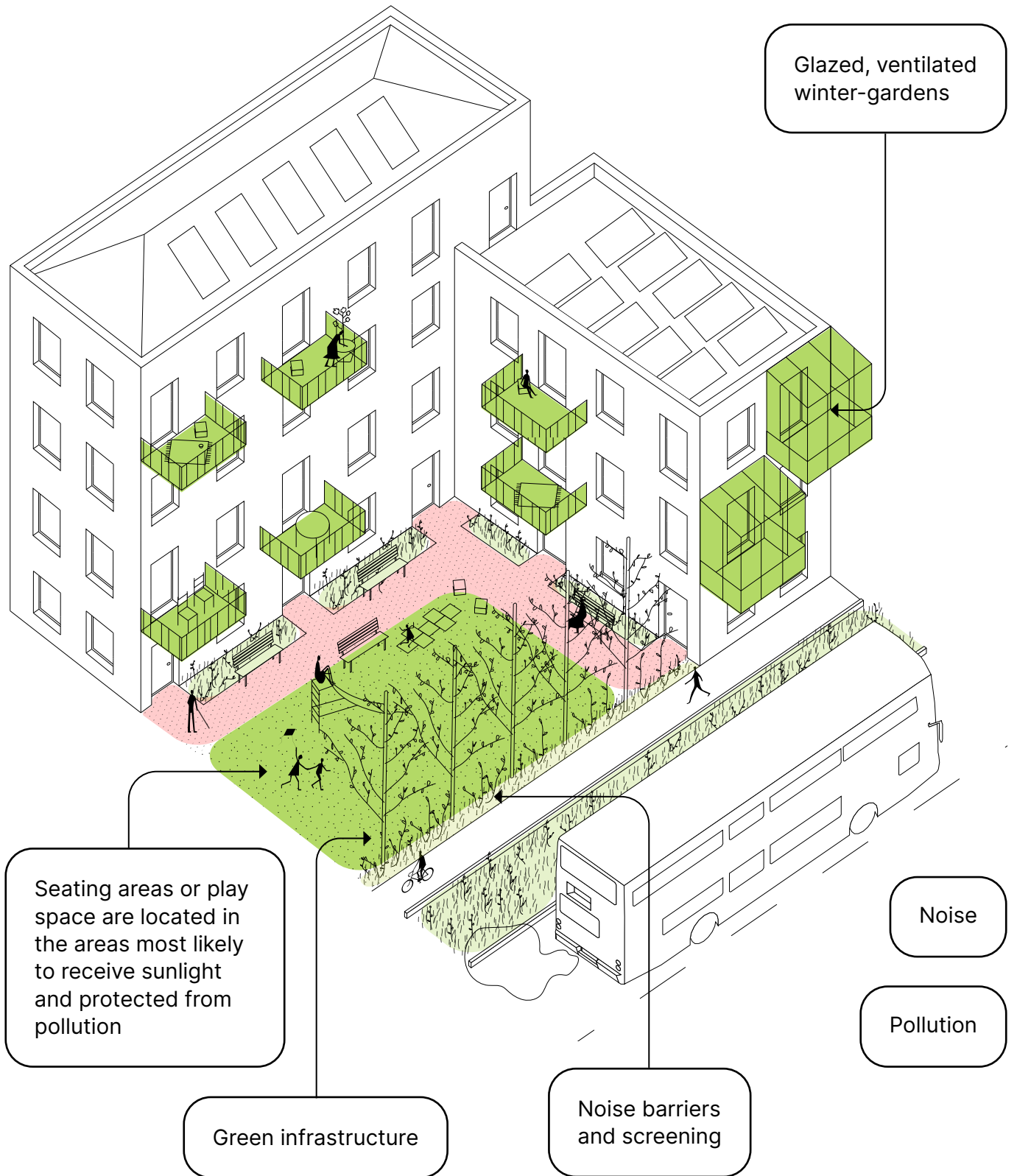


Figure 9: Examples of environmental requirements

Residential Amenity Space and Place Quality SPD

3.5 Stewardship, Management and Maintenance

- 3.5.1 Quality, design and maintenance are important factors in people's perceptions of amenity spaces. Each may impact the extent to which social benefits are realised. Studies show that well-designed and well-maintained green spaces can help to reduce antisocial behaviour, while those that aren't tend to do the opposite.⁵¹
- 3.5.2 In turn, evidence indicates that the health benefits of green space are dependent on people's feelings of safety and the behaviour of other users.⁵² The aim should be to maximise the potential for community and social ties within an amenity space. Contributing factors such as activities, versatility, maintenance, facilities and access need to be considered.⁵³

Management and Maintenance Plan

- 3.5.3 The council may expect management and maintenance plans for communal amenity spaces to be set out and may apply planning conditions for landscape. This will depend on the scale, context and nature of a scheme. Management can create a positive user experience for those living in a development. The plans should confirm that the quality and value of amenity space is achieved and sustained in the long-term.

High Density Developments

- 3.5.4 London Plan Policy D4 Delivering good design states that higher density residential developments should demonstrate their ongoing sustainability in terms of servicing, maintenance and management. Specifically, details should be provided of day-to-day servicing and deliveries, longer-term maintenance implications and the long-term affordability of running costs and service charges (by different types of occupiers).

Social Tension and Anti-Social Behaviour

- 3.5.5 Points of possible social tension resulting from urban density should be identified through robust design appraisals at the design stage. This could include noise from open spaces disturbing adjacent residents. Defensible space and buffer zones should be provided to facades with residential windows. Planted screening may minimise potential conflict between different users. Screening should be in balance with daylight and sunlight considerations.
- 3.5.6 Spaces that appear un-maintained may lead to them feeling hostile and unsafe, impacting their enjoyment or usability. Therefore a management plan can sustain the quality and positive use of amenity spaces over time.

Community Ownership and Participation

3.5.7 Management plans that support community involvement are encouraged as this can build the positive use of spaces. It can also foster a sense of ownership and pride of place by enabling different people to meet and different generations to mix.

3.5.8 Developments are encouraged to include:

- Opportunities for community involvement;
- Mechanisms for responding to community needs; and
- Clear processes and policies for accommodating community uses and events where appropriate.

Community Gardening and Food Growing

3.5.9 Community gardening and food growing projects are encouraged. These can build on the success of projects across the borough. They can also support the future sustainability of food aid agencies in the borough in line with the Brent Poverty Commission recommendations.³⁹

Community Programming

3.5.10 For larger schemes, active community programming⁴⁰ can help build momentum around a new development. It can encourage local collaboration and a sense of welcome. Bringing new and existing communities together can celebrate cultural richness, improve health and wellbeing, and reduce social isolation.

3.6 Development Types and Submissions

- 3.6.1 Brent covers both inner and outer London areas. It has a wide range of types and sizes of developments. These span a range of different contexts, such as suburban locations, town centres and Growth Areas, as designated in the Brent Local Plan. This guidance sets out different levels of planning application submission requirements for different development types. This is in proportion to their potential impacts and benefits for residents and the local community.

Minor Development

Relates to developments of under 10 dwellings.

Please refer to **Section 4** for guidance and submission requirements.

Major and Strategic Development

Relates to developments of 10 or above dwellings. Due to the high potential impacts and benefits on residents' quality of life, the attainment of high-quality amenity space is required. This is particularly important when the private amenity space area requirements are not met. High quality is defined by the Place Quality Toolkit.

Please refer to **Section 5** and **Section 6** for guidance and submission requirements.

Contextual and Qualitative Assessment

- 3.6.2 All assessments are made in the context of the site, scheme and wider area, balancing the benefits and specific factors that are relevant on a case-by-case basis.

4. Minor Development

4.1 Requirements

- 4.1.1 New build minor developments, conversions and change of use applications under 10 dwellings will be assessed against the following criteria and submission requirements. Conversions and change of use above 10 dwellings will usually be assessed against the requirements of **Section 5**.
- 4.1.2 Any landscaping of the amenity space should be defined as part of the proposal. Areas of hard and soft landscaping, and boundary and threshold treatments must be identified. Communal amenity spaces are expected to be designed by a landscape architect.

Private Space

- Must provide 50sqm for a three bedroom ground floor dwelling or 20sqm for all other dwellings of private amenity per dwelling to the requirements of **Section 2**;
- Maximise, but as a minimum provide the London Plan area equivalent of private amenity space, with remaining policy area requirement provided as high-quality communal amenity space to the requirements of **Section 2**. The shortfall must be considered for each dwelling, including when communal amenity spaces are the only spaces accessible to some.

Constrained Sites and Mitigation Factors

- Internal space provision and quality must exceed the minimum area standards and not be considered adverse living conditions; and
- Development must be within a safe 400m walk of open space, which is of a suitable size and type appropriate for the future residents' needs.

Loss of Open or Green Space:

- Expected to be mitigated by compensatory measures. E.g. the re-provision of green or open space as additional high quality amenity space, optimising the urban greening of the site to achieve minimum score of 0.4 or higher.

Planning Application Submission Requirements

- Amenity Space Quality Statement (for minor development);
- Amenity space area schedule; and
- Amenity space key plan with area boundaries and reference numbers.

Table 2: Requirements for minor developments

Residential Amenity Space and Place Quality SPD

Amenity Space Quality Statement (Minor Development)

Please provide a statement answering the following questions, supported by an Amenity Space Area Schedule and key plan

Step 1: Is the policy area requirement achieved for private amenity?

Yes

No

Step 2: Does the area of private amenity space meet London Plan standards as a minimum? Does the communal amenity space meet the requirements of Section 2 of this SPD?

Yes

No

Step 3: Confirm if the total area requirement is achieved for private and communal amenity combined?

Step 3: Confirm the area shortfall and justification of mitigating factors

E.g. Does the internal living space exceed minimum space standards and not result in adverse living conditions? Provide details of areas and quality of space

And/Or

Residential Amenity Space and Place Quality SPD

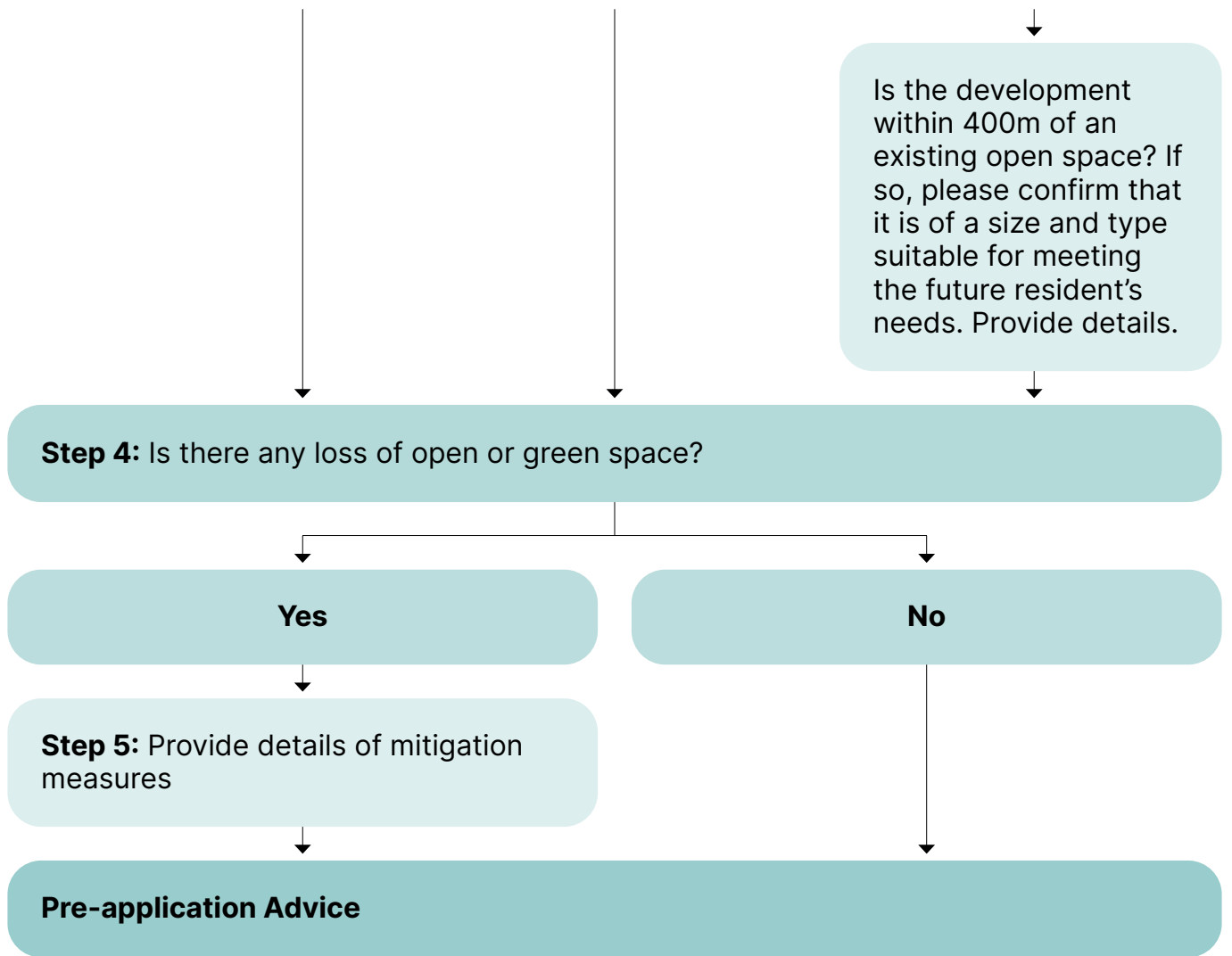


Table 3: Amenity Space Quality Statement process

4.1.3 To indicate how the Amenity Space Quality Statement process is followed for minor development, a worked example is included in **Table 4** based on the indicative floor plan shown in **Figure 10**.

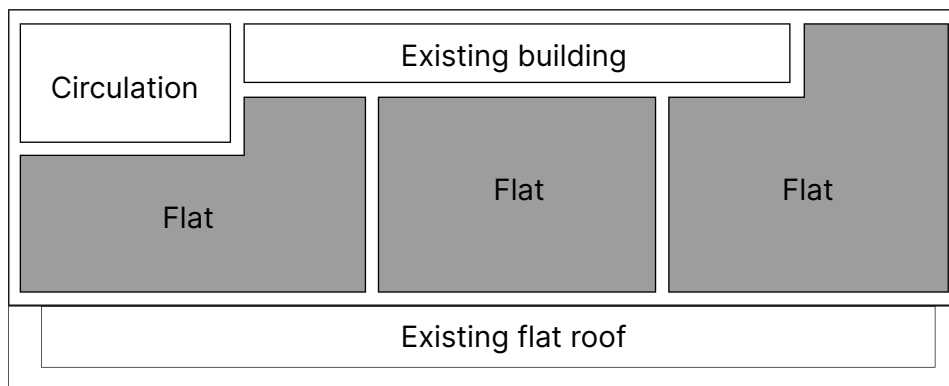


Figure 10: Indicative floor plan for conversion of an existing building

Amenity Space Quality Statement (Minor Development)

Please provide a statement answering the following questions, supported by an Amenity Space Area Schedule and key plan

Step 1: Is the policy area requirement achieved for private amenity?

Yes

No

Step 2: Does the area of private amenity space meet London Plan standards as a minimum? Does the communal amenity space meet the requirements of Section 2 of this SPD?

Yes

No, London Plan minimum of 5sqm not met; no communal amenity provided

Step 3: Confirm if the total area requirement is achieved for private and communal amenity combined?

Step 3: Confirm the area shortfall and justification of mitigating factors

No mitigating factors set out; only minimum internal living space areas provided

And/Or

Residential Amenity Space and Place Quality SPD

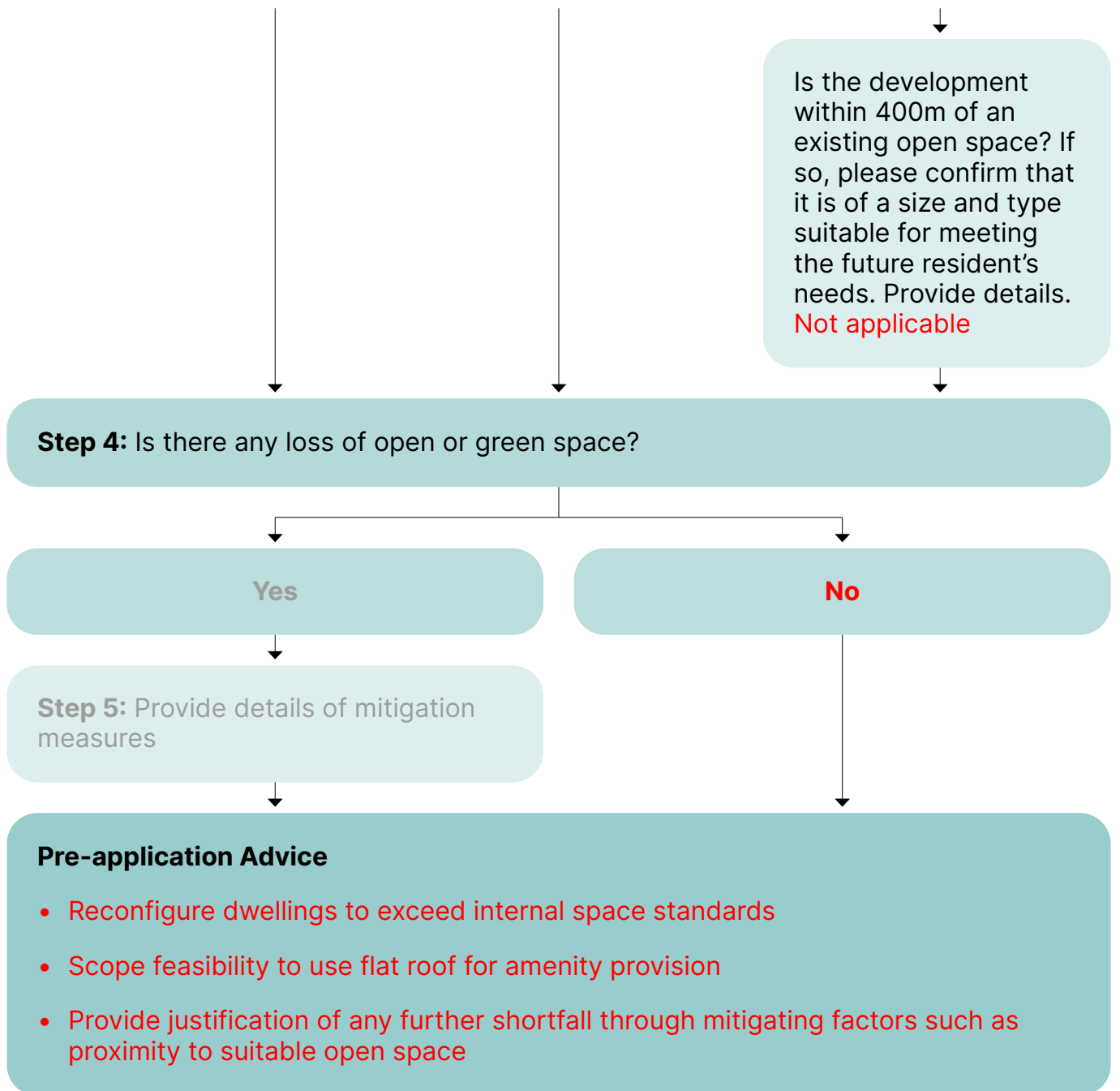


Table 4: Amenity Space Quality Statement worked example

Case Study (Minor Development)

Rokesby Place, Brent (22/1400)

- Infill scheme of two new homes
- High quality amenity space provided
- Requirement to balance the loss of green space



High quality communal amenity:

- Shared garden
- Buffer and planting zone for privacy
- Pedestrian-friendly design
- Boundary wall has increased planting



Pre-application advice:

- Loss of landscaping
- Maximise opportunities to re-provide soft landscaping
- Reduce hard standings and mitigate rear patio gardens by providing usable front gardens
- Optimise urban greening of the site



Figure 11: Examples from Rokesby Place DAS and Landscape Design Report

5. Major Development & Place Quality Framework

5.1 Overview

- 5.1.1 This section provides further guidance on the expectations for major and strategic development, including conversions or change of use applications of at least 10 dwellings. It sets out the definition for high quality communal amenity space when there is a shortfall of private amenity space against the requirements of Brent Local Plan Policy BH13.
- 5.1.2 Due to the high potential impacts and benefits to residents' quality of life, the assessment of amenity space for these schemes is defined by the Place Quality Framework and Toolkit. This section also provides further guidance on the qualitative expectations for Policy BD1 Leading the way in good urban design.

Private Space

- Must provide 50sqm for a three bedroom ground floor dwelling or 20sqm for all other dwellings of private amenity per dwelling to the requirements of **Section 2**;
- Where it is not possible, maximise, but as a minimum provide the London Plan area equivalent of private amenity space, with the remaining policy area requirement provided as high-quality communal amenity space to the requirements of **Section 2**, **Section 5** and **Section 6** as relevant;
- Any shortfalls will be considered for each dwelling and the accessibility of communal spaces.

High Quality Communal Amenity:

- Provide an Amenity Space Quality Statement, which demonstrates how it is designed for quality of life outcomes using the Place Quality Toolkit;
- Provide a supporting evidence base of drawings.

Mitigation Factors

- See **Section 5.7**

Planning Application Submission Requirements

- See **Section 5.4**

Key Concepts

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires planning policies and decisions to ensure that developments:

“Create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and wellbeing, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users”⁵⁴

The Building Better, Building Beautiful Commission recommends that:

“New developments should enhance the environment in which they occur, adding to the health, sustainability and biodiversity of their context”

A **healthy city** is one that continually creates and improves its physical and social environments. It expands the community resources that enable people to mutually support each other in performing all the functions of life and developing to their maximum potential.

World Health Organisation

The Commission’s overarching recommendation is that **‘health creation’**, also known as interventions positively improving health and wellbeing, should be the determining factor for built environment, planning and placemaking policies.

What Creates Healthy Cities? Commission on Creating Healthy Cities 2022

The **social determinants of health** are the non-medical factors that influence health outcomes. They are the conditions in which people are born, grow, work, live and age, and the wider set of forces and systems shaping the conditions of daily life.

World Health Organisation

5.2

Place Quality Framework



Figure 12: Place Quality Framework and Toolkit

Framework
 Structure of qualitative impacts, criteria and outcomes for people’s experience of the built and natural environment

Toolkit
 Process and method for shaping places to the qualitative outcomes, through a range of different design considerations

Indicators
 Specific design measures which demonstrate how the qualitative outcomes are achieved in a place



What is the Framework and Toolkit?

- 5.2.1 The Place Quality Framework and Toolkit set out the council's expectations for high quality design. They have been shaped in response to Brent's Good Growth vision, Corporate Strategy (the Borough Plan) and Local Plan Policy BD1. They can be used to assess the quality of external and internal communal amenity spaces, and public spaces where a scheme is reliant on this to mitigate amenity space policy shortfalls under Brent Local Plan Policy BH13.
- 5.2.2 The overall framework has three dimensions of impact and nine qualitative criteria or outcomes based on human experience considerations.⁴¹ These criteria act as "building blocks" for people-focused places and the Place Quality Toolkit (see **Table 5 and Section 5.5**). The toolkit includes a set of example design considerations focused on quality of life. They are prompts and questions to establish expectations, shared values and common benchmarks for quality. Applicants are required to demonstrate how qualitative outcomes are achieved by identifying specific design measures, or Place Quality Indicators; examples of these indicators are included.
- 5.2.3 The overall framework has been shaped to address Brent's local priorities and principles of empowerment, social sustainability and equity. The qualitative criteria bring together recommendations from national guidance into a new tool for implementation. Some aspects go beyond existing guidance, by drawing on leading practice.
- 5.2.4 Users are encouraged to refer to other guidance documents such as:
- Healthy Streets indicators - TfL
 - Building For a Healthy Life - Homes England
 - Quality of Life Framework - Quality of Life Foundation
 - *Design codes and health. Companion guide to the National Model Design Code on health improvement and disparities – OHID (due to be published early 2023)*
- 5.2.5 The Place Quality Framework helps those involved in designing and assessing development proposals to consider the qualitative aspects of places. This is both in relation to their direct and indirect impacts on people's lives. This tool is purposefully open-ended rather than a prescriptive checklist of features or a scoring system. This is because a combination of "good" features does not necessarily make a well-designed place if not carefully and cohesively considered.⁴² Good design requires more time, analysis and thought.⁴³
- 5.2.6 This framework provides a common reference point for good design. It goes beyond physical form and visual aesthetics to prioritise people-focused outcomes and measures of success. Healthy and inclusive shared places can support equity in many ways and ensure the benefits of growth are balanced across communities.

5.2.7 The Place Quality Toolkit should help structure pre-application discussions and design reviews to ensure wide-ranging considerations are covered in the round. The toolkit should also be used to frame discussions with communities about their places, needs, aspirations when developing proposals.

5.2.8 The toolkit is:

- A basis for qualitative assessment addressing specific criteria;
- Expected to be used by applicants to demonstrate design quality through quality of life considerations; and
- Not meant to be diminished in its role to simply a checklist or scoring system.

5.2.9 Four practical tools have been developed (see **Section 5.5**):

Place Quality Tool A: First Principles

Place Quality Tool B: Health and Wellbeing

Place Quality Tool C: Community and Belonging

Place Quality Tool D: Vibrant and Inclusive Places

Where to Use the Toolkit?

5.2.10 People-focused design considerations are expected to be integrated into the design process from the start. In case of shortfalls in the provision of private amenity space, Brent Local Plan Policy BH13 prioritises the provision of external communal amenity space. However, the provision and quality of internal communal amenity space can also be a mitigating factor. Where public space is proposed as a mitigating factor, the toolkit should also be used to demonstrate quality. The hierarchy of value and mitigating factors is set out in **Table 8**.

Masterplans

The appropriate size, shape and position for an external amenity space should be considered as part of the first principles of design in terms of how it meets residents' needs

External Amenity Spaces

The design of external amenity spaces should be considered through the perspective of quality of life outcomes, both direct and indirect

Public Spaces

Spaces that are also open to the community foster positive social interactions and increase residents' sense of trust and belonging

Internal Amenity Spaces

The entrance space, common areas and circulation of a building affects people's experience of their home. It can help people feel proud of where they live, and encourage social interaction. Shared areas outside and within buildings should be designed as places that residents feel are intended for use by them

What are the Dimensions of the Toolkit?

Health and Wellbeing

- 5.2.11 This dimension considers how places can support physical and mental wellbeing directly. This can include spaces that are restorative by reducing stress and improving mood. Examples can be green spaces,⁴⁴ tranquil spaces or spaces designed with biophilic design principles.⁴⁵ There is a significant body of evidence linking contact and exposure to the natural environment with improved health and wellbeing.⁴⁶ The benefits of green space are particularly important in Brent's areas of open space deficiency, deprivation and health inequalities.
- 5.2.12 Visual amenity and the attractiveness of places impacts wellbeing and the positive experience of a place. People's sense of ownership and influence over their environment also impacts health and wellbeing. For example, a greater sense of control over our lives and local environment is associated with healthier behaviours, greater psychological wellbeing and increased social connectedness.⁴⁷



Community and Belonging

- 5.2.13 Amenity space provides a setting for social interaction, which studies have shown can reduce isolation and loneliness.⁴⁸ Shared spaces can be used to build familiarity and a sense of commonality among residents. Green spaces can support bringing communities together. For a sense of community to take root in a neighbourhood, it is important to consider how a sense of identity and belonging is developed.
- 5.2.14 This dimension considers the importance of places that encourage casual encounters between the people that spend time there. Good design enables social interaction, builds social capital or sustained ties between people, and supports resilience. This is important particularly for high-rise, high density and Build to Rent developments in Brent (see **Section 6**). This dimension also focuses on how community and a sense of place can be supported by “wonder”,⁴⁹ and a strong character and identity, and how these factors support developing pride of place.



Vibrant and Inclusive Places

- 5.2.15 Amenity spaces can act as places for social integration by catering to a broad demographic spectrum. These spaces can facilitate both formal and informal interactions. These can be between people from different ages and cultural backgrounds, and this can in turn lead to increased social cohesion and inclusion. This is important in Brent, where there are high levels of diversity across the population. This dimension considers the needs of specific users, including children, young people, women and older people. It includes how places can be accessible and welcoming, feel safe, support vibrancy and connect new and existing communities together.
- 5.2.16 Social integration is the extent to which people positively interact and connect with others who are different to themselves. It is determined by the level of equality between people, the nature of their relationships, and their degree of participation in the communities in which they live. Amenity space, as shared space, can enable people to have more opportunities to connect with each other positively and meaningfully, support people to play an active part in their communities, and reduce barriers and inequalities.⁵⁰



What is the Process?

5.2.17 The framework sets out the components and steps to consider in preparing the required planning application submission material; an Amenity Space Quality Statement (see **Section 5.4**).

Place Quality Tool A

Context and User-Focused First Principles

Socio-economic and cultural context: An informed understanding of the levels of needs of different communities and specific groups must be reflected in the design, quality and provision of amenity space. Development will be expected to respond to local challenges of inequalities and the potential opportunities in Brent.

User-focused first principles: The tool should be used to describe how the overall strategy for amenity space is high quality with respect to supporting people's quality of life.

Place Quality Tools B, C & D

Quality of Life Dimensions and Criteria

Health and Wellbeing

Community and Belonging

Vibrant and Inclusive Places

Quality of life dimensions and criteria: These tools should be used to describe the specific qualitative benefits of the space and assist with defining Place Quality Indicators for individual spaces.

Levels of good practice and aspiration: The toolkit defines levels of baseline, good and leading practice. Innovation and careful attention to these factors is welcomed.

Green Infrastructure and Sustainability Co-Benefits (see **Section 2.3**)

Design that brings together several positive outcomes is encouraged (see also **Section 5.3**).

Place Quality Framework and Toolkit Overview

Baseline

Good Practice

Leading Practice

Context and User-Focused First Principles

Quality of Life Dimensions and Criteria

Health and Wellbeing

Community and Belonging

Vibrant and Inclusive Places

Comfortable, Active and Relaxing Places

Distinctive Places

Safe, Legible, Welcoming Places

Attractive, Restorative, Natural Places

Sociable Places

Lively, Integrated, Equitable Places

Usable, Cared For, Empowering Places

Places that Build Community

Places for Different User Needs

Green Infrastructure and Sustainability Co-Benefits

Table 5: Place Quality Framework and Toolkit building blocks

5.3 Place Quality Priorities

- 5.3.1 The following aspects are particularly encouraged due to the multiple co-benefits they bring across different challenges and outcomes.

Green Space and Green Infrastructure

- 5.3.2 Green spaces and green infrastructure play a key role for both residents' quality of life and sustainability. There are significant co-benefits (see Section 3.2 of the emerging Sustainable Environment and Development SPD).

Community Gardening and Food Growing

- 5.3.3 Public Health England guidance identifies that allotment gardening may result in numerous positive physical and mental health-related impacts and outcomes.⁵¹ Community gardens provide similar benefits. They allow new opportunities for people to meet their neighbours, building a sense of community around the garden, and improving social capital or value.⁵² In the context of food poverty, they can provide access to fresh food and encourage healthy eating (see Chapter 3 of the emerging Sustainable Environment and Development SPD for further details).

Social Interaction

- 5.3.4 In high-rise, high density and Build to Rent development, social interaction is more typically difficult to achieve organically.⁵³ In this context, the qualities of internal communal spaces can be particularly important in supporting neighbourliness and building community (see **Section 6**).

Children and Young People

- 5.3.5 The places where children and young people spend their time are vitally important for their development and wellbeing. Shared spaces can support them in feeling a sense of ownership, belonging, safety, pride and possibility for the future. Good design can be welcoming to allow them to equally enjoy communal spaces and support their wellbeing.

Vibrant and Inclusive Places

- 5.3.6 This high-level dimension addresses the needs of different types of people and how they can be brought together in places holistically. It includes considering new and existing communities, disadvantaged groups and more vulnerable residents.



Residential Amenity Space and Place Quality SPD

5.4 Planning Application Submission Material

- 5.4.1 The Place Quality Toolkit should be used to prepare an Amenity Space Quality Statement that covers design considerations from the overall strategy to the details of the spaces. It should be accompanied by:
- A key plan clearly identifying each space and the area considered amenity space;
 - An amenity space area schedule; and
 - An accompanying evidence base of drawings.
- 5.4.2 The drawings submitted should be based on the material that would usually form part of a Design & Access Statement or landscape design statement. The scale and nature of the scheme will ultimately dictate the amount of material submitted. It would usually be expected to include masterplan concept diagrams, views of spaces, plan diagrams and other types of drawings normally used to explain the design quality of a scheme.
- 5.4.3 Submissions should be proportionate to the scale of the scheme. Larger schemes are expected to provide more information and details. For example, a Large Major development (50 to 149 homes) will require more information than a Small Major development (10 to 24 homes).
- 5.4.4 Submission drawings are to be marked or annotated with Place Quality Indicators; specific design measures in relation to the Quality of Life criteria. The example design considerations in the toolkit are provided as prompts only and are not a prescriptive checklist or guidelines of minimum expectations. Not all example design considerations may be relevant to the design, type of space and the development scale or context. Applicants are to consider how to best demonstrate high quality amenity space and to define Place Quality Indicators that are relevant to their context and aspirations.

Leading Practice and Brent-Specific Place Priorities

- 5.4.5 Design approaches, considerations or indicators considered to be leading practice or addressing a Brent-specific place priority are encouraged and should be noted in the Amenity Space Quality Statement.
- 5.4.6 Applicants are to provide:

Amenity Space Quality Statement (Major Development)

Masterplan statement

Describe how the overall strategy for amenity space is high quality with respect to supporting people's quality of life. Provide a written statement that demonstrates the qualitative benefits using Tool A as a guide

Individual statements for each amenity space

Describe how the qualitative benefits of the space, using Tools B-D to assist with defining Place Quality Indicators. Please mark the accompanying submission drawings as evidence

Amenity space key plan with area boundaries and reference numbers

Supporting evidence: drawings with Place Quality Indicators marked or annotated

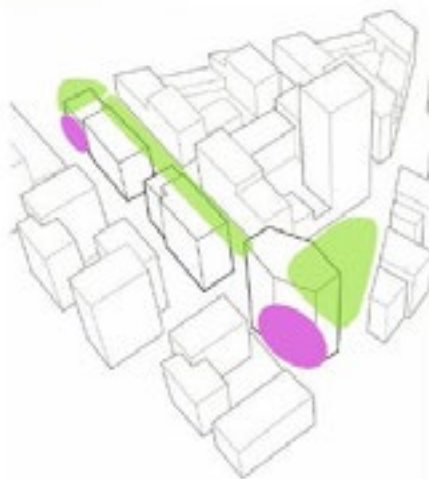
Amenity space area schedule

Table 6: Amenity Space Quality Statement checklist

Example Supporting Evidence

Masterplan statement

Describe how the overall strategy for amenity space is high quality with respect to supporting people's quality of life. Provide a written statement that demonstrates the qualitative benefits using Tool A as a guide.

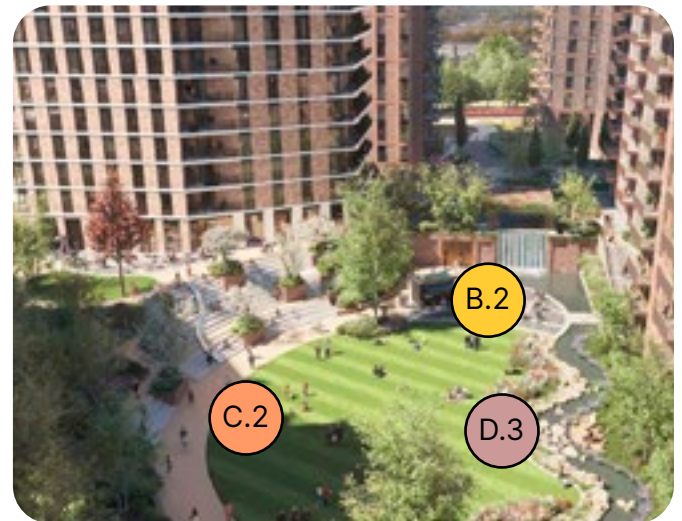
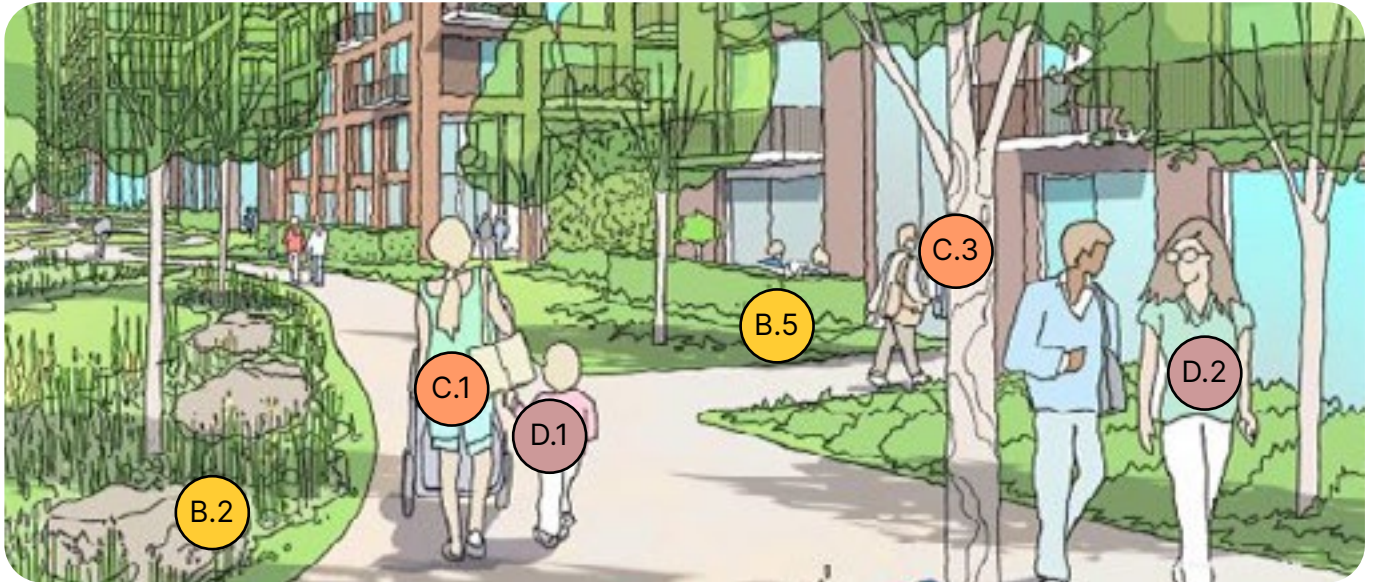


Tool A: Context and User-Focused First Principles

Figure 13: Examples of supporting evidence

Individual statements for each amenity space

Describe the qualitative benefits of the space using Tools B-D to assist with defining Place Quality Indicators. Please mark the accompanying submission drawings as evidence.



Place Quality Indicator descriptions or references to statement marked on drawings

Tool B: Health and Wellbeing

Tool C: Community and Belonging

Tool D: Vibrant and Inclusive Places

5.5 Place Quality Toolkit

Tool A: First Principles

1) Design for Specific User Needs

What is the socio-economic or cultural context of the site?

Who are the users, what are their needs?

How do the amenity spaces meet the needs of prospective residents and the full range of different type of users?

Do the amenity spaces meet the needs of the most vulnerable users? See **Tool D: Vibrant and Inclusive Places**

Is this a place for different user needs?

2) Variety, Flexibility, Character and User Journey

How is amenity space distributed across the development with respect to variety and flexibility of use, and the creation of distinctive spaces with character?

Please explain the user journey through the scheme.

3) Human Scale and Sense of Spaciousness

How does the approach to scale, size and layout promote feelings of privacy and control perceptions of density?

Does it provide a sense of spaciousness or openness?

4) Nature

How does the design of communal amenity space (external and internal as relevant) maximise access to natural and green environments?

Can residents experience nature at various scales throughout the development?

Tool A: First Principles

5) Social Integration and Connectivity

How do the amenity spaces enable residents, including those of different tenures, to connect and interact with each other and build a sense of community?

Are the amenity spaces available to all occupants?

How is neighbourhood connectivity and permeability maximised?

6) Strategic Development (150+ Dwellings)

How are smaller communities within the development being defined?

E.g. Smaller communities surrounding usable amenity spaces and several pockets of amenity space rather than one very large provision.

7) Area Shortfalls and Mitigation Factors

If the policy area requirement has not been met for private amenity space, or private and communal amenity space combined, please provide details of mitigating factors (see **Section 5.7**).

This can include:

- High quality Privately-Owned Public Space;
- High quality internal communal amenity space; and/or
- Proximity to open space - if the development is within a safe 400m walk of open space which is of a suitable size and type appropriate for meeting the future residents' needs; please provide justification.

Tool B: Health and Wellbeing

Baseline

Good Practice

Leading Practice

Is this a comfortable, active and/or relaxing place?

- How have the requirements for light, noise and air quality been addressed in the design? (See **Section 2**)
- Will the space feel appropriately peaceful or lively given the kind of shared space it is and the time of day it will be used?
- Are active design principles incorporated such as features that encourage walking?
- For internal space, is there a sense of spaciousness or visual connections between spaces? E.g. internal windows or double height space, or 'borrowed' views to outside?

Is this an attractive, restorative, natural place?

- Is there a landscape-led approach evidenced by a landscape design statement?
- How are the benefits of green and tranquil spaces being maximised?
- What are the qualities of the green spaces? Are there a wide range of natural features? E.g. planting, trees, water features, wild planting etc.
- Are there any sensory considerations?
- Are there sheltered areas for different types of weather?
- How is the amenity space and surrounding setting aesthetically and visually appealing? E.g. not bounded by blank elevations.
- Is it an interesting and engaging space to experience and spend time in?
- For internal space, have the connections to external and natural spaces been maximised?

Tool B: Health and Wellbeing

Baseline

Good Practice

Leading Practice

Is this a usable, cared for and empowering place?

- How is the space accessed by residents and how convenient is it to use in everyday life and day-to-day routines?
- Are they able input into its use? How much control and influence do they have?
- Can residents be involved in the design or maintenance of the space?
- Are residents and communities involved in co-design, co-production or engagement beyond typical consultation?
- How will the space be cared for and maintained? E.g. management, social tensions, community involvement, community gardening (see **Section 3.5**)
- Will there be any community programming to activate the space?

Leading Practice

- Are residents and communities involved in co-design, co-production or engagement beyond typical consultation?

Place Quality Indicators

Comfortable, relaxing

Quiet and peaceful courtyard for enjoyment by residents.

Unity Place, Brent



Comfortable, active, sociable

Double-height lobby creates sense of spaciousness. Visible wide staircase with regular landings encourages walking. Internal windows create spaciousness and supports social interaction between residents.

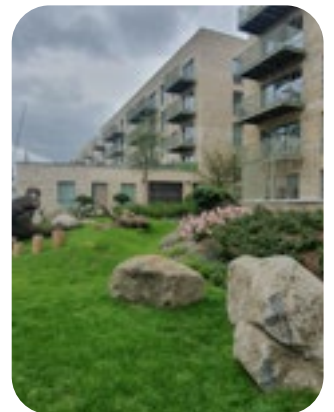
Varcoe Road, Southwark



Attractive, restorative, natural

Visual amenity, interest and appeal provided with sensory, attractive, playable landscaping.

Grand Union, Brent



Usable, cared for

Cared for and well-maintained green spaces.

Canada Gardens, Brent



Tool C: Community & Belonging

Baseline

Good Practice

Leading Practice

Is this a distinctive place?

- Does the design of the space support a sense of place for residents or visitors?
- Is it characterful, memorable or related to the local context?
- Does it celebrate local assets, characteristics or the identity of the residents?
- Does the design support pride of place and a common sense of identity?

Is this a sociable place?

- Does the design encourage people to spend time in the space?
- Are there any features that encourage dwelling? E.g. a reason to stay and pause?
- Are there any aspects that create interaction and sociability between users? E.g. shared resources or the arrangements of homes. Has social interaction been prioritised, such as communal gathering or places to sit with neighbours?

Is this a place that builds community?

- Are there factors that support building long term relationships between residents? E.g. places for shared activities? Is there a central space that acts at the “heart” of the development?
- Is a sense of belonging supported in the design?
- Are there any elements of playfulness or cultural activity?
- Are the opportunities for community gardening, including food-growing, composting and spaces that enable people to interact and work together?

Leading Practice

- Does the design go beyond sociability to create social value and social capital?

Place Quality Indicators

Distinctive, sociable

Places to sit and pause.

Unity Place, Brent

Seating orientated to activity and views.

Granary Square, Camden



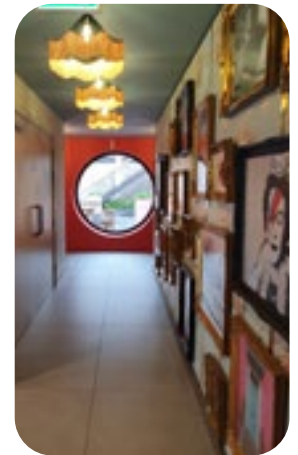
Sociable

Places to sit and talk to neighbours.

Marmalade Lane, Cambridge

Corridors with places to pause and features to look at e.g. art

Canada Gardens, Brent



Builds community

Social interaction is prioritised with shared common spaces for regular gathering and mixing generations.

La Borda Cooperative Housing, Barcelona



Builds community

Community gardening; including food-growing, composting and spaces that enable people to interact and work together

Harlesden Town Garden, Brent



Tool D: Vibrant and Inclusive Places

Baseline

Good Practice

Leading Practice

Is this a safe, legible and welcoming place?

- How is the space designed to feel safe, beyond the use of lighting or defensive measures?
- Are the spaces overlooked with clear distinction between public, semi-private and private spaces?
- Are there clear “fronts” and “backs”? How is this defined?
- Are there transition spaces between private and public space, to enable social connection?
- Is it easy for people to find their way in and around the shared space?
- How is the space designed to feel welcoming to those using it or visiting?

Is this a lively, integrated and equitable place?

- How do the ground level frontages and uses activate and enliven the space?
- Do the shared spaces connect to the wider neighbourhood and community?
- Is permeability and integration maximised?
- Does the design consider social inclusion, integration and cohesion between different groups?
- Is there opportunity for people from different walks of life to meet?
- Is it welcoming regardless of a resident’s tenure, with equitable access to the space and associated entrances and facilities?
- Is the space accessible and inclusive to different types of people and with dignity for all?
- Intergenerational: Does the space cater for people of different ages or backgrounds coming together? E.g. communal BBQ facilities
- How does the space allow different types of people to come together and interact without there being tension between different activities?

Tool D: Vibrant and Inclusive Places

Baseline

Good Practice

Leading Practice

Is this a place for different types of user needs?

- How does the design consider the needs of specific groups? Who are the groups and what are their needs?
- Has there been any consultation with specific users and demographic groups? E.g. children and young people in the design of new provision to understand their changing needs?
- Child-friendly: How are their needs integrated into the design?
- Young people: How are their needs integrated into the design?
- Are there places for young people to “hang out”, such as covered external space which can be used in all weathers
- Women and teenage girls: How is the space designed to ensure women and girls feel comfortable to use the space as well as safe at different times of day?
- Older people: How is the design age-friendly? Are there places to stop and rest?
- Protected characteristics: How does the design consider people with protected characteristics, such as disability or race?

Leading Practice

- Does the design go beyond creating “places for everyone”, to give specific consideration to a wide range of specific and identified user needs?
- Neurodiversity: How is the design responsive to a range sensory and neurological needs ? Is it informed by guidance or standards such as PAS 6463:2022 Design for the mind. Neurodiversity and the built environment? E.g. has the design been informed by sensory needs of users of the space so that it is for instance suitable for people with Alzheimer’s or Autism?
- Does the design help overcome barriers for marginalised groups?

Place Quality Indicators

Safe, legible, welcoming

Courtyard is overlooked for natural surveillance giving a sense of safety and conviviality.

Unity Place, Brent



Lively, integrated, equitable

The different areas of the park are zoned to allow a range of users to enjoy the space simultaneously and parents to keep an eye on their children from a range of vantage points.

Woodhouse Urban Park, Brent



Places for different user needs

A public space designed by young people for young people, for them to come together and relax, where they can 'just be' and a place to 'hang out' without needing to spend any money.

The design includes sheltered seating areas and a covered space for events.

Samovar Space, Brent.

Park developed in collaboration with the community and local partners; and to ensure that public space and future upkeep were designed, delivered and managed sustainably

Woodhouse Urban Park, Brent



5.6 Place Quality Assessment

5.6.1 Assessments may take into account mitigating factors and contextual considerations (see **Section 5.7**).

Score	Rationale
Excellent	<p>The submission demonstrates an exceptionally well-crafted qualitative design response. The approach to design quality and quality of life outcomes is excellent, demonstrating an innovative and progressive design concept.</p> <p>There are several examples of leading practice included and Brent place priorities addressed, demonstrating that the design goes beyond current best practice.</p> <p>The proposal demonstrates a high level of ambition which would significantly add to the Good Growth in Brent aspirations for the built environment of the borough.</p>
Good	<p>The submission demonstrates a good and well-crafted qualitative design response. The approach to design quality and quality of life outcomes, relevant policy and best practice context is clear, demonstrating that the design is equal to current best practice. The proposal relates to the Good Growth in Brent aspirations for the built environment of the borough.</p>
Unsatisfactory	<p>The submission demonstrates a design response that has limited elements that address the requirement for high quality design and quality of life. The approach to design quality outcomes, relevant policy and best practice context is partially explored, demonstrating a design concept that is not considered high quality.</p>
Poor	<p>The submission demonstrates an incomplete design response. The approach to design quality and quality of life outcomes, relevant policy and best practice context is tenuous, and the design concept is unclear.</p>
Unacceptable	<p>An appropriate understanding of the policy requirements has not been met in any form. The proposal is not clear and would detract from the aspirations for the built environment of Brent.</p>

Table 7: Amenity Space Quality Assessment criteria

5.7

Mitigating Factors, Adverse Impacts and Addressing Inequalities

- 5.7.1 There may be instances where the policy requirements cannot be fully met. In these cases, a hierarchy of value and mitigating factors provides further guidance (see **Table 8**).
- 5.7.2 If proximity to open space is considered a mitigating factor and justified, planning contributions toward improvements to those public open spaces may be required
- 5.7.3 Further contextual considerations and potential adverse impacts may be taken into account in assessments such as:
- **Loss of Open or Green Space**
 - Mitigation measures may be expected such as optimising urban greening.
 - **Growth and High-Density Areas**
 - Shortfalls of amenity space in schemes results in increased population density without the necessary increased provision of amenity to meet their needs. This may cause adverse impacts on health, wellbeing and quality of life. This may also result in existing open spaces coming under increasing demand and pressure. This might negatively impact on communities outside of the development.
 - **Areas of Open Space Deficiency and Deprivation**
 - Delivery of residential amenity space will usually be given highest priority in locations which have an open space deficit, as identified in **Map 1**;
 - Areas of deprivation and health inequalities can intersect with areas that lack of access to green space, as identified in **Map 2**. The highest priority is usually expected to be given in these circumstances.

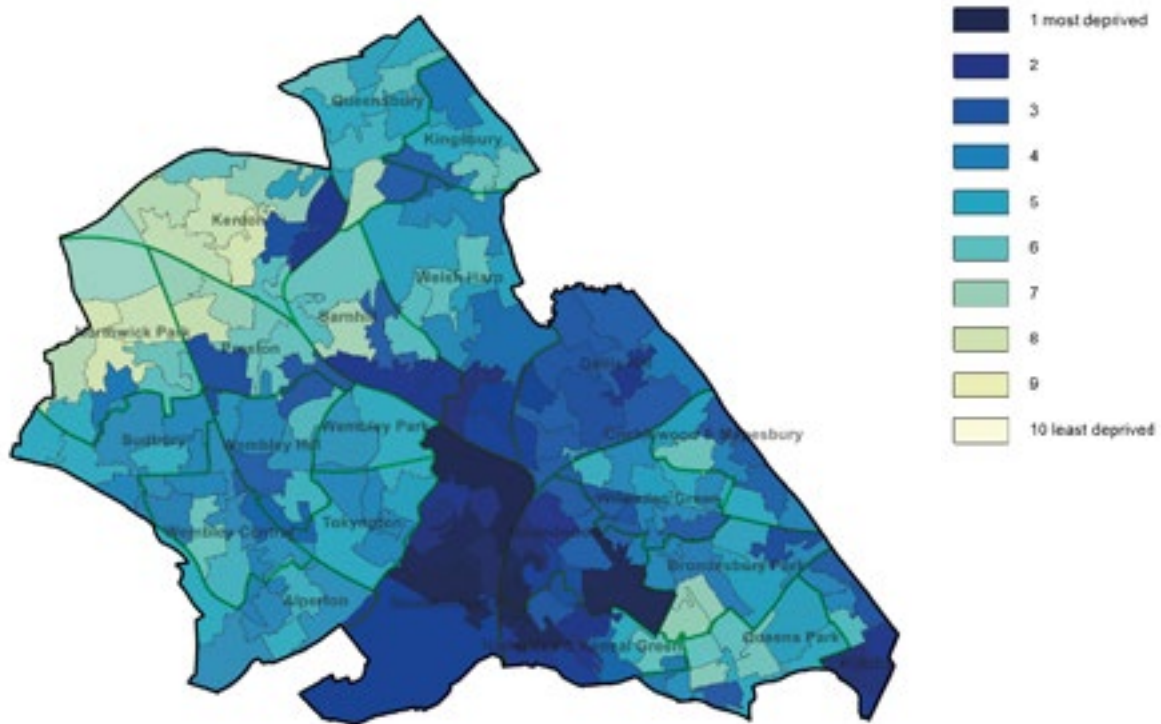
Contextual Assessment

5.7.4 Each development is assessed on a case-by-case basis in the context of the site, scheme and local area. Population sizes, densities and quality of existing open space varies across the borough. Some of the factors that may be taken into consideration include:

- Number of new homes and density of proposed development;
- Population of new development;
- Existing type of homes (houses with gardens or flats) in area and limited access to private amenity;
- Existing population densities;
- Projected population densities;
- Quality and usability of existing open spaces in surrounding area, in meeting local population's needs; and
- Accessibility of existing open spaces in surrounding area.



Map 1: Open space deficiency in Brent



Map 2: Indices of Multiple Deprivation in Brent 2019

Hierarchy of Value and Mitigating Factors

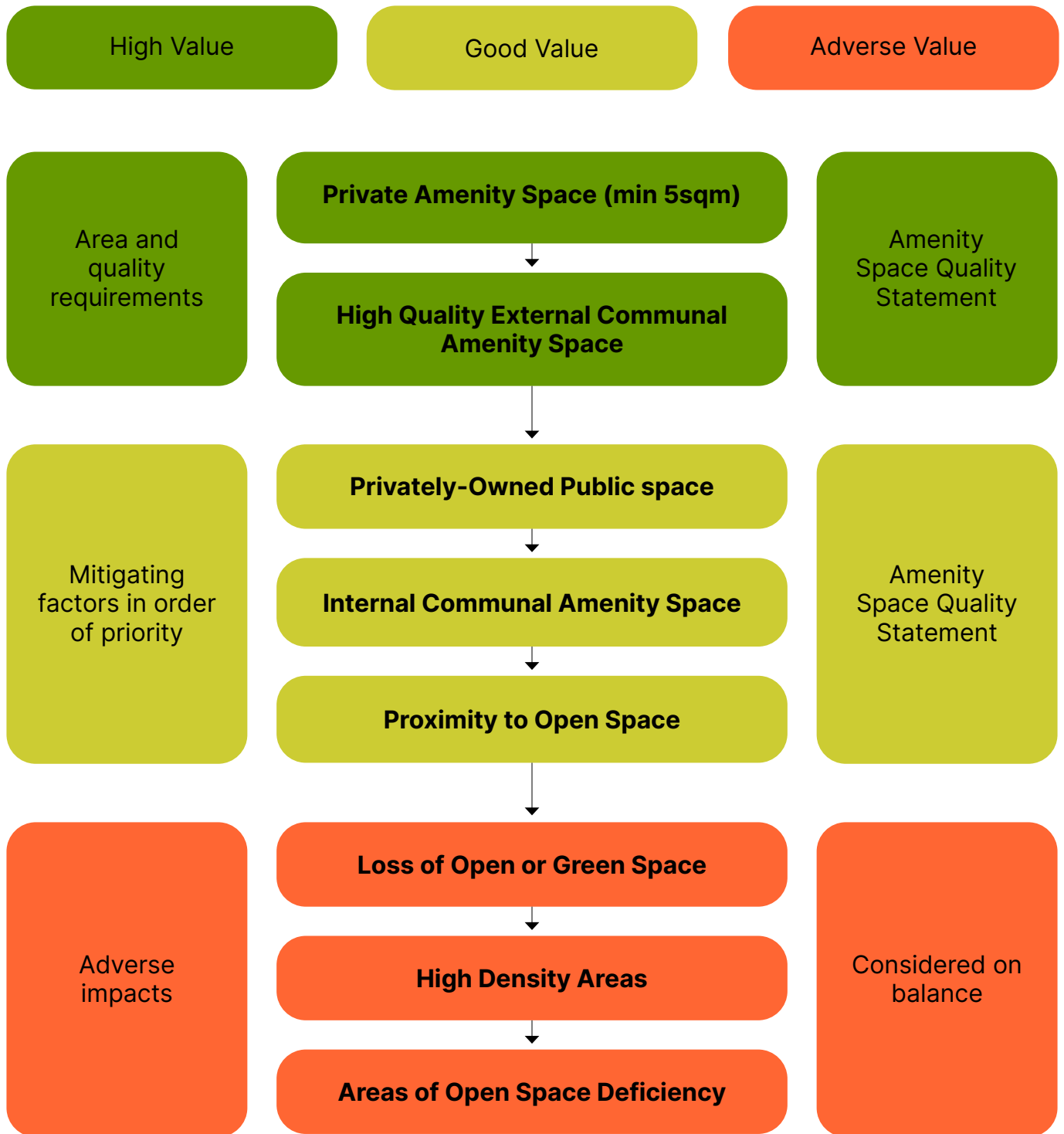


Table 8: Hierarchy of value and mitigating factors

6. Specific Typologies

6.1 High-Rise, High Density, Build to Rent

London Plan Policy D4 Delivering good design

Para 3.4.8 For residential development it is particularly important to scrutinise the qualitative aspects of the development design described in London Plan Policy D6 Housing quality and standards. The higher the density of a development the greater this scrutiny should be of the proposed built form, massing, site layout, external spaces, internal design and ongoing management. This is important because these elements of the development come under more pressure as the density increases. The housing minimum space standards set out in Policy D6 Housing quality and standards help ensure that as densities increase, quality of internal residential units is maintained.

High Density

- 6.1.1 High density and compact developments have many benefits. They can create liveable, vibrant places that also support sustainability objectives due to connectivity.
- 6.1.2 The Brent Local Plan has identified the challenges of creating high quality, mixed use higher density environments that fit well into the surrounding suburban context.⁵⁵ High density living environments can make it challenging for residents, particularly those of different tenures, to connect and interact with each other. However, they can present a good opportunity to improve social integration and a sense of community. This is more likely if a mix of tenures and home sizes is achieved and communal spaces are designed and managed correctly.⁵⁶

High-Rise Buildings

- 6.1.3 High-rise buildings can be associated with higher turnover rates, neglect of common spaces, low social trust and architectural design that supports anonymity.⁵⁷ Spatial constraints can often result in the provision of communal amenity space either on rooftops or in the public realm. It is therefore important to consider these design guidelines. This will make sure the quality of the scheme and communal amenity areas supports the quality of life and needs of residents. Emergency evacuation plans for communal amenity spaces above ground level should also be considered at an early stage.

6.1.4 Ground floor amenity or public space and the location of entrance spaces help make high-rise buildings feel part of the wider neighbourhood. In higher density locations, internal communal amenity space can often be the primary way of providing communal facilities in standalone tall buildings. It is therefore important for this type of development to carefully consider the design guidelines in these cases.

Build to Rent

6.1.5 There has been a 65% increase in number of households in privately rented homes in the last decade. Now over 30% of households privately rent.⁵⁸ Larger institutions are now becoming significant investors in private rent. The majority of the Wembley Park regeneration will be delivered through this model. Residents of Build to Rent accommodation should benefit from communal amenity space that supports social interaction and neighbourliness. This is likely to be beneficial to landlords, resulting in a less transient population.

6.1.6 Additional relevant policies include:

Local Plan Policy & Guidance

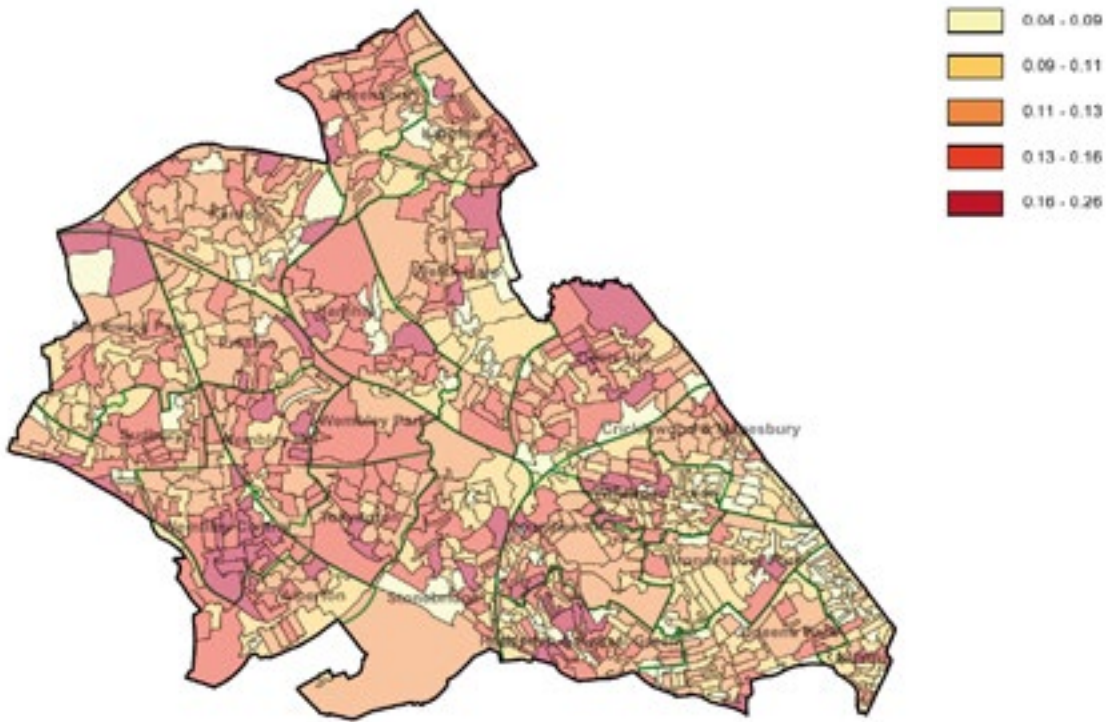
Policy BH7 Accommodation with shared facilities or additional support

London Plan Policy & Guidance

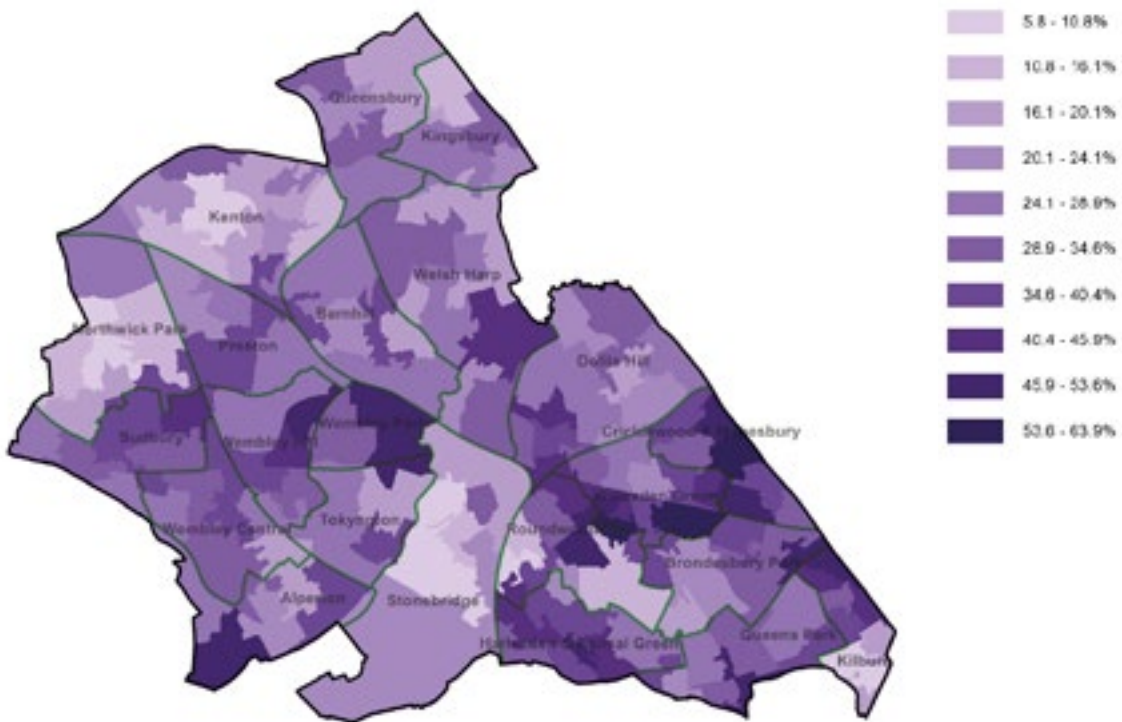
Policy H16 Large-scale purpose-built shared living

Policy H11 Build to Rent

Large-scale Purpose-built Shared Living LPG – draft 2022



Map 3: Population density as a percentage of the total borough (based on 2011 census)



Map 4: Private Rental Sector (PRS) as a percentage of all households in Brent

6.2 Co-Living and Houses in Multiple Occupation

Co-Living

- 6.2.1 The London Plan has existing policy and emerging guidance on co-living. This provides detailed expectations for this new typology (Large-scale Purpose-built Shared Living (LSPBSL) LPG – draft 2022)
- 6.2.2 It identifies an important range of considerations:

“In particular, LSPBSL should contribute towards building strong and inclusive communities and creating a healthy city, in accordance with Policies GG1 and GG3. Development will contribute towards this objective through providing high-quality homes for tenants, with communal amenity space for social interaction that can support good mental and physical health. LSPBSL, where of good quality and of high standards, could contribute towards Policy GG4 by delivering more homes to meet London’s diverse range of housing needs, helping to create mixed and inclusive communities.”

Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs)

- 6.2.3 It is estimated that approximately 17,000 of Brent’s homes are Houses in Multiple Occupation. The Brent Houses in Multiple Occupation SPD aims to improve the quality of outcomes for HMO occupants and their neighbours in locations where HMOs are considered appropriate.

6.3

Levels of Expectations

6.3.1 This SPD sets out guidance for the levels of expectations across a wide range of scheme sizes, types and context. Generally, the expectations for quality will be in line with the potential impacts and benefits of the development. The greater the scale and population, or the higher the density, the greater the expectation of the qualitative aspects of design.

Proportionate Levels of Expectations

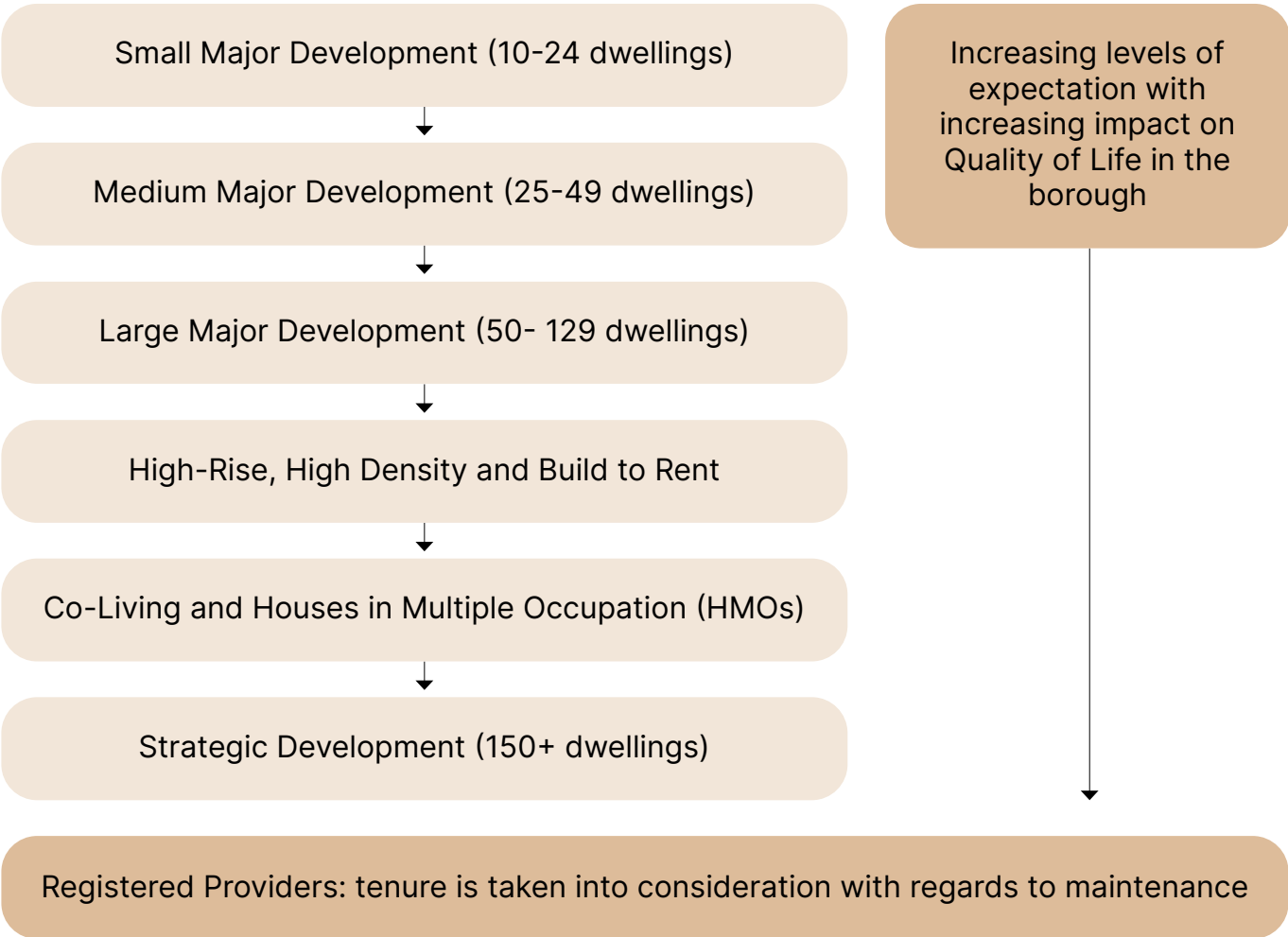


Table 9: Proportionate levels of expectations for different types of development

7. Appendix

7.1

Key Policies

London Plan Policy & Guidance

Policy D4 Delivering good design

Policy D5 Inclusive design

Policy D6 Housing quality and standards

Policy S4 Play and Informal Recreation

Policy G1 Green Infrastructure

Policy G4 Open Space

Policy G5 Urban Greening

Policy G6 Biodiversity and Access to Nature

Housing SPG 2016

Housing Design Standard LPG 2022 draft

Play and Informal Recreation SPG

Brent Local Plan Policy & Guidance

Policy BH13 Residential amenity space

Policy BD1: Leading the way in good urban design

Policy BG11: Blue and green infrastructure in Brent

Open Space, sports and recreation study

Local Plan Section 4: Development vision and good growth in Brent

Brent Design Guide SPD1

Policy BD1: Leading The Way In Good Urban Design

All new development must be of the highest architectural and urban design quality.

Innovative contemporary design will be supported where it respects and complements historic character but is also fit for the future. In delivering high quality design, development proposals will be expected to show how they positively address all the relevant criteria within London Plan design policies and the Brent Design Guide SPD1

The council is committed to delivering excellence in development quality. It expects all new development to embrace the principles of good design, and positively respond to the character of Brent's places.

6.1.12 The policy seeks to create buildings and places of high quality that will be appreciated by future generations. High quality design is both visually interesting and attractive and should enhance local character. Good design is not just about what things look like, it is also about how places function and how individual buildings and the spaces around them contribute to the public realm and community wellbeing.

The design of the places and buildings that make up our local environment affects everyone and the quality of life. Good design makes places that put people first, promote health and are welcoming, feel safe, are enjoyable and easy to use for everyone.

7.2 Further Reading

British Standards Institute, PAS 6463. Design for the mind. Neurodiversity and the built environment, 2022

Barton, H. and Grant, M. (2006) A health map for the local human habitat. The Journal for the Royal Society for the Promotion of Health, 126 (6). pp. 252-253. ISSN 1466-4240 developed from the model by Dahlgren and Whitehead, 1991

Campaign to End Loneliness. Tackling Loneliness through the Built Environment. 2022

Greater London Authority. Social Integration Measurement Toolkit, 2021.

Homes England. Building for a Healthy Life, 2020

Happy City. Designed to Engage. Policy recommendations for promoting sociability in multi-family housing design, 2017

Marmot M, Allen J, Boyce T, Goldblatt P and Morrison J. Health equity in England: The Marmot Review 10 years on. London: Institute of Health Equity, 2020

NHS England. Putting Health into Place, 2019

OHID. Health disparities and health inequalities: applying All Our Health, 2022

PHE. Spatial Planning for Health: An evidence resource for planning and designing healthier places, 2017

PHE. Getting research into practice - A resource for local authorities on planning healthier places, 2021

Public Health Scotland. Place Standard Tool.

Quality of Life Foundation. Quality of Life Framework

Transport for London. Healthy Streets Approach, 2017

Endnotes

- 1 Brent Local Plan. para. 3.11 and 3.15
- 2 See Social Determinants of Health and Marmot reviews. 2020
- 3 Public Health England. Spatial Planning for Health: An Evidence Resource for Planning and Designing Healthier Places. June 2017.
- 4 See Further Reading
- 5 London Plan Policy D4 Delivering good design
- 6 Brent Local Plan. para. 4.1 Strong & Inclusive Communities 1a
- 7 Reid N. Compassionate Spaces. Conscious Cities Anthology 2019: Science-Informed Architecture and Urbanism. 2019
- 8 Brent Poverty Commission. A Fairer Future, Ending Poverty in Brent. Recommendations from the Brent Poverty Commission. July 2020
- 9 Brent Local Plan. para. 3.11
- 10 Brent Council. Black Community Action Plan. July 2020.
- 11 Brent Poverty Commission. A Fairer Future, Ending Poverty in Brent. Recommendations from the Brent Poverty Commission. July 2020
- 12 Brent Local Plan. para 3.19 referencing Sport England Active Life Survey 16-17
- 13 Brent Local Plan. para. 3.2.7
- 14 Brent Local Plan. para. 3.15
- 15 Gehl J. Life Between buildings: Using Public Space. 1971
- 16 Office for Health Improvement and Disparities. Design code and health. Companion guide to the National Model Design Code on health improvement and disparities. 2023 (draft)
- 17 Martmot et al, 2020; Chang et al, 2022
- 18 Chang M, Green L and Petrokofsy C. Public Health Spatial Planning in Practice. Improving health and wellbeing. 2022
- 19 Marmot et al, 2020; Turnbull, 2021; Chang et al, 2022
- 20 Chang M, Green L and Petrokofsy C. Public Health Spatial Planning in Practice.

Improving health and wellbeing. 2022

- 21 Based on Sir Michael Marmot's concept of Universal proportionalism
- 22 Office for Health Improvement and Disparities. Design code and health. Companion guide to the National Model Design Code on health improvement and disparities. 2023 (draft)
- 23 Brent Local Plan. para. 6.7.10
- 24 MHCLG. National Planning Policy Framework. 2021. paragraph 98
- 25 Brent Local Plan. para. 6.6.13
- 26 Brent Sustainable Environment and Development SPD
- 27 Brent Poverty Commission. A Fairer Future, Ending Poverty in Brent. Recommendations from the Brent Poverty Commission. July 2020. Recommendation 37
- 28 Brent Design Guide SPD 1 2018 and GLA, London Plan 2021
- 29 GLA. London Plan 2021
- 30 GLA. London Plan 2021
- 31 MHCLG. National Design Guide. 2021. H2 Well-related to external amenity and public spaces
- 32 MHCLG. National Design Guide. 2021. Tenure neutral definition. p.36
- 33 MHCLG. National Design Guide. 2021. para. 130
- 34 Wirz-Justice, A., Skene, D.J. and Münch, M. The relevance of daylight for humans. Biochemical Pharmacology. 2020. p.114-304.
- 35 Babisch, W. Cardiovascular effects of noise. Noise and health. 2011. 13(52), p.201.
- 36 DLUHC, MHCLG. National Planning Practice Guidance – Noise. 2019
- 37 Note: The Professional Practice Guidance on Planning & Noise define “relatively quiet” as any situation where the typical average hourly daytime LA90 is more than 10 dB below the typical average hourly daytime LA90 noise levels in the immediate locality.
- 38 GLA. Guide to Using Green Infrastructure to Protect People from Air Pollution. 2019
- 39 Brent Poverty Commission report: Recommendation 37: We recommend that

Residential Amenity Space and Place Quality SPD

the council supports the future sustainability of food aid agencies in the borough including by further developing community garden schemes and working with food banks, mutual aid groups and residents' associations

40 TFL. Sustainable Development Framework. 2021. Dimension 2 Social Cohesion

41 Office for Health Improvement and Disparities. Design code and health. Companion guide to the National Model Design Code on health improvement and disparities. 2023 (draft)

42 Reid N. Compassionate Spaces. Conscious Cities Anthology 2019: Science-Informed Architecture and Urbanism. 2019

43 Homes England. Building for a Healthy Life. 2020

44 Quality of Life Foundation. Quality of Life framework evidence review. 2021

45 Biophilic Design: Design that integrates nature, natural materials, natural forms and experiences that recall nature.

46 Public Health England. Spatial Planning for Health: An Evidence Resource for Planning and Designing Healthier Places. Jun 2017.

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56 Tower Hamlets. High Density Living SPD. 2020

57 Kearns A, Whitley E, Mason P, & Bond L. "Living the High Life"? Residential, Social and Psychosocial Outcomes for High-Rise Occupants in a Deprived Context. 2012. Housing Studies, 27(1), 97–126.

58 Brent Local Plan. para. 3.14



Figure 14: The determinants of health and well-being in our neighbourhoods

Source: Barton and Grant, 2006. A health map for the local human habitat (based on Dahlgren and Whitehead, 1991)

Brent Council
Civic Centre
Engineers Way
Wembley HA9 0FJ