

Glossary of Common Planning Terms and Abbreviations

Affordable Housing – Includes social rented and intermediate housing, provided to specified eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. Social rented housing is owned and managed by local authorities, registered social landlords and others. Intermediate affordable housing is housing at prices and rents above those of social rent but below market price or rents. These can include shared equity and other low cost homes for sale, and intermediate rent.

Amenity Space – The land that is part of the application site that is not built on. In the case of dwellings, for example, it includes all garden land and not just the rear garden.

Area of Special Local Character – Areas designated locally by the Council with the intention of protecting their character and appearance by managing change in a sympathetic way.

Archaeological Priority Area – An area specified by local planning authorities to help protect archaeological remains that might be affected by development. Larger sites in these areas will always be assessed for their archaeological potential when application is made for their redevelopment.

Article 4 Direction – A power available under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 allowing the Council, in certain instances, to restrict permitted development rights (see also 'permitted development').

BREEAM (Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method) – Environmental assessment method for buildings. It sets the standard for best practice in sustainable design and has become the measure used to describe a building's environmental performance. BREEAM assesses buildings against a set criteria and provides an overall score within a band providing a rating of either, pass, good, very good, excellent or outstanding.

Conservation Area – An area designated by the Council under the Town and Country Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as possessing special architectural or historical interest. The designation aims to protect an area's character and appearance by enabling the Council to exercise additional planning controls to manage change in a sympathetic way. Trees are also given protection.

Density – Density is a measure of the intensity of use of housing land. It is calculated on the basis of the number of habitable rooms per hectare. Density standards are set out in the Unitary Development Plan (see also 'habitable rooms').

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) – The process by which information about the likely environmental effects of major projects is gathered, evaluated and taken into account by the local authority in considering whether or not planning permission should be granted.

Green Belt Land – A statutory regional strategic planning designation to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. The use of land within the Green Belt should provide opportunities for access to the open countryside, provide opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation, retain and enhance attractive landscapes, and secure nature conservation.

Habitable Rooms – All separate living rooms and bedrooms, plus kitchens with a floor area of 13 square metres or more. Bathrooms, toilets, cupboards, landings, halls, lobbies and recesses are not included.

LDF (Local Development Framework) – A group of documents that are being developed to update the Council's planning policies and eventually replace the UDP.

Listed Building – The Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport compiles a statutory list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest for the guidance of local planning authorities in the exercise of their planning functions. This statutory listing imposes additional planning controls. The Council has also designated some buildings of local architectural interest (the local list) whose retention is encouraged, but they are not subject to any additional planning controls.

Listed Building Consent – Required in addition to planning permission before any work can be undertaken on a statutorily listed building. Consent is granted by a Government regional office on the recommendation of the Council.

London Plan – A development strategy prepared by the Mayor of London. Major applications that are of strategic importance to Greater London are determined by the Mayor of London on the recommendation of the Council.

Metropolitan Open Land – A designation of land that is clearly distinguishable from the built up area and can include facilities that serve the whole or a significant part of London. It has the same level of protection as 'Green Belt' land and there is a presumption against inappropriate development that does not preserve the open character of the land.

Permitted Development – Minor building work or changes in use, defined in the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development Procedure) Order 1995, that can be carried out without the need for planning permission.

Planning Brief – A statement regarding the Council's views on the opportunities and constraints for the development of a particular site, intended to guide potential developers.

Planning Obligations – An agreement under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 entered into regarding the use or development of land. Obligations may be used to enhance development proposals (see also 'section 106 agreement').

PPG (Planning Policy Guidance) – Documents prepared by the government after public consultation to explain statutory provisions and provide guidance to local authorities and others on planning policy and the operation of the planning system. Local authorities must take their contents into account in preparing their development plan documents. The guidance may also be relevant to decisions on individual planning applications and appeals. New guidance is now referred to as:

PPS (Planning Policy Statements)

Public Open Space – Urban space, designated by the Council, defined where public access is generally not formally established, but which fulfils or is capable of fulfilling a recreational or non-recreational role.

Public Transport Accessibility Level (PTAL) – A measure of the accessibility of a site to the public transport network, taking into account walking time to public transport and service availability. A PTAL calculation assigns a level of between 1a, representing very low public transport accessibility, and 6b, representing very high public transport accessibility, to any given site or point of interest. The higher the PTAL score, the better the accessibility. A score of four would apply to town centre sites indicating that higher density development was possible.

Section 106 Agreement – A binding agreement under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 between the Council and a developer. It is completed on the granting of planning permission and deals with matters linked to the proposed development. It will usually involve the payment of a financial contribution, on a pre-determined scale, towards public costs, such as a new road junction or additional school places, arising as a result of a development (see also ‘planning obligations’).

Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) – A designation applied to important nature conservation sites, which can be designated for both their ecology and geological interest. They are of lesser quality than the nationally or internationally important Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). Sites are designated in accordance with a published list of criteria and supported by Natural England. They do not receive statutory protection but are protected from damaging development by local and national planning policy.

Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) – A site of wildlife and natural features safeguarded to protect its high natural heritage importance. Sites are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 from development or other damage. Protection is not necessarily absolute - generally it requires the SSSI interest to be considered properly against other factors.

Special Policy Area

Established residential areas where the Council seeks to retain their predominantly open, landscape dominated layout, and preserve their character and appearance.

SPD (Supplementary Planning Document) – A document that supplements the UDP, and which gives guidance on the Council’s policy towards certain types of development or where certain circumstances arise (eg home extensions). Also referred to as:

SPG (Supplementary Planning Guidance)

Sustainable Development/Sustainability – Defined by the Brundtland Commission (1987) as: “development which meets present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to achieve their own needs and aspirations”. The World Conservation Union (1991) definition is also useful - “improving the quality of life while living within the carrying capacity of supporting ecosystems”.

Sustainable Residential Development Area

Areas designated by the Council in, or in close proximity to, town centres, where higher housing densities can be achieved and amenity space and car parking standards can be applied flexibly if certain design quality and sustainability objectives are met.

TfL – Transport for London, part of the Greater London Authority. Its role is to implement the transport strategy and to manage transport services across London.

Tree Preservation Order (TPO) – Made under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 by the local planning authority to protect trees of importance for amenity, landscape and nature conservation.

UDP (Unitary Development Plan) – A group of documents that set out the Council’s planning policies, which was adopted in 2003 (see also LDF).

Use Class – The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 2005 classifies the uses of premises into different classes. The use of premises can normally be changed to a different use within the same class without the need for planning permission, but a change to a use in a different class requires planning permission.

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