

## DELIVERING SUSTAINABLE NEIGHBOURHOODS

**2.154** A sustainable neighbourhood is a place where there are good quality public services; mixed and integrated communities with a number of housing choices (including, size, type and for different incomes); places where people feel they can influence decision-making and have pride in their community; where there is good access to jobs, shops and other local services and where there is a healthy and safe environment (Sustainable Communities: building for the future ODPM 2003).

**2.155** The Sustainable Neighbourhoods strategy and Preferred Option SN1 will apply to all residential areas of Brighton & Hove indicated on the key diagram. The aim is to support the delivery of sustainable communities across the city. The Residential Renewal Areas Strategy and Preferred Option SN2 take a positive approach to tackling the specific problems of more deprived areas and reducing inequalities. Specific problems in these deprived areas include low levels of qualifications and skills, high rates of unemployment, poor quality of the physical environment, low levels of good health, fears over community safety and community disempowerment.

### SN1 Sustainable Neighbourhoods



#### Supporting Documents:

Sustainable Community Strategy - 2006  
 Reducing Inequality Review - 2008  
 Refreshed Local Area Agreement - 2007  
 Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy - 2002  
 Neighbourhood Action Plans - 2007  
 Retail Study 2006  
 Urban Characterisation Study 2007  
 Local Transport Plan 2006  
 Draft Brighton & Hove Social Enterprise Strategy - 2008

#### Context

**2.156** The strategy for sustainable neighbourhoods relates to all neighbourhoods of the city which are primarily residential. The strategy requires joint working with partners, including the health and education sectors, the community and voluntary sector, sustainable transport providers, the police and local communities which will be facilitated by the Local Area Agreement by the city's Local Strategic Partnership and 'family of partnerships'. The strategy for sustainable neighbourhoods is underpinned by the following aims (see spatial objectives):

- create balanced communities that meet the needs of all who live there;
- reduce the need to travel by private car and make roads in residential areas feel safer;
- the availability of jobs and training;

- help create communities that work well – with good local facilities (shops, pubs, cafes), opens space and play and community facilities (GPs surgeries, schools, community buildings);
- engage with and listen to local communities;
- encourage environmental sustainability.

### Preferred Option – SN1 Sustainable Neighbourhoods

Contribute to creating and maintaining sustainable neighbourhoods by working with partners, developers and local communities to:

1. Focus new development in neighbourhoods in local shopping centres and parades where the proposal contributes to the range and viability of local facilities by maintaining and creating a focal point for community activities and encourage investment to improve sustainable transport.
2. Ensure a good balance and mix of uses in existing defined local centres is maintained and carefully monitored, and opportunities for defining new local centres in areas currently under-provided for should be explored (see CP15 Retail Provision).
3. Facilitate creation of employment opportunities within neighbourhoods.
4. Ensure new or enlarged community facilities (e.g. surgeries, schools, youth facilities, community buildings) are provided by working with partners to identify appropriate sites in areas of need or shortfall; ensure new development contributes to community priorities and needs through planning obligations (see CP9 Developer Contributions); and encourage shared use of existing and new community facilities.
5. Contribute to creating balanced communities through the requirement for new development to provide an appropriate mix of dwelling sizes, tenure types and affordable housing (see CP11 Housing Delivery and CP12 Affordable Housing).
6. Promote new development that builds on the positive aspects of the character of neighbourhoods and protects distinctive and important aspects of character (see CP2 Urban Design and CP13 Housing Densities).
7. Work with local communities to identify priorities for safer streets and priorities for sustainable transport improvements.
8. Prioritise improvements to open space, sports and recreation facilities in local neighbourhoods where a shortfall has been identified (CP6 Open Space, Sports and Recreation and CP4 Healthy City).
9. Encourage neighbourhood arts projects that improve the environment and develop community spirit
10. Encourage existing education and community organisations to forge closer links with local communities by providing them with a greater range of services and facilities for learning and training.
11. Encourage environmental sustainability improvements to new and existing buildings (CP1 Sustainable Buildings).
12. Establish mechanisms and processes that give communities the skills, confidence and power to shape and influence public services.

## Supporting Text

**2.157** Creating sustainable communities is an ambition of national, regional and local policy documents. The preferred option is part of the new area-based approach seeking to direct former topic based policies in the previous version of preferred options into this integrated area strategy.

**2.158** Promoting development in local shopping centres/hubs in suburban reflects the spatial strategy in the first Preferred Options Core Strategy. Good quality development will be allowed where it helps to strengthen the provision and viability of local services including shops, community facilities (including public houses) and public transport access.

**2.159** Local shopping centres and parades provide important local services to neighbourhoods and can often be a focal point for community activities. A sustainable community should have a reasonable range of shops, public houses and cafes that serves day to day needs for local residents particularly for those without access to transport. Parts 1 and 2 of the strategy seek to secure investment in local parades/centres and ensure a healthy mix of uses is maintained. The important role of a network of local shopping centres and parades, particularly for walk-in top-up shopping is recognised and supported. These centres should allow local communities and neighbourhoods to access fresh, locally produced food and key services for people travelling on foot or by means other than the car.

**2.160** Good quality community facilities within walking distance of all neighbourhoods is central to the sustainable neighbourhood strategy. Such facilities may include GPs surgeries, education, training and health centres and community buildings.

**2.161** Although there is currently a citywide surplus of school places, demand for places is unbalanced with schools in the centre and west of the city having significant capacity problems whilst in the north-east there is an oversupply of places. As primary schools are encouraged to serve their local areas by the government the council will need to address issues of capacity at these schools and the wider balance of school places across the city. Additionally opportunities to share existing community buildings and facilities, like schools, churches and universities will be maximised. Through funding by the Learning and Skills Council proposals are coming forward for the refurbishments and improvements to sixth form colleges in the city.

**2.162** Balanced communities should cater for a mix of all household types and affordability ranging from single households to larger families and including the needs of diverse groups such as older people, disabled people, the black and ethnic minority community and the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community.

**2.163** CP2 Urban Design and CP13 Housing Densities set out the urban design priorities for the city. Higher densities are unlikely to be achieved in those suburban and village neighbourhoods or localities where existing low density development contributes to a positive sense of place. The Urban Characterisation Study provides a comprehensive understanding of the diversity, quality and sensitivity of the city's neighbourhoods. The study will be used to guide consideration of backland or infill developments and more detailed policies will be set out in the Development Policies and Site Allocations DPD.

**2.164** The preferred option will seek to encourage householders to improve the efficiency of existing stock by encouraging retrofit of efficiency measures and sustainable energy measures.

**2.165** Part 7 of the preferred option will require securing improvements to residential areas in terms of road safety and where appropriate opportunities for shared surfaces, safer streets and traffic calming will be implemented. Effective community involvement in implementing this strategy will contribute to strengthening sustainable communities.

**2.166** Robust and meaningful community engagement at all levels of participation, and a thriving voluntary sector are critical elements for a sustainable community and are a priority for all residential neighbourhoods in the city.

### Implementation

**2.167** Part 1 would be implemented by developers. A good mix of uses with local shopping centres/parades will be monitored through retail health checks and via development policies that will be updated in the Development Policies and Site Allocations DPD. In the meantime the current policies in the Brighton & Hove Local Plan will be saved until replaced. Implementation of Part 4 requires close working with public sector providers, in particular the Primary Care Trust, adult learning, community and voluntary sector and local communities to identify needs, priorities and sites for community uses and specifying these through the Development Policies and Site Allocations Document.

**2.168** Improving community facilities in neighbourhoods by promoting sharing is currently underway through the extended schools programme and provision of children's centres. It is proposed that this should be widened to include sharing university and further education college facilities and appropriate health facilities via effective community development work. New development proposals impacting on neighbourhoods should contribute towards community facilities through developer contributions.

**2.169** Parts 5 (balanced neighbourhoods), 6 (urban design), 8 (open space, sports and recreation) and 11 (environmental sustainability) will be implemented through core policies. Ensuring appropriate densities and good quality of design in new development will also be implemented through applying CP13 Housing Densities and CP2 on Urban design.

**2.170** Safer street initiatives will be funded and implemented through the Local Transport Plan. Additionally the city council, in partnership with local transport operators, will work towards improving the quality, number and frequency of services to residential areas with an identified shortfall.

**2.171** Priorities for improvements to open space, sports and recreation facilities will be identified through the city council's Open Space Strategy and will be primarily funded through developer contributions.

**2.172** Improved environmental sustainability to existing buildings will be promoted through the Sustainable Building Design SPD and the city council's Sustainability Team and through applying high sustainability standards to new development proposals.

**2.173** The ability of residents to influence decisions in their areas will be implemented through an array of mechanisms including the existing neighbourhood action groups, local action teams, neighbourhood partnerships and community development support as well as any new opportunities from the emerging Community Engagement Framework and the revised Local Area Agreement. Residents and community/neighbourhood groups will have the opportunity to engage in preparing policy and guidance documents and in their implementation. Engagement will be carried in accordance with the statement of community involvement and monitored through the annual monitoring report.