

# URBAN PLACE SUPPLEMENT - PUBLIC CONSULTATION QUESTIONNAIRE

The Urban Place Supplement (UPS) provides guidance to developers, architects and planners about how new urban developments in Essex should respond to the higher density requirements for new housing set out by central government. The document also addresses the pressing need to reduce consumption of natural resources during the construction and occupation of development schemes.

The UPS seeks to grasp the opportunities being presented by these challenging requirements by showing how new urban developments can be of high quality, durable and sound and, more importantly, will be places where people will choose to live. In addition, the UPS will require developers to undertake detailed appraisals to ensure that new developments respond to the needs, aspirations and opportunities identified in local communities.

The Supplement is primarily concerned with what are called 'compact' urban developments. These developments, typically, would have a high proportion of apartments and a diverse range of uses incorporating, where appropriate, shops, services and employment. Car parking will be mainly underground or under deck, with precedence being given to communal gardens and high quality public spaces. The density of development and its relationship with public transport facilities will be such that dependency on the car will be reduced.

**1** In line with central government guidance, sites in urban areas are being developed at higher densities to help prevent or reduce outward growth into rural areas and to maximise the use of redundant urban land. This approach also helps to ensure that urban centres have an increased population within their catchments and can maintain a good level of amenities and services. At the higher densities being adopted, only a very small number of houses will have ground level private gardens, if any at all, but this will be balanced by the greenness of public spaces and by the provision of balconies, roof-gardens and high-quality shared communal gardens. The Urban Place Supplement sees the provision of good quality public space or private shared space as more important than individual private gardens in a high density urban situation.



**Do you accept that, in order to create attractive urban environments, less space should be allocated for individual private gardens in return for high quality, safe public spaces and communal private spaces?**

Yes

Possibly

Neutral

Unlikely

No

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**2** As residential densities increase it becomes more difficult to accommodate ground-level car parking without compromising the quality of the space around buildings. The UPS sees it as more important to produce an attractive, safe environment in the vicinity of properties than to provide space for car parking at ground level and, therefore, in many new urban developments, residents' cars will be accommodated in secure underground, under-deck or multi-level parking. This removes the need for large areas of ground-level parking, thus releasing space to enable an attractive, car-free, living environment to be created around new homes.



**Do you see the provision of car parking, in forms other than normal ground level parking, as acceptable in return for an attractive, high-quality, car-free environment?**

Yes       Possibly       Neutral       Unlikely       No

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**3** In Essex we are currently consuming natural resources at a rate that is unsustainable whilst producing an unacceptably high level of carbon emissions. The construction of buildings and their subsequent use accounts for significant proportion of UK emissions and therefore measures to protect our environment and reduce resource consumption in new urban developments are integral elements of the Urban Place Supplement. Developers will be expected to fully embrace measures to achieve a high degree of environmental sustainability which hitherto have only been seen in limited numbers of developments. These include consideration of construction materials, designing of reduced energy use, the provision of renewable energy sources (windpower, solar energy etc) and designing to conserve water.

**Would the provision of energy-reducing or energy-generating measures in a property (above-standard levels of construction, solar panels, wind energy) attract you to that property.**

Yes       Possibly       Neutral       Unlikely       No

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**4** Living alongside nature is possible within urban places and it can contribute substantially to the health and well-being of an urban community. Developments can provide many opportunities for biodiversity (the range and content of natural environments) as part of good design and the Urban Place Supplement would require that these be maximised. In order to increase biodiversity, the UPS proposes the introduction of a 'Green Points' system against which new developments would be scored; a certain minimum being required from almost all developments.



**If you were choosing a new urban development in which to live would the existence of an extensive network of ‘green’ measures (roofs designed to include ‘natural’ habitats, climbing plants, bird boxes, re-created natural habitats, vegetation etc) attract you to an area?**

Yes       Possibly       Neutral       Unlikely       No

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**5** Policies in the Urban Place Supplement would lead to an increased use of mixed-use developments, that is, developments that are not solely for housing purposes. Central government believes that residential areas would benefit from the inclusion of small scale developments of alternative uses and sees this, together with an increase in densities and sustainable transport choices, as a central theme in the creation of sustainable communities. Mixed-use developments would combine residential provision with other uses such as shops, schools and health and would create sources of employment and services within close to where people live, thereby reducing the need to travel and helping to contribute to the vitality of towns.



**Do you think that the convenience of a mixed-use area would attract you to live there as opposed to living in an area at similar density that was purely residential?**

Yes       Possibly       Neutral       Unlikely       No

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**6** A new type of road, a ‘Play Street’, would be introduced by the Urban Place Supplement. These would be residential streets carefully designed for outdoor play and socialising and where special attention would be paid to the needs of residents, including people who walk and cycle, and children. They will be routes for vehicles; their layout would be such that motorists are compelled to drive very slowly, at 10 mph or less, with speed restricted by physical means such as bollards, trees, planters and public art. Traffic volume would be low and the aim would be to create places where people feel comfortable, safe and can enjoy urban living.



**Do you like the idea of living in such area, where the street would be an active communal space and where users would share the whole street safely and on equal terms?**

Yes       Possibly       Neutral       Unlikely       No

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**7** There is need to manage waste from our homes in an efficient way. The Urban Place Supplement proposes increased provision for waste recycling in new developments – both within the home and in communal collection facilities within developments, including a requirement for small-scale, on-site composting in most developments. New developments would be required to provide each home with well-designed, short-term storage.



**Would the existence of well-designed waste recycling/on-site composting facilities in a development be likely to increase the likelihood of your wishing to move to that development?**

Yes       Possibly       Neutral       Unlikely       No

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**8** An important element of the Urban Place Supplement is the requirement to carry out a Context Appraisal. This is a methodical analysis of the local area, which is intended to ensure that developments respond appropriately to the physical and social contexts of an area. What this means in practice is that, apart from thoroughly looking at how the site relates to all aspects of the locality (the types of buildings, communications, biodiversity, availability of local services etc) a developer would be encouraged to ascertain what the local residential and business communities see as the main opportunities for improvement. The requirement to carry out a Context Appraisal would not apply to small development sites (accommodating, say, 2 or 3 house plots) but would apply all other sites.



**How important is it to you that new urban development is planned and designed to contribute to the character, life and aspirations of local communities.**

Very important     quite important     not very important     no importance

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**9** The Urban Place Supplement is concerned with good design quality and will encourage the development of buildings and outdoor spaces that are visually attractive and fit for their purposes. Well designed, well managed streets that are occupied by people are inherently safe places to be and new urban development in Essex will be required to demonstrate how it will contribute to this ambition. The UPS is intended to change the emphasis of design effort in order to secure the enhancement of public spaces.



**How important do you think it is for developers to direct resources to create very high quality outdoor spaces (streets, parks and squares)**

**in new urban developments?**

Very important  quite important  not very important  no importance

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To assist in the analysis of questionnaires replies, please complete the following:

Your age group: 20 & under  21-30  31-40  41-60  over 60

Number of persons in your household

Number of cars owned by your household

Type of property in which you live (apartment, terraced, detached house etc) and whether it is owned or rented

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Name of your local district or borough council.....

*Further comments can be included on a separate sheet of paper if necessary.*

**Completed questionnaires should be handed in to your local District Council or returned to:**

**Peter Dawson  
Built Environment Branch  
Essex County Council  
County Hall,  
Chelmsford  
Essex CM1 1QH**

**Alternatively comments can be made online via the Essex Design Initiative website [www.the-edi.co.uk](http://www.the-edi.co.uk) or they can be emailed to [peter.dawson@essexcc.gov.uk](mailto:peter.dawson@essexcc.gov.uk)**