

BOLTON METRO

ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT

PLANNING CONTROL POLICY NOTE No 10

Planning Out Crime

Introduction

1. Everyone to a greater or lesser extent, is affected by crime. Some people have had their homes burgled or had property stolen, a much smaller number have been attacked in their homes. The criminal minority reduce the quality for the majority of law abiding citizens, and it is now accepted that some crime can be prevented by good design practice.
2. The best way to deal with the crime is to prevent it happening in the first place and this policy note aims to provide advice to developers/architects and builders on measures which may reduce the opportunity for crime in new development and refurbishments. For further information there is a wide range of publications available from general and The Stationery Shop Ltd. bookshops.
3. Developers and architects should take note of design guidance contained in the Police Architectural Liaison Manual of Guidance for crime prevention principles. Copies can be obtained from the Crime Prevention College, Hawhills, Easingwold, York, YO6 3EG. (Tel: 01347 825060).
4. In addition free advice can be provided to developers and designers by contacting Greater Manchester Police, Community Safety Officer on 0161 872 5050 or the Architectural Liaison Officer on 01061 856 2249.
5. Although measures individuals can take to make their homes and possessions more secure are not covered in this, further advice can be obtained from above sources.

Government Guidance

6. Government guidance (DoE Circular 4/95) emphasises that the causes of crime are complex but environmental factors play a significant part pointing to desolate, sterile surroundings which engender hostility, anonymity and alienation.
7. It is advised that sensitive planning and design can produce attractive, well managed environments which discourage anti-social and criminal

behaviour. Successful crime prevention depends on a wide range of measures of which the planning system is an important element.

8. For some developers security will be a priority and constitute a 'material consideration.' However, flexibility in design solutions must allow sensitivity to local circumstances, thus reconciling the needs of visual quality and crime prevention.
9. To this end developers are encouraged to select suitable locations, siting and design for developments which fully account for the security of people and property balanced with appropriate aesthetics. A variety of land uses can create lively well used environments which deters criminal activity.
10. It is recognised that the layout of developments play an important role in reducing the risk of criminal activity. For example, the orientation of dwellings with the main living space facing the access road enables residents to see visitors and checks access.

Policy

11. Policy CE5/2 of the Council's Unitary Development Plan states:

the Council will take into account the need for design to minimise the possibility of crime in considering all development proposals.

12. Once development has been completed, the main opportunity to incorporate crime prevention measures has been lost. Careful consideration of the design of development can help to lessen the potential for crime. The Council will ensure that this is taken into account at the outset of the design stage of development. Where there is potential to reduce crime this should feature in pre-application discussions with the Council developers and designers.
13. As a part of this process the Council will consult the Police Architectural Liaison Officer and other agencies on planning applications for developments where there is potential to reduce crime through the adoption of suitable measures which is especially important for major new developments.

Advice

14. This section of the note offers some practical hints on ways that may reduce the possibility of crime. It starts by considering three basic points, then continues by outlining detailed design measures that can

reduce crime. For the purposes of this document crime includes not only theft from and of property, but also attacks on people, and vandalism.

Basic design considerations

15. *Use natural surveillance as a precautionary aid towards crime prevention:* this is by far the most important tool in the fight against crime, and many of the measures outlined in this note rely on the basic principle of observation. Burglars like easy opportunity and if they have to make a lot of noise, spend a lot of time or above all risk being seen, the chances are they won't bother. Property and people on view from occupied buildings or from passers-by are less vulnerable than those out of sight. The 'Neighbourhood Watch' scheme relies on the basic principle of observation.
16. *Design for both the safety of people and property:* although most recorded crime is against property, designers should not neglect the dangers to people. People are most vulnerable when they are walking in public areas at night, without the protection afforded by such things as cars and buildings.
17. *Do not design to give the impression of safety where real danger exists:* the fear of crime will deter people from using areas that they consider to be dangerous, especially at night. Therefore, do not try to overcome this problem without seriously thinking of redesigning the whole area, rather than making minor changes.

Footpaths and walkways

18. *Paths should be overlooked:* pedestrians feel safe if footpaths are overlooked from occupied buildings. Similarly, passing traffic offers an alternative form of surveillance.
19. *Footpath link should be short, direct to avoid sharp bends:* footpaths should provide the shortest, most direct, safest link. They should follow desired lines to avoid the nuisance of people creating their own routes. Sharp bends should be avoided as they restrict views.
20. *Footpaths should be wide, well-lit and not obscured by planting:* a clear area of approximately 2-3 metres either side of the path should be provided wherever possible. Lighting should be positioned so as to give maximum illumination and avoid creating areas of shadow. Lighting columns should illuminate the faces of pedestrians and be positioned at regular intervals. Pedestrians may be discouraged from using a potentially dangerous route if it is not lit.

21. *Avoid directing footpaths along the rear of properties:* in the interests of maintaining surveillance it is best if public walkways are not directed around the rear of properties.
22. *Increase surveillance by encouraging signage:* regular maintenance and clear signage will encourage people to use a certain path, which will in itself offer greater security to pedestrians.
23. *Border treatment and fencing should be designed to reduce crime:* open railings serve the dual purpose of restricting access while also permitting passers-by to see into the land. Try to strike the right balance between maintaining privacy and permitting some open views across the enclosed land.

Housing areas

24. *Only provide footpaths if they are essential:* footpaths should link areas such as schools, shops and bus stops. Routes should be limited to those which are essential so as to encourage their usage. Strangers are more likely to be seen if they have to use well used routes. Provide escape areas, which are areas where the victim may run to, where there is a chance of them being seen.
25. *Pedestrian routes should be overlooked:* surveillance is again paramount from both houses and passing vehicles. Cul-de-sacs provide intensive surveillance, and houses should front onto estate roads wherever possible.
26. *Mixed housing types increases scope for surveillance:* starter units are more likely to be empty during the working day and therefore more vulnerable to break-ins. On the other hand 'elderly persons' dwellings are more likely to be occupied during the day and therefore offer a greater degree of surveillance. Family housing offers sporadic surveillance but is a reliable source of help in emergencies.
27. *The rear gardens of properties should adjoin each other for mutual protection:* as unprotected rear gardens offer easy access to a house.
28. *Communal car parking areas should be overlooked:* cars are safest when they are locked in a garage. If this is not possible then car parking spaces should be within the curtilage of the property and be easily seen from the house. Communal parking areas should not be

unduly screened by planting but be visible from neighbouring properties. Parking areas should be at the front of properties and not at the rear.

29. *Avoid open plan development:* identify wherever possible public and private open space.

Open space

30. *Provide escape routes through open areas:* escape areas are open areas where there is a good chance of being seen and therefore deterring an attacker. In the event of an attack an escape route provides a way out for a victim who may escape to a place where there is a change of being seen. Applicants should ensure that escape routes are incorporated into landscaping schemes.
31. *Make use of surveillance from buildings which overlook the open space:* the key to crime prevention is surveillance. Areas of open spaces should be surrounded by houses to ensure that they are overlooked. Avoid layouts in which rear gardens adjoin open spaces, where surveillance is not possible.
32. *Children's play areas should be visible from neighbouring houses:* play areas should be designed as an integral part of a layout and not be an after-thought situated on a piece of unusable backland. Play areas should be within view of a number of houses and not obscured by high planting.

Landscaping

33. *High growing shrubs should be set back from the edge of paths:* areas of dense landscaping may be used as hiding places by attackers. Planting which is set back from the path affords more time for a victim to see the attacker and the element of surprise is reduced. Planting should be set back approximately 2-3 metres from the edge of footpaths and ensure that they will not, when fully mature, obscure lighting and escape routes.
34. *Shrub planting should be kept away from doorways and windows:* attackers may hide in dense planting and it is therefore unwise to plant shrubs right up to doorway of buildings.

Car parking areas

35. *Surface car parks should be designed to be overlooked from the road and occupied buildings:* areas of the car park should not be blocked by dense landscaping. The plantings should be designed so that it meets

is function of softening a potentially unsightly area, while also deterring criminal activity.

36. *Lighting should be located so that it illuminates parking bays as well as circulation routes:* access and egress points to car parks are frequently lit, leaving large areas of darkness for the motorist to walk from the car to the building the car park serves. If car park is to be used at night illuminate as much of the area as possible.

Commercial areas and public buildings

37. *Pedestrian access should be direct from the main road to the front of the building:* major industrial and business areas are frequently unoccupied at night, in isolated locations where surveillance is not always possible. Staff should therefore be encouraged to use the main access point and not a rear access.
38. *Buildings should be oriented so as to allow views into the site:* buildings unoccupied at night are more secure if passers-by are able to see right into the site from the main road.
39. *Doors and windows may need extra security:* business premises are often unoccupied at night and therefore require extra security, after business hours. However, when commercial premises are in public view the right balance has to be achieved between the most appropriate level of security and its effect on the visual appearance of the building and street scene. If external grilles on shop fronts are considered essential the open type should be used as they provide a clear view of the window display and enable surveillance of the premises. For shops it is also possible to incorporate security measures to counter theft and vandalism, for example, stall risers built in brick or concrete and concealed by exterior panels to improve appearance can help provide protection as well as sufficiently thick laminated glass.
40. *Care needs to be exercised in the use and location of CCTV and security lighting:* the system needs to be directed towards providing a safer built environment whilst respecting its character. To this end cameras should be sited so as to minimise their effects on the visual appearance of the building attached to and removed as soon as they are no longer required for security purposes. Under current planning legislation various criteria must be observed for CCTV to be erected without submission of a planning application or listed building consent.

Nuisance and vandalism

41. *Limit the number of pedestrian routes:* busy areas are less likely to attract anti-social behaviour because surveillance is increased.

Pedestrians also feel safer if they know that they may be seen by passers-by.

42. *Ensure that potential meeting areas for youngsters are lit:* areas where youngsters congregate should be overlooked from adjacent properties and roads. Such areas should be well lit and open in character.
43. *Use planting to limit areas for graffiti:* large unrestricted areas of walls invite graffiti artists. Planting right up to the wall can reduce access and also soften the environment. The appearance of an area may, in itself create a feeling of fear and uncertainty. Try to reduce the opportunity for vandalism when designing schemes.

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