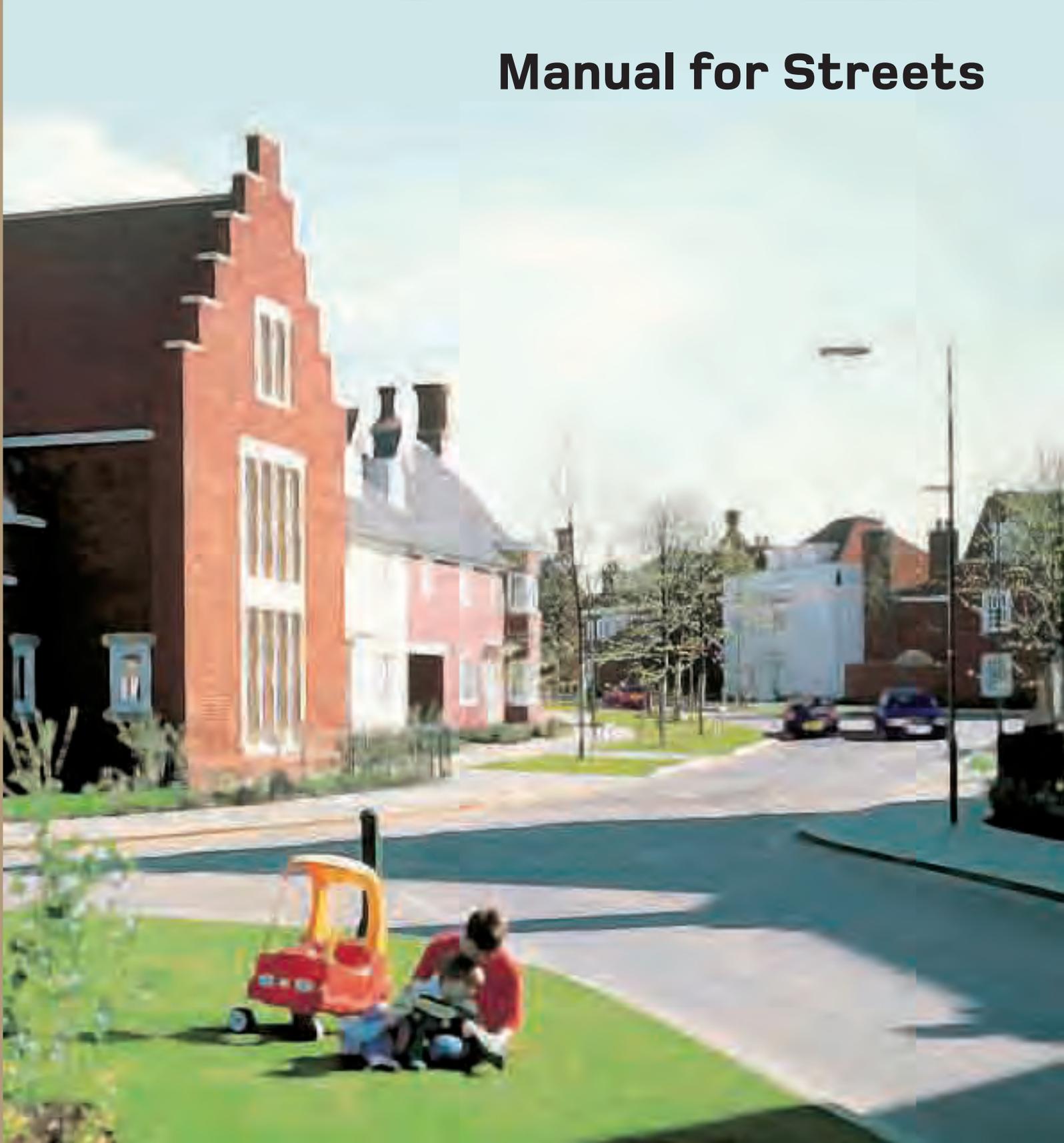




Department for
Transport



Manual for Streets



Chapter aims

- Set out the design process in broad terms and reinforce the importance of collaborative working.
- Demonstrate the advantages of local authorities following a Development Team approach and emphasise the benefits of the developer engaging with the team at an early stage in the design process.
- Look at the key principles within the design process, and the use of design codes.
- Introduce a user hierarchy where pedestrians are considered first in the design process.
- Recommend a new approach to street and safety audits.

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 The life of a scheme, from conception to implementation and beyond, can be broken down into seven key stages, as shown in Fig. 3.1.

3.1.2 This seven-stage process is generally applicable to all schemes, from large new developments, through to smaller infill schemes and improvements to existing streets. The key aspects are that:

- design decisions reflect current policies;
- policies are interpreted on a case-by-case basis and are used to define objectives; and
- scheme designs are tested against these objectives before approval is given to their implementation.

3.1.3 The process is a general one and should be applied in a way appropriate to the size and importance of the proposal. For example, the design stage refers to the desirability of preparing a masterplan for large schemes. This is unlikely to be the case for smaller developments and improvement schemes for existing streets which are likely to be less complex, and, in some cases, a scheme layout is generally all that is required.



Figure 3.1 The seven key stages in the life of a scheme.

3.2 Integrated street design – a streamlined approach

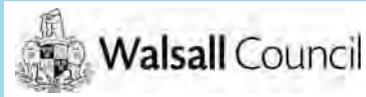
3.2.1 The developer's design team needs to engage with several departments within the local planning and highway authorities in order to identify all the relevant issues. It is therefore recommended that planning and highway authorities, together with other public agencies, such as those responsible for waste collection and drainage, coordinate their activities to ensure that they do not give contradictory advice or impose conflicting conditions on the developer and the design team (Fig. 3.2).



Figure 3.2 Multi-disciplinary collaborative planning helps identify all the relevant issues.

Case study

Walsall: the Development Team approach



Walsall Council has successfully run a Development Team for some years. Developers submitting major planning applications benefit from meetings with officials representing a broad range of disciplines. They cover Highways, Pollution Control, Housing Services, Building Control, Development Control, Ecology, Landscape and Arboriculture (officials for these disciplines are always present), and Leisure Services, Education and the Environment Agency (officials for these disciplines are brought in as required).

From a list of available time slots at least 10 days in advance, applicants book a meeting with the Development Team, submitting their preliminary proposals at the same time. This gives ample opportunity for initial consideration of the application, including site visits if necessary.

At the meeting, developers present their proposal to the Development Team where they receive initial comments and advice. The Team provides a formal, written, fully considered response within three weeks.

Significant advantages of this approach are that the developers can plan their presentation to suit their development programme and the Team can offer advice on key elements of the proposal at an early stage, thus minimising the need for costly changes later on.

3.2.2 Local authorities should enable developers to engage effectively with individual departments by establishing a single point of contact. Some local authorities have created development teams so that all council departments with an interest in street design work together during the design and approval process (see 'Walsall case study box'). Authorities that have adopted a similar approach for larger schemes include North Somerset District Council and Oxfordshire County Council in association with the District Councils. This has clear advantages when dealing with large or small development proposals. The same approach can be adopted by local authorities internally when considering improvements to existing streets.

3.2.3 The benefits of an integrated approach applies to all stages in the process, up to and including planning how the street will be maintained in future.

3.3 Steps in the design process

3.3.1 The seven-stage process will need to be tailored to particular situations, depending on the type and complexity of the scheme. It is therefore recommended that, at the outset, a project plan is drawn up by the developer and agreed with stakeholders. The plan should include a flow chart diagram and an indication of the level and scope of information required at each stage.

3.3.2 Consultation with the public (including organisations representing particular groups) is not shown as a single, discrete stage. Public consultation should take place at appropriate points in the process. The timing and number of public consultation events will vary depending on the size and complexity of the scheme.

3.3.3 Where schemes are significant because of their size, the site or other reasons, local planning authorities and developers are encouraged to submit them to the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) for Design Review at the earliest opportunity.¹ Design Review is a free advice service offering expert, independent assessments of schemes.

3.3.4 Table 3.1 shows how the process can be applied. It should be noted that these steps are indicative and will vary in detail from scheme to scheme.

3.4 Stage 1: policy review

3.4.1 Street designs should generally be consistent with national, regional and local policy. The process begins with a review of relevant planning and transportation policies, and the identification of the required key design principles.

3.4.2 The starting point for the review of local policy is the Local Development Framework. The Local Transport Plan will need to be considered and authorities may also have prepared a Public

¹ Communities and Local Government (2006) *Circular 1/06 Guidance on Changes to the Development Control System*. London: TSO, paragraph 76.