

## Chapter 16: Public Realm

### Introduction

- 16.1 Public realm relates to all those parts of the built environment where the public has free access. It encompasses streets, squares, and other rights of way, whether predominantly in residential, commercial or community/civic uses; the open spaces and parks; and the 'public/private' spaces where public access is unrestricted (at least during daylight hours). It includes the interfaces with key internal and private spaces to which the public normally has free access.

### Policy Context

#### Cambridge

- 16.2 Cambridge Local Plan 2018 includes a range of policies which seek to protect and enhance the public realm. Policy 10: The City Centre requires development in the city centre to contribute to the Council's aim of improving the capacity and quality of the public realm throughout the city centre. The Local Plan also identifies a range of Areas of Major Change and Opportunity Areas where a comprehensive approach to development and a high-quality public realm is sought. A number of these sites have their own Supplementary Planning Documents.
- 16.3 Policy 56 in Cambridge City Council's Local Plan explains how development will be supported if it is designed to be attractive, high-quality, accessible, inclusive and safe. In part i) of the policy it states that proposals should create and improve public realm, open space and landscaped areas that respond to their context and development as a whole and are designed as an integral part of the scheme. Policy 59 Designing landscape and the public realm states that high quality public realm must be designed as an integral part of new development and co-ordinated with adjacent sites and phases.

#### South Cambridgeshire

- 16.4 The South Cambridgeshire Local Plan Policy HQ1 Design Principles requires delivery of high-quality landscaping and public spaces, and the delivery of high-quality public realm. The [District Design Guide SPD \(2010\)](#) provide further details. A number of Neighbourhood Plans also provide policies and guidance on issues in particular areas.

## **Development types from which Obligations will be sought**

- 16.5 Any development that requires alterations to the public realm to provide or improve access, servicing, and amenity. Consequently, there is no trigger below which a public realm obligation may not be required and there are no types of development that would be exempt.

## **Form in which contributions should be made**

- 16.6 To a large extent the delivery of public realm through new developments will be through the design of new developments and through direct delivery of new places. Much of this will be achieved through planning conditions.
- 16.7 S106 could be used for a variety of on-site or off-site public realm improvements such as improving footways, street furniture, lighting or removal of street clutter. Where area wide public realm improvement schemes are sought, contributions may be required towards such improvement from multiple developments through planning obligations. Each case will be considered on its individual merits.
- 16.8 Applications should detail how they will address the requirements of policies related to public realm improvements, including as part of their design and access statement.
- 16.9 Applicants will need to demonstrate public realm measures are suitably managed in perpetuity. S106 obligation will put in place measures to agree the management and maintenance of any unadopted areas. If they are proposed for adoption, they will need to be of a suitable standard. Upon transfer, a commuted maintenance payment will be required to cover the initial costs of maintaining the Public Realm (usually 15 years).

## **Exemptions**

- 16.10 No specific exceptions.