

DRAFT Ebbfleet Public Realm Strategy

A toolkit for Healthier Streets and Public Spaces

May 2019



Welcome to Ebbsfleet's Public Realm Strategy

This guidance document has been co-developed with our partners to promote streets and public spaces that support happy and healthy lives for all of our residents in the Garden City, be they human or creature.

The strategy has been developed as a toolkit of six sections that can be used by design specialists, consenting teams and stakeholders to enhance the design quality of streets and public spaces;

1

PUBLIC REALM DESIGN PROCESS

Pages 11 - 25

Use this enhanced design process to guide you from project initiation to delivery for all new public realm schemes in Ebbsfleet.

Ebbsfleet’s updated design process builds on the Kent Design Guide to prioritise integrated and inclusive design that is co-owned by all design specialists, as well as key stakeholders and the local community.

2

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER OVERVIEW

Pages 27 - 43

Use our landscape character overview to guide the characterisation of your public realm design concept.

This analysis of Ebbsfleet’s unique existing landscape identifies four unifying landscape themes; Water, Chalk, Agriculture, and Industry. These themes should be used to inspire a distinctive and characterful landscape design in all future public realm future projects.

3

PUBLIC REALM EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

Pages 45 - 67

This new design tool can be used by design teams and stakeholders to collectively review and quantify the design performance across 9 key indicators for street and public realm projects.

4

PUBLIC REALM EXEMPLARY DESIGNS

Pages 69 - 119

Use these worked examples to inspire and benchmark your own concept street designs.

There are worked examples for 4 types of street, and 2 types of public spaces, that will provide a benchmark against which EDC will evaluate the performance of future public realm schemes.

5

HARD LANDSCAPE GUIDE

Pages 127 - 161

Use this section to guide the specification of hard surfaces in your own public realm project.

The specification should be informed by a landscape character assessment (Section 2), and an understanding of the maintenance management requirements, to provide a consistent hard materials strategy that enhances Ebbsfleet’s existing sense of place.

6

PLANTING GUIDE

Page 163

Vibrant, distinctive and sustainable planting underpins the vision for a 21st century Garden City, and this section establishes the preferred approaches for planting in the public realm.

Use this guidance to inform your vision, and embed a viable maintenance and management strategy for planting that can be sustained into the future.





Welcome to Ebbsfleet, a Garden City for the 21st Century

Sitting on the banks of the River Thames, only 17 minutes from Kings Cross St Pancras, Ebbsfleet is being planned to grow out of the chalk quarries and industrial heritage of northern Kent to become a healthy, happy new place to invest, live, work and play within.

Ebbsfleet is sponsored by Government to become a 'Garden City' to add ambition, quality and pace to planned development between Dartford and Gravesend.

The Garden City benchmark is a commitment to build on the legacy of Ebenezer Howard's original Garden Cities at Welwyn and Letchworth, and create a place founded on quality place-making, community building and sustainability, making long term arrangements for the care of public spaces and assets drawing upon a fair share of land values.

A 21st Century Garden City Approach

The Garden Cities of the 20th century are defined by their landscape setting of parks, open spaces, tree-lined streets and homes with generous gardens. The resulting leafy and green character is generally recognised as an important reason for their enduring popularity which at the same time offers a number of key benefits in terms of sustainability and climate change resilience. They were built in response to a range of urban and health issues associated with Victorian overcrowding and poor social conditions.

The government has established a Development Corporation at Ebbsfleet in response to a series of specific 21st Century challenges, including the need to build more new homes. In addition, issues relating to climate change and a growing obesity crisis linked to inactive lifestyles require an innovative approach to landscape and public realm design. A summary of the key ambitions of this document are as follows.

Guiding principles for healthier streets and public spaces in Ebbsfleet

City in a Garden

The public realm of a 21st Century Garden City needs to function on many levels, reinterpreting the enduring Garden City brand- to become a City in a Garden.

The strategy recognises that the large private gardens that contributed so much to the leafy character of towns such as Letchworth and Welwyn Garden City are no longer affordable for many, and it will be Ebbsfleet's public realm, its streets, parks and green spaces, that will deliver these qualities. The 'city in the garden' concept is also able to promote ecological health, biodiversity, local food production, and the overall well-being of its residents.

A more active Ebbsfleet

Strategic planning has ensured that Ebbsfleet's residents will enjoy unparalleled access to an extensive network of parks and open spaces to help to relax, exercise, socialise and unwind.

Schools, community facilities, public transport and local shops have all been located within walking distance of homes. However, for the full restorative value of these green spaces and community facilities to be achieved they need to be safely and easily accessible from every resident's doorstep, without the need to get in the car. The overarching goal is to create a public realm that encourages activity and the long term health of its residents.

Re-purposing the street

The local streets will provide a vital stepping stone in encouraging people to get out of their cars and will be carefully designed to give pedestrians, cyclists and public transport priority. The Garden City's streets will become places where people meet, children play and cars proceed with caution. They will be designed to encourage people to become more active, walking and cycle shorter journeys rather than using the car. Adopting such an approach will also help to improve air quality, reduce congestion, and make Ebbsfleet's neighbourhoods greener, healthier and more attractive places in which to live, work and play.

Encouraging play

The strategy recognises the importance of these streets and spaces in the lives of the Garden City's children and youth. There is a recognition that too many children and young people today are inactive, spending too much time inside addicted to their screens, with growing incidences of childhood obesity, storing up physical and mental health issues for their future adult lives. Parents also spend a lot of time ferrying their children from one protected area to another, whether school, club, or friend's house, under the perception that it is not safe for their children to be out by themselves.

The design of the streets and public spaces in the Garden City seeks to encourage children to socialise outside and actively use the green spaces within their neighbourhoods. In streets where pedestrians take priority over the car children can safely play outside and do so independently from quite a young age without being continuously supervised by their parents. In this way we can give back to our children the freedom to play that we enjoyed when we were children.

Enabling communities to grow and flourish

The public realm strategy recognises the importance of establishing a strong sense of community and imagines a public realm that facilitates opportunities for greater engagement between residents and visitors alike. The vision for the Garden City's public realm promotes this by actively engaging the local community, outlining design principles for the establishment of a safe environment, and providing places for the local residents to meet, socialise and play. In this way, the open spaces and streets of Ebbsfleet Garden City will provide a platform for all residents to enjoy communal activities, spontaneously engage with their neighbours, and reduce social isolation.

Celebrating Ebbsfleet's distinctive landscapes

The public realm strategy encourages an approach to the design of the landscape and the public realm that responds to the uniqueness of Ebbsfleet's rich cultural heritage of agriculture and industry, and its enigmatic post-industrial landscapes to create distinctive neighbourhoods, streets and parks. The material palettes and furniture specifications of the public realm should be informed by the materiality of the white chalk cliffs, lakes and marshes, and use the colours, texture and patterns of Ebbsfleet's fauna and flora to create a memorable public realm.

Promoting collaborative, inclusive and integrated design

It is hoped that the strategy can provide a fresh new approach to designing the public realm within north Kent, integrating the many different specialists involved in each project within an integrated design process that promotes the widest range of outcomes for the public realm providing a system in which engineers, landscape architects and planners can work collaboratively.

Sustainable stewardship into the future

The public realm strategy is underpinned by life cycle cost analysis and strong engagement from key stakeholders to inform the future stewardship of the public realm. The vision is to create a robust public realm that coordinates maintenance expectations and outlines life cycle expectations with the long term stewardship of Ebbsfleet Garden City's public realm. The strategy, therefore, aims to establish design guidance that leads to both a qualitative public realm that can be built today and can sustainably evolve with Ebbsfleet Garden City into the 22nd Century.

How has the strategy been developed ?

The strategy has been informed by a review of what has already been consented and constructed within current planning permissions, as well as the landscape character areas within Ebbsfleet, to provide a clear understanding of the existing context. It has also responded to contemporary approaches to designing for healthy and active lifestyles, water sensitive design, productive landscapes and pictorial approaches to planting at a city scale.

It has been developed with Kent County Council, to ensure alignment of ambition, and a co-ownership of the approach.

A lifecycle costing exercise has been undertaken of the public realm typologies within the guidance to inform the maintenance regimes and costs going forward, and establish life cycle requirements for the public realm.

This document builds on the principles and established in the Kent Design Guide and Ebbsfleet Implementation Framework as well as current best practice guidance. It aligns with the spatial principles established for the streets and open spaces in the Ebbsfleet Implementation Framework, providing further detail and best practice examples of how these can be achieved.

The following key documents have informed the strategy:

Existing guidance relating to the public realm of Ebbsfleet Garden City

- Ebbsfleet implementation Framework (2017)
- Kent Design Guide (2010)

Best practice guidance

- Manual for Streets (2007) Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government & Department of Transport
- Guide to Healthy Street Indicators –(2017) Mayor of London/ TFL
- SuDs in London – a guide (2016)- Mayor of London/ TFL

How will the strategy be used in Ebbsfleet?

The Strategy will be used by EDC and all those involved in the design, management and consenting of the public realm within the Garden City (including developers, planners, landscape architects, engineers, ecologists and quantity surveyors) to;

- **Measure design performance**

Establishing an objective and quantifiable design performance framework for Ebbsfleet's public realm to promote, evaluate and monitor accessibility, sustainability, health lifestyles, biodiversity, water sensitive design, safety and security.

- **Illustrate best practice street layouts**

Providing design guidance on the main street typologies and open spaces within the Garden City using best practice exemplar case studies

- **Deliver quality planting in public spaces**

Providing guidance on the development of a distinctive, vibrant, affordable and maintainable planting strategy for public realm across Ebbsfleet that is informed by the existing landscape character area.

- **Deliver quality hard surfaces**

Establishing a consistent palette of materials and street furniture in public realm projects across the Ebbsfleet area that contributes to creating a distinctive identity and sense of place for Ebbsfleet

- **Promote a co-design process for public realm projects**

Establishing an agreed approach to the design, delivery and maintenance of the public realm that is collaborative, promotes public engagement, and incorporates a structured design review process.

- **Promote sustainable stewardship of the public realm**

Establish maintenance and management requirements and inform material selection in relation to life cycle expectations.



