

Designing out Crime

Introduction

Good quality design can make a significant contribution to creating places where people want to live, work and relax safely. Whether through new development, or the regeneration of an existing area, thorough consideration of design principles can help improve an area's security - for both people and property.

Incorporating sensible security measures during the construction of a new development, or the refurbishment of buildings and estates, has been shown to reduce levels of crime, fear of crime and disorder. The design process needs to achieve a secure environment for residents and users of public space without creating a 'fortress mentality' and balanced with the need to achieve desirable places to live where communities will readily feel a sense of ownership and responsibility. The emphasis has been on putting a range of preventative measures in place at the planning stage. However, recent work by the Assembly and the Design Commission for Wales has also identified the importance of design at the procurement stage for public development projects.

In each Welsh Police force area there are specially trained officers who act as **Architectural Liaison Officers (ALOs)** and can advise on means of designing out crime.

Statutes and Guidance

Crime prevention through design is promoted by legislation covering England and Wales, and in strategic Government policy documents which differ between England and Wales.

Planning Guidance in Wales

Planning guidance on the design of site layouts and external areas began with WO Circular 16/94 '**Planning out crime**'.

The Assembly promotes Secured By Design (SBD) in its strategic planning policy document '**Planning Policy Wales (PPW), 2002.**' Paragraph 2.9.6 outlines that the aim is to produce safe environments through good design.

SBD is also advocated in the **Design Technical Advice Note (TAN) 12, 2002.** Its objectives include promotion of: "high quality in the public realm by ensuring safe public spaces and routes" and "a successful relationship between public and private space". It gives detailed guidance in support of the policy in Planning Policy Wales and presents designing out crime as being an integral part of the design process. The TAN also suggests that all planning applications be accompanied by a design statement.

ODPM and Home Office Guide 'Safer Places: the Planning System and Crime Prevention'

This comprehensive new good practice document was issued jointly by ODPM and the Home Office in February 2004 as a companion to the UK Government's new, overarching Planning Policy Statement 1 (comparable to policy covered in PPW and TAN 12 in Wales). The objective is well-designed places where people feel secure and where crime and disorder, or the fear of crime, does not undermine quality of life or community cohesion. The guide's objective is to show how good planning can contribute to crime prevention and the creation of well designed, safer, sustainable communities and environments which people want to occupy and use, creating a strong sense of communal identity. It challenges developers, designers and all those who influence the design and layout of developments to think in an holistic manner about each one. Its main audience is local authority planners along with those within the Police who advise on SBD. The guide is built around SBD principles, which it covers in detail, and presents a number of case studies which demonstrate best practice in designing out crime in a range of settings: housing; town centres; retailers; leisure providers; commercial; health; education; parks; car parks and public transport. The guide provides substantial detail on designing out crime which is transferable to Wales.

Planning Authorities

Planning Policy Wales requires that local planning authorities incorporate design policies within development plans to indicate their requirements for planning proposals. They may also produce supplementary planning guidance (SPG) to support their development plan policy statement, outlining how developments should aim to satisfy the design elements advocated by TAN 12, including crime prevention. The Planning Officers' Society of Wales, funded by the Assembly, has produced a model residential design guide which authorities can adapt and use as SPG. It includes issues such as designing for safety and was launched formally in September 2005 during Urban Design Week. It is also recommended that planning authorities consult Architectural Liaison Officers on their Local Development Plans or Unitary Development Plans to ensure that crime prevention is taken into account.

Building Regulations

In the past, the Building Regulations (which apply to Wales and England) have not required physical security measures for buildings. This remains the case, although the Sustainable and Secure Buildings Act 2004 extends the purposes for which Building Regulations may be made to include sustainability and 'the prevention or detection of crime'. In effect, the Act makes it possible for the Regulations to require compliance with SBD standards in all new buildings. The Building Regulations Advisory Committee is currently considering how such measures might be incorporated but there are no plans at present to implement new Regulations.

Section 17 Crime & Disorder Act 1998

Crime prevention through environmental design fits well with the clear statutory obligation placed on the Police and local authorities by Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act (1998). Section 17 places a duty on both these key partners to exercise their functions with regard to the likely effect on crime and disorder in the area and the need to do all they reasonably can to prevent it. So, for example, the planning department of a local authority must take crime and disorder into account when granting planning permission. Section 17 is intended to be a useful lever to encourage a thorough-going corporate commitment to crime prevention but the extent to which this happens in Wales is patchy.

Designing out Crime Initiatives

Some of the most useful and practical guidance is linked to specific initiatives on designing out crime:

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)

CPTED is a long standing design concept which is based on the theory that the proper design and effective use of the environment can lead to a reduction in the fear and incidence of crime, as well as an improvement in the quality of life. It recognises that the best time to apply this is at the design stage. The use of CPTED can reduce criminality and foster positive social interaction between legitimate users. The theory is based on three principles:

Surveillance – by designing the placement of physical features, activities and people in such a way as to maximise visibility to promote natural surveillance.

Access control – by selectively placing entrances and exits, fencing, lighting and landscape to control the flow of/or limit access.

Territorial reinforcement – clearly delineating private space creates a sense of ownership and protectiveness and also makes intruders stand out.

CPTED was the forerunner of Secured by Design.

Secured by Design

Secured By Design is a Police initiative developed by the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) and backed by the Home Office. Its objective is to encourage the adoption of crime prevention measures in the design of the built environment to assist in reducing the opportunity for crime, the fear of crime and anti-social behaviour and to create a safer and more secure environment.

The scheme comprises a combination of estate design principles and complementary physical measures. SBD aims to achieve a good overall

standard of security for buildings and for the private and public spaces around them. These design features can include: secure vehicle parking; adequate lighting of communal areas; fostering a sense of ownership of the local environment; control of access to individual and common boundaries and landscape design supporting natural surveillance.

Research undertaken by the University of Huddersfield has estimated the additional cost to developers of complying with SBD is no more than £1,250 for a 3 bed semi-detached house; this is sufficient to deter many developers from seeking the award. The problem is not one of proving the wider community benefits of prevention, but of persuading developers to bear the initial capital cost of SBD.

Obtaining approval under the SBD award scheme involves the submission of design details to the local ALO or Police Crime Prevention Design Advisor. Developers who gain SBD approval benefit from a significant marketing opportunity, including being able to use the SBD logo in their advertising and literature.

The core principles of Secured by Design are also applicable to non-residential development and facilities and can be applied to virtually all the built environment including: businesses; town centres; car parks; parks and play areas; hospitals; schools; licensed premises; bus and railway stations; leisure centres and caravan parks.

In 1992, ACPO, with the support of the AA, launched the **Secured Car Parks** scheme with the aim of developing security standards and reducing crime in all types of car parks. The standards cover good design and management practices; good surveillance by cameras or regular patrols; good lighting; provision of help points and controlled pedestrian and vehicle entry and exit points. Car park operators can obtain a Secured Car Park award, subject to annual re-inspection, if they satisfy certain security and safety standards. The initiative has been widely taken up as a marketing tool, not only by municipal car park operators, but also by hotels, airports and sports centres, amongst others. It has recently been re-badged as '**Safer Parking**'.

Secured by Design and Social Housing in Wales

Since July 1993, all housing schemes developed by Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) in Wales, and receiving Assembly Social Housing Grant (SHG), have had to comply with the requirements of SBD, and requirements regarding the security of the dwellings have been incorporated into the Assembly's standard contract documentation for new-build social housing. This has been operated as a partnership between the Welsh Police forces, the Assembly and Welsh RSLs resulting in over 17,000 homes complying with the standards.

While the maximum impact of SBD is achieved in new housing, the Assembly's standards for refurbishing existing properties also require that

RSLs take the opportunity to improve the physical security of dwellings when carrying out the improvements.

The introduction of SBD has had a noticeable impact on the quality of social housing in terms of making tenants feel safe in their homes and by creating estates where good, careful design minimises the threat of theft, vandalism and assault.

Two separate evaluation studies, by Gwent Police and the Building Research Establishment, have confirmed the effectiveness of SBD. Other findings have highlighted that numbers of break-ins through doors and windows are reduced by half in properties built to SBD standards and that the incidence of daylight offences is reduced when estates are designed to ensure natural surveillance.

Welsh Assembly Government

In addition to what has been covered so far, the Welsh Assembly Government has promoted crime prevention through design across a range of policy areas:

Design Commission for Wales

The improvement of new building design through the establishment of a Design Commission for Wales was a commitment in the Welsh Assembly Government's 'Plan for Wales' and the Assembly voted for the Commission in October 2001. Established in 2002, its objective is: to champion high standards of design and architecture to the public and private sectors in Wales through promoting a wider understanding of design issues and the importance of good standards in enhancing the built environment across all sectors.

The Commission works with South Wales Police to assist in the promotion of the SBD initiative in Wales and ran a training seminar with the police and local authorities in 2004. ALOs have worked with the Design Review Panel of the Commission. The Panel reviews development proposals that are submitted to it and that are considered to have a significant impact on the local environment. Their reviews are sent to participants and put onto their web site.

Alleygating Pilot projects

In 2003, Assembly funding of £250,000 was made available for 5 alleygating pilots – a novel means of designing out crime and making vulnerable houses and garages more secure. Alleygating can drastically cut burglary rates and make people feel more secure in their homes. Gating also helps keep back lanes free of rubbish and prevents nuisance behaviour such as graffiti and youth annoyance. The funding went to areas where there were significant problems with crime and disorder. Four of the projects – in Rhyl, Wrexham, Cardiff and Barry – saw gates fitted to rear alleyways and residents were

issued with keys to the gates, along with the emergency services and public utilities. The fourth project – for Milford Haven - saw structural changes being made to a housing estate to block off walkways and underpasses that are being used as escape routes from the police.

Residents in the pilot areas report greater peace of mind – children can play safely in the gated areas, for instance, and problems like rubbish, fly-tipping and nuisance behaviour have been curbed. The pilots were to establish 'what works' so that others might consider them as a solution to local problems elsewhere. The Vale of Glamorgan Partnership, for example, is believed to be committed to rolling out such projects throughout the borough, finance permitting.

Public Transport

Secure Railway Station Scheme

The Department for Transport's Secure Stations Scheme represents a national standard for passenger safety and security on Britain's railway stations.

Launched in 1998, the Scheme has recently been independently reviewed and subsequently revised in order to simplify some procedures and encourage more operators to take part.

Currently only two stations in Wales are accredited – Cardiff Central and Aberystwyth. Arriva Trains Wales have confirmed that they are considering pursuing accreditation under the Secure Station Scheme for Newport, Swansea and Bridgend and the fitting of additional CCTV at Swansea.

For stations that fall short of the Scheme's accreditation standard there is a new category of 'working towards accreditation'. This category recognises the efforts that are being made by some train operators to get such stations to meet the standard, and provides them with the guidance and support to do so.

The Welsh Assembly Government continues to fund station improvements (including better security arrangements) throughout Wales. The Minister for Economic Development and Transport has agreed to provide funding from the National Assembly for Wales of £11,000 in 2004-05 and £25,000 in 2005-06 and 2006-07 to British Transport Police in North Wales for the provision of a community partnership manager in North Wales. Employing the manager will release a uniformed officer from these duties to concentrate on operational issues. The main purpose of the role of the community partnership manager is to: promote good relations between the Police and the community; provide a programme of education that will help develop knowledge and respect for the law and reduce fatalities and crime on the railways by diverting those in the community away from trespass, vandalism and anti-social behaviour.

Secure Bus Stations Scheme

The Assembly has also funded Crime Concern to develop a good practice guide for local authorities and bus operators through the 'Secure Bus Stations' scheme. The guidance will shortly be issued to local authorities and bus operators in Wales, as well as to the Police, Bus Users UK (representing bus passengers) and local Community Safety Partnerships.

Business Crime Reduction Strategy Wales

This strategy, launched by the Assembly in June 2005, aims to reduce the burden of crime against business in Wales and encourages Community Safety Partnerships and business representatives to work together. One of the strategy's objectives is to raise the profile of commercial applications and information available from the Secured by Design initiative. Any enterprise benefits from attention to the principles of designing out crime and this holds good for the business sector too. All types of businesses from large industrial estates and town centres to small workshops could probably identify a number of ways of improving security but interest in SBD in the commercial sector has been very limited to date.

Discussion and Conclusions

There is general consensus about the crime prevention value of designing out crime. There is a range of design guidance on the subject and there are some positive examples covering a range of sectors across Wales, perhaps most notably in relation to new social housing all of which is now designed to SBD standards. All development commissioned by the public sector, such as schools, should also be targeted, which is why procurement processes are currently being reviewed.

But private developers are not signing up to SBD in numbers. Most often private developers focus instead on the legal requirements of areas such as highways. Trying to encourage them to build with sustainability and security in mind is a generic problem and needs to be tackled holistically. It is not the type of change that is best dealt with by a condition on a planning application as it needs to be built into a development plan then into design at the beginning of a project. This is why TAN 12: Design recommends that design statements should accompany proposals. Trying to bolt SBD on at the end leads to overall poorer quality design.

There is no evidence that it is the availability of specifically Welsh design guidance, or the lack of it, that is prohibiting delivery of SBD. Delivery problems could relate to a complex set of factors including:

- the pressure on local planning authorities to consider a record number of development proposals,
- the lack of progress made on development plans and general design policy,
- the fact that the design of development is influenced by a number of factors, not just security,

- the relationship between the LPA (including the highways departments) and the ALO and also with lobbying groups relating to other aspects of design