

Building for Life

- The Quality Mark

Building for Life 12 (BfL12) is a government-endorsed industry standard for well-designed homes and neighbourhoods. It is the sign of the quality developments and it gives the homebuyer the confidence that essential elements were checked and approved during the planning process.

These elements include for instance, car parking, safe streets, access to amenities etc. All engaged in the building industry, from local authorities to developers are encouraged to apply the BfL12 to create modern and good places to live. It will help local planning authorities to assess the quality of proposed and completed buildings. This standard can be used for build specifications, design codes and local building policies. BfL12 is led by three partners: Cabe at the Design Council, Design for Homes and the Home Builders Federation, supported by Nottingham Trent University.

Developments assessed towards BfL12 standard achieve 12 green, amber or red points. The achievement of 9 greens enables Build for LifeTM accreditation. 'Built for LifeTM' accreditation is a quality mark available immediately after planning approval, offering developers the opportunity to promote the quality of their developments during sales and marketing activity. It will also help those seeking a home to find a place to live which has been designed to have the best possible chance of becoming a popular

and desirable neighbourhood. BfL12 helps during the design process to demonstrate compliance with the National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Practice Guidance.

'Built for Life accreditation gives the consumer confidence in the quality of developments and the consideration that has gone into all aspects of the build.' Nick Boles MP, former Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Planning. Homebuyers can check if the development have achieved Built for Life TM on www.builtforlifehomes.org.

The 12 criteria of the Building for Life

Local authorities are encouraged to adopt BfL12, but to avoid setting a requirement for all proposed developments to achieve 12 'greens'. Instead, it is recommended that local policies require all proposed developments to use BfL12 as a design tool throughout the planning process. Moreover, local authorities are advised to consider expecting developments to demonstrate they are targeting BfL12 where applications for outline planning permission is granted.

Integrating into the neighbourhood

- Does the scheme integrate into its surroundings by reinforcing existing connections and creating new ones, while also respecting existing buildings and land uses around the development site?
- Does the development provide (or is it close to) community facilities, such as shops, schools, workplaces, parks, play areas, pubs or cafes?
- Does the scheme have good access to public transport to help reduce car dependency?

- Does the development have a mix of housing types and tenures that suit local requirements?

Creating a place

- Does the scheme create a place with a locally inspired or otherwise distinctive character?
- Does the scheme take advantage of existing topography, landscape features (including water courses), wild-life habitats, existing buildings, site orientation and microclimates?
- Are buildings designed and positioned with landscaping to define and enhance streets and spaces and are buildings designed to turn street corners well?
- Is the scheme designed to make it easy to find your way around?

Street and home

- Are streets designed in a way that encourage low vehicle speeds and allow them to function as social spaces?
- Is resident and visitor parking sufficient and well integrated so that it does not dominate the street?
- Will public and private spaces be clearly defined and designed to be attractive, well managed and safe?
- Is there adequate external storage space for bins and recycling as well as vehicles and cycles?

(Source: www.builtforlifehomes.org)