



### What is meant by urban structure?

The term urban structure refers to the pattern or arrangement of development blocks, streets, buildings, open space and landscape which make up urban areas. It is the interrelationship between all these elements, rather than their particular characteristics that bond together to make a place.

Urban structure does not imply any particular kind of urbanism: it applies equally to the centre and to the suburb, and everything in between; and of course it applies equally to the city, the town and the village.

### Why urban structure is important

The urban structure provides the foundations for detailed design of the constituent elements. It creates a coherent framework, which forms the basis of the design of individual developments - quite possibly by different actors - in order to achieve the following:

- **Integration**  
Connection and overlap with surrounding areas.
- **Functional efficiency**  
So that individual elements (buildings, streets, open space etc) work together as part of an efficient whole.
- **Environmental harmony**  
Creating development forms that are energy efficient and ecologically sensitive.
- **A sense of place**  
Creating somewhere that is recognisably distinct but simultaneously strengthens local identity.
- **Commercial viability**  
Responding to the realities of market influence on development mix and delivery.