

CABINET

17th November 2020

DRAFT DESIGN GUIDE

SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT

Report of the Director of Places

Strategic Aim:	Sustainable Growth	
Key Decision: Yes	Forward Plan Reference: FP/021020	
Exempt Information	No	
Cabinet Member(s) Responsible:	Mr G Brown Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Finance and Planning	
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Ward Councillors	All	

DECISION RECOMMENDATIONS

That Cabinet approves the Draft Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document, as set out in Appendix 1, for public consultation.

1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The emerging Local Plan for Rutland approved by Council for its statutory consultation proposes the preparation of a Design Guide SPD in order to improve design quality in development proposals and provide guidance to assist applicants and decision makers. This is intended to provide additional guidance to the emerging Local Plan Policy EN3.
- 1.2 The draft Design Guide (Appendix 1) sets out the Council's design expectations for high quality, inclusive and sustainable places which reflect and respond to local character alongside the design process to achieve these. It also provides detailed guidance for the design of commercial areas to meet best practice.
- 1.3 Cabinet is requested to consider and approve the draft Design Guide for the purposes of public consultation.

2 BACKGROUND AND MAIN CONSIDERATIONS

- 2.1 The Design Guide was commissioned jointly by South Kesteven District Council and Rutland County Council. It has been fully funded by a planning delivery grant awarded by the Government on a competitive bidding basis. Government guidance encouraged joint applications for planning delivery grants and commissioning a design guide to cover the two local authority areas was considered the most cost effective option.
- 2.2 Each authority is responsible for undertaking its own public consultation on the joint guide and adopting the document. Whilst the draft Design Guide has been produced as a joint document to serve both Local Planning Authorities, following consultation, it is intended to customise a final version specifically for the County of Rutland which would also take account of responses made to the consultation.
- 2.3 Once adopted the draft Design Guide will be a material consideration in determining planning applications. Once the Local Plan for Rutland is adopted, the Design Guide can be adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document.
- 2.4 The emerging Local Plan approved by Council for its statutory consultation and subsequent submission and examination proposes sustainable growth for the County, with development needed to deliver new homes as well as strong, prosperous communities that foster economic growth. This context merits the creation of special places and the highest levels of design quality. High quality design of new developments will also be important for community perception of new growth.
- 2.5 Taking account of the Council's aspirations for quality of design, the draft Design Guide sets out requirements for developers, applicants and Council officers to ensure that new development is of the highest possible design quality. It outlines the design process and principles which will be encouraged across sites of all scales and which should underpin design at all stages, from site-wide masterplanning to the design of blocks, buildings and streets.
- 2.6 It requires new proposals submitted for planning permission to demonstrate not only how they have responded to nationally recognised best practice in design, but also how they have responded to the characteristics and features, which are unique and distinctive to the area.
- 2.7 In accordance with the latest national-level planning policies and guidance, the draft Design Guide ensures clarity on design expectations and how this will be demonstrated and tested through the development management process.
- 2.8 Good design matters as it frames the places in which we live, work, socialise and do business. From the orientation of a rear garden to the amount of sunlight reaching a public square to how welcoming streets are to pedestrians, research has consistently demonstrated the link between design and people's physical and mental wellbeing.
- 2.9 Places that are designed well, function well and meet the needs of a wide range of uses and activities and can last for generations. In recognition of the challenges we are facing by our changing climate, it will also be essential to ensure that new

development seeks to reduce its carbon footprint, in terms of its design, construction and use.

2.10 The guidance should be used by applicants, designers and officers working in collaboration. The Design Guide is intended to be used by:

- ❖ applicants and their design teams preparing development proposals;
- ❖ planning officers, to negotiate with applicants/agents as proposals are developed, to offer pre-application advice at the outline and reserved matters stage, and to assess the quality of development proposals when determining planning applications;
- ❖ elected Councillors when assessing development proposals advance of and at committee
- ❖ statutory consultees providing commentary on applications;
- ❖ any design review panels or similar meetings arranged to review development proposals at pre-application and application stage; and
- ❖ local communities as they are consulted on applications.

3 CONSULTATION

3.1 A number of workshops were held with elected members of each authority and with landowners, developers and stakeholders during the course of the preparation of the draft Design Guide.

3.2 Cabinet is requested to approve the draft Design Guide for wider public consultation, to be conducted in line with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement.

3.3 There is the scope for the Growth, Infrastructure and Resources Scrutiny Committee to review the Design Guide SPD during the course of the public consultation so that any specific considerations from the scrutiny process can inform the final version of the document.

4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

4.1 The preferred option is to undertake the public consultation on the draft Design Guide. This is considered to be complementary to national guidance on design. The Government's White Paper on reform to the planning system in England proposes further changes to improve the quality of design. These are currently the subject of consultation and will require primary and secondary legislation. Therefore, it is considered that the White Paper should not be regarded as an impediment to the Council taking forward its Design Guide.

4.2 Given the nature of future growth likely to come forward within the County as proposed in the emerging Local Plan, it is important that the Council has up to date and robust design policies that reflect national practice and emerging planning policy. National guidance currently advises Councils to have local Design Guides that provide detailed design guidance; the draft Design Guide provides this local-level framework whilst reflecting the latest national-level design guidance. If the draft Design Guide is not approved, the Council will continue to continue with current guidance which does not take account of the Council's ambitions for improving the quality of design in new development as set out in the emerging Local Plan.

- 4.3 Whilst the outcomes of the Government consultation on the Planning for the Future White Paper will take some time to come into legislation, one clear outcome is that there is a renewed focus of the importance of design within the proposed planning reforms. The draft Design Guide and its supporting evidence will assist Rutland County Council set the foundations to support a move towards a design led planning system.

5 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The total cost of the draft Design Guide has been fully funded by a Government planning delivery grant awarded for this specific purpose by the Government jointly to both South Kesteven District Council and Rutland County Council. South Kesteven District Council has acted as the “accountable body” for the management and administration of this grant. Each authority is responsible for undertaking its own public consultation on the draft Design Guide. This will be funded from existing approved budgets.

6 LEGAL AND GOVERNANCE CONSIDERATIONS

- 6.1 There is a requirement for public participation prior to the adoption of a SPD by a local planning authority as set out in the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

7 DATA PROTECTION IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 A Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIA) has not been completed.

8 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 8.1 The Design Guide includes proposals to make places and developments more accessible and inclusive and so will have a positive impact on equality.

9 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The Design Guide includes proposals to address community safety with the design of new developments. Although there is no specific chapter on this subject, it is addressed in other chapters that cover issues such as healthy lifestyles, buildings overlooking streets and strong front boundary treatments

10 HEALTH AND WELLBEING IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 Research has demonstrated a link between design and people’s physical and mental wellbeing.

11 ORGANISATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 Environmental implications – the draft Design Guide recognises the challenges we are facing by our changing climate and seeks to provide guidance as to how new development can reduce its carbon footprint, in terms of its design, layout, construction and use. There is a specific chapter on the Climate Emergency (5B) and this is also a cross-cutting theme throughout the document, being covered in many of the other chapters.
- 11.2 Human Resource implications – There will be a need for staff training which can be

arranged internally.

11.3 Procurement Implications – procurement of the draft Design Guide was undertaken by South Kesteven District Council in line with their financial regulations.

12 CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

12.1 The Design Guide will take forward the Council's ambitions to enhance the quality of design in new development. Public consultation on the draft Design Guide provides the opportunity to seek views on the proposals and help shape a final document. In line with the Council's ambitions for design set out in the emerging Local Plan, the key aims of this Design Guide are to:

- Establish the requirements for a high level of design and build quality in all development proposals in Rutland;
- Set out the design steps and considerations that planning applicants need to undertake; and
- Provide applicants with a clear understanding of good quality design at any scale or type of development.

13 BACKGROUND PAPERS

13.1 Rutland emerging Local Plan.

13.2 Government White Paper – Planning for the Future.

14 APPENDICES

14.1 Appendix 1 – Draft Rutland and South Kesteven Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document.

A Large Print or Braille Version of this Report is available upon request – Contact 01572 722577.