

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: New Communities Portfolio Holder 1 October 2009
AUTHOR/S: Executive Director (Operational Services) / Corporate Manager
(Planning and Sustainable Communities)

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK - CONSULTATION ON SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENTS

Purpose

1. The purpose of this report is to seek agreement for a number of Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) to be published for consultation. The SPDs to be consulted on are as follows:
 - Affordable Housing
 - District Design Guide: High Quality and Sustainable Development in South Cambridgeshire
 - Landscape in New Developments

Background

2. The purpose of Supplementary Planning Documents is to expand on policies set out in Development Plan Documents and to provide additional detail. The Council has adopted a number of Development Plan Documents (DPD) that form part of the Local Development Framework. The three SPDs that have been currently prepared relate to policies contained within the adopted Development Control Policies DPD, and in the adopted Area Action Plans (AAP) for Northstowe, Cambridge East, and Cambridge Southern Fringe.

Process for preparing the Supplementary Planning Documents

3. The draft SPDs have been prepared in consultation with the relevant specialist officers within the Council. Following the enactment of the Planning Act 2008 and a change to the Regulations in 2009 there is no longer a requirement to carry out a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of the social, environmental and economic effects of the proposals contained within each SPD. However, under the European Union Strategic Environment Assessment (SEA) Directive, the Council still needs to consider whether there will be any significant environmental effects of the SPDs. Given the parent policies in the DPDs have been fully appraised, and SPDs cannot create new policy, it is considered unnecessary to undertake an SA / SEA of the SPDs. A statement to this effect has been prepared and will be published alongside the draft SPDs (Appendix 4).
4. The Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC) sets out the requirement for Assessment of plans or projects affecting Natura 2000 sites¹. The first stage in carrying out an HRA is the scoping report which identifies the likely impacts upon a Natura 2000 or Ramsar site, either alone or in combination with other projects or

¹ Natura 2000 is a Europe-wide network of sites of international importance for nature conservation established under the European Council Directive 'on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora' – (92/43/EEC 'Habitats Directive').

plans, and considers whether these impacts are likely to be significant. If it is found that there is not likely to be a significant impact then a full Appropriate Assessment would not need to be carried out. Each of the DPDs containing the parent policies for the SPDs has been found to have no likely significant impact. Given the parent policies in the DPDs have been fully appraised, and SPDs cannot create new policy, it is considered unnecessary to undertake an assessment of the SPDs. A statement to this effect has been prepared and will be published alongside the draft SPDs (Appendix 5).

5. As part of the process of preparing an SPD there must be an opportunity for representations to be made on their content. If agreed by the Portfolio Holder, the three SPDs and their accompanying documents will be subject to six weeks of public consultation, which is anticipated will start before the end of October.
6. The Council will consider the representations on the draft SPDs and make any relevant changes to the SPDs as a result of comments received. A report will then be made to Cabinet on the representations submitted, and Cabinet will make the decision whether to adopt the documents.

The three SPDs being considered

- ***Affordable Housing SPD***

7. The SPD expands on district-wide policies in the Development Control Policies Development Plan Document (DPD), adopted in July 2007. Policies seek to ensure that a suitable proportion, type and mix of Affordable Housing is provided through new development and also provide for rural exceptions sites, to address the high level of housing need in the district, and this SPD provides additional details on how these policies will be implemented.

Note – There is a section in the SPD on Model Section 106 Clauses – the Model Section 106 Clauses are in preparation and will be tabled at the meeting, or provided in advance if possible.

- ***District Design Guide: High Quality and Sustainable Development in South Cambridgeshire SPD***

8. Achieving good design and sustainable development are the core principals underlying planning. At the heart of sustainable development is the simple idea of ensuring a better quality of life for everyone, now and for future generations. The aim of this SPD is to provide additional guidance on how developments can ensure they are sustainable and achieve a high quality of design in a way that respects the local context.

Note – There is further formatting to be undertaken on the Design Guide SPD, including the insertion of more illustrations than currently presented. These will be added to the text before the consultation.

- ***Landscape in New Developments SPD***

9. Landscaping should not be peripheral to the planning process but fully integrated into the design stages. The SPD seeks to ensure consideration is given, wherever possible, to the retention of landscaping features within developments, or to incorporating new planting into new designs. Landscaping is a valuable addition to any development, often helping to create accessible green spaces for wildlife and

people, and achieve development of a high quality design in the local landscape or townscape, and to contribute to a better quality of life.

Implications

10. Financial	Within existing budgets
Legal	None
Staffing	Staffing will be required to manage the consultation process, although this can be accommodated within existing resources.
Risk Management	No significant risks. The Consultation responses will highlight any issues for further consideration by the Council.
Equal Opportunities	The SPDs have each been subject to an Equality Impact Assessment (see Appendix 6) and have been shown to have a neutral and/or positive impact on Equal Opportunities.

Consultations

11. The Council's Appeals Team, Major Development Team, New Communities Section, Urban Design Team, Development Control officers, Planning Policy Team, and Housing Development Team have been consulted during the preparation of the Supplementary Planning Document.

Effect on Strategic Aims

12.	Commitment to being a listening council, providing first class services accessible to all.
	N/A
	Commitment to ensuring that South Cambridgeshire continues to be a safe and healthy place for all.
	The SPDs will provide a framework for planning within South Cambridgeshire and will assist in improving the environment of the district.
	Commitment to making South Cambridgeshire a place in which residents can feel proud to live.
	The SPDs will provide a framework for planning within South Cambridgeshire and will assist in improving the environment of the district.
	Commitment to assisting provision for local jobs for all.
	N/A
	Commitment to providing a voice for rural life.
	N/A

Recommendations

13. It is recommended
- (a) that the New Communities Portfolio Holder agrees the following documents for consultation:
- Draft Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (Appendix 1)

- Draft District Design Guide: High Quality and Sustainable Development in South Cambridgeshire Supplementary Planning Document (Appendix 2)
 - Draft Landscape in New Developments Supplementary Planning Document (Appendix 3)
- (b) that the New Communities Portfolio Holder notes the Sustainability Appraisal Statement (Appendix 4) and Habitat Regulations Assessment Statement (Appendix 5).
- (c) that authority be given to the Corporate Manager (Planning and Sustainable Communities) to make minor amendments to the above documents.

Background Papers: the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

- Development Control Policies DPD
- Northstowe Area Action Plan
- Cambridge East Area Action Plan
- Cambridge Southern Fringe Area Action Plan
- South Cambridgeshire Design Guide 2005
- PPS1 Delivering Sustainable Development
- Planning and Climate Change – Supplement to PPS1
- PPS3 Housing

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