

TEIGNBRIDGE DISTRICT COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE

LEADER: Cllr Jeremy Christophers

PORTFOLIO HOLDER: Cllr Humphrey Clemens

DATE: 17 July 2018

REPORT OF: Business Manager Strategic Place

SUBJECT: Teignbridge Design Guide

PART I

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Executive is recommended to

Resolve

That

Proposed changes to the draft Teignbridge Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) based on the completed Principal Layout Strategies section is approved for adoption with further amendments to other sections being delegated to the Planning & Housing Portfolio Holder in consultation with the Business Manager Strategic Place.

1. PURPOSE

To review consultation responses to the draft Teignbridge Design Guide and confirm proposed changes arising from the consultation stage detailed in section 3 of this report.

2. BACKGROUND

The draft Teignbridge Design Guide SPD has been prepared in order to provide a framework and reference point to achieve high quality development within the district. It will therefore be based upon the Teignbridge Local Plan 2013-2033 and provides a detailed interpretation of Policy S2 – Quality Development, (an intention emphasised in the plan under para 2.5). As a whole, the Guide therefore carries important implications for those involved in the development process and as a material

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consideration for future planning applications, particularly for residential and employment schemes.

The core content is included within 5 main sections of the document as below:

- Principal Layout Strategies – sets out the principle design rules at the scale of large new areas of development such as new neighbourhoods and includes legibility, movement networks and residential density.
- Urban Structure – sets out the principles at the scale of development blocks including parking court, mews lane and back-to-back blocks.
- Streets and Movement – sets out the principles for the design of highway areas and parking
- Green Structures – sets out the principles for the design of open spaces, including greenways and wildlife corridors, urban parks and community open spaces.
- Building Design - sets out the principles for the design of buildings, including construction materials and common building styles of Teignbridge.

Draft Design Guide - public engagement and amendments

A draft version of the Teignbridge Design Guide was approved by Planning Committee in January 2018 for consultation purposes (Minute 73 refers). The Council published and invited comments on the Guide over a six week period from Friday 26 January to Friday 9 March 2018. The public consultation generated 320 separate comments from 18 respondents.

During preparation of the document the council also published emerging sections of the guide for pre-consultation comments from interested parties over the course of 2016/17.

Many comments received were supportive and constructive in tone for the draft Design Guide content. The majority of amendments made to the draft SPD represent points of clarification or correction of technical terminology rather than significant revision of the guide itself.

Some revisions have also been made to the graphics, these have for instance included simplifying some images presented to help clarify overall advice on a particular topic or in other cases replacing with different images which have been suggested by respondents.

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The revised Teignbridge Design Guide / SPD covering first sections only is included in Appendix A to this report.

3. MAIN IMPLICATIONS

The Council's adoption of the SPD will support design related policies of the Teignbridge Local Plan and help secure good place-making. The Teignbridge Design Guide will include amendments made following the public consultation. Individual comments are shown in a Responses Schedule at Appendix B.

A number of key issues were raised during the consultation, some of which have resulted in proposed amendments to the SPD. These are summarised below and contain a relevant officer assessment.

- (i) *General:* Some respondents felt the SPD added a confusing and unnecessary layer of additional design requirements beyond those set out in the Local Plan, (contrary to para 153 of NPPF) also will stagnate and stifle development and add unnecessary additional financial burdens on development. *In response* – the draft Design Guide provides clarity about how to achieve good design, (whilst avoiding bad design) innovation is not excluded. The guide generally deals with key topics necessitated by Policy S2 over a two page spread only with the objectives sections being restricted to a single page or less (excluding any tables or similar, specifically referenced within the objectives).
- (ii) *General:* A few comments considered it unnecessary to implement another layer of information/guidance to sit below Local Plan policy and Development Frameworks associated with allocated sites. *In response* – Providing design guidance through the SPD will connect with outstanding advice contained in the Local Plan and Development Frameworks, the latter purposely allows for principles contained within the Design Guide through cross-reference. It would be unreasonable to set out that level of design detail in the Local Plan or each of the Development Frameworks.
- (iii) *General:* Some comments emphasised the SPD should provide guidance and principle only and remove any reference to detail, allowing this to be picked up through the planning application process. Suggesting that developer led approach with accompanying Design and Access Statement for planning applications is the fulcrum to successful design outcomes. *In response* – the Design Guide sets out to explain how adopted Local Plan policies can be applied to different aspects of design by providing guidance and citing common and relevant scenarios. This will add further clarity for

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those preparing planning applications. The objectives are numbered to help users find and reference relevant content quickly.

- (iv) *Contemporary Design:* A number of respondents pointed out that design guidance from LPAs should be pragmatic and permissive of contemporary design as well as traditional / vernacular design. The Teignbridge Design Guide does not offer this role. *In response* – the Guide does not exclude contemporary design. Many of the traditional/vernacular images seek to help applicants start to understand some of the existing context of the district to help inform either innovative or traditional/vernacular approaches in order to promote or reinforce local distinctiveness (NPPF, para 60 refers). In recognition of the points raised a number of adjustments to preambles and text have been made particularly within the Building Design section.
- (v) *General:* Some comments considered that presenting principles and guidance as a series of 'Codes' implies a status beyond guidance that is inflexible and beyond the scope of an SPD. The terminology should be revised to 'principles' rather than 'Codes'. *In response* – national policy through the NPPF suggests that local planning authorities should use design codes to deliver high quality outcomes. Use of the term in the draft Teignbridge Design Guide will differentiate from policies contained in the Local Plan. It is reasonable to make a change to the term in the interests of full clarity and avoid misunderstanding. Therefore the word 'Code' is instead substituted by the word 'Objective', the themes of which are drawn from the Local Plan. Sub paragraphs show how the objectives should be applied to given design topic based scenarios.
- (vi) *Usability:* A few respondents considered the Design Guide in practical terms will be difficult for designers and applicants to review and demonstrate compliance with and for officers to implement given its extensive volume (214 pages). The suggestion was put that it read at times as an academic design textbook rather than a guidance document and many of the tables presented, most notably on Street Design, page 69, are very difficult to understand (*Streets and Movement section*). *In response* – The document is sectioned in logical theme based chapters and graphic designed. However its size on touchscreen devices may have some limitations. The table on page 69 has been removed. All other tables throughout the document have been reviewed by a wide cross-section of users prior to the consultation phase and found to be understandable.

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- (vii) *Using the document:* It was suggested the Design Guide needs to clarify what specifically is policy to which weight is attached and what is just guidance. *In response* – Changes have been made to recognise this concern in terms of format of document. In addition a typical page layout near the beginning on the ‘Using the Document’ page explains how the SPD should be read.
- (viii) *Building Design:* A few comments maintained the Building Design section removes flexibility for approaches other than those specified. There will be developments where a different approach to building design will be justified to reflect a garden village concept (*Building Design section*). *In response* – text within the Guide does not exclude contemporary design, the Building Design section is style neutral. Many of the images of existing parts of the district seek to help applicants start to understand some of the existing context of the district; to help inform either innovative or traditional/vernacular approaches in order to promote or reinforce local distinctiveness. Additional contemporary images have been added.
- (ix) *Materials:* Some respondents indicated the materials advice (in Building Design section) is valid but will vastly increase the cost of all developments. Unless the development is within a Conservation Area, it will not be viable or necessary to use local building forms or materials. *In response* – The Materials and Details Standing Advice section provides a reference point for common good practice approaches across Teignbridge. Seeking to promote the use of materials that relate well to those common to the area. Designers and developers are free to select materials that reflect local character and are appropriate to their context. This requirement does not necessarily translate into higher construction costs as suggested but it may steer developers away from material choices that do not reflect local character.
- (x) *Residential Density:* A few comments covered the focus on high density urban typologies and reflecting historic settlement forms is considered too narrow; other options such as garden city principles should be embraced (*Principal Layout Strategies section*). *In response* – The approach to the distribution of residential density is in response to meeting the objectives of the Local Plan and analysis of densities of neighbourhood areas of the district, the urban form and character. A review of the densities has resulted in adjustments to the ranges.

Due to the size of the document it will only be supplied electronically. It is anticipated that a small number of minor amendments will be required to finalise the document, in order to correct ‘typos’. A few usability and navigation enhancements will also be

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made once the content is finalised. Such amendments will not affect the content of the SPD.

Supporting Documents

SEA and HRA screening

The Council's draft Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) determination has concluded that no new significant effects are likely to arise through the implementation of the draft Design Guide that have not previously been identified through the full Sustainability Appraisal (SA) / SEA of the Teignbridge Local Plan. Therefore, full SEA of the Design Guide is not required. Natural England, Historic England and the Environment Agency have been consulted on the Council's draft determination and have not raised objection to this.

A Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening Assessment has been undertaken for the draft Design Guide. It concludes that there will be no likely significant effect on a European wildlife site from the Design Guide.

4. GROUPS CONSULTED

A wide spread of organisations and individuals were given the opportunity to comment on the draft SPD. A range of these have fed back constructive representations that are shown in the Responses Schedule in Appendix B.

As a whole consultees have returned comprehensive responses that have helped to pinpoint detailed concerns which may otherwise have been missed. The overall standard of responses was high and reflected amongst other things a strong interest in achieving improvement in the design quality of new development in Teignbridge. It was particularly welcome to see that a majority of community based respondents (i.e. from parish/town councils) were supportive of the main proposals of the Design Guide.

5. TIME-SCALE

Once adopted the Teignbridge Design Guide/SPD will be published at the earliest opportunity together with supporting documentation. A copy of each will also be sent to the Secretary of State for notification purposes within 28 days of adoption.

6. JUSTIFICATION

The main reasons are to make planning guidance for all forms of development consistent with the adopted Local Plan and national planning policy and where possible simplify in order to help users. In addition, to fulfil a corporate plan action. The

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publication of clear, strong design guidance is a key action of the Council Strategy T10 Project – Great Places to Live and Work.

7. DATE OF IMPLEMENTATION (CONFIRMATION OF DECISION SUBJECT TO CALL-IN)

10.00 a.m. on Tuesday 24 July 2018.

Nick Davies
Business Manager
Strategic Place

Cllr Humphrey Clemens
Portfolio Holder for
Planning & Housing

Wards affected	All outside Dartmoor National Park
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Background Papers (For Part I reports only)	Teignbridge Local Plan 2013-2033 https://www.teignbridge.gov.uk/localplan National Planning Policy Framework (section 7) https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2 Planning Practice Guidance – Design Building for Life 12 (Third edition) Design Council, Jan 2015
Key Decision	Yes/No
In Forward Plan	Yes
In O&S Work Programme	No
Appendices attached	A: Teignbridge Design Guide SPD – first sections B: Consultation Responses Schedule