

<b>8 March 2017</b>		<b>ITEM: 11</b> (Decision 01104410)
<b>Cabinet</b>		
<b>Thurrock Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)</b>		
<b>Wards and communities affected:</b> All	<b>Key Decision:</b> Key	
<b>Report of:</b> Councillor Mark Coxshall, Cabinet Member for Regeneration		
<b>Accountable Head of Service:</b> Andy Millard, Head of Planning and Growth		
<b>Accountable Director:</b> Steve Cox, Corporate Director of Environment and Place		
<b>This report is</b> Public		

## **Executive Summary**

The Design Guide is the first in a series of design documents being produced by the Council to help raise design standards and ensure that all new developments regardless of their scale are designed to a high standard and fit for purpose. As an adopted Supplementary Planning Document the Design Guide would be a 'material consideration' in determining planning applications.

A draft of the Design Guide (previously known as Design Strategy) was published for public consultation from 26th February to 11th April 2016 alongside the Thurrock Local Plan Issues and Options (Stage 1) document. The Council received 53 formal responses from local residents, statutory consultees and interest groups and a series of informal comments from internal colleagues. Overall, the consultation feedback has been positive and constructive and the guide has been amended to incorporate and respond to relevant comments.

### **1. Recommendation**

- 1.1 To adopt the Thurrock Design Guide (Appendix B) as a Supplementary Planning Document to the adopted Core Strategy and Policies for the Management of Development Local Plan**
- 1.2 To endorse the Thurrock Design Guide (Appendix B) as a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.**

## **2. Introduction and Background**

2.1 Thurrock's character and personality has formed and evolved over centuries as agriculture, industry and the river have shaped the landscape, the make-up of its people and the quality of life.

2.2 Thurrock has one of, if not the largest and most ambitious growth programmes in the country, with over £6bn of investment driving the creation of 26,000 new jobs and 20,000 new homes over the next 20 years. With that many additional people choosing Thurrock as a place to live, work and play the need to strengthen the identity of Thurrock: the place and ensure that all new development contributes towards the creation of healthy communities and sustainable development has never been greater.

2.3 The Thurrock Design Guide and subsequent daughter documents will play a critical role in reinforcing the importance of place and improving the design quality of all new developments that require planning permission. In broad terms the Design Guide sets out the main design principles that should be considered and/or adhered to by applicants when they are working up new development proposals in the borough. It includes requirements for assessing the context of a site and provides specific guidance that relates to the individual characteristics of the borough's five broad place typologies. The typologies used in the guide are as follows:

- Urban Centres and Transport Hubs
- Residential Neighbourhoods
- Commerce and Industry
- Thurrock Lakeside
- Village and Rural Locations

2.4 The Design Guide is a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). SPD's provide additional detail and guidance to support policies and proposals in an adopted Local Plan<sup>1</sup>. Although SPD's do not have the same weight or status as policies in a Local Plan they still form a 'material consideration' in determining planning applications once they have been adopted by the Council following public consultation.

## **3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options**

3.1 The importance of achieving good design and the benefits this can bring in delivering sustainable communities, is clearly set out in National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Practice Guidance resource. Although the Council's adopted 'Core Strategy' Local Plan has policies relating to design it lacks the detail to be able to inform development proposals in a meaningful way. The Design Guide interprets and add additional detail to both national and local planning policies providing developers and officers with a clear idea

---

<sup>1</sup> The Council's current plan is the Core Strategy and Policies for the Management of Development Document which was originally adopted by the Council in 2011 and subsequently updated in 2015 to reflect changes to national policy.

of what is expected with regards to the design of new development in Thurrock.

- 3.2 In February 2016, Full Council agreed to undertake a 6-week consultation on the first draft of the Thurrock Design Strategy (now Design Guide). During that consultation period, the Council received 53 formal responses from local residents, statutory consultees and interest groups and series of informal comments from internal colleagues in areas such as Public Health. Although the majority of responses received were supportive of the document and the approach there were concerns by stakeholders that some elements of the draft SPD were too prescriptive, while others were too ambiguous. A summary of the consultation responses and Officers' responses are attached to this report in Appendix A.
- 3.3 The Design Guide has been amended in response to relevant comments following the consultation. The main changes were removing elements of repetition, condensing some of the statements and improving the clarity of others. A text version of the document has been appended to the report for consideration (Appendix B). The final version of the document will be desktop published in a similar style to the draft consultation document and will contain a mix of photographs, sketches and diagrams.

#### **4. Reasons for Recommendation**

- 4.1 The Design Guide has been updated following a period of public consultation. The adoption of the document as a Supplementary Planning Document to the Core Strategy and Policies for the Management of Development Local Plan will enable the document to be used by Officers and Members as a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

#### **5. Consultation (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)**

- 5.1 The draft Thurrock Design Strategy was published for public consultation from 26 February to 11 April 2016 alongside the Thurrock Local Plan Issues and Options (Stage 1) document. During the consultation period the draft Design Strategy document was made available to view at [thurrock.gov.uk/localplan](http://thurrock.gov.uk/localplan) with comments being encouraged through the Council's consultation portal or on Comment Forms which were available on request at the Civic Offices and in libraries across the Borough. Council Officers also attended Community Forum meetings and organised a series of drop-in 'Road Show' events to allow people to learn more about the emerging Local Plan and the Draft Design Strategy.
- 5.2 An update report on the Design Strategy SPD (now referred to as Design Guide) was considered by Overview and Scrutiny on the 5 January 2017. Although this report did not include a draft of the amended Design Guide SPD it did set out the responses received during the consultation and discussed the changes that would need to be made to the document.

## **6. Impact on corporate policies, priorities, performance and community impact**

- 6.1 The Design Guide SPD and its subsequent daughter documents will help the Council in substantially raising the quality of new developments coming forward in the borough. It strengthens corporate policies and priorities particularly in creating a great place, improving health and well-being, promoting and protecting the environment.

## **7. Implications**

### **7.1 Financial**

Implications verified by: **Laura Last**  
**Management Accountant**

The costs associated with adoption of the Design Guide will be met from within the existing Local Plan budget.

### **7.2 Legal**

Implications verified by: **Vivien Williams**  
**Principal Regeneration Solicitor**

The Design Guide SPD has been prepared in accordance with Regulation 14 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2012 and the Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement. The guidance within the Design Guide supplements adopted policies within the Council's Core Strategy as such it has not been subject to a separate Sustainability Appraisal. Once adopted, the Design Strategy can be used as a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

### **7.3 Diversity and Equality**

Implications verified by: **Natalie Warren**  
**Community Development and Equalities Manager**

The Design Guide SPD will be subject to a Community and Equality Impact assessment to assess the borough-wide equality improvements through better design solutions such as mixed uses and tenures, accessible open spaces and etc. The CEIA will also allow for possible negative impacts to be assessed and mitigated.

7.4 **Other implications** (where significant) – i.e. Staff, Health, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder)

The Design Guide SPD sets out Council's requirements regarding assessing the context of a site and the key design principles and objectives for safe, healthy and sustainable developments.

8. **Background papers used in preparing the report** (including their location on the Council's website or identification whether any are exempt or protected by copyright):

- Draft Design Strategy SPD -  
<https://www.thurrock.gov.uk/supplementary-planning-documents/supplementary-planning-documents>

9. **Appendices to the report**

- Appendix A – Report of Consultation
- Appendix B – Design Guide SPD – Text Version

**Report Author**

Kirsty Paul  
Principal Planning Officer