
REPORT TO:	ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM: 11
DATE OF MEETING:	27 May 2003	CATEGORY: DELEGATED
REPORT FROM:	DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE	OPEN
MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:	Tony Sylvester (Ext. 5743)	DOC:
SUBJECT:	Housing Design and Layout (Supplementary Planning Guidance)	REF:
WARDS AFFECTED:	ALL	TERMS OF REFERENCE: ES03

1.0 Reason for Exempt (if appropriate)

1.1 Not applicable.

2.0 Recommendations

- (i) The draft supplementary planning guidance note relating to Housing Design and Layout be circulated for public consultation to such parties as deemed appropriate, and,
- (ii) The results of this consultation exercise be reported to the Environment and Development Services Committee as soon as possible following the completion of the consultation exercise.

3.0 Purpose of Report

3.1 The purpose of this report is to seek members' approval to consult appropriate parties concerning a draft revised supplementary planning guidance (SPG) note relating to Housing design and layout. A copy of the draft SPG is attached at Appendix A.

4.0 Executive Summary

5.0 Detail

5.1 Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) is employed by Local Planning Authorities to add detail to, and aid in the application of, policies contained in the Local Plan. The Council is required to consult widely as to the format and content of such guidance prior to adoption, in order to ensure that the guidance will carry weight when applied either in the determination of planning applications or as a material consideration set before inspectors on appeal. SPG's are a material consideration when applications are considered.

- 5.2 This SPG, which has formed the basis on which planning decisions have been taken by the Council for a considerable time, requires revisions due to the relatively recent publication of a revised Planning Policy Guidance Note No. 3 on "Housing". Members may recall that a report was placed before them on that PPG in August 2000. The basic thrust of the PPG is that new development should be located within urban areas, wherever possible, and in sustainable locations, wherever possible and have a particular regard to local distinctiveness. Members may also recall resolving to approve an earlier revision to this SPG in April 2001 which was subsequently the subject of wide consultation. However, the Government has since issued several further informal guidance as an aid to interpretation of PPG3 which has meant a redrafting. Nevertheless, the amended draft attached also reflects the comments that were received as result of that consultation exercise.
- 5.3 The PPG also places greater insistence, at the local level, that new housing layouts should be more intensive, in terms of the number of houses per hectare, and that there should be a higher quality of design and layout promoted both by Local Planning Authorities and site developers. The draft SPG seeks to interpret this and to direct developers towards a form of layout that is likely to be acceptable to this Council. However, the draft SPG moves away from the traditional stance of the Council, whereby it has sought to ensure that the space about and between dwellings are at a set level, to a position where only existing dwellings are protected from intrusive and over bearing forms of new development. This would have the effect of allowing developers within new housing areas to accommodate a larger number of houses whilst freeing them to come up with innovative and interesting designs.
- 5.4 Additionally, the draft SPG reflects the stance of the PPG and the latest revision to the Local Plan in promoting lower levels of car parking provision for each new dwelling. This reflects the government's intention to reduce the reliance on the private motor vehicle.
- 5.5 Consultation on the SPG would take place over a 6-week period and it is proposed to report the results of the consultation exercise to the next Environment and Development Services Committee after the completion of that period.

6.0 Financial Implications

- 6.1 Financial Implications relate to staff costs associated with the consultation exercise. These costs will be absorbed into the existing work programme.

7.0 Corporate Implications

- 7.1 None

8.0 Community Implications

- 8.1 The revised standards contained in the SPG would not alter the current level of 'protection' offered to the occupiers of existing dwellings.

9.0 Conclusions

- 9.1 The Council is committed to the continuous updating and improvement of all its SPG in accord with the Best Value Improvement Plan for Development Control.

The attached Supplementary Planning Guidance seeks to update the current guidance and simplify the text to make it more accessible generally. After the consultation period any comments will be brought back to the committee with a view to approval.

10.0 Background Papers

10.1 APPENDIX A: attached (text version only – version to be published for consultation to be illustrated and formatted as appropriate)

