

TITLE	Borough Design Guide - Update
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 13 January 2020
WARD	None specific;
LEAD OFFICER	Deputy Chief Executive - Graham Ebers

OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

The overall aim of the Borough Design Guide is to enhance the quality of development and promote good design through the development process.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee note the contents of the report and request that they be involved in the consultation on any proposed revision to the Design Guide.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

The following is an overview of the status and aims of the current Borough Design Guide and sets out a potential timetable for its review.

The Design Guide is a Supplementary Planning Document that elaborates on policies in the Wokingham Borough Core Strategy and Managing Development Delivery local plans which were adopted in 2010 and 2014.

The overall aim of the Design Guide is to enhance the quality of development and make sure proposals are of the highest quality of design. That means inclusive, safe, harmonious, welcoming, sustainable places that are well-related to the surroundings.

The key objectives of the current Design Guide are:

- To promote good design through the development process;
- To create attractive, harmonious and well used places;
- To ensure that all developments improve the character and quality of the area;
- To encourage vibrant communities where people feel safe;
- To create places that provide ease of movement and are accessible to all;
- To respect and be sympathetic to the character of the area in which the development is situated;
- To minimise overlooking, loss of privacy, loss of amenity or over-dominance;
- To take full account of the mass and height of development in relation to adjacent development and surrounding spaces; and
- To ensure that new development meets the needs of its users.

The current Design Guide is still valid and is used by designers and applicants when formulating development proposals and by the Local Authority when assessing planning applications

At its meeting on January 15th 2019 Executive will consider a consultation draft of a new Local Plan for Wokingham. If approved the draft will go out for public consultation over the following couple of months with any subsequent amendments then being made

before a submission draft of the Plan is brought back to full Council in the summer of 2020.

Once that draft has been approved and submitted for examination it is envisaged that work will start to review the various supplementary planning guidance documents. That review will consider which documents are still current and valid and which need updating. The Design Guide will be part of that review with discussions and consultation on any potential update likely to start towards the end of 2020.

BACKGROUND

Wokingham Borough Council's Borough Design Guide is a Supplementary Planning Document with the current version being published in June 2012. It elaborates on policies in the Wokingham Borough Core Strategy and Managing Development Delivery local plans that were adopted in 2010 and 2014.

The current Design Guide is still valid and used by designers and applicants when formulating development proposals and by the Local Authority when assessing planning applications.

The Design Guide is split into a number of sections:

Section 1 – Highlights the importance of good design and the Council's overall vision

Section 2 - Covers general principles such as context, character, accessibility and environmental sustainability

Section 3 – Provides guidance and advice on the design process as well as looking at local character

Section 4 – Focuses on residential development

Section 5 – Focuses on streets and spaces

Section 6 – Focuses on parking

Section 7 – Focuses on non-residential

Section 8 – Focuses on rural and settlement edge

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Although Supplementary Planning Documents can be reviewed and amended at any time, our current approach is to review documents such as the Design Guide once full Council has approved the submission draft of a new Local Plan.

The new Local Plan is a key document through which the Council sets out a vision and framework for how future development in the area will be managed. In doing so, it sets out how much development is required and if what type, where it should go, and where it should not go. The new Local Plan will contain policies for how development across Wokingham Borough will be managed in the period to 2036 and, once adopted, will be the main consideration in deciding planning applications.

The new Local Plan will highlight the importance of good design but rather than go into any significant detail it will refer to the relevant Supplementary Planning Document – in this case the Design Guide and other relevant documents such as village design statements and neighbourhood plans.

At its meeting on January 15th 2019 Executive will consider a consultation draft of that new Local Plan. If approved the draft will go out for public consultation over the following couple of months with any subsequent amendments then being made before a submission draft of the Plan is brought back to full Council in the summer of 2020.

Once that draft has been approved and submitted for examination, it is envisaged that work will start to review the various supplementary planning guidance documents. That review will consider which documents are still current and valid and which need updating. The Design Guide will be part of that review with discussions and consultation on any potential update likely to start towards the end of 2020.

It is suggested that once a timetable has been agreed for the review of the Design Guide then a more detailed report is brought back to this Overview and Scrutiny Committee for discussion and consultation.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

The Council continues to face severe financial challenges over the coming years as a result of reductions to public sector funding and growing pressures in our statutory services. It is estimated that Wokingham Borough Council will be required to make budget reductions of approximately £20m over the next three years and all Executive decisions should be made in this context

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)	£0	Yes	N/A
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	£0	Yes	N/A
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	£0	Yes	N/A

Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision
None relevant to this report

Cross-Council Implications
N/A

Public Sector Equality Duty
The Council's duties shall be considered upon the formation of the updated Borough Design Guide

Reasons for considering the report in Part 2
N/A

List of Background Papers
Current Borough Design Guide

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