

EXETER CITY COUNCIL**EXECUTIVE
28 SEPTEMBER 2010****RESIDENTIAL DESIGN
SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT****1 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval from Executive to the formal adoption of the Residential Design Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). The SPD identifies the City Council's requirements in relation to residential development and forms the basis for the determination of planning applications. The document has been subject to a period of formal consultation and has been amended accordingly. A copy of the proposed amended SPD for adoption is at Appendix 1.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 During the early stages of the preparation of draft SPD workshops were held with residents of King's Heath and Gras Lawn. A further workshop was held with house builders prior to completion of the draft. Because of the importance of the document Planning Member Working Group agreed that there should be further consultation with house builders before formal public consultation. A second workshop was therefore held on 12 May. This was attended by major house builders: Persimmon, Bovis, Midas, Fry and Barratt. CABE representatives Mark Pearson and Juliet Bidgood also attended. On 15 June 2010 Executive agreed the draft Residential Design SPD for public consultation. The consultation commenced on 24 June and closed on 4 August, allowing six weeks for comments to be submitted.
- 2.2 The Consultation Statement at Appendix 2 indicates to whom copies of the draft document were sent. The SPD was also made available at the Civic Centre and on the Council website.
- 2.3 Twenty **three** written comments have been received.
- 2.4 A key part of the process of preparing an SPD is to determine whether a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is required in accordance with the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 and European Directive 2001/42/EC. The screening process to determine whether an SEA was required was carried out in August 2009. It was determined that the Residential Design Guide SPD will not have significant environmental impact and that, therefore, an SEA is not required. The Screening Statement is attached to this report at Appendix 3. As set out in the requirements for Local Development Frameworks in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 a Sustainability Appraisal is also not required for Supplementary Planning Documents.

3 CONSULTATION RESPONSES

- 3.1 A schedule of the comments received and the proposed responses is included within the Consultation Statement at Appendix 2.

- 3.2 The majority of the responses are positive. They demonstrate support for the SPD including key elements such as Building for Life, Lifetime Homes, internal space standards, frontage parking and the inclusion of biodiversity requirements. Constructive criticism is made with regard to strengthening biodiversity including practical suggestions for habitat improvement.
- 3.3 While some comments have been made with regard to the length of the document, others consider it informative and easy to understand. It would be very difficult to deal with all the issues properly in a shorter document but it is intended to produce a concise booklet summarising the main points.
- 3.4 The main objection to the SPD was submitted by consultants on behalf of Barratt (Exeter) Limited. This amounts effectively to a wholesale objection to the document. The majority of issues raised had not been previously mentioned at the developers' workshops, at which a representative of Barratt Exeter was present. They question the relevance and necessity of the SPD and consider that it is premature pending agreement of the Core Strategy. The SPD was identified in the Local Development Scheme as one of the suite of documents making up the LDF and has been co-ordinated with the emerging Core Strategy. The SPD amplifies saved Local Plan policy in line with guidance in PPS12. Amendments have been made in response to some of Barratt's detailed comments but, their assertions about the validity of the document are refuted. There have been no objections from any of the other major house builders operating in Exeter.
- 3.5 Officers consider that no comments justify major changes to the SPD. A number of responses suggest minor changes to the text to clarify or emphasise specific points. Where appropriate these are incorporated.
- 3.6 Members' attention is drawn, in particular, to the main amendments that have been made:
- The clear links between Local Plan policy, the Core Strategy and the more detailed guidance in the SPD are highlighted at the start of each chapter.
 - A Sustainability Statement as part of a Design and Access Statement cannot be insisted upon as the contents of Design and Access Statements are defined by Circular 1/06. It is, therefore, proposed that such a statement be requested as a local requirement.
 - The SPD now requires new buildings to be built in accordance with Code Level 3 of the Code for Sustainable Homes in line with the submission Core Strategy.
 - Detailed guidance is provided on how to protect and enhance biodiversity.
 - A summary document is being produced.
- 3.7 Various minor amendments and corrections have been made.

4 PLANNING MEMBER WORKING GROUP

- 4.1 On 24 August 2010 the results of the consultation were reported to Planning Member Working Group. Members noted the comments received and the responses and supported the adoption of the amended SPD.

5 PROPOSED ADOPTION

- 5.1 Once adopted, the SPD will supplement the Local Plan policies DG1, DG2 and DG4 and forms a material consideration in determining planning applications.

6 RECOMMENDATION

- 6.1 It is recommended that Executive adopt the amended draft Residential Design SPD.

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Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (as amended)

Background papers used in compiling this report:

None