

**EXETER CITY COUNCIL****EXECUTIVE  
16 SEPTEMBER 2008****RESULTS OF PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING  
DOCUMENT ON HOUSEHOLDER EXTENSIONS****1 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To report the results of the recent public consultation on the draft supplementary planning document (SPD), to consider proposed amendments and to seek approval from Executive for an adopted document.

**2 THE NEED FOR GUIDANCE**

- 2.1 The Council receives over 500 planning applications per annum for householder related development. The majority of these are for extensions to houses such as to the rear, side, front or roof space. There is a need to provide clear guidance to householders on the means of achieving high standards of design and preserving residential amenity.
- 2.2 The adopted Exeter Local Plan First Review provides the statutory planning policy framework. While it contains general policies on design there are no specific policies relevant to extensions. Existing guidance on extensions is in 'Design Guide for Extending Your Own Home' published in February 1993. This document needs updating and carries less weight than a formal SPD prepared in accordance with the new planning system.

**3 THE PUBLIC CONSULTATION**

- 3.1 A draft SPD for the purpose of public consultation was agreed by Planning Member Working Group in January 2008 and Executive on 11 February 2008.
- 3.2 The consultation period extended from February to 2 May. Copies of the draft SPD were placed on the Council's web site, with a link from the home page. Articles were included in the Citizen and a press release and advert appeared in the Express and Echo on 28 February. Thirty one agents and architects active in the Exeter were informed by letter. A further consultation was undertaken with special interest groups.
- 3.3 The draft SPD was subject to a sustainability appraisal in accordance with the regulations. A consultation statement also accompanied the draft guidance.

**4 RESULTS OF PUBLIC CONSULTATION**

- 4.1 The Council received seventeen representations on the draft SPD, ten were from architects/agents, four from the general public and three from interested organisations. A summary of these is available in the Members' room. Many of the architects and agents raised similar issues such as the SPD was too prescriptive, needed to recognise the importance of site circumstances, that Permitted Development rights limit potential control and for any distances to reflect standard brick dimensions.
- 4.2 The SPD seeks to provide certainty on requirements through identified

standards; references to site conditions are proposed to be amended to make it clearer that they are also significant. The existence of Permitted Development rights to undertake what may be similar forms of development without planning permission should not preclude the Council requiring high standards of design. Measurements have been amended to reflect standard brick dimensions.

4.3 A number of significant amendments are proposed to be made to the SPD reflecting the results of public consultation and officers' experience of applying it (as a material consideration with little weight) over the last few months. The main changes proposed are:

- Greater emphasis on the importance of individual site conditions.
- More specific advice in the second general principle on streetscene issues.
- Less prescriptive advice in the fifth general principle on scale and massing; it now merely states that extensions should be subservient to the original house.
- The requirement for a 1.0 metre gap between side extensions/ detached outbuildings and the property boundary is deleted.
- A requirement that rear extensions should not normally exceed two thirds of the width of the original house is introduced.
- Single storey wrap-around extensions to the side and rear are no longer precluded.
- The set down of dormer windows below the ridge of roofs is reduced from 1.0 to 0.5 metres in recognition of the implications for achieving usable headroom/roomspace and reference to a 22 metre separation distance is deleted.
- Specified distances in relation to walls are slightly reduced and amended to reflect standard brick measurements.

4.4 A copy of the proposed SPD for adoption is circulated for Executive Members and available from Member Services on request. The draft SPD will need minor editing and formatting before formal publication. The adopted SPD will be placed on the Council's web site and all householders will be referred to the document.

## **5 PLANNING MEMBER WORKING GROUP**

5.1 The results of the public consultation and the proposed amendments were presented to Planning Member Working Group on 19 August. Members supported the amendments particularly with regard to improvements to the clarity and flexibility of the advice. Members did not consider that Figure 1.6 indicated a high quality design solution and requested an alternative image be found.

## **6 RECOMMENDATION**

6.1 It is recommended that Executive adopt the amended document as formal SPD.

**RICHARD SHORT**

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**ECONOMY AND DEVELOPMENT DIRECTORATE**

**Local Government (Access to information) Act 1985 (as amended)**

**Background Papers used in compiling the report:-**

None