
Meeting: Executive
Date: 12 January 2010
Subject: Design in Central Bedfordshire – A Guide for Development Supplementary Planning Document
Report of: Cllr Tom Nicols, Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Development
Summary: The report considers the responses following public consultation on the draft Central Bedfordshire Design Guide and Design Supplements and recommends adoption of the documents as a Supplementary Planning Document for the consideration and determination of planning applications for development.

Advising Officer: Gary Alderson, Director of Sustainable Communities
Contact Officer: Fiona Webb, Team Leader, Design & Heritage
Mark Saccoccio, Team Leader, Local Development Framework, (South Area)
Public/Exempt: Public
Wards Affected: All
Function of: Executive
Key Decision Yes
Reason for urgency/ exemption from call-in (if appropriate) N/A

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Council Priorities:

Assist in ensuring that high standards of design will help improve the quality of life for all in Central Bedfordshire and enhance the sustainability and unique character of our communities and environment and ensure that growth is managed effectively.

Financial:

Preparation costs to date have all been met within existing Development Plan budget. Printing and officer training costs in due course will similarly be met within that budget. No new budget needs to be identified to operate the Guide when adopted.

Legal:

None

Risk Management:

The Design Guide has been prepared to avoid the risk of poor design solutions that have an adverse effect on the quality of the street scene and do not relate to local distinctiveness.

Staffing (including Trades Unions):

This involves no extra staff resourcing.

Equalities/Human Rights:

In developing the Design Guide full consideration has been given to best practice guidance from the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment relating to Design and Access statements and Inclusion by design: equality, diversity and the built environment.

Community Safety:

This Guide will assist in raising awareness of the need to achieve safe environments through the design and layout of development

Sustainability:

A key aim of the Design Guide is to help achieve sustainable development through good design which contributes towards the implementation of national and local policies and legislation. The Design Guide suggests a variety of design solutions for new development which when followed will help reduce the need to use the car; encourages the use of renewable energy; uses building plan shape and orientation to improve energy efficiency and lower energy use; reduces water usage; encourages the creation of shelter and habitats; encourages the selection of local building materials and recycling of materials.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

that the Executive:

- (a) welcomes the widespread and broadly positive response and support to the Draft Design Guide following formal public consultation and endorse the Council's response as set out in Appendix 1;**
- (b) formally adopts the proposed Design Guide for Development as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) constituting part of its Local Development Framework (LDF);**
- (c) agrees that the Director of Sustainable Communities in conjunction with the Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Development resolve any minor typographical, quantitative and explanatory amendments to the text of the SPD prior to its operation.**

Reason for Recommendation(s): To help underpin national planning guidance, the Local Development Framework and Development Management through guidance aimed at improving the quality and sustainability of new development.

Executive Summary

The Design Guide for Central Bedfordshire has been produced to underpin the Council's commitment to maintaining and improving the quality of the built environment and promoting sustainable development and healthy communities. The Design Guide reinforces the Government's commitment to place making, good design and achieving carbon neutrality.

Background

1. The scope of the new Design Guide is applicable to the whole of the Central Bedfordshire area and is broader in that it covers most aspects of development likely to be encountered in the local built environment. It covers not only the principles of good design and place making but also puts them in the wider context of achieving sustainable development. The Guidance consists of a core Design Guide and 7 Design Supplements which provide more detailed guidance on specific development types. Design Supplement 7 incorporates and expands upon the long standing draft highways guide produced for the former County Council.

The Design Supplements are:

1. New Residential Development
2. Larger Footprint Buildings
3. Town Centre and Infill Development
4. Residential Alterations and Extensions
5. The Historic Environment
6. Shopfronts and Signage
7. Movement, Streets and Places

Review of the Design Guide

2. The process of reviewing the design guide commenced in April 2008. Stakeholder participation has included stakeholder seminars, workshops with planning officers (including associated questionnaire surveys), as well as extensive discussions with the Council's Highways Officers, Community Safety Officer, Building Control Officer, Conservation Officer, Access Officer and Waste Management Officer.

Public Consultation

3. This report considers the comments received during the six week public consultation period held between 5 October 2009 and 16 November 2009.
4. During the public consultation the documents were sent to stakeholders, deposited in libraries and customer service points, and placed on the Council's website. The consultation also included a workshop for a variety of stakeholders including Town and Parish Councillors, Developers and other interested stakeholders held at Priory House on 22 October 2009 to consider the final draft document.

5. In response to the public consultation, a total of 22 written responses have been received from individuals, local authorities, amenity bodies and agencies. Detailed comments together with the Council's response are set out in Appendix 1 of this report.
6. It will be noted that the majority of respondents specifically welcome the Design Guide both in content and in format. No objections to the guidance were received.

The Way Forward

7. The revised draft Design Guide and Design Supplements will be placed on the Council's website early in 2010 at the following link:
<http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/environment-and-planning/planning/ldf/central-bedfordshire-design-guide.aspx>
This will be available A hard copy of the documents will be placed in Members resource rooms at Chicksands and Dunstable.
8. When adopted the Design Guide will inform the Building for Life and housing quality performance agenda. The undertaking of Building for Life assessments has been introduced through the Annual Monitoring Report and is required for all new housing developments of 10 units and above. This requirement is linked to the Central Bedfordshire Development Management Performance Indicator to monitor the design quality of new housing developments. This new agenda will be achieved through a series of training events for officers and agents to ensure ownership and commitment to the principles in the design guidance.
9. It is also proposed to raise the quality of design in Central Bedfordshire through the widening of the existing Annual Design Award Initiative.

Appendices:

APPENDIX 1 – DESIGN IN CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE - A GUIDE FOR DEVELOPMENT COMMENTS RECEIVED DURING PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Background Papers: (open to public inspection)

Mid Beds District Council – Design Guide for Residential Areas (October 2004)

Building in Context: New development in historic areas. English Heritage/CABE 2001

Building Sustainable Communities:
Developing the Skills We Need CABE 2003

Creating Successful Masterplans: A Guide for Clients CABE 2004

Design and access statements: how to write, read and use them CABE 2006

Inclusion by design: equality, diversity and the built environment CABE 2008

Protecting Design Quality in Planning CABE 2003

The Value of Urban Design CABE Thomas Telford 2001

Design at appeal: Advice on dealing with design issues within planning appeals CABE 2006

The Councillor's Guide to Urban Design CABE 2003

Affordable Housing, Better by Good Design
Housing Corporation 2003

Better places to work CABE 2006

A Companion Guide to Better Places to Live PPG3
DETR and CABE 2001

Making design policy work: how to deliver good design through your local development framework CABE 2005

By Design: Urban Design in the Planning System -
Towards Better practice, DETR and CABE 2000

Our Towns and Cities: the Future – Delivering and Urban Renaissance DETR The
Stationery Office 2000

Planning Policy Guidance Note 1: General Policy and Principles, Department of the
Environment 1997

Planning Policy Guidance Note 3 (Housing) DTLR 2000

Actions for housing growth: creating a legacy of great places CABE 2007

Delivering great places to live: 20 questions you need to answer CABE 2008

Safer Places: The Planning System and Crime Prevention ODPM/Home Office, Thomas
Telford 2004

Streets for All: A Guide to the Management of London's Streets, English Heritage 2001

The Community Planning Handbook: How People Can Shape Their Cities, Towns and
Villages in Any Part of the World
Wates N, Earthscan 2000

Towards an Urban Renaissance
Rogers Richard (Lord Rogers of Riverside) & Office of the Deputy Prime Minister ODPM
1999

Urban Design Compendium English Partnerships
The Housing Corporation 2000

Urban Design Guidance: urban design frameworks, development briefs and masterplans
Urban Design Group Thomas Telford 2002

What Makes a Good Building?
Royal Fine Art Commission 1994

Location of papers: Priory House (GW1)