

**Report of: Executive Member for Housing and Development**

<b>Executive</b>	<b>Date: 19 1 17</b>	<b>Ward(s): All</b>
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**SUBJECT: Adoption of the Urban Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document**

**1. Synopsis**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to outline the final content of the Islington Urban Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (UDG SPD) and recommend to Executive for adoption.
- 1.2 The Council issued a preliminary consultation document and questionnaire in December 2014, setting out the reasons for the proposed revision of the original Islington Urban Design Guide. A revised draft SPD was then produced and subject to public consultation between 29 July and 23 September 2016.
- 1.3 The draft SPD was characterised by a less prescriptive approach than that taken in the existing UDG. It set out objectives to be met, design considerations to be taken into account and examples of good practice. This approach aligns with that stipulated by the NPPF to “*avoid unnecessary prescription or detail ...not attempt to impose architectural styles or particular tastes and ...not stifle innovation, originality or initiative*”.
- 1.4 The final SPD has now been produced (see Appendix 1), developed in line with responses to both rounds of public consultation and in liaison with officers in Development Management, the Energy Team and Housing.
- 1.5 Once adopted, the SPD will be a material consideration in determining any future planning applications to which it applies.

**2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 To note the consultation report at Appendix 2.
- 2.2 To agree to adopt the Urban Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document attached at Appendix 1.

- 2.3 To agree to authorise the Corporate Director of Environment and Regeneration, in consultation with the Executive Member for Housing and Development, to make any minor changes to the SPD as might be considered necessary.

### **3. Background**

- 3.1 Islington's Urban Design Guide was adopted as an SPD in 2006. It provided design principles and standards for the whole of the borough that expanded, and provided further detail, on the core policies in the Council's then emerging Local Development Framework (LDF), the Islington Unitary Development Plan (UDP) 2002, and the London Plan 2004. The UDG also built upon Government advice contained in Planning Policy Statement 1 (PPS1) and other guidance including from Department for the Environment, Transport and the Regions.
- 3.2 The SPD has been a robust document that has been used to great effect by Islington's planning officers. However, changes in national planning regulation and guidance, the evolving demographic profile of the borough, and emerging trends in (and pressures on) development, required a new Local Plan and guidance to amplify the policies therein.
- 3.3 In February 2011, the Council adopted the Core Strategy and in June 2013 the Development Management (DM) Policies, part of its Local Plan (superseding the Unitary Development Plan (UDP)), which includes a number of policies that aim to ensure that the Council promotes and secures high quality architectural design.
- 3.4 To this end policy CS9 sets out the approach to the built and historic environment and policies DM2.1 and DM2.3 set out specific requirements. However, without further clarification those requirements are vulnerable to wide ranging interpretation and unnecessarily protracted negotiation. It is the role of an SPD to provide a more objective definition of those requirements and to advise developers on the most effective ways of meeting them.
- 3.5 At the same time, PPS1 has been withdrawn and replaced by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG), which require Local Planning Authorities to ensure that developments:
- respond to local character and history, and reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation
  - are visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping.
- 3.6 The NPPF also stipulates that design guidance should "*avoid unnecessary prescription or detail*" and that "*planning decisions should not attempt to impose architectural styles or particular tastes and they should not stifle innovation, originality or initiative through unsubstantiated requirements to conform to certain development forms or styles. It is, however, proper to seek to promote or reinforce local distinctiveness*".
- 3.7 The revised SPD therefore sets out general principles and precise objectives; it describes more detailed design considerations and provides illustrative examples of good practice. To provide a comprehensive and holistic reference point, issues around sustainability and inclusion are integrated within the main body of the document.
- 3.8 The structure of the document has also been rationalised to provide a more easily navigated point of reference for applicants and officers alike. It provides a reference point for development across the borough and also distinguishes between those objectives that must be met, and design considerations that should be taken into account, within and outside conservation areas.
- 3.9 The Council recognises that in a dense urban environment such as Islington, the ability to enlarge and adapt existing homes plays an important part in retaining diverse and balanced communities. At the same time it is essential that the Council maintains a strategic view, ensuring that new development is of a high standard; that it protects the interests of the whole community, preserves and enhances the historic environment and is sustainable. The revised SPD takes this balanced approach to the

implementation of the design, inclusive design and heritage policies in the Local Plan.

- 3.10 The examples and photographs have been updated to reflect recent good practices examples, and new illustrative diagrams produced for the residential alternations and extensions section. There is also some material that has been deleted from the current UDG because it has already been updated and included in other documents, such as the Streetbook SPD

### **Purpose and content of the SPD**

- 3.11 The SPD provides guidance on how urban design principles should be applied to ensure that new development successfully contributes to making the borough a better place. It is applicable to all new developments, including alterations and extensions to existing buildings.
- 3.12 The document is divided into five chapters, including an Introduction. Chapter Two sets out the planning policy context for development proposals and Chapter Three describes the character of the borough. Chapters Four and Five form the core of the document, with Chapter Four setting out the overarching principles which form the Council's approach to managing change in the borough and Chapter Five containing detailed design guidance to be considered when developing proposals.
- 3.13 To signpost which criteria of DM2.1A are covered by the SPD and which are covered in other SPDs, a table has been included in Appendix 2, alongside reference to other DM policies relevant to the achievement of high quality design on which the SPD also provides further guidance.
- 3.14 Chapter Three places the SPD in context and to articulate to applicants the Council's understanding of the character of the borough, as the starting point for design development; this is particularly important as the borough has changed rapidly over the past ten years.
- 3.15 Chapter Four sets out the four overarching principles –contextual, connected, sustainable, and inclusive - that together constitute high quality design. These are set out in the Local Plan but it is helpful to draw them together in the SPD and reiterate that they are not mutually exclusive.
- 3.16 Chapter Five forms the main part of the SPD that applicants, developers and case officers will refer to for guidance on specific issues, for example site layout or acceptable approaches to roof extensions. Guidance on Shopfront Design is also incorporated at the end of Chapter Five.

### **Consultation**

- 3.17 Broadly speaking, responses to the preliminary consultation paper fell into the following categories:
- The level of prescription perceived in the advice given.
  - The precision of language used
  - Resistance to gated development
  - A desire to see greater emphasis on contemporary and alternative site layouts.
  - The importance of developments' environmental/thermal performance
  - The economic realities of redevelopment/refurbishment/home/estate improvement
  - The need for a relaxation of domestic design restrictions to meet burgeoning demand
- 3.18 Broadly speaking, responses to the formal public consultation on the full draft SPD fell into the following categories:
- The importance of the borough's community profile and social history in shaping development.
  - A welcome for the site specific, objective-based approach to policy compliance and concern around residual arbitrary prescription.
  - The scope and status of the document
  - The precision of language used
  - The importance of play and the promotion of active lifestyles
- 3.19 A full analysis of the consultation responses is provided in the Regulation 12(a) Consultation Statement (attached at Appendix 2). The consultation report contains all of the comments received as well as proposed minor amendments to the SPD arising from the consultation.

### 3.20 **SPD adoption**

The draft SPD has been revised to take account of relevant planning issues raised during public consultation and it is recommended that Executive agree to adopt the Urban Design Guide SPD.

## 4 **Implications**

### **Financial implications:**

- 4.1 The cost of producing the SPD and consultation costs will be met through existing budgets within the Planning and Development Division

### **Legal Implications:**

- 4.2 The final Urban Design Guide SPD has been prepared in line with the relevant planning regulations. The principal statutory policy basis for the SPD is policy CS9 of the Core Strategy DPD and policy DM2.1 of the Council's Development Management Policies DPD. There are also other DM policies relevant to the achievement of high quality design on which the SPD also provides further guidance

- 4.3 The final Urban Design Guide SPD has been subject to consultation in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended). Following consultation and adoption, the SPD will be a material consideration in the determination of all relevant planning applications. However, the SPD will be without any prejudice to any decisions that the Council may take as Local Planning Authority in respect of individual site/s and any future planning applications.

### **Environmental Implications**

- 4.4 The statutory policies on which the SPD is based have been subject to extensive Sustainability Appraisal at each stage of plan preparation. The Urban Design Guide SPD has therefore not been subject to Sustainability Appraisal because it does not introduce new policies; rather it supports implementation of Local Plan policies that have been sufficiently appraised in the SA of the Core Strategy and Development Management Policies DPDs.
- 4.5 A Screening Statement to determine the need for a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) has been prepared, in accordance with the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 and European Directive 2001/42/EC. The screening has concluded that an SEA does not need to be prepared as the SPD does not introduce new policies and will not result in any additional significant effects to those already identified through higher level sustainability appraisals of the Local Plan documents adopted by the Council. The SPD will provide more detailed guidance to ensure that the potential positive effects identified within the Sustainability Appraisals for Islington's Local Plan documents are realised.

### **Resident Impact Assessment:**

- 4.6 The Council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and to advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations, between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it (section 149 Equality Act 2010). The Council has a duty to have due regard to the need to remove or minimise disadvantages, take steps to meet needs, in particular steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities, and encourage people to participate in public life. The Council must have due regard to the need to tackle prejudice and promote understanding
- 4.7 A Resident Impact Assessment has been completed and this did not identify any negative equality impacts for any protected characteristic or any human rights or safeguarding risks.

## 5. Reasons for the recommendations

- 5.1 Once adopted, the SPD will be used by the Council to assess planning applications for all new development, including extensions and alterations to existing buildings. It will be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications in future years. Minor amendments have been made in response to the feedback received as part of the public consultation process; however, the substantive content of the document has largely been supported and therefore remains the same.
- 5.2 Adoption of the SPD by the Council will provide greater certainty to both the local community and interested parties about the design quality of development that is likely to be acceptable to the Council as a Local Planning Authority.

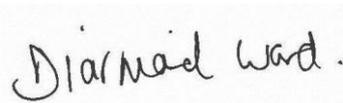
### Appendices

- Appendix 1 - Urban Design Guide SPD – final draft
- Appendix 2 - Urban Design Guide SPD – Regulation 12(a) Consultation Statement

### Background papers:

- None

### Signed by:



11 January 2017

Executive Member for Housing and Development      Date

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