

Report of: Executive Member for Housing and Development

Executive	Date: 21 July 2016	Ward(s): All
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SUBJECT: Public Consultation on the draft Urban Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document

1. Synopsis

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to outline the content of the draft Islington Urban Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (UDG SPD) and to notify members that public consultation on the document is scheduled to take place over an eight week period between 29 July and 23 September 2016.
- 1.2 The Council issued a preliminary discussion paper and questionnaire in December 2014 to inform the review of the SPD. This set out the reasons for the proposed revision of the Islington Urban Design Guide 2006, namely to ensure that the guidance:
 - is up-to-date
 - is clearly linked to current policies (the Core Strategy was adopted in 2011 and the Development Management Policies were adopted in 2013);
 - aligns with national policy (the National Planning Policy Framework was issued in 2012); and
 - reflects contemporary design, social and economic development trends.
- 1.3 The discussion paper described areas where the guidance in the existing SPD might be enhanced (preventing gated communities; roof extensions; dormer windows and roof lights; rear extensions; balconies and roof terraces) and identified areas where new guidance might be required (materials; garden rooms and out buildings; energy saving measures; basements). It also proposed that the existing informal guidance on the design and installation of shop fronts would be drawn into the SPD.
- 1.4 A revised draft SPD has now been produced (see Appendix 1, *though to follow for Exec*) in line with responses to the preliminary consultation and in liaison with colleagues in Development Management, the Energy Team and Housing.
- 1.5 Public consultation on the draft SPD is scheduled to take place from 29 July to 23 September 2016. The response to this consultation will then inform a final SPD to be taken forward for adoption by the

Council. 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 that Executive on 21 July 2016 will be asked to agree the draft Urban Design Guide SPD for public consultation (*to follow for Exec*).
- 2.2 To note that public consultation on the draft Urban Design Guide SPD is scheduled to take place from 29 July to 23 September 2016.

3. Background

- 3.1 Islington's Urban Design Guide was adopted as an SPD in 2006. It provides design principles and standards for the whole of the borough that expand and provide further detail on the core policies in the Council's Islington Unitary Development Plan (UDP) 2002, and the London Plan 2004. The SPD also built upon Government advice contained in PPS1 (Planning Policy Statement 1) and other guidance including from the former 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 the Council. However, changes in national planning regulation and guidance, the evolving demographic profile of the borough, and emerging development trends 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 Policies. Together these documents wholly superseded the UDP. The Local Plan includes a number of policies that aim to ensure that Islington promotes and secures high quality design. Policy CS9 sets out at a strategic level how the Council expects new development to contribute to enhancing and protecting Islington's built environment, and Policy DM2.1 sets out specific requirements against which applications will be assessed in relation to design quality. It is the role of an SPD to provide further detailed guidance on these requirements and to advise applicants on the most effective ways of meeting them.
- 3.4 At the same time, PPS1 has been withdrawn and replaced by the NPPF (National Planning Policy Framework) and NPPG (National Planning Practice Guidance), 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.
- 3.5 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*".
- 3.6 The revised SPD therefore sets out general principles and precise objectives, describing more detailed design considerations and providing illustrative examples of good practice. To provide a comprehensive and holistic reference point, issues around sustainability and inclusion also need to be addressed. The structure of the document also needs to be altered to provide a more easily navigated point of reference for applicants and officers against the relevant Local Plan policies.
- 3.7 In addition, it also needs to be recognised 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 however, 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 therefore needs to take a balanced approach to the implementation of the design, inclusive design and heritage policies in the Local Plan.

- 3.8 Finally, the examples and photographs in the current SPD need updating and guidance which is included in other adopted documents (for example, the recently adopted Basement Development SPD) can also be deleted from the updated Urban Design Guide to avoid unnecessary repetition between SPDs.

Initial consultation

- 3.9 The approach in the draft SPD has also been informed by the consultation responses to the discussion paper. Detailed responses were received from The Islington Society, English Heritage, Montagu Evans, Savills and DOCOMOMO. There were 10 other, essentially single issue, responses and seven respondents to the online survey (all were local residents). Responses, broadly speaking, 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

- 3.10 A full analysis of the consultation responses is provided in the Regulation 12(a) Consultation Statement (attached at Appendix 2).

Purpose and content of the draft SPD

- 3.11 The draft 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. On adoption, it will be 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 Chapter Two, alongside reference to other DM policies relevant to the achievement of high quality design on which the SPD also provides further guidance. Chapter Three is a new standalone chapter that has been produced to place 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 10 years.
- 3.14 Chapter Four is also a new standalone chapter that 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.
- 3.15 Chapter Five forms the main part of the SPD updates and expands on the guidance in the current SPD as set out in the discussion paper. It is 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. The guidance on Shopfront Design has also been incorporated at the end of Chapter Five.

Consultation and adoption

- 3.17 Public consultation is scheduled to take place for an eight week period, and will include notifications to all those organisations and individuals registered on the planning policy consultation database (over 1700 registered) and copies of the SPD will be available for public viewing in all libraries. All representations received will be carefully considered, and detailed responses published in a Consultation Statement. Where appropriate, the draft SPD will be revised to take account of any relevant planning issues raised during public consultation. The Executive will then be asked to consider the comments received during public consultation and adopt the SPD in Autumn 2016.

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 draft 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 DM 2.1 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 draft Urban Design Guide SPD will be 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 Islington 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.

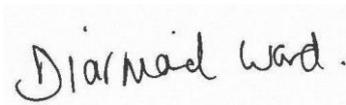
Resident Impact Assessment:

- 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 / decision:

- 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. The public consultation process therefore enables local people and other interested parties to engage with and feedback on the draft SPD.
- 5.2 Prior to its adoption, the draft SPD will be reviewed and as necessary amended in the light of any relevant planning concerns raised during the public consultation. However, the SPD cannot change adopted policies and will need to align with adopted Local Plan policies. Adoption of the SPD by the Council will provide greater certainty to both the local community and interested parties about the nature of development that is likely to be acceptable to the Council as a Local Planning Authority.

Signed by:



13 July 2016

Executive Member for Housing and Development Date

Appendices

- Urban Design Guide SPD – consultation draft (*to follow for Exec*)
- Urban Design Guide SPD – Regulation 12(a) Consultation Statement

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