

Decision Maker: EXECUTIVE

For Pre-Decision Scrutiny at the Development Control Committee on 27 September 2022 and Renewal, Recreation and Housing Policy Development and Scrutiny Committee on 4 October 2022

Date: 6 October 2022

Decision Type: Non-Urgent Executive

Title: URBAN DESIGN GUIDE SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT – CONSULTATION DRAFT

Contact Officer: Ben Johnson, Head of Planning Policy and Strategy
E-mail: ben.johnson@bromley.gov.uk

Chief Officer: Tim Horsman, Assistant Director (Planning)

Ward: All Wards

1. Reason for report

- 1.1. This report recommends that the draft Urban Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) is published for six weeks public consultation. The SPD provides guidance on urban design to inform and engage developers, applicants, planning officers, residents and all other interested parties in bringing forward proposals for development in Bromley.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

For Renewal, Recreation and Housing Policy Development and Scrutiny Committee members

- 2.1 That members endorse the draft Urban Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (shown at Appendix 1) and supporting documentation (at Appendix 2) for six weeks public consultation, noting that there may be further minor amendments prior to consultation.

For Development Control Committee members

- 2.2 That members endorse the draft Urban Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (shown at Appendix 1) and supporting documentation (at Appendix 2) for six weeks public consultation, noting that there may be further minor amendments prior to consultation.**

For Executive members

- 2.3 That Executive approve the draft Urban Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (shown at Appendix 1) and supporting documentation (at Appendix 2) for six weeks public consultation.**
- 2.4 That Executive authorise the Director of Housing, Planning, Property and Regeneration, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Renewal, Recreation and Housing, to approve any further minor changes (e.g. related to formatting or mapping) to the draft Urban Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (shown at Appendix 1) prior to consultation.**

Impact on Vulnerable Adults and Children

1. Summary of Impact: No Impact
-

Transformation Policy

1. Policy Status: Existing Policy – document provides guidance to assist the implementation of adopted Development Plan policy set out in the Bromley Local Plan and the London Plan.
 2. Making Bromley Even Better Priority (delete as appropriate):
(3) For people to make their homes in Bromley and for business, enterprise and the third sector to prosper.
-

Financial

1. Cost of proposal: Costs associated with publicising the draft SPD will be met from the Planning Policy and Strategy budget.
 2. Ongoing costs: Not Applicable:
 3. Budget head/performance centre: Planning Policy and Strategy
 4. Total current budget for this head: £0.568m
 5. Source of funding: Existing Revenue Budget for 2022/23
-

Personnel

1. Number of staff (current and additional): 10 FTE
 2. If from existing staff resources, number of staff hours: N/A
-

Legal

1. Legal Requirement: Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012
 2. Call-in: Applicable: Executive Decision
-

Procurement

1. Summary of Procurement Implications: N/A
-

Property

1. Summary of Property Implications: N/A
-

Carbon Reduction and Social Value

1. Summary of Carbon Reduction/Sustainability Implications: the SPD will assist the implementation of Development Plan policies which seek design which responds to the impacts of climate change, is fit for purpose and adaptable over time and adopts technologies to minimise their environmental impact.
-

Customer Impact

1. Estimated number of users/beneficiaries (current and projected): N/A
-

Ward Councillor Views

1. Have Ward Councillors been asked for comments? No
2. Summary of Ward Councillors comments: N/A

3. COMMENTARY

Background

- 3.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) encourages local planning authorities (LPAs) to prepare design guides to provide maximum clarity about design expectations at an early stage. Such guides should be consistent with the principles set out in the National Design Guide (NDG) and National Model Design Code (NMDC); and reflect local character and design preferences. In the absence of locally produced design guides, these national documents should be used to guide decisions on applications.
- 3.2 Design guides provide a local framework for creating beautiful and distinctive places with a consistent and high-quality standard of design. They can also provide a basis for developing design codes; the Government have suggested that LPAs will, in future, be required to produce design codes. The guidance in the SPD has been developed by the Council's policy and urban design officers, with consideration of the national, London-wide and local planning framework, including the emphasis on design quality in national policy.

Draft Urban Design Guide SPD

- 3.3 The Urban Design Guide SPD is a technical document which provides guidance on urban design to inform and engage developers, applicants, planning officers, residents and all other interested parties in bringing forward proposals for development in Bromley.
- 3.4 The SPD first sets out the national, London and local planning policy framework which informs the document. It then sets out a broad character appraisal of the borough, focusing on historical development in the borough and then the character of Bromley today. With reference to current character, the SPD assesses character based on a number of 'places', which are not rigidly delineated areas and hence deliberately overlap, acknowledging the gradual transition from one place to another. These 'places' differ from wards, which are defined for electoral purposes, and whose sharp boundaries may cut through places and communities.
- 3.5 After establishing the borough character appraisal, the SPD sets out the following principles for achieving good design with the aim of significantly raising the quality of development within the borough:
 - Contextual (Character and Identity)
 - Responsive (Architecture and Landscape)
 - Connected (Movement and Connectivity)
 - Inclusive (Access and Inclusion)
 - Healthy (Health and Well-being)
 - Sustainable (Sustainable Design, Adaptability and Resilience)
- 3.6 The SPD then provides detailed guidance for each principle. The guidance introduces each characteristic and its importance to good urban design, its relevance to national/regional/local policy guidance, and its application within the context of Bromley. Specific requirements are provided in the form of detailed design guidance notes which include links to relevant planning policies. A number of precedent images are used to highlight good examples of each principle.

Shopfronts

- 3.7 The SPD includes a detailed section on Shopfront Design. Development Control Committee (DCC) recently informally approved three storefront guides for publication on the Council's website¹; these informal guides cover Beckenham, Chislehurst and Bromley North Village. These guides have been used to inform the SPD section on Shopfront Design. The table at Appendix 3 sets out exactly which sections of these informal guides have been incorporated; and sets out reasons why some sections have not been incorporated.
- 3.8 The informal guides purport to be area-specific, but there is nothing within these guides that is specific to each of the three areas. Furthermore, officer research suggests that the Beckenham and Chislehurst guidance seems to have been copied (verbatim in places) from similar storefront guides in other boroughs, particularly Hounslow² (headings and several sections); and Watford³.
- 3.9 Therefore, incorporating this guidance into borough-wide guidance in the SPD does not result in any loss of guidance in these areas (notwithstanding the point that the three guides are not adopted guidance in any event). Upon future adoption of the Urban Design Guide, the three guides would be removed from the website to avoid any confusion over the role of these informal documents.

Next steps

- 3.10 If approved, the SPD will be subject to six weeks public consultation. The Regulations require a minimum of four weeks consultation; and the Bromley Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) specifies a minimum of six weeks. Six weeks is considered an appropriate length of consultation.
- 3.11 Following public consultation, all representations will be considered, and, where necessary, amendments to the SPD will be proposed. An adoption version of the SPD will then be put forward for consideration by committees. The adoption of the SPD is a matter for the Executive.

4. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 SPDs should build upon and provide more detailed advice or guidance on policies in an adopted local plan. As they do not form part of the development plan, they cannot introduce new planning policies into the development plan. They are however a material consideration in decision-making. They should not add unnecessarily to the financial burdens on development.
- 4.2 The Urban Design Guide SPD provides guidance to assist with the implementation of the Local Plan, London Plan, NPPF and other documents.
- 4.3 The Council also has two extant Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) documents - Supplementary Planning Guidance 1 - General Design Principles; and Supplementary Planning Guidance 2 - Residential Design Guidance. These documents provided guidance on a number of UDP policies; although the UDP has now been superseded by the Local

¹ <https://www.bromley.gov.uk/planning-policy/shop-fronts-guidance>

² <https://democraticservices.hounslow.gov.uk/documents/s77102/Final%20Draft%20Shop%20Front%20Design%20Guidelines%20SPD.pdf>

³ <https://www.watford.gov.uk/downloads/file/228/shop-front-design-guide-2013>

Plan, these two SPG documents may still be material considerations where justified, albeit their weight is likely to be very limited. If the Urban Design Guide is adopted in future, these SPGs would cease to be relevant and would no longer be material to decision-making in Bromley.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The production of the Urban Design Guide SPD and the costs of public consultation will be funded from the Planning Policy and Strategy budget.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The draft SPD has been prepared in line with relevant planning guidance and regulations, including the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended). If adopted following public consultation, the SPD will be a material consideration in the determination of relevant planning applications.
- 6.2 A Screening Statement to determine the need for a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) has been prepared by officers, in accordance with the requirements of European Directive 2001/42/EC; and the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004; this is provided at Appendix 3. The screening has concluded that an SEA does not need to be prepared as the SPD does not introduce new policies but provides further guidance on adopted Development Plan policy. This policy has been sufficiently appraised in the Sustainability Appraisals of the Local Plan and London Plan documents; it is considered that the Urban Design Guide SPD will not result in any additional significant effects to those already identified through these higher-level Sustainability Appraisals.
- 6.3 This approach is consistent with national planning guidance which states that SPDs are only likely to require an SEA in exceptional circumstances, where they are likely to have significant environmental effects that have not already have been assessed during the preparation of the relevant strategic policies.
- 6.4 There is a requirement to consult three statutory consultation bodies designated in the SEA Regulations (the Environment Agency, Historic England and Natural England) on whether an environmental assessment is required. Officers have consulted each of the three bodies on the screening statement provided at Appendix 2; details of the responses are provided in the Screening Statement appendix. To date (as of 1 September 2022), only Natural England have provided comments.

7. CARBON REDUCTION/SOCIAL VALUE IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The Urban Design Guide SPD supports the implementation of London Plan and Local Plan policies on carbon reduction. The SPD does not introduce new policy but will help to deliver existing sustainable design policy and lead to positive outcomes.

Non-Applicable Sections:	IMPACT ON VULNERABLE ADULTS AND CHILDREN PERSONNEL/PROCUREMENT/PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS CUSTOMER IMPACT
---------------------------------	--

Background Documents: (Access via Contact Officer)	Bromley Local Plan 2019, available from: https://www.bromley.gov.uk/downloads/file/51/bromley-local-plan London Plan (adopted 2 March 2021), available from: https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/the_london_plan_2021.pdf National Planning Policy Framework (July 2021), available from: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1005759/NPPF_July_2021.pdf National Planning Practice Guidance – https://www.gov.uk/guidance/design The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended) - https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2012/767/contents
---	--