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**Decision Maker:** EXECUTIVE

**Date:** 18 October 2023

**Decision Type:** Non-Urgent Executive Key

**Title:** ADOPTION OF THE BROMLEY TOWN CENTRE  
SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT

**Contact Officer:** Ben Johnson, Head of Planning Policy and Strategy  
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**Chief Officer:** Tim Horsman, Assistant Director (Planning)

**Ward:** Bromley Town; Plaistow

1. Reason for report

- 1.1. This report recommends the adoption of the Bromley Town Centre Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). The SPD provides guidance to assist with the determination of planning applications in the Bromley Town Centre area, including guidance on design requirements.
- 1.2. A draft SPD underwent public consultation from 28 October 2022 to 27 January 2023. A significant number of responses were received covering a number of issues. The final SPD includes a number of amendments in response to comments received.
- 1.3. Upon adoption of the SPD, it is recommended that the Council writes to the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to request that the Bromley Town Centre Area Action Plan is revoked.

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2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 2.1 That Executive adopt the Bromley Town Centre Supplementary Planning Document (shown at Appendix 1) as a local development document, subject to any further minor changes (e.g. related to formatting or mapping) prior to adoption.
- 2.2 That Executive authorise officers to write to the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to request that the Bromley Town Centre Area Action Plan is revoked, as per the provisions of section 25 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.



## Impact on Vulnerable Adults and Children

1. Summary of Impact: No Impact
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## 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.
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## Financial

1. Cost of proposal: Costs associated with publicising the adopted 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 2023/24
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## Personnel

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

1. Legal Requirement: Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012
  2. Call-in: Applicable: Further Details – Executive Decision
  3. It is necessary to have due regard to the public sector equality duty, which sets out the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; to advance equality of opportunity; and to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it. It is not anticipated that adoption would adversely affect any of those objectives.
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## Procurement

1. Summary of Procurement Implications: N/A
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#### Property

1. Summary of Property Implications: N/A
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#### Carbon Reduction and Social Value

1. Summary of Carbon Reduction/Sustainability Implications: the SPD will assist the implementation of Development Plan policies which seek to reduce carbon emissions.
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#### Impact on the Local Economy

1. Summary of Local Economy Implications: The Bromley Town Centre SPD supports the implementation of London Plan and Local Plan economic policies.
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#### Impact on Health and Wellbeing

1. Summary of Health and Wellbeing Implications: The Bromley Town Centre SPD supports the implementation of London Plan and Local Plan policies relating to health and wellbeing.
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#### Customer Impact

1. Estimated number of users/beneficiaries (current and projected): N/A
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#### Ward Councillor Views

1. Have Ward Councillors been asked for comments? Yes
2. Summary of Ward Councillors comments: Ward Councillors for Bromley Town and Plaistow (wards which cover the draft SPD area) have been engaged on this work; and provided feedback on an initial draft of the consultation document. Ward councillors from the four surrounding wards – Shortlands & Park Langley, Bickley, Hayes & Coney Hall and Bromley Common & Holwood – were also invited to comment on an initial draft of the consultation document, with several councillors providing feedback. A number of comments on an early draft document were received, and the consultation document was amended to reflect these comments where appropriate.

All ward councillors were notified of the consultation on the draft SPD. No comments were received during the consultation period. At the 6 September 2023 meeting of RRHPDS, the Bromley Liberal Democrats noted that their consultation response was not reflected in the SPD and supporting documents; officers noted that there was no record of a consultation response being received. Following further investigation, it was found that the response was not received during the SPD consultation period due to a technical issue with the Council firewall which blocked the respondents email. At the meeting of Development Control

Committee on 5 October 2023, members requested that the response was provided to Executive for information. This is provided at Appendix 5, with officer comments on the response..

### 3. COMMENTARY

#### Background

- 3.1 A report to Development Control Committee, Renewal, Recreation and Housing Policy Development and Scrutiny Committee (RRHPDS) and Executive in early 2020 set out the intention to prepare to produce a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to guide development in Bromley Town Centre<sup>1</sup>. This proposed approach was agreed in April 2020<sup>2</sup>.
- 3.2 A consultation exercise to inform the SPD was conducted between 15 July and 5 October 2020, seeking views on the future of Bromley Town Centre and what SPD should focus on. Details of the feedback received during the consultation, and how this feedback informed the draft SPD, is provided in the consultation statement at Appendix 3.

#### Consultation on the draft Bromley Town Centre SPD

- 3.3 Executive approved the draft Bromley Town Centre SPD for consultation at their meeting of 6 October 2022<sup>3</sup>. The Council consulted on the draft SPD from 28 October 2022 to 27 January 2023. The consultation statement (provided at Appendix 3) sets out details of how the consultation was undertaken (section 5); summaries of the responses received (section 6); and details of how the Council has addressed these responses in the final SPD (section 7).

#### Proposed adoption draft Bromley Town Centre SPD

- 3.4 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 emerging emphasis on design quality in national policy. The proposed adoption draft SPD at Appendix 1 includes a number of amendments in response to comments received during the public consultation, as well as additional amendments following further internal discussions.
- 3.5 The SPD first sets out relevant background information and a vision for the town centre. An amendment has been made to this section to clarify the role of 'development opportunities' included elsewhere in the SPD.
- 3.6 It then sets out the relevant local, London-wide and national policy framework which underpins the guidance and describes the context of the area with reference to townscape, topography and other important considerations. Additional policy and guidance references have been added following consultation.
- 3.7 The SPD then sets out the following six design principles that are considered essential components in delivering good quality design, and which are widely documented (e.g. in

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<sup>1</sup> TOWN CENTRE PLANNING POLICY STRATEGY: BROMLEY AND ORPINGTON, available from: [https://cds.bromley.gov.uk/documents/s50080729/20200310114417\\_017114\\_0037666\\_Executive010420DRAFTTownCentrePlanningPolicyStrategyBromleyandOrpi%2018.pdf](https://cds.bromley.gov.uk/documents/s50080729/20200310114417_017114_0037666_Executive010420DRAFTTownCentrePlanningPolicyStrategyBromleyandOrpi%2018.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Statement of Executive Decisions on reports due to be considered at the cancelled Executive meeting on 1st April 2020 following consultation with PDS Committee Members, available from: <https://cds.bromley.gov.uk/documents/b50014566/Decision%20Statements%20Wednesday%2001-Apr-2020%2019.00%20Executive.pdf?T=9>

<sup>3</sup> BROMLEY TOWN CENTRE SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT – CONSULTATION DRAFT, available from: <https://cds.bromley.gov.uk/documents/s50100161/Exec%2010922%20Bromley%20Town%20Centre%20SPD%20Report.pdf>

Development Plan policy and national planning policy) as being among the key characteristics of successful well-designed places:

- 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)

- 3.8 These principles mirror the design principles proposed in the adopted Urban Design Guide SPD. Having these consistent principles threaded through the borough's planning guidance is important as it creates consistency and sets out clear design parameters which development proposals should consider from the very first stages of designing a scheme.
- 3.9 The principles are supported by guidance notes which are a short summary of how the principles should be applied, and which cite specific policy and guidance which is relevant to the respective principles. In response to comments received during public consultation, amendments have been made to the design guidance notes relating to some of the principles, primarily the addition of further policy and guidance references.
- 3.10 The SPD then sets out four character areas and eight sub-areas within them. These areas were derived through consideration of the context of the wider area and represent those parts of the area which are considered to have similar characteristics. They are not intended to be finite boundaries; they are identified for the purposes of the SPD to set out relevant guidance applicable to each area. They have been drawn with deliberately 'soft' edges reflecting the fact that boundaries between character areas are fluid rather than 'fixed'. An amendment has been made to clarify that the sub-areas are not self-contained in terms of the impacts of development, and that proposals in one area can impact on another area, or areas.
- 3.11 There are a series of general guidance notes which apply across the character areas, relating to various topics including density, tall buildings and sustainability.
- 3.12 More specific guidance is also provided for each character area. This includes some key parameters to guide the development of specific sites in the areas (where appropriate) and the identification of potential development opportunities. The development opportunities are indicative, as only the Local Plan allocates sites. The character area guidance sets out detailed design considerations for the areas, including identification of relevant reference heights to inform the assessment of the height of proposals; details of specific public realm and green connections that should be provided; and, where appropriate, details of any prominent materials and design styles which could influence the style of new development.
- 3.13 Each character sub-area includes a plan of area which visualises the key elements of the specific character area guidance.
- 3.14 A number of amendments have been made to the character area sections including:
- Bromley North Gateway – clarity about the potential suitable height of a taller element on the site, including an additional reference that any taller element would be subject to detailed design considerations.
  - North High Street – minor amendment to clarify relevant heritage assets within the Site 3 boundary.

- High Street – amendment to state that new development should respect the setting of the Churchill Theatre, rather than being subservient to it. This amended wording ensures consistency with guidance elsewhere in this sub-character area section.
- Civic Centre / Palace – updated wording to reflect the imminent relocation of civic functions.
- Bromley South – additional wording to ensure that new development does not affect the operation of Bromley Police Station.

3.15 RRHPDS and Development Control Committee considered the SPD at their meetings of 6 September 2023 and 5 October 2023 respectively. Members suggested several minor changes to the SPD, as set out in the schedule at Appendix 4. These changes have been made to the adoption draft SPD at Appendix 1.

#### Revocation of Bromley Town Centre Area Action Plan (AAP)

3.16 The Bromley Town Centre AAP was adopted in 2010, based on evidence produced in the mid-2000s, and technically remains an extant Development Plan Document. The document is significantly out-of-date, and has been largely superseded by the adoption of the Local Plan and the London Plan. The adoption of the Bromley Town Centre SPD, which provides detailed guidance for development in the town centre, will mean that the AAP ceases to have any relevance and would be fully superseded.

3.17 As the AAP is technically extant, this has caused some confusion about its weight and relevance to planning applications. The weight of the document has, in reality, been negligible for some time, but certain applicants have placed undue reliance on some parts of the AAP, despite it not reflecting the Council's up-to-date planning policies and objectives relating to the development and use of land in Bromley Town Centre.

3.18 To avoid further confusion and to ensure that the Council's relevant policy and guidance for Bromley Town Centre is clear, it is considered that the AAP should be formally revoked upon adoption of the SPD. The Council cannot revoke the AAP itself and must ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to do so, as per the provisions of section 25 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

## **4. TRANSFORMATION/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 Bromley Town Centre SPD provides guidance to assist with the implementation of the Local Plan, London Plan, NPPF and other documents.

## **5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 The production of the Bromley Town Centre SPD and the costs associated with adoption will be funded from the Planning Policy and Strategy budget.

## **6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 The 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, the SPD will be a material consideration in the determination of relevant planning applications. Any requirements relating to adoption will be undertaken in line with regulations.

- 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 2. 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 Bromley Town Centre 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 prior to the consultation on the draft SPD and as part of the draft SPD consultation. Comments received are set out in Appendix 2.
- 6.5 Officers have reviewed the SEA screening statement in light of the comments received, and consider that the responses to the SEA criteria set out in tables 1 and 2 remain appropriate as set out in the initial draft SEA screening statement. As noted above, officers consider that an SEA will not be required for the Bromley Town Centre SPD.
- 6.6 The further minor amendments made by Development Control Committee and RRHPDS (discussed at paragraph 3.15) do not have any further implications for the SEA screening statement.

## **7. CARBON REDUCTION/SOCIAL VALUE IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 The Bromley Town Centre 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 policy in the Bromley Town Centre area and lead to positive outcomes.

## **8. IMPACT ON THE LOCAL ECONOMY**

- 8.1 The Bromley Town Centre SPD supports the implementation of London Plan and Local Plan economic policies, particularly policies which promote economic activity in town centres.

## **9. IMPACT ON HEALTH AND WELLBEING**

- 9.1 The Bromley Town Centre SPD supports the implementation of London Plan and Local Plan policies relating to health and wellbeing, including policies which aim to protect social infrastructure. The SPD includes the 'Healthy' design principle which notes that

development proposals should seek to promote and prioritise health and well-being.

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| <b>Non-Applicable Sections:</b>                               | <p>IMPACT ON VULNERABLE ADULTS AND CHILDREN</p> <p>PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS</p> <p>PROCUREMENT IMPLICATIONS</p> <p>PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS</p> <p>CUSTOMER IMPACT</p>   |
| <p>Background Documents:<br/>(Access via Contact Officer)</p> | <p>Bromley Local Plan 2019, available from:<br/><a href="https://www.bromley.gov.uk/downloads/file/51/bromley-local-plan">https://www.bromley.gov.uk/downloads/file/51/bromley-local-plan</a></p> <p>Bromley Town Centre Area Action Plan (2010), available from:<br/><a href="https://www.bromley.gov.uk/downloads/download/91/bromley-town-centre-area-action-plan">https://www.bromley.gov.uk/downloads/download/91/bromley-town-centre-area-action-plan</a></p> <p>London Plan (adopted 2 March 2021), available from:<br/><a href="https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/the_london_plan_2021.pdf">https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/the_london_plan_2021.pdf</a></p> <p>National Planning Policy Framework (September 2023), available from:<br/><a href="https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1182995/NPPF_Sept_23.pdf">https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1182995/NPPF_Sept_23.pdf</a></p> <p>National Planning Practice Guidance – <a href="https://www.gov.uk/guidance/plan-making">https://www.gov.uk/guidance/plan-making</a></p> <p>The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended) - <a href="https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2012/767/contents">https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2012/767/contents</a></p> |