

## MID SUSSEX DESIGN GUIDE SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT

REPORT OF: Judy Holmes, Assistant Chief Executive  
Contact Officer: Sally Blomfield, Divisional Leader for Planning and Economy  
Wards Affected: All  
Key Decision: Yes  
Report to: Council  
Date of Meeting: 4<sup>th</sup> November 2020

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### Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of this report is to recommend to Council that it adopts the Mid Sussex Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document as a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

### Summary

2. This report:
  - (a) Describes the background and context in which the draft SPD has been prepared;
  - (b) Recommends that the SPD is adopted by the Council for use in the consideration and determination of planning applications.

### Recommendations

3. **That Council:**

**Adopt the Mid Sussex Design Guide as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for use in the consideration and determination of planning applications.**

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### Background

4. The scale of housing and employment growth in Mid Sussex is one of the most significant in the region. If the character and quality of the district's towns and villages is to be maintained, it is vital that new development in Mid Sussex is responsive to its local context and is designed to a high standard.
5. District Plan Policy DP26 Character and Design sets out a series of high-level design principles that new development is expected to achieve. However, further detailed guidance is needed to secure a step change in the quality of design in Mid Sussex.
6. This approach is in line with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF); and the National Design Guide which encourages Local Authorities to formulate local design guides to meet the priorities of its communities based on local context. It also responds to the Building Better, Building Beautiful Commission's reports.
7. The District-wide Design Guide will assist landowners, developers, applicants and planners in the process of assessing the design quality of schemes. It will also help to support decision making by the Council's Planning Committees. A step change in the quality of design will also help our communities better accept the growth agenda.

## Scope and Content of Document

8. The Design Guide is structured according to a series of integrated design themes, including understanding the context, establishing well defined streets and layouts, transport connectivity, parking strategies and sustainability. It seeks to optimise site potential through building heights and housing density that reduces future pressure on development in the countryside. A series of Design Principles for each theme has been prepared.

## Public Consultation

9. The Design Guide has been considered by the Scrutiny Committee for Housing and Planning on three occasions. On 18<sup>th</sup> July 2019 prior to public consultation, and on 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2020 after public consultation, to consider the consultation responses, and on 29<sup>th</sup> July to agree the changes.
10. At its meeting on 18th July 2019, the Scrutiny Committee welcomed the draft Guide and resolved to delegate authority to the Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning to approve the document for public consultation. Consultation was carried out for six weeks between 9th October and 20th November 2019.
11. A total of 41 individual respondents commented on the draft Design Guide with 137 individual responses. A detailed schedule of responses received during the consultation is available on the Councils' webpage at:  
<https://www.midsussex.gov.uk/planning-building/supplementary-planning-documents/>
12. In line with the responses, the Scrutiny Committee on 22 January 2020 agreed:
  - the need for further guidance on residential amenity, extensions and conversions and the need for improved images;
  - the need for a separate chapter on Employment Sites with specific guidance on layout, landscaping and the design of buildings relating to this use;
  - the need for more detailed guidance on the development of brownfield sites and the inclusion of a reference to the Mid Sussex Brownfield Sites Register;
  - the need to provide more information on appropriate, locally distinctive materials, including suitable modern or contemporary materials and their application.
13. A number of respondents also considered that the draft Design Guide should be clear and more concise. In response to this, the Scrutiny Committee agreed that the document should be reviewed to make it clearer and more succinct, including removing any repetition in the 'reasons' sections and any overlap between chapters.
14. At its meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> July 2020, the Scrutiny Committee considered and agreed the final text. It also agreed that a glossary of terms should be added and that the guide could be updated to make an additional reference to cover cycle parking at employment sites. The glossary is now included. Following a further review it was considered that a reference to cycle parking in the employment chapter was unnecessary. This is because it is adequately covered by both principle DG24 and the reference to WSCC's Cycling Design Guide. Therefore, a cross reference is now made to DG24 to ensure this principle is considered in such development.

15. Following the Scrutiny Committee on 29<sup>th</sup> July, the images have been updated for the Council draft to reflect the consultation responses and changes to the text.

### **Next steps**

16. Following a positive resolution from Council, the SPD will be adopted with immediate effect.
17. The SPD will be published on the District Council's website along with an Adoption Statement and a Consultation Statement.
18. Training on the effective use of the Design Guide will be arranged for Members and Officers in early 2021.

### **Policy Context**

19. The NPPF emphasises the importance of high-quality design. The Mid Sussex District Plan seeks to ensure that well located and designed development is delivered in the District. The Design Guide supplements and adds detail to the District Plan..

### **Other Options Considered**

20. An option would be to not prepare a Design Guide and rely on District Plan Policies. However, this would mean that the Council would miss an opportunity to provide clear design guidance specific to Mid Sussex.

### **Financial Implications**

21. The cost of the preparation of the Design Guide SPD was £30,000 and this has been funded from the Development Plan Reserve.

### **Equality and Customer Service Implications**

22. The draft Design Guide has been subject to an Equalities Impact Assessment. This concludes that the document does not discriminate against any members of the community that have 'protected characteristics.'

### **Other Material Implications**

23. There are no other material implications.

## **Appendix 1: Mid Sussex Design Guide SPD – Final Draft for Adoption November 2020**