

**CABINET**  
**5 April 2018**

## **MID DEVON DESIGN GUIDE – SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT**

**Cabinet Member:** Cllr Richard Chesterton  
**Responsible Officer:** Mrs Jenny Clifford, Head of Planning, Economy and Regeneration

**Reason for Report:** To approve the use of an external consultant to prepare a Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document for Mid Devon.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

**That Cabinet approve the commissioning of a suitable external consultant to prepare the Mid Devon Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document**

**Relationship to Corporate Plan:** The Mid Devon Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) will contain guidance on the urban, village and rural design issues for development in Mid Devon. It will therefore help deliver all four of the Corporate Plan priorities.

**Financial Implications:** The estimated contract value between £50,000 - £60,000 has been identified for the production of the Mid Devon Design Guide SPD. This has been budgeted for in the 18/19 service budget.

**Legal Implications:** The process of preparing the SPD will need to comply with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 and the Council's Statement of Community Involvement. Adoption of the Mid Devon Design Guide SPD will help raise design standards in development proposals that are submitted to the Council for determination and help guide planning decisions made on these. This will be a below threshold procurement for the purposes of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015, but there are still certain steps that need to be followed – the Council's Procurement Manager will need to advise on these. The Council's own Financial Regulations must also be followed.

**Risk Assessment:** The SPD will provide guidance on design issues in Mid Devon. The document will reduce the risks of costs being awarded against the Council providing decisions are based on its content.

**Equality Impact Assessment:** A full Equality Impact Assessment has been prepared as part of the Local Plan Review Evidence Base. The assessment undertaken for Policy DM1 (High Quality Design) indicates a high possibility of a positive impact in regard to the protected characteristics. This policy provides the baseline for the more detailed guidance to be included in the Design SPD.

### **1.0 Introduction**

1.1 Mid Devon District Council is proposing to expand on existing and proposed planning policy through a new Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to provide detailed guidance on urban, village and rural design issues in Mid

Devon. It is intended that the SPD will raise design awareness and standards through the planning process.

1.2 Securing good design is central to good planning and place-making. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states within its core planning principles that planning should always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings. The SPD will need to comply with the NPPF including its forthcoming revisions (currently subject to public consultation).

1.3 The SPD will be prepared in accordance with Part 5 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 and the Council's Statement of Community Involvement. The SPD will complement existing adopted local planning policy on design (DM2):

1.4 **DM2: High quality design.**

**Designs of new development must be of high quality, based upon and demonstrating the following principles:**

- a) Clear understanding of the characteristics of the site, its wider context and the surrounding area;
- b) Efficient and effective use of the site, having regard to criterion (a);
- c) Positive contribution to local character including any heritage or biodiversity assets and the setting of heritage assets;
- d) Creation of safe and accessible places that also encourage sustainable modes of travel such as walking and cycling;
- e) Visually attractive places that are well integrated with surrounding buildings, streets and landscapes, and do not have an unacceptably adverse effect on the privacy and amenity of the proposed or neighbouring properties and uses, taking account of:
  - i) Architecture
  - ii) Siting, layout, scale and massing
  - iii) Orientation and fenestration
  - iv) Materials, landscaping and green infrastructure
- f) Appropriate drainage including sustainable drainage systems (SUDS) and connection of foul drainage to a mains sewer where available.

Major residential development proposals will be required to achieve 'green' status under at least 8 of the 12 Building for Life criteria. The proposed Local Plan Review Policy DM1 (High Quality Design) will continue to provide the baseline for the more detailed guidance to be included in the SPD:

1.5 **DM1: High quality design.**

**Designs of new development must be of high quality, based upon and demonstrating the following principles:**

- a) Clear understanding of the characteristics of the site, its wider context and the surrounding area;
- b) Efficient and effective use of the site, having regard to criterion (a);
- c) Positive contribution to local character including any heritage or biodiversity assets and the setting of heritage assets;
- d) Creation of safe and accessible places that also encourage and enable sustainable modes of travel such as walking and cycling;
- e) Visually attractive places that are well integrated with surrounding buildings, streets and landscapes, and do not have an unacceptably adverse effect on the privacy and amenity of the proposed or neighbouring properties and uses, taking account of:
  - i) Architecture
  - ii) Siting, layout, scale and massing
  - iii) Orientation and fenestration
  - iv) Materials, landscaping and green infrastructure
- f) Appropriate drainage including sustainable drainage systems (SUDS), including arrangements for future maintenance, and connection of foul drainage to a mains sewer where available.

## 2.0 Content and Timescales

2.1 A project brief / invitation to tender is being prepared that will set out the requirements for the completion of the project. A proposed content of the SPD currently includes the following matters. This will be subject to refinement prior to the invitation to tender.

- Introduction and Vision
- Importance and principles of good design
- Design principles
- Design and viability – adding value through quality design
- Aspects of development form – scale, mass, materials, placement of buildings and the spaces between them
- Relevant planning policy and guidance
- Character appraisal of Mid Devon
- Promoting Health and Wellbeing in Mid Devon
- Development themes (principles of design and character for differing contexts to inform the following chapters):
  - Urban
  - Village
  - Rural

2.2 These sections can cover a range of topics including, but not limited to: sustainable places - mixed use and accessibility; public realm; landscaping, trees and public open space; access and parking; residential development (including custom and self-build); commercial development; barn conversions; shopfront design and security; street scene principles, resilience - energy efficiency, flood risk and climate change, listed buildings and conservation areas. The exact scope and content of the SPD will be further refined through

stakeholder engagement early on in the process and will reflect and respond to the unique design context of Mid Devon.

- Submitting a planning application
- Design quality checklist and clarity about what is good design and where proposals with poor design are likely to be rejected
- Glossary of terms

2.3 A proposed timetable for the SPD is as follows. This will be subject to refinement prior to the invitation to tender.

Tender process	April 2018
Appoint Consultants	June 2018
Phase 1 (Evidence Gathering)	June – July 2018
Design Workshop	July 2018
Draft SPD Production	July – November 2018
Public Consultation on Draft SPD	December 2018 – January 2019
Adoption	March 2019

### 3.0 Stakeholder Engagement

3.1 The Council's Statement of Community Involvement requires one stage of public consultation for Supplementary Planning Documents that are not masterplans. It is proposed this will be for a minimum 6 week period.

3.2 A design workshop will be held early in the process for preparing the SPD. Participation for external stakeholders with interests in design in Mid Devon will be through invitation. The design workshop will be facilitated by the appointed consultant and will provide an opportunity to refine the scope of the SPD and inform its content.

### 4.0 Groups Consulted

4.1 The Planning Policy Advisory Group (PPAG) is to consider a draft project brief for the Design SPD at its meeting of 22 March 2018. The views of PPAG over the procurement and appointment of a suitable external consultant to prepare the Design SPD will be reported verbally to Cabinet.

**Contact for more information:** Arron Beecham, Forward Planning Officer – 01884 234221 / [abeecham@middevon.gov.uk](mailto:abeecham@middevon.gov.uk) or Tristan Peat, Forward Planning Team Leader – 01884 234344 / [tpeat@middevon.gov.uk](mailto:tpeat@middevon.gov.uk)

**Background Papers:** Mid Devon Local Plan Review Proposed Submission (incorporating proposed modifications (January 2017) Policy DM1 High Quality Design. Local Plan Part 3 (Adopted October 2013) Development Management Policy DM2 High Quality Design.

**Circulation of the report:** Cllr Richard Chesterton, Leadership Team