

CABINET

8th April 2021

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF PLANNING, ECONOMY AND REGENERATION

THE DESIGN OF SHOPFRONTS AND ASSOCIATED ADVERTISEMENTS SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT

Cabinet Member: Cllr Richard Chesterton, Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Regeneration

Responsible Officer: Mrs Jenny Clifford, Head of Planning, Economy & Regeneration

Reason for the Report: To approve the draft Design of Shopfronts and Associated Advertisements Supplementary Planning Document to be published for public consultation.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That Cabinet approves:

- 1. The draft Design of Shopfronts and Associated Advertisements Supplementary Planning Document (Appendix 1), the Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Report (Appendix 2) and the Habitat Regulations Assessment Screening Report (Appendix 3) for public consultation.**
- 2. That delegated authority be given to the Head of Planning, Economy and Regeneration in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Regeneration to finalise the material and arrangements for consultation.**

Financial Implications: Cullompton has been awarded a High Street Heritage Action Zone (HAZ) by Historic England. This will bring money in the form of a grant from Historic England to be invested in a core area at the centre of the Conservation Area. This money will be invested in the form of grants and public realm work.

The Draft Design of Shopfronts and Associated Advertisements Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) is a District wide document, but the commitment to produce this guidance has been agreed as part of the part of the in kind match funding by Mid Devon District Council towards the Cullompton High Street HAZ agreement with Historic England.

Budget and Policy Framework: The preparation of the Draft Design of Shopfronts and Associated Advertisements SPD has been undertaken as part of match funding contributions from Mid Devon District Council for the Cullompton High Street HAZ.

The Policy Framework is referred to in Part 2 of the document includes Statute, The National Planning Policy Framework, and the adopted Mid Devon Local Plan.

Once adopted, the Design of Shopfronts and Associated Advertisements SPD will be capable of being a material consideration for planning decision making purposes.

Legal Implications: The process of preparing the Design of Shopfronts and Associated Advertisements SPD will need to comply with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 and the Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement. Adoption of the Design of Shopfronts and Associated Advertisements 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.

Risk Assessment: The Design of Shopfronts and Associated Advertisements SPD will provide guidance on design issues in Mid Devon and once adopted will be a material planning consideration. The document will reduce the risk of costs being awarded against the Council where decisions are based on its content. The production of the Design of Shopfronts and Associated Advertisements SPD, whilst being District wide, is also to support regeneration of the Cullompton Town Centre as part of the High Street HAZ, and it is a key document in this respect. Failure to produce it may harm the High Street HAZ going forward.

Equality Impact Assessment: No equality issues are identified for this report.

Impact on Climate Change: The Design of Shopfronts and Associated Advertisements SPD is, by its nature, neutral on climate change. The Design of Shopfronts and Associated Advertisements SPD should be considered part of a suite of documents produced by the District Council where climate change will be at the core.

Relationship to Corporate Plan: The Design of Shopfronts and Associated Advertisements SPD will provide guidance on the planning and delivery of development across the District. It will assist the following priority areas and actions identified in the Council's Corporate Plan 2020-24:

- Economy: Identify strategic and tactical interventions to create economic and community confidence and pride in the places we live. This includes a continued focus on Town Centre Regeneration; and
- Community: Promote new, more integrated approaches to promoting good health and healthier living especially in the context of planned new developments.

1.0 Background

National and local planning policy

- 1.1 The Government published the National Design Guide in October 2019. This provides a common overarching framework for design based on ten characteristics reflecting the Government's priorities for design. It also

highlights the importance of local Design Guides in setting out and understanding the local context and analysis of local character and identity.

1.2 The Mid Devon Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document was adopted on 29 October 2020. It provides detailed guidance on urban, village and rural design issues in Mid Devon and complements the National Design Guide through setting out a comprehensive understanding of the local context and analysis of local character and identity.

1.3 A Design of Shopfronts and Associated Advertisements supplementary planning document (SPD) is proposed to supplement the National Design Guide, the Mid Devon Design Guide, and also relevant policies of the adopted Mid Devon Local Plan to help raise design standards in development affecting shop fronts in Mid Devon. The relevant Local Plan policies include (amongst potential others such as site allocations):

- S1 Sustainable development priorities
- S7 Town centres
- S9 Environment
- S10 Tiverton
- S11 Cullompton
- S12 Crediton
- DM1 High Quality Design
- DM14 Town centre development
- DM16 Fronts of shops and business premises
- DM17 Rural Shopping
- DM25 Development affecting heritage assets

1.4 The Design of Shopfronts and Associated Advertisements 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 Design Guide will be adopted by the Council as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), once it has been consulted on and finalised. The SPD will not be part of the development plan and does not introduce new planning policies into the Local Plan (development plan). However, it will be capable of being a material consideration in determining planning applications submitted to the Council for determination and help guide planning decisions made on these.

1.5 In addition, the Design of Shopfronts and Associated Advertisements SPD will support the achievement of Core Principle 2 set out in the Mid Devon Design Guide. This seeks to identify and facilitate local distinctiveness, including conservation and enhancement of the historic environment, heritage assets, their settings and wider historic landscapes and/or townscapes as part of an integrated approach to design.

Cullompton High Street Heritage Action Zone (HAZ) and supporting the regeneration of shopping areas

- 1.6 The Council has bid for schemes to bring investment to Cullompton and has been successful in securing a High Street Heritage Action Zone (HAZ) for Cullompton with Historic England.
- 1.7 As part of the match funding for the High Street HAZ, the Council has agreed with Historic England that it will prepare the SPD for the Design of Shopfronts and Associated Advertisements.
- 1.8 The Design of Shopfronts and Associated Advertisements SPD will form part of a suite of documents (also including the Cullompton Town Centre Masterplan, the Cullompton Neighbourhood Plan and the Mid Devon Design Guide) that can be used to help guide the regeneration of Cullompton's town centre. It can be used across the district to help enhance other shopping areas and in doing so can help improve their economic prospects. It will provide a part of the advice framework within which the Cullompton HAZ works will be delivered.
- 1.9 There will be one stage of consultation in accordance with the Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement.

2.0 Content of the Design of Shopfronts and Associated Advertisements SPD

- 2.1 The Draft Design of Shopfronts and Associated Advertisements SPD is attached as **Appendix 1** to this report.
- 2.2 The principles set out in this SPD apply throughout the district but it is not intended that they should be treated as blueprints. The advice offered in this guidance is to help towards achieving successful designs and each proposal will be judged on its own merits. Good contemporary designs which are appropriate and relate well to their surroundings are as likely to be supported as traditional designs.
- 2.3 This document is set out in two parts. The first is a guide to a successful refurbishment or alteration to an existing shopfront, or complete replacement of a shopfront, or a brand new shopfront. The second sets out the permissions/consents that may be required and the context in which those decisions are made.
- 2.4 Shopfronts and their associated signs and advertisements play a very important part in the appearance of the commercial areas of our towns. Most of the buildings in these areas contain a shopfront on the ground floor which is the principal focus of attention and falls in the direct line of sight for people in the street. A shopfront is designed to attract attention but its effectiveness depends on the quality of its design and the display within its windows.
- 2.5 The surrounds to the shop windows containing a display act as a visual frame and set off the display in a similar way a picture frame enhances a picture. Just as an unframed picture often has less impact than a framed one, the impact of a display can be enhanced by its setting with an attractive shopfront. Poor quality badly proportioned and discordant design shopfronts

will let down the display and project a poor image for the shop, and erode the character and interest of the street and area.

3.0 Habitats Regulation Assessment Screening / Strategic Environmental Assessment

3.1 The Draft Design of Shopfronts and Associated Advertisements SPD has been 'screened' to establish whether it requires a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). The SEA Screening Report (**Appendix 2** to this report) has concluded that the Design of Shopfronts and Associated Advertisements SPD is unlikely to have significant effects on the environment. The SEA Screening has also found that there is no requirement for the Design of Shopfronts and Associated Advertisements to be subject to a full SEA.

3.2 The Draft Design of Shopfronts and Associated Advertisements SPD has been 'screened' for the purpose of the Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) to assess whether it may affect the protected features of a European 'habitats site' identified under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) and the Conservation of Offshore Marine Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). The HRA Screening Report (see **Appendix 3** to this report) has identified that the Design of Shopfronts and Associated Advertisements SPD is unlikely to have significant effects on the integrity of Habitat Sites, either alone or in-combination with other plans or projects and further 'Appropriate Assessment' is not required.

4.0 Planning Policy Advisory Group

4.1 The Planning Policy Advisory Group (PPAG) considered the draft Design of Shopfronts and Associated Advertisements SPD at its meeting on the 18th March 2021. Members of PPAG were content for the draft SPD to be considered by Cabinet without amendment. No concerns were raised over its contents.

5.0 Next Steps

5.1 The draft Design of Shopfronts and Associated Advertisements SPD, and the Habitats Regulation Assessment Screening and Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening reports will be published for public consultation for a statutory minimum period of 6 weeks in accordance with the Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement. Once the consultation has ended and officers have considered the responses, the final version of the Design of Shopfronts and Associated Advertisements SPD including any amendments necessary, will be reported back to the Cabinet for formal adoption, together with a statement of public participation.

5.2 A provisional timetable for the next stages in the production of the masterplan are set out as follows:

Action	Date
Public Consultation	May / June 2021

6.0 Conclusion

- 6.1 The Design of Shopfronts and Associated Advertisements SPD will provide a framework that can be used to help guide development in a coordinated and comprehensive manner. Once adopted, it will be capable of being a material planning consideration in the decision making process. The production of an adopted Design of Shopfronts and Associated Advertisements SPD is an important component of the regeneration of Cullompton and successfully delivering the Cullompton High Street HAZ project.

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Background Papers:

The Adopted Mid Devon Local Plan (2013-2033):
<https://www.middevon.gov.uk/residents/planning-policy/adopted-local-plan-and-policies-maps/>

Referendum version of the Cullompton Neighbourhood Plan
<https://www.middevon.gov.uk/media/350767/cnp-final-referendum-version-26-aug-2020.pdf>

Circulation of the Report: Cabinet