
Cabinet Member

5th February 2019

Name of Cabinet Member:

Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities – Councillor E Ruane

Director Approving Submission of the report:

Deputy Chief Executive - Place

Ward(s) affected:

All

Title:

Draft Urban Extensions Design Guidance Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

Is this a key decision?

No.

This SPD provides draft technical guidance which supports the adopted Local Plan.

Executive Summary:

This SPD is intended to provide technical guidance and support to the relevant policies within the new Local Plan that relate directly to the Allocated Urban Extensions at Keresley and Eastern Green. For the avoidance of doubt this primarily relates to Policies DS4 and H2. The Design Guidance can also be applied to other site allocations within Policy H2, especially those situated within the wider Arden landscape. The Local Plan provides the framework for determining planning applications across Coventry following its adoption on the 6th December 2017. This SPD has been developed in partnership with various Council departments, including Highways, Drainage and Public Health and is intended to support ongoing joint working to support all infrastructure and design matters going forward.

The SPD is structured to provide specific design guidance around key areas of development. This primarily includes new homes, but also relates to employment provision and community/commercial buildings. The design guidance also covers green infrastructure, highways and parking provisions.

Alongside the SPD a specific appendix is being issued to provide a high level, Indicative Masterplan for the Keresley Sustainable Urban Extensions (SUE). This reflects the fact that this SUE is split across multiple land ownerships and numerous development phases. The Indicative Masterplan is reflective of the original shortlisted development plots in the Council's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) (2016) and the discussions that were held around this at the Local Plan examinations. It is intended to help site promoters and developers link these respective phases together through design, access

and infrastructure. It also highlights key infrastructure features including the green corridor, protected ancient woodlands and a high-level interpretation of the link road.

The SPD has previously been consulted on during August and September 2018. A number of technical comments were made during that consultation and as a result the Design Guidance and Indicative Masterplan has been updated and adjusted as appropriate. The key areas of comment and subsequent adjustment are summarised in section 3 of this report.

Recommendations:

The Cabinet Member is requested to:

1. Note the consultation statement included at appendix 2.
2. Approve a final round of public participation on the SUE Design Guidance SPD. The consultation is proposed to run for 6 weeks between Friday 8th February and Friday 22nd March 2019.

List of Appendices included:

Appendix 1 – draft Urban Extensions Design Guidance SPD and Indicative Keresley Masterplan.

Appendix 2 – SPD Consultation Statement

Background papers:

None.

Other useful documents:

The Coventry Local Plan was adopted at full Council on the 5th December 2017, with adoption statements issued the following day. This SPD relates primarily to Policies DS4, H2 and DE1 of the Local Plan, which covers policies on Masterplan Principles, Housing Allocations and Design. The Local Plan can be viewed via the following link: http://www.coventry.gov.uk/downloads/download/4881/adoption_statements

Has it been or will it be considered by Scrutiny?

No.

Has it been or will it be considered by any other Council Committee, Advisory Panel or other body?

No

Will this report go to Council?

No.

Report title: Draft Urban Extensions Design Guidance Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

1. Context (or background)

1.1 Context of the SPD

The SPD will act as a guide to inform and advise on how to deliver high quality development primarily within the city's two Sustainable Urban Extensions (SUE's) at Keresley and Eastern Green. This will have full regard to the Ancient Arden landscape characteristics and could also be applied to other development proposals within this area as well as other site allocations. It builds upon previous guidance, and responds to the adoption of the Local Plan. It also has regard to the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework. The SPD is split into 5 specific sections with a supporting Appendix. These sections are summarised as follows:

1.2 Introduction and the Ancient Arden

This section of the Design Guidance introduces the SPD and gives it context alongside the newly adopted Local Plan. Throughout the SPD, focus is placed on the importance of the Ancient Arden. The key points identified include the significance of the Ancient Arden and the characteristics of the landscape and built form. It discusses previous guidelines specific to the area, drawing on the Ancient Arden Design Guidelines (1995). Displaying examples of authentic Arden building characteristics, it highlights how original buildings can be extended or regenerated managing and reflecting historic character, generating modern interest and respecting the character of the buildings and surrounding area.

1.3 Housing Design

This section of the SPD focuses on the delivery of high quality residential development. The SPD recommends retention of Arden characteristics as a starting point but makes allowances for incorporating these within a modern interpretation. This produces a flexible approach to housing design, ensuring that there is a variety of character and texture across development whilst retaining links back to Arden examples. The key points it identifies include:

- The positive effect that 'linked dwellings' can have in the creation of visually harmonious street scenes.
- The purpose of corner sites and the opportunities they can bring to a development.
- The relationship of feature buildings to key view corridors and street setting.
- The consideration of bicycle and bin storage in developments and provides guidance on how to avoid issues generated (as a result them being both unaesthetically pleasing and potentially dangerous).
- The integration of suitable car parking provision.

- 1.4 It draws on examples of well-designed, new traditional buildings successfully developed in practice such as a timber framed building on Far Gosford Street and The Old Dairy, Washbrook Lane. There are also examples of vernacular architecture interpreted in a modern style, for example in Chatham, Kent (taking inspiration from a farmstead using the typical 'big roof' barn and interpreting local brick work forms). It displays various examples of linked dwellings developed successfully such as Beaulieu, Chelmsford and Horsted Park, Chatham, Kent. When considering Corner and Landmark buildings it draws inspiration from various developments including a Dutch Style Gable, Upton, Northampton.

1.5 Street Hierarchy

A hierarchy of streets has been devised to help reflect how vehicles and pedestrians will move through the new developments. It considers the vision for:

- Link roads (primarily applied to the Keresley, urban extension).
- Avenues and internal roads (set out primarily, addressing how they contribute positively in both usage and aesthetics).
- Courtyards and how they can better contribute to more efficient development that reflects development characteristics of the Arden area.
- Edge roads and how they help integrate new developments with wider countryside and green spaces.

- 1.6 This section also focuses on the importance of internal junctions, how they integrate with the wider public realm the materials palette utilised. This section also gives guidance as to the types of acceptable boundary demarcation available (both formal and informal) and how these can reflect the Arden character, the public realm and existing landscape features. To help demonstrate the street hierarchy and how it operates elsewhere, the SPD draws on a range of examples including:

- Link roads / spine roads in Chelmsford and Lutterworth.
- Well-designed Avenues is The Chase, Harlow.
- The successful implementation of edge streets, it uses the example of Holmead Walk, Poundbury.
- An example of the use of internal junctions in Newhall.
- The housing scheme at Ivy Farm Lane, Coventry (is identified as a site where a courtyard was implemented into development, done so respectfully of the setting of the two barns and the character of the conservation area).
- Providing a suggested design for parking is The Old Diary, Henlow along with negative examples of parking in developments, including more local schemes across Coventry.

- 1.7 The Public Realm materials palette reflects examples of what the Council wants to encourage developers to use in new developments and draws upon well received schemes across Coventry city centre and the experience gained from them.

1.8 Commercial Centres

Commercial developments within the area covered by the SPD are expected to be limited and constrained to 4 specific cases identified within the Local Plan. They will include 2 Local Centres at Keresley, a Major District Centre at Eastern Green and an area of primarily B class development adjacent to the A45. With regards the designated centres, these are expected to form the community heart of the new development. As such, this section provides a focus on this concept, identifying how they should be designed and integrated. For example they are often unique buildings and can often become a local landmark, so should include high quality architecture and materials. To help demonstrate this the SPD draws on examples from Poundbury, Dorset, designed in the form of a traditional market square and Houlton, Rugby where the buildings are arranged to form a type of 'farm yard' interpreted in a modern way.

- 1.9 With regards large b-class employment, this is traditionally more challenging to deliver in unique and well-designed schemes (unless they involve specific office delivery). However, examples of the Morrison Distribution Centre, Bridgewater, the Audi showroom in Leicester and more local developments at Warwick University campus offer more positive examples of what can be achieved. All these developments use high standard design and high-quality materials to create unusual and interesting schemes.

1.10 The Natural Landscapes

Focusing on existing trees, hedgerows or other aspects of important green and blue infrastructure, this section considers how new development can work to integrate these. It identifies how, doing so successfully, can act to enhance the development. It also considers the topography and the importance of natural landscape features within the historic context of the area. It draws inspiration from Upton, Northampton, Grey to Green, Sheffield and Poundbury, Dorset. This section also provides a list of appropriate tree species and how they could relate to the street hierarchy.

2. Options considered and recommended proposal

- 2.1 Two options have been considered in relation to this report. The first has formed the recommendations of this report and is to publish the final draft of the SPD for a final period of comment prior to its potential adoption later this year. This is the recommended approach as it will provide technical guidance and support to those submitting planning applications that relate to the proposed urban extensions at Eastern Green and Keresley.
- 2.2 The second option is to abandon the document and to rely solely on the policies in the Local Plan and how applicants interpret those policies. This option has not been recommended as it would place greater reliance on how applicants use the new policies which could generate greater inconsistency in evidence submitted in support of applications and lead to greater resource pressure for planning officers managing day to day caseloads. As such this technical guidance is important to the correct understanding of policies within the Local Plan (in so far as they relate to matters of design and master planning associated with the proposed urban extensions). This level of detail was not provided within the Local Plan itself though as it would have extended the complexity and length of the Plan substantially.

3 Results of consultation undertaken

- 3.1 There has been one round of formal consultation to date on the draft SUE Design Guidance SPD, between the dates of 8th August 2018 and 23rd September 2018.
- 3.2 A total of 10 responses were received via email as well as a range of informal comments and suggestions made through stakeholder meetings and consultation drop in events. A summary of the representations made and the proposed action in response to the representations are set out in Appendix 2.
- 3.3 The primary comments came from stakeholders with an interest in developing land within the SUE areas and those with concerns relating to the environmental impact of development. Although a range of changes have been made to the SPD in response to these comments, none of these changes dilute the overall aim and intention of the document. They primarily add clarity and where appropriate provide suitable flexibility to ensure viable and high quality development is delivered. The comments focussed upon the following key aspects:
 - Request for additional references within the natural environment section with regards biodiversity offsetting;
 - Additional section for on-plot drainage attenuation measures;
 - Suggestions that the guidance is too over prescriptive;
 - Updates to reflect new NPPF;
 - Additional references to separation distances between properties;
 - That the scope of the Design Guidance could put viability pressures on development and the delivery of sites;

- That the scope of the Design Guidance is not reflective of the property types delivered by volume housebuilders;
- That the guidance lacks local examples of good quality larger developments relative to the Arden characteristics;
- A range of typographical amendments and terminology changes to ensure consistency;
- Additional section on appropriate lighting proposals; and
- Requests for clarification around a range of specific points – including:
 - Function of junctions on/off the link road;
 - The primary function of the link road proposal at Keresley and how it will relate to the wider development;
 - References to building heights;
 - The overarching vision for edge roads needs to be clearer;
 - How the indicative masterplan at appendix 1 will evolve as sites get delivered;
 - Boundary demarcation and links to ecology and biodiversity;
 - Integration of Green Infrastructure into the new developments as a whole;
 - Buffer zones to ancient woodland;
 - Parking provision;
 - What type of trees will be appropriate within the developments and how will they be maintained; and
 - Property types and relevance of linked dwellings.

4 Timetable for implementing this decision

- 4.1 Subject to approval by the Cabinet Member it is proposed to consult on the draft SPD for a period of 6 weeks between Friday 8th February and Friday 22nd March 2019.
- 4.2 This round of consultation will seek formal representations to the SPD. Following this round of consultation, all responses will be reviewed and the SPD will be updated for the final time (if appropriate). The SPD will then be presented for adoption at Cabinet in June or July 2019.

5 Comments from the Director of Finance and Corporate Services

5.1 Financial implications

Unlike the Local Plan or an Area Action Plan, a SPD is not subject to public examination. It therefore does not incur the same level of costs as a higher level Plan. As such, any costs associated with the delivery of this SPD will be met through existing budgets attributed to the Planning and Housing Policy team.

5.2 Legal implications

Supplementary Planning Documents are produced under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) and in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. This draft SPD has been produced in accordance with the relevant legislation and regulations. SPD's are subject to supporting evidence and consultation but are not publicly examined or subject to Sustainability Appraisal. As such, their 'material weight' in planning terms is less than that of a Local Plan, Area Action Plan or other Development Plan Document. Notwithstanding this, SPD's must be adopted by a resolution of the Local Planning Authority and are still important planning policy documents that provide technical

guidance and supporting information to those submitting planning applications. A SPD does not introduce new policy, instead it builds and expands upon those set out in the higher level plan (in this case the Local Plan) to ensure they are interpreted and delivered in the most efficient and effective way.

6 Other implications

None.

6.1 How will this contribute to achievement of the Council's Plan?

- A prosperous Coventry: The SPD will support the delivery of high quality urban extensions to the city, providing significant numbers of new homes, job opportunities and local community and commercial floor space as well as new green and blue infrastructure. This will help enable continued investment and regeneration through the statutory plan making process;
- Citizens living longer, healthier, independent lives: The SPD promotes high quality developments that will deliver the homes the city needs coupled with significant investment in infrastructure. This will include improved accessibility to green and blue infrastructure and the promotion of active travel. High quality design and attractive residential environments will also be beneficial to resident's mental health;
- Making Coventry an attractive and enjoyable place to be: The SPD will support the delivery of new high quality residential and community environments. These areas will be well connected and well served by infrastructure and will be attractive areas within which to live and work;
- Making places and services easily accessible: The SPD seeks to ensure greater connectivity of new communities with existing residential areas (and vice versa). This will focus on all forms of highway infrastructure including roads, footpaths and cycle ways;
- Encouraging a creative, active and vibrant city: New high quality residential environments will promote active and vibrant communities that are well connected to other parts of Coventry and supported by high quality infrastructure. This will facilitate and enable job opportunities and inward investment across Coventry and its surrounding areas;
- Developing a more equal city with cohesive communities and neighbourhoods: The new SPD promotes new high quality residential areas. It will facilitate and enable job opportunities and inward investment across Coventry and its surrounding areas. This will help ensure new and existing communities will have greater access to new high-quality homes, jobs, leisure provisions and community facilities;
- Improving the environment and tackling climate change: The successful implementation of this SPD will help seek to mitigate the impacts of development on the environment through targeted guidance towards high quality residential properties, supporting infrastructure and design considerations that help contribute towards tackling climate change.

6.2 How is risk being managed?

The primary risk associated with this SPD is the length of time it will take to formally adopt the SPD, however this risk has been reduced as the document has already been taken through the first round of consultation as necessary. Although the Draft SPD can be a material consideration from the moment it is published, its weight will be very low, this still remains the case. As a result the Council continues to be reliant upon planning applicants to utilise the SPD at their own discretion and to their own benefit when developing planning applications. Based on the initial consideration of

the affected policies of the Local Plan, and officer's engagement with planning consultants via pre-application services and informal discussions, the publication of this SPD is actively awaited and encouraged. As such we consider this risk to remain minimal.

Risk has been identified through the first consultation process in so far as the design expectations on development may prove over burdensome and lead to schemes being unviable or less attractive for volume house builders to deliver. Officer responses to these concerns in Appendix 2 (The Consultation Statement) highlight that the Design guidance has been researched and developed with regard to a wide range of national examples of good design. These schemes are frequently delivered by volume house builders active across the country. The Guidance is also sufficiently flexible to allow for modern interpretations of Arden design characteristics with a sufficient range of materials and styles to support high quality development across the area. Given the comments above and the importance of delivering high quality development to help diversify the city's housing offer, we therefore consider this risk minimal and important to take.

6.3 What is the impact on the organisation?

No direct impact.

6.4 Equalities / EIA

A full Equality and Consultation Assessment (ECA) was undertaken as part of developing the Local Plan. As this SPD supports the delivery and technical interpretation of policies within the Plan no further assessment has been undertaken. As part of that analysis, the Council had due regard to its public sector equality duty under section 149 of the Equality Act (2010).

A key priority of this SPD is to support the interpretation and effectiveness of the relevant housing and design policies within the Local Plan. These policies focus on promoting the delivery of new high quality residential areas supported by high quality infrastructure. This will help deliver social, environmental and economic benefits to new and existing communities.

6.5 Implications for (or impact on) the environment

It was acknowledged through the development of the Local Plan that development on previously undeveloped sites would have some impact upon the environment. As this SPD will support the delivery of at least two of these areas it shares those impacts in principle. It does however promote the high-quality delivery of these areas through excellent design and the successful delivery of high quality infrastructure, especially through the protection and integration of ancient woodlands and brook corridors. These attributes will bring with them enhanced biodiversity and ecology value providing excellent green and blue infrastructure to both new and existing residents.

6.6 Implications for partner organisations?

None

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Appendix 1 – Draft Urban Extensions Design Guidance SPD and Indicative Keresley masterplan

Appendix 2 – Consultation Statement