

## Report of the Strategic Director of Place to the meeting of the Executive to be held on 11 June 2019

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**Subject:**

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**Homes and Neighbourhoods Design Guide**

### **Summary statement:**

A Draft Homes and Neighbourhoods Design Guide has been prepared for public consultation. It is intended that the guide will become a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).

The purpose of the guide will be to achieve a step change in the quality of new housing development in the District in support of policies in the Local Plan Core Strategy. It will help to ensure that the significant level of housing growth needed in the District to meet future need will be designed to create healthy, inclusive, sustainable places to live for everyone, which are also financially viable to build.

To enable it to be progressed towards SPD status the guide needs to undergo a formal public consultation period. This will help to test the content of the guide and identify any changes and improvements which may be necessary.

This report seeks Executive approval to undertake public consultation on the draft document.

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**Portfolio:**

**Regeneration, Planning & Transport**

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**Overview & Scrutiny Area:**

**Regeneration & Environment**

## **1. SUMMARY**

- 1.1 A Draft Homes and Neighbourhoods Design Guide has been prepared for public consultation. It is intended that the guide will become a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).
- 1.2 The purpose of the guide will be to achieve a step change in the quality of new housing development in the District in support of policies in the Local Plan Core Strategy. It will help to ensure that the significant level of housing growth needed in the District to meet future need will be designed to create healthy, inclusive, sustainable places to live for everyone, which are also financially viable to build.
- 1.3 To enable it to be progressed towards SPD status the guide needs to undergo a formal public consultation period. This will help to test the content of the guide and identify any changes and improvements which may be necessary.
- 1.4 This report seeks Executive approval to undertake public consultation on the draft document.

## **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The Homes & Neighbourhoods Design Guide forms part of a wider 'Design Quality' programme for Bradford which is being funded by the Government's Planning Delivery Fund. The Council was successful in receiving an award from this fund for the year 2018-19. The programme also includes a Masterplan for the City Village scheme and a Design Skills Training Programme for staff and members.
- 2.2 In September 2018 a team of consultants, comprising of Tibbalds and Urban Design Skills, were commissioned to prepare a draft Homes & Neighbourhoods Design Guide ready for public consultation. The consultants completed their final draft in May 2019 and this is the document which the Executive is now being asked to consider.
- 2.3 The consultant team have worked closely with the Council and wider stakeholders to try and create a guide which is specific to Bradford and responsive to the challenges and opportunities in our District.
- 2.4 The preparation of the guide has involved a number of workshops with a Council officer group including representatives drawn from Departments across the Council including Place, Health & Wellbeing, Corporate Resources and the Office of the Chief Executive.
- 2.5 Workshops and discussions have also been held with a number of key stakeholders including Born in Bradford, Bradford Property Forum, Bradford Civic Society,

Disabled and Older People Groups, and house builders active in the District.

- 2.6 The resulting document is intended to be both a highly visual, engaging guide which is attractive to a wide audience and helps to sell the District whilst also being a robust planning document which can influence and improve the quality of new housing development.
- 2.7 The vision set out in the guide is for **“green, safe, inclusive and distinctive neighbourhoods that create healthy communities for all.”** It identifies the following eight priorities for new development in the District:
1. **Choice** – a broad range of adaptable and efficient homes that are affordable to build, buy, rent and run.
  2. **Green** – green streets and spaces.
  3. **Inclusive** – accessible places with clear pedestrian routes.
  4. **Healthy** – healthy and connected neighbourhoods that promote wellbeing and community life.
  5. **Distinctive** – neighbourhoods with identity reflecting the District’s varied character.
  6. **Slopes** – opening up views and designing to make the most of the topography and ground.
  7. **Efficient** – designing to make efficient use of resources.
  8. **Process** – making design and planning processes work together.
- 2.8 The Guide will support policies in the Local Plan Core Strategy, in particular policies HO9, DS1, DS2, DS3, DS4 and DS5. It will be applicable to all scales of development from an individual house to a whole new neighbourhood.
- 2.9 Following the public consultation the guide will be amended accordingly in response to comments received and then approval will be sought to adopt it as a Supplementary Planning Document.
- 2.10 It is hoped that it will provide a ‘go to’ manual for developers, officers, elected members and communities to ensure good design principles are applied across the District for many years to come.

### **3. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS**

#### **3.1 Bradford Street Design Guide**

- 3.1.1 The Council has acquired the rights to use the Leeds Street Design Guide and is currently adapting it to create a Bradford specific guide. The intention is that this will be a separate Supplementary Planning Document which will be closely linked to the Homes & Neighbourhoods Design Guide.

3.1.2 The Homes & Neighbourhoods Design Guide will set the overall agenda and principles for the design of residential streets with the Street Design Guide providing the detailed technical guidance which sits alongside this.

### **3.2 Core Strategy Partial Review**

3.2.1 A Partial Review of the Core Strategy is currently underway. This will include proposed amendments to Policy HO9 Housing Quality particularly in relation to accessibility and space standards for new homes. The Homes & Neighbourhoods Design Guide refers to these standards and has been prepared to be consistent with both current and emerging policy in the Core Strategy.

### **3.3 Public Consultation**

3.3.1 The Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2012 requires that public consultation is undertaken on SPDs for a period of not less than 4 weeks. Given the potential for overlap with the summer school holidays the Executive is being asked to approve an 8 week consultation period to give people reasonable time to respond and make representations.

3.4 During the consultation period the draft Homes & Neighbourhoods Design Guide will be advertised in the local press, and it will be placed on the Council's website. Paper copies will also be made available to view at Britannia House, Keighley Town Hall, City Library, Bradford Local Studies Library, and the libraries at Bingley, Keighley, Shipley and Ilkley. In addition, the following groups will be directly notified of the consultation:

- All Members of the Council
- All local Parish Councils and adjoining Parish Councils
- Adjoining Local Authorities
- Interested bodies and organisations, including community groups
- Statutory bodies including Natural England, Historic England and the Environment Agency.
- House builders and local architectural and planning practices/ agents
- All relevant Services across the Local Authority.

### **3.5 Strategic Environmental Assessment**

3.5.1 The national Planning Practice Guidance (revised 15 March 2019) states that in exceptional circumstances a Strategic Environmental Assessment may be required when producing a Supplementary Planning Document.

3.5.2 To determine if exceptional circumstances exist it is necessary to undertake a screening process and to consult with the statutory bodies listed above. A Screening Statement is being prepared to accompany the draft Homes & Neighbourhoods Design Guide as a supporting document at public consultation stage.

### **3.6 Habitats Regulation Assessment**

- 3.6.1 Bradford District includes an area of the South Pennine Moors designated as a Special Protection Area (SPA) and a Special Area of Conservation (SAC). These are protected under the European Habitats Directive and the European Birds Directive because they contain habitat types which are rare or threatened, and due to the importance of breeding bird populations.
- 3.6.2 The Council is required to consider whether its planning documents will have an adverse impact on the integrity of these internationally designated sites. This is undertaken through a process known as a Habitats Regulations Assessment which is a requirement of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010.
- 3.6.3 In line with these regulations a Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening Statement is being prepared to accompany the draft Homes & Neighbourhoods Design Guide as a supporting document at public consultation stage.

## **4. FINANCIAL & RESOURCE APPRAISAL**

- 4.1 The costs of preparing the guide have been funded via an award from the Government's Planning Delivery Fund. The costs of consulting on the guide will be borne by the Planning, Transportation & Highways' revenue budget.

## **5. RISK MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE ISSUES**

- 5.1 It is not foreseen that any legal, financial, reputation or other risks will arise if options 1 or 2 (see section 9) are selected by Members and the recommendation of this report is accepted. If option 3 is selected there are potentially some financial and reputation risks, as outlined under this option in section 9.

## **6. LEGAL APPRAISAL**

- 6.1 The preparation of the draft Homes & Neighbourhoods Design Guide and the recommended period of public consultation is in compliance with relevant legislation and guidance regarding supplementary planning documents including the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2012 and the government's Planning Practice Guidance (revised 15 March 2019).

## **7. OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

### **7.1 EQUALITY & DIVERSITY**

- 7.1.1 A number of workshops have taken place to inform the preparation of the draft Homes and Neighbourhoods Design Guide involving representatives from Born in Bradford, Disabled and Older People Groups, Incommunities and Council officers

from Public Health, Housing and the Chief Executive's department.

7.1.2 This has enabled an insight into housing issues affecting different age groups (children and older people), a range of disabilities (including wheelchair users, visual impairment, mental health and dementia), and low income households and BME communities.

7.1.3 In response to this Priority 1 of the draft guide is to provide a 'choice' of housing to meet the needs of people in the District, Priority 3 is for 'inclusive' and accessible homes and places, and Priority 4 is for 'healthy' neighbourhoods (see pages 10-11 of the draft guide).

7.1.4 This is supported by specific guidance including:

- **Movement** (pages 56-59 in the draft Design Guide) – requires that developments provide safe, well connected routes which give priority to pedestrians and cyclists, and which are designed to limit traffic speeds to 20mph.
- **Play** (pages 72-73) – introduces a requirement to provide opportunities for 'doorstep play' for young children and toddlers close to homes on residential streets.
- **Housing Mix** (p75 and 96) – includes guidance on how homes can be designed for multi-generational living.
- **Accessible Homes** (p88) – sets standards in advance of the Core Strategy Partial Review as follows:  
10% of new homes to be M4(Category 3) Wheelchair Accessible Dwellings.  
90% of new homes to be M4(Category 2) Accessible & Adaptable Dwellings.
- **Inclusive Places** (p 88) – requires consideration of features such as clear, direct and level paths and pavements free of clutter, cars and bins, with regular resting points/benches on main walking routes, and open spaces designed to be accessible and appealing to less able residents.
- **Internal Space** (p94 and 101) – sets out the requirement for all new homes to be built to the *Nationally Described Space Standards* (in advance of the Core Strategy Partial Review). Also introduces standards to achieve good levels of light and ventilation in rooms.
- **Outdoor space** (p93, 103) – requires all new build homes to have direct access to good quality private outdoor space. For apartments this can be provided with balconies, terraces, roof spaces or communal gardens.

7.1.5 It is considered that by influencing the design quality of new housing developments in the ways described above that the draft Homes & Neighbourhoods Design Guide can help to advance equality of opportunity for people who have a protected characteristic, and also to foster good relations between those who have a

protected characteristic and those who do not.

- 7.1.6 If adopted the guide will be a supplementary planning document in support of policies in the Core Strategy which has been subject to a full Equalities Impact Assessment.

## 7.2 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.2.1 The preparation of the draft guide has included input from officers in Environmental Health, Energy and the Countryside Service amongst others. It is considered that it will have positive implications in terms of sustainability through guidance including the following examples:

- **Green Streets** (pages 58-61 in the draft guide) – requires streets to be designed to be greener which could include more street trees, swales, and planting/hedgerows for garden boundaries.
- **Water** (pages 66-67) – requires that priority is given to sustainable drainage processes and that a drainage strategy should help to shape the design of the open space, landscape and streets.
- **Biodiversity** (p70-71) – identifies how development can provide a net gain in biodiversity by including design features at the scales of neighbourhood, street and individual house.
- **Air Quality** (p48-49, 56-65, 82) – the issue of air quality is addressed throughout the document through requiring that developments:
  - Prioritise active travel (walking and cycling) and public transport.
  - Incorporate street trees, planting, open spaces and landscape.
  - Include EV charging points for vehicles.
- **Cycling** (p84-85) – includes design guidance on how to meet the Core Strategy's cycle parking requirements for different types of homes.
- **Energy Efficiency** (p49, 109-111) – whilst Government policy doesn't allow planning authorities to set energy standards beyond current Building Regulations the guide does provide guidance on how homes can be designed to be more energy efficient through their layout, details and materials, including taking a fabric first approach.

- 7.2.2 The draft Homes & Neighbourhoods Design Guide will support policies in the Core Strategy which has been subject to a full Sustainability Assessment.

## 7.3 GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS IMPACTS

- 7.3.1 The draft guide should help to reduce greenhouse gas emission impacts through prioritising active travel and public transport over the car, making developments

greener with more trees and landscape, requiring the provision of electric vehicle charging points and encouraging better energy efficiency in homes.

#### **7.4 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

7.4.1 West Yorkshire Police's Architectural Liaison Officer has been involved in workshops throughout the preparation of the draft guide and has helped to influence its content. A priority of the guide is to create safe communities. It has been developed in accordance with 'Secure By Design' principles and includes guidance on making inclusive places for people with safe streets and spaces and secure properties.

#### **7.5 HUMAN RIGHTS ACT**

7.5.1 Members of the public will have an opportunity to comment on the draft guide within the consultation period, and any comments will be taken into consideration and fully documented. No conflict with the Human Rights Act is foreseen.

#### **7.6 TRADE UNION**

7.6.1 There are no Trade Union implications.

#### **7.7 WARD IMPLICATIONS**

7.7.1 If adopted, the Homes & Neighbourhoods Design Guide SPD will influence applications for housing development throughout the entire Bradford District.

#### **7.8 AREA COMMITTEE ACTION PLAN IMPLICATIONS**

7.8.1 As stated above, the Homes & Neighbourhoods Design Guide SPD, if adopted, will influence applications for housing development throughout the entire Bradford District.

#### **7.9 IMPLICATIONS FOR CORPORATE PARENTING**

7.9.1 There are no implications for corporate parenting.

#### **7.10 ISSUES ARISING FROM PRIVACY IMPACT ASSESMENT**

7.10.1 General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) principles relating to individuals' data and rights under the Data Protection Act 2018 will be respected with regard to the public consultation.

## **8. NOT FOR PUBLICATION DOCUMENTS**

8.1 None.

## **9. OPTIONS**

### **9.1 Option 1 (Recommended)**

9.1.1 Approve the draft Homes & Neighbourhoods Design Guide SPD for an eight week period of public consultation.

9.1.2 The selection of this option will allow the draft guide to progress and minimise delay.

### **9.2 Option 2**

9.2.1 Subject to amendments, approve the draft Homes & Neighbourhoods Design Guide SPD for an eight week period of public consultation.

9.2.2 The selection of this option will allow Members to shape and influence the content of the draft guide prior to public consultation. However it may cause some delay, depending on the scope of the proposed amendments and whether or not the Executive, an alternative Committee or individual Members wish to be re-consulted prior to public consultation.

### **9.3 Option 3**

9.3.1 Refuse permission for the draft Homes & Neighbourhoods Design Guide SPD to undergo an eight week period of public consultation.

9.3.2 Should Members be deeply unsatisfied with the document or the principal of adopting a Homes & Neighbourhoods Design Guide SPD then selection of this option will allow them to halt or put an end to the progression of the document.

9.3.3 However it should be noted that the Council's adopted Core Strategy states that an SPD will be prepared to support the implementation of the design and housing policies. The Council has received an award from the Government's Planning Delivery Fund for the purpose of preparing and progressing a Design Guide towards SPD status. Selection of this option would effectively put an end to this work and could potentially negatively impact on any future funding bids to the Government.

9.3.4 Also a number of Council departments, other organisations and community groups have provided input into the preparation of the draft guide and selection of this option may prevent their aspirations from being met.

## **10. RECOMMENDATIONS**

10.1 **That the draft Homes and Neighbourhoods Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document, attached in Appendix 1, be approved as the basis for a public consultation period of eight weeks.**

10.2 **That the outcome of the public consultation, including any appropriate suggested amendments, be reported back to the Executive as soon as possible with a view to seeking approval to adopt the Homes and Neighbourhoods Design Guide as an SPD.**

10.3 **That authority be delegated to the Strategic Director Place in consultation with the Portfolio Holder to carry out any minor amendments of a drafting or similar nature necessary, prior to consulting on the draft Homes and Neighbourhoods Design Guide.**

10.4 **That authority be delegated to the Strategic Director Place in consultation with the Portfolio Holder to prepare a 'Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Statement' and a 'Habitats Regulation Assessment Screening Statement' as supporting documents to the draft Homes and Neighbourhoods Design Guide to be made available for comment in the public consultation period.**

## **11. APPENDICES**

11.1 Appendix 1. Draft Homes and Neighbourhoods Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document.

## **12. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

12.1 A number of background documents have been used to inform the writing of this report. All are published and readily available to the public.