

Land West of Horsham Design Principles and Character Areas SPD

CONSULTATION STATEMENT

This statement has been prepared by the Council in accordance with Regulation 17 and Regulation 18 (4) of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations, 2004 and the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2008.

Part A - Consultation on the Land West of Horsham Design Principles and Character Areas SPD

Pre-production Consultation

The SPD was devised to provide more detail on the Land West of Horsham Masterplan SPD in relation to design and therefore consultation on that document helped inform and steer the development of the SPD. A number of stakeholder consultation events were held to assist in the preparation of the Masterplan SPD. These took the form of workshops and exhibitions and helped explore and establish the principles for the development of the land. In relation specifically to design issues, a stakeholder consultation event held in Spring 2006 examined the visions and opportunities of the development and collaborative design. This took the form of 2 workshop sessions followed by a public exhibition.

In October 2007, a further stakeholder event was held to assist in preparation of the final Masterplan. The themes considered by the workshop groups included 'Housing - creating a sense of place - design/character areas/phasing'. The outcomes of these sessions were used to help inform the identification of 'character areas' within the Design Principles SPD and the resulting design principles that will be used to guide future development at the Land West of Horsham.

A report was submitted to the Strategic Planning Advisory Group (SPAG) on 29th January 2007 to initiate the process of developing the SPD. The written report and oral presentation gave the Members of SPAG an opportunity to comment on the proposed structure and content of the SPD. The report was then sent to key stakeholders for the West of Horsham Development who it was decided should be involved from the earliest stages of production of the SPD in order to gain a local community perspective from the outset. The stakeholders included the West of Horsham Reference Group and the Horsham Society. Copies of the report were also sent to the main developers of the site.

On the 19th March 2008 Officers met with members of the Horsham Society to talk through a working draft of the document and give the Society an opportunity to provide comments and ideas. Officers also met with representatives from West Sussex County Council on 10th April 2008 and the Reference Group on 14th April 2008 to invite comments and input on the working draft. A draft was also sent to the main developers of the site on 1st May 2008 and the Council's Landscape Architect and Arboriculture Officer.

Further working drafts were consulted on at meetings with the Reference Group on the 9th June 2008 and 31st July 2008 and sent to the Horsham Society for comment

on 4th August 2008. On 23rd September 2008 a final draft was presented to SPAG and the Members comments were incorporated before the document was taken to Cabinet for approval to publish for public consultation.

Public Consultation on the Draft SPD

Following approval by Cabinet on the 8th October 2008, the Draft Land West of Horsham Design Principles and Character Areas SPD was published for public consultation on the 31st October 2008 for a period of six weeks ending on the 12th December 2008. The production of the SPD was advertised in the West Sussex County Times (**Appendix 1**).

The following documents were available for public consultation:

- The Draft SPD
- Comments forms, detailing the consultation procedures

These documents were made available at the following locations:

Horsham District Council Offices, Park North, North Street, Horsham, West Sussex (8.45am - 5.20pm Monday to Thursday and 8.45am - 4.20pm Fridays)

Horsham Library and Help Point, Lower Tanbridge Way, Horsham

Southwater Library, Lintot Square, Fairbank Road, Southwater

Storrington Library and Help Point, Ryecroft Lane, Storrington

The Draft SPD and all accompanying documents were also made available on the Council's website www.horsham.gov.uk/strategic_planning

The persons and organisations that were specifically consulted after the publication of the Draft SPD mirrored those consulted on the Land West of Horsham Masterplan SPD.

Representations were received from 11 organisations or individuals in total. As a result of the close working relationship with Reference Group during the pre-consultation stage their views had been taken into account of fully and we therefore had no formal views submitted from them during the public consultation. **Part B** provides a summary of the main issues raised in the representations received as well as how these issues have been addressed in the final version of the SPD to be adopted.

Further Consultation

A draft of the SPD, which was amended in accordance with representations received in the consultation period, was presented to the members of SPAG on the 10th March 2009 for comments.

Part B - Summary of the main issues raised in the representations received and how these issues have been addressed in the final version of the SPD

General Comments

Densities

There were a couple of representations that questioned the rationale behind the allocation of housing densities. One representation suggested that Character Areas should indicate a broad density range and should be flexible rather than too prescriptive by supplying for example maximum densities only. Another representation questioned the balance between densities in Character Area 3 and Character Area 1 stating that Character Area 1 is an extension of the existing town and therefore more suitable for the highest densities proposed.

Response

It was felt that the existing densities reflect the documents vision for the development of each Character Area and that by already setting out a density range in each Character Area there is already a degree of flexibility. The higher density in Character Area 3 reflects the fact that it will become the new neighbourhood centre for Broadbridge Heath and therefore it was considered that density in this area would be higher as it would have a much more urban character encompassing office and retail units. No change.

Natural Environment

Several representations were received concerning the natural environment. Generally the comments suggested that environmental data should be used inform the overall design of the new development with green infrastructure and biodiversity being mapped first to work within the environmental parameters of the area.

Response

Chapter 1 of the Design Principles SPD clearly states that the document should be read alongside the Masterplan SPD. The Sixth Principle of the Masterplan SPD sets out guidance on wildlife, habitat and Landscape and states that comprehensive ecological surveys were carried out across the site to inform the production of the Masterplan identifying a green network to allow for the retention and enhancement of the important ecological features at the site. The Masterplan Constraints map that had taken account of the ecological surveys was used as a basis for the Design Principles SPD. No change.

Design Detail

A number of representations were received that requested that detailed design issues were addressed in the SPD such as the detailed design of pedestrian links, lighting intensity, nesting sites for birds etc.

Response

The SPD was devised and written to set out the Council's overarching design principles for development at the land west of Horsham to help guide the developers when writing their planning applications. The more detailed aspects of design will be addressed during the planning application stage.

Recreation of the present and encouragement of good modern design

There were several representations on the document that were concerned that the SPD was leaning towards recreating the present, in terms of taking too many references from existing surrounding vernacular, rather than encouraging innovation and good modern design. It was argued that the document recognises that there is little if any discernable local character or context except for the natural landscape and should therefore not be looking to recreate this or parts of the surrounding settlements, but should be looking for innovation and modern design particularly in Chapter 3 where the guidance could be seen as restrictive to this.

Response

It was felt that the design would be expected to take some cues from the local character and context in terms of scale and massing, but it was agreed that the document should do more to encourage good modern design and also be adaptable enough to cater for future changing technologies, materials and construction that may enhance the development. Minor changes were made to the document in Chapter 2 and 3 to reflect this and provide more flexibility. The main change was to the first paragraph of Chapter 3, which was expanded to explain that in the context of the documents objective to promote innovation in design, variations to the Principles may be agreed with the Council to meet that objective.

Diversion of Footpaths and access issues

A number of representations commented on the retention of footpaths across the site and argued that the document should give more flexibility to the potential diversion of these should they be required in the design.

Response

The document recognises the need to retain particular footpaths across the site, however it is not within the District Council's authority to sanction diversions of footpaths it is the authority of West Sussex County Council.

Character Areas

A couple of representations questioned the usefulness of character areas as mechanisms to promote good design.

Response

As paragraph 4.2 of the SPD states "Identifying separate character areas across the site provides an opportunity to create an attractive, legible layout where it is possible to move between different parts of the site and experience places which have an identity and provide a sense of place. It promotes variety in design and layout and the integration of a mix of house types and sizes, incorporating affordable housing grouped in clusters so as to achieve mixed and balanced communities in a development form that is sensitive to its edge of town location." It is therefore an approach the Council feels appropriate for achieving high quality development.

Detailed Comments

Chapter 1: Introduction

It was considered in a representation that stating 'specific design guidance' for each character area in paragraph 1.1 is not acceptable as such detail would be dealt with at the more detailed reserved matters stage during the planning application process.

Response

Paragraph 1.1 states that ‘Site specific design guidance which amplifies the policies of the LDF and the West of Horsham Masterplan SPD...’ It was considered that this particular sentence describes the guidance as a translation of LDF policies and the Masterplan SPD into design related guidance specific to the Land West of Horsham and not for each character area as suggested. No change.

Chapter 2: The Horsham Context - Constraints and Opportunities

East of A24 - Hedges and Trees

A representation was made regarding paragraph 2.4 on hedges and trees in the land east of the A24. The representation objects to the first sentence of the paragraph and argues that all trees and hedgerows in the area add great character to the landscape and should be protected by means of TPO’s.

Response

The Masterplan SPD states in paragraph 5.76 that the Council wishes to protect as far as is practicable existing hedges and important trees within and adjoining the site. This detail as well as the matter of TPO’s will be addressed at the planning application stage. However, the first sentence of paragraph 2.4 in the Design Principles SPD was amended so that all of the characteristics at the site are described with equal significance.

East of A24 - Waterways

An objection was made to the sentence “the brook and it’s floodplain run from north to south along Hills Farm Lane effectively dampening the relationships and links in character there may be between the Denne Neighbourhood and the northern section of the new development area.” The representation argued that during the winter months the new development would clearly be seen from Denne neighbourhood on Hills Farm Lane in the winter months when the trees have lost their leaves.

Response

Even though the development would be visible from Hills Farm Lane in the winter months, the river and its corridor provide a clear distinction between the new site and the existing development areas providing the opportunity for the new development to take on a different character and identity. No change.

Other Constraints

A representation commented that insufficient importance has been given to the smells coming from the Horsham sewage works.

Response

The smell from the sewage works has been addressed in paragraphs 3.9 -3.11 in the Masterplan SPD. This will ultimately be addressed at the planning application stage. No change.

Chapter 3: Design Principles

Designing Character Areas

A representation requested the term “local settlement patterns” and “settlements in the area” were explained more clearly in the text.

Response

The text was amended in paragraph 3.2 to clarify the terms more clearly.

Garages and Parking

A representation felt that the use people make of their cars may change in the future but they are very unlikely to forgo altogether the flexibility and freedom they provide. It therefore suggests that parking should be provided for at least 1.5 spaces per home. Another representation felt that by stating “where garages are proposed” in paragraph 3.32 suggests that they are unwelcome. It was felt that the provision of garages should be encouraged

Response

The SPD reflects the West Sussex County Council Parking Standards as set out in Appendix B: Parking and Cycle Parking Standards. On the site the Council is looking for a mixed development meaning that it would be inappropriate to encourage the provision of garages for every property. No change.

Landscape/Public Realm

A representation was received stating that this section refers only to the retention of existing trees and landscaping and it would benefit from positive encouragement to include tree lined streets. Another representation objected to the example of a landscape buffer as illustrated in Appendix D as it was considered inappropriate for the development and not in accordance with Manual for Streets guidance.

Response

It was felt that tree lined streets assumes the dominance of cars and most streets will be designed in terms of Manual for Streets. However, it was agreed that incidental planting of trees within the development itself should be encouraged and has subsequently been added to the text. It was agreed that Appendix D is not an appropriate example of landscape buffering for this development and has been deleted from the document.

Street Lighting and Furniture

A comment considered that street furniture should be of simple design and unobtrusive as possible

Response

It was agreed that street furniture should be of simple design and the text has been amended to reflect this.

Chapter 4: The Development of Character Areas

Character Area 1

A representation suggested that the text should reflect the inclusion of the Fulling Mill earthworks and WWII pillbox amongst the identified significant landscape features, and state the intention to retain the pillbox in line with the Masterplan SPD.

Response

It was agreed and the text has been amended to reflect this.



Character Area 4

There was an objection raised on the design guidance where it states that the new east/west link road should be set into a small cutting to help mitigate impact. It argued that there are alternative ways of reducing visual impact that may be more viable.

Response

To make the guidance more flexible the text was amended to stipulate that measures should be taken to mitigate the visual impact of the new link road, for example by placing the road in a small cutting.

APPENDIX 1: Statutory Notice

 Horsham District Council	HORSHAM DISTRICT LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK
Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 The Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004 and The Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2008	
NOTICE OF THE REPRESENTATION PERIOD FOR THE LAND WEST OF HORSHAM DESIGN PRINCIPLES & CHARACTER AREAS DRAFT SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT	
As part of the preparation of the planning strategy for Horsham District to 2018, the District Council is publishing a draft Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) on Land West of Horsham Design Principles and Character Areas.	
This document has been created to amplify guidance in the West of Horsham Masterplan SPD on design related matters. It is intended that the document will provide an appropriate brief to developers which clearly sets out the Council's expectations in relation to matters such as building design and scale, layout and landscape strategy.	
The document will be published for a six week public consultation period on 31 October 2008. Should you wish to comment on the documents, please do so on or before 4.20pm on 12 December 2008 .	
There are two ways in which representations can be submitted:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">* Electronically on the dedicated website www.horsham.gov.uk/strategic_planning; or* On the representation form available from the Council and sent to Strategic and Community Planning Department, Park North, North Street, Horsham, RH12 1RL or fax to: 01403 215597.	
Should you wish to be notified of the adoption of the SPD, please provide appropriate contact details.	
For further information about the Land West of Horsham Design Principles and Character Areas SPD, please contact the Strategic and Community Planning Department on (01403) 215398 or email strategic.planning@horsham.gov.uk .	
Inspecting the documents	
The draft SPD will be available to view on the Council's website www.horsham.gov.uk/strategic_planning .	
Hard copies of the documents are also available from:	
Horsham District Council Offices Park North, North Street, Horsham, West Sussex 8.45am - 5.20pm Monday to Thursday and 8.45am - 4.20pm Fridays	
And also at the following libraries and Help Points: <i>For opening times please telephone</i>	
Horsham Library & Help Point	Lower Tanbridge Way, Horsham (01403) 224350
Southwater Library	Lintot Square, Fairbank Road, Southwater (01403) 734660
Storrington Library & Help Point	Ryecroft Lane, Storrington (01903) 743075
Horsham District Local Development Framework	 Horsham District Council