

2. SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT - PEAK DISTRICT DESIGN GUIDE (A.453/BJT/BT)

Proposal

1 To recommend that the Authority adopt the text of the draft Peak District National Park Design Guide as a Supplementary Planning Document, and that the document be published with additional illustrations.

2 RECOMMENDATION:

1. **That the Authority adopt the text of Peak District Design Guide with the amendments covering the points in the Appendix of this report as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).**
2. **That the Director of Conservation and Development in consultation with the Chair of the Plans Review Team be delegated to agree minor changes to the text of the document.**
3. **That the existing Building Design Guide is adopted as a Technical Supplement to the 2007 Peak District Design Guide until such time all or part is superseded by the adoption of new Technical Supplements as Supplementary Planning Documents. If there is any conflict in the advice between the two guides, then the 2007 guide as SPD takes precedence.**

Policy/Legal Background

- 3 Following the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act in 2004, authorities can now produce Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) which appear as a statutory document within the Local Development Framework. These have more weight in planning decisions than previous documents, though they should not be used to restate policy or allocate sites (the role of a Development Plan Document). The Act introduced a new rigour to the preparation of SPDs, by requiring high quality stakeholder engagement, ensuring close linkage with parent policy, and embedding sustainable development principles by undertaking a Sustainability Appraisal.
- 4 The Design Guide SPD is primarily intended to supplement the landscape and design objectives of Structure Plan policies C2 (Development in the countryside outside the Natural Zone) and C3 (Development in towns and villages); and Local Plan policy LC4 (Design, layout and landscaping), and other policy issues relating to conservation, transport, flooding etc.
- 5 The Authority has evolved a corporate approach to implementing its statutory functions. It is policy-led, via the Strategic Outcomes in the adopted National Park Management Plan. The new Design Guide will contribute strongly to the delivery of outcomes for cultural heritage, but interlink with other commitments to the environment, working for and with communities, and encouraging business and social enterprise.
- 6 At the request of the Chair of Planning Committee, the Guide was reported to the January meeting of the Planning Committee for scrutiny as it is very relevant to the work of this committee. The Committee debate centred on sustainability, modern design and bungalows. The Committee supported the guide and accepted the recommendation which is in section 2 of this report. The Annex tracks changes to the text following comments by consultees and the Planning Committee. This will enable members to see the original together with proposed changes.

Key Issues

- 7 Responses to consultation raise a number of issues relating to the preparation and content of the draft Design Guide. The principal issues are as follows:
- Achieving an appropriate balance between protecting the Peak District building tradition in order to conserve and enhance the character of the National Park, whilst having proper regard to wider matters of sustainability – the underlying concept of the guide.
 - Buildings in their landscape setting. Previous guides have covered this point but have tended to focus on individual buildings. There is national recognition that both urban and rural buildings and places matter, as does the way they are used over time.
 - Bungalows are not supported by the guide but are viewed by some as practical and sensible for the elderly.
 - The application of high standards in external building materials. Some consultees believe that standards should be lowered to enable more affordable housing, and others suggest a wider range of external building materials should be permitted.
 - Role and purpose of the Design Guide. The guide needs to be useful to all users, and this is a challenge because some practitioners want more flexibility and others would happily settle for a pattern book approach to aid consistency. How prescriptive should the guide be?
 - The need for Technical Supplements to be prepared soon, which are likely to be the sections of the guide which will be most used by practitioners.
 - Adequacy of the consultation period. 6 weeks public consultation is the maximum allowed by the regulations for Supplementary Planning Documents, but some consultees find this unsatisfactory.

Further detail and officer response on these issues is included in the attached Appendix.

APPENDIX

Background

Introduction

- 1 There have been 5 design guides for building in the Peak District published over the last 70 years. The first was by the CPRE in 1933, and the rest were by predecessor authorities in 1964, 1973, 1976 and 1987. The last was reprinted in 1995 and remains the current adopted guide. However, all the guides have a lot in common in their analysis of the Peak District's traditional architecture, and general guidance - which has always been to respect the local building tradition but not slavishly copy it. Each emphasised contemporary issues and offered advice on good modern architecture; the more recent versions also gave quite clear guidance on detailed design. None of the previous guides has been prepared with due process as a Supplementary Planning Document, and as a result only little weight has been afforded to the guidance in important planning appeals, leading to greater inconsistency in design outcomes.
- 2 Support for a new Design Guide emerged during consultation on 'Help Shape the Future' in May 2005 and on the Draft Management Plan in June 2006. Amongst a range of questions on the future management of the National Park, comment was invited on the status and content of the proposed new guide. A workshop for representative stakeholders was held in September 2006, which helped to refine the draft.
- 3 Circumstances have changed over the last 20 years, and there is now a need for a guide that is more obviously linked to adopted policies and addresses current design issues, particularly sustainability and the relationship of buildings to their landscape setting. The approach to this new Design Guide draws together a thorough analysis of the building tradition with a sense of the new national attitude to design and planning. The guide seeks to contribute positively to sustainable development and encourage a reinterpretation of the vernacular to ensure delivery of the primary conservation objectives for the National Park, exploring the scope for sustainable design principles to be incorporated where possible.
- 4 The new guide will be generic, with a main document and supporting Technical Supplements. This format should ensure best connection with intended users, and a degree of flexibility at the detailed level, especially as some aspects are likely to be produced through joint working with other public agencies (eg police, building control, environmental health). It also addresses an internal resource problem.

Structure

- 5 The Guide reflects adopted policies of the 1994 Structure Plan and 2001 Local Plan, and current National and Regional Guidance and advice from other agencies. The Guide is divided into the following chapters:
 - The Peak District Tradition
 - New Development- Designing in Sympathy
 - Materials
 - Access and Space Between Buildings
 - Sustainable design
 - Alterations and Extensions
 - Conversions
 - Shop Fronts
 - Details

- External Works
- Wildlife and Protected Species

- 6 There are also four appendices covering related topics (eg Landscape Character Assessments), advice from other agencies (eg Highways), adopted policies, and the consultation process. There is also a sustainability appraisal report in accordance with statutory guidance for processing SPD.
- 7 Technical Supplements will be produced for most chapters and there will be leaflets on specific topics (eg pointing). A limited number of paper copies of these documents will be published, as the aim is to direct users to the Authority's web site, where the electronic versions will have links and will periodically be revised so that they are up to date. Any major changes to the SPD would of course have to go the statutory process. Members should note that sustainability design advice will be incorporated into a new SPD which would replace the 2003 Supplementary Guidance on Energy, Renewables and Conservation.

Response to consultation

- 8 A limited, targeted public consultation was undertaken between 8 November and 19 December 2006. 200 organisations and individuals were consulted, from which there have been 22 responses raising about 100 separate points. There were also 18 comments from members and Authority staff. All points raised have been assessed in relation to possible textural changes. The main points are summarised below. Other minor factual changes and amendments will be made in response to the comments made. All changes will be shown in the report to Authority.
- **Achieving an appropriate balance between protecting the Peak District building tradition so as to conserve and enhance the character of the National Park, whilst having proper regard to wider matters of sustainability**
- 9 Consultees generally supported the principles of the Design Guide, but concern was raised about its purpose and content. Some sought flexibility in considering proposals, whilst others perceived inconsistency in decisions. There was a desire to permit more sustainable design, more renewables and new building materials .

Officer Comment:

- 10 The underlying principle of the guide is sustainability but within context of National Park purposes to conserve and enhance valued characteristics. Valued characteristics (stated in the Structure Plan para 2.17) include wildlife and landscape quality, and cultural heritage such as settlements, buildings and local character. The Authority's policies make a general presumption against developments that are incompatible with this. The development control process rigorously tests these policies. The Structure Plan concludes in para 2.32 that its policies are a reasonable step towards sustainable development and sustainability. The Local Plan para 1.18-1.22 reaffirms this view. In supporting the Authority's policies, the Regional Spatial Strategy accepts that National Park policies contribute to regional and national sustainability. The Design Guide is an application of adopted policies and its sustainability appraisal report scores highly.
- 11 The Guide is an overarching document, which defines local character and offers general advice. Understandably, some people expect to see detailed advice in the current guide. However, further detailed advice will follow in the form of Technical Supplements and (where appropriate) leaflets.

- 12 There is a perception that the present guide is too prescriptive, favouring traditional design over modern. The purpose of the Guide is to promote a better understanding of traditional architecture, but there is more emphasis on promoting good modern contextual architecture. However not all designers are expert in modern design and the perception of flexibility can invite critical comment. Similarly concern has been expressed that the Authority exercises detailed control over house extensions whilst permitting large modern farm buildings. The separate SPG on agricultural buildings offers advice on siting and design and landscaping.

Action:

- 13 Officers feel that overall the correct balance is struck between traditional and modern architecture. Technical Supplements must address the need for detailed guidance, especially on materials. The intended SPD on Energy, Renewables and Conservation will cover the integration of renewable energy sources with buildings.

- **Buildings in the landscape**

- 14 This relates to the design of spaces between buildings whether town, village or even a farmstead. It is the art of making attractive, lively and above all distinctive places for people to use and identify with. Consultation replies emphasise the importance of landscape character and landscape.

Officer Comment:

The Authority should welcome the support for undertaking a Landscape Character Assessment of the National Park. The Design Guide will link to it and any design proposals need to consider this aspect. However it must be recognised that often maintaining a sense of place goes beyond the planning system. It is hoped that by producing an attractive overarching guide will raise awareness and encourage others to conserve local distinctiveness.

Action:

The Guide should be amended to ensure effective referencing with Landscape Character Assessment.

- **Bungalows**

- 15 Several consultees and members stated that bungalows, which are not supported by the Guide, can be practical and sensible for the elderly.

Officer Comment:

The Guide (para 3.21) states that bungalows are an unwelcome modern day addition to many settlements. Traditionally even almshouses in the area were low two storey. However within the National Park there is some tradition of single storey agricultural buildings. Single storey dwellings, which have a traditional narrow plan, could be acceptable if they are designed to fit in with the character of the locality. A low two storey or one and a half storey cottage has the benefit of extra bedrooms in the roof space and is more likely to be in keeping with the more important road frontages.

Action:

The guide should be amended to reflect this point.

- **External Materials**

- 16 Some consultees believe that high standards of materials should be lowered to enable more affordable housing. Others suggest a wider range of external building materials ought to be permitted.

Officer Comment:

- Building materials have been a central concern of all National Park design guides. National and local polices seek high standards of design in National Parks and the use of appropriate materials. They do not distinguish between affordable housing and other developments.
- 17 Historically social housing on rural estates was built in local stone with traditional roofing materials, and this practice continued into the late C20. Interwar council houses tended to be rendered under blue slate roofs. After the creation of the National Park in 1951 some local councils built houses in natural stone (eg at Baslow) under concrete tile roofs (Hardrow), although rubble limestone block walling was introduced in the 1950s because dimensional limestone was not readily available. By the 1960s external materials on social housing was often artificial stone or bookend rubble block and render as at Warslow, where the rubble block was limestone in a gritstone village. In 1974 local councils lost delegated development control powers to the newly formed Joint Planning Board and this coincided with the government's response to the Sandford Report which sought higher standards of development control within National Parks. From then on there was a gradual improvement in design standards. Unfortunately the acceptance of lower standards of walling and roofing materials extended well beyond social housing, and design details had become poor, so achieving higher standards of design was a long and slow process. In 1985 a new form of rubble block was devised for the Windy Ridge housing development at Longnor, but rubble blocks however improved had their limitations, as can be seen at Highfield Drive, Bakewell (1995). In granting consent to the newly formed PDRHA in 1989 for housing at Bradfield, the planning committee made it clear that social housing should be designed to higher standards with external walls built in natural stone. Although it took time to develop a supply of natural limestone walling, this decision set the pattern for the future. It led to an expansion of local dimensional stone businesses because most new developments required stone walling. Improvements in roofing materials have occurred too. The quality of the built environment improved as at Grouse Farm, Warslow and New Street, Bakewell. However, build costs have always been an issue in the public sector, and on occasions the Authority has conceded lower standard finishes on discrete elevations eg Soldier's Croft, Monyash and Highfield Drive phase 2.
- 18 Setting aside the expectations of prevailing policies, the benefits of traditional external building materials are as follows:
- Maintains local distinctiveness
 - Sustainable use of a long-life material and can be reused when the dwelling is redundant or extended (eg Pilsley).
 - Visually improves with age unlike artificial stone and roofing materials.
 - Maintains continuity between new and old, and avoids sectors in different materials as occurred in the 1960s eg Calver. As much of the new development in settlements will be affordable housing the use of local walling and appropriate roofing materials is important.
 - Supports economic attractiveness especially to the local tourism industry.
 - Supports local employment in stone cutting and masonry skills.
 - Ensures physical, and by implication social, continuity between affordable housing and the rest of the village, which did not always occur.

Disbenefits can include:

- Most is local stone, but it is not necessarily quarried from the National Park.
- Additional costs. In 2006 the overcost of natural stone and traditional roofing materials per affordable dwelling was approx £5000 per house (£3000 walls and £2000 roof). Nevertheless, this is modest in relation to overall build costs, and it is possibly even a net benefit over the lifetime of the dwelling because of lower maintenance costs.
- Some roofing materials are imported from other parts of the world. This is cost driven and local distinctiveness can be compromised.

19 In respect of new materials, the advice in the guide reflects analysis of the character of the area. This is one of simple robust architecture where stone is the dominant walling material and roofs are limited to few types of slate and tiles. This simple palette of materials affords local identity. The introduction of other materials could dilute and spoil the very character which the Authority is required to protect. Past experience has shown that new materials do not always perform well (eg artificial stone, rubble blocks, concrete tiles). Others have to be used with care (eg Terne coated steel). More appropriate, is the use of traditional materials in a modern way (eg the lead roof on the David Mellor building). The Guide does however offer a basis for reasonable exploration of innovative materials and techniques.

20 • **Role and purpose of the Design Guide**

The Design Guide needs to be useful to all users, which is a challenge because some practitioners want more flexibility whilst others would prefer a pattern book approach to aid consistency. There is a fundamental conflict here between prescription and flexibility.

Officer comment:

This highlights the proposed role of the Guide sitting alongside Technical Supplements. The Technical Supplements are likely to be most used by practitioners. They will be consistent with the over-arching document, but will need to go into more detail and will tend towards more prescriptive examples of what is appropriate in the context of the National Park. Officers have concluded that in order to have proper weight in the decision making process, the Technical Supplements will have to be produced as Supplementary Planning Documents themselves. It is anticipated they will be produced in batches over the next 18 months.

Action:

Technical Supplements will be prepared as soon as possible.

21 • **Length of the consultation period**

Regulations allow a maximum period of six weeks for formal public consultation on Supplementary Planning Documents. Parish Councils in particular have commented that they find this unsatisfactory.

Officer comment:

Officers are sympathetic with this concern. Although the regulations cannot be disregarded, it is possible to undertake more periods of informal pre-production consultation during the preparation of these documents.

Action:

Timetabling for future SPDs will make allowance for more extensive pre-production consultation.

22 • **Key observations arising from the Sustainability Appraisal**

In November 2006 a Sustainability Appraisal, including a Strategic Environmental Assessment, was undertaken, which concluded that the Design Guide scores very well against most of the sustainability objectives for conserving the National Park. The only negative effect was against the objective to protect geology and geomorphology, because of the need to make use of local stone and slate.

23 The Appraisal shows that the guide is an effective contribution to reducing carbon emissions in the context of the protection afforded by National Park purposes. However, to support this it was considered that more emphasis could be given by designing-in sustainable travel features, such as safe, attractive pedestrian routes, cycle routes, cycle racks and outdoor covered cycle storage, car pool facilities (in larger developments) etc. On a related theme, it is suggested that a note is included to ensure that new developments design-in features to enable home working, eg ICT facilities, as this can play a role in reducing road traffic movements.

24 In terms of the impact on natural resources it was felt that the guide should stress the value of designing-in sustainable drainage features at the beginning of a project.

25 The appraisal reflected on the impact on social and economic well-being. The issue of the cost of materials was considered against the objective to help meet the local need for affordable homes. Although the materials and methods recommended in the guidance can be seen as making the cost of building more expensive, this can also be understood as simply detailing the measures (and therefore costs) already required by the need to adhere to the statutory purposes of National Park designation, and hence to current planning policy. In this view the costs are added by legislation and contextual planning policy, not by the Design Guide itself. The appraisal also reflected on the potential for positive economic impacts as a direct relationship between attractive environment and business viability (as also backed up by a recent CNP study).

Officer comment:

These points add to the sustainability of the document.

Action:

Incorporate amendments to cover the points made.

Resources

26 The preparation and publication of the final document which will contain many more photographs and some illustrations; most of this work will in-house with external assistance as necessary. The consultation process has been supported by Planning Policy Team; finance was secured from Planning Delivery Grant for preparation during 2006-7.

Risk Management

27 Risks identified include:

- Failure to produce upto date design guidance which does not have recognised planning status as SPD would undermine the Authority's ability to apply adopted polices in the Development Plan and emerging Local Development Framework and so detract from its statutory functions. Adoption and publication of the SPD would address this issue, and would form part of a wider corporate guidance on design matters

- Further resource should be considered for preparation of Technical Supplements during 2007 and 2008.

Human Rights, Equalities, Health & Safety

28 There are no issues to highlight.

Consultees

- 29
- All constituent authorities – Government Office for the East Midlands, East Midlands Regional Assembly, County, District, Town/Parish Councils
 - CABE, OPUN
 - Selected agents
 - Attendees at the Design Guide Workshop – Countryside Agency, English Heritage, Derbyshire Constabulary, local agents, Peak District Parish Forum, National Park interest groups
- (A full list of consultees is available on request).

Enclosures

30 Annex – Supplementary Planning Document – Draft Peak District Design Guide with tracked changes.

List of Background Papers (not previously published)

31 None

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33 1 February 2007