

Report

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Report to:	Planning Committee
Date of Meeting:	23 August, 2011
Report by:	Executive Director (Enterprise Resources)

Subject:	South Lanarkshire Local Plan Supplementary Planning Guidance: Residential Design Guide
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1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-

- Inform Committee of the work undertaken to prepare the Supplementary Planning Guidance: Residential Design Guide
- Seek Committee approval for the Supplementary Planning Guidance: Residential Design Guide

2. Recommendation(s)

2.1. The Committee is asked to approve the following recommendation(s):-

- (1) That Committee approve the Supplementary Planning Guidance: Residential Design Guide
- (2) That the Head of Planning and Building Standards Services be authorised to modify the Supplementary Planning Guidance: Residential Design Guide to take account of minor drafting and technical matters.

3 Background

3.1 The Council's original 'Residential Development Guide' was approved by Committee in 1998 and was further revised in 2001. It contains advice and guidance on key development standards for planning applications dealing with new housing development throughout South Lanarkshire. Its aim was to encourage high quality planning application submissions which complied with specified Council development standards. The Guide has been in operation since April 1998 and now requires to be updated and amended in order to take account of new policy guidance which has come into operation at both national and Council level.

3.2 In recent years, The Scottish Government's planning policies and agenda have put increasing emphasis on the importance of creating good quality, sustainable places which improve the quality of the built and natural environment. These policies are set out in the National Planning Framework (NPF), Scottish Planning Policy (SPP), Designing Places and Designing Streets. These in turn are supported by a range of design-based Planning Advice Notes.

3.3 NPF 2 (2009) highlights the importance of place and environmental quality and the need to have planning policies which support and enhance these. It has a key strategic aim of promoting a greener Scotland by contributing to the achievement of climate change targets and protecting and enhancing the quality of the natural and built environments. SPP (2010) states that, with specific reference to housing, that the planning system should enable the development of well designed, energy efficient, good quality housing in sustainable locations.

- 3.4 'Designing Places' (2008) and 'Designing Streets' (2010) are the Scottish Government's two key policy statements on design and place making. Both documents have the status of Scottish Planning Policy and are supported by a range of design-based Planning Advice Notes.
- 3.5 The South Lanarkshire Local Plan (2009) seeks to develop a placemaking approach at the local level. The Local Plan contains a number of detailed policies relevant to design in general and to residential development in particular. Specifically, Policy ENV 31 – New Housing Development, sets out criteria against which residential proposals will be assessed and includes reference to taking account of the Council's supplementary planning guidance on residential development. Whilst the Local Plan design policies provide an appropriate guiding framework, it is recognised that further more detailed guidance is necessary for both Council officers and developers to set out how these policies can be implemented in practice.
- 3.6 The main objectives of the Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) are to encourage an improvement in the quality of the design and layout of new housing developments, to increase awareness of the principles of good design and to provide advice and guidance to developers on the key issues to consider when developing new residential sites. The SPG applies to all scales of development, from single houses to large scale developments.

4 Supplementary Planning Guidance: Residential Design Guide

- 4.1 A draft SPG was subject to a consultation period of 6 weeks, from 4 April to 20 May 2011. There were three responses received from stakeholders, developers and individuals. These comments have been considered and where appropriate, reflected in the final SPG. A background paper to the Committee Report sets out in more detail the Council's response to the comments raised during the consultation period.
- 4.2 The SPG highlights the importance of site analysis and appraisal in developing a design solution for a site, regardless of the number of houses being proposed. An illustrated worked example demonstrates the stages that need to be followed in the design process for a residential development. It illustrates how to analyse a site, identify constraints and opportunities and use these to inform the detailed aspects of design and layout. Each section of the Guide contains a number of 'Prompts' which are key questions that a developer needs to address when working up a design for a site.
- 4.3 As well as describing the process of site analysis, the Guide sets out the importance of taking account of the context of the site and its surroundings, together with the other design principles contained in the document. Although the Guide has an appendix setting out some development standards, the aim is for the applicant to demonstrate that the design process has been followed and that site analysis, context and good design principles have been considered first, rather than simply adopting a strict adherence to fixed standards. Creating sustainable, residential developments which establish a sense of place, respect and respond to local context, are easy to move around in and provide 'quality' rather than 'standards' based solutions are what the Guide seeks to achieve. This would reflect some of the actions described in the Council's current Sustainable Development Strategy and its emerging replacement.
- 4.4 The Council is aware of the effects of the economic downturn on the housebuilding industry and that the advice and guidance contained in this SPG could be viewed as

an additional economic burden. The Scottish Government, the Council's Local Plan and its Sustainable Development Strategy however, all emphasise the need to ensure that good design, that takes account of the principles of sustainability, is incorporated into new residential developments. This SPG, therefore, on the basis that it will be a material consideration in the assessment of planning applications for residential development, can provide guidance for developers and landowners to factor into their financial appraisals at an early stage in the development process.

4.5 The SPG has been available for viewing in Member's areas prior to Committee.

5 Next Steps and Timescales

5.1 Following Committee approval, the Supplementary Planning Guidance: Residential Design Guide will be published. As it was prepared under the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 a further period of public consultation is not required. The SPG will therefore become a material planning consideration in deciding planning applications and appeals with immediate effect.

6 Employee Implications

6.1 There are no implications for staff resources within this Service.

7 Financial Implications

7.1 All publications and staffing costs arising from the recommendations of this report are accounted for within established budgets.

8 Other Implications

8.1 The Supplementary Planning Guidance: Residential Design Guide has been assessed in terms of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 for Strategic Environmental Assessment of Council plans, programmes, policies and strategies. The conclusion of this screening was that an SEA was not required and this was agreed by the Consultation Authorities on 25 April 2011. The South Lanarkshire Local Plan identified the need for Supplementary Planning Guidance on Residential Design Guidance. There would be a reputational risk if this was not undertaken.

9 Equality impact assessment and consultation arrangements

9.1 All new Council policies require to be subject to an equality impact assessment (EqIA). The conclusion of the initial EqIA is that the proposals do not have any adverse impact on any part of the community covered by equalities legislation, or on community relations. Therefore there was no requirement to carry out a full EqIA.

9.2 The Supplementary Planning Guidance: Residential Design Guide will be made available on the Council's web site. Copies will also be available for purchase.

Colin McDowall
Executive Director
(Enterprise Resources)

8 August, 2011

Link(s) to Council Objectives

- Improve the quality of the physical environment

- Improve health and increase physical activity

Previous References

- None.

List of Background Papers

- Supplementary Planning Guidance: Residential Design Guide
- SPG: Residential Design Guide: Consultation Summary and Responses

Contact for Further Information

If you would like to inspect the background papers or want further information, please contact:-

Gordon Cameron, Planning and Building Standards Manager - HQ, Montrose House, Hamilton

Ext: 4294 (Tel: 01698 454294)

E-mail: gordon.cameron@southlanarkshire.gov.uk