

Northumberland Local Plan

Northumberland Design Guide
Supplementary Planning Document
Scoping Document

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1. Introduction

1.1. About this consultation document

- 1.1.1. The Council is going to prepare a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to provide guidance on the design of future development in Northumberland. The Northumberland Design Guide SPD will provide further detail on the planning policies that relate to design quality in the emerging Northumberland Local Plan.
- 1.1.2. This consultation document sets out the Council's initial views on the scope and content of the proposed SPD and is seeking feedback prior to preparing a draft SPD for consultation.

1.2. How to get involved

- 1.2.1. The Council is seeking your comments at this stage in order to consider what level of guidance should be contained in the Northumberland Design Guide SPD. Specific consultation questions have been included within this document to identify the issues that the Council would particularly welcome views on.
- 1.2.2. Consultation on this scoping document is taking place over a six week period between 30 January 2019 and 13 March 2019.
- 1.2.3. Comments in response to the consultation document can be submitted online or by returning a response form by email or by post. The Council is encouraging people to submit their comments online but you may wish to submit comments by completing a response form, which is available from libraries, customer information centres and County Hall or can be downloaded from the Council's website at www.northumberland.gov.uk/localplan. Details of how to respond to the consultation using these methods is provided below:
- 1.2.4. Online: Comments can be submitted via the consultation website at www.northumberland.gov.uk/localplan;
- 1.2.5. Email: planningstrategy@northumberland.gov.uk
- 1.2.6. Post: Planning Policy, Northumberland County Council, County Hall, Morpeth, Northumberland, NE61 2EF.
- 1.2.7. All comments must be received by **5pm on Wednesday 13 March 2019**.

1.3. What is a Supplementary Planning Document?

- 1.3.1. The main purpose of an SPD is to add further detail to specific policies contained within the Development Plan. They do not set or introduce new policy but provide guidance on the interpretation and implementation of the policies. An SPD may

address a particular theme, such as design, or it may provide guidance on the development of a specific site or area.

- 1.3.2. SPDs are prepared by the Council in consultation with the community but are not subject to independent examination in the way that a Development Plan document, such as the Local Plan or a Neighbourhood Plan, would be. The regulatory framework for adopting an SPD is set out in the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.
- 1.3.3. Once adopted, the contents of a SPD are a material consideration when making decisions on planning applications.

2. Policy context

2.1. The National Planning Policy Framework

- 2.1.1. The role of planning in ‘fostering a well-designed and safe built environment’ is enshrined within the objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2018) for achieving sustainable development¹. The NPPF identifies high quality buildings and places to be a fundamental aspect of what the planning process should deliver.
- 2.1.2. Setting clear design expectations is placed at the centre of the ‘achieving well-designed places’ chapter of the NPPF. This is to ensure that applicants have as much certainty as possible about what is likely to be acceptable. The NPPF highlights the importance of making sure that local design expectations set out in policies and guidance are informed by the aspirations of the local community.

2.2. The Northumberland Local Plan

- 2.2.1. The Northumberland Local Plan will be a single new Local Plan for the whole of Northumberland and will replace all of the previous District and County Council Local Plan and Core Strategy documents. Once adopted, the Local Plan will become part of the Development Plan along with Neighbourhood Plans prepared by local communities. The Development Plan forms the statutory framework for future development of land and buildings.
- 2.2.2. The following key policies relevant to the design of development are included within the Quality of Place chapter in the Northumberland Local Plan - Publication Draft Plan (Regulation 19):
- QOP 1 - Design Principles
Overarching policy that sets out the principles which must underpin the design of all new development.
 - QOP 2 - Good Design and Amenity
Policy which seeks to ensure that the design of buildings and places protects and enhances the amenity of people that come into contact with them.
 - QOP 3 - Public Realm Design Principles
Policy which sets out principles that, together with the principles set out in QOP 1, must inform the design of buildings and spaces that are intended to be accessed by the public.

¹ Paragraph 8, National Planning Policy Framework (2018) MHCLG

- QOP 4 - Landscaping and Trees
Policy which seeks to achieve high quality exterior spaces within new development, including the protection of trees as important features within the existing landscape.
- QOP 5 - Sustainable Design and Construction
Policy which focuses on delivering high levels of sustainability in new development, with particular emphasis on effective use of resources and mitigating and adapting to climate change.
- QOP 6 - Delivering Well-Designed Places
Development management policy establishing the requirements of planning processes to ensure good design is delivered.

2.2.3. As design is a cross-cutting theme, the Northumberland Local Plan - Publication Draft Plan (Regulation 19) includes a number of other policies which address the design of new development. Some policies which focus on types of development, for example housing, include requirements around design. Certain policies which address specific social and environmental themes, such as health or climate change, also include requirements to ensure that the design of new development contributes towards achieving positive outcomes.

2.2.4. Transport and highways is a key aspect of the design of new development and policies within the Connectivity and Movement chapter of the document make particular reference to these aspects. The Council is going to prepare a separate Highways and Transportation Design and Delivery SPD which will address design matters relevant to highways and transport. A scoping document for the SPD has been published for consultation alongside this document and can be accessed via the Council's website at www.northumberland.gov.uk/localplan.

3. Role and Scope of the Northumberland Design Guide

3.1. Role of the Northumberland Design Guide SPD

- 3.1.1. The Northumberland Design Guide SPD will provide guidance on how design related policies in the Local Plan should be interpreted and applied. It will be particularly relevant for decision makers, applicants and design professionals involved in planning applications. The guidance within the SPD may also be of interest to local communities, as the design of development can have a significant influence on how people experience the places where they live, work and visit. It is considered that all those involved with or affected by the design of new development should have the opportunity to inform the content of the Northumberland Design Guide SPD.
- 3.1.2. The role of the SPD will be to ensure that clear design expectations are set out for new development in Northumberland. Guidance within the document will also seek to inform the design process and the quality of design information supporting applications for planning permission. It is anticipated that the SPD will help to provide clarity and improve collaboration between all those involved with or affected by the design of new development.
- 3.1.3. Ensuring that new development responds to its context is fundamental to placemaking, not just in terms of how it will integrate with the site but also with the local area and the people that will come into contact with it. Poor design, which does not respond to context, is often the result of standardised building types and layouts which have not grown from or been adapted to the individual context or character of a site. A key aim of the Northumberland Design Guide will be to support designers in terms of responding positively to context and character to ensure that there is a bespoke approach to the design of new development.

3.2. Proposed scope of the Northumberland Design Guide SPD

- 3.2.1. It is proposed that the Northumberland Design SPD should include the following:
- An explanation of how to interpret and apply design principles;
 - Guidance around the design of different types of development;
 - An explanation of what is required of the design process in relation to planning;
 - Guidance around the content and format of design information accompanying planning applications;
 - Tools and checklists to support the design process and help assess design

4. Proposed structure of the Northumberland Design Guide

4.1. The following sets out the suggested structure of the Northumberland Design Guide SPD:

- 1. Introduction**
 - 1.1. Purpose of the SPD
 - 1.2. Status of the document
 - 1.3. Overview of the document structure
- 2. Background**
 - 2.1. The value of design
 - 2.2. Policy context
 - 2.3. Scope of the design guide
- 3. Design Principles**
 - 3.1. Overarching design principles in the Local Plan
 - 3.2. Good design and amenity
 - 3.3. Public Realm design principles
 - 3.4. Landscaping and trees
 - 3.5. Sustainable design and construction
- 4. Applying Design Principles to Different Types of Development**
 - 4.1. Housing design
 - 4.2. Extensions, conversions and alterations
 - 4.3. Town Centres
 - 4.4. Community buildings
 - 4.5. Commercial development
- 5. The Design Process**
 - 5.1. Design and the planning process
 - 5.2. Collaboration and Consultation
 - 5.3. Site analysis
 - 5.4. Concept design
 - 5.5. Design development
 - 5.6. Detailing
 - 5.7. Construction
- 6. Planning Applications**
 - 6.1. Demonstrating approach to design
 - 6.2. Design and Access Statements
 - 6.3. Drawings and models
- 7. Guidance, Tools and Checklists**
 - 7.1. Using guidance, tools and checklists
 - 7.2. Build for life 12
 - 7.3. Accreditation schemes
 - 7.4. Design Review
 - 7.5. Character assessments
 - 7.6. Design codes, frameworks and masterplans
 - 7.7. Other useful guidance, tools and checklists

5. Consultation and Next Steps

5.1. Consultation questions

- 5.1.1. We are seeking responses to the following questions in relation to the Northumberland Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) scoping document:

Question 1

- a. Do you agree with the proposed role of the Northumberland Design Guide SPD as set out in section 3.1 of this document?
- b. Please provide further comment if there is anything you would change in relation to the proposed role of the Northumberland Design Guide SPD.

Question 2

- c. Do you agree with the proposed scope of the Northumberland Design Guide SPD as set out in section 3.2 of this document?
- d. Please provide further comment if there is anything you would change in relation to the proposed scope of the Northumberland Design Guide SPD.

Question 3

- e. Do you agree with the proposed structure of the Northumberland Design Guide SPD as set out in section 4 of this document?
- f. Please provide further comment if there is anything you would change in relation to the proposed structure of the Northumberland Design Guide SPD.

5.2. Next Steps

- 5.2.1. Following the consultation on this document, a draft Northumberland Design Guide SPD will be prepared. The feedback received from the consultation on this scoping document will be used to help inform the contents of the draft document.
- 5.2.2. The draft Northumberland Design Guide SPD will be published for public consultation and feedback will be used to help finalise the SPD. The Council will then adopt the SPD and it will become a material consideration in reaching decisions on planning applications.
- 5.2.3. A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) screening will be carried out prior to a consultation on the draft Northumberland Design Guide SPD to determine if there is a need to carry out an SEA. SPDs do not normally require Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) except in exceptional circumstances where there are likely to be significant environmental effects that have not already been

assessed during the preparation of the Local Plan. The Council will consult the environmental assessment consultation bodies on the result of the SEA screening and will make this information available during consultation on the draft SPD.

- 5.2.4. A full timetable will be identified for the preparation of this SPD following an analysis of the feedback from the consultation on this scoping document.



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