

**WILTSHIRE COUNCIL**

**SOUTHERN AREA PLANNING COMMITTEE**

**25 July 2013**

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**IDMISTON, PORTON AND GOMELDON VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT**

**Purpose of Report**

1. To consider the contents of, and approve as material planning consideration, the following Village Design Statement (VDS) for Idmiston Parish.

A copy of the VDS is attached at **Appendix 1**.

**Background**

2. In 1996 the Countryside Commission (now Natural England) launched the 'Design in the Countryside' initiative, and produced advisory packs to help villages understand the concept, process and method of producing a VDS.
3. VDSs are prepared by local communities. They offer a framework for engaging local people in constructive debate about defining the special character of their village, as a basis for ensuring that new development in their area fits its surroundings and is in keeping with that character. The VDS can help everyone involved in a development to understand local views and perceptions at the outset of the design process.
4. This helps new buildings to be designed in a way that is more likely to gain local support, rather than generate opposition. VDSs provide a tool to help manage long-term change, not prevent it.
5. A VDS contains a descriptive analysis of the relationship between landscape, settlement patterns and buildings. From the survey analysis, the VDS identifies principles to be applied to new developments such as the design of buildings and the spaces between them. The document should benefit local people, developers, new occupants and planners.
6. The Localism Act has provided a renewed impetus to community-led planning and documents such as VDSs play an important part in helping to deliver the Government's Localism agenda.
7. This paper considers and assesses three VDS, all of which fall within southern Wiltshire. The statutory development plan for south Wiltshire is the South Wiltshire Core Strategy which was adopted in February 2012. This includes

saved Local Plan policies and provides the policy context for considering development within the villages in south Wiltshire.

### **Village Design Statement Protocol**

8. The Council's approach towards endorsing VDSs is to approve them as material planning considerations in the consideration of planning applications. The rationale for this is set out in the Council's Village Design Statement Protocol attached at **Appendix 2**.
9. The Protocol also sets out the validation checklist that will be used to appraise each VDS to ensure it is fit for purpose and appropriate for the Council to approve as a material planning consideration. This checklist is based on the Countryside Commission's (now Natural England) advisory guidance referred to above and is set out in brief below:

Does the VDS:

- describe the distinctive character of the village and the surrounding countryside;
- show how character can be identified at three levels:
  - the landscape setting of the village,
  - the shape of the settlement,
  - the nature of the buildings themselves;
- draw up design principles based on the distinctive local character.

Has the process of developing the Village Design Guidance met the following objectives:

- worked in partnership with the local planning authority in the context of existing local planning policy and to influence future policies;
- been developed, researched, written and edited by local people? Is it representative of the views of the village as a whole? Has the process involved a wide section of the village community in its production?

### **Summary of Appraisal**

10. The VDS has been appraised against each of these objectives and the detailed results of the assessment are presented in the template at **Appendix 3**.
11. To summarise, the document provides a comprehensive description of the villages in question and its environs, and identifies its key characteristics. It provides clear guidance to developers as to what should be respected and acknowledged by new buildings in order to help preserve the local scene. Good use of pictorial evidence has been used. Therefore, the Idmiston, Porton and Gomeldon VDS is considered to be fit for purpose.

## **Legal Implications**

12. No implications other than as already explained in this report. Once a Village Design Guidance has been approved by Committee, full regard must be had to its content in decision making.

## **Conclusions**

13. It is considered that the Idmiston, Porton and Gomeldon VDS is fit for purpose and should be approved as material planning consideration.

## **Recommendations**

17. It is recommended that the Village Design Statement for Idmiston, Porton and Gomeldon be approved as a material planning consideration for the purposes of development management.

## **ALISTAIR CUNNINGHAM**

Service Director, Economy and Regeneration

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**The following unpublished documents have been relied on in the preparation of this report:**

None

## **Appendices:**

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| Appendix 1: | Idmiston Village Design Statement.                     |
| Appendix 2: | Village Design Statement Protocol                      |
| Appendix 3: | Idmiston Village Design Statement Validation Checklist |