

REPORT FOR EASTERN AREA PLANNING COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	1 st December 2022
Proposal	Chute Design Guide
Applicant	
Parish Council	Chute Parish Council and Chute Forest Parish Council
Electoral Division	
Type of application	
Officer	Mike Kilmister

Reason for the Village Design Statement being considered by Committee

The council's constitution sets out that one of the roles of the area committees is:

“To consider matters of local importance within the area such as:

- Village design statements and parish plans where Council approval is required for them to be considered as material considerations in dealing with planning applications.”

Purpose of Report

1. To seek Committee approval for the revised Village Design Statement (VDS) known as the Chute Design Guide for The Chutes, to enable the Design Guide to be treated as a material consideration when determining planning applications.:

A copy of the VDS is presented in Appendix 1.

Below is a location map that shows the context of the area covered by 'The Chutes'.



The original village design statement (VDS) was prepared under the old Kennet Local Plan in 2006 and whilst still relevant, the community have found that it has not had the anticipated success in defending the design quality of the Chutes. The Parish Council are looking at a refresh of the VDS to bring it up to date and make a more meaningful document.

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. A 'Statement of Community Involvement' is presented in Appendix 2 which shows how the parishes engaged with their local communities in producing the design guide.
4. The VDS can help everyone involved in development to understand local views and perceptions at the outset of the design process. 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 2011 provided a renewed impetus to community-led planning and documents such as VDSs to play an important part in helping to deliver the Government's Localism agenda.
7. This paper considers and assesses the Chute Design Guide, which is situated in the eastern part of Wiltshire. The statutory development plan is the Wiltshire Core Strategy adopted in January 2015 (WCS) which includes the saved policies of the Kennet District Local Plan 2011 providing the policy context for considering development for villages in the eastern part of Wiltshire.
8. Chute and Chute Forest Councils do not wish to undertake the process of producing a neighbourhood plan which has advantages over a village design guide in that once approved at a referendum it attains the same legal status as a local plan (and other documents that form part of the statutory development plan). The policies within a neighbourhood plan sit alongside the policies within the Local Plan in decision making. A village design statement focuses solely on design issues and are essentially guidance documents for developers and individuals that encourage good design to enhance and protect the local area without preventing growth. Village design statements do not determine or detail what type of development can occur and where it should go.

Village Design Statement Protocol

9. Once the Chute Design Guide is approved, it will become a material planning consideration in the consideration of planning applications. The rationale for this is set out in the council's Village Design Statement Protocol presented in Appendix 3.
- 10.. The Protocol also sets out the validation checklist that is used to appraise the Chute Design Guide 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's) advisory guidance referred to above and is set out in brief below:

Does the Chute Design Guide:

- 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

11. The Chute Design Guide has been appraised against each of these objectives and the detailed results of the VDS assessment is presented in Appendix 4.
12. To summarise the Chute Design Guide provides a comprehensive description of the Chutes and their environs. Throughout the Chute Design Guide, a detailed description of the local character is provided, and design principles are provided throughout the document based on this character.
13. Wiltshire Council's Urban Design and Development Management services have been consulted on the Chute Design Guide and have raised no concerns to its approval and use in the planning process.

Safeguarding Considerations

14. There are no known implications at this time.

Public Health Implications

15. There are no public health implications.

Environmental Impact of the Recommendation

16. The Chute Design Guide provides design guidance to help inform the determination of planning applications in The Chutes.

Risk Assessment

17. There are no key risks identified in relation to the decision being considered.

Financial Implications

18. There are no financial implications to the Council at this time.

Options Considered

19. Approval of the Chute Design Guide by committee gives the document weight in decision making. It will complement existing planning policy and guidance, strengthening the Council's position when advising or negotiating on design and allows local views to be taken into consideration early in the process.

Legal Implications

20. Once a VDS has been approved by Committee, full regard must be had to its content in decision making.

Conclusion

21. It is considered that the Chute Design Guide complies with the Council's village design statement protocol and should be approved as a material consideration to inform decisions on planning applications.

Recommendation

22. It is recommended that the Chute Design Guide for The Chutes be approved as a material planning consideration for the purposes of development management in their decision making.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Chute Design Guide (October 2022)

Appendix 2: Statement of Community Involvement

Appendix 3: Village Design Statement Protocol

Appendix 4: Village Design Statement Validation Checklists for 'The Chutes'