

Update on Draft Wiltshire Design Guide

Briefing Note No. 23 – 19

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We wanted to provide you with an update on our work to formally introduce a design guide for the county. If adopted, it will help to ensure that future developments in the county are consistently of a high quality-design.

What is the draft Wiltshire Design Guide?

The draft Wiltshire Design Guide (WDG) has been structured around the '10 characteristics of good design', as described in the National Design Guide, and if adopted will be used as a supplementary planning document.

The process of creating the draft WDG has been based around the following objectives:

- To comply with a national government directive to produce up-to-date local design guidance that addresses local priorities and preferences.
- To ensure that the WDG advances the delivery of the council's Business Plan objectives and the Core Strategy in particular Core Policy 57.
- To ensure the WDG is not singularly focused on the appearance of new buildings and addresses all 10 characteristics of good design, as described in the National Design Guide. In doing so it will provide the framework for any additional local design guidance that may be produced as part of Neighbourhood Planning or through Village Design Statements.
- To create a more detailed level of good practice guidance than currently exists at a national level. This will ensure all Wiltshire is covered by comprehensive, local design guidance, which will have material weight when considering planning applications.
- To ensure the text and presentation of the WDG is clear, engaging and of practical use to a wide audience, ranging from members of the public to developers and designers.
- To create a document that developers can use to make more informed, early decisions when planning projects before they engage with the planning authority through a formal planning application process.
- To formally adopt the guidance as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), to ensure it has proper weight in planning and that this weight is publicly recognised.

The role of Neighbourhood Plans and Village Design Statements will remain important. These shall continue to incorporate design guidance that relates to specific neighbourhoods or sites and that cannot be covered in the county-wide WDG.

Consultation

On 2 May 2023 Wiltshire Council's Cabinet approved the Wiltshire Design Guide for public consultation and to delegate to the Corporate Director Place in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance, Development Management and Strategic Planning, to finalise subsequent matters as required and take all necessary steps.

The statutory consultation gets under way from 3 July and will run for four weeks closing at 23:59 on 30 July. An official notice has been published in the local press, and the consultation will be regularly promoted through the council's communication channels for the duration of the consultation period.

The council will also be hosting an information webinar to talk about the draft WDG in more detail. The hour-long webinar, which is open to all, will take place at 6:30pm on 19 July and we'll share more information on that nearer the time. In addition, on 26 July from 10am- 5:30pm an Urban Designer will be available in-person to answer any questions at County Hall, Trowbridge.

Hard copies have been made available for reference in libraries.

Your role

We'd be grateful if you could share details about the consultation with any community members and local networks that you feel would like to participate. Thank you for your support.

Next steps

It is anticipated that following the period of public consultation the WDG will be brought back to Cabinet in due course with a view to being formally adopted.

More information

If you would like more information about the draft WDG or would like clarification, please contact designguideconsult@wiltshire.gov.uk

More information and the online survey will be available on the Wiltshire Council website at: www.wiltshire.gov.uk/article/6110/Wiltshire-Design-Guide.