

# Planning & Economic Development Overview and Scrutiny Panel

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## REPORT

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### **Sustainable Development: Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG)**

#### **1. Report Summary:**

A working group led by Forward Planning prepared a draft Sustainable Development SPG last Autumn designed to promote sustainable development objectives in new developments in the district. The guidance was published for an 8 week consultation period (which closed on January 13<sup>th</sup>) and responses have now been considered and amendments made where appropriate. This report summarises the results of the consultation and presents the amended document for adoption as Supplementary Planning Guidance.

#### **2. Background**

The guidance includes an introduction to the issues of sustainability (balancing the needs of economic, social and environmental priorities) and provides a methodology for applicants to demonstrate how their proposals reflect these objectives. It can also be used by Parish Councils, members and officers to help assess whether development schemes have met the sustainability requirements of the adopted Local Plan.

Once adopted, the guidance would supplement policies G1 and G2 of the adopted Salisbury District Local Plan. Whilst the assessment method provided with the guidance would not be mandatory, an applicant could use it to demonstrate to the Council that their proposal is in accordance with sustainable development objectives. Any refusals of applications on grounds of sustainability would continue to be under the policies of the Local Plan. It is hoped that this guidance would also help raise awareness of the issues so that applicants could address sustainability through the design of their development schemes at the earliest stages.

It is proposed that the guidance is made widely available, through both hard copies and on the Council website, and by including it with all application packs for minor applications that do not fall into the “fast-track” category. The guidance explains that Major applications would be expected to address sustainability issues in greater detail e.g. through a statement of sustainability in a Design Code.

#### **3. Summary of consultation responses**

The main points to arise from the consultation exercise were:

- nearly all respondents supported the principle of the document

- several respondents requested that the document be simplified to make it more user friendly, therefore, efforts have been made to reduce the amount of technical language and make the assessment more concise and more straight forward to use
- some respondents welcomed the guidance but wanted it to go further than it does in committing developers to sustainable development. Whilst it is a longer term aim to require higher standards of sustainable design (in accordance with national planning policy), this guidance represents the first step in this process and cannot introduce anything new to the adopted Local Plan policies. If adopted, Forward Planning intends to monitor the use of this guidance to assess whether or not it serves to help applicants in addressing sustainability issues. The results of this monitoring would then feed into the review of planning policies as part of the implementation of the new Local Development Framework.

A summary of all the responses received is attached with this report and outlines the amendments that have been made.

Overall, whilst some amendments are considered appropriate, there appears to be no need to make fundamental changes to the version that was published for consultation.

#### 4. **Recommendation:**

**That members note the summary of consultation responses and the proposed amendments to the guidance, and recommend it be adopted by Cabinet as Supplementary Planning Guidance.**

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#### **Background Papers:**

None.

#### **Implications:**

- **Financial:** no comments
- **Legal:** no comments
- **Environmental Health:** no comments
- **Human Rights:** no comments
- **Community Safety:** community safety issues covered in point 15. No other comments
- **Council's Core Values:** Excellent service, thriving economy, fairness & equality, willing partner, communicating with the public, protecting the environment.
- **Ward(s) Affected:** All

### Achieving Sustainable Development – consultation responses and proposed amendments (March 2005)

	<b>Respondent</b>	<b>Comments</b>	<b>Proposed amendments</b>
1.	Hindon Parish Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In support of guidance but wish it to be reduced to no more than two A4 pages to make it quicker to use</li> <li>much of it is irrelevant to modifications and extensions to existing properties so will have limited use for them</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>efforts have been made to reduce the amount of text and simplify the language to make it more user friendly</li> </ul>
2.	Teffont Parish Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>in support of the guidance</li> <li>would like to see a copy of the checklist included with every application they are determining</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>it is proposed to include a copy of the guidance with every minor application that is not “fast track” (i.e. not household extensions, conservatories etc)</li> </ul>
3.	Michael Drury Architects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>support the document and think it is clear and fairly comprehensive</li> <li>believe guidance on sustainability is long overdue and will help move things in the right direction and encourage all parties to consider these important issues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>no change</li> </ul>
4.	Student, Surrey University	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>making objection to Stonehenge visitor centre proposal</li> <li>objections relate to the Stonehenge project rather than this draft guidance therefore not relevant to this consultation?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>no change</li> </ul>
5.	Durrington Parish Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>in support of guidance</li> <li>ask if the issue of affordable housing could be included to encourage local people to have first choice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>question 23 has been added to ask whether any affordable housing for local people will be provided by the proposed development</li> </ul>
6.	English Nature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>in support of the guidance</li> <li>Point 4 should include specific mention of designated sites and protected species as ‘material considerations’ in planning applications. EN would want to see how wildlife enhancements or mitigation measures have been considered</li> <li>should include reference to assessing existing buildings for wildlife such as bats and barn owls</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>there is now direct reference to protected species and assessment of wildlife including in any existing buildings on the site (question 3)</li> </ul>
7.	Berwick St James Parish Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>in general support of the guidance</li> <li>need to explain what “live/work provision” means and explain what “Information &amp; Communication Technologies” are</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>have reworded the reference to live/work provision and Information and Communication Technology (see question 13)</li> <li>none of the questions will allow an application</li> </ul>

	<b>Respondent</b>	<b>Comments</b>	<b>Proposed amendments</b>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• don't think that point 10 is relevant as the council can't refuse permission based on the materials used</li> <li>• question the relevance of point 12 (domestic recycling) as the council doesn't provide enough collections of recyclables</li> <li>• object to the use of the phrase "informed the development design" as too jargonistic</li> <li>• point 20 – suggest adding in the word "make" to read "make contributions to recreation space"</li> </ul>	<p>to be refused in its own right; the purpose of the guidance is simply to give an opportunity for applicants to demonstrate that their proposal is sustainable and therefore in general accordance with the sustainability objectives of the Local Plan; determination of applications will continue to be based on planning policies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• have removed most 'jargonistic terms' although the subject matter does require a degree of technical detail</li> <li>• point 20 has been rewritten and question 22 now includes "make contributions to public recreation space"</li> </ul>
8.	West Tisbury Parish Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• in support of the guidance</li> <li>• concern that whilst it will raise the profile of sustainable development, environmental objectives will still often be compromised by other economic and political priorities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• no change</li> <li>• applications will not be able to be determined on the strength of this document, but it is hoped that it will help officers, members and applicants to assess whether or not proposals will achieve the general objective of sustainable development which underpins the Local Plan and national planning policy. The guidance will hopefully serve to clarify what issues should be considered when thinking about sustainability</li> </ul>
9.	Ansty Parish Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• neither support or object</li> <li>• unlikely to be used regularly in a village with so few planning applications and most of the issues are dealt with already</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• no change</li> <li>• the assessment will not be mandatory but will be available for any applicant to assist their application therefore there is no onus on the Parish Council to use this assessment if they do not think it is helpful.</li> </ul>
10.	Shrewton Parish Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• in support of the guidance</li> <li>• find it a helpful checklist and hope that a copy will be included with each application that they determine</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• no change</li> <li>• it is proposed that the document will be included with all Minor (excluding fast track) applications</li> </ul>

	<b>Respondent</b>	<b>Comments</b>	<b>Proposed amendments</b>
11.	Whiteparish Parish Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>in support of the guidance</li> <li>consider it a step in the right direction although is not “all-embracing”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>no change</li> <li>in an effort to keep the guidance down to a user friendly scale, it is not possible to cover every detailed aspect of what is essentially an all-embracing subject; this guidance is designed to help monitor how sustainability issues are generally featuring in development schemes and whether there is need for more stringent sustainability policies in the new Local Development Framework</li> </ul>
12.	Southern Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>in general support of the guidance</li> <li>request amendment to point 5 to read: How will site drainage be managed – has flood risk been considered and how will surface run-off be handled? <i>What arrangements are in place to establish legal ownership and responsibility for long-term maintenance?</i></li> <li>request amendment to point 6: Are there potential pollution hazards <i>on the site or adjacent to it?</i> How will these hazards be managed or avoided?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>question 4 now covers site drainage whilst question 5 has been added to ask about the legal responsibility for upkeep of the drainage</li> <li>the question regarding pollution hazards has been amended to include off-site hazards plus a couple of examples of what these could be (see question 7)</li> </ul>
13.	Tollard Royal Parish Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In support of the guidance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No change</li> </ul>
14.	Laverstock & Ford Parish Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>in support of the guidance</li> <li>consider it a necessary document clear presentation and sufficient detail</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No change</li> </ul>
15.	West Dean Parish Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In general support of the guidance</li> <li>feel that the form is comprehensive and the additional information will assist their decisions</li> <li>hope that the “not applicable” option will not be over used</li> <li>would like a question asking “why is the development needed and for what uses?”</li> <li>Question 9 could include reference to: “insulation, solar power, energy efficient boilers for oil and gas”</li> <li>Question 20 could include reference to “provision, restoration or enhancement of wildlife habitats”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a question has been added specifically referring to renewable energy (Q11)</li> <li>question 22 includes improvement of the local environment as a community benefit</li> <li>sustainability of a business should not be confused with sustainability of the design of the development; a sustainable building should be capable of being adapted to meet changing demands and users</li> </ul>

	<b>Respondent</b>	<b>Comments</b>	<b>Proposed amendments</b>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• applications for commercial development should have to demonstrate sustainability of the business i.e. account for past 5 years minimum</li> </ul>	
16.	The Countryside Agency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• in general support of the guidance</li> <li>• concerned that despite applying to smaller developments, applicants should have consideration of the landscape impact of their development. There should be reference to various websites that offer landscape assessment advice and the Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) methodology</li> <li>• will the guidance be adopted as SPG or SPD?</li> <li>• para. 10 should ensure reused materials are responsibly sourced i.e not illegally salvaged from local vernacular buildings</li> <li>• para.11 should ask for certification of local materials</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• question 6 now covers landscape designations and how they have affected the proposed design</li> <li>• the Countryside Agency’s website has been added to the list of further information sources (back page)</li> <li>• the guidance is intended to be adopted as SPG as it relates to policies of the existing Local Plan and the intention is to update this guidance as soon as policies G1 and G2 are reviewed as part of the implementation of the Local Development Framework</li> <li>• question 8 covers local materials and would allow the applicant to provide certification if they have it, but at the application stage it may be unreasonable to demand certification of suppliers – this could potentially be done by condition of any planning consent</li> </ul>
17.	Mere Parish Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• in general support of the guidance</li> <li>• request direct reference to “Parish Plans” in question 18</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parish Plans are now mentioned in Question 20 regarding taking consideration of the local environment and character of the community</li> </ul>
18.	Pegasus Planning Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• support the principle of the guidance but have observations about its content</li> <li>• “document is a fairly onerous task to complete” and is not a mandatory part of an application therefore likely to be ignored</li> <li>• is not user friendly and “is not actually a checklist” but a list of questions – needs a “yes” or “no” tick-box system with space to provide explanatory detail if necessary</li> <li>• question 1 should simply ask whether overshadowing is an issue rather than ask how the issue has been addressed</li> <li>• feel it needs emphasising that not all questions/issues may</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the assessment will not be a mandatory part of the application as sustainability issues should be addressed in any case through the requirements of the Local Plan (especially policies G1 and G2); this document simply provides one method for demonstrating how it is proposed that these sustainability objectives will be achieved</li> <li>• the document has been re-branded to reflect it is an assessment method/questionnaire rather than a prescriptive checklist</li> <li>• the language has been simplified where</li> </ul>

	<b>Respondent</b>	<b>Comments</b>	<b>Proposed amendments</b>
		<p>be relevant to an application</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>terminology is of an overly “technical nature” and therefore not user friendly for the public e.g. phrases like “surface runoff”, “information and communication technology”, and “rainwater harvesting”, “community area plans” and “village design statements”</li> <li>use of clear English would encourage more positive responses and be more attractive to use thereby raising more awareness of the issues</li> </ul>	<p>possible, although some technical language is inevitable – whilst this is a public document it is expected that it will be used by architects and parish/district councillors with knowledge of the planning system and the basic terms used; it is also clear that support in using the guidance is available from the planning department</p>
19.	Downton Parish Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>consider it a duplication of other sources and full of “meaningless jargon” and “symptomatic of the way things are progressing – more paper and less service”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No change</li> <li>the growing support for sustainable development by SDC Members and experience within the planning department suggest such guidance would be a valuable addition to the Local Plan rather than a duplication; the guidance is also designed to test how well these issues are being considered in planning proposals and whether or not there is a need for more prescriptive sustainability policies in the emerging Local Development Framework</li> </ul>