



South  
Cambridgeshire  
District Council

Local Development Framework

# District Design Guide: High Quality and Sustainable Development in South Cambridgeshire

Supplementary Planning Document



Adopted March 2010

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Local Development Framework

**District Design Guide:**  
High Quality and Sustainable Development in  
South Cambridgeshire

Supplementary Planning Document

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION TO THE SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT

- 1.1 This South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC) District Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) forms part of the South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework (LDF).
- 1.2 The SPD expands on district-wide policies in the Development Control Policies Development Plan Document (DPD), adopted in July 2007, and policies in individual Area Action Plans for major developments that may vary from the district-wide policies. It provides additional details on how they will be implemented. Policies seek to ensure that design is an integral part of the development process.
- 1.3 The SPD builds on national policy in Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 1: Delivering Sustainable Development, and Planning and Climate Change – Supplement to PPS1. These promote sustainable, well-designed development to achieve a high quality built and natural environment. Achieving good design and sustainable development are the core principles underlying planning. At the heart of sustainable development is the simple idea of ensuring a better quality of life for everyone, now and for future generations.
- 1.4 “We cannot afford not to invest in good design. Good design is not just about aesthetic improvement of our environment, it is as much about improved quality of life, equality of opportunity and economic growth. If we want to be a successful and sustainable society we have to overcome our ignorance of design and depart from our culturally ingrained notion that a poor quality environment is the norm... Good design does not cost more when measured across the lifetime of the building or place.” (CABE, The Value of Good Design, 2002)

#### PURPOSE

- 1.5 The purpose of this District Design Guide is to ensure delivery of sensitively and appropriately designed, sustainable developments. This document sets out important design principles based on recognised good practice and explains key requirements of the District Council that will be taken into account when considering planning proposals. It is not a ‘recipe book’ of design solutions.
- 1.6 The Guide deals with different types of development including: creating new towns, extending Cambridge and adding to villages; large scale projects and extensions to existing buildings; mixed use schemes, large business

structures and infill housing. Many of the design principles are common to all but some apply particularly to one type of development.

- 1.7 The Guide covers and links to a range of subjects which are integral to good quality and sustainable design such as building regulations, environmental health and renewable energy.
- 1.8 The Supplementary Planning Document provides additional advice and guidance on design and achieving sustainable development and expands on the policies set out in the Local Development Framework, in particular Development Control Policies DPD Policies DP/1 and DP/2.
- 1.9 Specific objectives of this document are to:
  - Assist applicants in the achievement of an attractive, sustainable, well-designed, high quality environment that integrates housing, employment and community uses, together with infrastructure and green areas in conjunction with the surrounding landscape.
  - Assist applicants' understanding of the local context, help identify features of importance, and ensure that proposals are appropriately designed to be compatible with their surroundings.
  - Assist applicants gain planning permission quickly by informing them what information is required to accompany planning applications to justify their proposals and demonstrate what impact they would have.

## **SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE LDF POLICY**

- 1.10 Achieving sustainable development is at the heart of planning, and will be controlled by the following policy in the Development Control Policies DPD:

### **SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

#### **POLICY DP/1 Sustainable Development**

- 1. Development will only be permitted where it is demonstrated that it is consistent with the principles of sustainable development, as appropriate to its location, scale and form. It should:**
  - a. Be consistent with the sequential approach to development, as set out in the Strategy chapter of the Core Strategy DPD;**
  - b. Minimise the need to travel and reduce car dependency;**

- c. Make efficient and effective use of land by giving priority to the use of brownfield sites and achieve adaptable, compact forms of development through the use of higher densities;**
- d. Include mixed-use development of compatible uses as appropriate to the scale and location of the development;**
- e. Where practicable, use sustainable building methods and verifiably sustainable, locally sourced materials, including recycled materials, and include a Travel Plan to address the travel needs of labour during construction;**
- f. Where practicable, minimise use of energy and resources;**
- g. Where practicable, maximise the use of renewable energy sources;**
- h. Incorporate water conservation measures;**
- i. Minimise flood risk;**
- j. Where practicable, use sustainable drainage systems (SuDS);**
- k. Mitigate against the impacts of climate change on development through the location, form and design of buildings;**
- l. Ensure no unacceptable adverse impact on land, air and water;**
- m. Contribute to the creation of mixed and socially inclusive communities and provide for the health, education, recreation, community services and facilities, and social needs of all sections of the community;**
- n. Where practicable, include infrastructure for modern telecommunications and information technology to facilitate home working;**
- o. Conserve and wherever possible enhance biodiversity of both wildlife and the natural environment;**
- p. Conserve and wherever possible enhance local landscape character;**

- q. **Involve community and providers of community services in the design process;**
  - r. **Conserve and wherever possible enhance cultural heritage.**
- 2. **In criteria e, f, g, j and n it will be for any applicant or developer proposing to compromise sustainability to demonstrate the impracticability of use of sustainable methods, systems, materials and energy sources and provision of sustainable infrastructure. Additional cost will not, on its own, amount to impracticability.**
  - 3. **For major developments, applicants must submit a Sustainability Statement and a Health Impact Assessment, to demonstrate that principles of sustainable development have been applied.**
- 1.11 The design of new development will be controlled by the following policy in the Development Control Policies DPD:

## **DESIGN OF NEW DEVELOPMENT**

### **POLICY DP/2 Design of New Development**

#### **New Development Design**

- 1. **All new development must be of high quality design and, as appropriate to the scale and nature of the development, should:**
  - a. **Preserve or enhance the character of the local area;**
  - b. **Conserve or enhance important environmental assets of the site;**
  - c. **Include variety and interest within a coherent design, which is legible and provides a sense of place whilst also responding to the local context and respecting local distinctiveness;**
  - d. **Achieve a legible development, which includes streets, squares and other public spaces with a defined sense of enclosure and interesting vistas, skylines, focal points and landmarks, with good interrelationship between buildings, routes and spaces both within the development and with the surrounding area;**
  - e. **Achieve a permeable development for all sectors of the community and all modes of transport, including links to**

existing footways, cycleways, bridleways, rights of way, green spaces and roads;

- f. Be compatible with its location and appropriate in terms of scale, mass, form, siting, design, proportion, materials, texture and colour in relation to the surrounding area;
- g. In the case of residential development, provide higher residential densities, and a mix of housing types including smaller homes;
- h. Provide high quality public spaces;
- i. Provide an inclusive environment that is created for people, that is and feels safe, and that has a strong community focus;
- j. Include high quality landscaping compatible with the scale and character of the development and its surroundings.

#### **Design and Access Statements**

- 2. **Design and Access Statements submitted to accompany planning applications and applications for listed building consent should be compatible with the scale and complexity of the proposal and, as appropriate should include:**
  - k. A full site analysis of existing features and designations;
  - l. An accurate site survey including landscape features and site levels;
  - m. The relationship of the site to its surroundings;
  - n. Existing accesses for pedestrians, cyclists, equestrians and vehicles;
  - o. Any known historic importance;
  - p. Opportunities for maximising energy efficiency and addressing water and drainage issues.
- 3. **The Access element of the Statement should demonstrate that the development will achieve an inclusive environment that can be used by everyone, regardless of age, gender or disability. It should also address how the development has taken account of the transport policies of the development plan.**

- 1.12 All new development will have an impact on its surroundings. The aim must be that any development, from a major urban extension to Cambridge to an extension to an existing home, takes all proper care to respond to its surroundings, including existing buildings, open spaces and village edges, and ensure an integrated scheme that does not harm local amenity and wherever possible, brings benefits to the area.
- 1.13 A fully integrated and responsive design-led approach to development is therefore needed. For all development, a design-led approach will ensure that every proposal, whatever its scale, responds positively to the particular characteristics of a site and its surroundings and reinforces local distinctiveness.
- 1.14 The location and design of development should contribute to global sustainability by addressing the causes and potential impacts of climate change, through reducing energy use, reducing emissions, promote renewable energy resources, and take climate change impacts into account, according to Key Principle ii in PPS1.
- 1.15 There are a number of documents, covering sustainability and design issues, produced by the Council or its partners that form a material planning consideration when determining planning applications. These include other SPDs, for example on Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings, Village Design Statements and Conservation Area Appraisals. Many of these set out particular local characteristics that should be protected or enhanced. Appendix 2 references useful sources of further information.
- 1.16 The SPD is divided into three sections:
- **Part I Local Context** - describes the characteristics of South Cambridgeshire and how these should influence the design of new development.
  - **Part II Design Principles and Criteria** – covers general approaches to design, appreciating and responding to context, different locations, types and scales of development, and the elements of design. It also outlines how design should deal with environmental sustainability, biodiversity and environmental health issues, and national legislation and standards.
  - **Part III Procedures and Applications** – describes the documentation, such as site appraisals, concept diagrams and design and access statements, that is likely to be needed to show the design process and explain and support proposals and planning applications.

The SPD includes a number of Appendices, including useful contacts, addresses, and reference material, as well as further detail on a number of issues covered within the SPD.



## PART I

### LOCAL CONTEXT



