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Meeting	Cabinet
Date	18 April 2013
<b>Subject</b>	<b>Barnet's Local Plan – Residential Design Guidance Supplementary Planning Document - Adoption</b>
Report of	Cabinet Member for Planning and Regulatory Services
Summary	<p>The Local Plan is one of the most important statutory plans in Barnet. The Residential Design Guidance Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) implements the policies contained in the Local Plan Core Strategy and Development Management Policies documents.</p> <p>This SPD sets out an approach to housing design that is sensitive to and reflects Barnet's suburban character. The SPD replaces Design Guidance Notes on Residential Conversions (1994), Porches (1995), Extensions (2010) and on Hardstandings and Vehicular Crossovers (2011).</p>

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Officer Contributors	Assistant Director – Strategic Planning & Regeneration Principal Planner (Policy)
Status (public or exempt)	Public
Wards Affected	All
Key Decision	Yes
Reason for urgency / exemption from call-in	Not applicable
Function of	
Enclosures	Appendix A: Residential Design Guidance SPD Appendix B: Schedule of consultation responses
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## **1. RECOMMENDATION**

- 1.1 That Cabinet approve the Residential Design Guidance Supplementary Planning Document (attached at Appendix A) for adoption.**

## **2. RELEVANT PREVIOUS DECISIONS**

- 2.1 On 6 September 2010 Cabinet (Decision item 8) approved the draft of the Local Development Scheme (LDS). In May 2011, the delegated Cabinet Member for Housing, Planning and Regeneration (now Cabinet Member for Planning) approved the changes to the document prior to its submission to the Mayor of London and Secretary of State and adoption on 18 July 2011.
- 2.2 On 17 July 2012 Cabinet (Decision item 9), followed by full Council (11 September 2012, item 4.1) approved the formal adoption of the Local Plan Core Strategy and Development Management Policies documents.
- 2.3 On 26 October 2012 the Cabinet Member for Planning approved a Delegated Powers Report (Report number 1838) authorising eight weeks consultation on the draft Residential Design Guidance SPD.

## **3. CORPORATE PRIORITIES AND POLICY CONSIDERATIONS**

- 3.1 All three priorities in the Corporate Plan 2012 -2013 are embedded within the Residential Design Guidance SPD.

In providing better services with less money it ensures that :

- clear, concise and up-to-date guidance on housing design relevant to Barnet is set out in one document rather than a suite of documents.

In sharing opportunities and sharing responsibilities it ensures that :

- by meeting Building for Life criteria new housing is designed to help residents lead healthy and independent lives.

In enabling Barnet to continue to be a Successful London Suburb it ensures that:

- development respects local context and distinctive local character so that it can protect and enhance our suburban environment.

## **4. RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES**

- 4.1 The SPD incorporates and updates the content of a number of Design Guidance Notes (DGNs) dating back to 1994. The updates and clarifications reflect changes at a national, London Plan and Local Plan level. The absence of updated guidance weakens the council's ability to justify and defend planning decisions including at appeal.
- 4.2 The SPD forms an important delivery mechanism for the Local Plan Core Strategy. Failure to publish the SPD, will undermine delivery of key planning

objectives including the protection and enhancement of the suburbs as well as managing housing growth to meet housing aspirations.

## **5. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

- 5.1 The Residential Design Guidance SPD implements policy contained in the Core Strategy which has been subject to an Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA). The EqIA addressed the seven questions for assessing equalities in the Corporate Plan.
- 5.2 The SPD will help deliver good quality residential developments of all tenures, and improve opportunities and quality of life of Barnet's residents.

## **6. USE OF RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS (Finance, Procurement, Performance & Value for Money, Staffing, IT, Property, Sustainability)**

- 6.1 The cost of preparing the Local Plan including supporting SPDs is included in the Strategic Planning Service approved budget in 2012/13 of £1.063m. The Residential Design SPD is one part of the Local Plan and the cost of preparing the SPD is incorporated within the approved budget. Officer time amounted to 341 hours at a cost in staff time of £10,093. The adoption of this Residential Design SPD does not add any additional resource implications to the existing resources in the approved budget.
- 6.2 The implementation of the SPD will be monitored through Barnet's Local Plan Annual Monitoring Report (AMR). Successful implementation of the SPD should (a) reduce the number of cases that are the subject of appeal, by providing developers with a clearer framework for residential design and layout; and (b) improve the council's success rate at appeal in defending decisions against poor residential schemes.

## **7. LEGAL ISSUES**

- 7.1 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 provide guidance on the preparation and adoption of the Local Plan. Upon adoption the Residential Design Guidance SPD becomes a statutory Supplementary Planning Document that provides part of Barnet's formal planning policy framework.

## **8. CONSTITUTIONAL POWERS (Relevant section from the Constitution, Key/Non-Key Decision)**

- 8.1 Constitution, Part 3 (Responsibility for Functions), Section 3 (Responsibilities of the Executive) – details that the adoption of Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) are the responsibility of the Cabinet.

## 9. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 9.1 Following adoption of the Core Strategy and Development Management Policies documents in September 2012 Barnet has one of the most up to date Local Plans in the country. With the support of a robust planning framework with clearly set out priorities of protection, enhancement and consolidated growth the council is in a strong position to produce more detailed local guidance.
- 9.2 Barnet's Residential Design Guidance SPD provides a clear and consistent message on how we manage change within Barnet's suburbs. The SPD consolidates and updates the existing framework for residential design which mainly focused on improvements to the existing housing stock (Design Guidance Notes on Extensions, Conversions, Porches, and Hardstandings and Vehicular Crossovers). This SPD provides more detailed guidance on issues such as density, built form and amenity space standards connected with new build development. Through these changes the SPD sets out the local priorities for protecting and enhancing Barnet's character. It provides a local reference point to the suite of national guidance on good design.
- 9.3 The SPD focuses on those areas of the borough which make up the residential suburb and where most Barnet residents live. These are areas neither protected by a planning designation such as conservation area or Green Belt, nor prioritised for growth such as town centres, priority estates and regeneration and development areas. More detailed specific guidance has been or will be produced for these designated areas.
- 9.4 The SPD provides local guidance on how to manage change through good design. Change ranges from the impact of infill development, house conversions, extensions and basements down to the implications for local character of new porches or new areas of hardstanding replacing front gardens. These local design issues have been highlighted through feedback on the Local Plan and in particular the Barnet Characterisation Study published in 2010 which underpins the Core Strategy.
- 9.5 The SPD aims to provide clear design guidance that can help ensure a consistent and coherent architectural character is maintained. It sets out guidelines for ensuring that infill development does not detract from prevailing character. To get the message across the SPD sets out Barnet's requirements and provides examples of good and bad practice. At the end of each section, the SPD sets out principles for achieving good standards in residential design within Barnet.
- 9.6 The Mayor of London states in his Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) on Housing (November 2012) that "*providing good homes for Londoners is not just about numbers. The quality and design of homes, and the facilities provided for those living in them, are vital to ensuring good liveable neighbourhoods*". This message reinforces Barnet's approach and the council welcomes the Mayor's statement on housing priorities and his work to ensure consistent housing standards across London.
- 9.7 In order to get a consistent and clear message across, we have through this SPD highlighted those Londonwide housing design standards which reflect Barnet's priorities for protecting and enhancing suburban character. We

therefore expect all applicants, developers and their architects to deliver good design in all new and existing residential developments in Barnet. The SPD is a material consideration for decisions on planning applications.

- 9.8 The Government intends to relax planning regulations and rationalise development standards which it considers are a barrier to growth. A review of national and local standards together with proposals to increase permitted development rights for extensions to homes and business premises in non-protected areas for a three-year period were announced by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government in September 2012. The Council responded in December 2012 to the technical consultation on extending permitted development rights for homeowners and businesses and understands the Government intends to implement these proposals in Summer 2013.
- 9.9 The consultation on the draft SPD ran for eight weeks from 15 November 2012 until 17 January 2013. The following sub-headings reflect the main issues raised by representations received during the consultation and the Councils action follows in *italics*. The full schedule of responses and the Councils response are set out in Appendix A2.

**Designing out Crime** – The Metropolitan Police wanted more references to the document ‘Secured by Design’.

*Further cross references have been added.*

**Gated development** – Further detail was requested.

*The SPD already sets out detail that the fronts of houses should generally remain open to view.*

**Hardstandings and front gardens** – Several respondents wanted more controls on conversion of front gardens to hardstanding and highlighted impact on character, safety issues and loss of on street parking.

*The SPD provides further detail on when permitted development rights will apply and when planning permission will be required. Further to this an amendment has been made which sets out that when a vehicle is parked on a hardstanding in front of a house it should be able to be parked at right angles to the footway.*

**Protected Species and Ecological Surveys** – Local wildlife groups wanted ecological surveys to be required for all residential sites and that reference to the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 is added.

*Further amendments have been made to include reference to a survey where the established ecology warrants it and to protected species.*

**Flood Risk and Water Quality** – The Environment Agency wanted further detail on flood risk and how to help developments become more flood resilient and add to improved water quality.

*Further amendments have been made.*

**Single Family Houses and size of new units** – One resident expressed concern that where residential character is characterised by single dwellings fronting a street it is made clear that these are single family dwellings. Resident also wants to resist one bedroom units and only approve such accommodation in exceptional circumstances.

*The Local Plan Core Strategy sets out the approach to housing in policy CS4: Providing quality homes and housing choice in Barnet. The policy sets out that a range of dwellings sizes and types of housing including family and lifetime homes will be sought that meet our identified housing priorities and does not undermine suburban character or local distinctiveness. The need for conversions to consider the dwelling size priorities is referenced in paragraph 2.8.2 in the Local Plan Development Management Policies.*

**Conversions** – Residents have responded with a number of amendments to decrease the impact of conversions

*Various amendments have been made*

**Character Typology** – A developer requested further clarity on the negative characteristics of an existing building typology and the relationship with new development.

*All proposals are considered on their own particular merits, local character and land uses.*

## 10. LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 None

<b>Cleared by Finance (Officer's initials)</b>	<b>JH</b>
<b>Cleared by Legal (Officer's initials)</b>	<b>CH</b>