

DECISION TAKER: Councillor Jackie Porter – Cabinet Member for Place and Local Plan

REPORT TITLE: DRAFT LITTLETON VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT

5 DECEMBER 2022

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WARD(S): WONSTON AND MICHELDEVER, ST BARNABAS

PURPOSE

This report seeks authorisation to undertake public consultation on the draft Littleton Village Design Statement with a view to then adopting it as a Supplementary Planning Document.

Village Design Statements are produced by local communities and provide guidance for the design of new developments within the local area. In order for these documents to carry weight in planning decision-making process they need to be adopted by the City Council as Supplementary Planning Documents.

Across the Winchester District there are 33 adopted village or neighbourhood design statements. Some of these were adopted some time ago and are now being updated. This is to be welcomed, as it will provide more up to date guidance to be taken into account when determining planning applications. The existing Littleton Village Design Statement was adopted in 2010.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. That the draft revised Littleton Village Design Statement be approved for public consultation.

IMPLICATIONS:

1 COUNCIL PLAN OUTCOME

- 1.1 Village Design Statements ('VDS') outline the local community's aspirations for good quality and locally responsive design within their areas. The draft Littleton VDS supports the Climate Change vision which includes the aim that "the natural and built environment is protected, maintained, sustained and enhanced".

2 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 2.1 Work on the document has and will be undertaken using existing staff resources within the Strategic Planning Team.

3 LEGAL AND PROCUREMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The statutory procedures for the production, consultation on and adoption of a Supplementary Planning Document ("SPD") are set out in Regulations 11 to 16 of the Town and Country (Local Plan) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended). The formal consultation process set out in the Regulations must be undertaken prior to adoption by the council as a SPD.
- 3.2 A SPD builds upon policies in the Local Plan to provide more detailed advice and guidance which is then taken into consideration when planning decisions are made. A SPD is a material planning consideration in decision making.

4 CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

- 4.1 The draft Littleton VDS has been produced by Littleton and Harestock Parish Council. A request for comments was put on the Parish Council website in April 2020 together with a 30 point questionnaire, based upon the existing (2010) VDS. This was followed up with an item in the Community Section of the Hampshire Chronicle, with the same request for information. Comments received were taken into account in drafting the revised VDS.
- 4.2 Progress was reported to Parish Council Meetings, and copies of the draft VDS were provided for information, on request.

5 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 5.1 A VDS is used in planning decision making, to encourage developments to conserve important local features and respond positively to the design and appearance of local areas. They therefore benefit the quality of life, health and wellbeing of the local community as well as improving the quality of the built and natural environment, all of which contribute to the aim of sustainable development as a whole.

6 PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY

- 6.1 The Village Design Statement will supplement the existing Local Plan policies, which have been subject to an equalities impact assessment and accord with the Public Sector Equality Duty. When the draft VDS is published for consultation all members of the community will have the opportunity to comment on its guidance.

7 RISK MANAGEMENT

Risk	Mitigation	Opportunities
Financial Exposure	N/A	N/A
Exposure to challenge. Regulations require public consultation by the Local Planning Authority prior to adoption of a SPD for a minimum of four weeks. This should encourage public participation and comments and reduce the chance of challenge.	Undertake public consultation on the Draft Littleton VDS encouraging public participation and comment on the proposed VDS for a period of 6 weeks.	An up to date adopted VDS will be a Supplementary Planning Document that will carry greater weight in planning decisions including appeals.
Innovation	N/A	N/A
Reputation. Risk to reputation if planning decisions are perceived not to reflect the VDS.	Ensure VDS is given appropriate consideration in planning decision making and is sufficiently up-to-date.	Ensure VDS sets out realistic expectations for planning decisions and communicate these to the local community.
Achievement of outcome. Once adopted the VDS will be used in planning decisions and encourage developments to respond positively to the design and appearance of local areas. This will achieve the outcome of improving the quality of the built and natural environment.	Ensure that the VDS is adopted in line with the 2012 Regulations and that comments received on the consultation VDS are incorporated into the adopted document where appropriate.	An up to date adopted VDS will be a Supplementary Planning Document that will carry greater weight in planning decisions including appeals and will improve the quality of the built and natural environment.
Property.	N/A	N/A
Community Support. Risk that planning decisions are seen as not taking sufficient account of the views of the local community.	The VDS allows for the views of the local community to be reflected in a planning document which addresses how the design of new development should respond positively to its location when applications for development are being decided.	Ensure that the VDS contains appropriate and realistic guidance that will be taken into account in planning decisions, improving the quality of the local built and natural environment.
Timescales. Risk that the existing VDS is	Prepare and adopt a new up to date VDS.	Adopting an up to date VDS will support policies in the

outdated and does not reflect current planning policy.		adopted local plan and decision making on development proposals.
Project capacity. There is adequate capacity within the Strategic Planning Team to progress the Littleton VDS.	Maintain sufficient staff capacity.	Improve staff knowledge and understanding of design matters.
Other	N/A	N/A

8 OTHER KEY ISSUES

8.1 None

9 SUPPORTING INFORMATION:

Introduction

- 9.1 Across the Winchester district there are 33 adopted village, neighbourhood or local area design statements, many of which were adopted some time ago. A number of communities have undertaken an update of their design statements and this is welcomed. The Council has produced guidance on the preparation and review of local design statements, which is available on the WCC website.
- 9.2 Good design is considered a key aspect of sustainable development and the importance of setting policies to achieve high quality and inclusive design for all development is emphasised in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). This principle is carried forward into policies within Winchester's existing and emerging local plans. Having an up to date VDS will provide detailed local guidance for the assessment and determination of applications for new development whilst reflecting both national and adopted local planning policies.
- 9.3 In 2015, the council adopted the High Quality Places Supplementary Planning Document that provides more general guidance on how the high level design principles set out in policy CP13 in Local Plan Part 1 (LPP1) should be applied. Village Design Statements (VDS) however are particularly useful in that they identify the key characteristics of the area to which they relate and provide local guidelines which are intended to inform and encourage new development to respond to these local characteristics in a positive way. To be considered as a material consideration through the planning decision making process it is necessary for such community-led documents to be updated and subsequently adopted to complement policies within the local plan. This is delivered in the form of Supplementary Planning Documents.
- 9.4 Policy DM15 (Local Distinctiveness) Local Plan Part 2 (LPP2) sets out how proposals should have regard to any adopted Design Statements, such as Village Design Statements.

- 9.5 The Town & Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, set out the process for the preparation and adoption of SPDs, which includes a requirement to publish a draft VDS for at least 4 weeks' public consultation. The City Council's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) gives a commitment to a 6-week consultation period, for which approval is sought in this report.

Background

- 9.6 Littleton Parish Council has a good record of producing and updating its Village Design Statement. The original Littleton VDS was adopted in 2000 and updated in 2010.
- 9.7 Following consultation with local residents a draft revised VDS has been prepared for formal public consultation. The updated VDS accords with the relevant policies of the Winchester Local Plan Parts 1 and 2 and WCC's adopted High Quality Places SPD. The VDS reflects the principles of the latest version of the NPPF and responds to changes which have taken place within the parish since the existing VDS was adopted in 2010. The Parish Council wishes to update its VDS now, rather than delaying this until the emerging Local Plan 2039 is adopted (planned for 2024).

Conclusion and Next Steps

- 9.8 It is recommended that authorisation for public consultation on the Draft Littleton VDS is undertaken. The Planning Regulations require a minimum of four weeks public consultation but it is proposed that public consultation on the Littleton VDS is for a period of six weeks, reflecting the commitment within the Council's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI).
- 9.9 Formal notice of the consultation will be published in the local press and the draft VDS will be published on the City Council's web site. The Parish Council also plans to put it on its web site and to publicise it through the Parish Newsletter.
- 9.10 It is recommended that delegated authority be granted to the Strategic Planning Manager, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Place and Local Plan, to undertake any minor editing that may be required prior to public consultation. Once the consultation period has been completed comments will be carefully considered by officers and the VDS team, with any amendments needed being made to the document before it is referred to Cabinet/Decision Day for final consideration and adoption as a SPD.

10 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

- 10.1 The City Council encourages the production of VDSs by local communities, to improve the quality of development in local areas and public involvement in the planning process. In order to carry weight when determining planning applications, a VDS needs to be adopted by the Council as Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs).

- 10.2 An alternative approach to formal adoption as SPD would be for the Council to informally adopt or endorse the VDS. However, an informally adopted document would carry less weight in determining planning applications, as the formal adoption processes – including the public consultation - required of an SPD would not have been followed. This approach is therefore not considered appropriate for Village Design Statements.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:-

Previous Cabinet/Committee Reports or Cabinet Member Decisions

None on the updated VDS.

Other Background Documents

Adopted Littleton Village Design Statement 2010:

<https://www.winchester.gov.uk/assets/attach/3731/LittletonVillageDesignStatement.pdf>

APPENDICES:

Appendix 1: Draft Revised Littleton Village Design Statement for consultation

<http://sharepoint/sites/policyprojects/LocalPlan/Littleton%20Village%20Design%20Statement%202020/Littleton%20VDS%20Draft%20V0.9.5%20Oct%202022.pdf>