

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

REPORT TITLE: LITTLETON VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT ADOPTION

4 SEPTEMBER 2023

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WARD(S): WONSTON AND MICHELDEVER

## PURPOSE

This report recommends that the Littleton Village Design Statement is adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document, following public consultation in January / February 2023 and amendments as recommended.

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 34 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.

## RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That the draft Littleton Village Design Statement be amended as set out in Appendix 1 of this report and that the revised Statement at Appendix 2 be adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document.
2. That the 2010 Littleton Village Design Statement be revoked as SPD following the adoption of the 2023 version.
3. That the Strategic Planning Manager is granted delegated authority to make

minor factual corrections and editing, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Place and Local Plan, to finalise the Planning Guidance in the revised Littleton Village Design Statement, prior to publication on the Council website.

## 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 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. Following further development of the draft document, a report for a Decision Day on the 5<sup>th</sup> December 2022 (report DD54 refers) was prepared to authorise publication of the draft VDS for formal public and stakeholder consultation. All members, Ward Members and the Cabinet Member for Place and Local Plan were therefore consulted as part of the Decision Day process.
- 4.3 The draft VDS was subject to statutory consultation between 9th January and 20th February via the Citizenspace online consultation portal. The consultation included statutory consultees and those on the Local Plan database. Formal notice of the consultation was published in the local press and the draft VDS was published on the City Council's web site. The Parish

Council also put it on its web site and to publicised it through the Parish Newsletter.

- 4.4 The Council received 8 consultation responses, including a number of 'no comments' from several statutory consultees. As a result of these it is recommended that some amendments and additions be included in the VDS and Appendix 1 sets out a summary of the comments received, a recommended officer response, and any proposed changes to the draft VDS. The representations can be viewed on [Citizen Space](#).
- 4.5 The 2012 Planning Regulations require a statement of consultation to be published before a SPD can be adopted. This report forms the required statement of consultation and updates the information in the draft VDS; detailing the public consultation undertaken, summarising the issues raised and describing how these issues have been addressed, as required by the Regulations. The final version of the VDS should be updated to refer to this prior to its publication in accordance with the Regulations.

## 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. All members of the community were given the opportunity to comment on the draft VDS at the public consultation stage.

## 7 RISK MANAGEMENT

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>	<b>Opportunities</b>
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.	Public consultation took place on the Draft Littleton VDS encouraging public participation and comment 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 outdated and does not reflect current planning policy.	Prepare and adopt a new up to date VDS.	Adopting an up to date VDS will support policies in the 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 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.
- 9.2 Across the Winchester district there are 34 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.
- 9.3 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, which took place during January and February 2023.

### 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 revised VDS was drafted to accord with the relevant policies of the Winchester Local Plan Parts 1 and 2 and WCC's adopted High Quality Places SPD. The draft VDS reflected the principles of the latest version of the NPPF and responded to changes which had 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 is adopted.

#### Public Consultation (see also Section 4 above)

9.8 The draft VDS was published for public consultation between 9th January and 20th February via the Citizenspace online consultation portal. The Council received 8 consultation responses, which are summarised at Appendix 1. The Appendix includes a summary of the comments received, recommended responses, and any resulting proposed changes to the draft VDS. The individual comments made can be viewed on [Citizenspace](#).

9.9 The key issues raised were:

- Responses from statutory consultees, mostly indicating ‘no comments’.
- Responses from several residents, mostly raising points of detail. Some appropriate amendments are recommended.
- Extensive comments on behalf of the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) about the implications of the VDS for the development of Sir John Moore Barracks. The DIO would prefer the VDS to not include the Barracks area, or to exclude it from its Planning Guidance, suggesting it would be more sensible to prepare the VDS in tandem with the new Local Plan. Officers’ recommendation is that it would not be appropriate to exclude the Barracks area from the VDS nor delay the VDS so that it can be prepared in parallel with the Local Plan, given the early stage of the emerging Local Plan allocation. Instead a new section is proposed at the beginning of the VDS referring to the emerging Local Plan, the forthcoming proposals for the Barracks, and the relationship with the VDS. Changes are also proposed in response to other comments made by DIO, mainly to the parts of the VDS explanatory text referring to ecology and landscape.

9.10 As a result, it is recommended that some amendments and additions be included in the VDS and these are shown at Appendix 1 and included in the revised VDS at Appendix 2..

#### Conclusion and Next Steps

9.11 Having an up to date VDS will provide guidance which reflects the current character of the village and accords with both national and adopted local planning policies. It is recommended that the Littleton Village VDS is adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document, to replace the previous 2010 VDS.

9.12 It is further recommended that delegated authority be granted to the Strategic Planning Manager, in consultation with the Cabinet Member, to undertake any minor editing that may be required prior to publication on the Council’s website.

10 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

- 10.1 The City Council encourages the production of Village Design Statements by local communities, in order to improve the quality of development in local area and public involvement in the planning process. In order to carry as much weight as possible in determining planning applications, such Statements need to be adopted by the City Council as Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs).
- 10.2 The City Council could, as an alternative approach, informally adopt or endorse the VDS. However, this would carry less weight in determining planning applications. This approach is therefore not recommended.
- 10.3 Comments on behalf of the Defence Infrastructure Organisation suggest that it would be more sensible to prepare the VDS in tandem with the new Local Plan or that the VDS should exclude Sir John Moore Barracks. It is recommended that a new section is included to clarify the relationship between the Local Plan, proposals for the Barracks and the VDS, but that the revised VDS should be adopted as a SPD and should continue to cover the Barracks area. Other comments were also made by DIO and others on the draft VDS, which are summarised at Appendix 1, along with a recommended response and proposed changes. These involve some changes to the content of the draft VDS, as set out at Appendix 1 and included in the recommended revised VDS at Appendix 2.

#### BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:-

#### Previous Cabinet/Committee Reports or Cabinet Member Decisions:-

[DD54, 5 December 2022, Draft Littleton Village Design Statement](#)

#### BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:-

[Adopted Littleton Village Design Statement 2010](#)

[Draft Littleton Village Design Statement 2023](#)

#### APPENDIX:

APPENDIX 1 - Summary of Comments Received and Recommended Changes

APPENDIX 2 – Revised Littleton Village Design Statement Recommended for Adoption