

Report of the Head of Planning & City Regeneration

Planning Committee – 4 July 2017

APPROVAL OF DRAFT UPDATED SUPPLEMENTARY HOUSEHOLDER DESIGN GUIDANCE FOR CONSULTATION

Purpose:	This report provides an overview of the draft updated 'A Design Guide for Householder Development' Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) document and seeks authorisation to undertake public and stakeholder consultation.
Policy Framework:	City and County of Swansea Unitary Development Plan (Adopted November 2008).
Reason for Decision:	To approve the draft updated SPG as a basis for public and stakeholder consultation.
Consultation:	Legal, Finance, Access to Services.
Recommendation(s):	1) The draft SPG as attached at Appendix A is approved as the basis for public consultation.
Report Author:	Huw Jenkins
Finance Officer:	Aimee Dyer
Legal Officer:	Jonathan Wills
Access to Services:	Phil Couch

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This report seeks authority to undertake a 6 week public and stakeholder consultation exercise on the draft updated Householder Design Guide. A copy of this guide is attached as Appendix A.
- 1.2 The Householder Design Guide was originally adopted in June 2008. It has been used successfully in many development management negotiations and decisions to help raise the quality of residential householder developments throughout the City & County of Swansea. It is also regularly referred to by Planning Inspectors. However, the need has arisen to review the Householder Design Guide to reflect recent changes to Permitted Development Rights.
- 1.3 Once the consultation process is concluded, a schedule of comments and responses to all representations received will be reported back to Planning Committee for consideration, along with an amended version of the SPG document for adoption.

2.0 Background and Policy Context

- 2.1 At the national level, Planning Policy Wales (Edition 9, Nov 2016) and Technical Advice Note 12: Design (2016) advocate the development of high quality design and development.
- 2.2 The design policies of the Unitary Development Plan (2008) comply with this national guidance, with policies such as EV1 setting out general design criteria for new development and Policy EV2 ensuring that development proposals are appropriately sited and located. Policy HC7 specifically addresses the impact of residential extensions and alterations on the existing surrounding context whilst a number of other UDP policies address the quality of design in particular circumstances which can affect proposals for shop fronts and commercial frontages including:
- Policy EV7 – Extensions/Alterations to Listed Buildings
 - Policy EV9 – Conservation Areas
 - Policy EV9 – Demolition of Unlisted Buildings in Conservation Areas
- 2.3 Under nationally set legislation, residential dwellings benefit from rights which allow certain minor changes to houses to be considered deemed consent and thus not requiring planning permission. These rights are known as Permitted Development (PD) Rights and were updated in April 2014 by way of the Welsh Government Technical Guidance document entitled “Permitted development for householders (version 2)”. This necessitated the need to update the Swansea Householder Design Guide SPG to incorporate these changes.
- 2.4 In addition to the varying planning policy contexts that can affect householder development proposals, consideration must also be given to the architectural context of the locality as well the potential impacts on the amenity of neighbouring properties. Therefore, it is necessary to set out clear local guidance to highlight the correct approach for each context as well as to raise standards of design and wellbeing. This will formalise the design advice provided by the Council’s officers, and provide residents and developers with a clear understanding of what is expected of their proposals.
- 2.5 This design guide has a key role to play in raising standards of residential design and wellbeing across the whole of Swansea. Well-designed residential extensions and alterations create much more attractive neighbourhoods for those living within these areas, help to minimise the detrimental impact of new development on neighbours and allow residents to adapt their homes in response to changing circumstances whilst remaining within their communities.
- 2.6 In many cases good design need not cost more, but poor design can have long term negative consequences and social impacts. Good quality householder development is important to meet the wellbeing needs of residents as well as to provide attractive communities. Given the prevalence of such proposals which make up a large proportion of development proposals in Swansea, day to day development management decisions in relation to these householder developments are a key part of the physical regeneration process.

In 2016 approximately 700 valid planning applications were received for householder developments which fall outside of the scope of Permitted Development. The need for clear local guidance to help raise design standards is therefore especially important.

3.0 A DESIGN GUIDE FOR HOUSEHOLDER DEVELOPMENT SPG

3.1 The draft updated Householder Design Guide (attached as Appendix A) is aimed at improving the character and appearance of all householder developments as well as the wellbeing of residents and communities within the City and County of Swansea. It will be used to assess and negotiate the wide range of householder development proposals within the whole city and county area. Underpinning this updated SPG document are a number of key aims which include:

- Ensuring that householder proposals protect the amenity of existing neighbours and the wider community.
- Encouraging appropriate responses to extensions and alterations to existing dwellings which contribute to the history and/or aesthetic quality of the area.
- Ensuring proposals relate satisfactorily to the dwellinghouse and the wider street as a whole.

3.2 The changes to the document do not seek to fundamentally alter the existing content that was originally adopted in June 2008 but have been undertaken in order to update the document to be in line with current legislation and to improve the clarity and ease of use of this SPG. These changes therefore comprise of:

- Updating the document to reflect changes to the Permitted Development Rights for householder in Wales;
- Altering some of the previous Guidance note sections to improve the layout and usability of the document. These changes include:
 - Adding a new 'General Principles for All House Types' section;
 - Adding a new 'Annexes & Ancillary Accommodation' section;
 - Removing the 'Conservatories' section as these are assessed in the same manner as extensions;
 - Splitting the previous 'Bungalows, dormers and roof extensions' section into two separate sections entitled 'Extending your Bungalow' and 'Dormers & Roof Extensions'.
- Reformatting the layout and style of the whole document to be in line with the recent suite of adopted SPG documents (Residential Design Guide, Infill & Backland Development Design Guide, Shop Front & Commercial Frontages Design Guide).

3.3 The guide does not prescribe a particular architectural style, rather it stresses the importance of analysing the context to find the correct approach to the development and once this has been selected then further detailed design issues can be addressed. It would therefore be used to assess and negotiate the wide range of proposals in different character areas present within the city and county area.

3.4 The guide sets out a logical approach for undertaking householder works across the City and County of Swansea area. Starting with the local Planning Policy context and advice on preparing the design, it then goes on to set out 3 Core General Guidance Notes for considering the context of development:

- Note A – Understanding your House and Local Area
- Note B – Respecting the Context and Character of your House
- Note C – Protecting the Amenity of Neighbouring Properties

Following this, the guide goes onto set out 14 specific Design Guidance Notes for different types of Householder development:

- 1 – General Principles for All House Types
- 2 – Extending your Detached House
- 3 – Extending your Semi-detached House
- 4 – Extending your Terraced House
- 5 – Extending your Bungalow
- 6 – Annexes & Ancillary Accommodation
- 7 – Dormers & Roof Extensions
- 8 – Raised Decking, Balconies & Retaining Walls
- 9 – Domestic Garages & Outbuildings
- 10 – Access & Parking
- 11 – Boundary Treatments
- 12 – Trees & Other Vegetation
- 13 – Resource Efficiency
- 14 – Crime Prevention

3.5 The guide is therefore about more than just how new additions and changes look. It seeks to provide guidance for an integrated approach to the various considerations for householder works underpinned by sensitivity to the local context as well as neighbouring amenity.

4.0 Consultation

4.1 The SPG document will be made available in both English and Welsh and subject to a 6 week period of consultation, which is an integral part of the process towards adoption as SPG. The consultation will provide Councillors, members of the public, stakeholders and other interested parties the opportunity to contribute to the guidance. The aim is to ensure that there is a broad consensus of support for the objectives of the guidance.

4.2 The public and stakeholder consultation process will make use of a variety of consultation methods to raise awareness and maximise the involvement of the community, including: publication of press notice, articles/adverts in the local media, and targeted consultation of local planning agents and specific local organisations.

4.3 The consultation will be publicised via the Council's dedicated consultation email database of over 8000 contacts and web page where comment forms will be available for those who wish to comment. During the consultation period a free event for stakeholders such as agents, designers, developers, amenity societies etc. will be offered to explain the draft document and invite their feedback. All information will also be readily available at the Civic Centre and libraries throughout the County. Summary details and promotional materials will be provided in a bi-lingual format.

- 4.4 All comments received will be recorded, evaluated and incorporated into the draft document where considered appropriate. A summary of the consultation will be incorporated into the final SPG document once adopted and a full detailed schedule of representations will be made available on request.

5.0 Financial Implications

- 5.1 There are no financial implications arising from the publication of this SPG, as the cost of the public consultation process can be accommodated within existing budgets and staff resources. The consultation will, as far as possible, utilise electronic means of distributing the documents and seeking the engagement of interested parties.
- 5.2 The final adopted document will be made available electronically on the Council website, so there will be no printing costs.

6.0 Legal Implications

- 6.1 The 'A Design Guide for Householder Development' guidance document will provide supplementary planning guidance to the adopted City and County of Swansea Unitary Development Plan (2008) and will be a material consideration in evaluating future planning applications. This SPG has been produced in order to inform the provisions of the current UDP, however given the emerging status of the LDP it also aligns with the principles established within this forthcoming Local Plan.
- 6.2 The Council has a duty to seek to continually improve in the exercise of its functions (which include where appropriate powers) in terms of strategic effectiveness, service quality and availability, sustainability, efficiency and innovation pursuant to the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009.

7.0 Equality & Engagement Implications

- 7.1 Section 4 of this report outlines equalities considerations in respect of consultation activity. Summary material will be available in Welsh. An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) screening has been carried out and this indicates that a full EIA is not necessary.

Background Papers:

None

Appendices:

Appendix A – Draft A Design Guide For Householder Development Guide