



EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Partial Assessment Form

Policy, practice, function or project assessed	District Design Guide: High Quality and Sustainable Development in South Cambridgeshire Supplementary Planning Document
Lead Officer	Claire Spencer
Team	Planning Policy
Start date of assessment	21 September 2009
Completion of assessment	2 March 2010

Please use this form to record your findings in relation to the assessment of an existing policy, function, service or practice.

A. POLICY, PRACTICE, FUNCTION OR PROJECT TO BE ASSESSED

A1. Please describe what are the main aims, objectives, purpose and intended outcomes of the policy or function?

The purpose of Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) is to expand on policies set out in Development Plan Documents (DPD) and to provide additional detail. The SPD expands on district-wide policies contained within the adopted Development Control Policies DPD, adopted in July 2007.

Achieving good design and sustainable development are the core principals 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. The aim of the District Design Guide SPD is to provide additional guidance on how developments can ensure they are sustainable and achieve a high quality of design in a way that respects the local context.

The overarching objective of the SPD is to assist achievement of the Development Control Policies DPD Objective HG/a “to ensure the provision of a range of affordable housing, to meet the identified needs of all sectors of the community, including key workers.”

Specific objectives of this document are:

- 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.

A2. Is this policy or function associated with any other Council policy or priority?

The District Design Guide SPD supplements adopted Development Control Policies Development Plan Document policies, in particular DP/1 and DP/2. http://www.scambs.gov.uk/Environment/Planning/DistrictPlanning/LocalDevelopmentFramework/Development_Control_Policies_DPD.htm and is linked to the following Council Aims:

Council Aim C. We are Committed to making South Cambridgeshire a place in which residents can feel proud to live, Approach C8 Promoting low carbon living and delivering low carbon growth through the planning system.

A3. Who are the intended beneficiaries/stakeholders of the policy or function? How many people are affected and from what sections of the community?

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 principals 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.

“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)

A4. Is the policy/function corporate and far-reaching?

Yes, the SPD applies district wide, and links with several Council aims (see A.2 above).

A5. Are you expecting to make any significant change to the policy or service in the near future? If so, please give details.

No changes are anticipated.

A6. Is this a new or existing policy or function?

The SPD supplements and amplifies the adopted Development Plan Document policy.

B. EVIDENCE/ DATA and CONSULTATION

It is important to consider all information that is available in determining whether the policy or function could have a differential impact. Please attach examples of monitoring information, research or consultation reports.

B1. What monitoring or other information do you have about relevant target groups, which will show the impact of the policy or function?

The Local Development Framework Annual Monitoring Report includes a number of indicators for monitoring purposes:

http://www.scams.gov.uk/Environment/Planning/DistrictPlanning/LocalDevelopmentFramework/Annual_Monitoring_Report.htm

Given that sustainability and design are the core principles underlying planning, the majority of the indicators are applicable to the SPD.

B2. Have you compared the data you have with the equality profile of the local population? What does it show?

See the Annual Monitoring Report:

http://www.scams.gov.uk/Environment/Planning/DistrictPlanning/LocalDevelopmentFramework/Annual_Monitoring_Report.htm

B3. Have you identified any improvements or other changes that could be made from monitoring the data?

The SPD should assist with meeting the targets in future.

B4. Have you consulted or involved external stakeholders about the policy or function? If so, what were their views?

The draft SPD was subject to six-weeks public consultation with a range of external stakeholders from 23 October to 4 December 2009. A Statement of Consultation has been produced and details the representations received and subsequently amendments have been incorporated into the final adopted SPD.

A total of 185 representations were received during the consultation period of which 40 were supporting, 42 objecting and 103 comments to the draft SPD. The main issues raised include:

- Strong support for the SPD in general and to specific parts of it.
- Suggestions that the SPD could usefully include more illustrations of good and/or bad examples, provide clearer annotations on illustrations.
- Suggestions that the SPD would benefit from a slight restructure to improve clarity, remove duplication and reduce the length of the document to make it more user-friendly.
- Suggestions that more information be added on car parking, Green Infrastructure, and using design to promote sport and recreation should be included.
- Suggestions for more policy references to source policies in LDF documents, and for cross-references to adopted SPD.

B5. Have you undertaken any consultation with staff to assess their perception of any impacts of the policy or function? If so, what has been learnt from them?

Yes, internal consultation was undertaken during the preparation of the SPD. The Consultation Statement details the comments received:
<http://www.scams.gov.uk/Environment/Planning/DistrictPlanning/LocalDevelopmentFramework/SPD.htm>

B6. Please provide information about any other consultation, research, or involvement undertaken in relation to this impact assessment.

The SPD was published for a six-weeks public consultation, as detailed in B4 above. A public notice was placed in the Cambridge News at the start of the public consultation. A number of stakeholders were sent a letter and CD-Rom containing each of the public participation documents, supporting documents, and forms for making comments. All documents were available to view and / or download from the Council's website: <http://www.scams.gov.uk/Environment/Planning/DistrictPlanning/LocalDevelopmentFramework/SPD.htm>, and a link was included from the home page. Interactive online versions of documents were also available to enable people to make comments online during the consultation period, as well as Word and PDF versions of a response form that could be completed and emailed / posted to the Council. South Cambs Magazine, which is delivered to every household in the district, also included information on the consultation. Printed copies of the document were also available to view or purchase at the Council's offices.

C1. IMPACT OF THE POLICY OR FUNCTION

Assess the potential impact on each of the equality strands/groups. The impact could be negative, positive or neutral. If you assess a negative impact for any of the groups then you will need to assess whether that impact is low, medium or high. Refer to the evidence you use.

DESCRIPTION OF IMPACT	Nature of Impact (Positive, Neutral, Adverse)	Extent of Impact (Low, Medium, High)
GENDER: Identify the potential impact of the policy or function on men and women	Positive	
RACE: Identify the potential impact of the policy or function on different race/ethnic groups	Neutral	
DISABILITY: Identify the potential impact of the policy or function on disabled people	Positive	
AGE: Identify the potential impact of the policy or function on different age groups	Positive	
SEXUAL ORIENTATION: potential impact of the policy on lesbian, gay men, bisexual or heterosexual people	Neutral	
RELIGION/FAITH: Identify the potential impact the policy on different religious/faith groups	Neutral	
OTHER:		

PLEASE NOTE: Following completion of the section above, if the nature of the impact is adverse then you may need to proceed to a full equality impact assessment.

C2. Could you minimise or remove any adverse or potential impact that is high, medium or low significance, in advance of a full impact assessment? Explain how.

N/A

C3. Does the policy or function actively promote equal opportunities and good community relations? Or could changes be made so that it does so?

Through the following Council Aims, the District Design Guide SPD helps to promote better community relations:
Council Aim C. We are Committed to making South Cambridgeshire a place in which residents can feel proud to live, Approach C8 Promoting low carbon living and delivering low carbon growth through the planning system.

C4. Please provide any further information, qualitative or quantitative that does not fit into the questions but you feel has a likely impact on this assessment.

The SPD may have a slight positive impact on Gender, Disability and Age from the provision of a mixture of tenures of housing, including affordable housing, and the requirement for the provision of Lifetime Homes, which would benefit the disabled and elderly. In addition, provision of more affordable housing in the rural areas may assist younger residents to remain in the villages where they grew up. The principles of 'Secured by Design' should ensure the environment is and feels safer for everyone, and may particularly benefit women, children and the elderly.

The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) was introduced in 1995 and updated in 2005 with the aim to facilitate equal access to services for all. The Act requires the provision to be reasonable and therefore the level of reasonable accessibility would vary according to the specific building and uses involved. The requirements are more stringent for new buildings, commercial buildings and buildings open to members of the public. In these cases, it is expected that at least the primary functions should be reasonably accessible to disabled people. Some flexibility may be necessary if the most accessible solution would be damaging to the character of a Listed Building, for instance by providing alternative facilities. Any alterations will need to be carefully considered and take account of the historic and architectural significance of the building.

D. CONCLUSIONS			
D1. Was there sufficient data to complete the partial assessment?	Yes?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	If “NO”, what arrangements are in place for evidence gathering and continuing with the assessment?
	No?	<input type="checkbox"/>	
D2. Is the outcome of the partial assessment that the policy or function would have an adverse impact (medium or high impact) on one or more target group?	Yes?	<input type="checkbox"/>	If “YES”, will you proceed to a full assessment? If so, what arrangements are in place to carry out the full assessment?
	No?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
D3. Is the outcome of the partial assessment that the policy or function would have a neutral or positive impact on equalities?	Yes?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	If “YES”, have you included proposals in the Action Plan to further improve the impact of the policy or function on equalities? No - the SPD already promotes equality of access for all people. Do you plan to review the service or policy again in future to assess whether there has been any change? If so, when? No.
	No?	<input type="checkbox"/>	Has the Equalities Steering Group and the Consultative Forum reviewed the assessment? If so what were their comments? No.
D4. Do you have any other conclusions/outcomes from the partial assessment?			

ACTION PLAN for enhancing existing practice

Recommendation/ issue to be addressed	Planned Milestone	Planned completion of milestone (date)	Officer Responsible	Progress
The success of the District Design Guide SPD will be addressed through the Annual Monitoring Report	-	Annually		

RESOURCES

Does the above action plan require any additional resources?

No resource issues have been identified.

ARRANGEMENTS FOR MONITORING

Please give your plans for monitoring the achievement of the above actions.

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SIGN OFF: The officers below confirm that this partial assessment has been completed in accordance with the Council's guidance

Signature of Lead Officer		Date:
Signature of Corporate Manager or Chief Officer:		Date:

Please retain the original form on your service area and return a copy of the completed form to the Equality & Diversity Officer.