

Community Involvement Plan – October 2019

For the:

- **Draft Mid Sussex Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)**

1. Background

Mid Sussex District Council has prepared a comprehensive District-wide Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to complement a specific design policy in the Mid Sussex development plan (District Plan policy DP26: Character and Design), as well as other policies related to design.

The aim of the Design Guide is to deliver high quality new development across Mid Sussex that responds appropriately to its context and is inclusive and sustainable. The Design Guide sets out clear principles and objectives that aim to inspire developers and designers and assist landowners, developers, applicants and planners in the process of delivering high quality and well designed development.

The draft SPD is subject to public consultation in accordance with regulation 13 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

The purpose of this Community Involvement Plan is to set out:

- Who is involved in the production and consultation of the draft Design Guide SPD;
- Why people are being involved in the process;
- When and how people will be able to get involved and influence the draft Design Guide SPD; and
- How the results of community involvement will be used.

This Community Involvement Plan has been written in accordance with the adopted Mid Sussex District Council Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) (2019).¹

2. Who is to be involved?

Early engagement

There has been early engagement with others during the production of the draft SPD, providing a range of expertise and advice that has informed the drafting of the document.

This included:

- A Member Workshop comprising Councillors;
- The Council's Design Review Panel, comprising local architects;
- West Sussex County Council officers gave advice on trees and transport issues, which have significant implications in regards to accessibility.
- A range of internal Mid Sussex District Council officers.

Furthermore, the draft SPD supplements a specific design policy in the Mid Sussex development plan. The District Plan itself was subject to extensive consultation, prior to its adoption in March 2018. As such, the policy which this SPD relates to has faced significantly scrutiny.

Including everyone

The Equality Impacts Assessment (EqIA) that accompanies the draft SPD considers the needs of people classified as having 'protected characteristics'.² This assessment concludes that there

¹ Available at: www.midsussex.gov.uk/sci.

² As defined by the *Equality Act 2010*

are a number of future actions to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to engage with the consultation, and particularly in terms of removing barriers of involvement for protected groups.

In terms of consultation, the Council must continue to promote consultation exercises that are inclusive of all, including engagement with representative organisations and monitoring of the consultation. This consideration includes things like making documents available on the website, which is equipped with 'BrowseAloud' to make the website more accessible. It will also be important to monitor the design of new development, to ensure these meet the needs of the protected groups.

There is further analysis of consultation practices and the actions that will be taken to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to engage with the consultation included within the EqIA which accompanies the draft Design Guide SPD.³

Who will be contacted?

A number of groups will be directly contacted and asked for their comments. These are:

- District Councillors;
- Town and Parish Councils;
- 'Specific consultation bodies'/ 'general consultation bodies' (statutory consultees) as set out in legislation.⁴ These include West Sussex County Council, adjoining local planning authorities, service providers and government agencies such as the Environment Agency and Natural England, and the South Downs National Park Authority;⁵
- Other organisations, groups or individuals that may have an interest in the draft Design Guide SPD. These include members of the Mid Sussex Partnership, voluntary services' associations, residents' associations, housing associations, business groups and associations, environmental, countryside and conservation groups, youth and elderly persons' groups and the development industry;
- Representatives of those groups highlighted as requiring targeted consultation by the EqIA;
- Subscribers to the Planning Policy e-mail alerts service⁶; and
- Internal consultees at the District Council.

Elected District Councillors have a key role to play in forming the Design Guide SPD and will be fully involved in the process through:

- The Scrutiny Committee for Housing, Planning and Economic Growth (any District Councillor can attend and request to speak);
- Full Council (consists of all District Councillors); and
- Councillors will be directly informed and can respond during the public consultation period.

3. Why are people being involved?

We are asking for people's views on the draft Design Guide SPD through a formal consultation period. It is important to seek input from the wider public, as the SPD will affect the design process of planning applications for new development in Mid Sussex.

Responses to the consultation will provide a valuable source of information which will inform the final document. All representations received through the consultation will be carefully reviewed by officers. A consultation report summarising the issues raised by consultation and how these

³ Available at: <https://www.midsussex.gov.uk/planning-building/supplementary-planning-documents/>

⁴ *The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended)*

⁵ Details of these groups are set out in the 'Key Contacts List' available at: www.midsussex.gov.uk/sci.

⁶ To receive news and updates on policy documents being prepared please sign up to our email alerts at: <https://www.midsussex.gov.uk/planning-building/consultation-monitoring/#topic-planning-policy-email-alerts>

comments have been used will be published on the Council's website and will be considered by the Council before the next stage in the plan-making process.

4. When will people be involved?

Early engagement	Undertaken throughout drafting process.
Public Consultation for draft SPD (Regulation 13)	Following agreement by the Council in September 2019, the draft Design Guide SPD will be published for a six-week consultation period from 9/10/19 to 20/11/19. During this time, the public can make representations on the draft SPD.

5. How will people be involved?

The consultation will be open to all and we will seek to inform and receive comment from the widest possible range of people. We will:

- Send out a press release, an email alert and utilise social media;
- Put all the details and documentation on the Council's website including an on-line response form. All on-line material will be compatible with 'BrowseAloud' for people who find it difficult to read on-line;
- Utilise electronic methods wherever possible in addition to traditional methods to make it as easy as possible to respond to the consultation;
- A translation service is available to those for whom English is a second language;
- Provide hard copies of the draft SPD to view at the District's libraries (including the mobile library); District, Town and Parish Council offices; help points;
- Send letters or emails to all the 'specific consultation bodies' (statutory consultees) and to all the other organisations listed in section 2 above.

Comments must be submitted in writing (physical or digital) and cannot be accepted as anonymous. All information received is public information, subject to relevant data protection legislation.⁷

Comments can be submitted via the website, email or by post. A response form will be made available which can be completed and submitted on the MSDC website. All responses can also be returned by:

Post to: Planning Policy, Mid Sussex District Council, Oaklands, Oaklands Road, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH16 1SS

E-mail to: ldfconsultation@midsussex.gov.uk

6. What happens to the results?

All comments will be treated equally and it will be up to the Council to balance any conflicting opinions when considering the final document.

The effectiveness of the consultation and the level of involvement by people, particularly those classified as having 'protected characteristics'⁸ and requiring particular consideration will be monitored, as detailed in the EqIA. This information will also inform future consultation work.⁹

⁷ Such as the *Data Protection Act (2018)*

⁸ As defined by the *Equality Act 2010*

⁹ This information will be used solely for this purpose. Equalities information will be kept strictly confidential. All data is subject to the *Data Protection Act (2018)*.

A consultation report summarising the issues raised by consultation and how these comments have been used will be published on the Council's website and will be considered by the Council.

An email notification that this report has been published will be sent to all statutory consultees, Planning Policy email alert subscribers and respondents who submitted a response and expressed a wish to be notified and provided a valid email address.

If you have any comments or queries on this Community Involvement Plan, please contact Jacob Lane (jacob.lane@midsussex.gov.uk; (01444) 477068).

If you have a comment or concern with your experience of a Council-led community involvement exercise, you should in the first instance contact the officer detailed in the Community Involvement Plan. Alternatively, you can contact the Customer Services and Communications Team by phone (01444) 477478 or by writing to Customer Services and Communications, Mid Sussex District Council, Oaklands Road, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH16 1SS.