

DRAFT CONSERVATION AREA DESIGN GUIDE SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT

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PURPOSE OF REPORT

To inform Members of the draft Conservation Area Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), and seek comments on the document and approval to consult on the draft Design Guide.

RECOMMENDATION

That Members consider the issues around design matters in conservation areas, and discuss and agree that the draft guide be presented at Full Council with a recommendation that the Council undertakes a six-week public consultation on the draft Design Guide between Monday 10th July and Friday 18th August 2017.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Council recently commissioned a piece of work to promote and encourage good design in the historic environment of its eight conservation areas of Whitehaven Town Centre, Corkickle, Hensingham, Cleator Moor, St Bees, Egremont, Beckermest and Millom.
- 1.2 The Design Guide is aimed at providing owners, developers, agents and designers of property and land within the Borough's Conservation Areas with guidance, advice and instructions on how to approach issues such as improvement, maintenance and repair.
- 1.3 The main objective of the draft Guide is to enable conservation to play an active part in regeneration by ensuring that change is managed in a way that sustains and enhances the built environment to maintain attractive places without overly constraining development.
- 1.4 The Design Guide provides a definition of a Conservation Area and a brief outline of the legislation covering Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings. It goes on to include information on generic design, repair and maintenance principles and guidance; individual characteristics and guidance for each conservation areas as well as useful information, references and contacts.

- 1.4 The Design Guide is currently in draft format and the Council wish to engage with the community to invite comments on the draft Design Guide. It is expected that the Council will embark on a six-week consultation period between Monday 10th July and Friday 18th August 2017.
- 1.5 The Design Guide will ultimately become a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) intending to be adopted in December 2017. SPDs are used to provide further detail and guidance on the implementation of policies and proposals contained in the Copeland Local Plan.

2.0 PURPOSE AND CONTENT OF THE CONSERVATION AREA DESIGN GUIDE

- 2.1 The Conservation Area Design Guide was initiated through the Whitehaven Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) established in 2014 to undertake building restoration work and heritage skills training.
- 2.2 In December 2014 the THI's Stakeholder Partnership sought to identify a solution to unsustainable development and design in conservation areas and to leave a legacy from the THI programme. It was proposed that a Design Guide, produced in partnership with the Council, would achieve this.
- 2.3 It was also agreed that such a Design Guide should look wider than Whitehaven and cover Conservation Areas across the whole Borough. The Design Guide will be adopted as an SPD as part of the Copeland Local Plan and be a material planning consideration for decision makers when determining planning applications within or in close proximity to the conservation area boundary.
- 2.4 SPDs are non-statutory documents which are not subject to an independent examination and do not have Development Plan status. However, they are subject to a thorough process of public consultation, in accordance with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) and must also be consistent with national and local planning policies.
- 2.5 The purpose of the Design Guide is to provide owners, developers, agents and designers of property and land within the Borough's Conservation Areas with guidance, advice and instructions on how to improve, maintain and repair their properties.
- 2.6 The draft Design Guide includes general design, repair and maintenance principles and guidance covering roofs and chimneys, soil and rainwater goods, walls and wall finishes, shopfronts including advertising, external alterations (including television aerials, satellite dishes and alarm boxes), paint colours and front garden areas, boundary walls, steps and railings.

- 2.7 The draft Design Guide defines conservation areas and briefly outlines the legislation covering conservation areas and listed buildings. It also identifies individual characteristics and guidance for each conservation area.
- 2.8 The Council intends to embark on a statutory public consultation exercise for a six-week period between Monday 10th July and Friday 18th August 2017.
- 2.9 Following public consultation, the draft Design Guide and proposed amendments to take account of the issues raised will be reported back to the LDF Working Party later in the year for consideration and approval. Following this it will be presented at Full Council in December 2017 with a recommendation to adopt the Design Guide as a Supplementary Planning Document.

3.0 CONCLUSION

- 3.1 Based upon Member agreement the next stages of taking the draft Conservation Area Design Guide forward will be to take the document out to public consultation for a minimum six-week period. This will enable Members to have a say on the content and approach of the draft Conservation Area and Design Guide.
- 3.2 Representations received as part of the formal consultation process will be considered and fed into the draft Conservation Area Design Guide where it is considered appropriate by the Whitehaven Townscape Heritage Initiative Officer with support from Strategic Planning and Development Management officers.
- 3.3 Members will have an opportunity to consider a summary of representations made and proposed changes later in the year before approving a final Conservation Area Design Guide in preparation of a Full Council meeting to be held in December 2017.

APPENDICES

- Appendix One: Draft Conservation Area Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document