

**PC 382-21**

## **NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY**

### **PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING – 21 DECEMBER 2021**

#### **DESIGN GUIDE SPD – RECOMMENDATION FOR ADOPTION**

**Report by:** David Illsley, Policy Manager  
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#### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 At the July 2021 Planning Committee meeting members unanimously approved the draft New Forest National Park Design Guide SPD for a statutory period of public consultation. This report summarises the feedback received on the draft document during the subsequent consultation; the amendments proposed in response to the feedback; and recommends that Planning Committee endorse the formal adoption of the revised Design Guide SPD (Annex 1, online) to the next full Authority meeting.
- 1.2 Report PC 370-21 (July 2021) set out the background to the draft Design Guide SPD, the preparation of which is identified in the Authority's work programme. The current National Park Design Guide SPD dates from 2011 and there have been significant changes in both local and national policy/guidance in the intervening years. There are clear benefits from reviewing and updating the Design Guide document.

#### **2. National policy and guidance context**

- 2.1 In updating the Design Guide SPD, regard must be given to national design policy and guidance set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (July 2021), the National Planning Practice Guidance resource on 'Design: process and tools', the National Design Guide (October 2019) and the National Model Design Code (July 2021).
- 2.2 Paragraphs 128 and 129 of the NPPF (July 2021) state:

*"To provide maximum clarity about design expectations at an early stage, all local planning authorities should prepare design guides or codes consistent with the principles set out in the National Design Guide and National Model Design Code, and which reflect local character and design preferences. Their geographic coverage, level of detail and degree of prescription should be tailored to the circumstances and scale of change in each place... to carry weight in decision-making should be produced either as part of a plan or as supplementary planning documents."*

- 2.3 The decision to update the New Forest National Park Design Guide is therefore consistent with national policy and the Design Guide SPD will play a key role in supporting our planning function as a material consideration in planning decisions.

#### **3. Public consultation on the draft Design Guide SPD (September – October 2021)**

- 3.1 In July 2021 the Planning Committee endorsed the publication of the draft Design Guide SPD for public consultation. This 6-week public consultation was undertaken between 10 September and 22 October 2021, in accordance with the Authority's Statement of Community Involvement and the relevant national planning regulations.

3.2 Further detail on the consultation undertaken in the Autumn are set out in the 'Consultation Statement' that forms Annex 2 (available online) to this report. The consultation included:

- Over 200 statutory and general consultees were directly notified of the start of the consultation. Hard copies of the draft Design Guide SPD were sent to all 37 town and parish councils within the National Park.
- The draft Design Guide SPD was made available on the Authority's website and for inspection during office hours at Lymington Town Hall.
- Updates on the consultation draft Design Guide SPD were given at the Parish Quadrant meetings held in September and October 2021. All four of the quadrant meetings were held within the 6-week consultation period to enable discussions to inform the Parish Council's respective consultation responses.
- A press release was issued to local media outlets, summarising the role of the draft Design Guide SPD, the consultation period, how comments could be submitted and where the document could be viewed. A formal press notice was also issued and picked up in articles in several local newspapers.
- The consultation of the draft Design Guide SPD was actively promoted through the Authority's social media channels, including Facebook (34,100 followers) and Twitter (15,400 followers).

#### 4. Summary of the main issues raised and how they have been addressed

4.1 During the consultation period on the draft Design Guide, responses were submitted by 32 individuals and organisations. There was a broad range of respondents, including statutory consultees (e.g. Historic England and Natural England); 11 town and parish councils within the National Park; service providers (e.g. Southern Water); conservation groups (e.g. the Friends of the New Forest); architects; and local residents.

4.2 The Consultation Statement (Annex 2, available online) provides more detail on the main points raised in the consultation responses and how it is proposed they are addressed. It should be noted that the Authority is not required to list and address every single point raised during the consultation, only the main issues raised.

4.3 A wide range of points were raised during the consultation, with over 250 individual comments made on the draft Design Guide. Some of the main issues included:

##### *Summary of the main issues raised during the consultation*

- Concerns regarding the impact on the National Park of external lighting, including that not affixed to a property or proposed as part of a wider development proposal.
- The call for greater encouragement to be given to renewable energy and sustainable construction techniques, given the climate challenge.
- Modern design and technologies should be supported where appropriate. The need to recognise that national policy and guidance, as well as technologies and sustainable construction techniques, are evolving at a rapid rate.
- Support for the draft Design Guide's coverage of boundary treatments.

- The Design Guide should address loopholes in national permitted development rights and further restrict development within the National Park.
- Calls for greater coverage of detailed issues including the delivery of biodiversity net gain in new development; and design guidance on how the introduction of wheelie bins would be assimilated into the built environment of the New Forest.
- A request from some for greater flexibility over the use of UPVC window, rather than traditional timber ones. Other respondents supported the draft guidance and highlighted the high energy costs associated with UPVC windows.
- Several requests to highlight the need for quality materials and the highest levels of design – good is not good enough.
- A request that specific areas of the New Forest National Park are highlighted within the Design Guide and bespoke design guidance given for them.
- A number of comments were received about the design of extensions and how to interpret this on traditional buildings.
- A call for greater coverage to be given to the design characteristics of shopfronts within the larger villages of the National Park.
- A request to provide plenty of photographs within the Design Guide to illustrate key points, including some of the recent Design Award winning schemes.

4.4 A number of respondents raised points that strayed beyond the remit of a Design Guide SPD, including comments around the impacts of national permitted development rights, the speed of traffic through the New Forest, the need to curtail second home ownership, the scale of planned new development in and around the National Park, and the policy requirements for sustainable construction. In reviewing all of the comments received, officers are clear that the focus of the Design Guide (and its status as a Supplementary Planning Document) means these issues cannot be addressed through changes to the Design Guide. A number of them can only be tackled through changes to national policy, or a review of the statutory development plan for the National Park.

4.5 The feedback also highlighted areas where the draft Design Guide can be positively strengthened. Several respondents helpfully proposed amended wording and provided reference material to support their representations. The Consultation Statement (Annex 2, online) provides detail on how the main points raised have been addressed, including a number of areas where it is recommended that the Design Guide should be amended.

*Summary of the main changes proposed to the Design Guide in response to feedback*

- Additional wording added to highlight the contribution managing light pollution can give to people's enjoyment of the National Park and its special qualities.
- Additional wording added clarifying that warm white lights being more appropriate and an additional footnote included referring to the Kelvin Scale.
- Changes made to include reference to water efficiency, such as rainwater harvesting, rain gardens, and grey water recycling.

- Signposts provided to the DEFRA Biodiversity Net Gain metrics and CIRIA's good practice guide for more information.
- Wording added to encourage discrete positioning and low-key design of bin storage areas. The Design Guide could be reviewed at an appropriate time with more detailed advice when a decision is made on the introduction of wheelie bins.
- Additional photos have been inserted into the Design Guide to illustrate the points made. These includes photos from recent winners of the New Forest National Park Building Design Awards.

## 5. Recommendation to the full Authority

- 5.1 The formal adoption of the Design Guide SPD will be a decision for the full National Park Authority meeting. In approving the draft document for consultation in July 2021, members requested that the revised draft Design Guide be brought back to Planning Committee prior to the full Authority considering it for adoption. Although the Planning Committee cannot formally adopt the Design Guide SPD, it can review the progress made and make a recommendation to the full Authority meeting on 27 January 2022.
- 5.2 The public consultation on the draft Design Guide elicited a good range of responses. Many of these were supportive of the document and recognised the role it can play in supporting good design that enhances the built heritage of the New Forest. The revised document at Annex 1 (online) has been updated in response to the consultation responses received and aims to provide comprehensive design guidance for the whole of the National Park area. The document available online in Annex 1 remains a working draft, with the formatting, photographs and accessibility due to be finalised before the full Authority meeting. Planning Committee members are therefore asked to endorse the document in advance of it being considered at the full National Park Authority meeting in January 2022 for formal adoption as a Supplementary Planning Document.

### Recommendation:

**Members: (i) note the amendments proposed to the draft New Forest National Park Design Guide SPD (Annex 1, online) following the public consultation; and (ii) endorse the recommendation that it be formally adopted by the full National Park Authority.**

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### Papers:

**PC 382-21** – cover paper

**Annex 1** – New Forest National Park Design Guide SPD – revised draft – **available online only**

**Annex 2** – New Forest National Park Design Guide SPD – Consultation Statement – **available online only**

**Equality Impact Assessment:** No impacts have been identified.