



ST HELENS
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Street Design Guide

Supplementary Planning Document

Scoping Report

May 2024

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1. Introduction

1.1 What is this document?

This scoping report is the first step in preparing a Street Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). The SPD will provide detailed guidance on the interpretation and implementation of policies within the St Helens Borough Local Plan up to 2037 (2022) (Local Plan).

The purpose of this document is to engage key stakeholders in considering the scope and content of the SPD.

The responses on this scoping report will inform the preparation of a draft SPD, which will then in turn be published for consultation before it is then adopted. Once adopted the SPD will carry full weight as a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

1.2 Overview

There has been a longstanding desire of both the Local Highway Authority and the Transport Planning Team to update the existing Street Design Guide which is over 15 years old.

The purpose of the Street Design Guide SPD will be to promote high standards of highway design that reflect nationally recognised best practice and facilitate the delivery of high quality residential, employment and mixed-use developments in St Helens. It is intended to support 'place led development' and to help achieve high standards of highway design, so as not to compromise highway safety, and to ensure that the safety and efficiency of the road network for all users is maintained and enhanced by the design of access to a new development.

The Street Design Guide SPD will outline the highway design considerations that should be taken into account in advance of preparing the layout of a scheme. It is intended that the SPD will be used by developers, design teams and other stakeholders, who seek to stimulate innovative designs that are appropriate for the context, character and location of a site and which safely cater for the needs of all road users.

The layout of a scheme governs the alignment and arrangement of roads in relation to existing highways and also frames and fixes how buildings, routes and open spaces relate to one another. The guidance will assist in the design of the layout of developments, to ensure safe movement for all street users including pedestrians, cyclists, public transport users, cars, lorries and other road users. Considerations relating to drainage, attenuation, utilities, structures, pedestrian movement, inclusive design, cycle provision, landscaping, parking, servicing, public transport, public open

space, emergency access and street lighting should all influence and inform a scheme's layout. The Street Design Guide SPD will aim to ensure that highway design considerations such as these are key design drivers rather than ancillary afterthoughts and are therefore taken into account and responded to well in advance of scheme's 'layout' being finalised.

Well-designed streets should accommodate all movements, functions and purposes, with their interrelationship considered from the outset. The emphasis should be on 'people movement' with the needs of people with health conditions or impairments, elderly people and children being prioritised for all modes. Walking and cycling should be considered the most important modes of transport as they increase human interaction, contribute to wellbeing and are the most sustainable forms of movement. In addition to offering a sustainable alternative to the car, walking and cycling can also make a positive contribution to public health, the overall character of a place and to tackling climate change through the reduction of carbon emissions.

The Street Design SPD will encourage developers and designers to create streets for people by responding to all the other components that make up the public realm and influence the identity of a place. It also covers the design of the 'highway' in its broadest sense, namely the public space between private property that encapsulates all public activity, including the circulation and storage of motorised traffic

1.3 SPD Links with National Policy and Legislation

The Street Design Guide SPD will be produced so it is consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. Regard will also be had to the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG).

1.4 SPD Links with St Helens Borough Local Plan up to 2037 (2022)

The Street Design Guide SPD will be prepared to provide further guidance in relation to the interpretation and implementation of the policies in the Local Plan, in particular, Policy LPA06: Travel and Transport and Policy LPD01: Ensuring Quality Development, which state:

Policy LPA06: Travel and Transport

1. The Council's strategic priorities for the transport network are to facilitate economic growth, enable good levels of accessibility between homes, jobs and services, improve air quality and minimise carbon emissions. To achieve these priorities, it will seek to:
 - a) Secure the delivery of new or improved road, rail, walking, cycling, and / or bus infrastructure where required;

- b) Ensure that new development is sufficiently accessible by road transport, walking, cycling and public transport;
 - c) Secure improvements to existing motorway capacity and infrastructure with particular priority being given to the M6 Junction 23 and M62 Junction 7;
 - d) Improve the accessibility to jobs, homes and services by all modes of transport and protect opportunities to achieve such improvements;
 - e) Secure the delivery of:
 - i) a new rail station at Carr Mill;
 - ii) any necessary improvements to local stations and rail lines;
 - iii) the proposed Skelmersdale Rail Link; and
 - iv) any infrastructure required to deliver HS2 or HS3 (Northern Powerhouse Rail);... and
 - f) Protect former railway lines and corridors from development that could hinder their future re-use for sustainable modes of transport.
2. All proposals for new development that would generate significant amounts of transport movement must be supported by a Transport Assessment or Transport Statement, the scope of which must be agreed by the Council.
3. New development will only be permitted if it would:
- a) maintain the safe and efficient flow of traffic on the surrounding highway network. Development proposals will not be permitted where vehicle movements would cause severe harm to the highway network;
 - b) be located and designed to enable a suitable level of access (having regard to the scale and nature of the proposal) to existing and / or proposed public transport services;
 - c) provide appropriate provision of charging points for electric vehicles;
 - d) enable good levels of accessibility by walking and cycling between homes, jobs and services;
 - e) provide for safe and convenient pedestrian, cycle and vehicular access and movement to, from and within the development;
 - f) include adequate access arrangements for emergency, service and refuse collection vehicles; and
 - g) provide sufficient on-site parking for persons of limited mobility, service vehicles, and cycles that must at least meet the Council's minimum standards, and adequate parking for all other vehicles.

4. To minimise air and noise pollution and carbon emissions, non-residential forms of development that would generate a significant amount of transport movement by employees or visitors must be supported by suitably formulated Travel Plans. Conditions and/or legal agreements will be used to ensure that Travel Plans submitted in such cases are fully implemented and monitored.
5. Development that would generate significant movement of freight must be located where there is a safe, convenient, and environmentally acceptable access route to a suitable part of the Key Route Network. The part of the Network that is marked as 'Key Route Network – non freight' on the Policies Map shall not be regarded as suitable in this context. Access into a new development (of any land use) directly from the Key Route Network will only be allowed if this would not unduly restrict the capacity of the road or cause harm to highway safety, and where no more suitable alternative exists or would be provided by the development.
6. Direct access from new development on to the Strategic Road Network will only be permitted as a last resort, where agreed by National Highways and where the necessary levels of transport accessibility and safety could not be more suitably provided by other means.
7. Where rail facilities are available or would be made so as part of a development generating significant movement of freight, this will be regarded as a benefit.
8. Development proposals must not prevent or jeopardise the implementation of planned transport schemes unless it has been demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Council that:
 - a) the transport scheme is no longer required;
 - b) there is a feasible and viable alternative to it;
 - c) or the benefits of the proposed development would outweigh those of the planned transport scheme.

Planned transport schemes include but are not limited to proposals for new or upgraded footpath, cycle path, bridleway, road, rail, bus and / or other public transport facilities that would be on the same site as, adjacent to or be otherwise affected by the development.
9. Further details of the operation of this Policy, for example those related to the Council's vehicle and cycle parking standards, standards for vehicle charging point provision, and to the requirements concerning transport assessments, transport statements and travel plans will be set out in a future

review of the Council's Ensuring a Choice of Travel Supplementary Planning Document.

Policy LPD01: Ensuring Quality Design

All proposals for development will be expected, as appropriate having regard to their scale, location, and nature, to meet or exceed the following requirements:

1. Quality of the Built Environment

- a) Maintain or enhance the character and appearance of the local environment, with a focus on the importance of local distinctiveness, as well as using good design to improve the quality of areas that may have become run down and be in need of regeneration, for example with regard to the siting, layout, massing, scale, design and materials used in any building work, the building-to-plot ratio and landscaping;
- b) Avoid causing unacceptable harm to the amenities of the local area and surrounding residential and other land uses and occupiers;
- c) Ensure that the occupiers of new developments will enjoy a high standard of amenity and will not be unacceptably affected by neighbouring uses and vice versa;
- d) Link in with surrounding movement patterns and not be prejudicial to the development of neighbouring land for example by creating landlocked sites;
- e) Be located and designed so as to minimise opportunities for crime, for example by maximising natural surveillance;
- f) Respect any existing natural features of the site by conserving, restoring or enhancing biodiversity and minimising any adverse impact on important natural features;
- g) Provide landscaping, including tree-lined streets, as an integral part of the development, protecting existing landscape features such as trees, hedges and watercourses and enhancing the public realm;
- h) Encourage the inclusion of, or make a contribution to public art within appropriate schemes (for example where the development would be of a substantial size and / or in a prominent gateway or town centre location);
- i) Provide for the needs of special groups in the community such as the elderly and those with disabilities as identified in Policy LPC01; and

- j) Protect the setting, integrity, and character of heritage assets in accordance with Policy LPC11.

2. Environmental Quality

- a) Ensure protection of watercourses and other water bodies from encroachment, modification and degradation and enable water bodies that are already modified or degraded to be improved to form sustainable, natural environments where feasible;
- b) Minimise and mitigate to acceptable levels any effects that the development may have on air quality; light, land and / or water pollution (including contamination of soil, surface water and groundwater resources); and levels of noise, vibration, smells, dust and electromagnetic fields in the area;
- c) Ensure that any contamination or ground stability issues that exist on the site of the proposed development would be remediated to an appropriate standard, taking into account its intended use and making use of sustainable remediation technologies; and
- d) Include satisfactory arrangements for the disposal of foul sewage, liquid waste, trade effluent and contaminated surface water.

3. Resource Management

- a) Ensure that development involving demolition and / or construction works minimises the generation of waste and promotes the use of recycled and / or locally sourced building materials in accordance with policy WM8 of the Merseyside and Halton Joint Waste Local Plan 2013 (or any equivalent policy in a successor document);
- b) Avoid prejudicing the delivery/improvement of utility infrastructure;
- c) Promote energy efficiency and the generation and use of low carbon and renewable energy in accordance with Policy LPC13; and
- d) Avoid loss of or damage to high quality agricultural land and / or soils (except where clearly justified by wider public benefits) and minimise such loss or damage where this is shown to be unavoidable.

Policy LPA06 of the Local Plan, as noted above, confirms that the Council's strategic priorities for the transport network are to facilitate economic growth, enable good levels of accessibility between homes, jobs and services, improve air quality and minimise carbon emissions, and sets out the criteria to achieve these aims.

Policy LPD01 of the Local Plan, as noted above, seeks to ensure that new development is of a high quality and provides buildings and places that will function

well and be visually attractive and resource efficient. Good design relates both to the appearance of a development and how well it will work in practical terms. All new development must be designed to enable safe and easy movement and passage into and through the development for all potential users, including those of limited mobility, pedestrians, cyclists, public transport users, car users, and for servicing, deliveries, and collection.

In addition to policies LPA06 and LPD01, the Local Plan contains other policies that are relevant to this SPD which, amongst others, include:

- Policy LPA01: Spatial Strategy
- Policy LPA02: Development Principles
- Policy LPD02: Design and Layout of New Housing

2. Scope of the Street Design Guide SPD

2.1 Proposed SPD Contents

The Street Design Guide SPD will aim to promote high standards of highway design that reflect nationally recognised best-practice and facilitate the delivery of high quality residential, employment and mixed-use developments in St Helens. The SPD

is relevant to all aspects of the built environment and will help encourage good design in terms of how developments, routes and spaces relate to one another to create streets and public spaces that are safe, accessible and pleasant to use.

The Street Design Guide SPD will aim to:

- Provide street layouts which meet the needs of all users and do not allow vehicles to dominate
- Create an environment that is safe for all street users and in which people are encouraged to walk, cycle and use public transport, and where they feel safe doing so
- Provide well designed streets which accommodate all functions and purposes (including provision for utility services, street lighting and drainage) and set out how their inter-relationship should be considered from the outset
- Help create quality environments in which to live, work and play, and where people feel a sense of ownership and pride in their street
- Achieve optimum highway design whilst providing high quality and varied spaces

The broad context and coverage of the Street Design Guide SPD will be as follows:

- Introduction and Aims/Objectives
- Policy Context
- General Highway and Street Design Principles
- Highway and Street Design Principles
- Residential Developments
- Industrial Developments
- Mixed Use Developments
- Junction Layouts and Visibility Requirements
- Materials and Construction
- Street Furniture (including bins, art, seating and cycling docking)
- Pedestrian Movement, Cycling and Inclusive Design (including crossings)
- Car Parking Requirements (including electric vehicle charging infrastructure)
- Public Transport Design and Integration (including taxi ranks)
- Servicing, Vehicle Tracking and Turning Space
- Road Markings, Signage, Traffic Regulation Orders, Sections 38 and 238 of the Highways Act (1980) and Highway Structures

- Landscape Considerations within the Highway (including pocket parks)
- Public Utilities and Drainage (including sustainable drainage systems (SuDs))

3. Time Schedule of SPD Preparation and Next Steps

3.1 Timescale for SPD preparation and adoption

Below is an indicative timescale for the preparation and adoption of the SPD.



3.2 Next Steps

This consultation will run for a minimum of four weeks. Following the consultation, Council Officers will review comments received, which will inform the drafting of the SPD. A public consultation will then be carried out on the draft SPD.

Following the consultation on the draft SPD, comments received will be reviewed with appropriate amendments made to the SPD before it is adopted at a St Helens Cabinet meeting. A Consultation Statement will be produced containing details of all those consulted when preparing the SPD, a summary of the main issues raised and how those issues have been addressed within the SPD.

4. How to get involved

This document has been prepared to identify the scope of the emerging Street Design Guide SPD and raise awareness of, and interest in, the document. Comments are sought on the scope that has been set out through this document and the questions in Section 5 below.

A response form has been created which allows for comments and responses on the questions contained within this document, along with any additional comments if required. This can be found at <https://sthelens.gov.uk/SDP-Scoping-Consultation>

Answering the questions in Section 5 is optional and the Council will also accept other forms of written response.

You can complete the response form and return it by email or post to:

Email: planningpolicy@sthelens.gov.uk

Post: Planning Policy Team, Development Plans, St Helens Borough Council, PO Box 512, ST HELENS, WA10 9JX.

All comments on this scoping report should be submitted by Thursday 13 June 2024.

5. Consultation Questions

Q1: Do you support the proposal to prepare a Street Design Guide SPD for St Helens? If not, what are the reasons as to why the Council should not prepare a Street Design Guide SPD?

Q2: Do you agree with the broad context and coverage of the Street Design Guide SPD, as set out in this document?

Q3: Are there any other matters relating to Street Design that should be addressed through the Street Design Guide SPD, beyond those set out in this document? If so, please explain why.

Q4: What level of detail should the Street Design Guide SPD go into, for example general advice or specific guidance (with illustrations and case studies included)?

Q5: Are there any specific reports, documents, or guidance that you think we should be considering as part of the evidence base to inform the Street Design Guide SPD?

Q6: If you believe a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) or a Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) is required, please set out why (please see accompanying SEA and HRA Screening Report for further information).