



Walsall Council

*Development Control
Committee*

8th January 2008

REPORT OF THE INTERIM HEAD OF DELIVERY AND DEVELOPMENT

Consultation on Draft Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) “Designing a Better Walsall”

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To advise Members of the Development Control Committee of the draft Supplementary Planning Document “Designing a Better Walsall”.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- i) That the report be noted;
- ii) That Cabinet be recommended to adopt the Supplementary Planning Document “Designing a Better Walsall”

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None arising from this report

4. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Within Council policy. All planning applications to which the SPD will apply relate to local and national planning policy.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

With specific regard to matters of the design quality of development, the briefing of members as to the outcome of individual appeals made by the Planning Inspectorate will enable members to keep abreast of planning issues relevant to urban design as may be raised within individual cases. Appeal decisions are material considerations and can be material considerations in the determination of subsequent applications where relevant.

6. **EQUAL OPPORTUNITY IMPLICATIONS**

None arising from the report.

7. **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT**

The impact of decisions made by the Planning Inspectorate on the environment is included in appeal decisions.

8. **WARD(S) AFFECTED**

All.

9. **CONSULTEES**

None.

10. **CONTACT OFFICER**

Katy Craddock – Extension 3653

11. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Draft SPD Designing a Better Walsall

Katy Craddock, Principal Urban Designer

1. Planning Policy Statement 1 (PPS1) states that good planning is indivisible from good design and that new developments should take the opportunities to improve the appearance and quality of an area. Circular 5/2005 states that Planning Obligations should be necessary to make the proposed development acceptable in planning terms; are relevant to planning and directly related in scale and kind to the proposed development. They must also be reasonable in all other respects.
2. The Council is required to comply with national planning policy in the form of guidance notes and Government Circulars together with policies ENV32, ENV33 and ENV34 of the Unitary Development Plan (UDP).
3. The Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) "Designing a Better Walsall" is a document which builds on these Unitary Development Plan (UDP) policies and explains in further detail how good quality design can be achieved, in terms of buildings and the public realm, based on sound urban design principles that reflect the borough's local distinctiveness and character. A copy of the SPD is attached as an Appendix. The SPD also advises on how the community can be involved in the creation of public art, as part of improving the quality of the public realm and engendering civic pride. The SPD proposes a structured way of calculating the costs charged to developers through Section 106 agreements for the provision of public art based on the amount of built floorspace per square metre that a development creates. The calculation of the contribution, as with other adopted SPDs, is based on an average rate per bedroom.
4. In terms of citizen impact the SPD will help to ensure that the quality of built environment makes a positive contribution to all aspects of peoples' quality of life, including the attractiveness of the borough. It should prevent poor quality development having a detrimental impact upon the visual appearance of the borough and prevent the creation of places that feel unsafe. Improving the design quality of the borough will contribute to attracting investment and improving the economy of the town.
5. With regards to community safety the SPD will contribute significantly to the creation of safe and welcoming places and spaces and prevent development that undermines community cohesion, including the promotion of Secure by Design standards where they raise the overall quality of design.
6. Planning officers negotiate with developers on planning applications to raise the quality of urban design across the borough of Walsall according to the design principles of sustainability, safety and security, character, continuity, ease of movement, legibility, diversity, and adaptability. These principles are applied to create attractive, safe environments comprised of a high quality public realm and well designed sustainable buildings. Planning applications will be assessed against the policies of the SPD in terms of they design quality.
7. The SPD also proposes Section 106 contributions towards acquiring public art that involves community participation from all major developments. These financial contributions would promote improving the built environment and public face of Walsall in addition to encouraging a sense of civic stewardship and pride amongst Walsall's communities.

8. The SPD will be applicable to all planning applications, unless otherwise justified in the planning officer's report, and will therefore include those applications that are presented to Development Control Committee. The report will include details of the head of terms of Section 106 contributions, including public art, along with any justification provided by the developer for reducing the costs of the contributions.