

Council Agenda Item 8iii

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Date	9 th April 2013 (Executive), 23 rd July 2013 (Council)

Ward (s) affected	All
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Subject	Proposed Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Larger Rural Villages Character Appraisals SPD; and • Landscape SPD
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RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Council adopts the Larger Rural Villages Character Appraisal SPD and the Landscape SPD as Supplementary Planning Documents.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report concerns two proposed Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs).

The draft Larger Villages Character Appraisal SPD covers the six "larger rural villages" i.e. Beare Green, Brockham, Capel, Charlwood, Hookwood and Westcott. The Landscape SPD covers the whole District, focusing on the natural landscape and the setting of towns and villages.

Alongside the Built Up Areas Character Appraisals (adopted February 2010) these SPDs will inform preparation of the Land Allocations Plan and will help the Council fulfil its Corporate Priorities under the heading of Environment.

The SPDs were published for public consultation from 18 January to 1 March 2013. Following amendments, they were approved by the Executive at its meeting of 9 April 2013 and are recommended to the Council for adoption as Supplementary Planning Documents.

* CORPORATE PRIORITIES

Environment: The SPDs will contribute to the Corporate Priority of improving the quality of our built environment whilst preserving the character and integrity of our towns and villages (including their landscape setting). They will provide additional tools to assist with the appraisal of sites put forward for consideration as part of the Land Allocations Plan.

The Council has the authority to determine the Recommendations

1.0 BACKGROUND/INTRODUCTION

Landscape SPD

1. Preparation of a Landscape SPD fulfills a commitment under Core Strategy Policy CS13. The SPD draws together material from a variety of published sources, assessing the landscape in and around Mole Valley. Key source documents include the AONB Management Plan and a County-wide landscape study undertaken in 1997.
2. The SPD uses the boundaries of 14 Landscape Character Areas (LCAs) identified in the County study. They are given a local focus by highlighting the characteristics which are particular to the Mole Valley area. The SPD provides a Character Profile for each LCA which includes a map, descriptive text, a summary of key characteristics, identification of threats and opportunities for landscape enhancement, and consideration of the landscape setting of settlements.
3. The SPD also provides general guidance (in Chapter 3), on landscape issues and how they should be addressed by developers and those responding to planning applications.
4. Members may be aware that, since the Landscape SPD was published for consultation and reported to the Executive, work has been progressing on a County-wide Landscape Character Assessment by Hankinson Duckett Associates (HDA), on behalf of the Surrey Planning Officers Association.
5. The HDA study is the first stage in the process of working towards a possible boundary review of the Surrey Hills AONB. At this stage no commitment has been made to proceeding with boundary changes which is dependant on there being adequate resources in Natural England to take it forward. With threatened cuts to Natural England, there is some uncertainty. The second stage, which is currently being worked on, is the assessment of natural beauty using criteria published by Natural England. Some conclusions are expected in the autumn and, if a decision is taken by Natural England to proceed with the inclusion of additional areas within the AONB, a full public consultation will be undertaken before final decisions are made.
6. Despite the fact that a landscape character assessment has been undertaken by HDA for the AONB and will eventually be extended to the whole of the County, this work has not yet been completed and published. It therefore makes sense to proceed with the Landscape SPD undertaken in house, in order that it can be adopted within a timescale which allows the contents to be used during preparation of the Land Allocations Plan.
7. It is not anticipated that there will be conflict between the Council's SPD and the HDA work. In the future it may be decided to combine them, but in the meantime

the HDA study can be used informally to supplement the Council's own landscape SPD.

Larger Rural Villages Character Appraisals SPD

8. In February 2010, the Council adopted Built Up Areas Character Appraisals for the settlements of Dorking, North Holmwood, Pixham, Leatherhead, Ashted, Bookham and Fetcham. These are the areas where it is anticipated that the majority of development will take place during the life of the Core Strategy.
9. The Core Strategy also identified six "Larger Rural Villages" which are inset from the Green Belt. Within these six villages, the Core Strategy allows for infilling and limited development on previously developed land. With that in mind, it was considered appropriate to prepare a similar Character Appraisal SPD for the six larger villages.
10. The draft SPD has a similar structure to the Landscape SPD, with general advice as to how the guidance should be used, followed by a series of Character Profiles; one for each village. Each village is divided into a number of Character Areas, which share common characteristics. A number of key characteristics are identified within each Character Area. Maps are included within the text to identify the boundaries, with a larger map of the whole village appearing in an Appendix.
11. It is recognised that, since work on the SPD was begun, the village of Westcott has embarked on the process of preparing a Neighbourhood Development Plan. These SPDs will still be a tool for the Council when making planning decisions within and around the village and they will sit alongside and inform the preparation of a Neighbourhood Development Plan in due course.
12. Photographs have been added to the SPD since it was considered by the Executive, to illustrate key points in the text.

Consultation

13. The SPDs were published on 13 January 2013, with a six week period for public consultation, ending 1 March 2013. Nineteen responses were received, copies of which are attached as an Appendix to this report.
14. Twelve comments relate to the Landscape SPD and twelve to the Larger Rural Villages SPD (five responses relate to both SPDs). None of the comments raise objections to the general thrust of the SPDs. Four respondents express support and have no further comments.
15. The issues raised are summarized in the tables attached to this report, along with the amendments made to the SPD, where appropriate.
16. The Surrey Hills AONB Board is concerned that the Landscape SPD should not be seen as a substitute for site-specific landscape character assessment by qualified consultants, where land is proposed for development, either as part of the Local Plan process or through a planning application. They are particularly concerned about proposals which could affect the landscape setting of Dorking

and other settlements, and/or views into or out of the AONB. Amendments have been incorporated to re-emphasise the special status of the AONB and make it plain that developers will be required to submit detailed landscape character assessment where the circumstances of the site mean that this is justified.

17. As a general comment, Capel Parish Council welcomed the fact that the Larger Rural Villages SPD reflects written submissions which they made to officers at an early stage in preparing the SPD. However, they felt that the Parish Council could have had a larger role in preparing the SPD text and the Council could take more account of the Parish Council's views, which are based on professional planning advice.
18. Where consultees have made detailed comments, they mainly relate to the way that areas are described, the precise location of boundaries between character areas or valued locally-valued landscape features which should be given a higher profile. Most of the points raised bring a valuable local perspective. The SPDs have been amended in light of comments, as summarised in the attached tables. Two of the Character Areas in the Larger Rural Villages SPD have been amended in response to comments raised by Capel Parish Council.
19. Some consultees raise issues related to the current consultation on the Green Belt review, regarding the limits of areas where development should be contemplated. This is outside the scope of these SPDs.

Financial Implications – Preparation of both SPDs is covered by the existing budget provision for the production of Local Plan documents.

Legal Implications – Publication of the Landscape SPD fulfills a commitment made under the Core Strategy. Both SPDs will assist the Council and those submitting and commenting on planning applications in interpretation and implementation of Core Strategy Policies CS13 and CS14.

2.0 CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Monitoring Officer commentary – Comments from the Monitoring Officer have been incorporated in this report.

S151 Officer commentary – Nothing to add.

Risk Implications - The SDPs support robust decision-making in connection with Local Plan documents and planning applications. The risk associated with planning decisions has been identified and managed through the business unit's risk register; adequate controls are in place to mitigate the risk.

Equalities Implications - No equalities implications have been identified.

Employment Issues – No employment issues have been identified.

Sustainability Issues - The protection of landscape and village character is consistent with the objectives of sustainable development as defined in the NPPF.

Consultation - The draft SPDs were subject to internal consultation and shared with key stakeholders, as outlined above. A public consultation process has taken place and amendments have been made in response to issues raised (see Tables 1 and 2).

Communications – Adoption of the SPDs will be publicised online, in accordance with the requirements of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. A Press Release is planned.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Copies of 19 representations from interested parties (attached as Appendix to this report).

Table 1: Larger Villages Character Appraisal SPD - Issues raised in Public Consultation

Name	Organisation	Summary of main points raised	Proposed Amendments
Pauline Olive	Resident	Urges that Green Belt/green areas around Hookwood are protected at all costs. Open spaces are enjoyed by local people for walking and accessing the countryside. Development would erode the openness and rural feel.	Noted – the amendments made at the request of the Charlwood Society and Charlwood Parish Council (see below) include additional content about the significance of open spaces around the village, including along the River Mole.
Peter Collis	Resident	Suggested amendments to the description of Hawksmoore Drive (para 4.13).	Para 4.13 amended
Mr Dino Adriano	Resident	Some of the areas listed in para 6.9 are in the Parish of Ockley and will be covered by the Neighbourhood Development Plan (NPD) which is being prepared for Ockley. Refers to Green Belt review consultation, which confirms that there is no intention to review the area of the Green Belt within the Ockley NPD.	Para 6.9 amended to note this point. Noted.
Jackie Coke	Capel Parish Council	Detailed comments about village profiles for Capel and Beare Green, including some recommendations about positions of boundary lines (see proposed amendments, right). The inclusion of material submitted by Parish Council in March 2010 is welcomed, but the Parish Council would have liked to be more involved in the production of the document. The Parish Council's views on planning matters are based on professional advice and should carry more weight in MVDC decisions.	Amendments are proposed to boundaries as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beare Green: include Old Horsham Rd in Area 2, as suggested. • Capel: include frontage properties south of Laundry Way in The Street, as suggested. <p>It is not proposed to merge Beare Green Areas 2 and 3, as it is considered that the housing in these areas is of a markedly different density and character. However, textual amendments are proposed, to acknowledge that both areas have ready access to Great Turners Wood.</p> <p>The Parish Council also requested that Beare Green Area</p>

			<p>4 be enlarged, but this is not considered an appropriate change. The existing boundary represents an area with continuous frontage development and takes in the larger non-agricultural uses (e.g. the primary school, brickworks and park homes site) on the edge of the village.</p> <p>Boundaries have not been enlarged around rear gardens in Capel and Beare Green. It is acknowledged that the gardens contribute to character, but the designated village boundary has been followed, to avoid confusion by having two boundary lines in close proximity.</p> <p>Capel Recreation Ground remains in the "The Street " character area, but its significance to the setting of Vicarage Lane is acknowledged in the text.</p> <p>Description of Turner House deleted and function of recreation ground clarified.</p>
Matthew Ellis	Waverley BC	No comment.	None
Katherine Harrison	Surrey CC	Recommendations as to additional material on historic environment issues	Additional references to listed buildings added, where recommended by local amenity bodies & Parish Councils. Addition of Historic Environment issues in Chapter 3 and mention of Areas of High Archaeological Potential where they lie within the Larger Rural Villages.
Francesca Barker	Natural England	No specific comments, but proposals that are considered in the context of this SPD should be considered in the context of threats and opportunities for landscape, biodiversity and for habitat networks.	Noted
Charles Muriithi	Environment Agency	Add reference to areas prone to flooding, particularly in Brockham, Charlwood and Hookwood.	Amendments made to highlight locations where flooding is a known issue.
		Include links to flooding policies and technical	Not considered appropriate – flood management is not part

		guidance in introduction.	of purpose of document and does not cross-refer to technical policies on other topics.
Alan Jones	Horley Town Council	No comment	None
Patrick Cox	Charlwood Society	<p>Several detailed amendments suggested for descriptions of Charlwood and Hookwood.</p> <p>The Society also elaborates on the issues in this particularly sensitive part of the Green Belt bordering Gatwick Airport and the benefits that have been obtained through careful management of the River Mole corridor and strict enforcement of the Green Belt. The Society believes it of paramount importance that the open area bordering the airport boundary should continue to be preserved.</p>	<p>Amendments have been incorporated, generally as suggested, with some changes to phrasing, factual corrections and rewording to draw in related issues raised by Charlwood Parish Council.</p> <p>Noted</p>
Peter Barclay	Charlwood Parish Council	Several detailed amendments suggested for descriptions of Charlwood and Hookwood.	Amendments have been incorporated, generally as suggested, with some changes to phrasing, factual corrections and rewording to draw in related issues raised by Charlwood Society.
Alan	Resident	<p>The part of Beare Green west of the A24 is not really a village and has already experienced excessively cramped development. Core Strategy policy to allow further development here is misguided.</p> <p>Chapter 3 is aimed at developers and is irrelevant in a public consultation document.</p> <p>Makes recommendations as to which village boundaries should be regarded as sacrosanct.</p>	<p>Noted, but it is not the function of this SPD to revisit the designation of the village or proposals for the location of development as set out in the Core Strategy.</p> <p>Developers are among the target users of the SPD so it is valid to include guidance for them.</p> <p>Views on the outer limits of the village envelope are for the Green Belt review and will be taken into account as part of that process.</p>

		<p>Mention of introduction of street lighting is misconceived.</p> <p>Amendments are requested to the description of football pitch and bungalows at Leith Lea.</p>	<p>The SPD does not propose introduction of street lighting. References to illumination in section 3 are specifically intended to ensure that developers exercise care in areas which are <i>not</i> illuminated, where this is part of their character.</p> <p>Amendments made.</p>
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Table 2 - Landscape SPD – Issues raised in Public Consultation

Name	Organisation	Response	Proposed Amendments
Penny Tyson-Davies	British Horse Society	<p>Supportive of the SPD, which is stated to describe the landscape extremely well.</p> <p>Makes observations on paragraph 4.15, Soils / impact of “horsiculture” and issues around hedgerow maintenance. Recommends that the Council better enforces maintenance of roadside hedges, trees and verges and places more importance on the maintenance of public bridleways.</p>	<p>Amendments to 4.15 to elaborate on issues raised.</p> <p>Maintenance of rights of way and roadside planting is a County matter, but additional material has been inserted in Chapter 3, to highlight these issues to developers where better management might be secured as part of a scheme.</p>
Roger Bennett	Ashted Residents Association	No comments with respect to description of landscape setting of Ashted.	None
Brian Mellor	Fetcham Residents Association	Has reviewed the Landscape SPD and supports its adoption.	None
Caroline Brown	Leatherhead Residents Association	<p>Comments that Leatherhead is a rather “hidden” town – surprisingly well hidden from most of the surrounding areas.</p> <p>Comments that the names of the Landscape Character Areas are unhelpful and should be changed to be specific to Mole Valley (e.g. North Leatherhead and Ashted, instead of Esher and Epsom)</p> <p>Highlights the following features which are not currently mentioned:</p>	<p>Noted in Landscape Setting section.</p> <p>LCA names are taken from County landscape study and it is considered appropriate to keep them, in order to aid cross-reference between the two. Footnotes have been added to explain this, in the areas which have names from outside the District.</p> <p>References added to these locations</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teazle Wood • Patchesham Park • Ancient chalk grasslands on Box Hill - needs more prominence • Nower Wood educational centre • Juniper Hall • High Ashurst <p>Landscape issues which could be addressed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ryebrook (clogged with debris in vicinity of Teazle Wood) • Widen and improve road to refuse site • Prominence of Elmer Treatment Works. 	<p>Included in description of Teazle Wood</p> <p>Not a landscape issue</p> <p>Visual impact is limited to specific viewpoints and this is considered too detailed a point for a document of this nature</p>
Jackie Coke	Capel Parish Council	Welcomes inclusion of material submitted by Parish Council in March 2010, but concerned that Parish Council were not more involved in production of document. PC's views on planning matters are based on professional advice and should carry more weight in MVDC decisions.	Noted
Matthew Ellis	Waverley BC	No comment.	None
Mike Waite	Surrey Wildlife Trust	Generally supportive, but makes several detailed suggestions about how to raise profile of biodiversity issues alongside purely landscape issues. Also corrections and updates to terminology.	Amendments made as recommended
Katherine Harrison	Surrey CC	Would like to see more emphasis on historic environment issues and the resources available from County to understand these.	References included to sources of historic environment data which are available from Historic Environment Record.

Francesca Barker	Natural England	<p>Welcomes SPD, which they feel offers appropriate protection for the AONB and AGLV, and clear criteria for considering development in different areas. They do not perceive any conflict with work towards review of the AONB boundaries, although the SPD will need updating if AONB review expands boundaries to include AGLV.</p> <p>Advice given on progress towards updating National Character Areas and recommends that reference is included in SPD.</p> <p>SPD should include consideration of the capacity of the landscape to accommodate renewable energy infrastructure.</p> <p>SPD should make reference to need for high quality design of developments which take account landscape characteristics.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Reference to update included</p> <p>This is considered to be more appropriately addressed at planning application stage, should any proposals be submitted. The SPD will provide the context for understanding the capacity of the landscape to accommodate specific proposals.</p> <p>Chapter 3 aims to do this. Wording has been updated to more closely reflect wording in NPPF re “high quality design”</p>
Charles Muriithi	Environment Agency	No comment, but section on River and Drainage systems could include a section detailing flood risk.	Cross-reference included to refer users to Mole Valley Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, which includes comprehensive information on flooding.
Alan Jones	Horley Town Council	No comment	
Clive Smith	Surrey Hills Board	<p>Emphasises need for professionally-prepared site-specific landscape impact assessments on sites where landscape is a planning issue. This SPD is well-prepared but is not a substitute for such assessments.</p> <p>Nothing in the SPD should override or outweigh any landscape designation or associated planning policy (eg</p>	<p>Additional reference to risks associated with reliance on vegetation to screen development.</p> <p>Editing of “Actions” at the end of each Character Profile in the Landscape SPD, to remove those which are generic landscape considerations and better covered in Section 3.</p>

	<p>NPPF policy framework for AONB).</p> <p>The document should be updated before final printing to reflect the current position re AONB boundary review. It should also identify areas of the AGLV which have been identified as sharing characteristics of the AONB.</p> <p>The section on the “Role of the SPD” is welcome, but should be expanded to note the dangers of relying on tree cover to screen a development, since trees can be removed or lost through disease, storms etc.</p> <p>References to “natural beauty” should be amended to “landscape and scenic beauty”, consistent with the Surrey Hills Management Plan definition.</p> <p>Issues are raised with respect to the consistency of “Actions” at the end of each area profile.</p>	<p>Additional emphasis on the need for site-specific landscape analysis, especially within the AONB or where views to or from the AONB might be affected.</p> <p>Factual updating regarding current status of AONB boundary review and identification of parts of the AGLV which have been noted as having identical characteristics to AONB.</p>
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