

Draft Sustainable Drainage Systems Vision for the New Eastern Villages

Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

Planning Committee

Date: 12th April 2016

Author: Head of Planning, Regulatory Services and Heritage

Parish / Wards Affected: All, but particularly those in the east of the Borough

Purpose

- To update the Planning Committee on the preparation of the Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) Vision for the New Eastern Villages Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), and
- To seek approval from the Planning Committee for public consultation on the draft SPD.

Recommendation

That the Planning Committee:

1. endorses the draft SuDS Vision for the New Eastern Villages Supplementary Planning Document for a six week public consultation as soon as reasonably practical, in accordance with the arrangements set out in paragraph 8.1 of this report; and
2. authorises the Head of Planning, Regulatory Services and Heritage, in consultation with the Director of Law and Democratic Services to update the draft SPD in accordance with recent national guidance and to make minor changes to the content of the document, if required, prior to carrying out the public consultation.

1 Background & Reason

Local Policy Context

- 1.1 Policy NC3 of the adopted Swindon Borough Local Plan 2026 (Local Plan) allocates a new mixed use development of about 8,000 new homes with associated employment, education, retail and leisure uses to the east of the A419¹, referred to

¹ Including Rowborough and South Marston Village expansion, north of the A420

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as the New Eastern Villages (NEV). Policy NC3 also seeks to ensure the risk of flooding from the development is minimised, both within the development and at existing neighbouring sites, as well as encouraging the use of existing watercourses such as the River Cole, to be utilised as areas of biodiversity.

- 1.2 Policy EN6 of the Local Plan seeks to minimise the risk and impact of flooding through the effective assessment and management of development proposals. Specifically all developments shall be required to provide a drainage strategy. Developments will be expected to incorporate sustainable drainage systems and ensure that run-off rates are attenuated to greenfield run-off rates. Higher (run-off) rates would need to be justified and the risks quantified. In addition, SuDS should seek to enhance water quality and diversity. The Local Plan also makes it clear that for major developments a complete and functional SuDS design should be provided at outline planning application stage, and early engagement with the Council is essential.

National Policy Context

- 1.3 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the Planning Practice Guidance² (PPG) suggest priority should be given to schemes which uses SuDS and that SuDS should be used unless it can be demonstrated that they would be inappropriate. The SuDS Vision for NEV elaborates on these requirements by providing guidance on how to incorporate SuDS within development proposals to ensure an integrated and sustainable approach to drainage throughout the allocation.
- 1.4 The draft SPD supports the Council's Corporate vision and pledges, the core principles of the Local Plan, and the stated objectives of the NPPF.
- 1.5 Due to the requirements within national and local policy, SuDS can play an important role in flood and pollution prevention, as well as providing environmental and aesthetic value. To ensure a cohesive approach to SuDS across the NEV development, this draft SPD has been produced to inform pre-application discussions and assist with the formulation of masterplans. It also provides guidance on effective design solutions for SuDS schemes to encourage current planning applications to create high-quality sustainable communities.

² Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015

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2 Detail

- 2.1 Sustainable drainage systems employ drainage techniques which mimic natural drainage to manage water at or near the surface. These techniques are used in series to manage water flow and help treat pollution in a process known as the management train. Each part of the management train contributes to controlling the quantity and quality of water entering the wider environment.
- 2.2 The effective design of drainage for the NEV development will enhance the development, helping to create sustainable, well-designed places where people want to live, work and spend time. In particular the effective design of the drainage within the NEV can help the development to:
- sensitively and positively respond to the existing landscape context, natural and historic assets and the character and identity of the surrounding villages as well as enhancing biodiversity and green infrastructure;
 - create vibrant, attractive places that are functional, durable and capable of adapting to accommodate changing lifestyles in line with sustainable communities;
 - conserve and enhance natural systems, watercourses, biodiversity and landscape settings, including integration with green infrastructure to help mitigate and facilitate adaptation to climate change.
- 2.3 The council commissioned CH2M to produce a draft SuDs Vision which can be found in **Appendix 1** of this report. To enable the draft SPD to be progressed in an expedient manner, an early engagement process was taken to key stakeholders to seek initial views. These stakeholders included Parish Councils; Local Flood Groups; Ward Councillors; Thames Water; Environment Agency; Wilts and Berks Canal Trust; and Developers.
- 2.4 Following the preparation of the initial draft SPD, CIRIA have produced a report updating drainage and flooding guidance. It is the intention of Officers to update the draft SPD to acknowledge and incorporate key aspects of the CIRIA report, prior to the draft SPD going out for public consultation. In order not to delay proceedings with current planning applications and the progression of the NEV; it was considered necessary to bring the SPD to Committee prior to making these amendments. The nature of the update is such that Officers do not consider the changes to materially alter the SPD presented within Appendix 1.

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- 2.5 It is important that the views of local residents and businesses are also taken into account in finalising the SPD. Therefore it is proposed to subject the draft SPD to a period of 6 week public consultation.

3 Alternative Options

- 3.1 The Council could delay consultation on the SPD and chose to rely solely on the Local Plan allocation to guide the detailed delivery of the NEV. The Local Plan sets the strategic policy framework for Swindon but this alone is not considered adequate to ensure all aspects of the vision are delivered, managed and secured in a phased and co-ordinated manner.
- 3.2 Delay to the publication and future adoption of the SPD is likely to prejudice the Council's ability to establish a comprehensive planning framework to guide the nature and quality of the development to the detriment of the proper planning of this strategic development. This would result in a missed opportunity to coordinate planning obligations at the strategic and local level and to secure the timely delivery of infrastructure across the development.

4 Implications, Diversity Impact Assessment and Risk Management

Financial and Procurement Implications

- 4.1 The financial implications arising from publishing and consulting on the Draft NEV Planning Obligations SPD are to be met from the Planning budgets for 2016/2017.
- 4.2 The financial implications of coordinating the Council's approach to drainage and flooding at the NEV are significant. Identifying and encouraging the implementation of SuDS in advance of development, will ensure that the Council will not be required to fund additional infrastructure or maintenance costs required by new developments from its own budgets.

Legal and Human Rights Implications

- 4.3 Human rights legislation has been considered in the preparation of this report and it is considered to be compatible with convention rights.
- 4.4 The preparation and adoption of the SPD is a process covered by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and associated regulations and amendments.

5 All Other Implications (including Staff, Sustainability, Health, Rural, Crime and Disorder)

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Edward Snook, New Eastern Villages Planning Team, Planning Department, Direct Dial 01793 466427, nev@swindon.gov.uk.

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- 5.1 There are no immediate staffing implications of such a document, which provide further guidance to Policy NC3 and Policy EN6 in assessing proposals for development at the New Eastern Villages.
- 5.2 The Council has a duty to ensure that the preparation of the SPD is in accordance with the sustainability principles of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
- 5.3 The draft SPD conforms to the policies in the Local Plan which has already been subject to a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) incorporating SEA and Health Impact Assessment (HIA) to ensure that the impact of proposals can be minimised with the least negative impact possible.

Diversity Impact Assessment

- 5.4 The draft SPD conforms to the policies in the Local Plan which has already undergone a DIA and no negative impacts were predicted.

6 Risk Management

- 6.1 Delaying the process of consultation and eventual adoption of this SPD carries less risk in the short term, but much higher risk over the medium-long term, as it would result in the lack of adequate tools necessary through the Planning System to uphold the detailed aspects of the policy and the Council's strategic objective to deliver sustainable development at the NEV.

7 Consultees

- 7.1 The Board Director, Resources (Section 151 Officer) and Director of Law and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer) are consulted in respect of all reports.

8 Next Steps

- 8.1 If Planning Committee approve the recommendations of this report, the draft SPD will be made available for public consultation for a period of six weeks as soon as reasonably practical in accordance with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement in Planning. Copies of the draft SPD, and accompanying documents, would be distributed to a wide range of statutory consultees, including Parish Councils. The documents would be made available for inspection at the Civic Offices, at libraries in the Borough, and on the Council's website.
- 8.2 Following completion of the public consultation period, all representations and suggested minor changes by the Council to the Plan will be submitted to a subsequent Planning Committee for adoption under the Planning and Compulsory

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Purchase Act 2004 (as amended). Should the document, as a result of the consultation, need major revision, it will be recommended a revised draft is produced for consultation.

9 Background Papers

9.1 Appendix 1 – SuDs Vision for New Eastern Villages Draft SPD (March 2016)