

# Village Design Statements

## *A guidance note for local communities*



*A Village Design Statement is an assessment of the character and local distinctiveness as valued by local people. The purpose of this leaflet is to explain how the Forward Plans Group can assist local communities in preparing Village Design Statements, and how the Council will take Village Design Statements into account when making planning decisions.*

### **Introduction**

The Countryside Agency promotes Village Design Statements (VDS) as part of the Community Planning process. The VDS is intended to provide an assessment of village character and local distinctiveness as valued by local people. They are prepared by the local community, will provide an illustrated record of local distinctiveness, and make recommendations to guide the design of future development. Village Design Statements will complement the existing District Design Guides by providing more detailed information with a strong local context. This local detail can be a material consideration when considering planning applications.

### **Can the VDS be adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document?**

The reform of the planning system has led to the Government introducing a number of procedural changes which affect the way supplementary planning documents are prepared and adopted. Under the new Planning Act, 'Supplementary Planning Guidance' (SPG) is being replaced by 'Supplementary Planning Documents' (SPD). Whereas in the past, the Council was able to adopt a wide range of documents as SPG, subject to consistency with policies in the Local Plan, consultation and so on, the regulations applying to SPD are much more onerous. In addition to following guidance very similar to that applied to SPG, SPD must now also be:

- a) Subject to sustainability appraisal throughout their preparation;
- b) Subject to public consultation in accordance with an authority's 'Statement of Community Involvement';
- c) Identified in the 'Local Development Scheme', or work programme for the preparation of the 'Local Development Framework' (the successor to local plans); and
- d) Shown to be 'sound' (i.e. that it complies with procedural requirements, conforms with planning policy and Community Strategy for the area, and is coherent, consistent and effective).

National Planning Policy Statement 12 (PPS12) states that Local Planning Authorities can only adopt SPD when it is directly related to adopted planning policies and when the technical regulations (set out above) have been complied with. Whilst it may be technically possible to produce Village Design Statements as SPD, we do not anticipate this being either appropriate or necessary. Firstly, the amount of procedural work involved would be exceedingly lengthy. Secondly SPD status is not necessary for Village Design Statements to be taken into account in the consideration of planning applications or drafting of development plan policy.

### **How will we take the VDS into account when making planning decisions?**

Whether SPD or not, VDS containing relevant planning information would be regarded as material planning considerations to be taken into account, largely as at present in the determination of planning applications. Generally speaking, documents prepared with the Council's input, and subject to public consultation, tend to have more weight as material considerations. Thus, if VDS are prepared largely in accordance with previous advice, they would effectively serve a similar function as when labelled SPG.

## What should the VDS contain?

A VDS should:

- Be prepared by local communities in partnership with the Local Planning Authority
- Describe the visual features and qualities of the village and its surroundings that are valued by local people
- Identify any characteristics that could serve as inspiration for future development
- Identify the character of the village in terms of its landscape setting, the shape of the settlement and the nature of the buildings themselves
- Put forward guidance on how these local characteristics could be reflected in new development e.g. make recommendations for open and connecting spaces, building form, materials and details, streets and street furniture.

## Who should be involved?

The production of the VDS should be locally led, and involve the whole community. It is vital that the VDS is representative of a cross section of the local community, and as such, the Council recommends that the final version of the VDS should include a statement of community involvement, which should include the following:

- How the VDS Group was formed
- The methods of local publicity used and the extent of public consultation
- The extent and opportunities for community involvement
- The availability of the draft VDS in the village for local comments
- How local comments have been considered and taken into account
- The extent of liaison with Buckinghamshire Community Action and AVDC

## What role does Forward Plans have in the process?

Forward Plans will comment on draft Village Design Statements where the Parish Council wishes to submit them to us. We are not able to provide any funding for Village Design Statements, but we are happy to advise and comment when required.

Once the final version of the VDS is sent to us, we will distribute it throughout the Planning Service and ensure the relevant Officers are aware of its contents. Therefore, a minimum of five copies is required. Our contact details are below.

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To obtain a copy of this information sheet in large print,  
please telephone 01296 585439

આ પત્રિકા ભવિષ્યના વિકાસોની રચનાને માર્ગદર્શક થતી મૂલ્યવાન ગ્રામ્ય લાક્ષણિકતાઓના ઉપયોગ બારામાં છે. મફત ભાષાંતર માટે મહેરબાની કરીને 01296 425334 પર ફોન કરો.

یہ لیف لیٹ مستقبل کی ترقیات کے ڈیزائن کی رہنمائی کرنے کیلئے پیش قیمت دیہاتی خصوصیات کو استعمال کرنے کے بارے میں ہے

-مفت ترجمے کیلئے براہ کرم 01296 425334 پر فون کریں۔



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