



## Planning Committee

26<sup>th</sup> January 2016

### Report from Head of Planning

For Action

Wards affected:  
ALL

## Review of SPG17 Design Guide for New Developments

### 1 Summary

- 1.1 The current SPG Design Guide for New Developments was adopted in 2001. The document has served its purpose well but due to its age requires updating. Since 2001 planning policy has changed significantly, particularly in relation to urban areas. There is much greater emphasis on maximising development density and the promotion of the efficient use of land. This is particularly so in areas of high public transport accessibility consistent with London Plan Policy 3.2 Optimising Housing Potential.
- 1.2 The current SPG primarily has a focus on the inter-war suburban context of much of the Brent. In areas of the borough where widescale and significant change is not envisaged, it can still be seen as being of particular relevance. However, its content is not so helpful for the areas of larger transformational change, or in the transitional areas where there is an interface between existing areas or sites where higher densities are anticipated. The review of the document also provides the opportunity for it to be a promotional tool, giving a positive message about development potential within Brent and the need for high quality design.

### 2 Recommendations

- 2.1 That Planning Committee support the existing general approach within the guidance and the need to review and produce a new Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document to reflect its application within the Borough.

2.2 That subject to incorporation of feedback from Planning Committee, that a draft Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document is issued for public consultation.

### **3 Detail**

3.1 The current SPG 17 Design Guide for New Developments was adopted in October 2001. Since then planning policy has changed significantly, particularly in relation to urban areas. There is much greater emphasis on maximising development density and the promotion of the efficient use of land. This is particularly so in areas of high public transport accessibility as set out in London Plan Policy 3.2 Optimising Housing Potential.

3.2 There have also been far reaching changes to permitted development rights for extensions and ancillary buildings/structures and more recently the introduction of Prior Approvals. These potentially allow development to occur which is inconsistent with some aspects of the SPG particularly distances anticipated between buildings and/or up to the boundaries of properties. In many cases in determining applications following these changes, greater emphasis is now placed on the quality of amenity to existing and future occupants rather than, for example, specific adherence to a distance set out in the SPG.

3.3 The current SPG primarily has a focus on the typical inter-war suburban context of Brent. In areas of non-significant change where spaces between existing buildings are relatively generous it is considered that numerous elements of the SPG can still be regarded as being of particular relevance. However, its content is not so helpful for the areas of larger transformational change, such as South Kilburn or Wembley where densities much higher than traditionally provided in Brent are anticipated. The same is true of the transitional areas such as Colindale or Wembley High Road where there is an interface between existing areas and those where significantly higher densities are anticipated.

3.4 The document also has the opportunity to be more 'positively' prepared, becoming more of a promotional tool to encourage the right type of development within Brent.

3.5 Main changes proposed in amending the document:

- a) Shorter/greater clarity on the main messages
- b) Identification of 3 types of area where differing approaches will be taken:
  - i) typical (majority of suburban character);
  - ii) transitional (higher density adjacent to the typical);
  - and
  - iii) transformational (significant areas remodelled at higher densities)
- c) Steps towards successful developments in Brent including

- i) Promoting the use of appropriate expertise
- ii) Quality of presentation standards and consultation expected
- iii) Pre-application and peer review
- iv) Ensuring a quality development

- d) Updating on 'standards' e.g. separation distances, heights within each of the 3 zones.

3.6 Consideration of the need to update the document, together with a proposed structure/focus is being brought to Committee for discussion and an opportunity to input prior to it being issued for consultation as a Supplementary Planning Document.

#### **4 Financial Implications**

4.1 An SPD seeks to provide greater clarity on the Council's approach to dealing with the design implications of applications. It should provide greater clarity for the Council and developers, thus improving the application process, reducing costs and delay and improving development quality.

#### **5 Legal Implications**

5.1 As a Supplementary Planning Document, once adopted it will replace the existing SPG17 Design Guide for New Developments. As such it will become a material consideration of some weight in the determination of planning applications.

#### **6 Diversity Implications**

6.1 The Equality Act 2010 introduced a new public sector equality duty under section 149. It covers the following nine protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

The Council must, in exercising its functions, have "due regard" to the need to:

- a) Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- b) Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- c) Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

6.2 No equality analysis assessment has been undertaken currently, however this will be incorporated into the review process prior to consultation. The SPG is not creating new policy, just providing clarity on approach within existing policy.

#### **7 Staffing/Accommodation Implications (if appropriate)**

7.1 None

## **8 Environmental Implications**

8.1 The Supplementary Planning Document deals with development proposals within the Borough with a view to have a positive effect on impacts on the environment.

### **Background Papers**

SPG 17 Design Guide for New Developments

<https://www.brent.gov.uk/services-for-residents/planning-and-building-control/planning-guides/supplementary-planning-guides/design-guide-for-new-developments-spg-17/>

### **Contact Officers**

Any person wishing to inspect the above papers should contact Paul Lewin, Planning Policy & Projects 0208 937 6710

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