

Swindon Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

Statement of Consultation

1 Sustainable Design and Construction

1.1 The SPD has been prepared to provide detailed guidance to assist the consideration of sustainable design and construction issues in new development. The SPD sets out an aspiration Swindon Standard for new major development in Swindon. The Swindon Standard includes 4 key elements:

- **Energy Efficient Design and Layout** (Passive Solar Design)
- **Sustainable Construction** (Code for Sustainable Homes level 3 and BREEAM “excellent” standard.
- **Zero/Low carbon energy** (20% of regulated energy)
- Future proofing through the **Lifetime Homes standard**.

1.2 Further information on these 4 key issues is included within the SPD

1.3 The use of the Swindon Standard in new major developments will help to address the causes and impacts of climate change and also wider sustainable development issues of resource use and ensuring what we build now is “future proof” and suitable for whatever happens over the long term.

1.4 The aspirations within the SPD will be supported by examples on the Council’s website of how to achieve high standards of sustainable design and construction.

2 Consultation Arrangements

2.1 A draft of the Sustainable Design and Construction SPD was considered at the Borough Council’s Planning Committee meeting on 12th December 2006. Approval was given at that meeting for a formal public consultation exercise to take place on its content for a period of six weeks. Consultation on the draft SPD took place between 19th January and 2nd March 2007.

2.2 The outcomes of the public consultation exercise were considered by Planning Committee on 12th June 2007 and approval was given by the Committee to undertake a further period of public consultation in the light of the comments received and national policy developments in this area.

2.3 Subsequent to the consultation period on the revised draft of the SPD, a final draft was prepared for consideration by the Planning Committee on 11 December 2007. The Planning Committee resolved to adopt the SPD for use as a material consideration in the development control process.

2.4 The SPD has been adopted in light of other reasonable alternatives discussed in the Sustainability Appraisal (SA). The SA assessed the potential effects of both the SPD policies and relevant Local Plan “saved” policies. It has found that both sets of policies have the potential for beneficial sustainability effects. However, policies in the Local Plan regarding sustainable construction are limited and, without supplementary guidance, are unlikely to result in significant benefits for the Borough. Consequently, it is considered that the SPD will contribute significantly more to sustainability objectives than relying solely on the “saved” policies.

3 Consultation Outcomes

3.1 During the consultation period on the draft and revised SPD, a total of 469 responses were received from a total of 75 respondents. A full summary of the comments and their responses are appended alongside this document.

3.2 A number of key changes have been made to the document since the consultation period, the most significant of them are:

- The structure has been simplified to make it user friendly and emphasise energy efficiency.
- The guidance has been aligned to national sustainability standards. The use of a pre-assessment estimator will allow development to be assessed against these standards.
- A higher development threshold has been included (applies to major developments only).
- An updated zero/low carbon energy target has been included (in the light of the findings of the Swindon Renewable Energy Task Group).
- As a result of new government guidance entitled “Building a Greener Future”, the requirements of the SPD have been made aspirational.
- Regularly updated examples on the Swindon Borough Council website will show how the sustainability principles will be applied.
- References to the importance of water resources and biodiversity have been included.

4 Sustainability Appraisal (SA) Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

4.1 Under Section 39(2) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, Sustainability Appraisal is mandatory for new or revised Development Plan Documents (DPDs) and SPDs. Local authorities must also conduct an environmental assessment in accordance with the requirements of European Directive 2001/42/EC “on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment”.

- 4.2** European Directive 2001/42/EC also requires that when a plan or programme is adopted, a statement must be produced, summarising how environmental considerations have been taken account of in the plan or programme
- 4.3** The SA has been carried out as an integral part of producing the Sustainable Design and Construction SPD and has provided input at each stage of production which has influenced the content and format of the document. Integrating the Sustainability Appraisal from the outset was considered essential to ensure the SPD met the objectives of sustainable development. As a result the SPD has become a resource that will further the achievement of sustainability objectives, within the Borough, by encouraging development that is sustainably designed, built and operated. As well as influencing the requirements of the SPD, the SA played a key role in highlighting the potential impacts on development delivery and also biodiversity which served to reinforce a section of the SPD concerning biodiversity in the built environment.
- 4.4** The SA has been carried out in line with Government guidance contained within “Sustainability Appraisal of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Documents” (ODPM, 2005) and “The Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive: Guidance for Planning Authorities” (ODPM, 2003). The SA meets the requirements of Section 19(5) of the Planning and Compulsory Act 2004 and European Directive 2001/42/EC.

5 Monitoring

- 5.1** European Directive 2001/42/EC requires that information is made available to the public on measures to monitor the significant effects of implementing the SPD. Proposed monitoring measures have been documented in the SA Report.

6 Further Information

- 6.1** The document is available to be viewed and purchased at the Borough Council’s offices at Premier House, Station Road, Swindon and is also available to view and be downloaded from the Borough Council’s website at www.swindon.gov.uk/supplanningdocs