

Classification: Public

Key Decision: No

Gravesham Borough Council

Report to: Strategic Environment Cabinet Committee

Date: 21 November 2023

Reporting officer: Assistant Director (Inclusive Growth)

Subject: Design for Gravesham

Purpose and summary of report:

To provide the Committee with an update on Design for Gravesham, tabling the emerging draft document that will soon go to public consultation. Following the consultation the final version of the document together with consultation responses will be presented to a future meeting of the Cabinet for approval.

Recommendations:

1. That the Committee notes this report and provides comments, as necessary on the draft Design for Gravesham document.
2. That the Committee notes that the final version of Design for Gravesham together with consultation responses will be presented to a future meeting of the Cabinet for approval and adoption as a Supplementary Planning Document.

Key Implications:	
Item	Implications
Legal	<p>The Design Code will be adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), subject to approval of Cabinet. The document will then be used by planning officers in the assessment of planning applications. The development of a borough wide design code responds to the government's Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023.</p> <p>Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) contain guidance that expands on the policies within the development plan, showing how the council expects our planning policies to be addressed by planning applications, and how the policies will be implemented by the council when making decisions on planning applications.</p> <p>The relevant legal context for SPD's is set out in the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.</p>
Finance and Value for Money	<p>The project is funded by an existing budget and a robust procurement process was undertaken to identify a suitable specialist to undertake this important piece of work.</p>

Corporate Plan	The 2019-23 Corporate Plan was appended to the Design for Gravesham ITT; it is the foundation for this important piece of work. The design code is included in the current Corporate Plan.
Climate Change	This design code will respond directly to the commitments set out in the Climate Change Strategy 2022-2030, setting the standard for sustainable new developments/regeneration in the borough. Key Climate Change Officers have been consulted as part of the development of the code.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Design for Gravesham is a borough wide design code. It is a once in a ten-year opportunity to steward community and place led regeneration by creating a Policy document that sets out Gravesham's expectations for high quality and sustainable regeneration and development that delivers holistically for people and place in Gravesham - responding to the needs of Gravesham's diverse community and the borough's unique identifies, places, towns, villages and neighbourhoods.
- 1.2 The document will be adopted as an SPD, subject to Cabinet approval. SPD's expand on the policies of the development plan. Design for Gravesham is to be used as a strategic document for the planning team in the assessment of planning applications and in both making recommendations to Members for those decisions made by Planning Committee and those made through Delegated Powers (as defined by the constitution).
- 1.3 It will provide clarity to developers/stakeholders on Gravesham's expectations and proudly showcase the unique qualities of the borough. The ambition is to enhance the quality of applications submitted to the council and provide greater efficiency and engagement in the planning process. The code will complement the Borough's existing Development Plan and in particular the adopted Local Plan Core Strategy (2014).
- 1.4 Why is this needed? The Design Code will be adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), subject to approval of Cabinet. The document will then be used by planning officers in the assessment of planning applications.
- 1.5 The draft code has been developed through a comprehensive programme of community engagement, based on the council's community engagement strategy and a multi-platform approach involving in person events, outreach and digital questionnaires.
- 1.6 The draft code has been developed in close dialogue with the planning team with comprehensive consideration of the Borough's Development Plan.

2. Background

- 2.1 The paper tabled to Strategic Environment Cabinet Committee (SECC) in September summarised the background to the engagement and development of the code. This included reference to previous engagement with the SECC, the offer of Ward walks made to all Members, the tender stage, the listening and engagement as part of public consultations and how this shaped the vision and objectives of the code.

3. Formal Consultation

- 3.1 The design code has been co-produced with the public through two distinct rounds of consultation already and will soon go to a third and final round of public

consultation. This consultation will run for four weeks. This is the timeframe required to consult on a draft SPD.

- 3.2 As discussed at the September meeting of the SECC, Members would be given further opportunity to offer comments on the design code at the November meeting of the SECC. The latest draft document is appended to this report. This is the edition of the code that will go to public consultation, subject to the consideration of comments made by Members at the November SECC.
- 3.3 Members will of course be able to offer further comments through the public consultation.
- 3.4 Members may wish, as representatives of their wards, to promote this statutory consultation to their residents. The consultation will be advertised on the council's website.

4. Next steps

- 4.1 A formal consultation in line with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement will be launched soon. Following this the document will be updated to respond to feedback from the formal consultation.
- 4.2 A final version of the document taking the responses to the consultation into account, will be taken to Cabinet for approval.
- 4.3 If approved at Cabinet, the document will be adopted as an SPD and be used by the planning team in the assessment of planning applications.

Appendices

- 4.4 Latest draft of the design code (to follow).

5. Background Documents

- 5.1 There are no background documents.

Lead Officer: Tom Reynolds

Email: Tom.Reynolds@gravesham.gov.uk