

Southend-on-Sea Borough Council
Report of Corporate Director for Place
to
Cabinet
on
7^h January 2014

Report prepared by:
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Southend Streetscape Manual SPD – Consideration of Manual for Adoption
Executive Councillor: Councillor J Garston

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To present, for consideration by Cabinet following a statutory period of consultation, the Southend Streetscape Manual Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), provided within **Appendix One**, for adoption.
- 1.2 This SPD has been produced in consultation with a number of Council officers and was subject of a period of consultation under Regulation 13 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, and in accordance with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement. Following this consultation, representations received have been analysed and a schedule of changes produced that sets out where minor amendments are proposed to the document and the reasons for these amends. It is intended that, subject to agreement by Cabinet, the Manual will progress to Full Council for agreement for adoption in February 2014.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the proposed amendments to the Streetscape Manual SPD are agreed.

3. Background

- 3.1 The purpose of the Streetscape Manual SPD is to provide a guide for Officers, Members and Developers to ensure that the Borough's streets are designed and managed in a consistent manner. Once adopted, the document will form part of the Council's local planning framework, and will be a material consideration for planning applications. It will also be used to guide public realm and street works across the Borough in general and key character areas (including town centre streets; district centres; the seafront; and Southend's historic environment).
- 3.2 The Borough's streets and public spaces are fundamental to creating successful communities and neighbourhoods, helping to forge links between

them and creating a sense of place and identity. If a consistent and coordinated approach to their design is adopted they have the potential to lift the appearance of an area, however an uncoordinated design approach can date quickly, creating maintenance issues and having potential cost implications.

- 3.3 The Streetscape Manual SPD has been designed to respond to the variation in character across the Borough, whilst providing a consistent approach to their design which will ensure a coordinated, quality palette of materials and street furniture, building upon the Council's Aim for the Borough as set out within its adopted Core Strategy DPD (2007):

The Aim: "To secure a major refocus of function and the long term sustainability of Southend as a significant urban area which serves local people and the Thames Gateway.

To do this there is a need to release the potential of Southend's land and buildings to achieve measureable improvements in the town's economic prosperity, transportation networks, infrastructure and facilities, and the quality of life of all its citizens. This will include safeguarding and improving the standards of the town's amenities and improving the quality of the natural and built environment."

- 3.4 The Streetscape Manual [**Appendix One**] is paramount to achieving a coordinated, high quality streetscape. It is presented in two parts, which should be read in conjunction:

PART A: Design Strategy – this section sets out the 'Why?' and the 'Where?' establishing the Council's objectives for the design of its streets and public spaces; why this approach has been established and identifying where the Key Character Areas are in the Borough, including focus on conserving and enhancing Southend's historic environment.

PART B: Design Detail – sets out the 'What?' and the 'How?' providing a technical guide for all street furniture across the Borough, what should be specified and how it should be installed. It is divided into two sections – Section One: Surfacing and Signage, and Section Two: Street Furniture.

- 3.5 There has been a varied palette of furniture and materials introduced to the Borough's streets and public spaces over time, and in compiling this Manual the Council is seeking to consolidate these to provide a simplified and consistent approach.
- 3.6 This Manual is intended to be a living document and will be reviewed annually to ascertain whether updates are necessary. It is intended that regular progress meetings will be held to review practices and furniture specifications to ensure that the document is in line with changes in legislation, best practice and that the materials and furniture styles specified are performing well in terms of wear and tear and value for money.
- 3.7 The Manual will also assist in reducing signage clutter by providing a framework with which appropriate street signage can be considered.

4. Consultation

4.1 The draft Streetscape Manual SPD was considered by Economic and Environmental Scrutiny Committee (now Place Scrutiny Committee) on 11th April 2013, where there was general consensus and support for the content of the report and agreement for it to progress to public consultation. The following points were raised by Members however, and are addressed in turn below:

- Lampposts: it would be helpful to include the whole image in the document.

The document has been amended within Table 6: Lighting and Banners Specification, to include additional images of lampposts.

- Trees Protection Specification, town centre: It was suggested that this should be reviewed to see if an alternative tree grille can be found that meets British Standards.

Officers from the Council's Parks Section have advised that this style of tree grille has been used successfully in the Borough for a number of years and that there are no BS Standards applying to tree grilles. It is noted that there are a number of different suppliers, however the Manual is clear that those manufacturers listed are intended as a guide only, and that there is no requirement to purchase the items from these companies. It is not proposed to make any amendments to the Manual.

- Roundabouts: consideration should be given to including a section within the document on roundabout design.

Roundabouts are managed by the Council's Parks team and, as set out within the Manual, are not included in the scope of the Manual and will be maintained by them on a separate basis. In discussion with the Parks team, an addition has been included to the Manual within Chapter 11: Tree Protection and Planting, to clarify the matter of roundabout design.

- Metric / Imperial Paving Slabs: Members wished to have clarity over the site of proposed paving slabs.

Within Section One: Surfacing and Signage, of the Manual [Appendix One] Part 1: Footways, the Council's approach to the use of metric and imperial paving slabs is set out. The material chosen will be location dependent and should be agreed by the Council's Traffic Management Service. In cases where ordinary flag paving is used in the Borough these are normally imperial slabs and, for the purpose of repair, these should be used. The Council is however proposing to phase out their use and for comprehensive resurfacing works, as the Manual notes, metric paving slabs should be used where paving is deemed appropriate and necessary, however consideration should be given to alternative surface materials as appropriate.

4.2 The justification for SPDs is addressed within paragraph 153 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the process for their preparation set out

in Part 5 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. A formal public consultation of not less than 4 weeks, to allow people to view and recommend changes to the SPD, must be carried out in accordance with Regulation 13 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

- 4.3 In accordance with the Regulations, the draft Streetscape Manual SPD was consulted on for a 6 week period at Regulation 13 from 8th July to 19th August 2013.
- 4.4 A total of 6 responses were received during the consultation period, which have now been analysed by Officers from the Strategic Planning team, and responses produced. The representations received, and responses to them, are set out within **Appendix Two** for reference. These responses will be formally published on the Council's JDI system.
- 4.5 There is no requirement for SPDs to be subjected to independent examination and the Council can therefore adopt the SPD following Regulation 13 consultation, which has now taken place.
- 4.6 In addition to those mentioned above a number of further comments have been raised by other Council colleagues and these are briefly detailed below:

- Ensure that replacement street lights in Conservation Areas are covered within the document:

Chapter 8 Lighting includes specification of lighting columns and lanterns for main roads and side streets within Conservation Areas within Table 6: Lighting Specification.

- Ensure the supporting text of the document seeks to support and enhance Southend's heritage:

The Manual provides detailed specification for street furniture and materials that are considered appropriate to conserve and enhance the context of Southend's historic environment, defining this, in the context of its 14 conservation areas, as a key character area (paragraph 39). Works undertaken in the Borough's conservation areas, the Manual specifies, should be carried out in consultation with the Council's Conservation Officers.

- Ensure visually impaired people are considered in the document:

Objective 2: Creating 'Better Streets' of the Manual seeks to ensure the Borough's streets and public spaces are safe and accessible for all, recognising the needs of vulnerable road users. A key consideration for all schemes must be accessibility for all users and their differing requirements, including those with mobility or sensory impairments. In regard to footways for example, the Manual draws reference to the use of tactile paving, highlighting the need to provide a contrast of colour and tone in tactile paving from the surrounding footway to aid partially sighted people.

4.7 Proposed amendments to the Streetscape Manual are set out within the Schedule of Changes [**Appendix Three**] to address points raised during the public consultation as considered appropriate, and to take account of the recently completed scheme at Elmer Square: The Forum (Southend-on-Sea). It is proposed, following agreement from Cabinet, to progress the Manual through to consideration for adoption by full Council in February 2014.

4.8 Reasons for Recommendations:

To ensure a consistent and managed approach to the design and maintenance of the Borough's streets and public realm is adopted.

4.9 Other Options:

Not to progress with the adoption of the Streetscape Manual SPD. If the Streetscape Manual SPD is not adopted however, the Borough will lack a comprehensive framework within which works to Southend's streets and space can be undertaken, which could result in an uncoordinated and piecemeal approach to street design.

5 Corporate Implications

5.1 Contribution to Council's Vision & Corporate Priorities

5.1.1 The successful delivery of the Streetscape Manual SPD will contribute to the fulfilment of a number of the spatial elements of the Council's vision and priorities. For example, ensuring a well maintained and attractive streetscene, and enabling well-planned quality developments that meet the needs of residents and businesses and address street clutter. It seeks to give recognition to the need to reflect and strengthen local distinctiveness, with detailed specifications set out for the town centre, district centres, the seafront and Southend's historic environment in its Conservation Areas.

5.2 Financial Implications

5.2.1 Important improvements to our streets and public realm are possible to achieve at a relatively low cost or level of investment. By implementing the standards set out within this Manual it will be possible to deliver good streets and public spaces through undertaking more efficient purchasing, making the streets easier to maintain and ensuring good value through durable design. It will be essential that works are properly coordinated, in line with the standards set out by the Manual, in agreement with the Council.

5.3 Legal Implications

5.3.1. None.

5.4 People Implications

5.4.1. Staff resources from the Strategic Planning team will continue to be required in order to produce the Streetscape Manual, particularly in terms of managing its on-going review and update once adopted.

5.5 Property Implications

5.5.1 None.

5.6 Consultation

5.6.1 As noted within Section 4 of this report, the Streetscape Manual was subject to a 6-week public consultation in accordance with Regulation 13 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 during July and August 2013. The responses received during this consultation are set out within **Appendix Two**.

5.7 Equalities and Diversity Implications

5.7.1 The Manual has been reviewed by the Council's Strategic Transport team in accordance with the findings of the EU funded Safer Mobility for Elderly Road Users (SaMERU) project, of which the Council is a partner. This, together with issues of accessibility, movement and safety, has informed and been addressed within Objective 2: Creating Better Streets of the Manual [**Appendix One**] whereby it is recognised that a key consideration of all schemes that affect the Borough's streets and public spaces should be accessibility for all users and their differing requirements, including those with mobility or sensory impairments, older people and children.

5.7.2 All schemes will therefore be expected to create safe, attractive and legible streets and crossing points without generating unnecessary obstructions to movement.

5.8 Risk Assessment

5.8.1 If the Manual was not published and taken forward to adoption, there would not be a comprehensive framework in place within which works to Southend's streets and spaces could be undertaken, which may result in inappropriate or piecemeal development.

5.9 Value for Money

5.9.1 The requirements outlined within this draft Manual are intended to provide a framework within which street works can be managed in order to undertake more efficient purchasing, making the streets easier to maintain and ensuring good value through durable design.

5.9.2 The Manual has been produced 'in-house' by Officers within the Council's Strategic Planning team in discussion with other Council Officers, negating the need for the employment of external consultants.

5.10 Community Safety Implications

5.10.1 It is anticipated that the scheme will improve community safety by providing for a coordinated palette of materials and street furniture that can be efficiently managed and maintained.

5.11 **Environmental Impact**

5.11.1 The Manual has been produced to allow for positive enhancements to be made to the streets and public realm in Southend.

6. **Appendices**

- Appendix One: Southend Streetscape Manual SPD3
- Appendix Two: Consultation Responses
- Appendix Three: Schedule of Changes