



SA / SEA Report for Village, Parish and Town Design Statements

Summary

Communities within Horsham District are in the process of preparing village or town design statements. These documents set out the qualities and characteristics that local people value in their village or town, and set out clear and simple guidance for the design of development.

Horsham District Council is supportive of the preparation of these documents, and will be adopting them as Supplementary Planning Documents to form part of the Local Development Framework. The Framework contains the Council's advice and guidance on how development should take place, and sets out locations where housing, employment and leisure development should be built over the next few years.

To meet legislative requirements, an assessment of the Design Statements must be carried out before they can be adopted as SPDs. This process is known as Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SA/SEA). It involves examining the documents to see how they contribute to protecting environmental, social and economic concerns both now and in the future. Although different communities are preparing their own village design statements, a single SA/SEA common to all Design Statements has been carried out, as each document has a similar purpose.

To carry out the SA/SEA, background research was undertaken to gain understanding of the sustainability issues affecting the District today. This information was then used to assess the impacts of producing design statements on sustainable development.

The results of the appraisal found community preparation of the Design statement to be a sustainable option. Communities are well placed to identify features of importance to them and set out simple guidance to help ensure that development protects and enhances these features. This will help to protect the character of local village and townscapes, and also help to maintain its cultural heritage.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Horsham District Council is working towards producing a Local Development Framework (LDF). This Framework will contain a range of documents setting out the policies for land-use planning in the District.
- 1.2 To ensure that LDFs contribute to sustainable development, it is a requirement for a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) to be undertaken for each document produced as part of a LDF. In addition, a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is also necessary in accordance with European legislation. These two processes are very similar and they have therefore been combined. Appendix One sets out where the requirements of the SEA legislation have been met in this document.
- 1.3 Horsham District Council has already carried out a number of SA/SEAs, including one of its Core Strategy. The findings of this study can be viewed in the "Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment; Final Report on the Core Strategy 2007" available from the Strategic and Community Planning Department or the Council's website, www.horsham.gov.uk/strategic_planning. The results of this work feed into all other sustainability appraisals that are carried out for documents being prepared as part of the Council's LDF as many of the issues identified are the same no matter which plan is being prepared. These issues are therefore not repeated in this document.

2.0 Village / Parish and Design Statements

- 2.1 The Village Design Statement (VDS) initiative was launched by the former Countryside Commission with the intention of ensuring that new development in village communities fits its surroundings and is in keeping with local character. Specific advice was produced with a view to helping communities to help themselves, by showing how a VDS can assist them in participating in, and influencing, the way the planning system operates locally. It should describe the qualities and characteristics that people value in their village and its surroundings. It should also set out clear and simple guidance for the design of development. The VDS is a document produced by the local community, not by the Local Planning Authority. Its purpose is to manage change, whether that change is major new development or just cumulative small-scale additions and alterations. The guidance makes it clear that they are not about whether development should take place; that is a job for the Local Development Framework. Instead, it is intended that they set out how planned development should be carried out, so that it is in harmony with its setting and contributes to the conservation and, where possible, the enhancement of the local environment. A similar process has now been set out in terms of Parishes and Towns.
- 2.2 Horsham District Council has been active in encouraging and supporting local communities in the preparation of Village or Parish Design Statements (VDS) and a number have been adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance. However, to comply with more recent legislation there is a need to prepare them in line with the requirements of a Supplementary Planning Document and as a result an SA / SEA is required.

2.0 The purpose of this report

- 2.1 The preparation of Village, Parish and Town Design Statements (from here onwards to be referred to as design statements) is an important element of the Council's strategy set out within the LDF Core Strategy, particularly in terms of achieving the spatial objective of 'ensuring that new development in the District is of high quality'
- 2.2 Although each Design Statement is different, prepared by a unique community, their purpose is the same. Therefore one SA / SEA report has been prepared to cover all the statements being prepared, in the anticipation that they will be capable of adoption by the Council as a Supplementary Planning Document. If a statement takes a different approach the SA / SEA for the area in question will be revised appropriately.
- 2.3 As part of the process of undertaking the SA/SEA, the opportunity was made for local communities and organisations to comment on the draft documentation. In November 2006 the draft assessment was published as part of the Scoping Report. No comments were received however.

3.0 Plans, Programmes and Baseline Data

Plans and Programmes

- 3.1 A wide range of plans and programmes influence the content of the LDF; these are set out in the Core Strategy SA / SEA. For the purposes of this report however, the most influential documents in relation to the preparation of Design Statements are set out below.

Level of policy / programme	Name	Broad Aims	Requirements in relation to the Design Statement
National	PPS1: Creating Sustainable Communities	Good design should be the aim of all involved in the development process	The LDF (which may include Design Statement SPDs) should include policies that set out design criteria by which planning applications will be assessed
National	PPS7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas	To ensure that development respects and enhances character, contributes to a sense of local identity and be of an appropriate design and scale for its location.	Local planning authorities should prepare policies and guidance that encourage good quality design throughout their rural areas, utilising tools such as Design Statements.
National	By Design, Urban Design and the Planning System	Aims to promote higher standards in Urban Design	Provides guidance on how the planning system can deliver better design through a variety of means including the preparation of supplementary guidance / documents.

Level of policy / programme	Name	Broad Aims	Requirements in relation to the Design Statement
District	Core Strategy	Sets out spatial vision and objectives for the District and policies for managing change. This includes the need for good design and the retention of local distinctiveness.	Sets policy requirement for development to complement the varying character of the District, particularly as defined in design statements. It also ensures that landscape character is maintained and enhanced.
District	Horsham District Landscape Character Assessment	Document provides background information on the different character areas in Horsham District	The document suggests settlement and landscape specific policies for protecting and enhancing the character of the District.
Local	Local Design Statements	To ensure that new development in village communities fits its surroundings and is in keeping with local character	Used by local organisations to help inspire the preparation of their document

Baseline Data

- 3.2 Baseline data identifies information about the state of an area as it is today, together with how it may change in the future without the preparation of a plan or programme.
- 3.3 Baseline data has been collected on a District level basis, and the results are set out in the SA/SEA of the Core Strategy 2007, and are therefore not repeated here. Local communities have also collected information at a more local level as part of the Parish Plan process, and it forms a background to some of the work on design statements. This more local baseline data can be viewed in the relevant Parish Plans, which are available, where they have been prepared, via the relevant Parish Council.

4.0 Sustainability Issues and Objectives

- 4.1 From the Plans, Programmes and Baseline data, it is possible to identify the main sustainability issues that are facing the District. More detail on these issues can be found in the Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment; Final Report on the Core Strategy 2007. These issues are also considered to be relevant to the towns and villages for which design statements are being prepared.
- 4.2 In order to assess the contribution that the design statements make in achieving sustainable development it is necessary to compare them against a range of sustainability objectives and indicators. A range of sustainability objectives and indicators have already been developed through the LDF process, and it is proposed to continue to use these as they are applicable to the design statement process. The objectives and indicators are set out fully in the SA/SEA of the Core Strategy 2007, and were developed in consultation with stakeholders. The objectives are summarised overleaf.

SUSTAINABILITY OBJECTIVES

1. To ensure that everyone has access to a good quality affordable home that meets their needs.
2. To ensure that everyone has access to the health education leisure and recreation facilities they require
3. To reduce crime and the fear of crime
4. To conserve and enhance the landscape and townscape character of the District
5. To conserve and enhance the biodiversity of the District
6. To conserve and enhance the historical and cultural environment of the District
7. To maintain a high quality environment in terms of air, soil and water quality
8. To reduce car journeys and promote alternative methods of transport
9. To reduce the risk of flooding
10. To make the most efficient use of land by prioritising brownfield land for development
11. To reduce the amount of waste produced and maximise the re-use and recycling of other materials
12. To ensure that rates of energy and water consumption are as efficient as possible
13. To seek to reduce the emission of greenhouse gases, in particular by encouraging provision and use of renewable energy
14. To maintain the high and stable economy of the District
15. To seek to enhance areas where there are inequalities in the economy, particularly the rural economy
16. To maintain and enhance the vitality of Horsham Town and village centres

5.0 Development Options

5.1 It is a requirement of the SA/SEA process to consider a number of alternative options which could be pursued as part of the preparation of a plan or programme. The number of options available for the preparation of design statements is relatively limited: they are set out below.

- a) The 'do nothing' option, design statements are not prepared
- b) Horsham District Council to prepare the design statement and to consult / adopt as a Supplementary Planning Document
- c) Design Statement to be prepared by the community supported / adopted by Horsham District Council as a Supplementary Planning Document

6.0 Assessment of Options

6.1 The options set out in section 5.0 have been assessed against the sustainability objectives, and the results are set out in Table 1 overleaf. The following table sets out the results of the preliminary assessment of the options in section 5.0. **The sustainability objectives numbered in the first column relate to the full set of objectives in section 4.0.**

6.2 The assessment of the options against the sustainability objective has used the following key:

Strong positive effect	☺☺
Positive effect	☺
No effect / neutral effect	☹
Negative effect	☹☹
Strong negative effect	☹☹☹

Table 1: Results of the assessment of Design Statement Options against the Sustainability Objective

Sustainability Objective	Timescale	Effect	Option a: No Statements	Option b: Statements prepared by HDC	Option c: Statements prepared by community
1: Access to affordable homes	Short - Long	The preparation of a design statement will ensure that development, for whatever purpose, is of a good quality.	☺	☺	☺
2: Access to services and facilities	Short - Long	A design statement will have limited / no effect on this objective	☺	☺	☺
3: To reduce crime / fear of crime	Short - Long	A design statement will have limited / no effect on this objective, although in some areas an improved appearance, with community involvement may assist. This will be site specific rather than in all cases as many areas already have a very high quality environment.	☺	☺	☺
4: Landscape and townscape character	Short	The purpose of a design statement is to conserve and enhance the landscape and townscape of the character. Their preparation is a key part of meeting the spatial objectives of the LDF Core Strategy. Statements prepared by the community will reflect more accurately their views and priorities and should be more effective.	☹	☺	☺☺
	Med - Long	The lack of a design statement will have a worsening effect throughout time. Poor examples of development may incrementally result in the degradation of townscape and landscape quality.	☹☹	☺	☺☺
5: Conserve and enhance biodiversity	Short - Long	Although not necessarily an objective of a design statement, they can highlight areas or species of local importance in terms of biodiversity that should be considered as part of any development proposal.	☹	☺	☺

Sustainability Objective	Timescale	Effect	Option a: No Statements	Option b: Statements prepared by HDC	Option c: Statements prepared by community
6: Conserve & enhance historical and cultural environment	Short	The purpose of a design statement is to conserve and enhance the landscape and townscape character - this will in many cases relate to areas of historical and cultural importance. Their preparation is a key part of meeting the spatial objectives of the LDF Core Strategy. Statements prepared by the community will reflect more accurately their views and priorities and should be more effective, particularly in relation to areas of cultural importance.	☹	☺	☺☺
	Med - Long	The lack of a design statement will have a worsening effect throughout time. Poor examples of development may incrementally result in the degradation of the historical and cultural environment, particularly where not protected by Conservation Area or Listed Building status.	☹	☺	☺☺
7: Soil / air / water quality	Short - Long	A design statement will have limited / no effect on this objective unless there is a specific local issue that needs addressing.	☺	☺	☺
8: Alternative transport methods	Short - Long	A design statement can not determine where development takes place, but instead helps to manage change; it will therefore have a limited / no effect on this objective.	☺	☺	☺
9: Reduced flood risk	Short - Long	A design statement can not determine where development takes place, but instead helps to manage change; it will therefore have a limited / no effect on this objective.	☺	☺	☺
10: Prioritise brownfield development	Short - Long	A design statement can not determine where development takes place, but can help to manage change. As a result there will be a limited effect on this objective, although the preparation of a statement by the community may help to identify sites and raise awareness of the issues and complexities surrounding the re-use of brownfield land.	☺	☺	☺
11: Reduce waste & maximise recycling	Short - Long	A design statement will have limited / no effect on this objective unless there is a specific local issue that needs addressing.	☺	☺	☺

Sustainability Objective	Timescale	Effect	Option a: No Statements	Option b: Statements prepared by HDC	Option c: Statements prepared by community
12: Energy and water efficiency	Short - Long	A design statement will have limited / no effect on this objective	☹	☹	☹
13: Reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase renewables	Short - Long	A design statement will have limited / no effect on this objective	☹	☹	☹
14: Maintain high and stable economy	Short - Med	A design statement will have limited / no effect on this objective	☹	☹	☹
	Long	Development of poor design could cumulatively reduce the attractiveness of the area which may in turn affect the economy.	☹	☺	☺
15: Enhance rural economy	Short - Long	A design statement will have limited effect on this objective, although ensuring that the countryside remains an attractive area whilst responding to change may help to retain viable rural communities.	☹	☺	☺
16: Maintain & Enhance vitality of Horsham and village centres	Short – Med	A design statement will have limited / no effect on this objective	☹	☹	☹
	Long	Development of poor design could cumulatively reduce the attractiveness of the area which may in turn affect the economy. This may be particularly noticeable in the town and village centres. The Statements could also work positively enhancing some areas, if necessary.	☹	☺	☺

7.0 Conclusions and Monitoring Requirements

- 7.1 As a result of the assessment of the alternatives, option 'c', the preparation of Design Statements by the community supported and ultimately adopted by Horsham District Council as Supplementary Planning Documents, is felt to be the most appropriate. No negative impacts have been identified and therefore no mitigation measures are required. In addition the adoption of such statements as SPD will assist in mitigating some of the effects of the Core Strategy and Site Specific Allocations of Land DPDs.
- 7.2 The possible impact of these statements will be reviewed throughout their preparation as each is individual, should any issues of local significance be highlighted they will have be addressed at that stage. Once each SPD is adopted, their effects will be monitored through the general monitoring of the LDF, in particular the Core Strategy. This will include monitoring of the sustainability indicators as part of the wider monitoring of the SA / SEA of not only the design statements but also the Core Strategy. This monitoring will take place on an annual basis and the results published in the Annual Monitoring Report, which is published each December.

REQUIREMENTS OF THE DIRECTIVE	WHERE / HOW COVERED
Preparation of an environmental report: <i>taking into account current knowledge and methods of assessment, the content and level of detail of the plan, its stage in the decision making process, and the extent to which certain matters are more appropriately assessed at different levels the information to be given in the report is:</i>	
An outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan or programme and relationship with other relevant plans and programmes	Section 2
The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution without implementation of the plan or programme	Section 3, SA/SEA of the Core Strategy
The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected	Section 3, SA/SEA of the Core Strategy
Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan or programme including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance, such as areas designated pursuant to Directive 79/409/EEC and 92/43/EEC	Section 3, SA/SEA of the Core Strategy
Any existing environmental protection objectives established at international, community or national level which are relevant to the programme and the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation	Section 3, SA/SEA of the Core Strategy
The likely significant effects on the environment, including: short, medium and long term; permanent and temporary; positive and negative; secondary, cumulative and synergistic effects on issues such as: biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and their interrelationships between the above factors.	Section 6
The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and, as fully as possible, offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme.	Section 7
An outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with and a description of how the assessment was undertaken including any difficulties (such as technical deficiencies or lack of know-how) encountered in compiling the required information	Section 5
A description of measures envisaged concerning monitoring (in accordance with regulation 17)	Section 7
A non-technical summary of this information	Summary
Consultation with:	
Authorities with environmental responsibility when deciding on the scope and level of detail of the information to be included in the environment report	Scoping Report, November 2006
Authorities with environmental responsibility and the public to be given an early and effective opportunity within appropriate time frames to express their opinion on the draft plan and accompanying environmental report before its adoption	Relevant organisations will be contacted as each community prepares their design statement
Other EU Member States, where the implementation of the plan or programme is likely to have significant effects on the environment of that country	Not Applicable
Taking the environmental report and the results of the consultations into account in decision making	
Provision of information on the decision: When the plan or programme is adopted the public and any countries consulted must be informed and the following made available: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The plan or programme as adopted • A statement summarising how environmental considerations have been integrated into the plan or programme in accordance with the requirements of the legislation • The measures decided concerning monitoring 	Adoption Statement