

STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL
ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

**AGENDA
ITEM NO**

16 FEBRUARY 2017

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Report Title	SLIMBRIDGE DESIGN STATEMENT
Purpose of Report	To approve a Design Statement: The report sets out the recommended response to Parish Council & Community work on the Slimbridge Design Statement.
Decision(s)	Committee resolves that the Slimbridge Design Statement is adopted as Supplementary Planning Advice (SPA).
Consultation and Feedback	The Slimbridge Design Statement process initially commenced in August 2012. It has been produced by members of the Parish Council with the assistance of community volunteers. The GRRC assisted the Parish throughout the process including a community workshop day. Slimbridge History Society helped to provide a historical context and significance to certain details. Comment and advice from Officers of the Council has been regularly sought since inception of the project to ensure compliance with the NPPF and adopted local plan policies. The Design Statement has been the subject of publicity, consultation and scrutiny at various stages of production. Public consultation is in accordance with the Council's Adopted Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) and the original 1995 Countryside Agency Design Statement production process advice. The record of community involvement is given in Appendix B of this report.
Financial Implications and Risk Assessment	No Financial Implications arising from this report. Adele Rudkin Tel: 01453 754109 Email:adele.rudkin@stroud.gov.uk
Legal Implications	In dealing with planning applications SDC have to have regard to the Local Plan so far as material and to any other material considerations; and, will determine the application in accordance with the Local Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. (Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Act 2004). If adopted the Uley & Owlpen Community Design Statement will become a material consideration and

	<p>will affect and be taken into account by SDC when determining planning applications from the parishes of Uley & Owlpen.</p> <p>The weight will be given to that material consideration will be a matter for the decision maker taking each application on its own merits.</p> <p>Alan Carr, Solicitor, Legal Services Tel: 01453 754357 Email: alan.carr@stroud.gov.uk</p>
Report Author	<p>Conrad Moore, Principal Planning Officer, Planning Strategy. Tel: 01453 754328 Email: conrad.moore@stroud.gov.uk</p>
Options	<p>The Council may decide not to approve Supplementary Planning Advice or specific guidelines within it. However the provision of up to date Supplementary Planning Advice (SPA) will assist effective and efficient planning and development control decision-making within the District.</p>
Performance Management Follow Up	<p>Progress on the use of the Design Statement will be monitored by the Parish through the development control process and the guidance reviewed to ensure continued conformity with any future local planning and national planning policy direction.</p>
Background Papers/ Appendices	<p>Background papers Appendix A – Slimbridge Design Statement (December 2016)</p> <p>Appendix B – Slimbridge Design Statement Consultation Audit Trail Report Paper copies have been placed in the Members Room.</p>

1 Background

- 1.1 The Slimbridge Design Statement has been produced under the initiative originally launched by the former Countryside Commission to encourage communities to identify local character and to set out design guidance at the local level. A Village Design Statement [VDS] is a practical tool to help influence decisions on local design. Prepared correctly, a VDS will provide a clear statement of the character of a particular village or locality against which planning applications may be assessed. It is not about whether development should take place (this is one of the purposes of both the current Adopted Stroud District Local Plan, but about how development should be undertaken so as to respect the sense of place and local identity.
- 1.2 Local people in villages and smaller more dispersed rural communities are well placed to identify local character and distinctiveness, described in terms of the landscape setting of their villages, the pattern and shape of

the settlements, and the nature of buildings, spaces, landmarks and special features. An effective VDS:

- is developed, researched, written, and edited by local people;
- is representative of the views of the village as a whole and has involved a wide section of the village community in its production;
- describes the visual character of the village and demonstrates how its character and distinctiveness can be protected and enhanced in new development locally;
- is compatible with the statutory planning system and is suitable for approval by the District Council as supporting its Adopted Local Plan;
- is applicable to all forms and scale of development; and is about managing change in the village, not preventing it.

1.3 At the national scale Government continues to seek to devolve powers to local councils and neighbourhoods thereby giving local communities influence and a voice in making planning decisions. This design statement is about letting the people who know and care for an area to influence development within it. Furthermore work undertaken for the Design Statement could be used as a first step towards drafting a future NDP. Plans can share a common evidence base. The adopted Local Plan contains a number of policies which refer to Neighbourhood Development Plans, Design Statements and accompanying evidence. An example is the District Council's Local Plan cluster approach to making places where DS's form part of the key supporting evidence and guiding principles The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states at paragraph 116 "Local Plans, including any neighbourhood plans, should develop robust and comprehensive policies that set out the quality of development that will be expected for the area. Such policies should be based on stated objectives for the future of the area and an understanding and evaluation of its present defining characteristics." The work and involvement of the local community here contributes to this aspiration.

2 The Slimbridge Design Statement Content

2.1 The DS covers the Parish of Slimbridge. The introductory and background text gives the location of the Parish and the document role and purpose in the planning context.

2.2 The DS then seeks to point out the distinctive characteristics of the locality and the settlements within it. The document draws together the particular aspects that the community value and provides planning guidance to respect the local environment characteristics and to influence how future development should be carried out.

The document identifies each settlement and sets out their individual key characteristics which are based on:

- Landscape Setting and Character;
- Settlement Pattern;
- Buildings and Spaces;
- Listed Buildings.
- Materials and Distinctive Features

2.3 The CDS sets out 13 clear and simple recommendations for the design of all development in the Parish, based on its characteristics. It is an advisory document that will not stop change from happening, but it can influence how any new building can better complement the existing Parish characteristics. By approving the document as Supplementary Planning Advice (SPA), the guidelines within it can be carefully considered in planning decisions relating to Slimbridge Parish and their individual communities. To ensure that the Council's statutory role is not undermined there is a clear acknowledgement that there are sometimes conflicting interests in reaching a planning decision. Each individual application is described as being determined on its own merits and in the context of many different planning documents.. The Design Statement is clear that all relevant planning documents will be carefully considered and weighed by the Council prior to a final planning decision. This important acknowledgement in Section 1 of the document recognises that other policies could take precedence over the guideline recommendations in some cases.

3 Consultation

3.1 Local public consultation has been carried out in accordance with the Council's Adopted Statement of Community Involvement and original Countryside Agency Design Statement production advice. The DS has an accompanying consultation audit trail document that sets out public consultation events and this provides a comprehensive audit trail of how comments from stakeholders have been taken into account in putting together the design statement in accordance with production guidelines. The Consultation Audit Trail Report is given at Appendix B of this report. By drawing a wide section of the community into the planning process, the CDS provides an important evidence base on local design issues that can help inform the implementation of national and Local Plan policies by recognising that local communities have a detailed appreciation and understanding of their own place, thereby adding value to the policy implementation process.

4 Future Document Review

4.1 The Design Statement will be monitored and reviewed by the Parish Council post any adoption as Supplementary Planning Advice. Any future potential changes will need to be made in accordance with the relevant guidance and policy at that time. Officers have sought to agree an appropriate review process that can acknowledge the potential limited resources available to the Parish Council. The Design Statement was adopted by the Parish Council on 16th January 2017. The District Council is committed to

undertaking an early review of the Adopted Local Plan and Slimbridge Parish have committed to undertaking a review of the VDS advice within the Local Plan review timeframe.

5 Conclusion

- 5.1 Every parish, village and small town should consider the benefits of preparing a DS. Officers consider for the reasons set out in this report to recommend that the Slimbridge Design Statement is adopted as Supplementary Planning Advice (SPA). In this role it can support and inform development management recommendations and decisions through joint working and collaboration.