

Report for: Regulatory Committee 25 February 2021

Title: National Planning Policy Framework and National Model Design Code: consultation proposals

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Lead Officer: Bryce Tudball, Planning Policy Team Manager

Ward(s) affected: N/A

Report for Key/ Non Key Decision: For information

1. Describe the issue under consideration

- 1.1 On 30 January 2021 the Government launched a consultation on draft revisions to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and a new draft National Model Design Code (NMDC) (Appendix A). The text of the NPPF has primarily been revised to implement policy changes in response to the Building Better Building Beautiful Commission “Living with Beauty” report. This consultation is also seeking views on the draft NMDC, which provides detailed guidance on the production of design codes, guides and policies to promote successful design.
- 1.2 This report provides information on the content of both consultations and invites comment on how the Council should respond to the consultation which closes on 27 March 2021.

2. Recommendations

That Regulatory Committee note and discuss the National Planning Policy Framework and National Model Design Code consultation proposals

3. Reasons for decision

Not applicable.

4. Alternative options considered

N/A

5. National Planning Policy Framework and National Model Design Code consultation proposals

National Planning Policy Framework

- 5.1 The NPPF sets out the Government’s planning policies for England and how these should be applied. It must be taken into account in preparing the Council’s development plan, and is a material consideration in planning decisions.

- 5.2 On 30 January 2021 the Government published a number of proposed changes to the NPPF (Appendix B). Most of the changes relate to policy on the quality of design of new development, and which respond to the recommendations of the Building Better, Building Beautiful Commission, an independent body set up to advise Government on how to promote and increase the use of high-quality design for new build homes and neighbourhoods. The Commission's recommendations to Government were set out in its 'Living with Beauty' Report (January 2020).
- 5.3 The revised NPPF also:
- Makes a number of changes to strengthen environmental policies – including those arising from a review of flood risk with Defra
 - Includes minor changes to clarify policy in order to address legal issues
 - Includes changes to remove or amend out of date material
 - Includes an update to reflect a recent change made in a Written Ministerial Statement about retaining and explaining statues.
 - Provides clarification on the use of Article 4 directions
- 5.4 It should be noted that this is not a wholesale revision of the National Planning Policy Framework, nor does it reflect proposals for wider planning reform set out in the Planning for the Future consultation document published in Summer 2020. The Government advises that a fuller review of the NPPF is likely to be required in due course to reflect those wider reforms, subject to decisions on how they are to be taken forward.

Draft National Model Design Code

- 5.5 On 30 January 2021 the Government published a draft NMDC (Appendix C). The purpose of the NMDC is to provide detailed guidance on the production of design codes, guides and policies to promote successful design. It expands on the ten characteristics of good design set out in the National Design Guide (originally published October 2019 and subsequently updated January 2021), which reflects the Government's priorities and provides a common overarching framework for design. The NMDC is intended to form part of the Government's planning practice guidance. It is not a statement of national policy. However, once finalised, local planning authorities are recommended to follow the advice and guidance contained within it on how to prepare design codes and guides is followed.
- 5.6 A design code is a set of illustrated design requirements that provide specific, detailed parameters for the physical development of a site or area. The draft NMDC is intended to be used as a toolkit to guide local planning authorities on the design parameters and issues that need to be considered and tailored to their own context when producing design codes and guides, as well as methods to capture and reflect the views of the local community from the outset, and at each stage in the process.
- 5.7 The Government believes that design codes are important because they provide a framework for creating healthy, environmentally responsive, sustainable and distinctive places, with a consistent and high-quality standard of

design. This can provide greater certainty for communities about the design of development and bring conversations about design to the start of the planning process, rather than the end.

6. Contribution to strategic outcomes

6.1 Changes to the planning system are relevant to all Priorities of the Borough Plan.

7. Use of Appendices

- Appendix A: National Planning Policy Framework and National Model Design Code consultation proposals
- Appendix B: National Planning Policy Framework Draft text for consultation
- Appendix C: Draft National Model Design Code

8. Background documents

- Building Better, Building Beautiful Commission 'Living with Beauty' Report:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/861832/Living_with_beauty_BBBC_report.pdf

9. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

N/A