

**Local Development Framework Working  
Group**

**7<sup>th</sup> November 2011**

Report of the Director of City Strategy

**City of York Council:  
House Extensions and Alterations Supplementary Planning  
Document**

**Summary**

1. The purpose of this report is to seek approval from Members for the draft Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) on House Extensions and Alterations (attached at Annex A of this report) to be published for consultation.
2. The role of the SPD is to provide additional guidance on how to interpret and implement policies of the Local Development Framework and Local Plan.
3. The SPD will replace the City Council's existing guidance note relating to extensions that was approved in 2001. The SPD will give more clarity to applicants and agents proposing to submit planning applications and will help improve the transparency, efficiency and consistency of decision making.

**Background**

4. The existing Council guidance note on house extensions and alterations approved in 2001 is a valuable resource for applicants and decision makers. It is however, a relatively short document and pre-dates existing and emerging guidance and policies relating to house extensions. In addition, in 2008 there was a major overhaul of national legislation relating to permitted development rights for enlarging dwelling houses. Amendments to this legislation had implications on the scale and nature of development that the Council could reasonably decide was unacceptable.

5. The Council has recently started charging residents for site specific planning advice on the likely acceptability of proposals to extend their homes. It is considered that more detailed guidance relating to house extensions will help create more certainty in this process and also give greater information to those people who do not want to pay the Council for personalised advice. The greater detail in the draft SPD will also be valuable for explaining to people living within close proximity to a planning application how a decision is made and what factors will be considered.
6. Guidance in the House Extensions SPD is divided into two sections. The first section offers general advice covering issues such as privacy and overshadowing which will be relevant to most applications. The second section gives more detailed advice for specific proposals relating to, for example, dormer windows and detached garages.
7. The SPD note seeks to achieve an acceptable balance between delivering consistent decision making through the use of numerical standards and having regard to site specific circumstances. The document emphasises the importance of understanding the local context and how a proposal will impact upon neighbours. Given the enormous difference in character between different residential areas around the city it is important that proposals respect their local environment.
8. Some planning authorities have relied on fixed rules and separation distances for assessing the impact that a proposal will have on neighbours' living conditions and the streetscene. This has not been an approach that has been taken in York. It is considered that a 'one size fits all' approach can be counter productive to good planning that has regard to local context and makes efficient use of land. It is considered that any 'planning rule' should only be a starting point and it is crucial that in drawing up proposals and making decisions local factors are fully understood and considered.
9. The SPD has been produced to support the emerging LDF Core Strategy. It is of particular relevance to policies:
  - CS5: Urban Design and the Historic environment; and
  - CS1: The Role of York's Green Belt.

10. Policy CS5 of the LDF seeks to promote high quality design, which respects the character of an area including the built development and open spaces. The SPD has been written to reflect the emphasis in Policy CS5 of the need to understand and respect the special character of York and its different areas.
11. Policy CS1 sets out that only very restricted types of development appropriate to the purposes of the Greenbelt will be permitted. The SPD includes a section stating how proposals for house extensions in the Green Belt will be considered.
12. The SPD picks up on issues relevant to sustainability including, for example, the importance of providing for cycle storage and the need to assess whether a proposal will overshadow a neighbouring room or garden. The annex of the document draws reader's attention to the Council's Interim Planning Statement on Sustainable Design and Construction.

### **Consultation**

13. Internal consultation has been undertaken with officers in Development Management.

### **Options**

14. There are three options identified in relation to this report.

**Option 1:** To recommend to Cabinet to approve the SPD for consultation.

**Option 2:** To recommend to Cabinet to request that amendments be made to the SPD in line with the comments of the LDF Working Group.

**Option 3:** To defer the SPD and request further work from officers.

### **Corporate Priorities**

15. The option outlined above accords with the following Corporate Priorities
  - Sustainable City
  - Thriving City
  - Safer City

- Healthy City

## **Implications**

16. The following implications have been assessed:

- **Financial** – None
- **Human Resources (HR)** - None
- **Equalities** - None
- **Legal** - None
- **Crime and Disorder** - None
- **Information Technology (IT)** - None
- **Property** - None
- **Other** – None

## **Risk Management**

17. In compliance with the Council's Risk Management Strategy, there are no risks associated with the recommendations of this report.

## **Recommendations**

18. That Members recommend Cabinet to:

- i) approve the attached draft SPD for consultation purposes; and
- ii) delegate to the Director of City Strategy in consultation with the Cabinet Member City Strategy the making of any changes to the SPD that are necessary as a result of the recommendations of the LDF Working Group.

Reason: So that SPD can be consulted on, and amended accordingly ahead of it being used for Development Management purposes to support the emerging LDF Core Strategy.

## **Contact Details**

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**Report  
Approved**



**Date** 27/10/2011

**Specialist Implications Officer(s)**

N/A

**Wards Affected:** *List wards or tick box to indicate all*

**All**

**For further information please contact the author of the report**

**Background Papers:**

Annex A: Draft Supplementary Planning Document on House Extensions