

By: Caroline Bruce - Interim Director of Kent Highway Services.

To: Keith Ferrin, MBE, Cabinet Member for Environment, Highways and Waste
Kevin Lynes, Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Supporting Independence

Subject: Kent Design Guide – Interim Guidance Notes prepared as a response to the publication of Manual for Streets and Planning Policy Statement PPS3: Housing.

Classification: Unrestricted.

Summary: The publication of national guidance on the planning, design and maintenance of new residential streets and spaces, Manual for Streets, and the Planning Policy Statement in respect of Housing, PPS3, have necessitated a review of the Kent Design Guide and the residential element of Kent and Medway Structure Plan Supplementary Planning Guidance on Vehicle Parking Standards (SPG4).

Three Interim Guidance Notes have been prepared:

1. Quality Audits – how development partners should work together to achieve design excellence.
2. “Visibility” – new guidance on sight lines for drivers at junctions and along streets.
3. Residential Parking – planning for adequate and properly laid out parking in residential developments.

These Interim Guidance Notes have been the subject of consultation through the Kent Design Initiative network and have been approved by the Kent Planning Officers Group for use by Medway Council, Kent’s District Councils and Kent County Council (including Kent Highway Services). The “Visibility” Note interprets national guidance and is already in use. However, adoption of the Quality Audit and Residential Parking Notes by Kent County Council will represent a strong recommendation to its Kent Design partners that the Notes should be adopted for Development Control purposes.

This report therefore **Seeks Approval**, through the appropriate Cabinet Members, and therefore adoption for development control and development planning purposes, of Interim Guidance Notes 1 and 3 and **Informs** Members of Interim Guidance Note 2, which supersedes particular guidance contained in the Kent Design Guide.

Introduction

1. (1) The publication of Manual for Streets (Department for Transport, Communities and Local Government & Welsh Assembly Government, March 2007) has necessitated a review of the Kent Design Guide. Furthermore, the publication of Planning Policy Statement PPS3: Housing (Communities & Local Government, November 2006) heralded a shift in guidance concerning residential parking 'standards' such that local planning authorities are required to produce residential parking policies for their areas. Kent's District Councils asked Kent Highway Services to use its considerable knowledge and growing evidence base on this subject to produce a response to PPS3.

(2) CABE Space facilitated an external review of the Kent Design Guide that gave it a relatively clean bill of health. However, the visibility guidance in the Guide has been superseded, the Quality Audit 'concept to completion' process needs to be enlarged upon and the guidance in respect of residential parking needs to be emphasised. The latter also satisfies the need to replace the residential parking element of Kent and Medway Structure Plan Supplementary Planning Guidance SPG4 (Vehicle Parking Standards) to accord with PPS3.

(3) The Kent Planning Officers Group (KPOG), as 'client' for the Kent Design Initiative, has overseen preparation of and consultation on the resulting Interim Guidance Notes. They have been approved by KPOG and are to be offered for adoption, for Development Control purposes, by Medway Council and Kent's District Councils. Formal approval by Kent County Council will encourage such adoption.

Interim Guidance Note 1 – Quality Audits

2. (1) The Kent Design Guide promotes collaborative working ("the Development Team approach") on all developments involving the creation of new streets and places. Manual for Streets develops this idea into Quality Audits. These enable the Development Team to balance a range of complimentary and competing factors to arrive at the best overall development.

(2) The Quality Audit Note establishes the way that Quality Audits should work, with reference to the Building for Life standard that is being recommended for use by all those involved in designing, assessing and building new housing.

(3) The Note also draws upon survey work conducted by Kent Highway Services, in conjunction with the Kent Design Initiative, into residents' views on recently completed developments.

Interim Guidance Note 2 – "Visibility"

3. (1) The 'visibility standards' contained in the Kent Design Guide have been superseded by the guidance contained in Manual for Streets. The Interim Guidance Note explains the changes and relates them to good design.

Interim Guidance Note 3 – Residential Parking

4. (1) Parking is by far the biggest cause of dissatisfaction among residents of recently completed developments. In spite of the guidance contained in the Kent Design Guide, discredited ideologies on the location, design and number

of spaces are still being imposed. PPS3 seeks a design-led approach that takes account of expected levels of car ownership, having regard for the most efficient use of land and assisting with demand management at appropriate locations.

(2) The Interim Guidance Note draws on national guidance on the design of and appropriate amounts of parking, interpreting both through the substantial evidence base gathered from residents in recently completed developments. It satisfies the aims of PPS3, offering development partners and elected members an opportunity to design, approve and build streets and places in which parking will not cause neighbour disputes, inconvenience to pedestrians and danger (perceived and actual) to all users.

(3) Two aspects of the Note which may prove to be controversial are worth highlighting. Firstly, the growing evidence base shows that only about half of garages provided as part of the parking provision are used for that purpose, even when non-use results in inappropriate parking. The Interim Guidance Note recommends that where there are no on-street parking controls, garages should be additional to the appropriate amount of parking for vehicles. Secondly, where there are no on-street controls, the recommended amounts of parking are expressed as "minimum". False limitations on amounts of parking have resulted in problems for residents, and have not always been in the interests of good design.

Training and Awareness-Raising

5. (1) It is important that new and updated guidance should be made known to all those who are expected to use it. Furthermore, training is often needed to help practitioners make use of new approaches to their work.

(2) The Interim Guidance Notes will be the subject of training and awareness-raising within Kent Highway Services and among Kent's District Councils as part of the ongoing partnership aimed at delivering design excellence and Putting Kent First. They will also figure in training that is being formulated by the Kent Design Initiative.

Implications

6. (1) The preparation of the Interim Guidance Notes, their adaptation for inclusion on the Kent Design Guide website and the training and awareness-raising necessary to bring them into widespread use are part of the work of the Kent Design Initiative. No additional resources are needed.

(2) The Interim Guidance Notes satisfy the requirements of updating the Kent Design Guide to bring it in line with Manual for Streets and provide an evidence based response to PPS3. They maintain and enhance the Kent Design Initiative's commitment to design excellence.

Views of the Highways Advisory Board

7. At its meeting on 6 January 2009 the Highways Advisory Board:-

(a) agreed that the Cabinet Member for Environment, Highways and Waste and the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Supporting Independence be informed that :

(i) the three Interim Guidance Notes are needed to reflect changes in national guidance since the Kent Design Guide was published in 2005;

- (ii) a thorough consultation has been undertaken using the Kent Design Initiative network. Representations have been embraced where appropriate; and
 - (iii) the Notes have been approved by the Kent Planning Officers Group as updates to the Kent Design Guide and, in the case of Residential Parking, also as an appropriate response to Planning Policy Statement PPS3: Housing.
- (b) supported the proposal for recommendation to the Cabinet Member for Environment, Highways and Waste and the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Supporting Independence as set out in paragraph 8 below; and
- (c) noted the “Visibility” Interim Guidance Note, which updates guidance contained in the Kent Design Guide.

Recommendation

8. THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT, HIGHWAYS AND WASTE AND THE CABINET MEMBER FOR REGENERATION AND SUPPORTING INDEPENDENCE are asked to AGREE –

That the Quality Audit and Residential Parking Interim Guidance Notes is approved for adoption by Kent County Council and for recommendation for adoption by Kent’s District Councils.

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