

NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET – TUESDAY, 24 MARCH 2026



Title of Report	GOOD DESIGN GUIDE FOR NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE	
Presented by	Tony Safell Portfolio Holder for Planning PH Briefed: Yes	
Background Papers	<u>Current Good Design Guide for North West Leicestershire 2017</u>	Public Report: Yes
	<u>Good Design Guide - supplementary planning document March 2026</u>	Key Decision: Yes
Financial Implications	The cost of preparing the Good Design Guide is being met from the Planning Skills Delivery Fund received in October 2024.	
	Signed off by the Section 151 Officer: Yes	
Legal Implications	The preparation of the Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) will need to comply with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012	
	Signed off by the Monitoring Officer: Yes	
Staffing and Corporate Implications	There are no direct staffing or corporate implications.	
	Signed off by the Head of Paid Service: Yes	
Purpose of Report	To update Cabinet on the preparation of the Good Design Guide SPD and the outcome of public consultation held between July and September 2025. To present a revised Good Design Guide for North West Leicestershire for consideration, with a recommendation that the Local Plan Committee adopts the SPD.	
Reason for Decision	The Council's Constitution (Part 2, Section D5, paragraph 2.2.1) requires the Local Plan Committee to receive reports from Cabinet on proposed SPDs.	

Recommendations	<p>THAT CABINET:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. RECOMMENDS THAT THE LOCAL PLAN COMMITTEE ADOPTS THE GOOD DESIGN GUIDE FOR NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT; AND 2. DELEGATES AUTHORITY TO THE STRATEGIC DIRECTOR OF PLACE TO AGREE ANY MINOR MODIFICATIONS TO THE FINAL DRAFT SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT PRIOR TO ADOPTION AT LOCAL PLAN COMMITTEE.
------------------------	---

1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Since 2007, the Council has improved the design quality of new development, while not compromising the number of planning consents for new homes. In 2017, the first Good Design Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) was produced by the Council which raised the bar further still.
- 1.2 As set out as a target in the Council Delivery Plan, the Council is working to raise the quality of new development even further. As part of this journey, the Council was one of 14 authorities who took part in the National Model Design Code Pilot programme in the summer of 2021 with grant funding from Government. The Council's funding bid, agreed with Government, was to refresh and update the Council's existing Good Design Guide SPD and align it with the National Model Design Code. The new Good Design Guide is the result of that work.
- 1.3 This new Guide looks to build upon the sound foundation, aspirations and vision set out in 2017, while seeking to respond to challenges identified with stakeholders, as well as evidence from what has been built across the district and what is seen as best practice nationally.
- 1.4 Since the Council adopted its award-winning design initiative, there has been a significant transformation in design quality across the District. It is acknowledged, however, that not all schemes have been a total success, and lessons have been learnt from those which have not reached the design quality expected. However, officers are generally satisfied that many developers have responded positively and enthusiastically to the Council's design expectations.

2.0 THE NEW GOOD DESIGN GUIDE SPD FOR NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE

- 2.1 One of the key aims in the Council's Delivery Plan 2023-28 is that the Council will secure high quality design in new developments and that a new local design guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) will have been produced which developments will need to comply with. Once agreed by Cabinet and then adopted at Local Plan Committee, planning applications will be assessed against the new document.
- 2.2 An SPD is a document which provides further information about a policy or policies in a development plan. An SPD can be a helpful way to provide guidance on matters such as how a policy should be interpreted in development management decisions, what information applicants need to supply to meet the requirements of a policy and procedural arrangements. Importantly an SPD is not itself part of the development plan,

but it is capable of being a material consideration in planning decisions. In addition, an SPD cannot be used to change or add to the policies in the adopted Local Plan. Such policy changes can only be made through the Local Plan Review.

- 2.3 The guidance contained within the new SPD is based on what the Council has achieved in North West Leicestershire over the last 15 years, but also how the Council can strive to improve the design quality of developments further. The document explains how good design is measured locally and provides applicants with the clarity and certainty they have asked for.
- 2.4 The draft SPD has been developed encompassing a series of visits to housing developments both within North West Leicestershire and across the country to inform what constitutes good and best practice. It also showcases examples of the design quality of the development that, if adopted by developers, are more likely to be approved. Some initial informal consultation with stakeholders including the National Forest Company, Leicestershire County Council Highways (LCC Highways), a local housebuilder and planning consultancy took place in 2024 to help inform the development of the document.
- 2.5 Once adopted, the new SPD will give Council the tools to ensure that the developments that are brought forward, enhance the built environment and are ones that the Council can be genuinely proud of.

3.0 CONSULTATION

3.1 At Local Plan Committee on 21 May 2025, members agreed that the draft Good Design Guide for North West Leicestershire SPD be approved for public consultation. The consultation ran between 23 July and 17 September 2025.

3.2 The consultation on the draft Good Design SPD received comments from ten external organisations or individuals. The external organisations were:

National Highways, LCC Highways, National Forest Company, Historic England, Environment Agency, Natural England, the Coal Authority, Leicestershire Police, Ashby de la Zouch Town Council and one planning consultant.

The comments received have generally focussed on three chapters within the document: Context, Movement and Nature.

- 3.3 A summary of the consultation responses received is attached as Appendix 1 to this report and in table form, this outlines the main issues raised, the Council's response, the action taken to deal with the issue and the name of the respondent's organisation.
- 3.4 In total there were 110 comments or observations received from the external organisations and internally. Of these, 22 were comments of support/no comment relating to chapters or sections within the document, which were noted. These are shown marked as blue in Appendix 1.
- 3.5 A further 63 comments and observation from external organisations and internally suggested changes which have been agreed and are now proposed within the revised document. These are shown marked as green in Appendix 1.

- 3.6 There are 25 comments which have been noted, but no changes to the document are recommended. The reasons for not amending the document to take account of those comments are shown marked as brown in Appendix 1.
- 3.7 Officers are satisfied that the consultation responses have been adequately dealt with, and in particular, detailed discussions have been held with LCC Highways to ensure the relevant chapters of the document are generally in accordance with the Leicestershire Highway Design Guide. Members will see that the majority of comments received have either supported the Good Design Guide or resulted in a significant number of amendments to the document. Where comments have not resulted in changes, the reasons why are clearly set out in Appendix 1.
- 3.8 A link to the document which has been amended to take into account the consultation responses where appropriate can be found here:
[Good Design Guide - supplementary planning document March 2026](#)

4.0 NEXT STEPS

- 4.1 Formulation of an SPD is an Executive function, but adoption is a Council function which has been delegated to the Local Plan Committee.
- 4.2 Therefore, Cabinet is asked to recommend to the Local Plan Committee that it formally adopts the Good Design Guide for North West Leicestershire SPD at its meeting on 22 April 2026.

Policies and other considerations, as appropriate	
Council Priorities:	Insert relevant Council Priorities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Planning and regeneration - Communities and housing - Clean, green and Zero Carbon - A well-run council
Policy Considerations:	Paragraph 133 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that to provide maximum clarity about design expectations at an early stage, all local planning authorities should prepare design guides or codes consistent with the principles set out in the National Design Guide and National Model Design Code. The Good Design Guide will align with national planning policy and the design policy in the new Local Plan.
Safeguarding:	None identified.
Equalities/Diversity:	An Equalities Impact Assessment has been completed.

Customer Impact:	The new Good Design Guide will provide clear clarity for customers on the Councils expectations for the design of new development.
Economic and Social Impact:	New development offers the opportunity to use good design to create healthy, social and economically vibrant places that work well for everyone. The aim of the document is that it will promote good and well-designed buildings and spaces and create meaningful places - places that people can be proud of, will last for generations and help to make people's lives happier and more fulfilling.
Environment, Climate Change and Zero Carbon:	The new Good Design Guide contains guidance on how to deal with green infrastructure, sustainable drainage, biodiversity, energy consumption and sustainable construction including water management.
Consultation/Community/Tenant Engagement:	Consultation of the draft document took place between 23 July and 17 September 2025.
Risks:	If applications are refused as contrary to the Good Design Guide, there is a risk that appeal inspectors may allow a poor-quality development and result in developers submitting schemes of a much lower standard of design on the basis that a precedent has been set. This risk should be mitigated by aligning the Good Design document with national policy contained in the NPPF, the National Model Design Code, design policy in the Council's Local Plan and by consultation with key stakeholders including major house builders.
Officer Contact	Chris Elston Head of Planning and Infrastructure chris.elston@nwleicestershire.gov.uk