

## **Adoption of the Yeovil Public Realm Design Guide as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)**

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*Ward Member(s)* Town centre ward members  
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### **Purpose of the Report**

1. To seek Council endorsement for the Yeovil Public Realm Design Guide to be adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). The guide has now completed the required steps for adoption relating to consultation as outlined in this report.
2. The document was endorsed by District Executive on 5<sup>th</sup> March 2020.
3. This adoption creates a SPD which supports relevant policies in the Council's adopted Local Plan (2006-2028) and completes Project P1 from the Yeovil Refresh.

### **Public Interest**

4. This report is requesting that South Somerset District Council formally adopt the Yeovil Public Realm Design Guide. The guide is a key foundation in the work to deliver the Yeovil Refresh. It will create a template for any building projects that happen in Yeovil town centre. This includes projects that the council is planning to deliver in the main streets. It will help create a guide for other developers to follow when designing public areas. The guide also includes a shopfront guide which is meant to help businesses by giving a clear style and quality when making or upgrading a shopfront.

### **Recommendations**

5. That the Council:
  - a. endorses the attached Public Realm Design Guide for adoption. (Appendix A)
  - b. endorses the attached Shopfront Guide for adoption. (Appendix B)

**(due to their size, these documents will be published as a supplement to the Agenda)**

### **Background**

6. The Yeovil Refresh was adopted in 2018 creating a new vision for Yeovil town centre. The Refresh describes how this vision will be delivered through four key themes. These are Development, Transport, Public Realm and Complementary Initiatives.
7. This report deals with the Public Realm Design Guide which is a key component of the Public realm theme, this is defined as project P1. The Design Guide is intended to provide a clear foundation for all future public realm schemes in Yeovil town centre. This includes a series of schemes P2- P5 described in the refresh document which cover the core town centre streets.

8. The Design Guide and associated Shopfront Guide are now ready to be adopted as Supplementary Planning Documents. These will provide further policy definition in Yeovil town centre to the council's town centre planning approach. These documents provide definition to policies in the Local Plan specifically policy EQ2: General Development and general town centre related policies. The SPD is intended to assist in driving through the aspirations for the town centre within the Yeovil Refresh document.
9. The Public Realm Design Guide has been created through the past year as the wider public realm design project has progressed. It is broken into a number of sections which:
  - a. Explore the existing situation
  - b. Set out design parameters
  - c. Describe the approach to public art,
  - d. Sets a Lighting strategy
  - e. Creates a Wayfinding and Signage strategy
  - f. Describes the Quality and types of Materials which are required.
10. The Design Guide has an associated shopfront guide which sets out parameters to improve the quality of design in the town centre.

## **Process of adoption**

11. The Town and County Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 set out the framework for the preparation, consultation and adoption of supplementary planning documents. The council also has an adopted Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) which creates a clear framework for consultation relating to Local Plan documents. In accordance with the process for creating supplementary planning documents there are a number of steps to follow to ensure that the document has been subject to appropriate consultation. The following has been delivered or is planned:
  - The principles of the Design Guide were subject to public, stakeholder and councilor consultation in the summer of 2019 which gathered information on the wider public realm proposals.
  - A screening report to determine whether the Design SPD requires a Habitats Regulation Assessment and/or a Strategic Environmental Assessment has been carried out and sent to statutory consultees for their comment. This was considered by District Executive on 7<sup>th</sup> November 2019 as part of the request to consult on the document.
  - The Design Guide and Shopfront Guide must be subject to a formal consultation which is a minimum of 4 weeks as required by legislation. This was approved by District Executive on 7<sup>th</sup> November. The consultation ran from 19<sup>th</sup> December to Monday 27<sup>th</sup> January 2020 to allow for the Christmas period.
  - Consultation feedback has been considered and no amendments have been needed as a result of the feedback.
  - Final Design Guide and Shopfront Guide submitted to District Executive in March 2020.
  - Document adopted by Council 19<sup>th</sup> March 2020.
  - Issue formal statement of adoption and allow three month period for any person aggrieved by the decision to adopt the SPD to apply to the High Court for permission to apply for a judicial review. Make the document available on the SSDC website and at key locations.
12. The feedback received from the recent consultation is appended to this report as Appendix C. This feedback has been considered and no amendments have been made to the documentation. Historic England have responded as a Statutory Consultee their comments are attached as Appendix D and will be utilized in the delivery of projects as they are implemented.

13. The completion of the adoption process will mean that the Supplementary Planning Document will support the delivery of the local plan. This creates a clear design style for Yeovil town centre intended to support the wider regeneration of the area.
14. If Council agree the adoption on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2020 a statutory adoption statement will be issued which allows a further 3 months for comments prior to the SPD adoption process being finalized. This is attached as Appendix E.

### **Financial Implications**

15. The Design Guide creates a backdrop for the use of materials and other components of any proposed build scheme. The council is currently working on design proposals for the core streets in Yeovil.
16. The ultimate adoption of the Public Realm Design Guide, subject to due process, would have impacts on costs of those schemes. This design guide will inform cost and quality of all schemes. Those impacts though will be considered by the Yeovil Regeneration Board as part of any delivery proposals.

### **Council Plan Implications**

17. Council Priority 3: To continue the Refresh of Yeovil Town Centre includes the adoption of a Public Realm Design Guide (P1) as one of the 2019/20 desired outcomes. This report seeks endorsement for adoption of the guide which will enable this outcome to be achieved in Quarter 4 of 19/20.

### **Carbon Emissions and Climate Change Implications**

18. The guide supports changes to the town centre which would have a positive impact for climate change. Whilst the guide is a framework if adopted as a supplementary planning document it sets principles for additional tree planting, better use of permeable materials and improved practice in management of the streets.

The guide supports a shared space approach which places greater reliance on walking and cycling. This aims to reduce impacts created by petrol and diesel vehicles in the town centre.

### **Equality and Diversity Implications**

19. The Design guide seeks to support greater access in the town centre through improved design in the areas it influences. It therefore sets a frame for action. At this stage a detailed equality impact assessment has not been carried out. This process will be applied to each individual design to ensure that they comply with Council's duties under the legislation. These will be the subject of future consideration when actual proposals for design are proposed.

### **Privacy Impact Assessment**

20. This consultation will encourage public feedback. Information will be processed to support the production of the guide in accordance with the legislation. An assessment was carried out on the report to District Executive in November 2019 which is available on request which considers the information collected in detail. This is Appendix D of the November District Executive report.

### **Background Papers**

- Public Realm Design Guide – Appendix A1 and A2
  - Shopfront Guide – Appendix B
  - Consultation feedback – Appendix C
  - Statutory Consultee Feedback – Appendix D , Historic England
  - Draft Adoption Statement – Appendix E
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