

Planning Committee

24 June 2022

Agenda item number 10

Draft Design Guide for consultation

Report by Historic Environment Manager

Summary

The Broads Authority is preparing a Design Guide to meet the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework. The initial draft of the document is complete and we seek approval to carry out consultation on it.

Recommendation

To approve public consultation for the Broads Authority Design Guide.

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The revised National Planning Policy Framework (2021) (NPPF) includes a requirement for all Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) to prepare design guides or codes consistent with the principles set out in the National Design Guide (2021) and National Model Design Code (2021). The Government's commitment to the production of Design Guides by LPAs has been strengthened in the recent Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill.
- 1.2. The purpose of a Design Guide is to provide clarity of design expectations at an early stage in the development process. The Design Guide should reflect local character and design preferences and should involve effective community engagement and reflect local aspirations for development, taking into account national design guidance.
- 1.3. The geographic coverage of the documents, the level of detail and degree of prescription should be tailored to the circumstances and scale of change in each place.
- 1.4. It is intended that Design Guides are used by anybody proposing new development, to give them an understanding of the key characteristics of built form in the area and guidance (in the form of Design Codes) as to what form new development should take and what is likely to be acceptable. The focus is primarily on urban design principles rather than just the elevational treatment of buildings.

2. Progress so far

- 2.1. We have been working with consultants on the production of the document.
- 2.2. We carried out an initial stage of public consultation, which consisted of a Survey Monkey questionnaire. This was sent to local interest groups and Parish Councils and

was publicised via social media and our website. We had a good level of engagement, with 148 responses received (see Appendix 2).

- 2.3. The purpose of this initial stage of consultation was to establish what is important to the local community (residents, visitors and users of the Broads area) in terms of their built environment. For example, what they think is special about it; what they think could be improved; what they think is characteristic of buildings in the Broads, whether they would prefer to see a traditional or contemporary approach to new buildings in the Broads etc.
- 2.4. The results of the survey were very interesting and demonstrated how greatly the built and natural environment of the Broads is valued. We must bear in mind that the survey is perhaps more likely to have been completed by those who already have an interest in their environment, but overall it would suggest that the majority of people value the traditional and historic buildings of the Broads, recognise the value that they provide and want to ensure that new development is in keeping with these buildings and preserves and enhances the wider landscape. This information has been taken into consideration as the draft Design Guide has been developed.
- 2.5. The document (see Appendix 2) consists of a series of character appraisals for the main building types within the Broads. The building types identified are those we consider most likely to be subject to change, where there are common characteristics in term of their built form (e.g. waterside chalets or boatyards). These can be used by those proposing development to establish the characteristics of the existing built form, with the intention that this understanding will inform the new development so that it responds to the existing. The Design Code can then be used to ensure that any proposals being developed meet the requirements of the guide and there will be a checklist to be submitted with planning applications.
- 2.6. This is the first draft and as such this is high-level consultation. We envisage that changes will be made to the document and it will be developed further. However, we consider this a good stage at which to get more public involvement and public consultation will enable us to take on board the comments raised in developing the document further. Government guidance on the production of Design Codes suggests that consultation should take place at the beginning, middle and end of the process.
- 2.7. It would be beneficial to run the consultation concurrently with that for the Local Plan, which is proposed to commence in July or August and run for 10 weeks. This will enable us to reach a wider audience and be an efficient use of resources. As well as having the consultation information on the Broads Authority's website, we intend to have three public drop-in events, one in the north of the area, one in the centre and one in the south.

3. Financial implications

- 3.1. By sharing venues to consult on both the Local Plan and Design Guide, costs will be reduced. There will be some minimal cost associated with venue hire and printing for display material.

4. Conclusion and recommendation

- 4.1. The NPPF requires consultation take place as part of the production of a Design Guide and it is recommended that members authorise the commencement of this process.

Author: Kate Knights

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[Broads Plan](#) objectives: 5.1

The following appendices are available to view on the [Planning Committee - 24 June 2022 \(broads-authority.gov.uk\)](#).

Appendix 1 – Results of Initial Design Guide Consultation

Appendix 2 – First draft of Design Guide