

**Local Development Framework**  
*Shaping the future of North Dorset*

# **Adopting Village and Town Design Statements as Supplementary Planning Documents**

Planning Guidance Note  
Updated April 2011



## **Foreword**

In North Dorset the Council actively promotes Village and Town Design Statements (V/TDS) as a community led planning initiative that enables local communities to determine what is special and what needs protecting in their own village or town.

Reflecting the views of the local community a V/TDS is an evidence based study of the built and natural environment that identifies a series of design guidelines and special features that future development needs to consider. V/TDS are seen as playing a vital role in the planning process by not only providing guidance to planning officers about the feelings and perceptions of local residents, but they also help in improving relationships and understanding between local communities, landowners and other stakeholders.

The Council remains committed to and will continue to encourage communities to prepare V/TDS although the legislation on which they are based may change as localism is introduced. If and when this is the case the Council will update the guidance accordingly.

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# **1 Introduction**

## **1.1 What are Village and Town Design Statements?**

Village and Town Design Statements (V/TDS) are produced by local people, with support and guidance from the Council, as local people are best placed to identify qualities and characteristics that are valued in their village or town. A V/TDS describes the setting, pattern and shape of a settlement, the nature of the buildings and spaces, local materials, landmarks, unique qualities and special features. It is a clear statement of the character of a particular village or town and provides guidelines against which planning applications can be assessed.

A V/TDS helps developers to understand these local views and perceptions at the outset of the design and development process and they are a practical tool to help make planning decisions. V/TDS cannot allocate land or determine whether or where future development should take place or address matters such as the ongoing management or maintenance of buildings or spaces, but they can assess how development should be undertaken so as to respect local character and identity.

This guidance note aims to inform groups that wish to produce a V/TDS for formal adoption by the Council of the procedures they will need to follow. It also provides guidance on the content of a V/TDS and identifies the key stages of preparation required under the relevant acts and regulations. A community group can decide to produce a V/TDS that will not be adopted by the Council. However, such an un-adopted document will be afforded little weight in the determination of planning applications and any subsequent appeals.

## **1.2 The objectives of Village and Town Design Statements**

A V/TDS should set out what 'high quality design' means for the village or town. The overarching objectives for a V/TDS are:

- To describe the distinctive character of the settlement and the surrounding countryside;
- To show how character can be identified at three levels:
  - The landscape setting of the village;
  - The form of the settlement;
  - The nature of the buildings themselves.
- To draw up design principles based on the distinctive local character;
- To work in partnership with the local planning authority in the context of existing local planning policy, and to influence future policies.

If there are issues that arise during the consultation process about which there is strong local consensus, but are outside the scope of a V/TDS, it may be worth pursuing the issues through other channels such as the Parish Plan or by lobbying other relevant organisations or authorities.



### 1.3 What is an effective Village or Town Design Statement?

The descriptive content and the resulting design guidelines are the key elements in giving a V/TDS material value. A V/TDS must meet the following criteria before it is ready to be formally consulted on and latterly adopted by the Council as a SPD. The V/TDS must:

- Have been developed, researched, written and edited by local people;
- Have involved a wide section of the community in its production;
- Represent the views of the community as a whole;
- Describe the visual character of the entire settlement;
- Demonstrate how local character and distinctiveness can be protected and enhanced in new development;
- Be suitable for approval as a SPD;
- Be applicable to all forms and scales of development; and,
- Be about **managing change in the settlement, not about preventing it.**

### 1.4 The planning context

In North Dorset we actively promote T/VDS as a community led planning initiative that enables local communities to determine what is special and what needs protecting in their own town or village. This view of local community involvement is reinforced in the emerging Localism Bill that states that *'instead of local people being told what to do, the Government think that local communities should have genuine opportunities to influence the future of the places where they live.'*<sup>1</sup>

Existing national planning policy in the form of Planning Policy Statement 3 (PPS 3 Para 18) states that *'To facilitate efficient delivery of high quality development, Local Planning Authorities should draw on relevant guidance and standards and promote the use of appropriate tools and techniques, such as Design Coding alongside urban design guidelines, detailed masterplans, village design statements, site briefs and community participation techniques.'*

Planning Policy Statement 7 (PPS7 Para 13) also recommends that Local Planning Authorities should *'prepare policies and guidance that encourage good quality design throughout their rural areas'* by *'utilising tools such as Landscape Character Assessments and Village or Town Design Statements, and the design elements of Village or Parish Plans'* that are prepared by local communities.

The emerging local planning policies in the form of Draft Core Policy 2 and draft Development Management Policy 3 of the Draft Core Strategy and Development Management DPD both support the above national policy and recognise the importance of V/TDS.

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<sup>1</sup> A plain English Guide to the Localism Bill – DCLG January 2011.

Prior to the Draft Core Strategy being adopted V/TDS will be supplementary to the North Dorset District Wide Local Plan. In particular they will provide further detail to policies 1.8 – 1.20 that specifically seek to protect the environment, to policies 1.21 to 1.31 that seek to conserve the historic environment and policies 1.33 to 1.41 that seek to protect the landscape and ecology. It is important that V/TDS are adopted as SPDs because this means that the guidelines they contain can then be regarded as material considerations in any subsequent planning decision. Statements that do not go through this formal process under the regulations are afforded little weight at any subsequent appeal.

## **1.5 Timetabling and Sustainability Appraisal**

To produce a V/TDS that can be adopted as a SPD the legal requirements of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the procedures outlined in the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004 and the guidance contained within the original Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Development Frameworks apply. However, in 2009 amendments to the regulations came into force that removed some of the more detailed requirements. One key change was that proposed SPDs were no longer required to be listed in the Council's Local Development Scheme (LDS), but instead information on their production needed to be provided in a more 'real time' format. At North Dorset V/TDS timetables are published on our website. The timetable lists all of those towns and parishes that are currently preparing statements together with provisional dates for their implementation. Any group wanting to prepare a V/TDS should agree a working timetable with the Council before they start.

The Council recognise that V/TDS are produced by local people who give their own time and unforeseen delays can occur. Every effort should be made to establish and keep to a V/TDS production timetable, both to help the Council programme its work effectively and so as not to disrupt the programme for production of other V/TDS that are in the pipeline. Where unavoidable delays occur the V/TDS group should inform the Council so that information on the website can be kept up to date.

The regulations also removed the need for SPDs to be subject to a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) where a SA of the higher level document had been carried out. The Draft Core Strategy and Development Management DPD was accompanied by an initial SA Report. The current North Dorset District-Wide Local Plan, which was adopted in 2003, has not been subject to a SA. As an SPD only requires a SA to be carried out if it is likely to give rise to significant effects and to determine whether this is the case, the Council sought a 'screening opinion' in February 2011 from the three statutory environmental bodies (English Heritage, Natural England and the Environment Agency). They agreed that T/VDS produced in North Dorset in accordance with our guidance and formally adopted as SPD, are unlikely to have a significant effect and as such they do not require SA. The full Determination Statement can be found on our website.

## 2 Content and structure

### 2.1 What should a Village Design Statement contain?

In drafting a Village Design Statement (VDS) the main aim is to articulate clear, sensible design objectives that have been created through detailed community consultation. These should be linked to the analysis of the character of the settlement and be written using plain language and presented in an easy to follow structure. A VDS should concentrate on providing a well-structured assessment of the character and design elements of the settlement and its setting, and should address the following criteria tests:

- Does it record and describe the unique character, design and local distinctiveness of the settlement's built and natural environment?
- Do the guidelines for development refer to (and are aided by) a description of the settlement's history and character?
- Will it assist in achieving a higher standard of design and informing the decisions of developers?
- Does it provide design recommendations, under the following broad topics?
  - The setting and landscape, including views;
  - Settlement pattern;
  - Open (and other) spaces;
  - Building form e.g. height, mass etc; (See Appendix A)
  - Materials and fenestration and chimney details;
  - Streets and street furniture;
  - Trees, hedges and other landscape features;
  - Boundary features e.g. walls, fences, etc.

Suggested chapter headings and content are listed in Figure 1 although the final V/TDS can include other chapters that the community feel are relevant.

- Does it include an explanation of exactly what is intended by the design recommendations and how they should be achieved in practice?
- Does it relate to the village as a whole, and for towns, each separate neighbourhood area, including the immediate surroundings which are important in contributing to aspects of setting? (The extent of any coverage beyond the settlement is for individual V/TDS determination).
- Is it compatible with, and have links been made to, existing planning policies and guidance adopted by the District Council e.g. the Local Plan, Conservation Area documents and (once adopted) the Core Strategy and Development Management DPD?
- Most importantly does it avoid the use of phrases such as "must be", "must not", "no more" "no development" etc? Suitable alternative forms of wording include, "wherever possible", "should" etc.

## **2.2 Additional Features of a Town Design Statement**

A Town Design Statement (TDS) is similar in concept to a VDS but the scale and complexity of towns means that a TDS will almost inevitably need to contain more detailed guidance, especially on the different character areas within the town. Over and above the recommended contents of a VDS, a TDS should contain:

- An overview of the different neighbourhood areas of the town and how they relate to each other, including annotated maps.
- An area by area townscape analysis identifying the:
  - i) Distinctive features covering building design styles, spatial layouts, building materials, landscape setting and special features;
  - ii) Main issues covering the problems and opportunities in the area as identified through community consultation.

Certain larger villages will also contain some of the characteristics of a town, such as industrial estates, and it may be suitable for these villages to undertake neighbourhood analysis; although this should be at a smaller scale than that for a town.



Figure 1 – Suggested structure for a V/TDS

<b>Introduction</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What the V/TDS is and its aims and objectives.</li> <li>• A brief summary of the methodology (this is expanded in the Statement of Consultation)</li> <li>• The local planning context into which the V/TDS will fit.</li> </ul>
<b>The context</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A description of the historic background of the settlement.</li> <li>• A short description of the settlement as it is today; the people, economics and future prospects and current environmental policies.</li> <li>• A description of the geographical setting of the settlement.</li> <li>• Any special considerations that affect development pressures in the settlement such as tourism or mineral extraction, etc.</li> </ul>
<b>The character of the landscape setting</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The visual character of the surrounding countryside.</li> <li>• The relationship between the surrounding countryside and the settlement edges including important views.</li> <li>• The relationship between the settlement and any historic or archaeological features, such as ancient monuments, strip lynchets, or ridge/furrow systems.</li> <li>• The relationship between the settlement and any significant landscape features, such as trees, hedgerows, or woodlands. Consider sensitive edges around the settlement.</li> <li>• The relationship between the settlement and any features of nature conservation interest such as ponds, streams, and nature reserves.</li> </ul>
<b>Settlement pattern and character</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overall pattern of settlement, zones, layouts and neighbourhood areas.</li> <li>• Character of streets and routes through the settlement.</li> <li>• Character and pattern of open spaces in the settlement and connections with the wider countryside.</li> </ul>
<b>Buildings form</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The character of distinct areas of building types.</li> <li>• The layout of development and its structure and grain (See Appendix A).</li> <li>• The density and mix of buildings (See Appendix A).</li> <li>• The height and massing of buildings (See Appendix A).</li> <li>• Building details and materials. (See Appendix A).</li> </ul>
<b>Highways</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Characteristics of local roads and streets including parking and drives</li> <li>• Hedges, walls and fences.</li> <li>• Footpaths and links</li> <li>• Street furniture, utilities and services.</li> </ul>
<b>Synopsis of Character Areas</b> (optional if more than one character area identified)
<b>Design guidelines</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Based on evidence gathered in above analysis</li> </ul>
<b>Conclusion</b>
<b>Recommendations</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Issues that have not been addressed in the design guidelines</li> </ul>

### 3 Process and Procedures

#### 3.1 Supporting guidance

The Countryside Commission (now Natural England) has published three useful documents to help groups produce design statements. They are ‘*Village Design – making local character count in new development*’ Parts 1 and 2<sup>2</sup> and ‘*Town Design Statements – why and how to produce them*’.<sup>3</sup> These documents go through all the relevant stages from preparation, to research and finally publication. Unfortunately the above documents are now relatively old and the information relating to procedures is a little out of date. It is important that those proposing to produce a V/TDS involve the planning service early in the process so that we are able to help and guide you to the relevant consultation process, timetable and adoption process.

However, in March 2011 English Heritage in partnership with Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE) produced *Knowing Your Place: Heritage and Community-Led Planning in the Countryside*. This advice note has been prepared to help rural communities in producing, reviewing and updating their V/TDS and refers to a number of examples of good practice in North Dorset. A summary of the advice note and where North Dorset has been identified as having ‘exemplary’ community-led plans can be found in Appendix C.

#### 3.2 The 3 key stages in producing a Village or Town Design Statement

Producing a V/TDS will involve a lot of work, organisation and commitment. Experience suggests that on average it takes between 18 and 24 months from the initial meeting to adoption of a V/TDS. The 3 key stages are:

<b>Key Stage 1 - Preproduction</b>
set up a working group preliminary meeting evidence gathering
<b>Key Stage 2 - Production</b>
informal public participation and statement of consultation formal public participation
<b>Key Stage 3 - Adoption</b>
consideration of all representations received adoption by Full Council monitoring

<sup>2</sup> <http://naturalengland.etraderstores.com/NaturalEnglandShop/CCP501>

<sup>3</sup> <http://naturalengland.etraderstores.com/NaturalEnglandShop/CA134>

### 3.3 Key Stage 1 - Preproduction

Every village and town should consider the benefits of preparing a V/TDS and any group can promote one, although Town and Parish Council's have historically taken the lead role as they are often best placed to do so. Once the decision has been made to undertake a V/TDS it is important to consider the relevant guidance and to **set up a working group** to manage the process. The first action of the working group is then to have a **preliminary meeting** with the Council to discuss how to proceed before any further actions are taken.

At this meeting the Council can signpost the working group to relevant documents that will help in the preparation of the V/TDS and include examples of good practice. The Council can also, after a licence agreement has been signed, provide the working group with OS maps to help in the **evidence gathering** stage. Evidence includes historical maps and photographs and as well as the more physical land use and building surveys. Evidence also needs to be gathered from the local community on what residents consider makes their town or village special. This can be via a resident's questionnaire that includes questions such as:

**Q. What physical features do you like best about the village?**

A. For example – the community open spaces, the rural setting of the village, and the ease of access around the village by foot

**Q. What physical features do like least about the village?**

A. For example – the road signs, derelict buildings, inaccessible open spaces

**Q. What would you like to see protected or enhanced?**

A. For example – special views, rural character, traditional materials, important trees and hedges

By circulating the residents questionnaire at the start of the evidence gathering stage it can also help in recruiting volunteers to assist in the more time consuming land use and building surveys. Alternatively the working party may be present at a village show or fete asking the community similar questions.

### 3.4 Key Stage 2 – Production

Once all the evidence has been gathered it is time to start writing the statement, but before commencing this stage it may be useful to have a second meeting with the Council to discuss the content and structure of the V/TDS (see section 2).

In order for a V/TDS to be adopted as a SPD it is critical and important to engage with the local community. Community involvement and **informal public participation** will be required to be in accordance with the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI), which was prepared by the Council and adopted

in July 2006.

The start of the informal public participation is at the evidence gathering stage above. It is vital to record dates and participants at any early events and meetings because a key requirement in the adoption of a SPD is the preparation of a **statement of consultation**, which sets out:

- The names of any persons who were consulted in connection with the preparation of the SPD;
- How those persons were consulted;
- A summary of the main issues raised in those consultations;
- How those issues have been addressed in the SPD.

It is the community groups' responsibility to record the evidence for the statement of consultation, as consultation will primarily be made at the local level. However, it is the Council's responsibility to prepare the final statement. Community groups are strongly encouraged to ensure that the Council is kept informed of the consultation progress. It is also recommended that a full audit trail of work carried out is kept by the working party and that where successive draft versions of a V/TDS are produced these are saved on file.

During the preparation of the draft V/TDS ongoing informal public participation is encouraged to ensure that the general public and key stakeholders such as landowners and local businesses are involved in the preparation of the V/TDS before the more formal consultation is undertaken by the Council.

Some working groups have presented their draft V/TDS to the local community at a series of presentations in the village hall whilst other working groups have opted for a more informal drop in session where the draft V/TDS has been on display. What ever approach is used it is important that the requirements of the statement of consultation are adhered to.

By updating the Town or Parish Council the working party can also keep residents up to date with progress of the draft V/TDS as minutes and agendas are posted on public notice boards. Some working groups have even utilised their village website to gather and distribute information.

Once the draft V/TDS has been agreed by the Parish Council and the Council the next stage in the process to adoption is to undertake **formal public participation**. Under the regulations the Council is required to publish the draft V/TDS and to undertake consultation for a period of 4-6 weeks, in which anyone will be able to make a representation about the draft SPD. These representations must be formally considered by the Council. During the formal consultation period the relevant draft documents must be available for inspection both in the District Council offices and other appropriate places (such as Village/Town Halls) and be published on the Council's website.

Before the statutory consultation period begins, adequate paper copies of the draft documents will need to be made available to the Council and an electronic copy will need to be submitted, in order that it can be published on the Council's website.

At this stage the consultation statement is also available to view demonstrating how the community have been engaged in the V/TDS process and how any issues raised have been addressed.

### **3.5 Key Stage 3 – Adoption**

Once the formal consultation period has closed, the Council will **consider** all of the **representations received** and prepare a statement setting out a summary of the main issues raised in the representations and how these main issues have been addressed in the final version of the V/TDS before the Council will be in a position to adopt it.

The ongoing involvement of the community in the preparation of the V/TDS should ensure that all the main issues are raised and discussed at an early stage. However, if any major issues arise during the formal consultation stage, the Council will discuss and agree any potential amendments to the V/TDS with the working group before putting the document forward for final adoption.

To adopt a V/TDS as a SPD the document will need to be considered at Cabinet before being formally **adopted** at a meeting of **Full Council**.

Proposals for the **monitoring** of a V/TDS need to be considered early in the process. Monitoring arrangements should be designed to enable the effectiveness of the V/TDS to be assessed. Proposals for monitoring will be discussed with the relevant working groups involved in the V/TDS process.

## 4 General advice and frequently asked questions

### Don't reinvent the wheel

At the start of the process it is worthwhile taking some time out to look at other examples of V/TDS. This will help the team visualise the final document and give a steer as to what it should include. Recent examples of good practice at North Dorset include the Iwerne Minster VDS and the Sturminster Newton TDS. Don't feel that you must replicate these approaches, as they may not be right for your town or village. English Heritage in their recent publication ***Knowing Your Place: Heritage and Community-Led Planning in the Countryside***<sup>4</sup> provide a good list of examples from which to start your search.

### A picture is worth a thousand words

Don't underestimate the value of including photographs in your document. It is often the photographs that underpin the text of the document and help readers to understand the points that you are trying to make. For example in the Sturminster Newton TDS for the landscape setting a photograph clearly shows the relationship between the town and the surrounding countryside.

Maps are also useful in showing key features, such as the location of important views in to and out of a village. Linked with photographs anyone reading an adopted V/TDS can clearly see what is important and why. Maps are also useful in showing the exact location of features described in the character assessment such as sunken lanes and important trees.

### Sharing experiences and ideas

Sharing experiences and ideas with other V/TDS working groups is a valuable resource and can save time and wasted effort. For example they can tell you what questions resulted in good feedback and what questions failed to get a response in their questionnaire. On request the Council can provide contact details for members of the working groups and individual V/TDS timetables can be found on our website so you can see who has already completed a key stage in the process. So on many occasions someone will have 'been there' and 'done that' and can give you some sound advice based on their own experience.

### Consultation

It is important to get residents involved in the process and take ownership of the final document at an early stage. Informal consultation can take many forms, for example you can:

- Launch the VDS at a village fete or show
- Identify key issues by sending all residents a questionnaire
- Gather community views through workshops and presentations



Other more individual approaches to gathering evidence can be to organise a photography competition of views into and out of the village. The photographs submitted could also be used for other parish events and productions. Throughout the informal and formal consultation process the parish website can be a useful tool for gathering and disseminating information

Remember to record all aspects of your consultation process as you go along, especially at workshops and meetings as this will reduce the amount of work you have to do at the end of the process when preparing the consultation statement. The consultation statement is an important document that will show how you have undertaken a robust consultation and it will support the V/TDS once it is adopted.

### **Technical advice**

The Council does not expect every working group or local community to have a resident 'expert' on architecture or urban design. For technical advice on building types and forms, materials and features please contact the Environment Policy Manager (see Section 5) who will be able to help.

### **Editing the document**

Depending on the approach the team decides to take, you may find that a number of different people or groups will write different sections of the document. It is therefore important to appoint an editor early within the process. This will ensure that the document is both consistent and cohesive. It is also suggested that you have someone not too closely attached to the project to read the document to ensure that it is written in plain English and is easy to understand.

### **Planning speak**

During discussions with the Council, you may find that you are asked to amend some of the wording in your document to align it with planning policy. There is no intention to undermine the messages you seek to make in the document, but in order for the Council to adopt the document it must not conflict with planning policy. For example, we often require that the word 'must' be replaced with 'should' as this suggests a stronger position than planning policy allows.

### **Funding**

Costs can be kept quite low as there is little need to produce large quantities of the final V/TDS document. If a parish council cannot find the funds from within its precept they may wish to seek funding from other sources. However, funding sources come and go so to see if any money is available for printing and map production when you are considering producing a V/TDS please contact your local Community Resource Worker or the Planning Policy Team (see Section 5).

### **Printing**

Once the document is adopted the Council will prepare a PDF version to be uploaded on our website. A number of hard copies will also need to be produced for people who do not have access to the internet. However, the Council will not

stock a large supply of the V/TDS so it is advisable that the Town or Parish Council holds a supply of the document for this purpose (although it will be available for download from our website).

### **Not just about planning**

As an SPD, a V/TDS relates specifically to development that requires planning permission only. However, anyone who undertakes 'permitted development' within a settlement that has an adopted V/TDS can be encouraged to have regard to the objectives and policies set out in an adopted V/TDS.

While V/TDS has a strong role to play in the planning process, it can also be used in other meaningful ways. For example, the parish council could give a copy of the VDS to new residents so that they get a feel of the area they have moved into. However, don't forget that the primary purpose of the document is to highlight the distinctive character of the parish or town.

### **When should the V/TDS be reviewed?**

It is down to the Town or Parish Council to determine when a V/TDS should be reviewed. Normally this would occur soon after a period of significant change. However, it is good practice to plan to review the document on a regular basis, even if no changes are made.

### **Parish Plans**

The Council is often asked to explain the differences between a Parish Plan and a VDS. The Countryside Agency (now Natural England) explains that:

"Parish Plans are "holistic" or comprehensive in scope. They should set out a vision for how the community wants to develop, and identify the action needed to achieve it. They can include everything that is relevant to the people who live and work in the community, from employment and playgrounds to the design of new buildings and protection of hedges and ponds. They can include any social, environmental or economic issues. It is up to you, the community to decide, what is important to you."

In essence, Parish Plans have a wider scope than V/TDS as they do not focus on the character of the area. Appendix B is a summary guide to the differences between V/TDS and Parish Plans. The Council has also produced a guide to their preparation which is available on our website.

## **5 Further information**

Should you require further details or clarification regarding V/TDS and their adoption by the Council as a SPD please contact Sarah Jennings, Trevor Warrick or Kevin Morris.

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The Council website page for V/TDS is <http://www.dorsetforyou.com/396497>

## 6 Glossary

**Core Strategy (CS)**- Sets out the long-term spatial vision and strategic objectives for the local planning authority's area, with core policies to implement that vision.

**Development Management (DM)**- The process whereby a local planning authority receives and considers the merits of a planning application and whether it should be given permission having regard to the development plan and all other material considerations. The DM policies in the Draft Core Strategy build on the Core Policies; provide a clear framework for assessing the acceptability of certain types of development that core policies permit in principle; and set the standards for the provision of certain items that are required by the core policies themselves.

**Local Development Document (LDD)** Any adopted document making up part of the LDF.

**Local Development Framework (LDF)** Comprises the portfolio of documents prepared by the local planning authority. It sets out a framework for the spatial strategy of the area. It will consist of a LDS, a SCI and a number of LDDs.

**Local Development Scheme (LDS)** - Sets out a 3 year time table for the preparation of the LDF.

**Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)** Is a legal requirement and sets out the standards by which the community will be involved. In addition a consultation statement will need to be included in all DPDs.

**Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)** - SPDs cover a wide range of issues where the local planning authority wishes to provide additional policy guidance on policies in the DPDs. They will not be part of the Development Plan or be subject to independent examination. They will be material considerations in determining planning applications.

**Sustainability Appraisal (SA)** A systematic and iterative process which seeks to appraise the social, environmental and economic effects of the policies contained within a LDD prepared from the outset of the process.

**Village/Town Design Statement (V/TDS)** - A community-led mechanism for managing change and influencing design, contributing to the conservation, and where possible, enhancement of the local environment.

## **Appendix A - Design terminology and definitions based on the principles outlined in 'By Design'<sup>5</sup>**

**Layout - Urban Structure and Grain:** The layout of a development provides a framework of routes and spaces that connect locally and more widely. Layout influences the way that buildings, routes and spaces relate to one other and provides the basic plan on which all other aspects of the form and uses of a development depend. The urban grain refers to the pattern of the arrangement of street blocks, plots and their buildings in a settlement and varies from small and frequent (fine grain), to large and infrequent (coarse grain).

**Density and Mix** is the amount of development on a given piece of land and the range of uses. Density influences the intensity of development and, in combination with the mix of uses, can affect a place's vitality and viability. Draft Core Policy 8 provides broad guidance on density and the mix of housing required to meet District-wide needs. Density and mix will not apply to small-scale developments such as single dwellings or domestic extensions.

**Scale - Height and Massing:** Scale is the size of a building in relation to its surroundings. It is also the size of parts of a building or its details, particularly in relation to the size of a person. Height determines the impact of development on views, vistas and skylines. Massing is the combined effect of the arrangement, volume and shape of a building or group of buildings in relation to other buildings and spaces. The scale, massing and height of a proposal should be related to any adjoining buildings, the general pattern of heights in the area, views, vistas and landmarks.

**Appearance - Details and Materials:** The details of a scheme refer to the craftsmanship, building techniques, decoration, styles and lighting of a building or structure. It includes all building elements such as openings and bays, entrances, roof spaces and façades. The richness of a building lies in its use of materials including their texture, colour, pattern and durability that contribute to the attractiveness of its appearance and the character of an area

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<sup>5</sup> 'By Design. Urban Design in the Planning System: Towards Better Practice', DCLG, May 2000. <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/bydesignurban>

## Appendix B – Key Features of Parish Plans and Village and Town Statements

Parish Plans	Village and Town Design Statements
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council is committed to the promotion and support of all Parish Plans</li> <li>• Community-led, locally produced and adopted document</li> <li>• Should concentrate on developing ‘action plans’ which set priorities and targets for community-led action</li> <li>• It should:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reflect the views of all sections of the community;</li> <li>- Identify which features and local characteristics people value;</li> <li>- Identify local problems and opportunities;</li> <li>- Set out how the residents would like the community to develop in the future; and,</li> <li>- Set out a plan of action to achieve the community’s vision.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Will not be formally adopted by the Council as a Supplementary Planning Document</li> <li>• Will carry some, but limited, weight in the determination of planning applications and at planning appeals</li> <li>• Should be owned by the entire community</li> <li>• Based on information provided by local surveys, research, consultation and community participation</li> <li>• Final approval and adoption made by the relevant parish/town council – although consultation, with the District Council, throughout the production of the Plan, would be good practice</li> <li>• Will be used by the District Council in identifying local issues which can be translated into policies or objectives in the Local Development Framework</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council can only work towards adopting a limited number of Design Statements per year</li> <li>• Interested community groups <i>must</i> contact the Planning Policy team before proceeding with a Design Statement</li> <li>• Community led, produced primarily by the local community, but formally adopted by the District Council following joint agreement</li> <li>• Will develop planning policies that will be used in the determination of relevant planning applications and by planning inspectors at planning appeals</li> <li>• Will guide not just applicants, agents and developers seeking planning permission but will be able to be used to guide ‘permitted’ development not requiring planning permission</li> <li>• Must have input from the entire community</li> <li>• Based on well documented information provided by local surveys, research, consultation and community participation</li> <li>• Will require submission of a ‘consultation statement’ setting out how, when and what outcome community consultation made to the production of the Design Statement – to be written primarily by the relevant community group</li> <li>• Will be formally adopted by the Council as a Supplementary Planning Document, through the statutory planning process</li> <li>• Will form part of the Local Development Framework’s portfolio of Local Development Documents</li> </ul>



## **New Appendix C – Summary of *Knowing Your Place: Heritage and Community-Led Planning in the Countryside*<sup>6</sup>**

This advice note from English Heritage in partnership with Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE) has been designed to help rural communities that are producing, reviewing or updating their community-led plans to harness the full power of their heritage. The advice note is divided into four parts.

Part 1 offers advice notes on gathering information. It explains how much information is required and where to get it with useful links to other organisations. It also identifies what should be included in a plan and recommends the following topics that are similar to those listed in Section 2 of this guidance note. They are:

- The surrounding landscape
- Village layout – Here the Sturminster Newton TDS is quoted as an example of good practice for its understanding of the settlements development, especially in the way it incorporates a detailed analysis of the townscape and includes a series of analytical maps to define different aspects. It also recognises how the Sturminster Newton TDS defines distinctive character areas and systematically describes and analyses each area
- Historic buildings
- Places of worship
- Village character and townscape – Here the Winterborne Stickland VDS is also quoted as an example of good practice for its analysis of distinctive local themes, especially recurring local building materials and detail.
- Greenspaces – Figure 12 identifies the village pond at Ashmore as an example of greenspace that is important for the village's heritage, wildlife and character.
- Views and sight lines – Again the Sturminster Newton TDS is quoted as good practice for understanding views by the way it identifies selected principal views both within and towards the town and looking outward into the surrounding countryside and the fact that these are depicted on a town analysis map.
- Conservation Areas
- Archaeological sites

Part 2 discusses recognising opportunities. Within town or village design statements this mainly takes the form of design guidelines (see Part 3), but through the analysis other opportunities in a town or village can be identified for future action such as the need to remove permitted development rights where there is good evidence that this is damaging local character. Our guidance note suggests that these can be included within a recommendations section of a V/TDS that deals with issues that cannot be addressed through the design guidelines.

Part 3 discusses developing objectives and making recommendations and in terms of village and town design statements this, together with the description of local character, provides the basis for design guidelines to shape future change.

Part 4 offers advice on the presentation of the plan and highlights the importance of a mixture of written description, illustrations and maps. In particular it recommends that plans are not overloaded with too much detail on heritage and that some of the best plans adopt a more visual approach with descriptions and photographs relating to key maps. Again this reinforces our general advice that 'a picture is worth a thousand words'.

In a series of appendices the advice note suggests a number of heritage questions that can be used when gathering information through a questionnaire and it also provides a comprehensive list of links to other organisations and groups. Questions for consultation are also outlined in section 3.3 of the revised guidance note.

Finally, the guidance provides links to 'exemplary' community-led plans in which Sturminster Newton TDS and Winterborne Stickland VDS are held up as examples of good practice. However, we suggest that people also refer to the other examples and the advice note helpfully supplies a list from which to start.



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