STRATEGIC DESIGN CODES - SOUTH MALDON GARDEN SUBURB

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To seek the Committee’s approval of the Strategic Design Codes as a basis for the determination of planning applications for development within the South Maldon Garden Suburb. Reserved matters applications are anticipated shortly and the determination of these is conditional on the prior approval of the Strategic Design Codes.

2. AREA FOR DECISION / ACTION

2.1 Implementation of the South Maldon and North Heybridge Garden Suburbs

2.1.1 The Local Development Plan (LDP) sets out important principles to guide the development of the South Maldon and North Heybridge Garden Suburbs and to ensure they are planned and developed as high quality neighbourhoods that will enhance the character of the District and protect and enhance the environmental qualities of the surrounding area. Policy S3 sets out the requirement for a masterplan for each of the Garden Suburbs at Maldon and Heybridge to be prepared and developed in partnership between the Council, relevant stakeholders, infrastructure providers and developers / landowners. Policy S4 defines key infrastructure requirements and development principles.

2.1.2 At the meeting on 10 July 2014 (Minute No. 245 refers), the Council resolved to invite the submission of planning applications and proactively encourage applications which are in accordance with the Submitted Local Development Plan including sites within the proposed Garden Suburbs in order to boost the five year supply of deliverable housing land and demonstrate the deliverability of the LDP. It was resolved at that meeting that Officers would work towards achieving compliance with the relevant Strategic Masterplan Frameworks and the Infrastructure Delivery Plan through the planning application process.

2.1.3 Strategic Masterplan Frameworks for both Garden Suburbs have been endorsed by the Council as a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. The Council requires all planning applications to be in compliance with the principles set out in the LDP and Strategic Masterplan Frameworks. Particular importance has been placed on the following:
• Securing the necessary developer contributions to ensure the timely delivery of strategic infrastructure in accordance with Policies S4 and I1 and the Infrastructure Delivery Plan;
• Continuing to work with developers and key partners to progress the design and implementation of key strategic infrastructure including the North Heybridge Flood Alleviation Scheme, highway improvements and new education provision;
• Securing high quality sustainable development which is consistent with garden suburb principles and well integrated with Maldon and Heybridge; and
• Securing agreement and delivery of long term management and governance arrangements.

2.1.4 At the meeting on 14 November 2014, the Committee authorised the Interim Head of Planning Services to develop the governance arrangements for implementation of the Garden Suburbs and approach to design review. A further update on progress was reported to the Committee at the meeting on 1 October 2015.

2.1.5 Planning applications have now been submitted in respect of all six of the strategic sites located in the Garden Suburbs. The Strategic Masterplan Frameworks have assisted the Council in ensuring that planning applications satisfy the requirements of Policy S4 and in particular, deliver the necessary infrastructure and a high quality development in accordance with garden suburb principles. In all cases, the Council has sought to agree a Planning Performance Agreement (PPA) with applicants prior to the submission of any planning application. This has ensured that applicants have been appropriately informed about the requirements of the Council and the submitted LDP, and the recommendations of the Garden Suburb Strategic Masterplan Frameworks prior to the submission of an application. This has included the production of parameter plan(s) for outline applications, and design codes to inform detailed planning and reserved matters applications.

2.1.6 The status of planning applications in respect of the sites within the Garden Suburb is summarised in the following table. All strategic applications are reported to extraordinary meetings of the Council for determination taking into account relevant planning policies and responses to statutory and public consultation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Application Reference</th>
<th>Proposal</th>
<th>Current Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>South Maldon Garden Suburb</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site S2(a) South of Limebrook Way</td>
<td>OUT/MAL/14/01103</td>
<td>1,000 residential dwellings, employment, primary school, local centre and associated infrastructure</td>
<td>Resolution to grant outline consent approved at an extraordinary meeting of the Council (EMC) subject to Section 106 (S106) (4 June 2015)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site S2(b) Wycke Hill (North)</td>
<td>OUT/MAL/15/0132</td>
<td>Up to 370 dwellings, employment, Relief Road and associated infrastructure</td>
<td>Outline Application submitted (December 2015)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site</td>
<td>Application Reference</td>
<td>Proposal</td>
<td>Current Status</td>
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<tr>
<td>Site S2(c) Wycke Hill (South)</td>
<td>OUT/MAL/13/00763 RES/MAL/15/00071 RES/MAL/15/01055</td>
<td>Up to 120 residential dwellings</td>
<td>Outline consent granted on appeal. Appeal submitted on grounds of non-determination of reserved matters application- hearing scheduled for 30-31 March 2016. Second reserved matters application submitted (November 2015).</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**North Heybridge Garden Suburb**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site</th>
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<th>Proposal</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Site S2(d) North of Heybridge</td>
<td>OUT/MAL/15/00419</td>
<td>Mixed use development comprising residential, residential care, neighbourhood uses, primary school, strategic flood relief infrastructure, link road and open space</td>
<td>Outline planning application submitted (April 2015)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site S2(e) land north of Holloway Road</td>
<td>OUT/MAL/14/00990</td>
<td>100 residential dwellings</td>
<td>Outline planning application submitted (October 2014)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site S2(f) land west of Broad Street Green Road</td>
<td>FUL/MAL/15/00885</td>
<td>145 residential dwellings, open space and ancillary infrastructure</td>
<td>Detailed planning application submitted (August 2015)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.1.7 With the submission of planning applications for individual sites, it is important to ensure applications are fully coordinated and there is a joined up and comprehensive approach to design and delivery of the Garden Suburbs over the longer term. In order to ensure design quality throughout the Garden Suburbs, consultants have been appointed by the Council to prepare Design Codes for the South Maldon and North Heybridge Garden Suburbs building on the principles in the Strategic Masterplan Frameworks and outline Parameter Plans and funded through the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) Capacity Funding. LDA Design were appointed in May 2015 to undertake this work and have been working closely with officers and the Implementation Groups to develop the Design Codes. Design Code Workshops have been held with officers, developers, stakeholders and infrastructure providers to test draft structuring plans based on Design and Access Statements, Parameter Plans and the endorsed Strategic Masterplan Frameworks for each Garden Suburb.
2.1.8 Outline Applications that have been approved in the Garden Suburbs have planning conditions attached whereby any future Reserved Matters Applications must be in accordance with the approved Design Codes. Work has now been completed on the Draft South Maldon Garden Suburb Strategic Design Codes and preparation of the North Heybridge Garden Suburb Strategic Design Codes is in progress. Reserved matters applications are anticipated shortly in respect of South Maldon Garden Suburb and it is therefore important to have the Design Codes in place to inform the preparation of detailed design proposals. The North Heybridge Garden Suburb Strategic Design Codes will be reported to a future meeting of the Committee for approval prior to the determination of reserved matters applications.

2.2 South Maldon Garden Suburb Strategic Design Codes

2.2.1 The South Maldon Garden Suburb Strategic Design Codes (APPENDIX 1) build on the vision and development framework set out in the Strategic Masterplan Framework which was endorsed by the Council in September 2014. It also builds on the Design and Access Statements and Parameter Plans which have been prepared as part of the outline planning applications. The purpose of the Design Codes is to provide greater certainty on aspirations for the design and quality of the key structuring elements of the masterplan and to ensure that the key garden suburb principles are carried through to detailed design and implementation.

2.2.2 The Strategic Design Codes are split into design codes and design guidance. The design codes will be mandatory and set standards for strategically important elements of the plan, notably in respect of the design and landscaping of principal streets and green spaces and the creation of an integrated network of green spaces and pedestrian and cycle routes. The design guidance is less prescriptive and sets out key principles in respect of other aspects of the development which are central to achieving the vision for the garden suburb such as character areas, car parking, materials and public realm and bin storage. Detailed proposals will be required to comply with both the design codes and design guidance.

2.2.3 The design of streets and spaces between buildings will have a key role in delivering the vision for the garden suburb and ensuring that they accommodate all necessary functions of movement and parking as well as creating an attractive high quality and comfortable environment. The design codes comprise the following:

- **A Structuring Plan** - the basic development framework and infrastructure including streets, pedestrian / cycle networks, location of community facilities, green infrastructure network, density and height parameters and urban design principles.

- **Primary Street Codes** - design criteria for the primary road network including street tree planting.

- **Green Edge Codes** - design criteria for how buildings interface with the rural green edge.

- **Green Space Codes** - design criteria for greenways and greenspaces.

- **Built Edge Codes** - design criteria for how buildings relate to existing streets and development to ensure integration with the wider area.
2.2.4 The document will be used by applicants and by the Development Management team in ensuring that development proposals come forward in line with the design codes and design guidance. In practice, this means ensuring that:

- Infrastructure and plot development reflect the spatial distribution of the elements as defined by the structuring plan.
- Street cross sections for primary streets, green spaces and edge treatments are compliant with the mandatory design codes.
- Proposals for individual plots reinforce the identity of the character context.
- Parking, materials and bin storage arrangements take due regard of the design guidance.

2.3 Primary Street Code

2.3.1 The treatment of the primary street establishes the character of the garden suburb and the design code will ensure continuity of character and identity across plot boundaries. Key elements of the primary street cross section which must remain constant include:

- a consistent landscape strip with formal tree planting on both sides of the street to create an Avenue.
- parallel pedestrian and cycle access.
- pedestrian and cycle access separated from the carriageway by a landscape strip or verge which will also accommodate parallel or bay parking.
- a flexible strip adjacent to the carriageway for either parking, bus layby, additional lane on approach to junctions or extension to landscape strip.

2.3.2 The design code sets out performance specification in respect of street dimensions, design criteria, public transport and materials and landscape including street trees and street furniture. The code states that no more than 50% of the plot frontage of individual houses will be occupied by parking spaces and a single species clipped hedge will be provided to the property boundary.

2.4 Green Edge Code

2.4.1 The green edge code will ensure that the relationship between green space and development and the interface with open countryside is attractive and well planned. Green spaces will be overlooked by development and designed in accordance with principles of ‘Secured by Design’. Landscape treatment will be required to reflect the character context areas by responding to the more wooded character in the west and the more open character to the east where it merges with the estuarine landscape. Provision is made for shared streets adjacent to green edges to create an attractive interface between the development and green space.

2.5 Green Space Code

2.5.1 Green infrastructure is an essential component of the garden suburb and will be required to fulfil a number of roles including recreation and opportunities for increased biodiversity. The code sets minimum requirements for green spaces and
corridors, including the linear park to the west of Maldon Wick Local Nature Reserve and the creation of a network of greenways which will include provision for pedestrian and cycle routes, play space, allotments and Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDs). The code also sets out a consistent approach to the treatment of the Limebrook Corridor which will contain a significant proportion of native planting including appropriate aquatic and marginal species. Provision is made for shared streets adjacent to green spaces to create an attractive interface between the development and green space.

2.6 **Built Edge Code**

2.6.1 The code requires all frontage development to be orientated to face the street or public realm in order to provide attractive and animated frontages. The code includes the treatment of the Limebrook Way frontage and the creation of an attractive gateway adjacent to the Local Centre to ensure that the garden suburb is well integrated with the wider town. The code also includes the creation of a new pedestrian footway adjacent to Farnbridge Road.

2.7 **Design Guidance**

2.7.1 Three Character Context Areas are defined- Garden Suburb North (the area north of the Lime Brook), Garden Suburb East and West and the Green Cushion immediately adjacent to open countryside. Design guidance is provided in respect of urban form, planting, colour and materials and boundary treatment. The Garden Suburb North provides the key gateways into the garden suburb that link with the existing road network and surrounding communities. It will be centred on the new local centre with formal wide tree lined avenues, greenways and a tighter urban form to achieve higher densities. The planting of front gardens and requirement to define front gardens with single species formal clipped hedges will be a unifying element. Development of the Garden Suburb East and West (south of the Lime Brook) will be required to emphasise the strong existing physical characteristics of the site. It will have a rural influence with a less formal arrangement of streets and create a successful synergy between town and countryside. The layout of buildings and landscape will have a more informal character with areas for natural planting and green space and a lower density than other parts of the development. Definition of the Green Cushion acknowledges the need to make a gentle transition from town to country. The principle is to create a softer edge to the development through a sequence of open spaces, planting and the retention of existing landscape elements

2.7.2 Guidance is provided on parking. This will be provided in accordance with adopted standards and the guidance states that it should be achieved predominantly with on-street and on-plot parking with the occasional use of courtyard parking areas, for example where there are flats. The guidance states that where courtyard parking is used it should be small size (generally a maximum of six - eight spaces) and should always be visible from the street and well overlooked by the fronts of surrounding properties.

2.7.3 Guidance is provided on materials and public realm design. Proposals will be required to incorporate materials which visually link and unify all parts of the development with a consistent treatment of carriageways and footways across each
phase of development. Materials will be required to be robust and durable and allow for easy maintenance and replacement.

3. **IMPACT ON CORPORATE GOALS**

3.1 The Strategic Design Codes will ensure delivery of design quality throughout the South Maldon Garden Suburb in accordance with the LDP and the Strategic Masterplan Framework. This will help to support and deliver the following Corporate Goals for the District:

- Meeting the housing needs of the District;
- Protecting and shaping the District and balancing the future needs of the community; and
- Enabling, supporting and empowering communities to be safe, active and healthy.

4. **IMPLICATIONS**

(i) **Impact on Customers** – Planning applications for development within the Garden Suburbs will be determined in accordance with the principles set out in the Strategic Design Codes ensuring delivery of necessary infrastructure and a high quality of development.

(ii) **Impact on Equalities** – The development of the South Maldon and North Heybridge Garden Suburbs will provide sustainable and well planned communities which promote social cohesion and help to provide for the future needs of the local community.

(iii) **Impact on Risk** – The Strategic Design Codes have been prepared in accordance with the Submitted Local Development Plan and the Strategic Masterplan Framework which has been endorsed by the Council as a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. From the day of publication decision makers may give weight to relevant policies in emerging plans according to the stage of preparation of the emerging plan.

(iv) **Impact on Resources (financial and human)** – Without Strategic Design Codes for the determination of applications for development within the area, each application will need to be treated in isolation which will have resource implications and this will also affect the ability to meet the objectives and principles set out in the LDP. The Council could also be at increased risk of planning appeals, which could potentially have significant resource implications. The Strategic design Codes will facilitate the development management process and make efficient use of available resources.

(v) **Impact on the Environment** – The Strategic Design Codes will assist the Council in promoting high quality and sustainable development, securing the necessary infrastructure to support new and existing communities and safeguarding the local environment in accordance with the policies set out in the submitted LDP and the Strategic Masterplan Framework.
5. **CONCLUSIONS**

5.1 The Council is committed to sustainable development and to improving the quality of the built and natural environment and to sustaining and enhancing the local economy. The Strategic Design Codes will provide an effective tool to ensure high quality design is delivered through the development of the South Maldon Garden Suburb. The interface between the policy requirements and the development management process will be maintained to ensure delivery of high quality sustainable development. The Council will continue to work closely with applicants to secure high quality design and development.

6. **RECOMMENDATION**

That the Committee approves the South Maldon Garden Suburb Strategic Design Codes (APPENDIX 1) for Development Management purposes in the determination of planning applications within the garden suburb.

**Background Papers:**
Report to Planning and Licensing Committee, 13 November 2014
Report to Planning and Licensing Committee, 1 October 2015
Draft South Maldon Garden Suburb Strategic Design Codes (February 2016)
South Maldon Garden Suburb Strategic Masterplan (September 2014)
Local Development Plan 2014 - 2029 as submitted for examination

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