

4 July 2017		ITEM: 5
Planning, Transport and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee		
Thurrock Design Guide – Residential Alteration and Extension Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)		
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Key	
Report of: Monica Qing, Principal Planning Officer		
Accountable Head of Service: Andy Millard, Head of Planning and Growth		
Accountable Director: Steve Cox, Corporate Director of Environment and Place		
This report is Public		

Executive Summary

Thurrock Design Guide for Residential Alteration and Extensions SPD (RAE) is one of a series of design-related policy document produced by the Council with ambition to raise development and environmental quality cross the Borough. Linked to the overarching Design Guide that was adopted in March, the standards and guidance within RAE will replace 1997 Local Plan Annex that has been used by the Council's Planning service for 20 years. As an adopted Supplementary Planning Document the RAE would be a 'material consideration' in determining planning applications.

The Council conducted a 6-week public consultation on the draft RAE and received both formal and informal responses from local residents, statutory consultees and interest groups and as well as from internal colleagues who will be using the policy document to manage future developments. Overall, the consultation feedback has been very positive and the document has been amended to incorporate and respond to the relevant comments.

1. Recommendation(s)

1.1 Members note the current status and progress on the production and adoption of the RAE Design Guide and provide comments on the consultation process that will inform the production of the final document.

2. Introduction and Background

2.1 Thurrock has one of, if not the largest and most ambitious growth programmes in the country, with over £6bn of investment driving the creation

of 26,000 new jobs and 20,000 new homes over the next 20 years. With that many additional people choosing Thurrock as a place to live, work and play the need to strengthen the identity of Thurrock: the place and ensure that all new development contributes towards the creation of healthy communities and sustainable development has never been greater.

- 2.2 The RAE will play a critical role in reinforcing the importance of place and improving the design quality of all residential alterations and extensions that require planning permission. In broad terms the RAE sets out the main design principles focusing on people's home improvements and equally project's potential impacts to their neighbours and wider community that should be considered by applicants when they are working up their proposals.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

- 3.1 The RAE interprets both relevant national and local planning policies providing local residents, agents and officers with meaningful details of what is expected with regards to the home alterations and extensions in Thurrock. It includes requirements for assessing the site context that aspire to strengthen the identity of place and provides specific guidance and standards that relates to ten common RAE project types including

- Front Extensions & Porches
- Rear Extensions
- Side Extensions
- Roof Alterations
- Additional Storeys
- Outbuildings
- Front Gardens
- Subdivision
- Change of Use
- Home Business

- 3.2 In March 2017, Full Council agreed to undertake a 6-week consultation on the first draft of the RAE. During the consultation period, the Planning team received numerous responses from local residents, statutory consultees and interest groups and series of informal comments from internal colleagues in areas such as Development Management and Enforcement. All the responses received agree that the RAE will be helpful to get the best outcome through the design and application process, and most people think the Guide has covered all the issues related to making alterations to or extending a home although there were suggestions by that a few technical elements of the draft document can be better clarified or improved. A summary of the consultation responses and Officers' responses are attached to this report in Appendix A.

- 3.3 The RAE has been amended in response to relevant comments following the consultation. The main changes were spell checking, adjusting the details of certain standards, improving the clarity of a few technical elements through either additional illustration or rewording.

- 3.4 The illustrations and photos in the RAE play an important role for the users to understand the technical standards so the final version of the document will be desktop published in both print-friendly style and chapter by chapter based on project type to keep the reasonable quality of the imageries.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

- 4.1. Thurrock Borough Local Plan Annex (adopted in September 1997) is a 20 year-old policy document. A full update is needed to better comply with the current national policies, industry standards and design approaches.
- 4.2. In developing the RAE the Planning service has undertaken in-depth research, including an assessment of the Council's existing guidance, a comparative study of national publications and best practice in the UK, and a series of internal and external workshops with both officers in Development Management and industry experts to ensure that the guidance is fit for purpose and future-proof.
- 4.3. The draft RAE has received great support from the public who wish to prevent negative impacts of poor quality extensions to them and to their local communities during 6-week consultation. The Planning service also received positive feedback from both industry experts and local agents. The final document has been refined based on the comments received. The adoption of the document will give the RAE a policy status as a Supplementary Planning Document to the Local Plan Core Strategy and Policies for the Management of Development. This means it can be used by Officers and Members as a material consideration in the determination of RAE planning applications

5. Consultation (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)

- 5.1 A draft of RAE was published for public consultation from 10th April 2017 to 23rd May. The purpose of the consultation was to obtain the views of local residents, agents and the industrial experts on the approach and any other matter that they felt that the document needed to address. During the consultation period the draft Design Guide document was made available to view at thurrock.gov.uk/urbandesign with comments being encouraged through the Council's consultation portal or on Comment Forms which were available on request at the Civic Offices and in libraries across the Borough. Council Officers also attended local agents panel workshops and organised a residents drop-in events to allow people to learn more about the Draft RAE.

6. Impact on corporate policies, priorities, performance and community impact

- 6.1 The RAE will help the Council in substantially raising the quality of residential alteration and extension developments that require Planning Permission in the borough. It strengthens corporate policies and priorities particularly in creating a high quality places, improving health and well-being and promoting and protecting the environment.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Laura Last**
Management Accountant

The costs associated with adoption of the RAE will be met from within the existing Local Plan budget.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Vivien Williams**
Principal Regeneration Solicitor

The RAE has been prepared in accordance with Regulation 14 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2012 and the Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement. The guidance within the Design Guide supplements adopted policies within the Council's Core Strategy as such it has not been subject to a separate Sustainability Appraisal. Once adopted, the RAE will be used as a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

7.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Natalie Warren**
Community Development and Equalities Manager

The RAE has been subject to a Community and Equality Impact assessment to assess the borough-wide equality improvements through better design solutions.

7.4 Other implications (where significant) – i.e. Staff, Health, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder)

The RAE Design Guide sets out Council's requirements regarding assessing the context of a site and the key design principles and objectives for safe, healthy and sustainable developments.

8. Background papers used in preparing the report (including their location on the Council's website or identification whether any are exempt or protected by copyright):

- Design Strategy SPD - <https://www.thurrock.gov.uk/urbandesign>
- 1997 Local Plan Annex - <https://www.thurrock.gov.uk/borough-local-plan/thurrock-borough-local-plan>

9. **Appendices to the report**

- Appendix 1 – Report of Consultation
- Appendix 2 – Design Guide for Residential Alteration and Extension

Report Author

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