

TOPIC PAPER 3: Design & Heritage

The way that the whole town develops in the future will be affected by planning decisions. Crawley Borough Council has started work on a new local plan that will help to guide development in Crawley over 15 years from 2014-2029.

This consultation period forms part of the early engagement, and further consultation stages are planned before the document is adopted in 2014. Comments received to earlier consultation periods, including to the Topic Papers in 2009, the Town Centre North Supplementary Planning Document and the Manor Royal Masterplan, will continue to be taken into consideration, alongside the technical evidence base, when formulating the Local Plan Preferred Strategy. The Preferred Strategy will be made available for a further period of consultation later in 2012.

This is your opportunity to shape the way the town develops and the council would appreciate and value any comments you have on this Topic Paper or any of the others that form part of this consultation.

Consultation Questions:

- DH1. How important is heritage to you?
- DH2. What physical features make a positive contribution to the character of the town and should these be protected and, where possible, improved?
- DH3. Should areas with environments that do not work well be physically changed in some way or left alone?
- DH4. Could the design of new housing schemes be improved through 'Building for Life' design quality assessments undertaken by applicants and the Borough Council?
- DH5. How would changes to existing designations such as boundaries of Conservation Areas or the designation of new areas be considered by local residents? Should any changes to the current boundaries of Conservation Areas be made? If so what should they be and why?
- DH6. What other features/areas should we be considering?
- DH7. What features/characteristics of your local area do you like and would want to protect?
- DH8. Which features/characteristics of your local area do you not like and why? What could we do to improve them?

Summary of Current Context:

The adopted Core Strategy and policies 'saved' from the Crawley Borough Local Plan 2000 already provide guidance and protection for a number of positive physical features within the Borough.

Current planning policy and guidance seeks to ensure that the character and value of a place or specific feature, such as a listed building, is clearly understood and used to inform decisions on proposals for change. This approach seeks to protect or enhance the quality of an area, in part by ensuring that new development is well-designed.

The council has undertaken work to define the character of the town, and its positive

and weaker features and areas, to guide development decisions and policies in the Local Plan as a whole. Existing policies may need to be reviewed to reflect the formal assessment of character, which may identify new areas or features of value.

Key Issues:

- The physical character of the town is being assessed and will need to be conveyed in policy.
- What should be done to protect and enhance the positive physical features and areas?
- How can change be managed without compromising the character or the historic environment?
- Should the Borough Council encourage good design through other means, for example a design awards scheme?

Options:

- The council to put forward potential new Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings for consideration.
- Complete a review of the 'saved' Local Plan policies on Areas of Special Environmental Quality (ASEQs) and locally listed buildings and complete the identification of potential new areas or buildings.
- Consider how new designations could manage change (e.g. structural landscaping, different character areas and important views).
- Investigate proactive approaches to renewing less successful areas. For example, extensive environmental improvements through to selective redevelopment.
- Developers and the Borough Council could 'score' the quality of proposed housing schemes using an accepted assessment method.

Indication of Potential Direction:

- Review designations (existing and new designation types) and possibly identify new areas or features.
- Review design/heritage policies, including 'saved' Local Plan policies (e.g. GD1, BN10 and BN16) and consider new Development Management Policies if any expand on national guidance.
- Set out how potential conflicts between heritage or character assets and new development, including redevelopment, would be managed.
- Investigate and seek agreement for an approach or approaches to physically renew the environment of weaker areas.
- Require housing developers to undertake and to submit a 'Building for Life' design quality evaluation with planning application for new housing.
- Bring design and heritage-related policies together within a design and heritage chapter, including a brief overview of the historic development of the town, in the Local Plan 2014.

Evidence Base:

National

- Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development (PPS1)
 - High quality, inclusive design helps deliver sustainable development and attractive, safe, usable, durable and adaptable places.
 - Good design should contribute positively to making places better for people and add to the overall character and quality of an area.
- Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment
- Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing (PPS3)
 - Good design is fundamental to the development of high quality new housing, which contributes to the creation of sustainable, mixed communities.
 - 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.

Regional

- South East Plan
 - SP3: urban focus for development and urban renaissance
 - CC6: sustainable communities and character of the environment
 - C4 & C5: management of landscape and the urban-rural fringe
 - BE1: management for an urban renaissance
 - BE2 & BE3: suburban intensification and renewal
 - BE6: management of the historic environment

Local

- Crawley Borough Adopted Core Strategy Policies
 - EN2: neighbourhood structure and centres were introduced as part of the New Town phase of the town's history
 - EN3: managing loss or improvements to green spaces and corridors
 - EN4: retaining landscape features and providing additional planting to green new development
 - EN5: new development should protect and enhance the built environment which include heritage assets
 - CS1: taking account of community safety through the design and operation of new development
 - CS2: improving safety through changes to the local environment
 - NS1: accommodating mixed use and higher density development within the neighbourhood structure
 - NS2: maintaining or improving vitality and viability within the neighbourhood centres.
- Crawley Extensive Urban Survey (EUS) and Crawley Rapid Character Assessment indicate need/opportunity for further designations.
- English Heritage and WSCC are supportive of characterisation approach.