

**Report to:**

**PLANNING COMMITTEE**

**Relevant Officer:**

Susan Parker, Head of Development Management

**Date of Meeting:**

13 June 2023

## **BLACKPOOL DESIGN GUIDE**

### **1.0 Purpose of the report**

1.1 To consider the Planning Guidance Note (Appendix 4a) which:

- Provides guidance for applicants bringing together national planning policy and guidance and Local Plan policies on design
- Sets out what is expected of applicants to ensure that development proposals in Blackpool raise the quality of design.

### **2.0 Recommendation**

2.1 To approve the use of the design guidance, to be publicised and given to applicants to support the development of planning applications.

### **3.0 Reasons for recommendation**

3.1 It is appropriate for this guidance to be produced to help applicants develop planning applications to meet the requirements set out in Local Plan Policies and fully take into account:

- National Planning Policy Framework
- Planning Practice Guidance
- National Design Guide
- National Model Design Code
- Manual for Streets

3.2 The Guidance is 'sign-posting' applicants to existing policies and setting out the Council's expectations of securing good design. It is not deemed appropriate to develop a separate design Supplementary Planning Document at this time. The guidance will guide applicants to adopted national and local policy and guidance.

3.3 The recommendation is not contrary to any plan or strategy adopted or approved by the Council, and is in accordance with the Council's budget.

### **4.0 Background information**

4.1 Part 2 of the Blackpool Local Plan: Site Allocations and Development Management Policies was adopted in February 2023. This contains detailed development management policies that cover many design aspects and replace the previous policies from the 2006 Local Plan. The adoption of Part 2 of the Local Plan provides the opportunity for a renewed impetus on

securing high quality design, alongside the policies in the Core Strategy, which were adopted in 2016.

- 4.2 An update to the National Planning Policy Framework in 2021 places much stronger emphasis on design and refusing development that is not well designed, taking into account both national and local guidance. This has subsequently formed the basis of planning appeal decisions, where appeals have been dismissed following refusals on design grounds. The National Planning Policy Framework, in paragraph 128, states that national documents should be used to guide decisions on applications in the absence of locally produced design guides or design codes.
- 4.3 The national documents referred to in National Planning Policy Framework are the National Design Guide published in January 2021 and the supporting the National Model Design Code, which was published in June 2021. The National Model Design Guide sets out the characteristics of well-designed places and demonstrates what good design means in practice. The National Model Design Code provides detailed guidance on the production of design codes, guides and policies to promote successful design. The Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill, published in May 2022, makes provision for design guides covering local authority areas, supplemented by detailed design codes.
- 4.4 In addition, Manual for Streets provides design guidelines for local roads and streets. This design guidance is currently being revised, with a replacement to be produced in 2023 to replace both Manual for Streets (2007) and Manual for Streets 2 (2010) to encourage more widespread use. The design, appearance, and the way streets function have a huge impact on the quality of people's lives as well as economic and social vitality and environmental sustainability.
- 4.5 This Blackpool planning guidance note assists applicants in the planning application process. It sets out what the Council expects to see in planning applications that are submitted to the council, including addressing design issues as early as possible, through the use of the Council's pre-application advice service.
- 4.6 To help applicants navigate local and national policies, a series of questions has been prepared to provide a prompt to applicants to set out how a proposal achieves high quality design. Applicants addressing these questions in Design and Access Statements (where one is required) will assist the Council in ensuring that the proposal is achieving high quality design and assist in effectively processing applications.

## **5.0 Appendices**

- 5.1 Appendix 4a: Draft Planning Guidance Note: Raising the Quality of Design in Blackpool

## **6.0 Financial considerations**

- 6.1 The work is being undertaken within existing budgetary provisions.

## **7.0 Legal considerations**

- 7.1 The Planning Guidance Note will not form a material consideration on its own, but it clearly sets out existing policy and guidance note and will assist offices and members when determining planning applications.

## **8.0 Risk management considerations**

- 8.1 The draft Planning Guidance Note provides advice to applicants, officers and members on the Blackpool Local Plan and national planning policy and guidance to enable and assist the delivery of high quality design in Blackpool.

## **9.0 Equalities considerations**

- 9.1 Local authorities need to have regard to the Public Sector Equalities Duty, as referred to in the Equality Act 2010, in respect of considering people with 'protected characteristics' in decision making. The Planning Guidance Note raises no adverse equalities considerations. The note will contribute to the Council priorities set out in the Council Plan.

## **10.0 Sustainability, climate change and environmental considerations**

- 10.1 Sustainability, climate change and the environment are key considerations that have to be taken into account in the preparation of the statutory Blackpool Local Plan.

## **11.0 Relevant Council Priority**

- 11.1. This matter is relevant to and would support both Council priorities being both 'The Economy: maximising growth and opportunity across Blackpool' and 'Communities: creating stronger communities and increasing resilience'.