



High Weald AONB Design Guide Developers Workshop 15th July 2019

Workshop Report



For Further information please contact:

High Weald AONB Unit
Woodland Enterprise Centre
Hastings Road
Flimwell, East Sussex
TN5 7PR
01424 723011



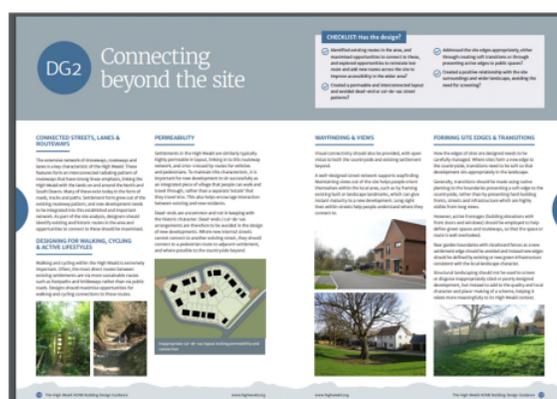
1. Introduction

Delivering appropriate new housing development within the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty is a key part of the planning policies of the local planning authorities covering the High Weald and for qualifying bodies producing neighbourhood plans.

The High Weald AONB Partnership, including the 15 local planning authorities, has prepared a draft Design Guide for new housing development in the High Weald. Following consultation it is intended that a revised version will be agreed by the Partnership and adopted by the local planning authorities as a material consideration in the determining of planning applications within the High Weald AONB.

The Guide is aimed at all those involved in housing developments within the High Weald AONB, from designers, developers and highways engineers, through to planning decision makers, so they can meet the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework for well-designed places and the conservation and enhancement of the AONB. It aims to give clear, succinct, practical and consistent advice on design expectations for new housing development within the High Weald AONB. This will enable higher quality and landscape-led design that reflects intrinsic High Weald character and is embedded with a true sense of place, without stifling innovation and creativity.

The Design Guide was the subject of an eight-week period of formal public consultation from Wednesday 19 June until Wednesday 14 August 2019. As part of this consultation a workshop was held with representatives of the development industry on 15th July 2019. This report provides a summary of the engagement methods used in this workshop and the outcomes. These outcomes will be taken into account in revising the Design Guide before it is finalised.



2. Method of Engagement



The High Weald AONB Unit asked local authority officers to provide details of those representatives of the development industry that they engaged with on a regular basis. This produced a 'long list' of 97 individuals / organisations. In May 2019 these people were contacted and asked whether they wished to be involved in a consultation on the Design Guide. 30 responded to express an interest. These then received a notification of the consultation and an invitation to the workshop. 19 attended the workshop on 15th July. 7 which were developers; 9 Architects and 3 Housing Associations as well as 5 representatives from local authorities.

3. Content of the Workshop

The workshop consisted of a morning session with the following agenda:

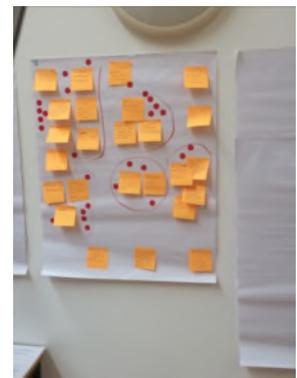
- 9:30 Registration
- 10:00 Welcome by Sally Marsh, Co-Director of the High Weald AONB Unit
- 10:05 Presentation on the Design Guide by Claire Tester, Planning Advisor, AONB Unit
- 10:20 Break Out Groups
- 11:20 Refreshments
- 11:35 Feedback from Groups
- 12:05 Discussion including of 'parked' comments
- 12:25 Next Steps (workshop report and responding to the consultation)
- 12:30 Finish

There were three Break Out Groups of 5-9 people which were allocated in advance to ensure a balance of disciplines and organisations. Each group had an independent facilitator and scribe provided by the High Weald Unit and the local authorities.

Each Group in turn had 20 minutes to consider the following three questions:

1. What challenges have you faced in delivering good design in the High Weald?
2. How could you or your organisation use the Design Guide to influence your working practices?
3. How can we improve the Design Guide and are any key issues missing?

Participants firstly wrote their own responses to these questions on postit notes which were placed on a flipchart sheet, with the scribe grouping these into similar themes. This was followed by a group discussion of these themes. Lastly the participants were given three coloured stickers to identify the three most important themes to feedback to the rest of the workshop. This method allowed for both individual voices to be heard and for the group to discuss the issues. It also means that the results are recorded in the participants' own words rather than summarised by the scribes/facilitators.



4. Results

Please find the results of the three questions attached.

Question: What challenges have you faced in delivering good design in the High Weald?

Group	Topic	Verbatim	Number of people who said this topic was a priority
A1	Planning process	Planning processes	21
		Obtaining planning consent and implement	
A2	Planning process	Nimby attitude	
		Difficulties in initial consultation with public	
		Under resourced planning authorities	
		Planning committee ignorance and weak representatives and planning officers	
		Lack of discussion with local authorities during planning process on how the design could be better and suits the landscape	
		More contact with AONB	
		Variability in engagement with decision makers and consultees	
		The mind set and local councillors why don't you build houses that look like houses?	
		No as a starting point and mind set rather than an open mind to listen and learn	
A3	Planning process	Local councillors needing education about distinctiveness	15
		Uninformed residents and decision makers	
		public and politics lack of imagination and creativity	
		Lack of education about design within the general public body	
		Lack of bravery in decision making	
		Fear of change or something different	
		Use brownfield sites for houses only	
A1	Highways	Highway design	11
		External bodies ie Kent CC	
A2	Highways	Highways authorities	
		Roads/parking	
A3	Highways	Transport engineering	
		KCC requirements for High ways road widths turning heads tracking their largest refuse vehicle distance to carry refuse all make design more urban	
A3	Costs	Cost competition	11
		cost of materials tile hanging roof tiles windows	
A1	Costs	Cost of build and cost of land	
		Tax Planning	
		Commerciality build cost and materials	

Question: What challenges have you faced in delivering good design in the High Weald?

Group	Topic	Verbatim	Number of people who said this topic was a priority
		cost of design detailed design quality and use of materials	
		Build cost and viability tiles bricks and windows	
A2	Costs	On-going maintenance costs	
		Restrictions in design due to issues with CLC payment	
A2	Education	lack of understanding	3
		Needs to be taught at school or architects courses	
A3	Environment Agency	Old practises of Environment agency	
A3	Climate change	climate change being denied	2
A3	Maintenance	Sometimes a challenge to manage long term	2
A1	Sustainable	ensuring sustainability	2
A1	Landownership	Landownership not able to connect to other land	2
A3	Timescale	Waiting for feedback from planning process	1
A1	Advice and help	Long term management responsibilities	
		Maintaining landscape characteristics	
		effect on future family farm	
A1	Design	Lack of support for contemporary design	
A1	Drainage	Drainage	
A1	Landscape & Topography	Topography	
		ecology	
		Trees	
A3	Landscape & Topography	Ecology	
A1	Local opposition	Local opposition	
		Local residents	
		Parish councils	
A1	Marketing	Internal sales aversion to risk and something different	
A1	Nitrates	Nitrates	
A2	Politics	Political sentiment	
		Council approach	

Question: What challenges have you faced in delivering good design in the High Weald?

Group	Topic	Verbatim	Number of people who said this topic was a priority
A2	Site constraints	technical constraints of sites drainage and topography etc	
		SUDS/drainage	
A2	Viability developer vs planner	Viability delivering best for landowner/developer vs what planners want	

Question: How could you or your organisation use the Design Guide to influence your working practices

Group	Topic	Verbatim	Number of people who said this topic was a priority
B1	Using the Guide	when developing schemes for planning ensure we use the design guide	10
		Add guidance documents to architect brief and requirement for architect to summarise design process in design and access statement	
		Share with prospective contractors, architects. We work with so they know the requirements too	
		Issue to landscape architect - incorporate into their brief to review guidance historic field boundaries and planting specification etc.	
B2	Using the Guide	Internal liaison meetings and use design guide	
		Consult	
		Set out constraints and opportunities	
B3	Using the Guide	As a discussion starting point with local planners/councillors	
		Consult	
		It gives a point of contact with the AONB rather than just the local planning authority. You are the experts in the landscape and it is good to have a point of contact	
B1	Layout & landscape connection	Contour and waterway strategies	9
		Help with layouts of the new developments in relation to landscape	
		Clearer guide at project start i.e. land purchase	
		Find relevance from the sites attributes	
		Great appreciate of site analysis	

Question: How could you or your organisation use the Design Guide to influence your working practices

Group	Topic	Verbatim	Number of people who said this topic was a priority
		Informing us of the characteristics of the context	
B1	Benchmarks for better design	Site layout precedents	7
		Guidance for light pollution, refuse storage and parking	
		Benchmarks standards and expectations	
B2	Benchmarks for better design	Analyse site and context	
		Input into detailed design from early stage	
B3	Benchmarks for better design	It helps reinforce understanding of local distinctiveness In an articulate and objective way Good design is not subjective	
		Clear set of design principles embedded into a scheme from the outset	
B1	Highways discussions	Access to site from main routes and pedestrian and possible eg cycle paths and routes	5
		Talk to highway engineer about hierarchy	
		Use guidance to aid discussions with transport consultants local highway authorities	
B1	Improving design	using the materials and colour references	4
		Helping us to create more appropriate and locally distinctive designs	
B2	Integration into planning system	Make the design guide part of the planning process	4
		Dictate design approach	
B3	Sense of possibility	It's an aide memoir	1
B3	Communication to a wider audience	It can help us reinforce good design practise to our clients	
		to understand what local opposition groups may use to misinterpret and object	
		assist in choosing the right architect	

Question: How could you or your organisation use the Design Guide to influence your working practices

Group	Topic	Verbatim	Number of people who said this topic was a priority
B2	Costs	Understand land value	2
		Homes England	
B3	Costs	Certain materials design features can be factored into budgets from day 1	
B1	Future Management	to ensure sympathetic ways of maintaining the site consider management company guidance	
B1	Incorporating surrounding landscapes	from planning point incorporating surrounding landscapes	
B1	Rare Plants	preserve rare plants like the Heath Lubilia	
B1	Urban design	The Guide should also could be reflected in urban design	

Question: How can we improve the Design Guide and are any key issues missing

Group	Topic	Verbatim	Number of people who said this topic was a priority
C1	Contemporary design	architecture it seems that this is a study in pastiche thus no mention of examples of contemporary design	17
		In the medieval era villages were noisy industrial and disease ridden what we see today is the Victorian post pastoral tourist network	
C3	Contemporary design	Design is for today not copying tomorrow	
		Look at the failed designs not just at the past ones	
		Modular construction and does it fit in	
		lack of comment of examples of contemporary design only historic examples	
C2	Contemporary design	New building methods	
		be open minded for new technology and design	
		shortage of modern architecture	
		The Guide should not be prescriptive and it should not restrict creativity	
C3	Technology/Future proofing	Technology and adoption of it	10
C2	Technology/Future proofing	lack of future proofing	
		incorporating technologies that are sympathetic to the High Weald and solar panels on structures	
		no mention of sustainability or climate change	
C1	Presentation	more examples of bad and good design/layout	8
		Bullet points under each photo or colour code red/green Good Practise or Bad Practise	

Question: How can we improve the Design Guide and are any key issues missing

Group	Topic	Verbatim	Number of people who said this topic was a priority
		P33 Form and design for example Chimney	
C3	Presentation	Layout examples good and bad	
		references to live good developments	
		case studies good examples	
C2	Presentation	use captions on images to say where it is from	
	Presentation	address the local public about design	
	Presentation	What is the stick and what is the carrot	
	Presentation	The Guide should stress that it is important for public councillors and officers to understand it	
	Presentation	relevance of the proposals to people why bother?	
	Presentation	digital continuous update of sources and examples to make it a live document	
C1	Ecology	Ecology and surveys as part of the analysis and understanding process not so far backing the guide	3
C1	Cars in design	How can developments be planned and designed to advice car use - car free spaces	2
		How to address the balance between adoptable roads and roads that have local vernacular	
C2	Typology	wider examples of building hydrology	2
C1	Height and density	How should affordable housing be addressed ie limit on height	1
C2	Highways	Have KCC been consulted especially	1
C1	History & time depth	including time depth in understanding of form and materials to avoid tendency for referential took kit design	1
C2	land connection	the Guide should state that it is landscape led	1
		Planting useful to have a small section or ornamental on plot	

Question: How can we improve the Design Guide and are any key issues missing

Group	Topic	Verbatim	Number of people who said this topic was a priority
		land usage is there a plan	
C1	Dark Skies	Dark Skies SDNP guide solutions for this contemporary issue	
C2	Materials	How to sustain the developments with materials required	
		Long term guidance on how sites can be maintained once in the hands of the private owner there is a tendency of urban features appearing	
C1	Overall	The document is the right length	
C1	Sustainability	Design review as part of a robust engagement process sustainability not mentioned anywhere?	
C1	Usage buildings	Is there encouragement of live/work to stimulate cottage working?	
C1	Usage of Guide	Is there someone that could be consulted with when initially planning a development or is the guide meant to fill this gap?	
		ways to engage with the unit pre app so that the proposals can be discussed and shaped prior to submission	
C3	Usage of Guide	flow diagram of steps process to consult	
		Consultation and comment from statutory and other bodies ie High ways and perceived conflict with LA advice	
		add recommend points for consultation	
		High Weald Heroes kids learn about design of buildings	