

Parish Council Presentation

Room 2, Civic Offices, 18 January 2012

Neil Sainsbury (NS) (Head of Urban Design and Landscape Architecture) gave a presentation explaining the main topics covered by the Draft New Residential Development Design Guide.

A Question & Answer session followed. The main issues raised were:

- The Design Guide should require that developers use qualified architects/landscape architects/urban designers.
- Sometimes qualified architects are just as bad.
- Chapter 5 – design quality assurance – should be strengthened. Section on Building for Life (BfL) too weak. Are we going to require accredited BfL assessor? Stronger pre-application procedure required. Is the Council going to use a local design review panel (NS – stated that the Council still looking into it).
- Is there a mechanism for parishes to identify what they value in their local area? (Suggestions from around the table included Village Design Statement, neighbourhood plan, appraisal using Design Guide template C2)
- Conflict between permeability and safety of footpaths from culs-de-sac. Too much emphasis on overlooking from dwellings – after dark curtains are drawn. Space around footpaths makes them feel safer. (NS – important that desire lines are along connected streets, not culs-de-sacs).
- Problem for cyclists of having to continually stop where driveways cross redways (p41 of Design Guide). (NS – stated that experienced cyclists will use road, less experienced cyclists will not be so worried about having to stop).
- Desire lines are from houses to facilities not between facilities. Grid squares should have more than one focal point – to encourage residents to visit different parts of the estate.
- Local centres provide a focus for a community. Design Guide should give more emphasis to local centres, through e.g. including a diagram. Local centres may need to serve more than one area, across a grid road.
- Need for allotments and edible plants within public spaces (e.g. fruit trees instead of ornamental species). Reference made to initiatives elsewhere e.g. Todmorden (<http://www.incredible-edible-todmorden.co.uk/home>)
- Complaint that the Council do not take account of parishes comments on planning applications.

- Concern that the Residential Design Guide and the Highways Design Guide were being divorced from one another. (NS – stated that Transport officers had been involved in the preparation of the Residential Design guide and that the Highway Design Guide was being consulted on late February.)
- Guide has nothing on street furniture, and on TV aerials/satellite dishes. Need to get rid of street clutter, as has been done in Upton.
- Guidelines needed for house extensions and householder developments to ensure that original design concept is not lost (NS – referred to the existing guidance note on householder developments: http://www.miltonkeynes.gov.uk/development-control/documents/Design_Guide_Final_V2.pdf). It was also noted that many of these changes are permitted development.
- Developers should be required to discuss proposals with parishes/town councils.
- Entrances from grid roads not mentioned in design guide. Guidance required relating to first stretch of estate road where there is a transition from vehicle speeds of grid road to residential roads.
- Should consider issues where existing villages are incorporated in new development areas.
- Is there a minimum level of provision of facilities (particularly, community centre/meeting hall) for each grid square or per population. (The Council has adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance on S106 contributions for leisure, recreation and sports facilities: http://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/planning-policy/documents/Leisure_recreation_and_sports_facilities_SPG.pdf)
- No provision has been made for a meeting hall in Ashland. (Suggestions from around the table included use dwelling as community house, or use an empty shop).