

Town Centre Design Guide SPD Consultation Statement (February 2023)

This consultation statement has been prepared in accordance with Regulations 12 and 13 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2012 and the Council's Statement of Community Involvement.

What is being consulted on?

This consultation statement relates to the draft Town Centre Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).

What is the purpose of the SPD?

The purpose of the SPD is to provide practical direction in the design of residential development and related uses within Luton Town Centre. The SPD provides design guidance to supplement policies within the adopted Luton Local Plan.

Local Plan Policy LLP3 (Luton Town Centre Strategy) sets out the preferred policy approach for Luton Town Centre, and commits to the Council updating the Luton Town Centre Development Framework and / or producing individual development briefs to provide further site specific guidance. Par 9.11 of the Local Plan adds that further consideration will be given to the need and appropriateness of producing a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for the design of new development.

Stakeholders have consistently emphasised the need to set a higher bar for development in the town centre, and this SPD clearly outlines what is expected of every development in the town centre, providing a clear sense of Luton's priorities for the built environment, with the aim being to deliver quality homes in the town centre, set within a safe and attractive public realm, offering ample outdoor amenities for residents to make it a great place to live and be proud of.

The SPD does not introduce new policies, but supports a number of policies in the Local Plan, in particular providing guidance on how to meet the policy requirements of the following key policies:

- Policy LLP25 – High Quality Design
- Policy LLP3 – Luton Town Centre
- Policy LLP15 – Housing Provision

In addition to the above, the SPD provides further guidance on how to meet the following policies for sites in the town centre:

- Policy LLP16 – Affordable Housing
- Policy LLP27 – Open Space
- Policy LLP28 – Biodiversity
- Policy LLP30 – Conservation
- Policy LLP31 – Sustainable Transport
- Policy LLP32 – Parking
- Policy LLP36 – Flooding
- Policy LLP37 – Climate Change
- Policy LLP38 – Pollution and Contamination

What is the area of coverage?

The SPD covers the town centre as defined on the Town Centre Inset Map and Policy LLP3 of the Luton Local Plan, plus an additional area to the north east of the railway line. The SPD also covers an area surrounding the town centre. The majority of the area the SPD applies to falls into Luton South ward. Small elements of the SPD application area also fall into Biscot, Dallow, High Town and Crawley wards.

What consultation has taken place so far?

The following consultation has taken place in drafting the SPD:

- A workshop with council officers in November 2021;
- A workshop with members in March 2022;
- A workshop with stakeholders on 7 July 2022;
- Internal consultation took place from 24th October – 11th November 2022 with the following: Climate Change / Strategy and Sustainability, Highway Development and Sustainable Travel, Regeneration / Design and Delivery, Landscape and Ecology / Parks Operations, Green Space Management, Parks and Grounds Maintenance / Green Space Management, Housing Quality and Enforcement, Housing Strategy and Development, Health, Building Control, Transport Planning, Luton 2040, Environmental Protection, and Development Management;
- Consultation on a Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening for the SPD with Historic England, Natural England and the Environment Agency. An invitation for comments on the draft Screening Assessment was sent to these three bodies on the 22nd November 2022 asking for any responses to be returned to the council within 5 weeks.

What steps will the council take to publicise the SPD?

- a) In preparation of the consultation, a review was undertaken of the council's planning policy database to ensure that all general and specific consultation bodies were present in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2012. While undertaking this the council also sought to ensure that all relevant groups and bodies outlined in the council's Statement of Community Involvement were also present on the consultation database. This included finding replacement bodies or groups where groups had ceased to exist;
- b) Notifications to be sent out to all consultees and agents on the planning policy consultation database;
- c) Notifications in the local newspapers in accordance with the SCI;

- d) Physical copies of the SPD to be placed on deposit for public viewing in the borough's libraries and in the Town Hall;
- e) Notices to be placed in the noticeboards outside the Town Hall;
- f) Consultation to be advertised on the council's social media channels;
- g) Promotion via the Social Justice Unit's network and community newsletter.

Representations may be made concerning the SPD between Friday 17th February 2023 and 5pm on Friday 31st March 2023. Hard copies of the SPD will be available to view in libraries across the borough and at the council's main offices (Luton Borough Council, Town Hall, George Street, Luton, LU1 2BQ).

Representations can be made by email to localplan@luton.gov.uk, via the planning policy team's consultation portal – available at <https://consult.luton.gov.uk/kse/> - or by post at the following address:

Planning Policy Team
Sustainable Development
Town Hall
George Street
Luton
LU1 2BQ

To make a representation, please:

- Identify which part of the SPD your representation relates to;
- State whether you support, object to, or just wish to comment on that particular part of the SPD
- Provide any relevant comments, and any suggested revised wording (if applicable).

You must include a name and an email address and / or postal address. Please note that following consultation, copies of all representations, including your name, will be made available for the public to view.

Representations must be received by the council by 5pm on Friday 31st March 2023.

Next Steps

Once consultation closes, the council will consider representations received and the SPD will be updated with any required changes. A recommendation to formally adopt the SPD will then be brought to the council's Overview and Scrutiny Board and Executive (dates to be confirmed).