

**COMMITTEE:** COUNCIL           **REF NO:** C/19/05  
**DATE:**                    **24<sup>th</sup> JULY 2019**  
**SUBJECT:**               **URBAN CHARACTERISATION STUDY**  
                                  **SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENTS**  
**PORTFOLIO HOLDER:**   **COUNCILLOR CAROLE JONES**  
**HEAD OF SERVICE:**     **MARTYN FULCHER**

***Short description of report content and the decision requested:***

This report requests that Council adopt the remaining three Ipswich Urban Characterisation Study - Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD). The first five of the eight Urban Character SPDs were adopted over 2014-2015.

As per the existing adopted Urban Character SPDs, these proposed SPDs identify assets and characteristics which are valued as distinctive elements of the townscape of Ipswich and give different neighbourhoods their individual character. They will enable valued characteristics to be taken into account when changes affecting an area are proposed as part of a planning application and will ensure that development and change reinforces local distinctiveness.

Following the public consultation held between 16th January and 27th February 2019, minor revisions were made to the documents.

Council is now asked to approve the documents for adoption as the final elements of the SPD.

***Ward(s) affected:***

Whitton, Castle Hill, Whitehouse, Rushmere, Bixley, St John's, Priory Heath, Gainsborough and Holywells.

***List of Appendices included in this report:***

- a) Appendix 1 – Map of the urban character areas identified
- b) Appendix 2 – 3 x Urban Characterisation Study SPDs.
- c) Appendix 3 – Consultation Statement
- d) Appendix 4 – SEA Screening Report
- e) Appendix 5 – HRA Screening Report

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*This report was prepared after consultation with:*

*Internal consultees*

Development Management, Planning Policy, Parks and Landscapes,  
Economic Development, Ward Councillors, Development Working Group.

*External consultees*

Ipswich Conservation and Design Panel, Historic England, Natural England,  
Local Plan consultees and members of the public

*The following policies form a context to this report:*

*(all relevant policies must also be referred to in the body of the report)*

*National Planning Policy Framework, 2019*

*Adopted Ipswich Core Strategy and Policies Development Plan Document  
2011, Policies CS2, DM5*

*Building a Better Ipswich 2017*

*Ipswich Urban Character Studies*

## **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS AS REQUIRED BY LAW**

*(papers relied on to write the report but which are not published and do not contain exempt information)*

**None**

## **OTHER HELPFUL PAPERS**

*(papers which the report author considers might be helpful – this might include published material)*

- 1. National Planning Policy Framework 2019**
- 2. National Planning Practice Guidance 2019**
- 3. Adopted Ipswich Core Strategy and Policies Development Plan Document 2017**
- 4. Already adopted Ipswich Urban Characterisation Studies (California; Norwich Road; Gipping and Orwell Valley; Parks; Chantry, Stoke Park and Maidenhall).**
- 5. Executive report authorising public consultation on the draft SPD documents - 8<sup>th</sup> January 2019 (report ref: E/18/44)**
- 6. Executive report authorising adoption of the final SPD – 9<sup>th</sup> July 2019 (report ref: E/19/10)**

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## **1. Introduction**

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- 1.1 In planning for growth in Ipswich, it is important to deliver high quality change which safeguards the best of the town's character and secures positive improvements to the townscape.
- 1.2 In 2014/15 the Ipswich Urban Characterisation Supplementary Planning Documents were commenced in order to provide urban character analysis and guidance to areas outside of the town's core which do not benefit from design guidance such as Conservation Area appraisals.
- 1.3 To this aim, the borough was divided into 8 'urban characterisation areas', to explore areas where local distinctiveness could be identified to highlight the special interest of these areas and help inform new development. A map showing all the character areas is attached at Appendix 1. Studies have already been written and the respective SPDs have been adopted for 5 of the 8 urban character areas.
- 1.4 The adopted SPDs enable valued characteristics to be taken into account when changes affecting an area are proposed by way of planning applications and ensure that development and change reinforces local distinctiveness, as required by the National Planning Policy Framework and the adopted Ipswich Local Plan (2017), and that it contributes to good design.
- 1.5 Executive approved public consultation on the draft documents for the remaining 3 characterisation studies (North East, South East and Castle Hill/Whitehouse/Whitton) to complete the suite of Urban Characterisation Study SPDs on 8<sup>th</sup> January 2019 (report ref: E/18/44). Public consultation was held between 16<sup>th</sup> January and 27<sup>th</sup> February 2019. Minor revisions have been made to the documents following public consultation as identified in the consultation statement at Appendix 3 and Council is now asked to approve the documents for adoption as the final elements of the borough-wide SPD.
- 1.6 Executive approved the final revised SPD document for adoption at its meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> July 2019.

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## **2. Background**

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- 2.1 Local distinctiveness has been described as what makes places special. It marks the difference between one place and another. It is a product of the natural and built heritage of a place, its history, culture, traditions and industry.
- 2.2 The proposed Urban Characterisation Study SPDs focus primarily on the natural and built features which characterise different parts of Ipswich. In doing so, they identify not only the major landmarks, but also small

scale details, such as the different materials used and decoration found on individual buildings within a particular area.

- 2.3 The SPDs which are the subject of this report are structured around the three remaining urban characterisation areas for North East, South East and Castle Hill, Whitehouse and Whitton. For each area, maps, images and commentary outline the history, open space, landform and views of each area. Sub-areas have also been identified within these broad characterisation areas, and these areas are magnified and described in more detail within the documents.
- 2.4 The SPDs are not prescriptive in how new development within each area should be designed. Instead they highlight aspects of character that new development should consider and respond to.
- 2.5 Now that the other 5 adopted Urban Characterisation SPDs have been in use for 4 years, it has become apparent that some of the chapters of the SPDs have not been particularly well used in assisting with decision making, such as the 'Transport and Access' and 'Urban Analysis' pages. These pages are principally dedicated to large graphics which do not particularly contribute to identifying the special interest and character of these areas.
- 2.6 The documents before Council for consideration have these elements removed from the SPD. The space saved by omitting these pages has allowed for a more in depth commentary of the areas, allowing for greater opportunity to explore character and local distinctiveness.
- 2.7 During the SPD's preparation there has been consultation with the Ipswich Conservation and Design Panel, Development Management and Planning Policy colleagues, Economic Development, Parks and Landscapes, Ward Councillors, and Development Working Group.
- 2.8 The planning guidance has been prepared as a supplementary planning document (SPD) to carry more weight in the determination of planning applications in supporting the implementation of adopted policies CS2 *The Location and Nature of Development*, and DM5 *Design and Character*.

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### **3. Relevant Policies**

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- 3.1 Building a Better Ipswich has 7 priorities, which include a sustainable environment; an enjoyable place to live, work and study; and quality homes for all. The draft SPD responds to these priorities and recognises that local distinctiveness and the quality of the urban environment matters in all of the neighbourhoods of Ipswich, not just those where designated heritage assets such as listed buildings and conservations areas are concentrated.

3.2 In providing urban character analysis and advice to inform the design of new development, the report also supports the efficiency of the planning application process and the themes of the Corporate Plan.

3.3 National Planning Policy Framework 2019 (NPPF)  
Paragraph 126 of the NPPF states:-

To provide maximum clarity about design expectations at an early stage, plans or supplementary planning documents should use visual tools such as design guides and codes. These provide a framework for creating distinctive places, with a consistent and high quality standard of design. However their level of detail and degree of prescription should be tailored to the circumstances in each place, and should allow a suitable degree of variety where this would be justified.

3.4 National Planning Practice Guidance 2019 (NPPG)  
The NPPG 2019 advises that supplementary planning documents should be prepared to build upon and provide more detailed advice or guidance on the policies in the Local Plan.

3.5 The NPPG goes on to advise that the requirements for producing SPDs are set out in Regulations 11 to 16 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

3.6 The Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (s23(1)) states:-

The local planning authority may adopt a local development document (other than a development plan document) either as originally prepared or as modified to take account of—

- (a) any representations made in relation to the document;
- (b) any other matter they think is relevant.

3.7 This enables amendments to the SPD to be made in order to address other matters, other than those raised in comments received through the public consultation.

3.8 The NPPF recognises the value of character and local distinctiveness, with Chapter 12 being dedicated to achieving well-designed places.

3.9 Paragraph 127 of the NPPF seeks to ensure that developments: function well and add to overall quality for the lifetime of the development; are visually attractive; are sympathetic to local character and history; establish a strong sense of place; optimise site development having regard to mix which supports local facilities; and creates places which are safe, inclusive and accessible which promote health and well being.

3.10 The adopted Core Strategy refers to high quality and distinctive design in policies CS2 (The Location and Nature of Development) and DM5 (Design and Character).

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#### **4. Options Considered / Under Consideration**

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- 4.1 Option 1: agree to the adoption of the 3 Urban Characterisation Study SPDs (North East; South East; and Castle Hill/Whitehouse/Whitton) to complete the suite of Urban Character Study SPDs. **Officers recommend that this option is taken.**
- 4.2 Option 2: do not agree to adopt the 3 draft Urban Character Supplementary Planning Documents (North East; South East; and Castle Hill/Whitehouse/Whitton) in their current form. This would mean revising the documents in order to amend any omissions or changes identified by members prior to adoption. These documents have been subject to public consultation, and are in a format which reflects the various comments from consultees, Development Management, Councillors, and Ipswich Conservation and Design Panel and as such, the documents reflect this breadth of recent consultation. It is not recommended that this option is taken.
- 4.3 Option 3: do not agree to the adoption of the 3 draft Urban Character Supplementary Planning Documents (North East; South East; and Castle Hill/Whitehouse/Whitton) at the current time. The work undertaken on the SPD would be abortive if the documents were not carried through to adoption as an SPD. The Urban Character SPD which is part complete would remain unfinished. It is not recommended that this option is taken.

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#### **5. Consultations**

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- 5.1 The work on the first five SPDs in 2015 was established in accordance with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement, a call for ideas which was issued in February 2013. These responses were summarised in the Executive Report dated 15<sup>th</sup> July 2014 (executive report ref: E/14/15) for the first 5 Urban Character Studies.
- 5.2 Throughout the drafting stage of the SDP, internal consultations have taken place with officers in the Parks department, Development Management and Economic Development, with Ward Councillors and the Ipswich Conservation and Design Panel.
- 5.3 Additionally, the drafts have been presented to Development Working Group, with member comments (where possible) being incorporated into the draft Urban Character Studies.
- 5.4 In accordance with the Statement of Community Involvement Review (2018) and the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) England Regulations 2012, the Council has taken drafts of the 3 remaining Urban

Character Studies to public consultation between 16th January and 27th February 2019.

- 5.5 During the public consultation period, presentations of the draft Urban Character Study SPDs were given to the North West, North East and South East Area Committees.
- 5.6 2 comments were formally submitted on the draft Urban Character Studies, both from statutory bodies: Natural England and Historic England. Very minor revisions have been made to the documents following public consultation to reflect these comments, as well minor rephrasing where necessary. The details of the consultation responses and revisions are shown at Appendix 2 of this report.
- 5.7 If adopted, a consultation statement will be provided on the IBC website, alongside a formal adoption statement.

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## 6. Risk Management

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Risk Description	Consequence of risk	Risk Controls	Probability of risk occurring taking account of controls (scale 1-6) 1 – almost impossible 6 – very high	Impact of risk, if it occurred taking account of actions (scale 1 – negligible; 4 – catastrophic)	Actions to mitigate risk
1. That the Council fails to adopt and complete the SPD.	There would be areas of the Borough not covered by the analysis within the SPD	Ensure that the SPD is robust and meets the necessary demands and goes through formal adoption process.	3	2	Ensure that the work undertaken has public support by engaging with consultation process so final content is supported.
2. Errors in SPD preparation process	Need to repeat elements of process and resulting associated costs	Ensure Regulations and SCI adhered to fully	1	2	Checking process; obtaining legal comments

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## 7. Environmental Impact Assessment

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- 7.1 The Strategic Environmental Assessment was attached to the Executive Report dated 15 July 2014 for the first 5 Urban Character SPDs. It concluded that a separate SEA is not required.

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## 8. Equalities and Diversity Implications

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- 8.1 Under the general equality duty as set out in the Equality Act 2010, public authorities are required to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation as well as advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.



- 8.2 The protected grounds covered by the equality duty are: age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, and sexual orientation. The equality duty also covers marriage and civil partnership, but only in respect of eliminating unlawful discrimination.
- 8.3 The law requires that this duty to have due regard be demonstrated in decision making processes. Assessing the potential impact on equality of proposed changes to policies, procedures and practices is one of the key ways in which public authorities can demonstrate that they have had due regard to the aims of the equality duty.
- 8.4 An equality impact screening assessment has been carried out and no adverse impact was identified.

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## **9. Financial Considerations**

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- 9.1 The costs of the adoption and preparation for the website on this document will be met by the planning policy team budget.

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## **10. Legal Considerations**

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- 10.1 The basis for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Sustainability Appraisal (SA) legislation is the European Directive 2001/42/EC and was transposed into English Law by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (“SEA Regulations”).
- 10.2 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 required local planning authorities to produce SA’s for all local development documents to meet the requirements of the EU Directive on SEA.
- 10.3 The Planning Act 2008 removed the requirement to undertake a SA for a SPD, but not an SEA. This, is because SPD’s do not formally introduce new policies or proposals.
- 10.4 The criteria for assessing the likely effects of the draft SPD is laid out in Article 3(5) of the SEA Directive. The Council have completed a screening report, which confirms that a SEA is not required.
- 10.5 Part 2 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 established the system of local development planning. SPDs are a category of planning documents which supplement the policies in a local plan. Unlike local plans, SPDs are not required to be submitted to independent examination.
- 10.6 The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (the Regulations) lay out the procedure for local planning

authorities in relation to the preparation of SPDs, including consultation with interested persons and bodies and the documents which must be made available at each stage.

- 10.7 Regulation 12 of the Regulations requires a period of consultation of not less than four weeks. The Council consulted on the draft SPD for a period of 6 weeks between 16<sup>th</sup> January and 27<sup>th</sup> February 2019.
- 10.8 Following the consultation and in order to adopt the draft SPD a consultation statement has been prepared under Regulation 12(a) which sets out the responses from persons the local planning authority consulted, a summary of the main issues raised and how these issues have been addressed in the SPD.
- 10.9 Should Council approve adoption of the SPDs a consultation statement will be published alongside an adoption statement and the SPD in accordance with Regulations 14 and 35, at the time of adoption of the SPD.

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## **11. Performance Monitoring**

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- 11.1 For Council to agree to adopt the remaining three Urban Characterisation Study Supplementary Planning Documents and that it goes go to Full Council meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> July 2019 for formal adoption by 7<sup>th</sup> August 2019.

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## **12. Conclusions**

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- 12.1 The three remaining Urban Character Study SPDs have been prepared to ensure that new development in the North East, South East and North West of the borough protects and enhances the special character and distinctiveness of Ipswich. The SPDs will achieve this through providing information and guidance on urban character areas for use by development applicants and planners and will complete the suite of Urban Character SPDs.
- 12.2 Following a successful round of consultation, Council is now asked to agree to the formal adoption of the three remaining Urban Character Study SPDs.

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## **13. Recommendations**

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- 13.1 That Council approves Option 1 (para 4.1) and that the three Urban Character Study Supplementary Planning Documents be approved for formal adoption.**

Reason: To support the implementation of adopted Local Plan policies.

- 13.2 That, up to and during the time of publication on the IBC website, the Planning and Development Operations Manager be authorised to make minor changes to the wording or layout of the documents referred to in recommendation 13.1, provided that the changes do not materially change the meaning of the adopted document.**

Reason: The Planning Policy team are working on the preparation of a new Local Plan and site allocations. The eventual adoption of the Local Plan may influence specific wording or policy numbers referred to in the adopted documents and therefore alterations to the document could be improved in wording and layout terms without impacting on meaning. This recommendation will provide the Planning and Development Operations Manager with the ability to undertake any such changes.

# Appendix 1 - Map of the urban character areas identified

