

**SPECIAL CABINET  
13 DECEMBER 2022**

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**SKERNINGHAM GARDEN VILLAGE DESIGN CODE**

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**Responsible Cabinet Member -  
Councillor Jamie Bartch, Economy Portfolio**

**Responsible Director -  
Ian Williams, Chief Executive**

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**SUMMARY REPORT**

**Purpose of the Report**

1. To update Cabinet on the progress of Skerningham Garden Village Design Code SPD.
2. To gain Cabinet approval to commence an additional round of public consultation on the Skerningham Garden Village Design Code Draft SPD.

**Summary**

3. A requirement of the adopted Darlington Local Plan 2016 – 2036 (Darlington Local Plan) is for the Council to progress with the creation and adoption of Supplementary Planning Policy Documents (SPD) based on a Design Code for Skerningham Garden Village.
4. After decision of Cabinet of 6 September 2022 the Skerningham Garden Village Design Code Draft SPD has been formally consulted upon between 9 September 2022 – 17 October 2022.
5. Darlington Borough Council received 87 comments from 75 contributing consultees on the Skerningham Garden Village Design Code Draft SPD. All comments received and suggested revisions are attached in **Appendix 1**.
6. The Council has welcomed the various responses to the draft SPD and given these extensive comments and observations it been requested that a refreshed document which demonstrates positively the differences that have been proposed in the Skerningham Garden Village Design Code. DesignNE have carried out this refresh of the Design Code and it is detailed in **Appendix 2**. It is proposed that a further round of consultation be carried out to ensure all stakeholders are aware of these changes and can comment on the refreshed document.

## **Recommendations**

7. It is recommended that :-
  - (a) Members note the progress and content of the Skerningham Garden Village Design Code SPD
  - (b) Members approve the additional public consultation period on the revised Skerningham Garden Village Design Code Draft SPD from 9 December 2202 – 6 January 2023.

## **Reason**

8. The recommendations are supported by the following reason; to ensure the various stakeholders are fully aware of the contents of the refreshed document and demonstrate that the Council has engaged positively with the residents and consultees.

**Ian Williams**  
**Chief Executive**

## **Background Papers**

- (i) Revised Skerningham Garden Village Design Code
- (ii) Darlington Local Plan 2016 – 2036

Mark Ladyman: Extension 6306

S17 Crime and Disorder	The Design SPD has a role in reducing crime through the promotion of good design and location of development.
Health and Wellbeing	A key objective of the Design Code for Skertingham GV SPD will be to improve people's health and wellbeing by protecting and improving the economic, social and environmental conditions in the Borough.
Carbon Impact and Climate Change	A Sustainability Appraisal has been carried out on the strategic issues and options for this site. Achieving sustainable development will be a fundamental objective of this SPD.
Diversity	An Equalities Impact Assessment has been part of the local plan preparation process.
Wards Affected	Harrowgate Hill; Heighington and Coniscliffe; Sadberge and Middleton St George and Whinfield.
Groups Affected	All
Budget and Policy Framework	The SPD will be prepared using existing budgets and will ultimately form part of the Council's Planning Policy Framework.
Key Decision	This a Key Decision
Urgent Decision	This is not an urgent decision
Council Plan	The SPD Design for Skertingham GV SPD will represent the spatial implications and help achieve the economic growth aspirations of the Council Plan.
Efficiency	The consultation stage of the SPD represents the most efficient way to include public opinion on strategic design and will have regard to the legislative and engagement requirements.
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	This report has no impact on Looked After Children or Care Leavers

## MAIN REPORT

### Information and Analysis

9. The Skerningham Garden Village is a site allocation in the adopted Darlington Local Plan 2016- 2036. The inspectors report and its modifications detail the policy for the site in H10 and recommends that a Skerningham Design Code should be consulted upon and once agreed established as a Supplementary Planning Document Design Code for Skerningham Garden Village.
10. DesignNE have been commissioned by the Council to prepare the Skerningham Garden Village Design Code in line with policy H10 of the Local Plan with engagement of the local community.
11. The Draft SPD - Skerningham Garden Village Design Code was prepared in accordance with the NPPF July 2021 and the National Model Design Code and presented to Cabinet on 6 September 2022. In addition the document followed the remit and guidance of the 2nd Round of the Design Code Pathfinders developed by the office for Place and the Design Code Team in the Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities.
12. The Draft SPD Skerningham Garden Village Design has been out for official consultation as an SPD from 9 September 2022 – 17 October 2022 on the Darlington Borough Council Consultation Portal <https://darlington-consult.objective.co.uk/>
13. A question-and-answer session on the Design Code led by DesignNE and the Council was arranged on 22nd September 2022 at Harrowgate Hill WMC. This session was an opportunity to illustrate how the community's workshops comments would be integrated to the Code, and to answer questions from the public on the Draft Design Code and advise how to participate in the consultation. Twenty people took the opportunity to ask questions at this session.
14. The initial consultation period closed on 17 October 2022. The Council received 87 comments from 75 consultees on the document. The range of areas covered in these comments was wide and on different levels of detail. A great deal of the comments related to the design code scoring assessment which has been modified and the access arrangements of the initial phases of development on the eastern part of the allocation where local members and the local community prefer and support the use of Bishopton Lane. Appendix 1 show the range of comments and how they have been progressed by Council Officers and show what changes to the document have been suggested.
15. In order to illustrate that comments have been taken on board by the Council DesignNE were requested to produce a refreshed document. In essence the document retains its original format, however this refreshed document includes changes following the initial consultation exercise and alterations in the documents lay out. Furthermore, the refreshed document includes amendments suggested and approved by the Councils planning policy team based on Planning Policy and the National Model Design Code 2022.
16. Given these changes, it is recommended that an additional consultation phase for the Draft SPD Skerningham Garden Village Design Code be carried out.

## The suggested SPD consultation process

17. Table below:

Cabinet to allow additional draft SPD to go through public consultation	13 Dec 2022
Draft SPD Consultation	16 Dec 22 – 13 Jan 2023
Amend SPD based on consultation input	From 16 Jan 2023
Amended and consulted on SPD to come back to Cabinet for approval	7 February 2023
Adoption of SPD by Council	16 February 2023

18. Following the completion of the additional consultation period the design code together with proposed further modifications will be presented to Cabinet and if approved forwarded to full Council for adoption as a Supplementary Planning Document.

### Final Considerations

19. The SPD preparation and conversion will be funded by Garden Community Funding of Homes England.

### Legal Implications

20. There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

### Consultation

21. This process will be in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework.