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Topic Paper 3 Design and Heritage

Crawley Borough Council adopted its Core Strategy back in November 2007, providing the spatial vision, objectives and development strategy for Crawley up to 2016. The Council has now begun preparing the successor to the Core Strategy – the Core Strategy Review – which will cover a much longer period up to 2026. Although there are aspects of the original Core Strategy that can be retained there are other areas where significant change has occurred in the intervening years and this will need to be reflected in the new document.

This consultation period is the first of the Review and further consultation stages are planned before the document is adopted in early 2012. This is your opportunity to shape the way the town develops over the next 20 years and the Council would appreciate and value any comments you have on this Topic Paper or any of the others that form part of this consultation.

Summary of the Current Context

The Crawley Borough Core Strategy and policies ‘saved’ from the Local Plan already provide guidance and protection for a number of positive physical features within the Borough.

Current planning policy and guidance seeks to ensure that the character and value of a place or specific feature, such as a listed building, is clearly understood and used to inform decisions on proposals for change. This approach seeks to protect or improve the quality of an area, in part by ensuring that new development is well-designed.

The Council is undertaking work to define the character of the town, and its positive and weaker features or areas, to guide development decisions and policies in the Core Strategy Review as a whole. Existing policies may need to be reviewed to reflect the formal assessment of character, which may identify new areas or features of value.

Indication of the Key Issues Relating to Design and Heritage

- The physical character of the town is currently being assessed and will need to be conveyed in policy.
- Should more be done to protect/improve the positive physical features and areas of the town?
- Should more be done to physically regenerate weak/negative features and areas?
- How can change be managed without compromising character or the historic environment?
- Is there scope to explore additional planning policy means to ensure good design in new development, particularly housing?
- Could the Council encourage good design through other means, for example a design awards scheme?



Indication of the Options for Addressing the Key Issues Outlined Above

- Put forward potential new conservation areas and listed buildings for consideration.
- Review 'saved' Local Plan policies on Areas of Special Environmental Quality and locally listed buildings and identify potential new areas or buildings.
- Create new designations to manage change (e.g. structural landscaping, different character areas and important views).
- Investigate proactive approaches to renewing less successful areas. For example, extensive environmental improvements through to selective redevelopment.
- Developers and the Council could 'score' the quality of proposed housing schemes using an accepted assessment method.

Indication of the Potential Direction at this Stage

- Review designations (existing and new designation types) and possibly identify new areas or features.
- Review design/heritage policies, including 'saved' Local Plan policies (e.g. GD1, BN10 and BN16) and consider new Development Management Policies if any expand on national guidance.
- Set out how potential conflicts between heritage or character assets and new development, including redevelopment, would be managed.
- Investigate and seek agreement for an approach or approaches to physically renew the environment of weaker areas.
- Require housing developers to undertake and submit a 'Building for Life' design quality evaluation with planning applications for new housing.
- Bring design and heritage-related policies together within a design and

heritage chapter, including a brief overview of the historic development of the town, in the Core Strategy Review.

Current Context

Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development

- High quality, inclusive design helps deliver sustainable development and attractive, safe, usable, durable and adaptable places.
- Good design should contribute positively to making places better for people and add to the overall character and quality of an area.

Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing

- Good design is fundamental to the development of high quality new housing, which contributes to the creation of sustainable, mixed communities.
- To facilitate efficient delivery of high quality development, Local Planning Authorities should draw on relevant guidance and standards and promote the use of appropriate tools and techniques, such as design coding alongside urban design guidelines, detailed masterplans, village design statements, site briefs and community participation techniques.

Planning Policy Guidance note 15: Planning and the Historic Environment

- The physical survivals of our past are a central part of our cultural heritage and sense of national identity and should be valued and protected.
- The historic environment enhances the familiar and cherished local scene, and sustains local distinctiveness. It's protection is a key aspect of wider environmental responsibilities.

Planning Policy Guidance note 16: Planning and Archaeology

- Archaeological remains should be seen as a finite, non-renewable resource and appropriate management is essential to ensure that they survive in good condition.
- Development plans should reconcile the need for development with the interests of conservation including archaeology.
- In all cases prospective developers should include as part of their research into the development potential of a site an initial assessment of whether archaeological remains are known or likely to be present.

South East Plan Proposed Modifications

- There are a number of policies of relevance to this Topic Paper within the South East Plan Proposed Modifications. Set out below are the key policies, which are located in several different chapters:
 - SP3 – Urban focus for development and urban renaissance.
 - CC6 – Sustainable communities and character of the environment.
 - C4 and C5 – Management of landscape and the urban-rural fringe.
 - BE1 – Management for an urban renaissance.
 - BE2 and 3 – Suburban intensification and renewal.
 - BE6 – Management of the historic environment.

Crawley Borough Core Strategy

- There are also a number of policies of relevance to this Topic Paper within the Core Strategy. Set out below are the key policies, which again, are located across several chapters:
 - EN2 – Neighbourhood structure and centres were introduced as part of the New Town phase of the town's history.
 - EN3 – Managing loss or improvements to green spaces and corridors.
 - EN4 – Retaining landscape features and



Main Issues for Consultation

These issues particularly relate to the identified options, the robustness of the evidence base and the proposed policy approach.

- What physical features make a positive contribution to the character of the town and should these be protected and, where possible, improved?
- Should areas with environments that do not work well be physically changed in some way or left alone?
- Could the design of new housing schemes be improved through 'Building for Life' design quality assessments undertaken by applicants and the Council?

providing additional planting to green new development.

- EN5 – New development should protect and enhance the built environment, which includes heritage assets.
- CS1 – Taking account of community safety through the design and operation of new development.
- CS2 – Improving safety through changes to the local environment.
- NS1 – Accommodating mixed use and higher density development within the neighbourhood structure.
- NS2 – Maintaining or improving vitality and viability within the neighbourhood centres.

- The purpose of the Crawley EUS is to deliver a unique and flexible tool to aid the understanding, exploration and management of the historic qualities of Crawley.

Crawley Baseline Character Assessment (2009)

- The Council has commissioned consultants to carry out a baseline character assessment of the town. This will indicate the need / opportunity for further designations.
- English Heritage and West Sussex County Council have been supportive of this characterisation approach.

Evidence Base

Crawley Extensive Urban Survey (EUS) (2008)

- This is an archaeological, historical and historic urban character assessment of the town. It forms part of the Sussex EUS – a survey of 41 towns across Sussex – which is being prepared by a consultant on behalf of West Sussex County Council, (with funding from English Heritage).