

Divisions Affected – All

**CABINET
21 September 2021**

Oxfordshire Street Design Guide

Report by Corporate Director Environment and Place

RECOMMENDATION

1. The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to endorse the Oxfordshire Street Design Guide for adoption and thereafter publication of the guidance document.

Executive Summary

2. Oxfordshire County Council aims to enable Oxfordshire as a whole to become zero-carbon by 2050. This ambition extends into our role as the Local Highway Authority when advising and assessing new developments. The Design Guide presents how we can prioritise active and healthy travel through street design in new developments meeting our carbon ambitions and that of established transport policy.
3. This guidance is also intended to support the development industry in the preparation and submission of development proposals through the provision of up to date guidance. This should both de-risk and accelerate the preparation and determination of development proposals for developers and the county council.
4. This document has been created in consultation with external stakeholders and the District Councils as described further in 'Communications'.

Background

5. The need for an updated design document was identified to replace the 'Residential Roads Design Guide', bring guidance in line with Local Transport Plan 4 and emerging Local Transport Connectivity Plan (which this guide will sit under) as well as updated national guidance. It provides broads guidance and directs users to more detailed guidance in specialist areas. It will be a publicly available document on the county council's website.
6. With 85,000 new jobs and 100,000 new homes planned for Oxfordshire up to 2031, the county council should provide up to date guidance to developers to help bring forward new development. Availability of guidance would help developers understand the county council's expectations for new developments

CA11

as well streamline the planning application process which would mean fewer delays to planning consent, thus ensuring that growth is brought forward in a timely fashion.

7. A draft of the Oxfordshire Street Design Guide, which is subject to limited revision for proof reading, graphics and formatting is attached to this report at **Annex 1**.
8. The Oxfordshire Street Design Guide will be a live document which will be updated yearly to address any issues and to be kept up to date with local and national guidance. It will also allow further annexes to be added to the document on additional design elements if required.

Key Issues

9. The Design Guide refers to national guidance, particularly Manual for Streets (Department for Transport, 2007), Inclusive Mobility (Department for Transport, 2005) and Local Transport Note 1/20 Cycle Infrastructure Design (Department for Transport, 2020). **Annex 2** shows where the guide would sit in the context of national and local policy. It refers to the Walking Design Standards and Cycle Design Standards which have been adopted by the county council. It also directs users to more detailed guidance in specialist areas. There is a recognition that this guidance requires development in several areas including landscaping, drainage, car parking etc. These will be developed separate to the Oxfordshire Street Design Guide.
10. The Oxfordshire Street Design Guide follows the same user hierarchy in Manual for Streets with pedestrians at the top, then cyclists, then public transport users and finally other motor traffic. This aligns with Oxfordshire County Council's ambitions to become zero-carbon as a county by prioritising sustainable and healthy travel.
11. The document is moving away from providing strict geometries to recognise that Oxfordshire is a diverse place and each development is unique. It provides some street examples to demonstrate how our requirements can be achieved.
12. It provides guidance on cycle parking for all new developments and requires provision for cargo bikes, mobility impaired bicycles, scooters, etc. It also provides guidance on bus stop design within new developments and its interaction with cycle routes and footways.
13. The guide discusses the approach the county council is taking in terms of car parking design and our preference to reduce private parking stock (garages, on plot parking) and increase the use of unallocated / allocated on-street parking. This allows flexibility in street design when private car dependency reduces in future which would allow on-street parking could be converted to other uses such as pocket parks, planting, cycle routes, Connected and Autonomous vehicles routes, etc.

CA11

14. The Design Guide also provides broad guidance on drainage, landscaping where these form parts of the street as well as how to accommodate the needs refuse and recycling collection within the street.
15. The project team has also worked with the Innovation Hub team to include guidance on how innovation can form part of street design. Innovation is fast paced and ever changing and therefore it is difficult to provide design parameters. However, we have knowledge of emerging innovations which already have some level of evidence in place to show likely efficacy which we have outlined within the guide.

Corporate Policies and Priorities

16. The Design Guide directly contributes to the Vision and Objectives of the Corporate Plan by creating high quality places for people to live in which encourage travel by foot, cycle and public transport thereby contributing to our ambition to create active and healthy communities as well as reducing carbon emissions.

Financial Implications

17. There are no budgetary implications in relation to publication of the Oxfordshire Design Guide. The cost of preparing the Design Guide has been funded through Homes and Community Agency Capacity Funding.

Comments checked by:

Rob Finlayson, Finance Business Partner for Communities,
Rob.Finlayson@Oxfordshire.gov.uk

Legal Implications

18. No legal implications have been identified in relation to publication of the Oxfordshire Design Guide.

Comments checked by:

Jennifer Crouch, Principal Solicitor Environmental,
Jennifer.Crouch@Oxfordshire.gov.uk

Staff Implications

19. The Transport Development Control Lead (North) will be responsible for monitoring and managing any ongoing updates and changes required to the guide. It will be funded from existing budgets.

Equality & Inclusion Implications

20. An Equality and Climate Impact Assessment has been carried out and is attached to this report at **Annex 3**. The assessment has identified largely positive impacts on equality and climate impact.

Sustainability Implications

21. See above for the Equality and Climate Impact Assessment undertaken.

Risk Management

22. Without a Street Design Guide, there is a risk of development coming forward that perpetuates a dependency on the private car. Therefore, there is a risk that the visions identified in the county council's Climate Action Framework and Local Transport and Connectivity Plan will not be met. Additionally, without this guidance, it would lead to protracted and lengthy pre-application discussions or alternatively no pre-application consultation, which would result in planning applications that do not meet the county council's requirements.
23. To be effective, the Street Design Guide will need to be kept up to date. It will be reviewed annually and updated as necessary to reflect any changes identified.

Consultations

24. A range of opportunities and methods were applied as part of the consultation process for the design guide to engage with a wide range of internal and external stakeholders. Those applied and intended to be applied leading up to and after publication are summarised in **Annex 4**.
25. A total of 45 questionnaire responses were received and 15 more detailed responses in the form of letters were also received to the external stakeholder consultation. All five District Councils were consulted, and their responses were submitted in letter format. Key findings from the consultation and how the document has been amended to address these points is shown in **Annex 5**. The Annex also sets out the responses in detail.
26. The external consultation revealed that stakeholders held very strong views on the content and form of the document. Whilst reviewing these comments an external professional was appointed as a Critical Friend to provide an independent review of the draft and identify any amendments required.

Bill Cotton
Corporate Director for Environment and Place

CA11

Annex:

1. Annex 1 - Draft Oxfordshire Street Design Guide
2. Annex 2 - Policy Hierarchy
3. Annex 3 - Equality and Climate Impact Assessment
4. Annex 4 - Summary of Stakeholder Engagement Approach
5. Annex 5 - External Stakeholder Consultation

Background papers: Nil

Contact Officer: Chanika Farmer, Transport Development Control Lead
(North), 07557 082590,
Chanika.farmer@oxfordshire.gov.uk

September 2020