

Broads Authority

29 November 2024

Agenda item number 17

Broads Authority Design Guide and Code

Report by Historic Environment Manager

Purpose

To inform Members of progress on the Broads Authority Design Guide and Code and seek endorsement for the document to go out to consultation as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).

Broads Plan context

Strategic Objective F4 of the Broads Plan requires that we provide up-to-date planning policy, site-specific allocations and planning guidance to support local community needs and ensure development happens within environmental limits. A key action under F4 is to produce, adopt and promote a new Design Guide and Code for the Broads in line with the NPPF requirements.

Recommended decision

To endorse the Broads Authority Design Guide and Code for consultation.

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The National Planning Policy Framework (2023) (NPPF) includes a requirement for all Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) to prepare design guides or codes consistent with the principles set out in the National Design Guide (2021) and National Model Design Code (2021). The Government's commitment to the production of design codes by LPAs has been strengthened in the recent Levelling Up and Regeneration Act (2023), which requires all LPAs to have a design code in place covering their entire areas.
- 1.2. The purpose of a Design Code is to provide clarity of design expectations at an early stage in the development process and to ensure that good design is considered at all spatial scales, down to development sites and individual plots. The Design Code should reflect local character and the NPPF specifically states that codes should be grounded in an understanding and evaluation of each area's defining characteristics. Codes should reflect local design preferences and should involve effective community engagement, taking into account national design guidance.
- 1.3. The level of detail and degree of prescription should be tailored to the circumstances and scale of change in each place.

- 1.4. It is intended that the document should be used by anybody proposing new development, to give them an understanding of the key characteristics of built form in the area and guidance on what form new development should take and what is likely to be acceptable. The focus is on both urban design principles, as well as more detailed design (e.g. the elevational treatment of buildings).

2. Progress to date

- 2.1. Work commenced on the document in 2022 when we worked with consultants, Turley, on the first draft of the document. There have been two previous rounds of consultation: the first at the beginning of 2022 prior to work commencing, and the second on the first draft of the document over winter 2022-2023.
- 2.2. Subsequently the document has developed and changes have been made to the Broads Authority Design Guide and Code. This is in response to consultation feedback and changing national and local planning policy and guidance.
- 2.3. The document is arranged in two parts. The first part of the document is the Design Guide, which sets out the characteristics of the main building types and forms of development that we deal with in the Broads (for example, waterside chalets and farm buildings). This is to ensure people understand the context in which they are proposing to develop and to encourage them to consider their surroundings when developing proposals. The second part of the document is the Design Code. This sets out parameters and requirements that must be met when applying for planning permission, with a checklist that should be submitted with planning applications.

3. Next steps

- 3.1. In order to ensure the Design Guide and Code carries sufficient weight in planning decisions, it is proposed that it should be adopted as an SPD.
- 3.2. As such, it is necessary to carry out consultation for at least 4 weeks. It is intended that this should commence in December and will run for 6 weeks to ensure there is sufficient time for respondents to comment, due to the Christmas period.
- 3.3. Comments will then be assessed and responded to and a consultation statement and adoption statement produced.
- 3.4. We will aim for the March 2025 Planning Committee and Broads Authority meetings for adoption. Planning Committee's recommendation will be verbally reported to the Broads Authority, due to the timescales for reports.

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1. There should not be any financial implications for the Authority.

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[Broads Plan](#) strategic objectives: F4

Appendix 1 - [Draft Broads Authority Design Guide and Code](#)