

**Committee:** Development Control

**Agenda Item**

**Date:** 22 July 2009

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**Title:** Great Dunmow Town Design Statement  
2009

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Item for  
decision

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### Summary

Great Dunmow Town Council adopted the Town Design Statement on 7<sup>th</sup> May 2009. They have submitted it to the District Council and requested that it becomes supplementary planning guidance and used as a reference in the consideration of all future development proposals affecting the Town.

### Recommendations

That the Council adopt the Great Dunmow Town Design Statement as Council Approved Guidance in determining planning applications in the town and as background evidence in the preparation of the Local Development Framework (LDF).

### Background Papers

Great Dunmow Town Design Statement

### Impact

Communication/Consultation	<b>The Design Statement has been the subject of wide community consultation and there has been significant community involvement in its preparation.</b>
Community Safety	None
Equalities	<b>None</b>
Finance	None
Human Rights	<b>None</b>
Legal implications	<b>None</b>
Sustainability	<b>The Design Statement has been subject to a sustainability appraisal as part of its preparation and this demonstrates that</b>

	<b>it contributes to wider sustainability objectives.</b>
Ward-specific impacts	<b>Great Dunmow (North and South)</b>
Workforce/Workplace	<b>None</b>

## Situation

- 1 The Great Dunmow Town Design Statement (TDS) has been primarily prepared by the Dunmow Town Design Statement Group supported by the Town Council the Dunmow Strategy Group and the community of Great Dunmow. The aim of the TDS is to make sure that the layout and design of new development in Dunmow meets the highest standards of design, complements the existing character and results in a safe, attractive and rewarding environment for all the community. The full document is available on the Great Dunmow Town Design Statement website at <http://www.greatdunmowtds.org>
- 2 The TDS has been produced following a series of community events over a 3 year period. A project open day and a photo funday were held in 2006. A real planning day followed in 2007 and in 2008 there was a Design Statement Public Consultation Day. The events were attended by over 1000 people and the final version of the TDS attempts to reflect all the comments that were received. The design statement has been prepared within the context of national and regional guidance and is generally consistent with the saved policies in the Uttlesford Local Plan.
- 3 The TDS includes an initial section which presents an overview of the character of Great Dunmow and highlights general design issues. This is followed by a brief history of the town and an assessment of the scale of more recent growth and the quality of new development. Traffic and footpaths are covered in a separate section. The TDS includes a detailed assessment of various character areas within the town against a list of characteristics e.g. main types of building and materials, key features, trees, open space, floorscape, signs, boundaries, building types, building height, materials, roof, walls, windows.
- 4 The TDS has been assessed against the Core Strategy Objectives and Sustainability Appraisal (SA) Objectives to make sure it is consistent with the evolving new planning framework for the District. This shows that the TDS objectives provide support for the Core Strategy particularly in relation to district and landscape character and transport impacts. In relation to the SA objectives the TDS objectives, on the whole, either support or are neutral in their impact. The only area of potential conflict which was identified is in relation to the TDS objective “to set out design guidelines that support a high standard of design in new development that complements the character of the town and it’s neighbourhoods” and the SA objective to “Conserve energy and

improve the efficient use of natural resources” It was felt that in some circumstances measures that could normally be taken to achieve this objective e.g. double glazing etc could conflict with the TDS objective, particularly in relation to historic buildings but that an appropriate view could be taken to balance these two conflicting interests taking relevant legislation into account.

- 5 The TDS contains a number of recommendations which are listed in full in an appendix to this report. The TDS does not contain an action plan which states which organisations will be responsible for or involved in delivery but joint partnership working will be important if many of these recommendations are to be taken forward, at present it is not clear what the District Council's role in this might be there – there is no provision in current work programmes for undertaking survey or design work. In relation to the Council's planning function the character area descriptions will be a useful resource for development control officers because they identify those features which the community feels are important and should be retained and reflected in new development. The TDS will also make an important contribution to the decisions which the Council needs to make in relation to the location and form of future development through the LDF.
6. In relation to the hierarchy of planning policy the saved policies in the adopted Local Plan will be the primary consideration. These policies will be replaced over the next five years by the policies in the Core Strategy and other development plan documents which will make up the new Local Development Framework. Any Supplementary Planning Document which supports the adopted policies and has been through the statutory process can also be given significant weight. The original intention was that the TDS would be adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document to the LDF and the Sustainability Appraisal shows that it is generally consistent with the Core Strategy objectives. However delays to the LDF programme mean that the Core Strategy is now unlikely to be adopted until October 2011. If the TDS were to be adopted as an SPD in support of a saved policy in the adopted local plan this would give it only a limited life and officers are therefore suggesting that in the interim period the TDS is adopted as council approved guidance so that it can be treated as a material consideration in the determination of planning applications in common with other parish plans. For the TDS to be approved for use in this way it has to be consistent with the existing policy framework in the Uttlesford Local Plan. The appendix to this report contains a list of the recommendations and shows how these fit with the Council's planning process and the primary policy or policies that the recommendation can be linked to. There are a number of recommendations in the TDS in relation to land management issues which are not strictly related to planning policy e.g. seeking improvements at the town's industrial estates. The only recommendations which are considered to be contrary to current policy are those which seek financial contributions towards improvements that may not arise directly from the development i.e. towards enhancement of the public realm and the enhancement of existing natural areas and woodlands. There is currently no policy basis for seeking such contributions but the

community aspiration to achieve these improvements is recognised. They will therefore be fed into development of the LDF policies on infrastructure provision, including green infrastructure. It is recommended that the TDS with the exception of these two recommendations is adopted as council approved guidance.

**Risk Analysis**

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
That the Town Design Statement is not taken into account as a material consideration	Low. Officers will be aware of the Town Design Statement and will include reference to it in any relevant reports	Medium. The views of the community of Great Dunmow are not taken into account, devaluing community-led planning.	That the Town Design Statement is included in check list of items to consider when determining applications in Great Dunmow.