

TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to:	Executive Committee
Date of Meeting:	5 January 2022
Subject:	Shopfronts, Shutters and Signage: Design Guidance for Tewkesbury Borough. Supplementary Planning Document
Report of:	Planning Policy Manager
Corporate Lead:	Head of Development Services
Lead Member:	Lead Member for Built Environment
Number of Appendices:	Two

Executive Summary:

The Shopfronts, Shutters and Signage: Design Guidance for Tewkesbury Borough Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) was put before Executive in September to be approved to go out to consultation. The purpose of the guide is to promote good shop front and signage design within the historic areas of the Borough and to offer guidance to designers and applicants in submitting planning proposals. The intention is to promote good design practice without stifling innovation yet respecting the historic character of buildings and the areas.

The SPD was consulted on for six weeks from Friday 17 September 2021 until Friday 29 October. Only minor comments were received. However, in accordance with regulation 12 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended), a consultation statement is required to be produced to show how the Council has responded to representations from the consultation. This is then required to be consulted on for a period of four weeks prior to adoption.

This report therefore recommends that the amended SPD and consultation statement be consulted on for four weeks during January and February. Providing no substantive comments are received it is recommended to put forward the SPD for adoption to Council.

Recommendation:

- 1. To APPROVE the Consultation Statement and amended SPD for consultation: Shopfronts, Shutters and Signage: Design Guidance for Tewkesbury Borough.**
- 2. To RECOMEND the amended SPD to be put forward to Council at the end of the consultation period, subject to no substantive comments being made during the consultation.**
- 3. To DELEGATE authority to the Head of Development Services, to make any necessary minor amendments to the draft document as considered appropriate prior to adoption.**

Reasons for Recommendation:

To consult on the draft Supplementary Planning Document and Consultation Statement in accordance with the The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

Resource Implications:

Resource implication on officer time to conduct the consultation, review responses and make amendments as appropriate.

Legal Implications:

The preparation of an SPD is not a statutory requirement, but a decision for each local planning authority based upon demands for further information to assist in the delivery of sustainable development and to provide further guidance on policies within the Development Plan. An SPD cannot in itself establish planning policy; it must be consistent with national and local planning policies. Before a local planning authority can adopt an SPD it must carry out formal public consultation, followed by the provision of a Consultation Statement setting out who was consulted in the preparation of the SPD; a summary of the issues raised; and how those issues have been addressed. This must then be consulted on along with the amended SPD. The SPD can then be put forward for adoption. Once adopted the SPD will be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

Risk Management Implications:

There is no statutory requirement to prepare SPDs. However, it is considered to be important that Tewkesbury Borough has appropriate planning guidance for the design of shopfronts and signage to assist both the public and officers in regard to related planning applications. Furthermore, Tewkesbury Borough Council is embarking on a major project to improve shopfronts in Tewkesbury Town centre from June 2021 as part of the Tewkesbury High Street Heritage Action Zone (HSHAZ) scheme. This scheme will make funds available to building and business owners to improve the appearance of their buildings within the streetscene. It is therefore important to maximise the effectiveness of this scheme to enhance the character and street scene of Tewkesbury Town Centre and ensure the success of this particular project and funding.

Performance Management Follow-up:

Subject to the adoption of the SPD, the effectiveness of the SPD and the policies and guidance contained within will be monitored by the Conservation Officer.

Environmental Implications:

The SPD contains further detail and advice in relation to the emerging Joint Core Strategy (JCS) and Tewkesbury Borough Plan policies on design and quality of the environment. The specific objective of the guidance is to improve the character and appearance of the historic environment within Tewkesbury Borough.

1.0 BACKGROUND

1.1 Shops in most of our town centres and larger villages in England are facing substantial challenges due to changes in shopping habits, a factor that may have accelerated due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The population in Tewkesbury Borough is also set to rise significantly due to the Garden Town initiative and other surrounding housing developments. It is not possible for our town centres and larger villages to compete with the retail parks on the outskirts of Cheltenham and Gloucester but it is necessary for them to play on their strengths to attract and maintain customers and visitors.

- 1.2** There are examples of inappropriate and unauthorised shop signage and alterations to historic shopfronts within our historic retail areas that detract from their character and appearance. The purpose of this guide/SPD is to promote good shop front design and to offer guidance to designers and applicants in submitting planning proposals. The intention is to promote good design practice and not to dictate a particular style or stifle innovation. However the period and style of the property needs to be respected, and so there is a particular focus on traditional detailing. The guidance includes a historic context to shopfront development and design and provides a clear identification of elements of good design and inappropriate design.
- 1.3** A shopfront design guide is a common document amongst local planning authorities and is generally accepted as a valuable tool in regards to managing historic areas. There is also a specific policy within the emerging local plan regarding shopfronts (DES4), the guide will underpin this and the other related policies.
- 1.4** The publication of this guidance is timely in that it will complement the launch of a grant scheme to fund restoration and repair of traditional shopfronts in Tewkesbury town as part of the Tewkesbury High Street Heritage Action Zone.

2.0 UPDATE

- 2.1** As approved by Executive in September 2021, a period of formal public consultation was undertaken for a six week period from Friday 17 September 2021 until Friday 29 October 2021 on the Shopfronts, Shutters and Signage: Design Guidance for Tewkesbury Borough Supplementary Planning Document SPD. Over 165 organisations and individuals were written to to inform them of consultation and invite comments on the draft SPD. Contacts were taken from the existing Tewkesbury Borough Plan consultation database as those who have been involved in, or have an interest in, the plan making process in Tewkesbury. This includes all Parish Councils in the Borough, neighbouring local authorities, Gloucestershire County Council, as well as statutory consultees. In addition to this a notice of the consultation was placed in the local press through the Gloucestershire Echo as well as advertised on the Borough Council's website news feed.
- 2.2** A total of seven responses were received, however four of these were from statutory consultees confirming they had no comments. The responses were positive and welcomed the purpose of the document. Suggestions for further development of the document were noted. These were then considered and appropriate amendments were made to the SPD.
- 2.3** A summary table of these issues, and the Council's response, is provided in the Consultation Statement. The Consultation Statement is required under regulation 12 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. It is required to be consulted on for at least four weeks. The Consultation Statement sets out who was consulted, the main issues raised and how those issues have been responded to.
- 2.4** This report therefore seeks Member approval to consult on the Consultation Statement, along with the amended SPD for a four week consultation period in early 2022. It also seeks Member approval to put forward the SPD for adoption to Council following the consultation, providing there are no substantive comments arising out of this consultation.

3.0 RELEVANT COUNCIL POLICIES/STRATEGIES

- 3.1** Tewkesbury Borough Local Plan to 2011.
Joint Core Strategy.
Emerging Tewkesbury Borough Plan (2011-2031).

4.0 RELEVANT GOVERNMENT POLICIES

- 4.1** National Planning Policy Framework.
National Planning Practice Guidance.

5.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (Human/Property)

- 5.1** Resource implication on officer time to conduct the consultation, review responses and make any amendments as appropriate.

6.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS (Social/Community Safety/Cultural/ Economic/ Environment)

- 6.1** The preparation of the Shopfronts, Shutters and Signage: Design Guidance for Tewkesbury Borough SPD provides an opportunity to manage the character and appearance of Tewkesbury Town centre in a manner that promotes tourism and trade. It provides Officers, businesses and building owners with the guidance to create and maintain an attractive and characterful environment for the community which encourages stability and wellbeing in the population.

7.0 IMPACT UPON (Value For Money/Equalities/E-Government/Human Rights/Health And Safety)

- 7.1** None.

8.0 RELATED DECISIONS AND ANY OTHER RELEVANT FACTS

- 8.1** None.

Background Papers: None.

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Appendices: 1 – Amended Shopfronts, Shutters and Signage: Design Guidance for Tewkesbury. Strategic Planning Document.
2 – Consultation Statement.