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**Report of the Chief Planning Officer**

**Report to Development Plan Panel**

**Date: 24<sup>th</sup> June 2019**

**Subject: Revised Tall Buildings Design Guide: Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)**

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s): All	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

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**Summary of main issues**

1. In providing a planning framework for Tall Buildings across the District, in 2010 the City Council adopted a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). This guidance has been subject to a review and the purpose of this report is to seek consideration and approval for the revised Tall Buildings Design Guide (see Appendix 1) for public consultation.

**Recommendation**

2. Development Plan Panel is recommended to endorse the undertaking of public consultation on the Draft Tall Buildings Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).

## **1 Purpose of this Report**

- 1.1 The City Council adopted a Tall Buildings Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) in 2010. The focus of this document is to amplify planning policies in relation to the overall location and design of tall buildings across Leeds. This guidance has been subject to a review and the purpose of this report, is to seek consideration and approval for the revised Tall Building Guide (SPD) (see Appendix 1) for public consultation.

## **2 Background Information**

- 2.1 Initially adopted by the City Council in 2010, the Tall Buildings Design Guide SPD, provides a positive framework for considering the location and design of Tall Buildings across the District. In reflecting the continued interest in Tall Buildings and to ensure that planning guidance remains 'fit for purpose', the guidance has been reviewed.

## **3 Main Issues**

- 3.1 Economic growth and investment in Leeds, has resulted in continued interest in tall buildings across the District. In seeking to help direct and manage this growth, the aim of the Tall Buildings Design Guide SPD, is to provide a short, clear design guide on the location, form and appearance of tall buildings so that they can be successfully integrated into the economy and townscape of Leeds. In reflecting this approach, the original SPD has been revised into a more concise document to provide clear and legible guidance to applicants considering tall buildings in Leeds. The document is structured as follows:
- Introduction
  - Strategic Design Issues 1. (Locations). Where can Tall Buildings Go?
  - Strategic Design Issues 2. (Detail Design). What Design Criteria should Tall Buildings meet?
  - Policy Context
  - Conclusion
  - Supplementary Information.
- 3.2 Integral to the overall approach are a series of General Design Principles regarding the location and form of tall buildings. These include the location of proposed tall buildings and their relationship to skylines and views, the relationship of the buildings with the streets and movements around them, legibility and sense of place, environmentally sustainable and operational (taking into account the consequences of climate change and wind mitigation measures), be of the highest design quality and safe (taking into account any recommendations arising from the Grenfell Tower Inquiry).
- 3.3 Whilst the majority of applications for tall buildings are expected to be in the City Centre the document is for guidance throughout the Leeds Metropolitan District.

#### **4. Next steps**

- 4.1 Subject to Development Plan Panel's consideration of this report, it is proposed to undertake a 6 week period of public consultation on the draft revised guide, consistent with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

#### **5. Corporate Considerations**

##### **5.1 Consultation and Engagement**

- 5.1.1 The emerging revised draft document has been subject to internal consultation within the City Council and also with Plans Panel Chairs.
- 5.1.2 As noted above, subject to Development Plan Panel's consideration the document will be subject to a 6 week period public consultation consistent with the Planning Regulations.

##### **5.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration**

- 5.2.1 The revised Tall Buildings Design Guide SPD, is set within the context of adopted development plans in Leeds, with the purpose of SPDs to amplify existing policies. In the preparation of the Leeds Development Plan Documents, due regard has been given to Equality, Diversity, Cohesion and Integration issues. This has included the completion of EDCI Screening and meeting the requirements of the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive, which has meant that these Plans are subject to the preparation of a Sustainability Appraisal. The purpose of such Appraisals is to assess (and where appropriate strengthen) the document's policies, in relation to a series of social (and health), environmental and economic objectives. As part of this process, issues of Equality, Diversity, Cohesion and Integration, are embedded as part of the Appraisal's objectives. Within this overall context also the Tall Buildings SPD forms part of the wider policy framework set out as part of the Core Strategy and Core Strategy Selective Review and other SPD documents.

##### **5.3 Council Policies and Best Council Plan**

- 5.3.1 The Planning has a key role to play in taking forward the City Council's ambitions and commitments set out as part of the Best Council Plan. These include Inclusive Growth, Housing and Sustainable Infrastructure. In March 2019, the City Council also declared a 'Climate Change Emergency', which has cross cutting implications. The Revised Tall Buildings Design Guide SPD has been prepared within the context of City Council and Best Council Plan priorities. The overall policy approach is embedded within existing adopted plans and policies, with the revised guide seeking to take these priorities forward as part of its principles and detailed policy requirements.
- 5.3.2 With regard to the climate change emergency, it should be emphasised that the proposed SPD, in itself makes a positive contribution to mitigating and adapting to climate changes, whilst also sitting alongside a series of complementary policies. These include EN1, EN2, and EN8, which have a direct impact on

reducing carbon reduction (through high energy efficiency standards – 20% more energy efficient than Building Regulations), 10% of energy needs to be met from renewable sources, efficient water consumption and electric vehicle charging points). The Building for Tomorrow Today SPD, also includes a developer check list to help developers reach better standards of sustainability construction. In terms of the Tall Buildings Design Guide SPD, specific reference is made to: Landscaping, Ecology, Sustainability, Orientation and Climate, setting out policy requirements.

#### 5.4 Resources and value for money

5.4.1 The document has been prepared within existing resources, together with specialist technical advice on the 'Wind Microclimate Toolkit'. The Design Guide is seeking to engage positively and proactively in the issue of tall buildings and to provide a clear framework. This in turn will assist investor confidence and inclusive growth.

#### 5.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

5.5.1 The revised draft SPD has been prepared within the context of the Local Plan Regulations, national Planning guidance and adopted Leeds planning policies.

5.5.2 This report is not eligible for call in as no decision is being taken.

#### 5.6 Risk Management

5.6.1 Important issues associated with this Design Guide, relate to wind around tall buildings and building safety. These matters are the responsibility of the applicant. The Planning Authority may ask for a 'wind study' with each application, to demonstrate the application meets safe criteria and ensure that wind studies are independently reviewed (by wind consultants).

5.6.2 To provide clarity on the wind studies required, a separate 'Wind and Microclimate Toolkit' (WMCTK) has been commissioned from technical specialists in wind effects. This is directly referenced in the Tall Buildings Design Guide and directs the applicants as to the appropriate wind studies that will be required for the particular Planning Application.

5.6.3 The document also has general comments as to what will be expected of the applications regarding mitigating wind impact. This has been done in consultation with development management, highways and other colleagues.

5.6.4 The focus of the SPD relates to Policy requirements and guidance in relation to the aesthetic townscape design, and location, of Tall Buildings. Other safety issues such as fire safety are beyond the scope of the document and are addressed separately via Building Control regulations. There is an acknowledgement that the Council will support any recommendations coming from the Grenfell Tower Inquiry.

### **6. Conclusion**

6.1 The City Council adopted a Tall Buildings Design Guide Supplementary

Planning Document (SPD) in 2010. The focus of the revised draft document is to ensure that the document remains 'fit for purpose' and to amplify planning policies in relation to the overall location and design of tall buildings across Leeds. This guidance has been subject to a review and the purpose of this report, is to seek consideration and approval for the revised Tall Buildings Design Guide (SPD) (see Appendix 1) for public consultation.

## **7. Recommendation**

- 7.1 Development Plan Panel is recommended to endorse the undertaking of public consultation on the Draft Tall Buildings Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).

Appendix 1: **Tall Building Guide (SPD)**