



## Report of the Director of City Development

Report to: Executive Board

Date: 26 August 2009

**Subject: Adoption of the Supplementary Planning Document of the Street Design Guide and Response to the Deputation of the National Federation of the Blind**

### Electoral Wards Affected:

All

Ward Members consulted  
(referred to in report)

### Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

Eligible for Call In

Not Eligible for Call In

(Details contained in the report)

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. A new Street Design Guide has been prepared following the principles of the Government's recent publication, Manual for Streets and our own Neighbourhoods for Living which is supplementary planning guidance. The Street Design Guide ensures that the principles in Manual for Streets are applied to Leeds and used as a basis for new housing design and for adoption of the highway. Consultation on the document has now taken place and a report setting out the issues raised, and how these issues have been dealt with, has been produced.
2. One issue raised is the concerns of disabled people on the provision of shared space and shared surface streets.
3. After extensive consultations a solution has been reached which provides for a safe route through these areas when they serve through routes or cul-de-sacs serving over 25 dwellings and follows advice from the Guide Dogs for the Blind Association. The document has been amended accordingly. Shared surface streets are being restricted to use in residential schemes serving 25 dwellings or less in short culs-de-sac only.
4. The measures set out above address the concerns raised in the deputation of the National Federation of the Blind.

5. This report seeks approval for the adoption of the Street Design Guide as a Supplementary Planning Document. This SPD amplifies the UDP (Review) Policy T2 which has been saved as part of the LDF process.

## **1.0 Purpose Of This Report**

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to inform members of the outcome of the consultation on the Street Design Guide and to endorse the contents of the amended document. The report also seeks approval for the adoption of the Street Design Guide as a Supplementary Planning Document.

## **1.0 Background Information**

- 2.1 The West Yorkshire Highway Design Guide was written in 1979 and adopted by Leeds City Council in 1986 as guidance on the design of residential streets. Since the publication of the HDG "Design Bulletin 32 - Design of Residential Streets" (1992) (DB32) and "Places Streets and Movement" (1998) have been published by the government. Most recently the "Manual for Streets" (2007) (MfS) has been produced by the government.
- 2.2 A requirement of MfS is that local authorities amend their existing guidance. A new design guide has therefore been produced which incorporates the appropriate principles in these documents and embraces "Neighbourhoods for Living", our own document produced in 2003. The draft document is called the "Street Design Guide" and as the new title suggests it puts emphasis on the road as a place rather than a highway, as set out in the new guidance. All new residential streets serving less than 200 dwellings will have a design speed of 20mph.
- 2.3 Shared surfaces have always been one of the options for the design of a street, the old guide restricting the use to a cul-de-sac serving a maximum of 25 dwellings. In the HDG the streets were known as 'access ways' and 'mews courts' as opposed to Shared Surfaces in the Street Design Guide.
- 2.4 'Places, Streets and Movement' allowed for through routes of up to 50 dwellings to be served off a shared surface, which was informally adopted by Leeds. Manual for Streets suggests that shared surfaces serving up to 100 vehicular movements in the busiest hour are acceptable, which is equivalent to approximately 120 houses or 200 apartments.
- 2.5 In the draft Street Design Guide it was determined that our own criteria for shared surfaces, 25 dwellings off culs-de-sac or 50 dwellings off through routes, was more appropriate, rather than the guidance in MfS. MfS does not give guidance for the provision of "Home Zones", which are similar to shared surfaces but are more irregular in shape and have a maximum speed of 10mph. It is proposed that these areas will be allowed to serve up to 120 dwelling or 200 apartments.
- 2.6 As the draft Street Design Guide was produced as a Supplementary Planning Document consultation was carried out following the requirements of the Statement of Community Involvement.
- 2.7 A number of comments have been received and a report setting out the various comments, and how each comment has been acted on, produced. The report is attached as **appendix A**

### **3.0 Main Issues**

- 3.1 The Street Design Guide has been proposed to amplify the following saved policy of the adopted revised UDP:-
- Policy T2 (New developments should be served adequately by existing or programmed highways)
- 3.2 The main issue arising out of the consultation was the concern regarding 'shared surfaces', raised by a number of groups representing disabled people and in particular blind and partially sighted people, one group being the Alliance of Users and Carers. Their concern was that in a shared surface environment they felt vulnerable to being knocked down by other users. They requested that a designated safe route through a shared area is provided.
- 3.3 Research has been carried out by the Guide Dogs for the Blind Association in conjunction with University College London, to try and determine a suitable delineator to demarcate pedestrian paths in a shared space environment. Unfortunately the conclusion reached was that "whilst none of the delineators emerged as meeting the needs of both groups of users [blind and partially sighted people and wheelchair users] two were identified by the researchers as warranting further research..." As that report was only published recently no further information is available.
- 3.4 Another piece of research entitled 'Designing for Disabled People in Home Zones' has also been produced in conjunction with the Guide Dogs for the Blind Association. This sets out a number of recommendations for designing such areas.
- 3.5 In April 2009 the Department for Transport informed all highway authorities that they were embarking on a wide-ranging research project into Shared Space and requesting authorities to participate. A response has been forwarded that Leeds City Council is willing to be involved in this project. It is anticipated that it will last two years.
- 3.6 Several meetings have been held with the Alliance of Users and Carers to determine an acceptable solution. At a meeting held on 29 April 2008 an agreement was reached that resolved this issue. The proposal was that a shared surface could be provided on a cul-de-sac serving a maximum of 25 dwellings. Any shared surface serving a higher number of dwellings, either as a cul-de-sac or a through route, would have at least one designated safe route through the length of highway, the width being a minimum of 2.0. It was determined that the safe route be delineated by a kerb with an up-stand of 30mm and that at each end, and other appropriate locations, a flush kerb with tactile paving would be provided. The material used in the safe route would be of contrasting colour to the remaining surface. This area would be designated as a Shared Space as opposed to a Shared Surface.
- 3.7 A request for the safe route to be constructed of a material with a smooth surface, such as a bituminous material, as opposed to block paving, was made. However as this would defeat the overall objectives of providing a shared area, an area where a driver would recognise that he was in a location different to a normal highway, this proposal was not accepted.
- 3.8 A further request was that a delineation feature be provided at the back of the footway, such as a garden wall or an edging raised to a height of 30mm was also made. As this would depend on the proposed development this has been

incorporated within the Street Design Guide as a further consideration when dealing with any proposal. The minutes of the meeting are attached as **appendix B**.

- 3.9 It was also agreed that when designing Home Zones the recommendations within Designing for the Disabled in Home Zones would be followed.
- 3.10 Following this agreement further representation has been made by letter on 29 May 2008, attached as **appendix C**. The letter is from the same association stating that they now feel that they did not reach a satisfactory solution and further research should be undertaken before they can agree to any proposals.
- 3.11 At the request of this Board further discussions have taken place with the Alliance of Users and Carers which has also involved a number of Members. Further to that meeting a Member/officer meeting has been held at which it was determined that the Council would invite Mr Tom Pey, Director of Development Guide Dogs for the Blind Association, to a meeting with Members and officers. Also invited to that meeting would be representatives from the Department for Transport and from the Alliance of Users and Carers.
- 3.12 The Member/officer meeting also determined that, as an interim measure, the solution set out above would be used in the Street Design Guide, until the findings from the on-going research being carried out by the DfT has concluded. The Street Design Guide would then be amended to incorporate the finding of the research.
- 3.13 This proposal was then put to the Alliance of Users and Carers on 27 July 2009 who were fully supportive of the proposal for a meeting with members. They were made aware that in the interim the agreement that was reached in April 2008, but later retracted, would be used as an interim policy within the Street Design Guide, and would be amended to reflect the outcome of any future research. They requested that included in this report was their strong preference for a 100mm kerb up-stand, as opposed to 30mm, and that the length of a cul-de-sac of up to 100 metres for a shared surface is too long. However these issues will remain as unresolved concerns until the research has been concluded.
- 3.14 In addition to the above objections a deputation was submitted to the Council, by the National Federation of the Blind, outlining concerns with the provision of Shared Spaces and requesting that such areas are not provided. The deputation was presented to the Full Council meeting on the 10 September 2008 where it was resolved that the matter should be considered by the Executive Board on 5 November 2008. Although a report was prepared for that committee the item was deferred until further discussions had taken place, as set out above.
- 3.15 The concerns raised in the submitted deputation are the same as those raised by the Alliance of Users and Carers, that is, that *“Shared Space has very serious implications for the health, choices, independence and mobility of disabled people...”* However the title of the deputation is “Say no to Shared Spaces”. This does conflict with the advice given by The Guide Dogs for the Blind Association in their document entitled “Shared Surface Street Design Research Project”. In the forward to that document it states *“At the heart of the issue is the need to distinguish between Shared Space and Shared Surfaces. The former can be successful in meeting everyone’s needs provided that physical ‘clues’ including kerbs and tactile surfaces are retained....”*
- 3.16 The proposals set out above address this issue by the provision of kerbs and tactile paving, when appropriate, within shared areas. It is considered that these provisions provide a safe and defined route for disabled people through a Shared Space.

3.17 Copies of the Street Design Guide document have been circulated to Board Members for consideration and can be obtained from the clerk named on the front of the agenda.

#### **4.0 Compliance with the Regulations**

4.1 In accordance with the statutory regulations and the Leeds City Council SPD Production Procedural Requirements, the following documents/statements have been prepared and cleared by Legal and Democratic Services:-

- Adoption Statement
- Sustainability Statement
- Statement confirming compliance with SCI

(all attached as **appendix D**)

#### **5.0 Conclusions**

5.1 The draft Street Design Guide follows the principles of Government guidance set out in the recently published Manual for Streets.

5.2 Objections to the provision of Shared Surface have been received from groups representing disabled people.

5.3 A solution with the objectors was initially reached which provides for a safe route through shared areas which are either on through routes or serving developments of over 25 dwellings. This agreement was later rescinded by letter dated 29 May 2008. However further discussions have taken place with the objectors and, as an interim measure the solution is acceptable whilst further research is carried out, the finding of which will be incorporated within the Street Design Guide.

5.4 In addition the document is a Supplementary Planning Document and thus subject to monitoring and therefore any Shared Surfaces built during the intervening period will also be monitored to determine if the provisions are adequate or require revising.

#### **6.0 Recommendations**

6.1 That the Executive Board approves the Street Design Guide, as now drafted, as a Supplementary Planning Document.

#### **7.0 Background Papers**

- Neighbourhoods for Living – A guide for residential design in Leeds, December 2003
- Manual for Street, Department of Transport, 2007
- Testing proposed delineators to demarcate pedestrian paths in a shared space environment
- Designing for Disabled People in Home Zones