

TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL

PLANNING COMMITTEE – 29th June 2016

**TITLE – LAWLEY STRATEGIC URBAN EXTENSION DESIGN CODE
ADDENDUM**

**REPORT OF ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: DEVELOPMENT, BUSINESS AND
EMPLOYMENT**

PART A) – SUMMARY REPORT

1. SUMMARY OF MAIN PROPOSALS

- 1.1 Outline planning permission was granted in 2005 for the Lawley Sustainable Urban Extension (application reference W2004/0980) for the erection of 3300 dwellings, employment/mixed-use/commercial and leisure floorspace, a primary school, a community centre, infrastructure works and associated recreational space and landscaping.
- 1.2 In order to provide a level of certainty over the quality of the development a detailed Design Codes document was prepared that set clear design instruction and guidance for new development. The Design Codes have been used to guide developers in drawing up detailed proposals and the various Reserved Matters applications that have been submitted across the Lawley Sustainable Urban Extension since 2004 have all been assessed against the codes.
- 1.3 The original Design Codes recommended that regular reviews were undertaken so that the Design Codes could be updated as necessary. There have been several changes in national planning guidance since the publication of the original Design Codes and as the development of Lawley has come forward lessons have been learnt by the developers and the Local Planning Authority. A detailed review of the Design Codes has been undertaken and a Design Code Addendum has been produced as a result.
- 1.4 The Design Code Addendum focuses specifically on the two remaining character areas that have yet to be developed, Lawley Bank and Newdale. As with the previous character areas the development will come forward in a number of phases. The Design Codes Addendum

has been designed to only update, not replace the Original codes and to that end the Original codes remains the master document.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 It is recommended that Members endorse the Design Code Addendum.

3. SUMMARY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

COMMUNITY IMPACT	Do these proposals contribute to specific Co-Operative Council priority objective(s)?	
	Yes	Housing, Regeneration and Prosperity (outcome No.3).
	Will the proposals impact on specific groups of people?	
	Yes	People living within the Ketley & Overdale, Horsehay & Lightmoor and Wrockwardine.Wards in particular and people living in the rest of the Borough.
TARGET COMPLETION/DELIVERY DATE	Immediate	
FINANCIAL/VALUE FOR MONEY IMPACT	Yes/No	The Design codes addendum updates the original code, the changes have arisen from revised national guidance and encompasses lessons learnt by developers from the initial development phase at Lawley. Design codes provide a clear guide to developers in their design proposals for planning applications. The financial implications of adhering to and developing of sites to meet these codes are met by the developers. Any further ongoing maintenance of these sites are managed by external providers and do not have financial implications for

		Telford & Wrekin. AEM 23/06/16.
LEGAL ISSUES	Yes	The recommendation is to endorse the Design Code Addendum and, in these circumstances, there is no legal comment to add to this report.
OTHER IMPACTS, RISKS & OPPORTUNITIES	No	
IMPACT ON SPECIFIC WARDS	Yes	Ketley & Overdale, Horsehay & Lightmoor and Wrockwardine.

PART B) – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

4. INFORMATION

- 4.1 Outline planning permission was granted in 2005 for the Lawley Sustainable Urban Extension (application reference W2004/0980) for the erection of 3300 dwellings, employment/mixed-use/commercial and leisure floorspace, a primary school, a community centre, infrastructure works and associated recreational space and landscaping. Planning application TWC/2010/0828 was subsequently approved varying some of the conditions of the original consent.
- 4.2 During 2003 English Partnerships, together with The Prince's Foundation and Telford & Wrekin Council prepared a Development Framework for Lawley. Utilising an Enquiry by Design process which involved the local community and stakeholders in collaborative workshops. The output was a Development Framework plan for the Lawley Area. At that time the office of the Government was promoting the use of Design Codes in order to achieve an improved quality of development and a greater speed of delivery of new housing by ensuring certainty for both developers and the Local Planning Authority.
- 4.3 In order to provide that level of certainty a detailed Design Codes document was prepared for Lawley that set the context for the detailed design development by providing the rationale behind the Development Framework Plan and clear design instruction and guidance for new development. The Design Codes have been used to guide developers in drawing up detailed proposals and the various Reserved Matters applications that have been submitted across the Lawley Sustainable Urban Extension since 2004 have all been assessed against the codes.

- 4.4 It was recognised within the Design Codes that as they provide guidance for such a large area and as the development would be implemented over a significant period of time there would be a need to monitor and review the Design Codes to reflect circumstances at the time. The intention was that the Design Codes should be reviewed after the first two years and then every three years thereafter in order to ensure that the Design Codes remain up to date.
- 4.5 No reviews of the Design Codes were undertaken until 2014 when the three key stakeholders (the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA), Telford and Wrekin Council, and the consortium of three national house builders - Taylor Wimpey, Barratt Homes and Persimmon, known as the Lawley Village Developer Group (LVDG) agreed to initiate a review of the Design Codes which was chaired by HCA with MADE (independent consultants from The Architecture Centre for the West Midlands) commissioned as the independent review body.
- 4.6 The purpose of the review was to:
- Update the Design Codes to reflect changing circumstances including updates in planning policy and new legislation such as The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which supports the use and adoption of Design Codes,
 - To monitor and adapt the codes as circumstances change,
 - To take account of the more challenging topography of the remaining phases of development,
 - To respond to lessons learnt from previous phases of development where variations have needed to be made from the Design Codes,
 - To respond to feedback from consultations carried out with residents living in the completed phases of Lawley, and
 - To take account of the recession in 2008 and the economic circumstances since that have made achieving viability of the development more challenging.
- 4.7 A working group was set up to hold a formal design codes review which was comprised of the above key stakeholders and Origin 3, the Urban Design Consultants instructed to undertake the review. A series of regular workshops were used to discuss and agree upon the updated text; this included variations and additions to the original document. The focus of the workshops was to ensure that the original vision for Lawley is honoured and that quality standards are maintained within future Reserved Matters applications.

- 4.8 A public consultation which involved an exhibition and questionnaire to gauge resident's views of Lawley was held on 28-29 May 2014 in order to establish where there were areas for improvement for subsequent phases. The following key comments were made;
- Increase of landscape features and bringing more trees and planting into streets;
 - Clear delineation of street profiles;
 - Logical use of materials to denote footpaths, parking and carriageways;
 - Integrate visitor car parking into the streetscape;
 - Greater on plot or front courtyard parking;
 - Increase parking ratios;
 - Speed up delivery and adoption of Public Open Space;
 - Bin storage is lacking.
- 4.9 The review process was temporarily put on hold whilst the Reserved Matters Application for Phase 8 was prepared and subsequently approved and it recommenced in 2015. In total 6 workshops have taken place as part of the review process.
- 4.10 The review process has now been completed and a Design Code Addendum has now been produced by Origin 3.
- 4.11 An application for a non-material amendment to application TWC/2010/0828 has now been submitted which will amend the wording of the relevant conditions that make reference to the Design Codes by inserting a reference to the Design Code Addendum.

DESIGN CODE ADDENDUM

- 4.12 The Design Code Addendum focuses specifically on the two remaining character areas that have yet to be developed, Lawley Bank and Newdale. As with the previous character areas the development will come forward in a number of phases.
- 4.13 The Design Codes Addendum has been designed to only update, not replace the Original codes and to that end the Original codes remains the master document.
- 4.14 A number of conditions that were attached to the original Outline planning permission and the subsequent application to vary that consent make reference to the need for the development to be carried

out in broad accordance with the original Design Codes and Development Framework. The applicant has submitted an application for a non-material amendment to vary the wording of those conditions to take account of the Design Codes Addendum.

4.15 Summary of updates to the Development Framework

- Lawley Circus - Neighbourhood Park is a focus for the character area.
- Green streets and swale streets have been introduced.
- A range of attenuation features from ponds to linear attenuation features are now proposed.
- A public square will be created to terminate Main Street and act as an arrival space from Lawley Common Roundabout.
- Proposed streets have been realigned to provide direct connectivity through to neighbouring streets.
- Better pedestrian connectivity between phases and existing areas and routes will be provided.
- Creation of small neighbourhood squares in place of rear parking court areas.
- Green buffer spaces will be provided to create a positive relationship between new development fronting existing neighbourhoods.
- Infill development backing onto existing plots to be designed sensitively to respond to existing scale and character.

4.16 Summary of updates to Street Hierarchy Plan

- Feature green streets and swale streets will be provided to promote a more sustainable and integrated approach to development.
- There will be a better relationship between building typologies and street hierarchy.
- Through routes will be promoted and the use of private drives will be limited.
- Parking courts will be retained but their use will be limited in preference for parking on street and on plot.

4.17 Summary of updates to Pedestrian and Cycle movement

- Green/swale streets within the development will create more attractive and safer places to walk or cycle.

- Connectivity will be improved along the eastern edge of Newdale through the creation of a continuous footpath connecting to The Rock.
- Strengthening the existing Bridleways, Public Rights of Way and footpaths by ensuring streets line up with key links.
- Ensuring connectivity between proposed crossing locations on boulevards.
- A number of linking footpaths have been introduced to enable easy access to Ironbridge Way from Main Street, connecting west to east into Lawley Bank.
- Creating clear links and connections to dedicated cycle routes such as along the western boundary of Lawley Drive adjacent to Phase 7 which forms an alternative to cycling on Main Street.
- Ensuring a link across Station Road to connect Phases 10 and 11.
- Pegasus crossing provided on West Centre Way

4.18 Parking

4.19 Since the Original Design Codes were written, Government guidance and best practise has changed to encourage a range of different parking arrangements, with an emphasis on a balanced approach rather than focusing on any one type, as one size does not fit all eventualities. Whilst one type of parking is not technically better than another, the practicalities and popularity of some forms of parking make them more appropriate to feature in residential development schemes.

4.20 Having discussed parking options as part of the Design Review process, a range of parking solutions was agreed. These are listed below in terms of preference for use, although it is emphasised that there will be a mix of these types to avoid any type dominating the development. Detailed codes are providing on the following parking types:

- On Plot parking within curtilage;
- On street (parallel/perpendicular/parking squares);
- Rear courtyard parking;
- Garages; and
- Cycle Parking.

4.21 Whilst the use of rear parking courtyards as featured in the original codes will still be permitted, they are likely to be used in a very limited capacity. This is because their use on earlier phases of development has not been successful, partly due to cost and construction difficulties

and partly because they have been unpopular with residents, who don't use them, as they find them inconvenient and difficult to manoeuvre in and out of.

4.22 Land uses

4.23 The original Land use plan in the Codes has been re-interpreted and reconfigured to present an updated block structure designed to respond more efficiently to the challenging topography to the south and east of Lawley

4.24 The remaining land to be developed is to be exclusively residential other than the potential allowance for a Doctors Surgery subject to future need. The Original Design Code allowed for Mixed Use development along Main Street in the Lawley Bank Character Area.

4.25 The Original Design Code has shown some areas as being "excluded from affordable housings" and this has been deleted from the plan so that affordable housing can be more evenly distributed across the development or phase.

4.26 Building Heights

4.27 As the focus is on the remaining two character areas, the need for a minimum requirement of 4 or 3 storeys is no longer considered to be necessary, however the need for minimum height restrictions has been lifted on the proviso that a variation in roofscape, which has become a distinct characteristic of Lawley, is maintained.

4.28 Along Main Street in particular there is still a need to highlight the importance of this route, which if not expressed through a minimum storey height, will be reflected through increased emphasis on other aspects or features expressed in the form, massing and architectural treatment of units.

4.29 Landmarks and Defining Public Spaces

4.30 Landmarks will be used at key locations to emphasise its significance within the character area and the development as a whole, such as at an arrival point, the termination of an important or long view and around a key space. Landmarks are proposed in key locations which are highly visible in the development and as such a special architectural or material treatment should be given to set them apart and create a memorable place.

- 4.31 In Lawley Bank legible markers will typically be symmetrical sentry type buildings at junctions. Occasionally legible markers in Lawley Bank will present an opportunity to break the formal rhythm and create a contrast from the streetscene. In Newdale a more asymmetrical pattern of single legible markers on ends of blocks will reinforce the informal character.
- 4.32 The block structure and their underlying principles have been reviewed and updated in response to more recent information in regard to the existing topography and the need to make the remaining character areas and the routes within them, more distinctive and greener.
- 4.33 Building materials and features
- 4.34 Designers and developers will utilise materials that respect the character of the area including brick and render elements. In Lawley Bank: a restrained palette of materials will be used to complement the more formal and repetitive nature of the character set out in the Addendum. This will similarly be reflected in the choice of colour and tone of materials which may be used selectively in key locations to create emphasis where required. In Newdale, the materials palette and their corresponding colours will be more varied to reflect the more informal character, but will be limited to a certain extent to avoid creating a patchwork of materials that will be visually distracting.
- 4.35 The original Design Code stated that UPVC windows would not be permitted. The Design Code Addendum would allow the use of UPVC windows but this is on the provision that the proportion of the frame to glazing is minimised and that grey windows are used on key frontages, landmarks and legible markers. The ability to be able to use white UPVC windows has been a key requirement of the developers due to the higher costs associated with the alternatives. It is considered that the use of grey windows along key frontages, landmarks and legible markers will provide an acceptable compromise between recognising the commercial nature of development and ensuring that the character of Lawley is maintained in future phases of development.
- 4.36 Rubbish
- 4.37 A key concern that came up in the feedback from public consultation was the need to have better provision within homes or gardens for the storage of bins, and to control the unsightly appearance of numerous bins left in the street around collection times. In response to this the

Design Code Addendum states that the principles that must be adhered to are:

- Provision will be made within all plots for storage and collection of refuse. Where provision is grouped, as in apartments, all refuse collection points should be close to the building envelope.
- Design of communal bin storage should be of a high quality and to allow ease of maintenance and access for collection of waste.
- Individual properties should have rear access in order that bins can be easily moved from the street to be stored at the rear of the house.

4.38 A second key issue relates to the size of the bin collection/recycling vehicle used by Telford & Wrekin Council. The Design Code Addendum advises that access requirements for this vehicle need to be considered within the design of the narrower streets within the hierarchy (particularly lanes), by allowing adequate turning spaces and undertaking detailed swept path analysis for the vehicle during layout testing phases. A refuse truck collection route should be planned and agreed at reserved matters stage to ensure that streets are not over-engineered and that bins can be collected efficiently.

CONCLUSIONS

4.39 The 2004 Design Codes have been a useful tool to provide certainty for developers, the Local Planning Authority and other interested parties over the form and detailed design of the numerous phases of development of the Lawley Sustainable Urban Extension. The original Design Codes recommended that regular reviews were undertaken so that the Design Codes could be updated as necessary. There have been several changes in national planning guidance since the publication of the original Design Codes and as the development of Lawley has come forward lessons have been learnt by the developers and the Local Planning Authority. A detailed review of the Design Codes has been undertaken and a Design Code Addendum has been produced as a result.

4.40 MADE has been involved within the review throughout the process as an independent consultant and have confirmed that it endorses the Design Code Addendum.

5. IMPACT ASSESSMENT – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

5.1 None necessary.

6. PREVIOUS MINUTES

6.1 None relevant.

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Lawley Design Codes (2004)
- Lawley Design Code Addendum (2016)
- National Planning Policy Framework;
- Core Strategy Development Plan Document 2007;
- Wrekin Local Plan 2000;
- Telford & Wrekin Local Plan (Publication Version) 2016

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