

Winkleigh Parish Council
Lower Itton,
Spreyton,
Crediton,
Devon,
EX17 5BB



David Green
Planning Manager
Riverbank House
Bideford
Devon
EX39 2QG

Re: Village Design Statement

DX:53606 Bideford

Dear Melanie

Tel 01237 428700

Further to your letter dated 1st August 2016 I can confirm that we have received the Village Design Statement (VDS) document and as mentioned in our meeting I have been very impressed with the level of detail and quality of the document in terms of the design aspirations of the Parish Council . The document has no real weaknesses in terms of its design and character detail, however my only comment would be that the document carries no Statutory weight as a decision making tool in Planning terms, and I would suggest you go through the Neighbourhood Plan process in order to give this document the statutory weight it deserves.

Office Hours
Mon, Tue, Wed, Thu
8:45am - 5:15pm
Friday
8:45am - 4:45pm

The VDS has been circulated to officers and I will make sure that the Planning Committee are sent a copy as well. The DM officers of Torridge District Council have been asked to refer to the VDS when they assess the design elements of any scheme that may be proposed in your Parish area and I will also suggest to the Planning Committee that they do the same .

Head of Paid Service

Jenny Wallace

In my view the best way for yourselves to emphasise the criteria contained in this document, would be if you refer to the VDS as part of your consultation responses so that it draws the Case Officers attention to the document, this will ensure that the Planning Officers refer to it when assessing the design merits of a development as they will need to respond to your specific points on the ADS in their reports.



100%

The VDS is a material consideration, however it will not carry more weight than Local Plan Policy or the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Therefore as mentioned above the only way to give it the weight you desire is to get it formally adopted as a Neighbourhood Plan.

Design is a subjective matter and therefore it is open to a degree of interpretation, for example the Planning Inspector at an appeal may disagree with design concerns raised by the Planning Officer and whilst we may not agree with their interpretation it may be perfectly legitimate in planning terms, for example where the impact of a design would be balanced against other material considerations such as the need for housing in the area. Therefore

design is an issue covered by Policies in the Local Plan the emerging Joint Local Plan and also the NPPF. The VDS will help to emphasise the design deficiencies of a scheme but will not prevent a degree of subjectivity in assessing whether that design is acceptable in Planning terms.

I have previously passed on guidance notes on how to prepare a NP and the Government websites referred to in those notes have information to assist you in this process. I would also stress that, should you decide to go down the NP route, then the Policy Team in Torridge District Council would be available to assist you as we have done with Great Torrington Town Council and also Bradworthy Parish Council. I would suggest you also speak to Torrington and Bradworthy to gain advice and guidance from them on how they have approached this process. Bradworthy are looking to address design issues in their parish as well therefore they have similar design concerns as yourselves so a conversation with them could prove useful .

With regard to your request that a small presentation be put on regarding the VDS for Planning Officers and also Planning Committee members I will ask Cheryl Stansbury the Development Management Team Leader to discuss the VDS with the DM team in one of their regular team meetings . I will also make sure that the document is circulated to the Planning Committee so that it can be discussed in one of our regular Planning Evidence Gathering (PEG) meetings which are held the week following our monthly Planning Committee meetings.

I hope this formal response is sufficient to address the points you have raised in your letter, however if there is anything I can assist you with please do not hesitate to contact me .

Yours sincerely



David Green
Planning Manager