

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Decision Report

Decision Maker:	Executive Member-Environment
Date:	6 April 2010
Title:	Adoption of the Hampshire County Council Companion Document to the Manual for Streets
Reference:	1418
Report From:	Director of Environment

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1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. The purpose of this paper is to seek approval for adoption of the Hampshire “Companion Document to the Manual for Streets”. It seeks approval to revoke Hampshire County Council’s currently adopted development guide “Movement, Access, Streets and Spaces” [MASS] for streets with a design speed of 30mph and less.
- 1.2. This paper sets out the national position and guidance on the design of streets and responses from local stakeholder engagement in the development of the Hampshire “Companion Document”, to inform the decision.

2. Contextual information

- 2.1. The County Council welcomes the “Manual for Streets” (MfS) which was published in March 2007 by the Department for Transport and the Department for Communities and Local Government . It reflects the County Council’s own principles and current practice, providing guidance for practitioners involved in the planning, design, provision and approval of new streets, and modifications to existing ones. It focuses on streets with a speed of 60kph or less and aims to increase the quality of life through good design which creates more people-orientated streets.
- 2.2. The national guidance updates the link between planning policy and residential street design and challenges some established working practices and standards that are outdated and failing to produce good-quality outcomes. Highways, planning and design professionals are challenged to think differently about their role in creating successful neighbourhoods.

- 2.3. MfS provides a clear framework for the use of local systems and procedures to ensure that neighbourhoods where buildings, streets and spaces combine to create distinctive places can make a positive contribution to the life of local communities. It places particular emphasis on the importance of collaborative working and coordinated decision-making, as well as the value of strong leadership and clear vision of design quality at the local level.
- 2.4. At Hampshire County Council's Members briefings in October and December 2009 MfS principles of distinguishing streets with a design speed of less than 30mph with a different policy approach was welcomed as reflecting Hampshire County Councils current approach to highways design.
- 2.5. The "Companion Document to the Manual for Streets" is Hampshire County Council's formal highways guidance on the "Hampshire" approach to street design. It also recognises the changes in national guidance. It does not replace or duplicate the national guidance but sits alongside it as local guidance. It is a technical publication meant for developers, planners, highways and environmental designers. For the purposes of the local guidance the design speed of 30 mph will apply to new streets. This is consistent with Hampshire County Council highways practice in the design of new residential roads and is in line with the recognised speed limit of 30mph for these situations. In the case of existing roads MfS guidance can be used where the 85 percentile recorded speed is 60kph (37.5mph) or less, or suitable measures can be put in place to reduce it to this level.

3. Stakeholder Engagement

- 3.1. Stakeholder engagement has been sought to inform the preparation of the local guidance for street design in Hampshire.
- 3.2. Four workshop events were held from June to July 2009, with a multi-disciplinary mix of practitioners from County Council, District Authorities, the two Hampshire Unitary Authorities and the New Forest National Park. The mix of disciplines invited included highways design, maintenance, safety audit, highways development control, engineering consultancy, lighting, planning officers, urban designers and landscape architects.
- 3.3. The objectives of the workshops were to:
 - (i) raise awareness of the national picture and application of MfS;
 - (ii) enable practitioners to develop and understand the "Hampshire" approach and to work in a multi-discipline group;
 - (iii) engage practitioners in formulating and finalising the Companion Document;
 - (iv) promote the understanding of streetscape characterisation methodology; and

- (v) review guidance and technical specifications to guide developers through the process of adoption.
- 3.4. The response from these events was very supportive of the non-prescriptive approach proposed. Local guidance in the form of a Companion Document was welcomed and the County Council was urged to formally adopt the Companion Document as County Council design policy for highways with a design speed of less than 30mph.
- 3.5. A further series of meetings were held in January and February 2010 with key local representatives from disabilities and access groups; parish and town councils; the Chief Executive of Hampshire Association of Local Councils; developers and house builders; and the emergency services.
- 3.6. A presentation was made at a half day briefing session for Hampshire County Council Members in October 2009 and at the Cabinet Policy Briefing in December 2009, where the proposed approach to the MfS guidance and the draft Hampshire "Companion Document" was explained and comments received.
- 3.7. The feedback and advice from these consultations and briefings have proven very supportive, constructive and invaluable in developing and shaping the final Hampshire "Companion Document to the Manual for Streets".

4. Access to information

- 4.1. The Hampshire "Companion Document to the Manual for Streets", if approved for adoption as Hampshire highways policy for streets with a design speed of 30mph or less, supported by Hampshire landscape and townscape character information, will be made available on the Hampshire County Council web site. It can also be made available in large print or other form as requested. A copy of the final document can be found on <http://www3.hants.gov.uk/hampshire-manual-for-streets.htm> and a hard copy is available for inspection in the Members' room at Hampshire County Council, Elizabeth II South.

5. Recommendations

- 5.1 That the Hampshire County Council "Companion Document to the Manual for Streets" be adopted as Hampshire County Council highways design and development control policy for all new streets with a speed of 30 miles per hour or less; and in the case of existing roads where the 85 percentile recorded speed is 37.5 miles per hour or less; and come into effect as from 6 April 2010.
- 5.2 That Hampshire County Council's currently adopted development guide "Movement, Access, Streets and Spaces" be revoked as from 6 April 2010.

5.3 That the Director of Environment be requested to write to Hampshire County Council highways agents to inform them of this decision.

CORPORATE OR LEGAL INFORMATION:**Links to the Corporate Strategy**

Hampshire safer and more secure for all:	yes
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	
Maximising well-being:	yes
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	
Enhancing our quality of place:	yes
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents

The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)

DocumentLocation

None

IMPACT ASSESSMENTS:

1. Equalities Impact Assessment:

- 1.1. Key local disabilities and access group representatives were engaged in the development of the document. The Hampshire “Companion Document to the Manual for Streets” will encourage and enable discussions with local communities to secure a better understanding of disabilities and equalities issues in addressing the design of streets.

2. Impact on Crime and Disorder:

- 2.1. Local representatives from the emergency services were engaged in the development of the document. Better opportunities will be afforded to address aspects of crime and disorder on individual schemes through the approach set out in the “Companion Document”.

3. Climate Change:

- a) How does what is being proposed impact on our carbon footprint / energy consumption?

It will encourage a reduction of carbon footprint by shifting the focus of street design from the movement of vehicles to providing a higher priority to pedestrians and cyclists. The emphasis will be on design solutions which should reduce the speed of traffic.

- b) How does what is being proposed consider the need to adapt to climate change, and be resilient to its longer term impacts?

The emphasis on creating locally distinctive places, supported by environmental solutions to street design in the form of green spaces, planting and local materials, will improve the quality of life for people and make a positive contribution to adaptation to climate change.