

Report to	<b>Planning Committee</b>
Date	<b>11 April 2024</b>
By	<b>Director of Planning</b>
Title of Report	<b>Adoption of the Selborne Village Design Statement (SVDS) as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).</b>
Purpose of Report	<b>To recommend the adoption of the Selborne Village Design Statement (SVDS) as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).</b>
<b>Decision</b>	

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**Recommendation:** **The committee is recommended to approve the adoption of the Selborne Village Design Statement (SVDS) as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).**

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### **Executive Summary**

- This report presents the Selborne Village Design Statement (SVDS) (Appendix 1) to the planning committee for adoption as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).
- The SVDS has been prepared by local volunteers (with considerable community input) and provides further detail - in the form of 48no. design guidelines - in relation to the interpretation and implementation of South Downs Local Plan (SDLP) Policies SD4 (Landscape Character) and SD5 (Design) for the village of Selborne, East Hampshire.
- The South Downs National Park Authority and Selborne Parish Council have carried out three public consultations of the SVDS which meets and exceeds the minimum requirements of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 and South Downs Statement of Community Involvement [2022].
- Between five (5) and seven (7) representations were received per public consultation. The most significant was from Historic England at the first consultation, however all comments were addressed/actioned leading to “no comments” from Historic England at the second and third consultations. All other representations either provided: no comments, support, general advice, or minor wording amendments which have been addressed or responded to in the SVDS Consultation Statement (Appendix 2).
- If adopted as an SPD, the SVDS would become a material consideration in the determination of planning applications in the village of Selborne, East Hampshire.

### **I. Introduction**

- I.1 This report presents the Selborne Village Design Statement (SVDS) (Appendix 1) to the planning committee for adoption as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).

- 1.2 **A Village Design Statement** is used to identify, describe, and/or outline the distinctive and local landscape character, design and special qualities of a village, especially those characteristics, design and qualities which are highly valued by local residents.
- 1.3 The SVDS (Appendix 1) has been informed by, and if adopted would supersede, the first SVDS which was adopted by East Hampshire District Council in 2001. Since this time, the South Downs National Park and South Downs National Park Authority have both been established, and a number of planning reforms, evidence base documents, planning applications, and planning appeals have been published and determined respectively.
- 1.4 The SVDS (Appendix 1) has been prepared by the SVDS Steering / Volunteer Group (supported by Selborne Parish Council) and has been predominantly informed by:
- The Selborne Local Landscape Character Assessment [2014];
  - The South Downs Landscape Character Assessment [2020];
  - The outcomes of planning application and planning appeal decisions; and
  - Extensive public engagement and consultation in 2014/15 and 2023/24.
- 1.5 The SVDS (Appendix 1) describes the distinctive and local landscape character, design and special qualities of Selborne Village and its immediate surrounding countryside. In doing so, the SVDS sets out 48no. design guidelines to help applicants, developers, planners, and residents understand, conserve and (where possible) enhance the distinctive and local character, design and special qualities of the area.
- 1.6 **A Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)** is a planning document which adds further detail to policies in an Adopted Local Plan – in this case, the South Downs Local Plan (SDLP). As the name suggests, an SPD is intended to supplement, rather than replace, existing planning policies. This means that although an SPD is capable of being a material consideration in the determination of planning applications, it does not, itself, form part of the Development Plan. As such, if adopted as an SPD, the SVDS would supplement – and provide further detail and guidance to help interpret and implement – SDLP Policies SD4 (Landscape Character) and SD5 (Design), and the South Downs Design Guide SPD, in relation to planning applications in Selborne, East Hampshire.
- 1.7 The South Downs National Park Authority agreed on 15 October 2013 to delegate authority for the adoption of community-led plans – this includes Village Design Statements - to the planning committee. The SVDS has undergone three rounds of public consultation in order to support its adoption as an SPD. This exceeds the minimum consultation requirements set out in the Town and County Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 and the South Downs Statement of Community Involvement [2022].

## 2. **Background**

- 2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework [December 2023] emphasises the importance of achieving well-designed and beautiful places – see Chapter 12.
- 2.2 Paragraphs 131 to 134 in the National Planning Policy Framework broadly explain that:
- The creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve;
  - Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development by creating better places to live and work, and help make development acceptable to communities;
  - Design guidance can provide a local framework for creating beautiful and distinctive places with a consistent and high-quality standard for design;
  - Whoever prepares them, guidance should be based on effective community engagement and reflect local aspirations for the development of their area; and
  - Design guidance can be prepared at an area-wide, neighbourhood or site specific scale, and to carry weight in decision-making should be produced either as part of a Plan or as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).

- 2.3 The South Downs National Park Authority has set out a commitment in the South Downs Partnership Management Plan [2020-25] to support the development of high-quality community-led plans and initiatives which enhance the towns, villages, and landscapes of the National Park – see Outcome 9.2 and Policy 34. For the avoidance of doubt, community-led plans can include Village Design Statements.
- 2.4 The South Downs Local Plan (SDLP) [2019] and South Downs Design Guide SPD [2022] reinforce the above commitment – see SDLP Paragraph 5.10. The former includes Policies SD4 (Landscape Character) and SD5 (Design). These policies set out how development proposals are expected to conserve and enhance the landscape character of the National Park, and ensure that all development proposals are of the highest design quality reflecting the agricultural, built, and natural environments of the National Park. As for the latter, this provides further detail and guidance, in relation to SDLP Policies SD4 and SD5, in the form of general design principles for the whole of the National Park.
- 2.5 It is important that a community-led plan or Village Design Statement does not replicate the South Downs Design Guide SPD [2022]. Instead, a Village Design Statement should use the general design principles in the South Downs Design Guide SPD to:
- Identify, describe and/or outline the distinctive and local landscape character, design, and special qualities of an area; and
  - Develop locally-specific design guidelines to help inform and guide proposals so that they conserve and (where possible) enhance the identified, distinctive and local landscape character, design, and special qualities of an area.
- 2.6 The National Planning Policy Framework (December 2023) explains that for design guidance to carry weight in decision-making, it should be produced as either part of a Plan or an SPD, see Paragraph 2.1 above. A Village Design Statement can be prepared by the local community. However, the administrative process for adopting it as an SPD must be carried out by the local planning authority – in this case the South Downs National Park Authority – to ensure that it meets the requirements of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.
- 2.7 An SPD is a planning document which adds further detail to policies in the Adopted Local Plan. As its name suggests, an SPD is intended to supplement, rather than replace, existing planning policies. This means that although it is capable of being a material consideration in planning decisions, it does not, itself, form part of the Development Plan. As such, if adopted as an SPD, a Village Design Statement would supplement – and provide further detail and guidance to help interpret and implement – SDLP Policies SD4 and SD5, and the South Downs Design Guide SPD, in relation to planning applications in a specific local area.
- 2.8 The Levelling Up & Regeneration Act 2023, in combination with anticipated planning reforms, sets out that SPDs will now only remain in force for a time-bound period. This period is until the local planning authority adopts a “new-style” local plan under the reformed planning system. After this time, SPDs will automatically cease to have weight as formal planning documents, although their content will remain a material planning consideration where relevant. The SVDS Steering / Volunteer Group is aware of the above.
- 3. Selborne Village Design Statement (SVDS) [Appendix I]**
- 3.1 The historic village of Selborne is located on the Scarp Slope, in the north-western area of the South Downs National Park, in the district of East Hampshire. It is most famous as the home to the eighteenth (18<sup>th</sup>) century “father of ecology”, Gilbert White.
- 3.2 The aim of a Village Design Statement is to ensure that future change/development is based on an understanding of the landscape and heritage of a local area. To do this, a Village Design Statement should identify, describe, and/or outline the distinctive and local landscape character, design and special qualities of a village, especially those characteristics, design and qualities which are highly valued by local residents.
- 3.3 The first Selborne Village Design Statement (SVDS1) was adopted by East Hampshire District Council in 2001. Since this time:

- The South Downs National Park and Authority have both been established;
  - The National Planning Policy Framework has been published and updated;
  - The National Planning Practice Guidance has been published and updated; and
  - The South Downs Local Plan (SDLP) and Design Guide SPD have both been adopted.
- 3.4 The process to prepare an update to, and supersede, the SVDSI started in September 2014 when Selborne Parish Council resolved to form the Selborne Village Design Statement (SVDS) Steering / Volunteer Group. The Group includes a number of local volunteers who, together, carried out a series of local consultation and engagement in 2014 and 2015 – see further details in Section 4 below. Due to a number of reasons (incl. Covid-19 pandemic), the SVDS was delayed but was eventually submitted to the South Downs National Park Authority in March 2023 for formal public consultation. The SVDS has been informed by / founded on a number of landscape character evidence which supports the Authority’s landscape-led approach to development. In addition to that listed in Paragraph 3.3 above, this evidence includes:
- The Selborne Local Landscape Character Assessment [2014];
  - The South Downs Landscape Character Assessment [2020];
  - The outcomes of various planning applications and planning appeal decisions; and
  - Extensive public engagement and consultation in 2014/15 and 2023/24.
- 3.5 The SVDS (Appendix 1) describes the setting of Selborne Village, along with the key characteristics, design, and special qualities of its landscape, public realm, and buildings (incl. size, shape, proportions, scale and materials etc.) that help contribute to making the village a unique and special place. In order for these characteristics, design, and qualities to be understood, conserved, and (where possible) enhanced, the SVDS provides 48no. design guidelines for good design. These comprise:
- 4no. design guidelines in relation to woodland, trees and biodiversity;
  - 7no. design guidelines in relation to views and visibility;
  - 8no. design guidelines in relation to landscape setting;
  - 12no. design guidelines in relation to roads, streets, lanes and paths; and
  - 17no. design guidelines in relation to settlement pattern and buildings.
- 3.6 The design guidelines collectively set out the desire to conserve and enhance the historic, traditional and linear settlement pattern and built form of Selborne Village. This includes respecting / and being informed by its contours/topography and valley-bottom location. More specifically, the settlement pattern can be considered as three discrete zones – i.e. the High Street, the rural lanes running from it, and Goslings Croft – whilst the built form is predominantly two-stories and opens directly onto the road with no two buildings the same. In terms of boundary treatments and building materials: the former tends to be hedged or comprise walls of typically local brick, flint and/or malmstone; and the latter includes malmstone with brick quoins, muted render and limewash, softly coloured orange/red bricks and clay tiles, thatch, slate, timber, and timber-weather boarding.
- 3.7 It is particularly important to highlight that the SVDS illustrates the “green apron” for the first time – see SVDS Figure 1. The green apron has been alluded to in the Selborne Local Landscape Character Assessment [2014] and planning appeal decisions. It is described in the SVDS as a swathe of land which is open, rural, and largely undeveloped. Moreover, the green apron defines the relationship between, provides views to / from / between, and positively contributes to the characters and settings of: Selborne Hanger, Selborne Common, Selborne Conservation Area, and Selborne Village. In doing so, the green apron helps to support the linear and valley bottom character of the village whilst also influencing a number of experiential qualities (incl. dark night skies and tranquillity etc.). The two design guidelines relevant to the green apron explain that its open, rural and undeveloped nature should be

conserved and protected (and development that would be incompatible to its described nature should be avoided), whilst opportunities to enhance its condition should be taken.

#### 4. Consultation & Adoption

- 4.1 The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 require local planning authorities to consult on Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) for a minimum of four (4) weeks. The South Downs Statement of Community Involvement [2022] sets out additional requirements to the above in the preparation and adoption of SPDs. The South Downs Statement of Community Involvement [2022] requires two (2) formal stages of public consultation, lasting for eight (8) and six (6) weeks respectively.
- 4.2 The Selborne Village Design Statement (SVDS) (Appendix 1) has been prepared by the SVDS Steering / Volunteer Group with the support of Selborne Parish Council. The Group carried out a programme of public consultation and engagement to inform the preparation of the SVDS and its design guidelines. This included:
- Hosting public meetings and an exhibition in 2014 and 2015;
  - Distributing a flier to all households about the SVDS in October 2014;
  - Promoting the SVDS in the Parish Magazine in October and November 2014; and
  - Setting up six (6) working groups to prepare specific sections of the SVDS.
- 4.3 In March 2023, the SVDS was submitted to the South Downs National Park Authority, which has since undertaken:
- The first consultation for eight (8) weeks between **11 April and 06 June 2023**.
    - 5no. response received; all from statutory consultees.
  - The second consultation for six (6) weeks between **13 July and 07 September 2023**.
    - 5no. response received, from 1no. resident and 4no. statutory consultees.
  - The third consultation for six (6) weeks between **01 February and 15 March 2024**.
    - 7no. responses received, from 2no. residents and 5no. statutory consultees.
- 4.4 As part of all three consultations:
- The Authority sent out emails to statutory consultees and other interested parties.
  - The Authority and parish council published the SVDS and Consultation Statement on their websites, and displayed hard copies of the consultation documents at their offices.
  - The parish council notified residents through a variety of resources such as, but not limited to: meetings, website, social media pages, and/or a poster on noticeboards.
- 4.5 As part of the third consultation only, the parish council displayed hard copies of the consultation documents at various venues in the village (subject to landowner agreements), and the Authority sent out letters to registered landowners of the illustrated “green apron”.
- 4.6 **Consultation – South Downs National Park Authority representation.** In Autumn 2023 – after the first and second consultations – Planning Policy Officers at the South Downs National Park Authority internally circulated the SVDS to design, ecology, heritage, landscape, and transport specialist colleagues. The Authority’s internal comments were collated and sent to the SVDS Steering / Volunteer Group, and follow-up in-person meetings were held. The Authority’s comments are set out in the SVDS Consultation Statement (Appendix 2). Selborne Parish Council resolved to make the Authority’s required changes on 14 December 2023 and 25 January 2024. Given the nature and number of requested changes, the Authority was of the view that a further (third) consultation was required beyond the minimum requirements set out in Regulations and the South Downs Statement of Community Involvement [2022].

- 4.7 **Consultation - external representations.** A summary of the external representations received during all three consultations – incl. issues raised and the corresponding responses and actions – can be found in the SVDS Consultation Statement (Appendix 2).
- 4.8 The external representations from the **Environment Agency, National Highways, Natural England and Southern Water** to all three consultations raised either: support, no comments, or general advice. As such, no changes were made. In terms of **Historic England**, substantial comments were raised during the first consultation in terms of language, wording and suggestions about how to make the SVDS more user-friendly. These suggested changes were all made by Selborne Parish Council and so further Historic England representations at the second and third consultations provided no additional comments. Finally, in terms of **resident** representations, comments were made about: inconsistent naming of land parcels; page number positions; footnote font size; deletion to the reference of a 2013 county council application to formally designate a habitually used footpath across Barnfield (Under the Hill); and deletion to the reference of Goslings Croft Allotments as Public Open Space (POS). All the above have either been actioned or the SVDS has been amended with alternative / compromised wording – please see the SVDS Consultation Statement (Appendix 2).
- 4.9 **Adoption.** The Selborne Village Design Statement (SVDS) is considered to have met the requirements of the Town and County Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, and is considered to be in general conformity with the National Planning Policy Framework, Planning Practice Guidance, South Downs Local Plan (SDLP), and South Downs Design Guide SPD. Moreover, the SVDS will add further detail to SDLP Policies SD4 (Landscape Character) and SD5 (Design) when considering and determining planning applications in Selborne, East Hampshire.

**5. Other Implications**

Implication	Yes*/No
Will further decisions be required by another committee/full authority?	None
Does the proposal raise any Resource implications?	There are no direct resource implications arising from this report. If the Selborne Village Design Statement (SVDS) is agreed and adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to the Adopted South Downs Local Plan (SDLP), then it will be published on the South Downs National Park Authority website. Hard copies of the SVDS will be made available in the South Downs Centre Library, and copies will also be made available for the Development Management Team. The Team will use the SVDS when considering relevant planning applications. The costs associated with the above would come from existing budgets.
Has due regard been taken of the South Downs National Park Authority’s equality duty as contained within the Equality Act 2010?	Due regard, where relevant, has been taken to the South Downs National Park Authority’s equality duty as contained within the Equalities Act 2010. An Equalities Impact Assessment was prepared for the South Downs Local Plan (SDLP) which considers Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs). Please note, this document (if adopted as an SPD) relates to SDLP Policies SD4 and SD5 of the SDLP.
Are there any Human Rights implications arising from the proposal?	None

Are there any Crime & Disorder implications arising from the proposal?	None
Are there any Health & Safety implications arising from the proposal?	None

\*[If 'Yes' please explain – if a lengthy explanation is required this may need to become a separate paragraph]

## 6. Risks Associated with the Proposed Decision

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation
The content of the SVDS could conflict with the National Park purposes and/or duty.	Low	Medium	The South Downs National Park Authority officers have reviewed the SVDS on a number of occasions during its preparation and have provided appropriate recommendations to the SVDS Steering / Volunteer Group and Selborne Parish Council.
The potential reputational risk for the SDNPA associated with not adopting the SVDS.	Low	Medium	The South Downs National Park Authority has / will continue to work with the SVDS Steering / Volunteer Group and Selborne Parish Council.
The material weight of the SVDS (as an SPD) will become limited under the reformed planning system once a “new-style” local plan is adopted.	High	Medium	SPDs will automatically cease to have weight as formal planning documents. However, their content will remain a material planning consideration where relevant. The SVDS Steering / Volunteer Group is aware of the above.

### MIKE HUGHES

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**South Downs National Park Authority**

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Appendices:	1. Selborne Village Design Statement (SVDS) 2. Selborne Village Design Statement (SVDS) Consultation Statement
SDNPA Consultees:	Legal Services; Chief Finance Officer; Monitoring Officer; and Director of Planning (Interim)
External Consultees:	None
Background Documents:	<a href="#">Town &amp; Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012</a> <a href="#">National Planning Policy Framework</a> <a href="#">National Planning Practice Guidance</a>

[South Downs Partnership Management Plan](#)

[South Downs Local Plan \(SDLP\)](#)

[South Downs Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document \(SPD\)](#)

SDNPA Agenda Item 9 (Report 34-13) (15 October 2013)