

**INFRASTRUCTURE, HOUSING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE -
23 JUNE 2020**

PART I – DELEGATED

**7. PROPOSED DRAFT STREETScape DESIGN MANUAL
(DCES)**

1 Summary

1.1 Street furniture is typically introduced by the District Council (through its Economic Development schemes to revitalise local Retail Parades) or Parish Councils (who play a key role in maintaining local character through the installation and maintenance of elements such as planters, hanging baskets, bus shelters and benches). The Local Highway Authority is involved, but does not specifically promote visual improvements to local roads.

1.2 The Streetscape Design Manual will:

1.2.1 Facilitate and streamline the District Council's Retail Parade Revitalisation proposals.

1.2.2 Enhance and add value to the visual amenity and accessibility of local centres, to:

- Introduce types of street furniture consistent with local character, tailored to enhance local identity in different town centres and villages (and particularly in support of public realm elements of local Conservation Areas), which must be agreed and adhered to by all parties delivering public realm improvements.
- Ensure that all public investment in local street-scene is consistent and that different schemes complement each other rather than repeatedly replacing each other and creating a piecemeal environment.
- Promote efficiency and value by setting agreed standards for the District and partners to work with
- Resolve untidy and inconsistent street furniture affecting perception of local retail parades and reduce signage clutter (a shared HCC objective).

1.3 The process for finalising the manual will include wide consultation with stakeholders including local interest groups (particularly Residents' Associations), statutory bodies and Local Ward Councillors followed by formal adoption by the Local Planning Authority and all relevant stakeholders such as Parish Councils and Hertfordshire County Council, as Local Highway Authority. Consultation responses will be considered and a proposal final document will be presented to the Policy and Resources committee.

1.3.1 An example of part of the Draft Streetscape Design Manual is appended as Appendix A, to indicate the likely output.

2 Details

2.1 Three Rivers District Council is the local planning authority for the District with general duties to preserve and enhance the local built environment, including the design and appearance of features of the public realm.

- 2.2 The public realm includes public and private land that is accessible to the public and often visible in and around public places such as High Streets, retail parades and town and village centres.
- 2.3 The overall look and feel of the public realm, through its appearance and the experience of the people using it, strongly contributes to the character of settlements and the way people see our local towns and villages.
- 2.4 A visually appealing, well-managed streetscape design contributes to public perception of shopping areas, tourist locations and local business centres by communicating messages about the quality, security and comfort of a place.

Policy background

- 2.5 Local and National policies increasingly promote the role of streets in contributing to the character and identity of local places. This approach was established in national policy by the *Manual for the Streets* (2007) and is now embedded in local highway policies under the County's *Local Transport Plan 4*.
- 2.6 This Plan includes the highway design guide *Roads in Hertfordshire* (2011) and the recently adopted *Place & Movement Approach* (Feb 2020). This last policy document interprets the Healthy Streets™ approach developed by Transport for London (TfL), a matrix has been developed which classifies the highway network based on its relative place function and vehicle movement function.

Purpose of the proposed Manual.

- 2.7 The purpose of the Streetscape Design Manual is to set out a consistent approach to the design of local streetscape improvements, to ensure that the visual amenity of local streets is continuously improved and not harmed when new schemes introduce new street furniture. This can only be delivered if all the parties who contribute to local public realm improvements agree on the approach and proposals set out in the Manual.
- 2.8 Observation of any local town or village centre will show clearly that the improvements introduced by these public bodies are not coordinated (for example, there are multiple different designs of most types of furniture, such as bollards, planters and benches; different and conflicting signage schemes and a mixture of very old and very new infrastructure that affects the street scene in different ways).
- 2.9 The Manual will help to inform and streamline the District Council's improvements through the Retail Parades Revitalisation (RPR) programme. It will also enable the Local Planning Authority (LPA) to publish standards for public realm improvements that will be supported by all the relevant local bodies (such as Parish Councils and the Local Highway Authority, Hertfordshire County Council).
- 2.10 Some of the elements that will be proposed to be managed by this Design Manual include:
 - 2.10.1 Street furniture such as benches, planters, bollards, railings, lamp column design (all subject to statutory and local regulatory requirements)
 - 2.10.2 Highway infrastructure, where relevant (for example in Conservation Areas) such as, types of surfacing, kerbstones and design of functional street equipment (such as traffic signals and road crossings).

- 2.10.3 Signage, including the 'Welcome Gateway' signage and 'Wayfinding street name plate' schemes produced by the District Council to promote walking, cycling and local identify; as well as other directional signs promoted by other local authorities.
- 2.10.4 Parking controls such as type and width of yellow lines (which can be varied from Buttercup to Primrose and other shades), use of signs and reduction of clutter.

3 Options and Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1.1 The production of this Manual is optional and is not a statutory requirement. It is intended to promote better streetscapes, more effective use of funding and to facilitate discussion and agreement between key local stakeholders including all the Local Authorities.
- 3.1.2 If this Manual were not taken forward, the existing situation would continue, as described in section 2 above.

4 Policy/Budget Reference and Implications

- 4.1 The recommendations in this report are within the Council's agreed policy and budgets as they proposed to improve effectiveness of existing work programmes (Retail Parade Revitalisation, Parking Management Programme and Highway Enhancement Programme) under existing budgets.
- 4.2 The purpose of this proposed policy is to produce a Streetscape Design Manual that has been agreed by all relevant stakeholders by March 2021. At the end of one year, it is anticipated that the policy will have achieved the creation of a shared framework to manage delivery of local public realm and highway improvements.

5 Financial, Legal, Equal Opportunities, Staffing, Environmental, Community Safety, Public Health, Customer Services Centre, Communications & Website, Risk Management and Health & Safety Implications

- 5.1 None specific. The consultation of this document does not present any additional resource requirements or risks.

6 Recommendation

- 6.1 The Committee agrees that a draft Streetscape Manual is published for consultation following detailed consultation with key local stakeholders described in this document, similar in content to the example shown at Appendix 1.
- 6.2 The Committee agrees to delegate agreement on the final form, before consultation, of the proposed draft Manual, to the Director of Community and Environmental Services, in consultation with the Lead Member for Transport and Economic Development.
- 6.1 That a report on the outcome of consultation and a proposed final Manual be presented to the Council's Policy and Resources committee:

Report prepared by: P. Simons, Transport Planner, Transport & Parking Policy
Background Papers - None.

Appendix
Appendix 1 – Example section of draft proposed Manual