



PART B:	RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL
REPORT TO:	PLANNING COMMITTEE
DATE:	22 OCTOBER 2013
REPORT OF THE:	HEAD OF PLANNING AND HOUSING GARY HOUSDEN
TITLE OF REPORT:	HOWARDIAN HILLS AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY: DESIGN GUIDANCE FOR NEW AGRICULTURAL BUILDINGS AND INFRASTRUCTURE
WARDS AFFECTED:	AMOTHERBY, AMPLEFORTH, DERWENT, HELMSLEY, HOVINGHAM, RYEDALE SOUTH WEST, SHERIFF HUTTON AND SINNINGTON

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The Howardian Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) has prepared design guidance for new agricultural buildings and infrastructure. The Document was approved by the JAC on 4 April 2013 for use as guidance and advice by the AONB Unit and at the same time, the JAC agreed to make a request to the relevant planning authorities (Ryedale and Hambleton) that they agree to use the document as a material consideration in the development management process.
- 1.2 This report is for Members to consider the document (Appendix 1) and to recommend to Council that regard is had to the guidance in the development management process.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 2.1 That Council:
(i) has regard to the AONB Design Guidance as a material planning consideration when discharging its statutory functions in the AONB.

3.0 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 3.1 To support good design in the AONB and to provide advice to landowners, farmers and construction companies.

4.0 SIGNIFICANT RISKS

4.1 There are no significant risks associated with this report.

5.0 POLICY CONTEXT AND CONSULTATION

5.1 Design guides are generally prepared to provide advice and guidance to members of the public or developers who are considering the development of new buildings. They can also be useful in supporting the implementation of planning policies and in this case, the AONB Management Plan. On a wider note, the guidance will support Council priorities of maintaining a high quality environment and providing a proactive and efficient approach to the determination of planning applications.

5.2 Usually, documents such as design guidance which are intended for use in the planning process will be adopted as Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD's). However, the JAC has agreed that the document should not be produced as SPD. This is in view of the fact that at the current time, this is not the immediate priority of both Local Planning Authorities and because the necessary formal procedures can be lengthy and will involve a cost. As an alternative, the JAC has asked both authorities to adopt the document as planning guidance for use as a material consideration in the planning process.

5.3 It should be noted that under this approach, the document will not have the full weight of a formal SPD in the decision making process, although it is considered that this would only be particularly relevant if it was to be relied upon in an appeal situation. However, given that the document has been the subject of consultation with relevant parties, it is considered that following a Council resolution to have regard to it in the decision making process, it is capable of being a material consideration. The fact that the document will have less weight than a formal SPD is in turn mitigated by the fact that both authorities have up-to-date design policies in Development Plans which will, in any event, be used to determine applications for development in the AONB.

5.4 It should be noted that under this Council's Constitution, Council can only formally "adopt" two types of planning documents – Development Plan Documents and Supplementary Planning Documents. To reflect this 'technicality', the recommendation of this report is that Council agrees to 'have regard' to the document as a material consideration.

5.4 The Design Guidance has been shaped by consultation and involvement of local interested groups represented on the JAC, including those representing the local farming community (the National Farmers Union and the Country Land and Business Association), Parish Councils, Natural England and officers of the County Council and both Local Planning Authorities. This consultation took place from November 2012 to March 2013 and resulted in a number of small detailed amendments to an original draft of the document.

REPORT

6.0 REPORT DETAILS

6.1 Farmsteads are a strong visual element within the landscape of the AONB and help to define the local distinctiveness and cultural heritage of the area. However, the scale and nature of farming operations has changed and evolved over time.

Farming practices and buildings have to be increasingly adaptable and meet new regulations and standards. This has meant that building materials and styles have become increasingly more industrial to meet these regulations and standards.

- 6.2 The decision of the JAC to prepare the design guidance relating to agricultural buildings and infrastructure was made in response to the AONB unit providing similar and repeated design comments on planning applications and agricultural/ infrastructure prior notifications within the AONB. The guidance has been produced to provide practical advice on the design of new agricultural buildings and infrastructure which will help to ensure adverse visual impacts on the environment are minimised whilst ensuring the functional efficiency of buildings. It aims to reduce the time and costs incurred by farmers and land managers by helping to enable design considerations to be considered at an early stage in the process. The document will also be used by officers in the AONB Unit as a basis for its response to the planning consultations it receives from the Local Planning Authorities.
- 6.3 The Design Guidance provides general advice for a broad range of farming structures including: siting, scale and form, colour, materials, construction detailing, access tracks, landscaping and sustainable design. Other statutory designations are considered and include: the built heritage, archaeology, the natural environment and Public Rights of Way. A further section provides details of the planning process within the AONB including the system for Prior Notifications and Planning Applications. The guidance usefully encourages early contact with the relevant Local Planning Authority. It should be noted that the document does not cover agricultural workers dwellings or farm and rural diversification schemes.
- 6.4 The outcomes the AONB wishes to achieve are stated as:
- “New agricultural buildings/infrastructure that are designed within the context of statutory AONB purposes and which also meet the requirements of modern farming
 - high quality design that conserves and enhances the character and special qualities of the area and respects the local distinctiveness and the built and natural heritage of the AONB
 - sustainable building practices which minimise waste and the use of resources
 - design that mitigates the causes and adapts to the effects of climate change
 - wildlife and natural habitats that are maintained or enhanced”

7.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The following implications have been identified:
- a) Financial
No financial implications have been identified
 - b) Legal
No further legal implications have been identified
 - c) Other (Equalities, Staffing, Planning, Health & Safety, Environmental, Crime & Disorder)
No other further implications have been identified.

8.0 NEXT STEPS

- 8.1 The AONB Unit are using the document. It has been made available on the Howardian Hills web-site and has also been circulated to local interested parties. The document will be made available on Ryedale's web-site.
- 8.2 The use of the document will be monitored over time. If, for any reason, it becomes apparent that there is a need to have the document adopted as a SPD, this can be addressed in the future.

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Background Papers:
Howardian Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty: Design Guidance for New Agricultural Buildings and Infrastructure

Background Papers are available for inspection at:
Ryedale House