

We want to prepare a VDS, what do we do now?

If your community has decided that it does want to prepare a VDS then the following is a suggested list of key stages that will help to produce an effective VDS and one that is more likely to be approved by the Council.

CONTACT THE FIELD OFFICER
AT THE RURAL COMMUNITY
COUNCIL OF ESSEX (RCCE)

FORM A VDS GROUP
RESPONSIBLE FOR ORGANISING
THE PRODUCTION OF THE VDS

CONTACT THE COUNCIL
(PLANNING POLICY) TO SAY
THAT YOUR COMMUNITY
INTENDS TO PREPARE A VDS

PREPARE DRAFT VDS IN
CONSULTATION WITH THE
WHOLE COMMUNITY, THE
COUNCIL AND RCCE TAKING
INTO ACCOUNT RELEVANT
POLICY AND GUIDANCE

ONCE PREPARED, SEND DRAFT
COPY OF VDS TO COUNCIL
(PLANNING POLICY) WHO WILL
PROVIDE FEEDBACK

AMEND VDS TO TAKE ON BOARD
ANY COMMENTS MADE BY THE
COUNCIL OR RCCE

SUBMIT FINAL DRAFT OF VDS (IN
PAPER AND ELECTRONIC FORM)
TO COUNCIL (PLANNING POLICY)
WHICH WILL CONSIDER
FORMALLY APPROVING THE VDS

(Please note that the above is not exhaustive and communities thinking of preparing a VDS should consider all sources of information available).

What other information and advice is available?

The Rural Community Council of Essex (RCCE)

The RCCE produces information packs explaining the planning system and how local communities can get more fully involved, including advice on community planning and preparing VDSs. The RCCE can be contacted to find out who the field officer is for Tendring, and the contact details are:

Tel: 0844 477 3938
Email: rcce@essexrcc.org.uk
Website: www.essexrcc.org.uk

Natural England

Natural England's website contains some information on what VDSs should contain and their role in the planning system.

Website: www.naturalengland.org.uk

Further information from the Council

For more information about VDSs or the VDS process please contact Gary Ashby on 01255 686137 (or email gashby@tendringdc.gov.uk) or alternatively write to:

Planning Policy, Tendring District Council,
Council Offices, Thorpe Road, Weeley,
Essex, CO16 9AJ.

Further information is also available on the Council's website (www.tendringdc.gov.uk).

Tendring
District Council



Village Design Statements

GUIDANCE LEAFLET



Prepared by Planning Policy
Planning Services
Tendring District Council
2007

What is a Village Design Statement?

Many people feel a strong attachment to the community in which they live and believe that they should have some control over the development that takes place within it. A Village Design Statement (VDS) is one of a number of community planning tools that can help local communities participate in and influence the way the planning system operates locally.

A VDS is a document prepared by the local community (not Tendring District Council) that assesses the distinctive visual local design/character of a village and provides guidance on how this could be protected and enhanced in the future.

The purpose of this guidance leaflet is to briefly introduce the VDS process and to answer some of the main questions that are likely to be asked before work starts on preparing a VDS. More detailed guidance and a VDS template is available on the Council's website (www.tendringdc.gov.uk).

How do VDSs fit into the planning system?

Government policy recognises the importance of engaging local communities and the role that they can (and should) play in the planning system. Although VDSs are not statutory documents, once completed they will help inform the outcome of planning decisions and how the local area is to be developed over time.

How will VDSs be used by Tendring District Council?

The Council is keen to encourage community involvement in the planning process and is committed to ensuring that all development takes into account local distinctiveness.

VDSs that have been prepared

- in accordance with local planning policy
- in consultation with the Council, and
- which are generally supported by the wider local community (all of which will need to be demonstrated)

may be formally noted as advisory guidance that could be used to help inform the outcome of individual planning applications within the relevant local area (although the weight it will carry will be limited). VDSs may also help to inform the production of the Council's Local Development Framework (LDF), which sets out how the district will develop up to 2021.

For more information about the LDF process please visit the Council's website (www.tendringdc.gov.uk) or contact the planning policy team on 01255 686177.

Importance of involving the community

A VDS is a document prepared by the community, for the community. It is therefore essential that everyone in the community is given the chance to be involved in its production and that it represents the views of the village as a whole. More detailed guidance and a VDS template is available on the Council's website.

What makes a successful VDS?

A VDS should be well-organised and easy to read by a number of different audiences, including:

- local people
- building designers
- highway authority
- Parish/Town Council
- property owners
- developers
- utility companies
- planners

The VDS will need to contain three distinct types of information:

- description of existing design/character
- identification of issues and objectives
- guidance on how design/character can be protected/improved

The Council will be most interested in the guidance content of the VDS as this is the part of the VDS that may help in determining applications. The Council will also be interested in the generation of issues as this will provide the reasoning for the guidance.

The use of maps and illustrations in a VDS to convey information is welcomed. However, if you intend to use Ordnance Survey maps then you will need to purchase the appropriate license from them. For copyright reasons the Council **cannot** provide maps for use in VDSs. Please see more detailed guidance available on the Council's website for further information about the use of maps.