



Supplementary planning guidance note

Settlement Character Plan

Southport

December 2003

Sefton Council 



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1. Introduction

- a. We have produced Settlement Plans to describe the main features that make up the character of each of the five urban districts in Sefton. The districts are based on the existing settlements of Bootle, Crosby, Maghull, Formby and Southport. The Settlement Plans consist of these guidance notes and the accompanying map, available from the planning department.
- b. The Settlement Plans identifies the distinct character areas within each district, and are based on patterns of land use, building type and period of development. Physical features such as key routes, landmarks, junctions and boundaries are shown. The plans also indicate the locations where Design Statements must be prepared and submitted with a planning application.
- c. The plans should be used to develop a scheme that responds positively to its context^G. Each plan also includes area-based design guidance that addresses specific issues relevant to that settlement area and must be taken into account when developing a scheme.
- d. This guidance note and the settlement plans are based on an Urban Design Study of Sefton. The tables below refer to information gathered by the study.
- e. Some of the technical terms in this guidance are explained in a glossary at the back of the Design SPG. These terms are indicated by a ‘^G’, the first time they appear in each section of the SPG.

2. Assessment of the Local Character of Southport

- a. Southport is effectively a product of the 19th Century, developing from a

collection of fisherman’s huts in the late 18th Century into a fashionable resort by the mid 19th Century. The first phases of development saw the reclamation of the foreshore dunes with streets laid out in a rectilinear^G gridiron^G pattern between Lord Street and the Seafront promenade. Within this grid there developed a range of leisure, commercial uses along with large Victorian villas and terraces. The growth of the town in the late 19th/early 20th Century continued this grid-iron^G layout but with variations that give the town subtle variety in its form^G and character.

- b. Development to the south and north of the town centre is characterised by large detached and semi detached houses set in large plots within a curvilinear^G grid layout. To the south this development is confined to the west of the Liverpool – Southport railway line and takes in the Victorian settlement of Birkdale. This general pattern is continued but with semi-detached properties on smaller plots from the inter-war period both to the east of the railway and to north.
- c. Ainsdale, separated from Birkdale by golf courses and dunes, has a Victorian centre next to the station which is surrounded by 1930’s semi-detached properties. The Victorian and Edwardian residential development to the east of the town maintain the tight rectilinear grid-iron pattern of the centre with pockets of industrial premises located within the blocks.
- d. Churchtown to the northeast of the town centre, although incorporated by Southport’s expansion in the 19th Century, predates it as a settlement. It’s more organic form is still visible within the surrounding grid.

3. Broad Character Zones (Residential)

Residential Character	Key Components of Character	ASL Study
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Area		Ref.
Large pre-war semi-detached housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spacious curvilinear⁶ road layout. 2 storey part brick and render elevations with curved bay windows & tiled roofs. Above average plot sizes. Mature trees. 	SBCZ 1
Small pre-war semi-detached housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tight curvilinear road layout that links into the historic route network. Brick and rendered elevations. Small front gardens with parking to side. 	SBCZ 2
Large Victorian Villas & detached housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spacious curvilinear grid layout. Large 2-3 storey properties set in large plots. Front gardens enclosed by brick boundary walls. High levels of ornamentation & three dimensional detail – gables, bays, turrets. Dense, mature tree coverage 	SBCZ 3
Victorian/Edwardian semi-detached housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2-3 storey with short front gardens & larger rear plots. Front gardens enclosed by boundary walls. Use of special shaped bricks & stonework to give detail. Rectilinear⁶ block pattern with some industrial uses within blocks. 	SBCZ 4
Post war semi-detached housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distinct road hierarchy⁶ with cul-de-sacs designed around vehicular access & movement. Homogeneous in appearance of built form^G and layout. Lack of boundary treatments to front gardens. Limited tree coverage 	SBCZ 5
Late 18 th , early 19 th Century housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Semi-detached villas set in mature grounds & small scale cottages. Organic, curvilinear street pattern. Dense tree coverage. Strong integration with & relationship to surrounding greenspace. 	SBCZ 6

4. Broad Character Zones (Commercial & Industrial)

Southport Town Centre ASL Study Ref. SNRD1	
Description & Location	Key Elements of Character
Mix of traditional town centre high street shopping, local retail, service uses, leisure & specialist retail. Edge of town supermarket & car park.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lord St. is an attractive tree lined boulevard enclosed by 2/3/4 storey Victorian & Edwardian back of pavement commercial properties. Many buildings have

Hotels/guesthouses & residential	decorative wrought iron canopies.
Seaside leisure attractions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Landmark buildings provide emphasis in streetscene & to key junctions. Arcades, passages and network of streets link Chapel St., Eastbank St., Lord St. & Promenade. Street trees & greenspace along Lord St. Extensive seafront pleasure gardens with Marine Lake & Pier. Promenade lined with large Victorian/Edwardian hotels & guesthouses with modern infill flat developments⁶. 2/3 storey Victorian terraces & villas within grid-iron street layout.
Centred on Lord St./Chapel St. the town centre lies between Duke St. in the south to Leicester St./Manchester Rd. in the north.	
Guesthouse/residential uses concentrated between Lord St. & Promenade.	
Seaside leisure attractions lie between Promenade & Coastal Rd./Marine Drive.	
Southport Station provides direct access into town centre.	

Ainsdale Local Centre ASL Study Ref. SNRD2	
Description & Location	Key Elements of Character
Local centre with small-scale convenience & specialist retail, banks & service uses. Strong independent base.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Victorian 2/3 storey back of pavement retail development with mix of residential & storage to upper floors. Some wrought iron canopies to shopfronts on Station Rd. Presence of mature street trees & floral displays. On street parking.
Shore Rd. forms approach from Coast Rd. to west . Station Rd. forms approach from A565 Liverpool Rd. to east.	
Ainsdale Station provides direct access point from railway	

Birkdale Local Centre ASL Study Ref. SNRD3	
Description & Location	Key Elements of Character
Local centre with small-scale convenience & specialist retail, banks & service uses. Strong independent base.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Victorian 2 storey back of pavement ribbon development⁶ with retail at ground floor. Upper floors mix of residential & storage. Modern 2 storey retail parade & car parking. Curvilinear road layout enhances townscape. Retains high level of Victorian detailing including wrought iron canopies and shopfronts. Presence of mature street trees & floral displays.
Weld Rd. & Liverpool Rd. form entry points from A565 Coast Rd. & A5267 Eastbourne Rd.	
Birkdale Station provides direct access point from railway.	

Churchtown Local Centre ASL Study Ref. SNRD4	
Description & Location	Key Elements of Character

<p>Local centre with small-scale convenience & specialist retail, banks & service uses. Strong independent base.</p> <p>Junction of Cambridge Rd./Preston New Rd. forms northern entry point. Mill Rd. forms southern approach.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historic core centred on Botanic Rd./St. Cuthbert's Church has strong back of pavement activity along historic route network, strong sense of enclosure to public space. High quality townscape. • St. Cuthbert's Church provides a strong landmark. • High quality hard & soft landscape⁶ in historic core. • Specialist retail/leisure concentrated in historic core. • Lack of unified character at junction of Preston New Rd. & Cambridge Rd. Forecourt uses/parking reduce sense of enclosure. • Strong relationship to surrounding greenspace in south & east of centre. • Traffic acts as a barrier to pedestrian movement.
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boundary to area.	gives emphasis & definition to junction of Canning Rd. & Cobden Rd.
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Fylde Road Industrial Estate ASL Study Ref. SNRD7	
Description & Location	Key Elements of Character
<p>Industrial Estate</p> <p>Located to north of town centre Fylde Rd. accessed from A565 Preston New Rd.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Range of relatively modern prefabricated and brick clad industrial/business units. • Landscaped forecourt frontage to Fylde Rd. with units fronting main road.

Philips Components Works ASL Study Ref. SNRD8	
Description & Location	Key Elements of Character
<p>Older Industrial Area</p> <p>Located to north east edge of town centre. Accessed from A565 Preston New Rd. via North Rd. or Rufford Rd.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large single storey early 20th Century industrial building. • Extensive use of red brick & terracotta.

Meols Cop Retail Park ASL Study Ref. SNRD5	
Description & Location	Key Elements of Character
<p>Edge of town retail park with retail warehouses, supermarket & fastfood outlets.</p> <p>On eastern boundary of town at junction of Scarisbrick Rd., Town Lane & Norwood Rd. A570 provides easy access from W. Lancs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Range of prefabricated units clad in variety of materials set within large areas of car parking. • Components of Retail Park are divorced from each other with limited pedestrian accessibility between units. • Isolated from adjacent residential areas. • Signage to units is visually dominant..

Crowland St. Industrial Estate ASL Study Ref. SNRD6	
Description & Location	Key Elements of Character
<p>Industrial Estate & Gas/Electricity distribution centre.</p> <p>Located to east of town centre on urban edge adjacent to green belt. Approached via Meols Cop Rd. from A570 Scarisbrick Road to the south & from High Park Rd/Wennington Rd. via A565 Preston New Rd. to the south.</p> <p>Southport – Manchester rail line forms western</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Range of purpose built & converted single storey brick & prefabricated units. • Gas holder is a dominant landmark feature visible from a great distance. • Lack of unified character. • Unattractive service areas. • Poor quality landscape & boundary treatments. • Former tram depot

5. Areas of Local Distinctiveness

- a. Areas of Local Distinctiveness are more closely defined areas within the district that have either retained their original character or illustrate a distinct or important period of growth a particular settlement. Achieving a high standard of design will be particularly important in these areas in order to preserve or enhance their established character.
- b. The following have been defined as Areas of Local Distinctiveness within the area covered by Southport Settlement Plan:

❖ **Southport Seafont**

❖ **Lord Street**

❖ **Westbourne Road, Birkdale**

Southport Seafont ASL Study Ref. SALD1	
General character & form	Key Elements of Character
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extensive area of pleasure gardens, lakes & seafont attractions with buildings lining Promenade giving

	<p>attractive backdrop & sense of enclosure.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pier & funfair are key landmarks when approaching along Coastal Rd. • Promenade is one of earliest elements of Southport's urban fabric. • Strong pedestrian linkages to Lord St. • Retains much evidence of changing fashions in resort attractions from Victorian Promenade & Pier, Edwardian Pleasure Gardens to modern funfair. • New sea wall & sculptures create a defined edge between seafront attractions & beach.
Architectural character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Victorian/Edwardian formal gardens with decorative shelters & monuments. • Victorian pier with modern structures at ends • 2 & 3 storey Victorian hotels, guesthouses and villas in mix of rendered brick or stone. Many retain original architectural detailing/features. • Some modern infill development.
Tree coverage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scattering of mature trees
Threats to character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inappropriately designed infill development to Promenade. • Inappropriate development within Marine Gardens. • Weakening of linkages between Seafront & town centre. • Development which detracts from existing tourism uses. • Development which harms views into or out of seafront.

Lord Street ASL Study Ref. SALD2	
General character & form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broad, tree lined boulevard with strong linear⁶ form reinforced by hard & soft landscaped spaces & series of landmark features. • Strong sense of entry into Lord St. • One of earliest elements of Southport's urban fabric. • Seaward side enclosed by back of pavement 2/3/4 storey commercial developments with wrought iron canopies extending over pavement. • Buildings to landward side set back behind landscape. Predominately civic, residential & service uses. • Strong pedestrian links through to Chapel Street & Seafront.
Architectural character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mix of late 19th, early 20th Century commercial & civic architecture. • Commercial properties show strong Dutch/French Renaissance and Arts & Crafts influences. Some use of classical forms for civic buildings/banks. • Extensive use of gables, vertical features and external decoration including tiles/half timbering.
Tree coverage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High density of mature trees both along pavement & within areas of landscape.
Threats to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of historic shopfronts &

character	<p>canopies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of street trees and historic hard & soft landscape elements. • Piecemeal redevelopment of Lord Street frontages. • Loss of landmarks from streetscene.
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Westbourne Road, Birkdale ASL Study Ref. SALD3	
General character & form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forms a ribbon of late Victorian detached & semi-detached villas set in large plots with mature planting & trees. • Example of upmarket Victorian suburban development. • Properties set within a loose grid spacious tree lined curvilinear streets. • Coastal Rd. (built along former railway line) forms strong boundary between housing & dunes.
Architectural character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2-3 storey late Victorian brick villas and semi detached properties. • Brick boundary walls. • Stone detailing to elevations including string courses, cills & lintels. • Use of specially shaped & embossed bricks.
Tree coverage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dense clusters of mature trees to front and rear plots.
Threats to character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inappropriate backland⁶ development or demolition of older detached properties to create development sites. • Loss of mature tree coverage. • Loss of original detailing or features.

6. Design Guidance

- a. We have developed the following guidance from an assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the area as set out in the above tables. The guidance gives more detailed advice to support the policies set out in the UDP and the Borough-wide guidance in Part 1 of the Design SPG.
- b. The guidance is in two parts, firstly there is district-wide advice relating to the Broad Character Areas; secondly there is more detailed guidance relating to the Areas of Local Distinctiveness. Here a high standard of design is required to preserve or enhance their established character.

District-wide Guidance

c. Within the Southport Plan Area development proposals will need to:

- ❖ **Maintain or reinstate back of pavement retail or commercial activity in Ainsdale, Birkdale & Churchtown Local Centres. Development should respect historic plot widths and building heights.**
- ❖ **Strengthen or create appropriate landmark or gateway features to reinforce the sense of entry into Southport Town Centre & Local Centres from main road approaches.**
- ❖ **Backland or infill development^G within existing residential areas should respect scale^G, form, & layout of surrounding development.**
- ❖ **Improve quality of boundary treatments & landscape to Crowland Street, Fylde Rd & Philips Works Industrial Estates.**
- ❖ **Strengthen & enhance quality of pedestrian linkages between various elements of Southport Town Centre, Meols Cop Retail Park & Churchtown Local Centre & their surrounding residential areas.**
- ❖ **Retain or reinstate period detailing, features or original materials including the retention of boundary walls, gateposts or other external features within residential areas.**
- ❖ **Maintain existing levels of tree coverage in respect to both street trees and those within individual plots.**

Local Distinctiveness Guidance

d. In addition to the above guidance the following guidance is applicable to proposals within the following Areas of Local Distinctiveness.

Southport Seafront:

e. Development proposals, including conversions and changes of use, will be expected to:

- ❖ **Maintain strong built edge to the Promenade with buildings that respect massing, scale & rhythm of adjacent properties.**
- ❖ **Protect or enhance views of the Promenade & Seafront. Where appropriate new landmark features should be created.**
- ❖ **Enhance & strengthen existing pedestrian linkages between the Seafront & Town Centre.**
- ❖ **Contribute to the maintenance or enhancement of Seafront Gardens & other public spaces.**
- ❖ **Support or enhance existing tourism related activities of Seafront area.**

Lord Street:

f. Development proposals, including conversions and changes of use, will need to:

- ❖ **Reinforce sense of entry into Lord Street through reinforcement or enhancement of existing gateway/landmark features.**
- ❖ **Give architectural emphasis to junctions & corners along Lord Street.**
- ❖ **Respect & relate to the scale, rhythm & proportion of neighbouring buildings. The use of gables, bays or other features to create an appropriate level of three-dimensional interest to upper floors will be required.**
- ❖ **Elevations to infill development should have a strong vertical emphasis.**
- ❖ **Maintain active retail or commercial frontages^G at ground floor level. The reuse of upper floors for residential**

or commercial use will be encouraged.

❖ **Maintain level of tree coverage within street scene.**

- ❖ **Retain, repair or reinstate historic shopfronts & canopies.**
- ❖ **Enhance & strengthen existing pedestrian linkages between Lord Street, the Seafront & the rest of the Town Centre. Where opportunity exists new links should be created.**
- ❖ **Contribute towards the enhancement of public spaces within the town centre.**
- ❖ **Maintain the level of tree coverage within Lord Street.**

Westbourne Road, Birkdale:

- g. Development proposals, particularly in respect to infill development, backland development or extensions to dwellings should:
 - ❖ **Respect the scale and massing of adjacent properties. Particular care should be taken in respecting floor to ceiling heights of existing properties & their setting within the landscape.**
 - ❖ **Avoid piecemeal development of rear plots particularly with the creation of short, unconnected cul-de-sacs.**
 - ❖ **Use gables, bays or other features to create an appropriate level of three-dimensional interest to elevations, break up mass of building, give vertical and horizontal emphasis & create variety and interest in the roofline.**
 - ❖ **Retain or reinstate period detailing , features or original materials including the retention of boundary walls, gateposts or other external features.**
 - ❖ **Ensure that car parking is designed to have a minimal visual impact on the street frontage.**

Glossary

Active frontage: The use of buildings which front onto the road as shops or businesses increases the number of people on the street and promotes more natural surveillance. Having frequent doors, windows and balconies, with few blank walls can also help by adding interest to the public realm.

Backland development: Development on land at the back of existing buildings which face a road, for example, housing development in a large rear garden.

Character: See Local Character.

Context: The wider setting of a site or area, including factors such as traffic, activities and land uses as well as landscape and built form.

Curvilinear development: Development along, curved roads or boundaries. This is often typical of more modern housing estates, built since the end of World War II.

Form: The layout (urban grain), scale (height and massing), appearance (materials and detail) and landscape of the development, its individual parts and their relationship with neighbouring buildings, adjacent open areas and the local context.

Grid-iron development: (see Layout below) Development where the road and housing layout looks like a grid, (or squared paper like school maths books!) with regular proportions and spaces. This is the commonest and the most traditional pattern for terraced houses built before 1919.

Hard and soft materials: This includes both 'hard' building materials such as bricks, tiles, slates and fencing and 'soft' landscaping such as trees, shrubs and grass.

Hierarchical road layout: Larger main roads (used by all sorts of vehicles) which have more smaller roads leading off them

(likely to be used by fewer lorries or even buses) which may have even more smaller roads leading off them (used only by local vehicles).

Infill development: Development that uses up smaller vacant sites or spaces within the original settlement, that is, it fills in the gaps between existing buildings.

Irregular Grid Layout: (See Layout below and Grid-iron development above) A grid-iron layout where the spaces or blocks in the grid are different sizes and shapes, and roads are different not regular lengths.

Layout: How a development or area is set out, as seen from above. There are many different ways development can be laid out (just as there are many ways of laying a table!). So 'road layout' is the way roads look, as seen from above, 'building layout' is the way buildings are set out within a site or along roads, and 'site layout' is where things like buildings, parking area and paths are within a site, for example.

Linear development: See Ribbon development and Rectilinear development below.

Local Character: The overall atmosphere and 'feel' of a place or area, the things which give it an identity, make it different from (or similar to) anywhere else and make it what it is.

Rectilinear development: Development that consists of, or is contained by, straight roads or boundaries. This is often typical of traditional terraced housing, built before 1919.

Ribbon development: Development concentrated in a long, narrow strip along a road, railway line or even a river or canal.

Scale: The impression of a building when seen in relation to its surroundings, including its height and massing, or the size of parts of a building or its details. Sometimes it is the total dimensions of a building which give it its sense of scale: at other times it is the size of the elements and the way they are combined. The concept is

a difficult and ambiguous one: often the word is simply used instead of size.

Streetscene: Views along the street.

Urban grain: The pattern of the arrangement and size of buildings and their plots in a settlement; and the degree to which an area's pattern of street-blocks and street junctions is respectively small and frequent, or large and infrequent.

Further Advice and Guidance

National design guidance:

- ***'Better Places to Live - A Companion Guide to PPG3'***, available from the Commission of Architecture and the Built Environment.
- ***'Building In Context'***, available from English Heritage and the Commission of Architecture and the Built Environment.
- ***'By Design: Urban Design in the Planning System – Towards Better Practice'***, available from the Commission of Architecture and the Built Environment.
- ***'Design Review'***, available from the Commission of Architecture and the Built Environment.
- ***'PPG1: General Policy and Principles'***, available from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.
- ***'The Urban Design Compendium'***, available from English Partnerships and the Housing Corporation.
- ***'The Value of Urban Design'***, available from the Commission of Architecture and the Built Environment.
- ***'Safer Places: The Planning System and Crime Prevention'***, available from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister or the Home Office.

Other relevant supplementary planning guidance we have produced:

- Archaeology
- Providing a choice of travel
- House extensions
- Landscape character
- Landscape design guidance sheets
- New housing residential development
- Sustainable drainage systems
- Trees and development

Sefton MBC information notes:

- Renewable energy information note
- Landscape design guidance sheets

Useful contacts

Planning & Economic Regeneration Department

(For Bootle, Waterloo, Crosby, Hightown, Maghull and Melling)

Planning Department,
Development Control South,
Balliol House,
Balliol Rd,
Bootle,
L20 3RY
Tel: (0151) 934 3572
Fax: (0151) 934 3587
E-mail:
planning.department@plannng.sefton.gov.uk

(For Southport, Formby, and Ince Blundell)

Planning Department,
Development Control North,
9/11 Eastbank Street,
Southport,
PR8 1DL
Tel: (0151) 934 2206
Fax: (0151) 934 2212
E-mail:
planning.dcnorth@planning.sefton.gov.uk

Community Safety Section

Chief Executives Department,
Connolly House
47, Balliol Road,
Bootle
L20 3AA
Tel: (0151) 934 4466
Email: David.Fenney@chief-executives.sefton.gov.uk

Environmental Advisory Service

Bryant House,
Liverpool Rd North,
Maghull,
Merseyside,
L31 2PA
Tel: (0151) 934 4950
Fax: (0151) 934 4955
E-mail: Alan.Jemmett@eas.sefton.gov.uk

ACPO Crime Prevention Initiatives Ltd

7th Floor
25 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0EX
Phone: 0207 227 3423
Fax: 0207 227 3400/01
E-mail: acpocpi@acpo.pnn.police.uk
Website: www.securedbydesign.com

Building Research Establishment

Garston
Watford
WD25 9XX
Phone: 01923 664462
Fax: 01923 664103
E-mail: ecohomes@bre.co.uk
Website: www.bre.co.uk

Commission for Architecture and The Built Environment (CABE)

Tower Building
11 York Road
London
SE1 7NX
Phone: 020 7960 2400
Website: www.cabe.org.uk

English Heritage (North West)

Suites 3.3 and 3.4
Canada House
3 Chepstow Street
Manchester
M1 5FW
Phone: 0161 242 1400
Fax: 0161 242 1401
Website: www.english-heritage.org.uk

English Partnerships (North West)

Arpley House
110 Birchwood Boulevard
Birchwood
Warrington
WA3 7QH
Phone: 01925 651144
Fax: 01925 411493
Website: www.englishpartnerships.co.uk

Housing Corporation

Maple House

149 Tottenham Court Road

London

W1T 7BN

Phone: 020 7393 2000

Fax: 020 7393 2111

Email: enquiries@housingcorp.gsx.gov.uk

Website: www.housingcorp.gov.uk

Joseph Rowntree Foundation

Website:

www.jrf.org.uk/housingandcare/lifetimehomes/

Office of the Deputy Prime Minister

Eland House

Bressenden Place

London

SW1E 5DU

Phone: 020 7944 3000

Website: www.odpm.gov.uk

APPENDIX 1

Statement of public consultation

- a The Planning Committee approved a draft 'Design' planning guidance note for feedback and to help it make decisions about planning applications on 5 June 2002. It was placed on our website later that year.
- b The guidance was discussed at the meeting of the Sefton Agents' Forum which was held in April 2003. Few comments or questions were raised during the meeting.
- c We consulted interested organisations in July 2003. In total, we sent over 600 letters to local agents, developers, housebuilders and other interested groups (such as parish councils). We then consulted with the general public in September and October 2003. We placed adverts in the local press and the guidance was available in the two planning offices and at four main public libraries (the main library at Bootle was closed for repair in 2003).
- d Our consultation procedure is in line with Planning Policy Guidance Note 12 'Development Plans' (PPG12) which stresses the importance of consulting widely if we and the Secretary of State are to rely on Supplementary planning guidance notes to help make decisions about planning applications.
- e We received a number of comments about the guidance from Formby Civic Society, Merseyside Civic Society, Government Office North West, Hitchcock and Wright and United Utilities. The table over the page summarises the comments we received, and our responses.
- f We consulted Plain English Campaign on the guidance to help make its wording clearer.
- g We revised the guidance to take account of the comments received during the consultation process, changes proposed to the draft plan, to correct mistakes in the guidance and to make the wording clearer in line with Plain English Campaign's suggestions.
- h We reported the results of the consultation process to the Planning Committee on 17 December 2003. The 'Design' guidance note, including a new Sustainability checklist in Part 4, was adopted on 17 December 2003.

Table – summarising comments received about the Design Supplementary planning guidance note and our responses

Person or Organisation commenting	Summary of comment	Summary of our response
General comments about all Supplementary planning guidance notes		
Garden History Society	No comments	Response is noted.
Formby Civic Society	Write to support all of the SPGs.	Support is noted.
Design Supplementary planning guidance note		
Merseyside Civic Society	Supportive of comprehensive assessment of character	Support is noted
Formby Civic Society	The section that identified Freshfield Road and Ryeground Lane as characteristic areas is excellent.	Support is noted
Government Office North West	Expand introduction to document to include overall vision for Sefton's urban environment.	Wording will be added to do this.
Government Office North West	Document could make useful links to Community Strategy and the major plans for neighbourhood renewal in the Borough	It is more appropriate for these documents to refer to other Supplementary planning guidance notes.
Government Office North West	Suggest highlighting design relating to public realm and inclusion of public art/ street furniture as Borough has some good examples to promote as good practice e.g. improvements at Southport	Southport Seafront Supplementary planning guidance note includes appropriate references. The Design Supplementary planning guidance note is aimed at developers and we considered that it is not the appropriate place to refer to street furniture. There is no policy in the draft Plan on public art and so it would not be appropriate to make reference to this in guidance note.
Government Office North West	<p>Specific points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - useful to mention need for buildings to face streets, squares or parks and avoid inward-facing development - welcome emphasis placed on sustainable drainage systems - section on access could be expanded to take into account public transport considerations - Settlement Character Plans – useful to have the conservation areas marked on the plans as well. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This first point will be included. - The second point is noted. - Access issues are dealt with in the 'Providing a Choice of Travel' guidance note but cross reference will be added. - Conservation areas will be added.
Hitchcock and	Revision of urban edge to include	This is premature until, firstly, the

Person or Organisation commenting	Summary of comment	Summary of our response
Wright	proposed Switch Island/ Thornton Bypass	road scheme is approved and, secondly, any consequent change to the Green Belt boundary is made.
United Utilities	Deep rooted shrubs and trees should not be planted in the vicinity of underground /overhead electricity cables, water mains, public sewers and overflow systems.	Amendment to be made to say that utilities need to be consulted before planting in the vicinity of their apparatus.