

Appendix A

A list of consultation responses received on the draft Boundary Treatments and Short-term Lets Supplementary Planning Documents.

Boundary Treatments SPD – Comments made by: Canals & Rivers Trust
Comment: The trust support the production of the boundary treatment SPD. We support the overall thrust of the document in terms of trying to provide a mechanism to ensure boundary treatments are appropriate to the character of the area and can have significant impact on how an area is perceived. We particularly welcome section 10 in terms of the boundaries adjacent to a canal corridor. As noted within the document, closing the canal corridor off with closed-board or palisade fencing would not maximise the potential of developing near water. We welcome the intention that new development should seek to provide an open and positive frontage to the canal corridor. We also welcome the intention of section 12 in terms of the retention of hedgerows.
Response: Noted
Suggested change to SPD: No changes proposed.

Boundary Treatments SPD – Comments made by: Highways England
Comment: Our focus whilst reviewing the SPD was the impact to road safety that unsuitable boundary treatments might have. We certainly see it as key that sight lines, for example, are not obstructed through the erection of boundary fences or walls in poor locations. Additionally, we would like to stress the point that the boundary fences for motorways are the responsibility of National Highways as Highway Authority for those routes, and developers are reminded that the removal of these fences would not be acceptable. There have been recent issues where our own fences have been replaced with acoustic barriers without consent. As we cannot permit a third party to maintain a highway boundary, this is causing land and legal issues that need to be overcome. Our responses to planning consultations for sites adjacent to motorway boundaries would almost always recommend the construction of a secondary, 2m-high close boarded fence at least 1m inside the developer's land. This allows for the continued maintenance of our own boundary, with the additional safety benefits of a close-boarded fence to reduce the risk of access on to the network. In terms of the construction of acoustic barriers and other structures, the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) states the requirement for technical approval of all structures which may be within "falling distance" of the highway boundary. This approval must be sought from National Highways by the developer, preferably prior to the submission of the planning application.
Response: Noted
Suggested change to SPD: No changes proposed.

Boundary Treatments SPD – Comments made by: Mersey Forest

Comment: The Boundary Treatment SPD says “Development proposals must replace any trees lost as a result of development at a ratio of 1:1 within the site”. We would strongly encourage you to go further with this ratio, to replace trees lost at a higher ratio to encourage an overall increase in tree cover. It is very important to take into consideration not just the number of trees lost, but also their overall canopy cover, species type, maturity, and the ecosystem services that they are providing. The loss of a smaller tree is much less significant than the loss of a larger more mature tree.

The Tree Equity Score, developed by the Woodland Trust, for Sefton is currently 77, with 100 being equitable. This varies across the borough with the lower scores being predominantly in South Sefton and around Southport; these areas are also marked as the highest priority. Protecting boundary trees and planting new trees will help the borough increase its tree equity score.

It may be beneficial to use a green infrastructure valuating tool, such as GI-Val, to calculate what the effect of losing trees on boundaries would be so that they can be replaced to provide equal/greater value. This would be a similar approach to Biodiversity Net Gain and would ensure the ecosystem services the trees were providing were not lost.

It is also worth considering the approach put forward by the Bristol Tree Forum in July 2023. This details the approach used in Bristol’s 2014 Local Plan, which has differing tree replacement numbers depending on the diameter of the lost trees. However, to take into climate and ecological emergencies, and meet the 10% BNG requirement, it is arguing that the replacement numbers should be significantly revised. It requires between 2, 100, and 21 replacement trees depending on if the tree is small, medium or large (with diameter measurements given for what constitutes each).

The Mersey Forest Team can assist with advising on tree planting scheme designs and delivery. The Mersey Forest has a number of delivery programmes to facilitate tree planting and habitat establishment, such as Trees for Climate and Northern Forest. The Forest can also support delivery through Section 106 agreements or Community Infrastructure Levies where it can be shown that our funds provide additionality in terms of the delivery of The Mersey Forest Plan.

Response: Noted. However, Local Plan policy EQ9 'provision of public open space, strategic paths and trees' outlines 'replace any trees lost as a result of the development at a ratio of 1:1 within the site'. An SPD can not introduce new policy, but rather build on those within a development plan, and as such, we are unable to ask for a higher ratio of tree replacement within this SPD.

Suggested change to SPD: No changes proposed.

Boundary Treatments SPD – Comments made by: Historic England

Comment: We would encourage you to consider the historic environment in the production of your SPD. We recommend that you seek advice from the local authority conservation officer and from the appropriate archaeological staff. They are best placed to provide information on the historic environment, advise on local historic environment issues and indicate how heritage assets may be affected and identify opportunities for securing wider benefits through the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment.

Response: Noted. The historic environment is covered by various Local Plan policies.

Suggested change to SPD: No changes proposed.

Short-term Lets SPD – Comments made by: Highways England

Comment: Given that there is unlikely to be an impact from the SPD to the Strategic Road Network, National Highways will not look to comment further on the proposals.

Response: Comment noted.

Suggested change to SPD: No changes proposed.

Short-term Lets SPD – Comments made by: Historic England

Comment: We would encourage you to consider the historic environment in the production of your SPD. We recommend that you seek advice from the local authority conservation officer and from the appropriate archaeological staff. They are best placed to provide information on the historic environment, advise on local historic environment issues and priorities, indicate how heritage assets may be affected and identify opportunities for securing wider benefits through the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment.

Response: Noted. It is not considered that the SPD will have a material impact upon Heritage assets as they are dealt with by other policies

Suggested change to SPD: No changes proposed.