

A large, ornate sign for Great Dunmow is visible in the background. The sign features a coat of arms with a red dragon and a blue lion, surrounded by the text 'GREAT DUNMOW' at the top and 'MAY DUNMOW' at the bottom. The sign is set against a backdrop of a clear blue sky and green grass.

# Producing the TDS

The Great Dunmow Town Design Statement sprang from discussions in the Town Strategy Group in 2006. Following these the Group strongly supported the idea of a community-produced design guide. This concept drew on guidance prepared by the Countryside Commission and on the numerous Villages and the few Town Design Statements that had been produced elsewhere.

The Town Council via the Strategy Group gave generous moral and financial support to the initial discussions and meetings that led to the formation of a properly constituted Town Design Statement Group. This early work was invaluable to the project taking off and the contribution of the individuals involved is sincerely acknowledged. The District Council gave its in principle support for the Group and for its objectives and has subsequently given valuable practical support.

The outline of the project was prepared by Nick Wates Consultancy as a result of funding generously given by the Countryside Commission. From this basis the TDSG prepared its programme which was initiated in April 2006 with an Open day in the Foakes Hall in Dunmow. This event was aimed at explaining the role and purpose of a TDS and at giving local people an opportunity to raise issues they felt were important. The exhibition included a large display of art from the local children. The event attracted around 500 people and generated more volunteers. Following this, a series of events have been held – a photographic day, a Design for Real Day and two appearances at the Carnival which have meant that around 1000 people have been involved. A fuller report on the consultation is set out in a separate appendix.

The TDS that is now being published is thus the result of a very extensive consultation exercise and, most important, the work of a number of enthusiastic and committed people. It has been put together drawing on:

- The views and priorities put forwards by local people.
- Good practice in Town Design Statements.

- The requirements of planning law.
- Surveys of the town carried out by members of the Group and the photographic survey.
- Other information collected by groups in the town.
- The model built so expertly and creatively by the Dunmow Youth Group.
- The sustainability appraisal carried out by Cornell Environmental.

The TDSG genuinely believe that the resulting document reflects a broad consensus of opinion and is soundly based on fact.

## Planning Policy Context for the TDS

It is vital that the TDS is consistent with established planning policy if it is to be acceptable as Supplementary Planning Guidance and is, in the end, to be fully effective. An attempt has been made to identify the most relevant policies and guidance.

A review of the main parts of the TDS suggests that it is highly consistent with the national and regional policy and can be justified both as evidence of the character and quality of the local environment and as an example of the contribution of the local community to defining that character.

Extracts from the main policy context – the national Planning Policy Statements and the Regional Spatial Strategy (known as the East of England Plan) are set out in the Appendix 1.

## Sustainability Appraisal

Documents that are to form part of the LDF should undergo a Sustainability Appraisal. The purpose of this is to demonstrate that it meets the Governments aim of spatial planning contributing to progress in sustainable development. The TDS Group have sought expert advice from an independent environmental assessor and believe that the TDS does meet this test. The results of the appraisal are set out in the Appendix 3.