Design Codes

A B C D E **F** G

Test Valley
Borough Council

Introduction

This annex will guide you through the process of preparing a design code; this guidance is for you and your community if you have a desire to create a set of design requirements for future developments in your area which developers will have to follow when they are designing future developments.

LEAD – a framework for Community Led Planning

When preparing your Village or Town Design Statement use the four key stages highlighted in the LEAD framework, these are Launch, Evidence, Agree and Deliver. You and your community will need to work through each of these stages in turn to produce your chosen document; once the accompanying checklists are completed you can move onto the next stage.

Framework Stage	Guidance Chapters
LAUNCH	**L1 - What to consider at the start of the process**
	L2 - Council Officer Role and Assistance
	L3 - Parish Council and Community Role
	Launch - Key Stages Checklist
EVIDENCE	**E1 - Identifying Good Local Design Aspects**
	Evidence - Key Stages Checklist
AGREE & PRIORITISE	**AP1 - Drafting Design Guidance**
	AP2 - Draft Document Consultation
	AP3 - Finalising Draft Document and Submission
	Agree & Prioritise - Key Stages Checklist
DELIVER & MONITOR	**DM1 - Adoption of VDS**
	DM2 - Monitoring
	DM3 - Reviewing the VDS
	Deliver & Monitor - Key Stages Checklist

Please feel free to contact us at any time through the process of preparing your village or town design statement if you want to discuss any particular issues or get any further advice, you can email us at **neighbourhoodplanning@testvalley.gov.uk**

L1 - What to consider at the start of the process

What is a Design Code?

A design code is a set of design requirements for the physical development of a site or area. It is made up of rules that are clear, specific and unambiguous, and it should normally include extensive graphical illustrations. The code should build upon a design vision, such as a masterplan or other design and development framework for a site or area.

The process of preparing a local design code is based on several steps:

- **Scoping:** Agreeing on the geographical area to be covered by the code and the policy areas that it will address

- **Baseline:** Bringing together the analysis that will underpin the code and inform its contents

- **Design vision:** Dividing the area covered by the code into a set of typical 'area types' and deciding on a vision for each of these area types

- **Coding plan:** Preparing a plan that maps out the different characteristics found in your area

- **Guidance for Area Types:** Developing guidance for each area type by outlining a set of design parameters

- **Code Wide Guidance:** Agree on a set of policies that will apply equally across all area types

A diagram showing the process for preparing a design code is in Appendix A.

The code presents a set of design requirements that establish the expectations for design quality and are created with local communities to develop a vision for new development in their area.

Every area of the borough is unique, so they need to be approached individually. Designing with people and planet at the heart allows us to create places that people want to be in and invest in – so good for the environment and great for business. Design codes support well-designed places by:

- Enhancing local character.

- Supporting vibrant and healthy communities.

- Addressing the climate emergency.

About the guidance

The guidance is based on the key characteristics of context, movement, nature, built form, identity, public space, and use. Other sections dealing with homes and buildings, resources and lifespan provide important considerations in achieving design quality and should be used to inform the content of local plans, design codes depending on local circumstances. These themes are interconnected, and users of this coding process should be mindful about the ways that they interrelate.

When preparing a code, it is essential that decisions are made in response to an overarching vision for the place. The guidance sets out the potential content of a design code. It provides both a framework and some sample content from which design codes can be developed and adapted, to address the particular context to which the code will be applied.

Effective design codes are:

- simple, concise and specific; and

- rely on visual and numerical information rather than detailed policy wording.

What are you trying to achieve with the code?

Depending on your community, the area you are covering, and the scale your code will cover the main design issues will vary. You may feel that developments are often generic in character and designed around roads and cars rather than people and the environment with poor connections to existing communities, poor provision of infrastructure and under provision and poor design of green spaces. Your code will be an opportunity to make a big impact on design quality in your area.

Before you commence work on your own code be sure to refer to the Local Plan for the borough and the design policies and the National Model Design Code and National Design Guidance. This existing design policies and national guidance will already influence development coming forward in your area and will not need to be repeated in your code; you will have an opportunity to get down to the fine grain with your code by assessing the existing character in your area and creating requirements to ensure new development is cohesive and fits in well with the existing local vernacular.

You should consider whether you are seeking to prepare your design code as part of a neighbourhood plan or whether it will be a standalone document. In making this decision you should be aware of the influence the final document will have. A code that comes forward as part of a neighbourhood plan will have considerably more influence on future projects as it will form part of the neighbourhood plan linked to a design policy and will be part of the development plan for the area. Whereas a standalone design code will be adopted by us as a supplementary planning document and only need to be considered by developers and not necessarily have to be complied with.

Challenges in developing a design code

The creation of a design codes requires a high level of expertise in design. It is challenging to develop a set of mandatory requirements that account for a new housing development and which responds to local priorities whilst not increasing the development costs and impacting on the viability of developments. Also, the code will also need to be suitably adaptive for a variety of locations and densities across the local area.

L2 - Council Officer Role and Assistance

We are here to help you throughout the code preparation process. While you will need to undertake the work as it is will be your document and you have the local knowledge to produce it, we can offer to sense check the document throughout the preparation at each stage and provide guidance or recommendations where necessary. We are also on hand to guide you with the community consultation and are happy to attend meetings to answer questions throughout the code making process.

If your design code has not come forward as part of a neighbourhood plan, once it has been completed we will also go through the process to formally adopt the final document as a Supplementary Planning Document so that developers and planning officers have to take the document into consideration throughout the planning application process.

The Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) sets out the main elements of the SPD preparation process and the legal requirements that that we have to follow. The SCI can be found here: **Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) | Test Valley Borough Council**

L3 - Parish Council and Community Role

A crucial part of the process of creating a design code is to involve your community. This is essentially a community design code. This can provide greater certainty for communities about the design of development and bring conversations about design to the start of the planning process, rather than the end.

When preparing design codes, communities need to be involved at each stage of the process in order to gain measurable community support that is appropriate for the scale and location of new development. This will address the ambition in a new planning system to bring democracy forward so that communities decide what good design means locally and that this is enshrined in design codes.

Identify skills

Successful codes are well-written and illustrated and may require particular skills and technical expertise that may or may not be readily available within your community. Local design professionals may be keen to help in producing a code and encouraging higher design standards. They may bring special abilities to the design team and help the group to express the area's view in words and images. A local designer's involvement

in preparing your code can help to provide design principles that encourage innovative designs, combining modern needs and efficient technology with local characteristics.

Working with a consultant

The decision to appoint external consultants depends on various factors, including resources and the availability of in-house expertise. Experienced consultants can assist where skills and experience are not available in-house. A hybrid team can combine the strengths of both, using internal knowledge and capabilities while benefiting from the specialised expertise of consultants.

A consultant can act as a critical friend to help you to carry out the preparation and delivery of the design code to deliver on the vision and objectives of the community. You will need to consider establishing a budget and allocating funding to the project to ensure the project team is well resourced.

Involving your Councillor

Your borough councillors are at the heart of a local approach to engaging and working with communities to better understand their needs and develop sustainable solutions within communities themselves.

Your Councillor should be informed of the decision to progress a design code in your area. They will have a vital role of supporting, mediating, helping to find solutions and explaining the proposals within the borough wide planning policy context.

Find details of your councillor here:
Who is my councillor?

LAUNCH

Key Stages Checklist

Once these steps have been completed you can move onto the next stage

Step 1 – Getting started

☐ Decide you want to undertake a design code as either part of a neighbourhood plan or as a standalone document, contact us if you want to discuss the process

☐ Make contact with a range of volunteers who might be able to help out in different ways

Step 2 – Establishing your working group

☐ Form a working group to undertake the preparation of the code

☐ Agree the purpose of the working group

Step 3 – Taking stock and planning the way ahead

☐ Set a clear vision – A clear and concise vision, setting out ambitions for the area, must be prepared at the start of the design coding process. This will act as a guide, be relevant to the area and record straightforward aspirations so that future action can be evaluated.

☐ Align with policies and be evidence based – Your code will take into account relevant national and local planning policies and have a basis in evidence of the types of places that support well-being and deliver healthy and sustainable outcomes for communities, and places that are safe and inclusive.

E1 - Defining the Code Area

In terms of geographical coverage, you may wish to create a code that covers your entire parish. Codes may also just cover the existing built-up area in your area, or just a new site allocated within a neighbourhood plan. The smaller the code area the more detail you may want to include in the code as there will be more focus on the specific characteristics of that area, it may be that you also identify character areas within a larger parish-wide area.

Baseline Analysis

You will need to have an understanding of your area informed by up-to-date evidence such as characterisation studies or site analysis, with input from the wider community, to support your design code. We may already hold this information, so it is possible that you will not need to carry out all of this analysis. The analysis could include:
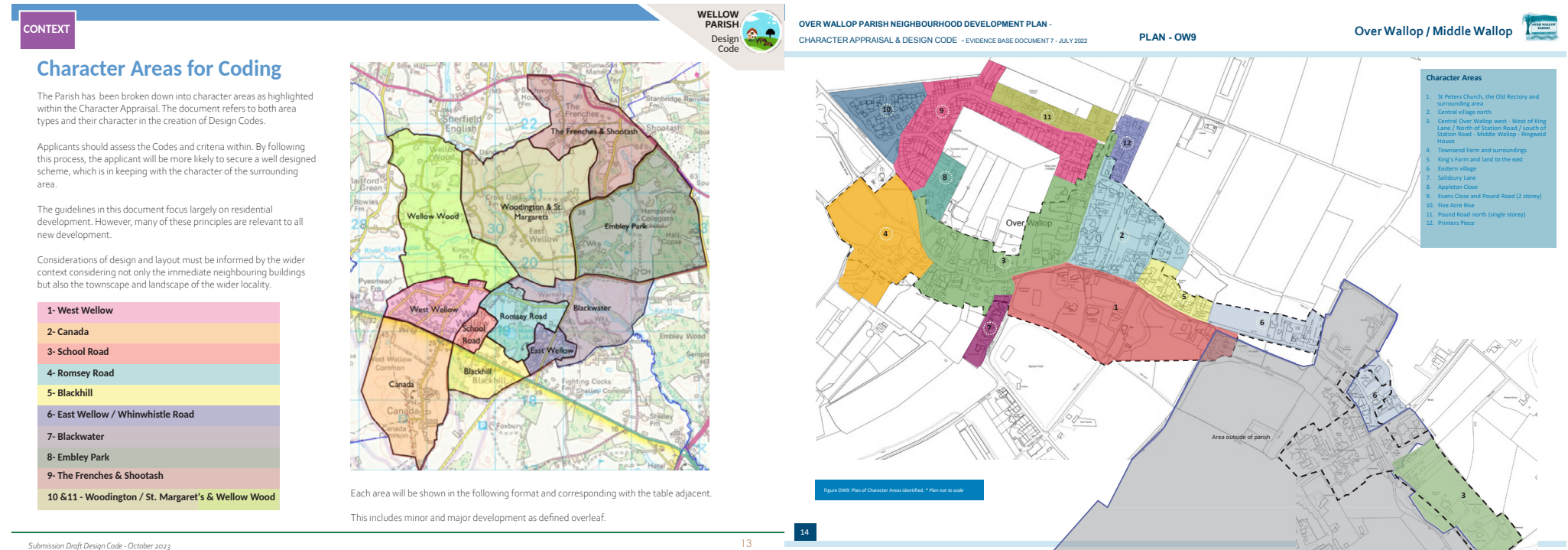
- Topographical, geology, ecology, river and waterways, flood risk.

- Landscape character including wider area.

- Open space and green infrastructure.

- Local character.

- Heritage and culture assets, including conservation areas.

- Land use, economic uses.

- Built form, density, massing.

- Community infrastructure and schools.

- Public transport accessibility.

- Road/street hierarchy

This analysis will feed into the identification of character area types.

The area covered by the design code and the level of detail is to be determined locally. A coding plan will be needed to show the area covered by the code. There is an option to use area types so that the guidance can be adjusted to reflect local character.

The plan shows the area to be covered by the code and divides this up into a series of area types based on their individual characters; this will also help you to provide more specific guidance to a particular character area in addition to general codes covering the code area as a whole.

Below are examples of where local codes have identified their characer areas for coding.

CONTEXT

WELLOW PARISH
Design Code

Character Areas for Coding

The Parish has been broken down into character areas as highlighted within the Character Appraisal. The document refers to both area types and their character in the creation of Design Codes.

Applicants should assess the Codes and criteria within. By following this process, the applicant will be more likely to secure a well designed scheme, which is in keeping with the character of the surrounding area.

The guidelines in this document focus largely on residential development. However, many of these principles are relevant to all new development.

Considerations of design and layout must be informed by the wider context considering not only the immediate neighbouring buildings but also the townscape and landscape of the wider locality.

| 1- West Wellow |
| 2- Canada |
| 3- School Road |
| 4- Romsey Road |
| 5- Blackhill |
| 6- East Wellow / Whinwhistle Road |
| 7- Blackwater |
| 8- Embley Park |
| 9- The Frenches & Shootash |
| 10 &11 - Woodington / St. Margaret's & Wellow Wood |

Each area will be shown in the following format and corresponding with the table adjacent.

This includes minor and major development as defined overleaf.

Submission Draft Design Code - October 2023

13

OVER WALLOP PARISH NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN -
CHARACTER APPRAISAL & DESIGN CODE - EVIDENCE BASE DOCUMENT 7 - JULY 2022

PLAN - OW9

Over Wallop / Middle Wallop

Character Areas

1. St Peters Church, the Old Rectory and surrounding area
2. Central village north
3. Central Over Wallop west - West of King Lane / North of Station Road / south of Station Road - Middle Wallop - Ringwold House
4. Townsend Farm and surroundings
5. King's Farm and land to the east
6. Eastern village
7. Salisbury Lane
8. Appleton Close
9. Evans Close and Pound Road (2 storey)
10. Five Acre Rise
11. Pound Road north (single storey)
12. Printers Piece

Figure OW9: Plan of Character Areas identified. * Plan not to scale

14

E2 - Identifying Local Design Character and Vernacular

Some design parameters are an essential component of design codes for their effective use such as movement, pattern, built form, height, land use, character of buildings and public spaces, open space and density while others are discretionary (see Figure 2). The latter include, for example, housing standards that are crucial but may be dealt with elsewhere in local plans.

Design codes would be expected to include the following:

- Context - Local character and built heritage.
- Movement - Design of the street network, active travel and public transport.
- Nature - Design of green infrastructure, play spaces, SUDS and the protection of biodiversity.
- Built Form - Density, built form and urban design.
- Identity - character of buildings.
- Public space - Design and of streets and public spaces.
- Homes and Buildings - Type and tenure of homes.
- Uses - Mix of uses and active frontage.

- Resources - Environmental design, renewable energy provision and low energy networks.
- Lifespan - Management and adoption standards.

Other related issues referred to in the National Model Design Code can be covered either in a Code or in other ways such as a policy in a neighbourhood plan.

Some issues will depend on the decision about the coverage of the code. Codes that cover site allocations may need to include guidance on the road layout and planning and designing green spaces. By contrast in existing settlement areas where roads and green spaces etc. already exist, these elements of the code may not be required.

The design of new development is more than how it looks: the size of buildings, and their materials, style and detailing. Design extends to how new development interacts with the landscape, nature, climate, hydrology and the historic environment, and how well it functions day to day: is it fit for purpose, well connected, safe, attractive and accessible? Will it reduce carbon emissions and adapt to a changing climate, while increasing biodiversity and access to nature?

EVIDENCE

Key Stages Checklist

Once these steps have been completed you can move onto the next stage

Step 4 – Understanding your area

☐ Find out what people really like – Your code must be based on robust evidence that has been obtained on what is popular about the design and character of the existing area, and the potential future for the area, and this must be apparent in the way the codes are worded and illustrated.

Framework Stage

Agree and Prioritise

Launch

Evidence

Deliver and Monitor

Agree and Priortise

AP1 - Drafting Design Codes

Once an area is identified coding can be prepared to translate a community's vision and objectives into design requirements for development proposals. We recommend that the code focusses on the most important design issues within the area to ensure that new development proposals deliver the desired outcomes for the area.

Design codes need to be based on a vision for how a place will develop in the future, as set out in the local plan. This vision needs to be developed with the local community and is likely to be an important part of the community engagement process.

When preparing a code, it is essential that decisions are made in response to an overarching vision for the place. The guidance sets out the potential content of a design code. It provides both a framework and some sample content from which design codes can be developed and adapted, to address the particular context to which the code will be applied. Effective design codes are:

- simple, concise and specific; and

- rely on visual and numerical information rather than detailed policy wording.

You should create a vision statement which sets out the specific aims for the design code. These visions need to be aspirational and set the context for the subsequent development of the code covering:

- An appreciation of the existing area or site, its natural, topographical, historical and heritage features.

- Its character and appearance.

- The mix of uses and facilities.

- The amount of green infrastructure and character of green space.

- The way in which it deals with traffic, parking, public transport, walking and cycling.

- Sustainability including energy efficiency, net zero alignment and climate resilience.

Consider adding monitoring criteria against design code objectives during this initial stage to allow you to monitor the effectiveness of your code once it has been adopted and is being implemented.

Defining Area Types

Your code will apply to a set of area types; these are areas of similar character that allow elements of the design code to be set out depending upon which area type a development is within. The aim of the design code is to work towards a vision of what each area type needs to be. The starting point will, be to undertake a series of area type studies through a combination of site visits, historical analysis and work with maps. The settings for each of the area types need to be based on

a) an analysis of the existing character of these areas

b) a visioning exercise.

See appendix B for an idea of how to lay out the results of the assessments which you could produce for each of your character areas.

Heritage

Well-designed development adds a new layer to the history of a site while enhancing and respecting its past, with the expectation that new development will be valued for its heritage in the future as heritage assets are today.

Historic assessment

A study of the history of the area can be done, including historic maps and details such as former uses, natural features, cultural features, urban form, street patterns and place names. This can help explain features of the area and can be used as inspiration for new development through the code.

Heritage Assets

Development should always take account of heritage assets within your area; the character of a place is created by the richness of the buildings that have been built up over time. Not just the individual buildings or monuments, but how they relate to each other and how they have contributed to the evolution of the place has a whole.

CONTEXT

WELLOW PARISH Design Code
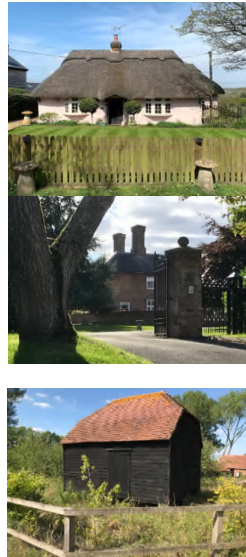
Heritage

Listed Buildings in the Parish

Other designated heritage assets include but are not limited to scheduled monuments, registered Parks, Gardens and Battlefields and archaeological sites.

There are many identified assets, as shown on the above plan.

Non-designated heritage assets have a degree of heritage significance but do not meet the requirements for designated heritage assets. Non-designated heritage assets can include buildings, monuments, sites, places or landscapes.

There are several such buildings with special architectural and aesthetic interest, it is recommended that the Neighbourhood Plan considers these to be formally identified as such or noted as Locally Important Buildings. These are mapped above.

Further information on such assets is found on the Historic England website

https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/non-listed-sites/

CODE IH01.3 -
Other Designated and Non Designated Heritage Assets

Any new development on undeveloped land may have potential for archaeology. Applicants should be aware of this and where relevant an archaeological assessment and or survey should be undertaken as appropriate.

Any proposals which affect the Locally Important Building /non-designated heritage asset and their setting should justify how the proposed scheme sustains and enhances the significance of the asset.

Major	Minor	1	2		4						10	11

Submission Draft Design Code - October 2023

17

Movement

Well-designed places are accessible and easy to move around, direct routes make walking and cycling more attractive and increase activity, making the streets feel safer and more attractive. The design of the streets play an important role in determining how they are used. Manual for Streets editions 1& 2 define common street types and functions.

Also, give consideration to encouraging passive surveillance of the street and good lighting to deter undesirable behaviour and to ensure people feel safe and secure using the street at all times.

Parking

Parking standards are set out in the local plan. Design codes are concerned with the design of parking and its impact on the quality of place. Well-considered parking is convenient, safe and attractive to use. It is also well integrated, takes account of access to electric charging points and does not dominate the local environment. It may also vary between area types.

A design code may also define the appropriate locations and forms for cycle parking, in close proximity to homes and other uses in the area.

Nature

Development should enhance the natural as well as the built environment. Nature is essential for health and wellbeing, for biodiversity, shading and cooling, noise mitigation, air quality and mitigating flood risk as well as contributing to tackling the climate emergency.

Design codes need to ensure that nature and the historic landscape is woven into the design of places. This may include the amount and type of open space, the response to flood risk and the protection, enhancement and promotion of biodiversity.

Open spaces

The way in which open spaces are designed is crucial to their success. The design considerations vary with the type of space, a formal park being very different to natural open space. The situation where your design code is likely to be most relevant is in the design of new smaller open space.

Sustainable drainage systems or SuDS mimic natural drainage in delivering effective surface water management, controlling surface water close to where it falls. They are designed to reduce the rate of rainwater run-off from areas of development, mitigating flood risk whilst delivering benefits for biodiversity, water quality and amenity.

Flood risk

Flood risk needs to be considered early in the design process based on an understanding of all sources of current and future flood risk and alongside other design factors.

A sequential test should be used to steer development away from flood risk areas. Where flood risk areas are unavoidable, development should be designed to ensure it will be safe from flooding throughout its lifetime, without increasing flood risk elsewhere.

Biodiversity

All new development needs to use, retain and improve existing habitats or create new habitats to achieve measurable gains for biodiversity. This includes landscaping and tree planting. Your design codes will be expected to reflect the need for a minimum 10% net increase in biodiversity compared to the situation prior to development.

Your code should set out that new development should first seek to avoid damaging habitats, then to mitigate any damage that may occur and then, if the first two are not possible, to consider replacement habitats.

Built form

A well-designed place has a coherent form of development, being able to accommodate enough people to support shops, local facilities and viable public transport, maximise social interaction in a local area, and make it feel a safe, lively and attractive place.

Density

Your design code may set out a local density or ranges of density, where local variations in density may be desirable in order to create a variety of identity without harming local character. Design codes may include coding that enables or prevents buildings from joining to each other, depending upon the character area.

Building types and forms

The character of an area is also influenced by the variety of building forms. This relates to the size and uniformity of the buildings. In many places it is the rhythm and variety of buildings that is intrinsic to the character of the area. While large buildings will be appropriate in places, an area made up entirely of large buildings can be dull, whereas the same area could be developed with a variety of larger and smaller buildings.

Building line

Attractive streets and other public spaces are generally defined by the frontages of buildings around their edges. A building line represents the alignment of the front face of the buildings in relation to a street or other public space.

The nature of this line and its position in relation to the street contribute to the character and identity of a place. It may be straight or irregular, continuous or broken. A consistent approach to building line in an area type or street type helps to give it a coherent identity.

Different areas are likely to have different building lines. Your code can identify building lines and their characteristics for each character area to guide new development, including circumstances that allow for exceptions, e.g. where a mature tree interrupts the existing building line or to create a public space.

Height

Building heights influence the quality of a place in terms of its identity. Building height may also have an impact on local environmental conditions in neighbouring properties, amenity spaces and public spaces in terms of daylight, sunlight, overshadowing, wind and micro-climate.

Your design code may regulate one or more of the following: eaves or parapet height, roof height and total height. Many building types have projections that rise above the general height of a roof. A code may either allow for projections above a roof height or define a total height including for projections.

Identity

The identity of a place comes not just from the form and appearance of the buildings and spaces but also from the way that it is planned, its natural environment and the use of its buildings. This includes the way that it responds to the character of the local area and the design of its buildings and public spaces.

Identity may come out of respecting and enhancing the existing character of the area and also from adapting and shaping to develop new character. The architectural approach needs to be influenced by its surrounding architectural character.

Sense of place

Your design code may include guidance on how to draw inspiration from the existing context, to create or enhance a sense of place through new development, and to follow some simple principles of scale and proportion in the design of new buildings.

Existing character is therefore something that must be understood as a starting point for the design of layouts and buildings so that they fit into and also enhance the character of the local area, this will include local building types, architectural styles, materials, detailing and colour.

OVER WALLOP PARISH NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN -

CHARACTER APPRAISAL & DESIGN CODE – EVIDENCE BASE DOCUMENT 7 - JULY 2022

New Dwellings - Design Code - Over Wallop

OW.I - WALLING MATERIALS - Timber frame with brick / Cob infill.
Decorative brickwork detailing, string courses, quoins / dressings
Flint panels and courses between brickwork

Light painted brick and cob. Render is more limited to modern properties

Handmade facing brickwork - red / orange with grey/ blue/ burnt headers and string course detail

OW.II - ROOF MATERIALS AND FORM - Simple roof forms - gables, hipped and half hipped

Plain Clay tiles - red / orange and limited slate
Concrete tiles are generally inappropriate due to poor colour match, form and variety

Plain bargeboards rather than ornate, often white or dark painted timber. Simple lead flashing around chimneys and dormers.
Generally simple ridge tiles interspersed rather than decorative features.

Dormer windows are small, non-dominant features. Eyebrow dormers within thatched roofs.
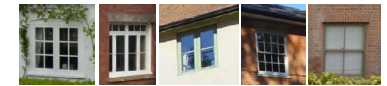
OW.III - WINDOWS & DOORS - Timber cottage casement windows - triple pane/ double pane - arch topped and sliding sash windows. Lighter paint colours are preferable

Dormer windows to be small, with pitched roof forms or eyebrow in thatch and windows to be in the same style and proportions to those in the main dwelling

Small cottage casement dormer windows, generally set into the roof with some cutting of the eaves line. Simple form detailing or decorative bargeboards

Doors to be timber rather than UPVC either solid wood or part glazed.

OW.IV- FRONT GARDENS AND BOUNDARIES - A range of front gardens - average 3+ metres. The Wallop Brook often then forms a further vegetated area beyond, separating the roadside.

Plot boundaries should be well contained by walls (brick and cob) and hedges, with some wrought iron railings as an alternative (preferably set on low brick walls). Close board fencing is suburban and is not appropriate without sufficient planting to screen.

Low key, open pedestrian gates are appropriate, as are wrought iron gates.
Vehicle gates to reflect the agricultural character or to be in context with the boundary.
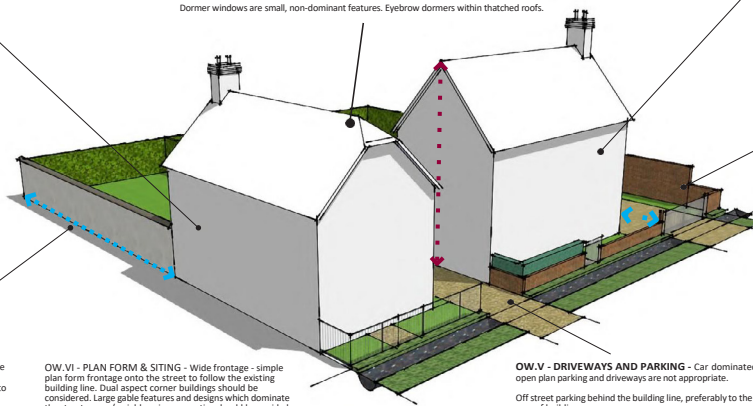
OW.VII - REAR GARDENS - over 15 metres in depth, where rear gardens are less than 12 metres, the overall level of amenity space should be considered including garden areas to the side.

Size of garden should relate to the property and setting and provide suitable amenity space for occupants, but should not set a precedent for sub standard garden sizes or lead to a loss of privacy.

OW.VI - PLAN FORM & SITING - Wide frontage - simple plan form frontage onto the street to follow the existing building line. Dual aspect corner buildings should be considered. Large gable features and designs which dominate the street scene / neighbouring properties should be avoided.

Front porches are common on later properties and should be simple and in proportion to the size of the dwelling

OW.V - DRIVEWAYS AND PARKING - Car dominated, open plan parking and driveways are not appropriate.

Off street parking behind the building line, preferably to the rear of buildings.

Car barns or garage outbuildings to the rear / be separate and form boundary walls to reflect the predominantly agricultural nature of the area

Buildings

The design of buildings includes their size and shape and configuration, and their relationship to their surroundings. It is also important to consider the way that the building is designed, its elevations, the arrangements of windows, the way it relates to the street, the design of its roof, the details of its construction and the materials that it uses.

Public space

The quality of public spaces is partly about the way they are enclosed by buildings and partly the way that they are designed. Streets and other public spaces such as public squares have an important social function to bring people together and to act as a focus for community life.

Streets

Other parts of the design code including built form, movement, nature and use will need to take streets into consideration, as they will vary depending on the character of the area that they pass through. Streets may need to be altered to address the needs of people with disabilities, children and young people, older people and businesses to meet local community needs; and climate change, with space being allocated from vehicle parking spaces to provide sustainable drainage and incorporate street trees.

Most streets need to be first and foremost an attractive community focus for the people who live and work there and need to be a safe and convenient route for walking and cycling while also accommodating low levels of traffic at low speeds.

In more rural villages lanes add to a distinctive character. They may not have separate footpath or street lighting and may have constrained vehicular access, depending on local character; your design code may seek to extend this character.

MOVEMENT

WELLOW PARISH Design Code

CODE MS.02.1 - *Village Streets & Lanes*

Village streets should be low speed, less than 20mph zones.

Traffic calming should be designed into the scheme through careful landscaping and building layout, not engineered measures.

The street should be able to accommodate cyclists as well as vehicles, or a shared cycle path and footway can be included.

Shared Surfaces and Lanes, should respect the rural nature of the area should be specifically designed to deter unnecessary traffic by using features and measures which prioritise pedestrian use.

All street types must include native tree, and

hedge / shrub planting as appropriate .

A shared surface street or lane must be clearly identified with a 'gateway' feature such as a change in surface pattern or rural access gate feature.

It must be surfaced in the same material throughout, with the exception for areas which may be marked out for parking, play or seating. In which case this may be undertaken through a carefully chosen palette of materials, rather than road markings.

It is important that public and private land is clearly identifiable.

Major | Minor

Village Street - 20mph - no parking

Tree planting

Private | *Paved footway* | 2m | 5.5m Road | 2m | *Paved footway* | *Private*

Village Street - 20mph - with parking

Tree planting / Tree planting

Private | *Paved footway* | 2m | 5.5m Road | 2.6m Parking | 3m Shared footway/ Cycleway | *Private*

Shared Streets and Lanes - 20mph

Tree planting

Private | 6m+ Shared surface lane | *Private*

Village Streets

Village streets are usually access roads, which give direct access to dwellings. They should accommodate two way traffic either with or without on-street parking. With appropriate design, traffic speeds should be low without the need for engineered traffic calming measures such as humps, cushions and chicanes.

If the street is designed to be a cul de sac (which is not preferable), it is technically not recommended to exceed 100 dwellings*. A proposed route which has more than one access, may serve more units however.

*It is unlikely that in such an environmentally constrained location as Wellow, such a major development would be appropriate.
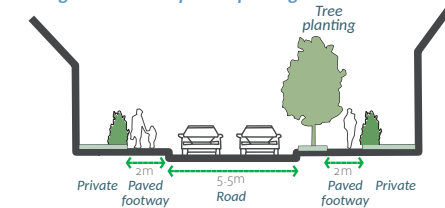
Shared Streets and Lanes

A shared street or lane (larger than a small courtyard overleaf), but usually lower than 25 dwellings.

The aim of the shared space is to make the traffic speed equal to that of a pedestrian.
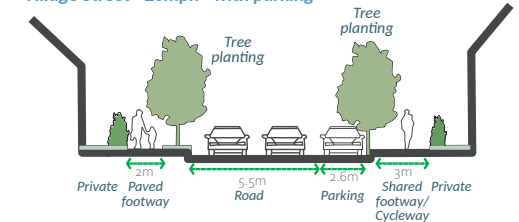
They should be focused around encouraging social interaction between neighbours and provision of pocket parks, meeting places and landscaping . Measures must be taken to maintain pedestrian safety by reducing traffic speed, ensuring pedestrian visibility.

Submission Draft Design Code - October 2023

43

Meeting places

Many areas include public spaces as focal points at the heart of the community. These spaces provide informal settings for activities such as meeting, resting, playing and holding events, good public spaces need to be appropriately sized and proportioned, many have trees within the space, the type of trees and their position will dictate the function of the space, so any new planting should be sure not to compromise the flexibility of the space.

Use

Sustainable places include a mix of uses that support everyday activities, including to live, work and play. Well- designed places have a mix of uses including local services and facilities to support daily life and an integrated mix of housing tenures and types to suit people at all stages of life. Your design code could seek to facilitate a mix of uses that reflect local needs and support community life.

Housing mix

Successful neighbourhoods contain a rich mix of people, including families and the elderly, young people and students, people with physical disabilities and those with mental health needs. This, in turn, requires a variety of housing in terms of tenure, type and construction. Your design code could help facilitate an appropriate mix of tenures and fair approaches to provision by providing additional guidance about where the tenures required by local or neighbourhood plan housing policy should be located and specifying tenure blind development.

Housing type

There are a wide variety of housing types and achieving the right mix is another component (along with tenure) of helping to create diverse, equitable and resilient communities where people are able to access the homes they want or need. Your design code could help facilitate an appropriate mix of housing types by providing additional guidance about where the types required by local or neighbourhood plan housing policy should be located and requiring a particular mix of types in a particular area; this could include a combination of housing types.

Community facilities

Community spaces are those that can be used by the wider public or specific resident groups for a range of activities. They play a vital role in the social life of communities, acting as a self-organising public service and supporting community cohesion. They can also create activity that supports local shops and other services. Your design codes could support the positive delivery and integration of community spaces into the area.

Homes and buildings

Well-designed homes and buildings are functional, accessible, inclusive and sustainable. They provide attractive environments that support the health and wellbeing of their users, they meet a diverse range of needs, are adequate in size, fit for purpose and adaptable and they relate positively to the spaces around them.

The built environment has a significant impact on people's health and wellbeing. This relates across the design code with regard to walkable neighbourhoods, access to greenery and recreation, attractive buildings and public spaces, space standards, and strong communities. There are also specific elements relating to the impact of the design of homes and buildings that affect wellbeing including daylight, aspect and privacy, noise mitigation, security and access to private outdoor space.

Lighting aspect and privacy

When preparing your design codes, give consideration to matters such as maximising access to natural daylight, privacy distances between the rear of properties and front gardens and privacy strips. Privacy distances are important but can have an impact on the density. There would not normally be a privacy distance at the front of the property.

Security

Housing plots need to include fences to the rear and defensible space/front gardens at the front with a boundary treatment or planting to keep people away from windows. Also consider the opportunity of security through natural surveillance.

Gardens

Access to external private space is important for people's wellbeing. This may include the size of back gardens related to the size or expected occupancy of the home. It may also include a requirement for a setback of the home from the street and provide guidance for how this is treated including the boundary treatment, such as a wall, hedge or fence.

Resources

Well-designed places and buildings conserve natural resources including buildings, land, water, energy and materials. A compact and walkable neighbourhood with a mix of uses and facilities reduces demand for energy and supports health and wellbeing.

Energy

The materials, construction and orientation of buildings dictate their energy efficiency. Consideration should be given to improving energy efficiency by addressing the selection of materials for thermal and solar performance, retrofitting existing buildings, design and orientation of buildings.

Some energy issues are most appropriately dealt with at the level of the neighbourhood rather than at building level. Your design code could help address neighbourhood level issues that contribute to meeting energy such as efficiency targets.

Sustainable construction

Your design code could also include guidance on sustainable construction including embodied energy, approach to construction and use of water. Design codes can include guidance that supports modern methods of construction by setting regular plot widths and encouraging the replication and repetition of plan types and layout elements. They can be used to limit requirements that make these methods more difficult to apply, such as excessive variety of form where this does not contradict the rhythm, building form and variety of the local context.

Water saving

The design of buildings and places can contribute to the efficient use of water. Your design codes can provide guidance and regulation around water saving measures.

Lifespan

Well-designed places sustain their beauty over the long term. They add to the quality of life of their users, and as a result, people are more likely to care for them over their lifespan.

Management

In preparing your design code give consideration to who is responsible for the management of public spaces, which might include individual residents and businesses managing private space, or a public authority.

Participation in design

Ensure there is a process for community participation in the production of your code. Consultation and co-design improve transparency, help to build trust, allow for valuable local knowledge to be gained, increase a sense of ownership over the completed development and help to build community cohesion and stakeholder buy-in. Your design codes can support meaningful participation.

AP2 - Draft Document Consultation

The local community should be involved in each stage of the preparation of your design code, and the National Model Design Code emphasises the importance of including communities in the creation of design codes in helping to shape the vision for their local area and provide clarity and certainty for developers and local development priorities.

The community involves all people living and working in and around the area for which the code is being produced together with local interest groups, stakeholders and elected representatives.

Wide engagement in the early stages can ensure many voices inform an understanding of a local area, and deep engagement in the later stages can allow for more appropriate design codes that reflect the needs and aspirations of the people who will be living and working in those areas. The form and approach for community engagement needs to be decided locally and co-designed with community groups.

You will need to build the knowledge of the community about the purpose, application and development of your design code. There may be a need for a period of networking, research and conversations to build a map of key interests and stakeholders. Initial engagement may include

- Surveying local hopes, preferences and fears as widely as possible

- Setting up community panels or forums to represent the views of local communities in the development of the design code

- Publicise the process widely, with an emphasis on groups whose views may have been under-represented in the past

- Definition and mapping of character area types

- Agree on the content and wording of the design code guidance

The process should be transparent and collaborative and precede each stage of the design code production. At each stage, it should be easy for participants to engage with the process and see how their inputs have been used to develop the code through its preparation.

Engagement processes can have social benefits that extend beyond the task being undertaken, such as strengthening community cohesion and making connections between people who might not otherwise have met or interacted. Community engagement enablers may work closely with established organisations and groups within the community to organise events.

All design codes will need evidence to show the community consultation undertaken and the support for the code. As a minimum, evidence of the community support will need to:

- Show how the process was publicised to the local community

- Explain the extent to which different groups within the local community were involved and the different methods used so that the views of the whole community have been reflected

- Include details of the community engagement carried out at each stage, including meetings and other consultation events, and record of the outcome of these. This can include questionnaires and surveys undertaken

- Explain how the community engagement has shaped the initial proposal and its evolution at each stage, including any changes made.

- Provide a record of the community support for the proposal including that there is majority support from those involved in the process.

- Allow opportunities to comment on the proposal.
- Include a record of parish council or steering group meetings including minutes, detailing support for the process at each stage
- Explain how the community group was selected and its terms of reference and relationship with the parish council.

See apendix 3 for an example of a table to fill out after each consultation to help you demonstrate the extent to which you have engaged with the community on your design code during its preparation.

Working with stakeholders

To inform the code encourage stakeholders and officers to contribute regularly, push for a high quality and aspirational code and inform and support the process. Involving officers will be key as they will be responsible for assessing applications against the requirements of the code and engage with applicants.

Working with highways authorities

Seek early input from the highways officers at HCC to ensure the agreed vision drives the preparation of the code. You should maintain an on-going dialogue with them to ensure strategic issues, operational constraints,

funding and maintenance considerations are all taken account of.

Working with developers and landowners

If your design code is focussing on a particular development site involving the landowner and a potential developer will allow for valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities. While developers and landowners might be initially apprehensive to be involved in the coding process, their engagement should be centred on outlining the benefits and opportunities of a code for the site.

Determining support

By the end of the engagement on your design code, you will need to be able to demonstrate that you have a good amount of community support. Activities that achieve this will need to be determined locally, there are a number of established techniques set out in the engagement guidance, as well as new emerging community engagement techniques, which you can use to show us that your approach to coding your area has a good level of community support. Remember that you can also use a mix of digital technology and social media platforms alongside traditional methods can support this.

AP3 - Finalising Draft Document and Submission

An enforceable code ensures developers adhere to requirements and provides a streamlined process for approving codes prepared by others. To ensure enforceability, coding can prepare checklists that give applicants an understanding of how their application is assessed against the requirements of the code.

Basic checklists

Outline the requirements applicants are expected to adhere to and identify those aspects of the code that different types of development should address

Compliance trackers

Enable judgement as to whether an application achieves the relevant requirements, supports Planning Officers in negotiations with developers and helps manage conflict

'Comply or Justify' principles

When a proposal deviates from the requirements within the design code an evidence-based justification must be provided; the justification is included in the planning balanced assessment determined as part of the planning process.

Code Language

Code language uses finite and clear sentences and is clear and enforceable using binary terms like "must", "will", and "required" which leave no room for interpretation. Be sure to avoid using vague and subjective words, for example when referring to certain architectural styles such as contemporary, innovative or pastiche; this may lead to confusion and disagreements about the application and enforcement of the code.

Your code must allow an objective evaluation and comparison, for instance, instead of large windows, the code should specify the required window-to-façade ratio. Instead of describing a space as comfortable, the code should define the parameters for microclimatic factors to demonstrate how the space achieves the desired level of comfort.

Avoid phrases that use words which introduce ambiguity and subjectivity to coding requirements, for example: "New development must use the same brick type, size, bond and mortar detailing as found on existing buildings as set out in the following diagram" instead of "New development must respond to the local material palette".

Use words that both professionals and non-professionals can understand, avoid architectural and planning jargon and frame statements in plain English instead. Avoid acronyms unless they are widely recognised, especially sector-specific ones. Also, consider including a glossary of terms at the end of your code.

Remember that aligning with key policies and priorities of the Local and Neighbourhood Plans can help ensure you design codes adoption and enhances the influence and enforceability of your code.

Graphics

Images, graphics or any other visual tools can support coding language, they improve accessibility and user understanding, to ensure design expectations can be effectively communicated, reducing misinterpretation. Graphics help to illustrate key concepts, ensuring a shared understanding of the code's requirements while tying it to place and local character.

When referencing images in your code, clearly outline which elements of those images you do and do not wish to see replicated. This can be achieved by annotating any photos or graphics to explain the design intent of the chosen image.

Ticks and crosses are a simple and effective way to explain binary design choices when defining requirements. They clearly exemplify what will be allowed. In addition, it can be helpful to illustrate the metrics of a specific requirement, this is particularly useful for coding for built form.

To exemplify the type of space you want to create, illustrate multiple requirements simultaneously. For example, create an illustration of an indicative development proposal that cross-references to different code requirements or an illustration of all the requirements for one characteristic.

Code Structure

The structure of your code plays a vital role in ensuring clarity, accessibility and effective implementation. A well-structured document allows for efficient reference and comprehension. Tailoring the structure of your design code document to align with the scale of your code will ensure that it is relevant, context-specific and actionable.

Consider how different groups will use the code, user experience and how they navigate the code should be key to how you structure it. While not every page needs to follow the same format rigidly, consistency will make information easy to find and reference, a typical coding page could include the following information:

- Mandatory coding requirements and additional guidance. This is the list of "must" and "should" statements but should differentiate it from guidance statements.

- Reasoning for a specific requirement or section and why it is important.

- Diagram(s) that illustrate the coding requirements; note the previous graphics section
- A checklist that allows users to review whether they have covered the requirements

Consider testing your draft design code with a number of stakeholders. Getting various user perspectives, including those of planning officers' developers and built environment professionals, local interest groups and the public will be beneficial to ensuring that your design code is an effective tool from all perspectives. Also be sure to review your design code to ensure it meets your own initial aims.

Bring together all requirements and visuals into the final version of the document ready for adoption, ensuring clarity, coherence, and accessibility ensuring your code is practical, legible, and enforceable.

AGREE & PRIORITISE

Key Stages Checklist

Once these steps have been completed you can move onto the next stage

Step 5 – Prioritising and planning action

- [ ] Make sense of the information you have gathered about your area
- [ ] Consult with members of your community and identify the key design criteria that your code will address

Step 6 – Drafting your Design Code

- [ ] Keep it short, visual and numerical wherever possible – Your code must be clear and brief, concentrate on essential points, should be illustrated with analytical diagrams, and must be written and presented in a way that can be understood by both professionals and non-professionals.
- [ ] Keep it practical – Your code must apply to practical choices that are achievable in the design and construction without unduly restricting the opportunities for creativity.
- [ ] Set definitive requirements through the use of language – Your code must set requirements to which a design can clearly conform or not conform (words like, 'must', 'will' and 'required').

- [ ] Guidance can also be usefully included but this must be made clearly distinct from the codes (words like, 'should', 'could', 'would', 'generally')
- [ ] Keep it real – Your code must provide sufficient information to direct design to what is demonstrably popular in such a way that the results will be recognised by the local community, while allowing opportunities for creative input.
- [ ] Keep it relevant – What is coded must be relevant to the area that is being coded, taking into account the context and scale of development.
- [ ] Carry out a public consultation, including us as a consultee, on you draft code and document all submitted comments and make changes from these comments

Step 7 – Finalising your Design Code

- [ ] If you a creating a standalone document formally submit your code and consultation material to us for the final public consultation and adoption

Framework Stage

Deliver & Monitor

Launch

Evidence

Deliver and Monitor

Agree and Priortise

DM1 - Adoption of the Code

We suggest the best approach to take when preparing your design code is to bring it forward as part of the preparation of a neighbourhood plan, working to the same plan area. This approach will give the code a design policy in the neighbourhood plan to work in conjunction with, it will also allow the design code to be adopted as part of the plan when the final version of the document is voted for at the neighbourhood plan referendum.

If, however, you decide to prepare your design code as a standalone document the document will need to go through its own adoption process. In considering the code for adoption as an SPD the following brief information should be available to support its submission:

- How the code working group formed.
- The extent and type of publicity for the project.
- The extent and opportunities for community participation and involvement during the various project stages.

- The extent of further local consultation and the availability of the draft code in the village for public comments.
- The extent of liaison and consultation with our planning officers during its preparation.
- That the final draft of the code has the formal support and endorsement of the parish council.

After submission to us, following an at least 4 week statutory public consultation which we will undertake, the final version of your design code will then progress to be adopted by us as a Supplementary Planning Document. This will ensure it has the necessary weight so that a potential developer will have to have regard the contents of the code when preparing their planning application and our officers will have to have regard to the code when determining an application.

DM2 - Implementation of the Code

Once the code is formally adopted the next phase is about integrating the code into everyday planning practices and ensuring consistent use. Successful implementation requires strong management engagement, ongoing training, and regular monitoring.

Ongoing management, monitoring, and enforcement of the design code's implementation, to ensure compliance, will facilitate its integration into development process of a site.

DM3 - Monitor and Review

Monitoring provides evidence about what is working and what needs to be improved or refined. It should allow you to gauge the extent to which planning applications comply to your code by tracking outcomes against the objectives within your code. Monitoring the performance of your code is easiest when the requirements are mandatory (developers must) rather than preferred (developers should), mandatory requirements can be assessed simply by determining whether they have or have not been complied with in a planning application with a compliance checklist, those requirements which aren't being complied with will be the ones which require updating before any others.

You may also consider engaging with the community to gauge its opinion the quality of any new development which has come forward and whether they can see the positive influence your design code has had in creating successful places.

The evidence you gather from your monitoring should allow you to show both the positive outcomes but also suggest where certain aspects of your code are falling short so you can make necessary adjustments through a review of your code.

DELIVER & MONITOR

Key Stages Checklist

Step 8 – Code adoption

- [ ] If a standalone document we will progress your code to Cabinet to be considered for adoption as SPD before being recommended to the Council for adoption

Step 9 – Implementing, monitoring and reviewing your code

- [ ] Make sure they are enforced – Local authorities must use or establish a process for the approval of codes prepared by others and all codes must be enforced at appropriate points in the process.

- [ ] Allow them to change over time – Your design code should reflect changes in social, technical and environmental circumstances and so should be reviewed from time to time, taking into account feedback from the outcomes of the code.

Examples and External Guidance

National Model Design Code
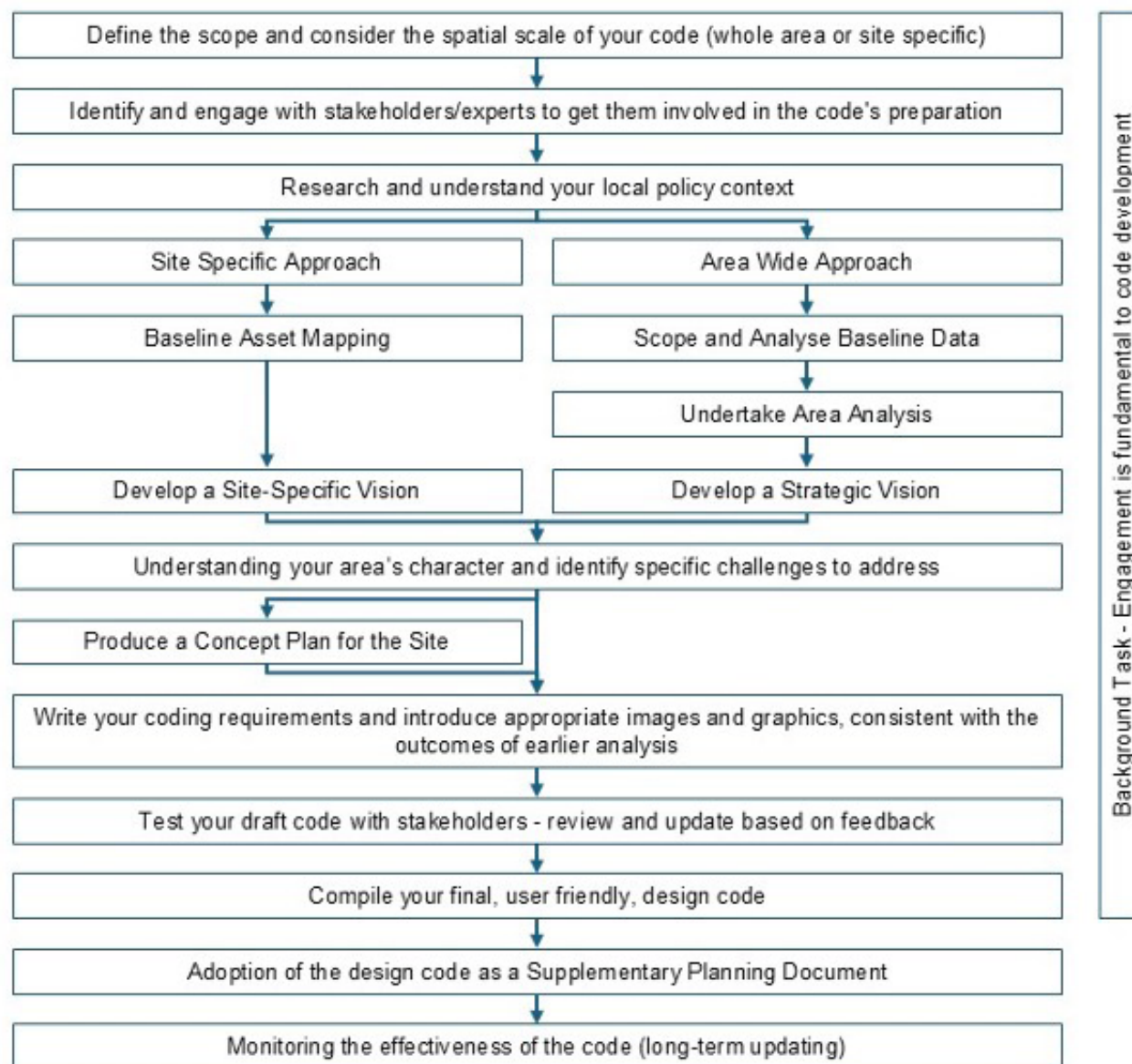National_Model_Design_Code.pdf

National Design Guide
National_design_guide.pdf

Design Council
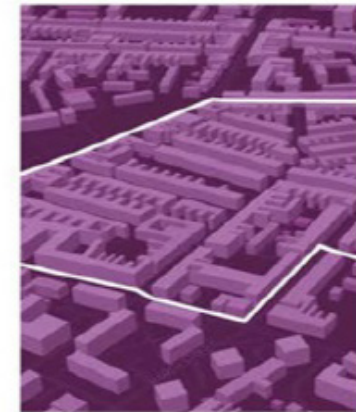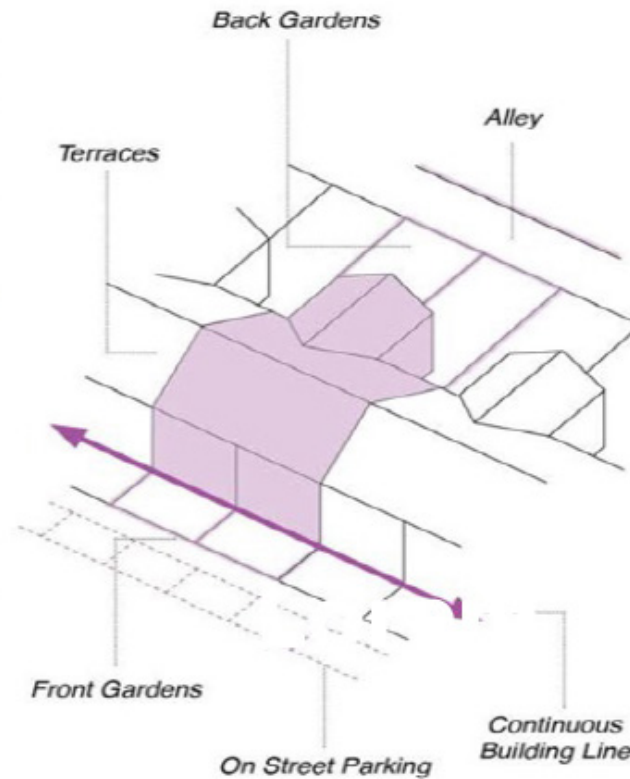https://www.designcouncil.org.uk/design-codes

Office for Place
https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/office-for-place

Appendix A: Design Code Flowchart

Define the scope and consider the spatial scale of your code (whole area or site specific)

↓

Identify and engage with stakeholders/experts to get them involved in the code's preparation

↓

Research and understand your local policy context

↓

Site Specific Approach	Area Wide Approach
Baseline Asset Mapping	Scope and Analyse Baseline Data
	Undertake Area Analysis
Develop a Site-Specific Vision	Develop a Strategic Vision

↓

Understanding your area's character and identify specific challenges to address

↓

Produce a Concept Plan for the Site

↓

Write your coding requirements and introduce appropriate images and graphics, consistent with the outcomes of earlier analysis

↓

Test your draft code with stakeholders - review and update based on feedback

↓

Compile your final, user friendly, design code

↓

Adoption of the design code as a Supplementary Planning Document

↓

Monitoring the effectiveness of the code (long-term updating)

Background Task - Engagement is fundamental to code development

Appendix B – Character Area Assessment Summary

The contents include:

- a diagram showing the average block size (could be more related to streetscape).

- photos of key architectural features and materials (in this example, red brick and prominent bay windows).

- A drawing showing the building line, set back and garden arrangement.

- A 3D plan showing heights and density.

Appendix 3 – Consultation Template

Consultation Stage	Engagement Method	Who was consulted	Who responded	Summary of Comment Received	Project Group Response	Action
1- Initial consultation event	Stall set up at village fete asking the public to complete a survey on design in the village	Community wide consultation	46 responses	• Design of recent development has not been in keeping with the existing character • Concern the upcoming housing will look out of place • Want new housing to respect the heritage and natural surroundings	Off the back of consultation decided to proceed with a design code	Feedback will be taken into consideration as part of first draft of document