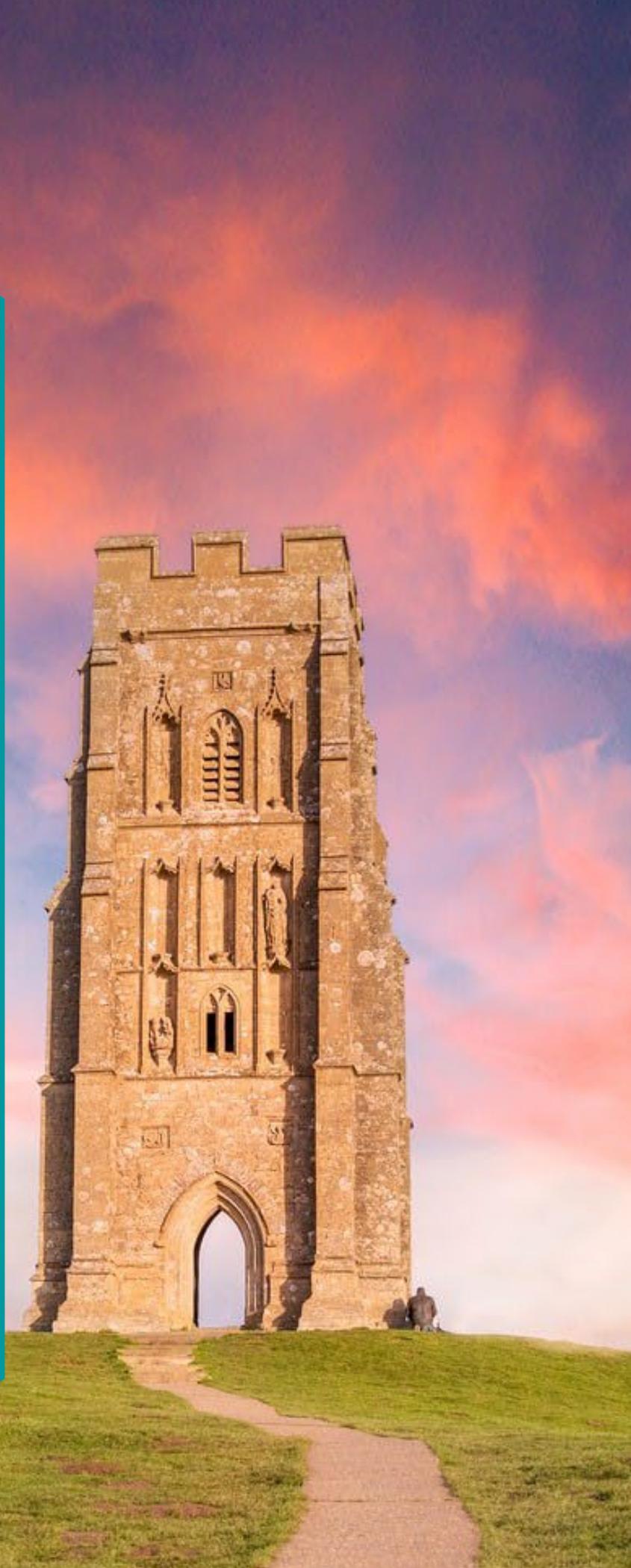


Mendip Design Code

Consultation Strategy



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Introduction

This Consultation Strategy sets out the Council’s approach to consultation and engagement in relation to the production of design codes to consistently achieve high quality design within the Council area.

In line with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2021, that “*all guides and codes should be based on effective community engagement and reflect local aspirations for the development of their area*”, we are committed to making the design code process as inclusive as possible and ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to be involved.

This strategy document will explain how the Council will engage local communities, individuals and organisations with a stake in the built environment throughout the design code process, what it is we will be engaging on, and how the information and feedback gained will be used.

It is hoped that the methods outlined in this strategy will be useful beyond just the design code process and will inform best practice within the Council for consultation and engagement in the preparation of other planning documents or projects.



Purpose of the Engagement

It is a clear requirement of the 2021 NPPF for all local authorities to produce a design code or similar level of design guidance:

Para 128: *'To provide maximum clarity about design expectations at an early stage, all local planning authorities should prepare design guides or codes consistent with the principles set out in the National Design Guide and National Model Design Code, and which reflect local character and design preferences'*.

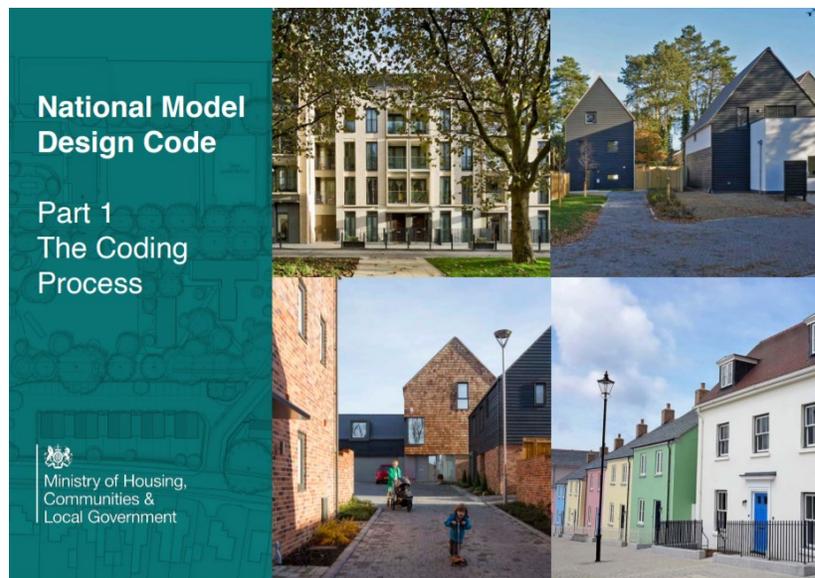
A design code is set of simple, concise, illustrated design requirements which set out the key criteria and parameters for the physical development of a site or area.

They provide clarity on what is expected of developments at the beginning of the design process, setting out requirements for how the built environment will look and function, and can be used to encompass many other forms of good planning and place-making.

They are predominantly a visual document which are easy to understand and use and are based on local issues and community aspirations.

Paragraph 129 of the NPPF states that *'all guides and codes should be based on effective community engagement and reflect local aspirations for the development of their area'*.

The National Model Design Code (2021) provides detailed guidance on the production of design codes with consultation playing a role in every stage of its development. A robust consultation strategy is therefore required to ensure that the requirements of the NPPF and the National Model Design Code are met to ensure that any locally produced codes are an accurate representation of the communities needs and desires for their local area.



Well-planned, effective, and consistent stakeholder engagement also has many identifiable benefits:

- It builds trust between the local authority and identified stakeholders and fosters long-term relationships between them

-
- Opportunity to influence – it gives local people and communities the opportunity to influence decisions that will affect them
 - Knowledge of local issues - it taps into local knowledge and expertise and allows a better understanding of the day-to-day experience of people in their communities
 - Community understanding – it enables everyone to know about and understand how complex some of the local issues may be
 - A sense of ownership – it supports community spirit and encourages the local people to take control of their own neighbourhoods, which will increase the chances of a successful outcome
 - Promotes community buy-in and higher levels of community ownership of planning instruments
 - Improved communication between all stakeholders which can result in reduced conflict within stakeholder groups, as individuals and communities can hear and understand each other's points of view, leading to consensus
 - Enhanced wellbeing and increased levels of satisfaction through local people being genuinely involved in decisions.
 - Increased openness and accessibility.
 - Promotion of social inclusion.
 - Increased sustainability – Sustainable change can only happen if communities are involved from the start.

It is hoped that the consultation strategy outlined within this document will result in the production of design codes throughout the Council area which have been produced as a result of meaningful dialogue and strong and ongoing partnerships with all identified stakeholders, in line with best current practice.

This will allow the strategy to adopt a clear approach to identify engagement objectives, anticipated outcomes and help to determine the scope and depth of the engagement process.

Engagement Scope

All settlements within the district are to be included for consideration within the Mendip Design Code Programme. This will include:

Towns	Frome, Glastonbury, Shepton Mallet, Street, Wells
Villages	Baltonsborough, Beckington, Butleigh, Chewton Mendip, Chilcompton, Coleford, Croscombe, Ditcheat, Draycott, Evercreech, Mells, Norton St Philip, Nunney, Rode, Stoke St Michael, Westbury sub Mendip
	Binegar/Gurney Slade, Coxley, Doultong, Faulkland, Holcombe, Kilmersdon, The Lydfords Meare/Westhay, Oakhill, Walton, West Pennard, Wookey, Wookey Hole

The National Model Design Code sets out the process for the production of a local design code and clearly outlines the stages in which consultation with the various stakeholders in the project are required, and the information that each period of consultation is aiming to acquire.

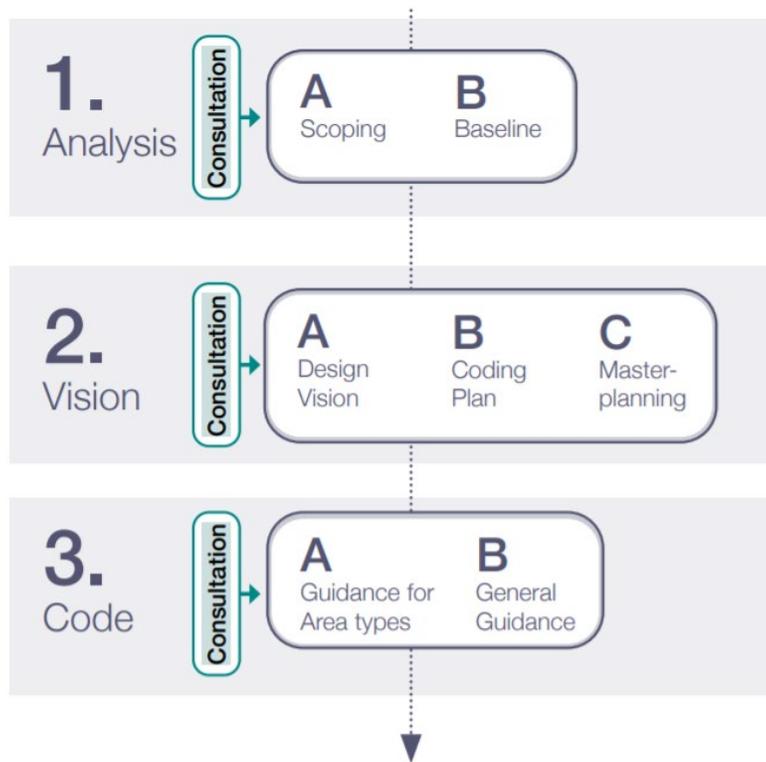


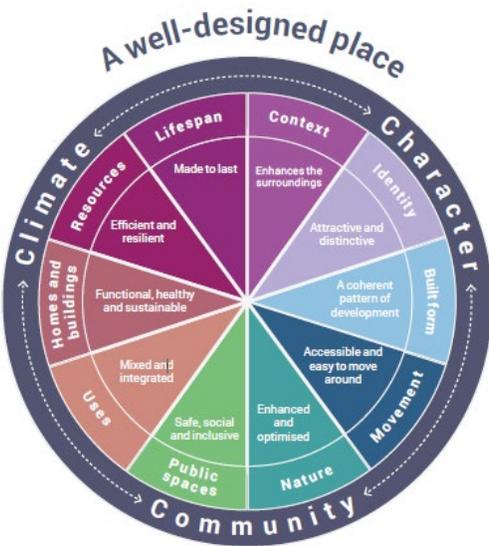
Figure 1: Design Code Process – National Model Design Code 2021

Stage 1.A Analysis (Scoping)

The guide states that the scoping stage in the first part of design code development should include the production of a consultation strategy. This will include details of the stages in which consultation will take place, what engagement methods will be used and how the various identified groups involved in the project will be actively engaged.

Once this strategy has been produced, the first stage of consultation will include:

- Explaining to groups about what a code is and how it will be developed, including the introduction of the 10 characteristics of a well-designed place
- Consultation with groups about the inclusion of their area within the design code programme and the potential for what a code could deliver



10 Characteristics of Well Designed Places

(National Design Guide Extract)

Stage 2.A Vision

The second stage of consultation consists of engaging with communities and stakeholders to analyse the exciting character of the local area and to envision how that character will change in the future. The national design code also emphasizes the need for widespread local input through the use of workshops and surveys to maximize engagement to acquire an understanding of the aspects of local character that people value and those that they would like to change.

In addition to the details above, consultation and engagement will take place at the following stages:

- The potential content of the code for the local area to address the issues identified within the visioning process
- Consultation on draft documents including the draft design vision for the area and the draft code itself

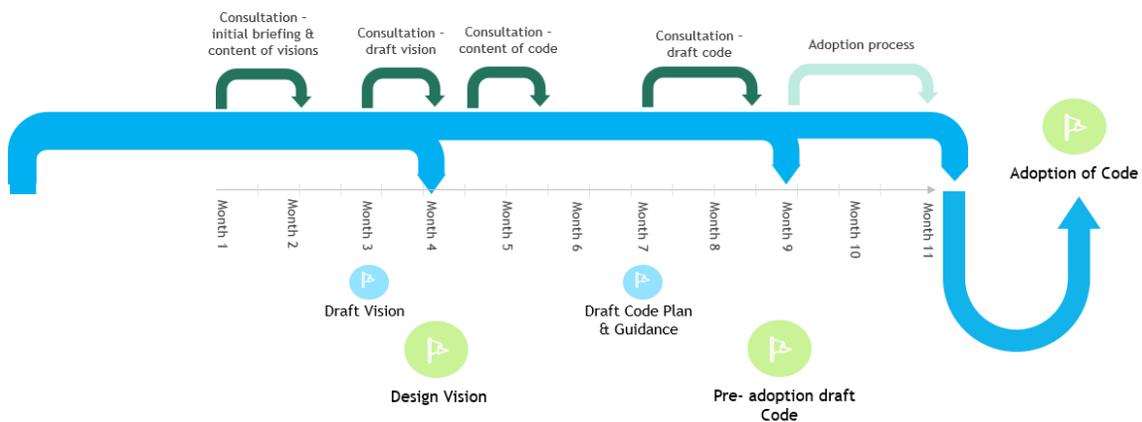


Figure 2 – Timeline for production of a local design code

If the code for a local area is to include the production of a masterplan for a specific allocated site, this will be subject to a separate community engagement exercise in partnership with the owner/developer.

The engagement process for the production of design codes will not focus on:

- Individual planning applications
- Future potential site allocations
- Any planning matter which cannot be covered through a design code
- Any other civil matter associated with the built environment

All stakeholders associated with the local built environment are to be engaged as part of the design coding process. The main stakeholders are identified within this strategy.

This level of engagement is necessary due to the complex nature and scale of the design code programme. It is not expected that the same level of consultation will be required for future consultations related to the production of other Supplementary Planning Documents by the Council.

Engagement Objectives

The overarching objective for this strategy is that all forms of consultation and engagement undertaken as part of the Design Code Programme is of the highest quality and is in line with established best practice.

In order to achieve this all consultation will be carried out in accordance with both the established Gunning Principles and the TCI Principles (The Consultation Institute).

Gunning Principles

The Gunning Principles state that consultation is only legitimate if 4 conditions can be met:

1. Proposals are still at a formative stage - a final decision has not yet been made, or predetermined, by the decision makers
2. There is sufficient information to give 'intelligent consideration' - the information provided must relate to the consultation and must be available, accessible, and easily interpretable for consultees to provide an informed response
3. There is adequate time for consideration and response
4. 'Conscientious consideration' must be given to the consultation responses before a decision is made - decision-makers should be able to provide evidence that they took consultation responses into account



TCI Principles

The Consultation Institute sets out 7 key principles in the development and execution of effective consultation:

Principle	Description	How requirement will be met
Visibility	To ensure that in any consultation that all those who have a justifiable right to participate are made reasonably aware.	All consultation events will be appropriately advertised using a variety of mediums to ensure that the maximum number of people are made aware.
Accessibility	Engagement should be designed to be accessible to and clearly targeted at those people the consultation is intended to reach.	This Consultation Strategy outlines how all stakeholders within the design code project will have an opportunity to be involved.
Transparency	Consultation should be an open and transparent process. The scope of the consultation and the level of influence should be made clear.	The public availability of this Consultation Strategy will provide clarity on how all engagement within the project will take place.
Disclosure	Consultation is a two-way process. Those delivering the consultation should disclose any information that could materially influence a consultee response. Consultees should make clear and disclose any information that may be relevant.	The design code programme is intended to be run in partnership with the various identified stakeholders, with a clear expectation of what is required from all involved. This will be communicated to all participants throughout the consultation process.
Fair Interpretation	Consultation responses should be considered carefully and clear feedback given.	This Consultation Strategy outlines how and at what stages of the programme feedback will be provided to consultees.
Publication	This entails 3 parts: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Community engagement should be at a stage where there is scope to influence the change 2. Ensuring that there is an appropriate timeframe to enable informed 	This Consultation Strategy will outline the stages at which stakeholders will be engaged, the timescales for participation, and how the results of the consultation will be made available.

	responses or participation 3. Clear feedback and publication of the results, findings or change should be published and accessible	
Integrity	Consultation should be honest, transparent and flexible to change and external influence if necessary.	The publication of this Consultation Strategy will provide clarity and transparency on how all engagement will take place within the design code programme. The strategy is designed to allow flexibility where necessary.

Public Participation Spectrum

The level of consultation proposed within the Design Code Programme is intended to achieve the ‘Collaborate’ level of engagement as described below.

This recognises that the local authority will work in partnership with the identified project stakeholders and that the responses and views of consultees will be incorporated into subsequent decisions within the design code process to the maximum extent possible. This is considered to be the highest level of engagement possible within the design code process.

	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
Purpose	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision making in the hands of the public.
Expectation	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed,	We will work with you to	We will work together with you	We will implement what you decide.

	listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision. We will seek your feedback on drafts and proposals.	ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	formulate solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.
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In addition to meeting the above requirements, the consultation process will aim to also meet the following objectives:

1. Build stronger relationships with communities and stakeholders –

Develop links and establish dialogue with key groups, individuals and organisations on design and planning issues in the local area and to feed in local information to help shape a project as it develops.

2. Empower people to participate in and take a lead in the design process -

Introduce local communities and other stakeholders to the design & placemaking and how it can influence and improve our lives. Work in partnership with identified stakeholders to create a design code that effectively tackles issues local to the area and delivers the aspirations of the local community for how the local area should evolve moving forward.

3. Engagement focuses on the best interests of the community –

Engagement is undertaken in the best interests of the whole community rather than of any individual person or group.

4. Engagement is open, honest and meaningful –

Engagement draws the attention of the community to all relevant information, and the purpose and general effect of the design code programme. The community is also provided

with genuine opportunities to participate in and contribute to the design code process and is kept informed of the progress of the project.

5. Approaches to engagement are inclusive and appropriate -

Engagement is inclusive, appropriate to the needs of the community, and commensurate with the scale and complexity of the design code project within the local area.

6. Information is timely and relevant -

The community is provided with information in a timely manner which allows for input before decisions are made. Sufficient time is allowed for the community to consider information and then make a meaningful contribution to the design code process.



Context Analysis

Mendip is a rural district, covering an area of 738 square kilometres. It has a resident population of 113,513 (2017 mid-year estimates) with a workday population of 104, 678 (2011 census). The mid-year estimates made in 2017 suggested that the population breakdown within the district was the following:

Age	Percentage of population
0-17	20.6%
18-64	56.7%
65-74	13.2%
75+	10.1%

It is expected that the percentage shares of those aged 65+ are set to increase in line with national and regional trends.

With regards to ethnicity, 94.24% of the population are White British and 5.76% are Non-White British (including 1.993% BME).

Further information can be found on the [Somerset Intelligence](#) website.

The district contains five principal towns: Frome, Glastonbury, Shepton Mallet, Street and Wells. In addition to this, there are in excess of 100 smaller rural settlements, varying in size from the large villages to small hamlets. 89% of the premises within the district have access to superfast broadband.

With regards to education, there are 58 schools in the district, including 5 State Secondary Schools. There are also 2 Further Education establishments located in Frome (Frome Community College) and Street (Strode College).



Mendip’s natural and man-made environments are highly diverse and this is a distinctive feature of the district. The complex geology, topography, hydrology and geography of the area have resulted in habitats and landscapes of distinctive character and high visual quality and a demonstrable variation of settlement layout and building styles.

The existing context of the district briefly described above is a significant consideration when delivering an effective programme of consultation as part of the design coding process.

Stakeholder Analysis

A stakeholder is anyone who will be affected by or intends to be actively involved with a project. Identification of key stakeholders is vital to engaging with all of those who can contribute or can influence and encourage others to contribute.

For the purposes of the design-code programme, a stakeholder is considered to be anyone who will actively be involved in the production of a design code or would be affected by a design code once it has been formerly adopted as part of the development control process.

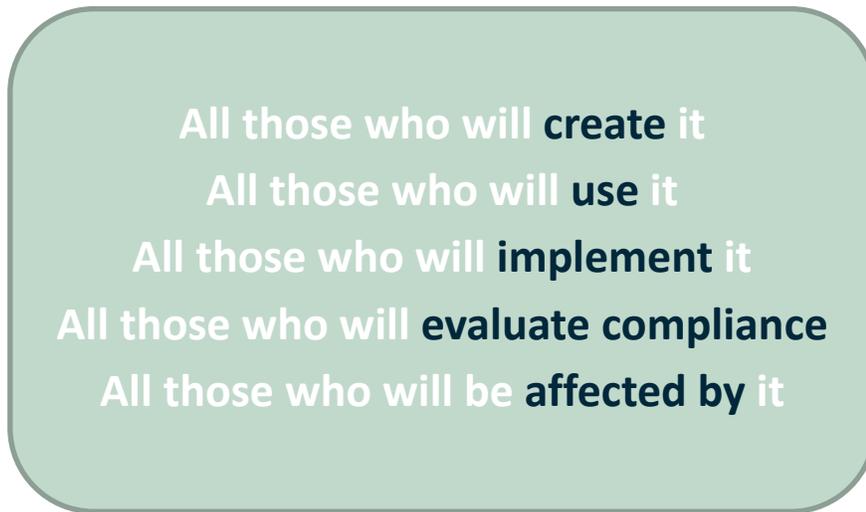


Figure 3: Stakeholders in the design code process

Due to the scale of the design code programme, there will be a large number of stakeholders involved. The list of identified stakeholders below is therefore not exhaustive but instead indicates who the major stakeholder groups are along with details of how they will be identified at a local/settlement level.

Not all stakeholders in a particular group or sub-group will necessarily share the same concerns or have unified opinions or priorities. This section explores how to understand and identify stakeholders who should be involved in the engagement process, analyse how best to engage and identify any potential barriers to this engagement.

Identify Stakeholders

This section will identify the main groups of stakeholders involved within the design code process and will give details of how they will be identified at a local/settlement level as part of each individual engagement event across the district.

This list is not exhaustive and also relates to successor bodies where re-organisations occur. It may also be appropriate to consult specialist teams within the Council as part of the design code process.

Stakeholder	Details	Local Identification
Local		
Local Communities	Focus on ‘communities of place’ where people identify with a defined geographical area, e.g. a council ward, a housing development or a neighbourhood.	Targeting geographical areas with assistance of local councils and elected members.
Parish/Town/City Councils	Covering all settlements within the district – including ‘Parish Meetings’.	Existing contacts through local planning authority.
Businesses	Local businesses affected by the design code programme- will focus on existing or potential businesses in mixed use areas.	Through contact with the local Chamber of Commerce and through web-based research and fieldwork.
Schools/Colleges	Engagement will focus on secondary schools and colleges.	Existing contacts through local authority.
Resident/Interest Groups	Any formal groups of people who live together in an area who wish to represent the community or have a shared interest e.g. Community Sustainable Transport Initiatives. Included web-based or virtual groups.	Research of social media, websites for local groups and with the assistance of local councils and elected members.
Significant Landowners	Landowners of large or strategically important parcels of land.	Existing local authority contacts and information held through the local plan process.
Landowners of allocated sites/promoting sites for development	Landowners of allocated sites within the exiting Local Plan or those which are currently being promoted either through the local plan process or through the planning application process (focus on sites capable of accommodating 5 or more dwellings).	Information held through the local plan process.
Mendip Hills AONB	Officers and other professionals associated with the AONB, along with residents and users of the AONB.	Direct communication with the Mendip Hills AONB unit.

Cranborne Chase AONB	Officers and other professionals associated with the AONB, along with residents and users of the AONB within the Mendip area.	Direct communication with the Cranborne Chase AONB unit.
Neighbourhood Planning Groups	Active Neighbourhood Plan Steering Groups within the district who have a neighbourhood plan in place/in production or have aspirations to produce one.	Existing local planning authority contacts of known steering groups within the district. Use assistance of parish/town/city councils to identify any additional steering groups.
Local Wildlife Trusts	Any local resident groups or official charitable trusts within the local area.	Web-based research, information from AONB units and local councils
Local Amenity Societies	Including local Civic Societies and local history/architecture/archaeological groups.	Existing contacts through local planning authority, web-based research, and assistance through local councils.
District-wide		
Developers	Developers associated with major applications or those related to sites for 5 or more dwellings.	Contacts provided within existing and past planning applications (for past 3 years) and potential future sites through the local plan process.
Planning Agents	Planning agents who are known to operate throughout the district.	Contacts provided within existing and past planning applications (for past 3 years) and through the established 'Agents Forum'.
Architects/Surveyors	Architects/Surveyors who are known to operate throughout the district.	Contacts provided within existing and past planning applications (for past 3 years) and through the established 'Agents Forum'.
Elected Members	Elected members at ward and parish/town/city level. Relevant Parliamentary elected members will also be included.	Contacts provided through local authority.

Regional/National		
Environment Agency	National executive non-departmental public body with the aim to create 'better places and support sustainable development'.	Contact details publicly available.
Homes England	National executive non-departmental public body with the aim to accelerate housing within England.	Contact details publicly available.
Natural England	National executive non-departmental public body advising on the natural environment in England.	Contact details publicly available.
Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)	Heart of the South West LEP, covers the south west of England including Somerset. Aim to lead and influence economic growth.	Contact details publicly available.
Police/Emergency Services	Focus on specialists within these organisations	Contact details publicly available and through local planning authority for specialist contacts related to planning.
Health Organisations	Local health practitioners e.g., GP surgeries, hospitals operating within the local area, including the Somerset NHS Foundation Trust.	Web-based research to locate facilities and to acquire relevant contact information.
Somerset County Council/ New Somerset Council	Includes SCC responsibilities covering minerals and waste, flooding, rights of way, biodiversity, environmental protection, equality) and highways.	Contact details provided through local authority.
Housing Associations	Major providers of new affordable housing for rent.	Contact details provided local authority.
Registered Social Landlords	Social landlords based locally within the district.	Contact details provided local authority.
Sustrans	Registered charity to promote active and sustainable travel across the UK.	Contact details publicly available.
Church and Faith Groups	Recognised as a 'community of interest' where people share a particular experience, interest, identity or characteristic.	Web-based research, assistance of local councils and elected members.
Cultural Organisations, Individuals	Bodies which represent the interests of racial, ethnic or national groups	Seek advice from the council's equalities officer

	e.g Gypsies, Travellers & Showpeople	and those with roles/responsibilities within the Council/County Council who already engage with the groups.
Historic England	A public body that looks after England's historic environment.	Contact details publicly available.
CPRE	Campaign to Protect Rural England is a charity in England to support and promote the countryside.	Contact details publicly available.
Internal (within Local Authority)		
Development Management Officers	Planning and Planning Policy Officers	Contacts available within local authority
Specialist Officers	Including Conservation, Tree, Landscape, Climate Change, SUDs, Economic Development and Sustainable Travel Officers.	Contacts available within local authority.

In order to effectively engage with each stakeholder, it is important to understand how they will be affected by the outcomes of the project, what their level of interest should be (particularly as the effects of the design code project would create long-term changes within the area), and the level of understanding they will have of the relevant issues.

This step involves analysing each of your identified stakeholders against certain criteria.

The two key criteria to analyse stakeholders against are:

- 1) extent to which they are interested (low to high)
- 2) ability to influence outcomes (low to high).

The results of the above informs the following for each stakeholder:

- The priority of a stakeholder within the consultation strategy (If a stakeholder has a low level of interest and a low level of influence of a project then they may be a lower priority)
- The level of information and support each stakeholder will require to actively engage
- The method(s) of engagement which are most appropriate for each stakeholder

This information is summarised within the table below:

Stakeholder	Level of Interest	Level of Influence	Level of Support Needed	Priority	Principal Methods of Engagement
Communities	High	High	High	High	Public meetings, public displays, workshops, webinars, website, surveys, walking tours, digital mapping
Parish/Town/City Councils	High	High	High	High	Public meetings, workshops, webinars, steering groups
Businesses	Low	Low	High	Low	Webinars, public displays, surveys, website
Schools/Colleges	Mid	High	High	High	Workshops, surveys
Resident/Interest Groups	High	High	High	High	Steering groups, workshops
Significant Landowners	High	High	High	High	Website, workshops, steering groups, webinars
Landowners of allocated sites/promoting sites for development	High	High	High	High	Website, workshops, steering groups, webinars
Mendip Hills AONB	High	High	Low	High	Workshops, steering group, webinar, digital mapping
Cranborne Chase AONB	Low	High	Low	Mid	Workshops, steering group, webinar, digital mapping
Neighbourhood Planning Groups	High	High	Mid	High	workshops, webinars, steering groups
Local Wildlife Trusts	Mid	Mid	Mid	Mid	Workshops, webinar
Local Amenity Societies	High	High	Mid	High	Workshops, steering group, webinar, digital mapping

Developers	High	High	Mid	High	Website, workshops, steering groups, webinars, surveys
Planning Agents	High	High	Mid	High	Website, workshops, steering groups, webinars, surveys
Architects/Surveyors	High	High	Mid	High	Website, workshops, steering groups, webinars, surveys
Elected Members	High	High	High	High	Website, workshops, steering groups, webinars, walking tours
Environment Agency	Mid	Mid	Low	Mid	Webinar, website, steering groups
Homes England	Mid	Mid	Low	Mid	Webinar, website, steering groups
Natural England	Mid	High	Low	High	Webinar, website, steering groups
Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)	Low	Low	High	Low	Webinar, website, steering groups
Police/Emergency Services	Mid	High	Mid	High	Webinar, website, steering groups, digital mapping
Health Organisations	Low	Mid	Mid	Mid	Webinar, website, steering groups
Somerset County Council/ New Somerset Council	High	High	Low	High	Webinar, website, steering groups, workshops
Housing Associations	High	High	High	High	Webinar, website, steering groups, workshops
Registered Social Landlords	Mid	Mid	High	Mid	Webinar, website, workshops
Sustrans	Mid	High	Low	High	Webinar, website, steering groups, digital mapping
Church and Faith Groups	Low	Low	High	Low	Workshops, webinars, walking tours, public meetings
Cultural Organisations, Individuals	Low	Low	High	Low	Workshops, webinars, walking

					tours, public meetings
Historic England	Mid	High	Low	High	Webinar, website, workshops
CPRE	Mid	Mid	Low	Mid	Webinar, website, workshops
Development Management Officers	High	High	Low	High	Workshops, webinars, website, steering groups, walking tours, digital mapping, surveys
Specialist Officers	High	High	Low	High	Workshops, webinars, website, steering groups, walking tours, digital mapping

Consultation on the production of a design code can be split into a number of different stages:

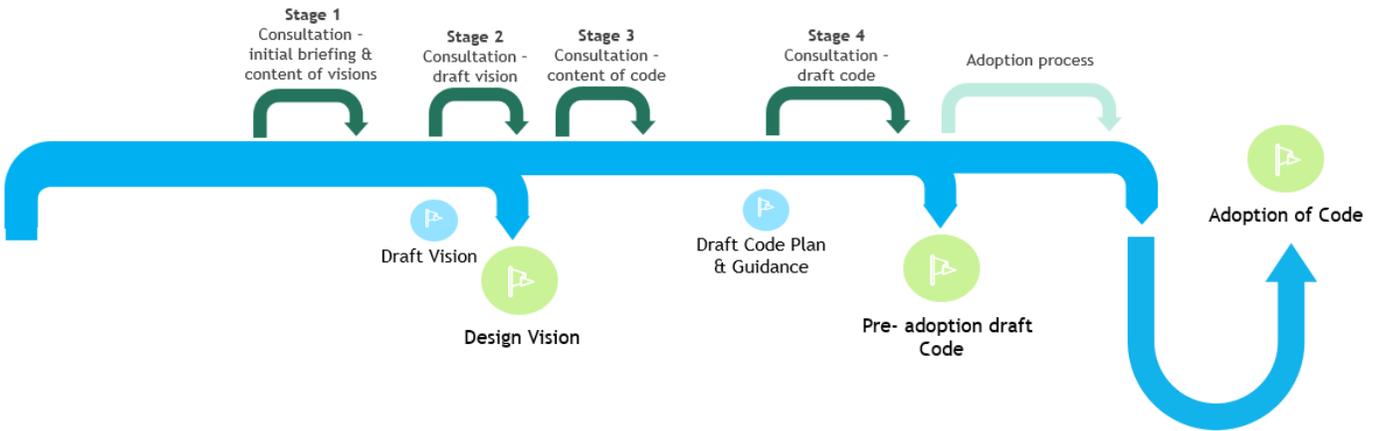


Figure 4 – Timeline showing consultation stages

Not all identified stakeholders will need to be consulted at every stage of the process. This ensures that engagement focuses on the right stakeholders at the right time and avoids stakeholder ‘burnout’.

Stakeholder	Stage of Engagement
Local Communities	All
Parish/Town/City Councils	All
Businesses	All
Schools/Colleges	All
Resident/Interest Groups	All
Significant Landowners	All
Landowners of allocated sites/promoting sites for development	All
Mendip Hills AONB	All
Cranborne Chase AONB	All
Neighbourhood Planning Groups	All
Local Wildlife Trusts	Stages 3-4
Local Amenity Societies	All
Developers	All
Planning Agents	All
Architects/Surveyors	All
Elected Members	All
Environment Agency	Stages 3-4
Homes England	Stages 3-4
Natural England	Stages 3-4
Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)	Stages 3-4
Police/Emergency Services	Stages 3-4

Health Organisations	Stages 3-4
Somerset County Council/ New Somerset Council	All
Housing Associations	All
Registered Social Landlords	All
Sustrans	Stages 3-4
Church and Faith Groups	All
Cultural Organisations, Individuals	All
Historic England	Stages 3-4
CPRE	Stages 3-4
Development Management Officers	Stages 3-4
Specialist Officers	Stages 3-4

Hard to Reach Groups

The principal priority of this Consultation Strategy is to facilitate engagement which is accessible and inclusive.

Everyone should be given an equal right to have their views heard and respected, however, there are groups in the community who can be more difficult to engage, sometimes referred to as ‘hard to reach’.

This being the case, consideration should be given to the best way to reach such groups and to tailor the engagement process to enable them to fully participate on an equal basis with all other identified stakeholders.

It is important to ensure that these groups of people are engaged with in the most appropriate way and aren’t marginalised as a result of their involvement (or lack of) with the engagement process.

Identification of Hard-to-Reach Groups

Examples of ‘hard to reach’ communities include older people, young people, the homeless, those in temporary forms of accommodation, gypsies and travellers, people with physical, learning or mental disabilities, BME communities, single parents and LGBT members.

For the purposes of the design code programme the principal ‘hard to reach’ groups are considered to be:

Stakeholder	Details	Potential Barriers	Engagement Issues to consider
Older People	Older people have helped shape the society that we enjoy today. They also have considerable professional knowledge and life experience to share through engagement processes.	While many older people have embraced technology, there are many that have not and engagement processes that rely heavily on online tools can preclude these individuals from participating and sharing their knowledge.	Engagement processes need to include traditional means for communication such as hard-copy materials in larger fonts, face-to-face meetings and displays. Engagement materials need to be accessible with strong visual elements Focus on local engagement events that are held during the day and provide good hospitality.
Young People	While local communities are the direct beneficiaries of good planning, children and young people are the long-term beneficiaries. Therefore, opportunities to increase their understanding of planning concepts and to encourage their participation in engagement processes need to be maximised.	Need to identify how best to initially access the networks working with young people to allow the opportunity for them to engage. May lack interest or motivation to engage with a process that they know little of or don't think is relevant to them.	Engagement materials need to use plain language and engaging graphics to explain the reasoning for the project and how it will affect the consultee. Integrate the mediums they value into the engagement process. This can include social media, online tools and music. Incorporate opportunities for young people to use these tools to create contributions.

<p>People with disability</p>	<p>The design of new places is especially important for those people living with a disability, it is therefore crucial that they're given great opportunities to engage.</p>	<p>When engaging with people with disability, it is crucial to ensure that facilities are accessible, comfortable and enhance their ability to listen and concentrate.</p> <p>Important to engage with the networks that support people with disability to capture their input and distribute information.</p>	<p>Engagement materials need to be well-designed and accessible. Improving accessibility can include using plain language, hearing loops, captions in digital video, translated materials, and graphics that explain complex concepts simply.</p> <p>Provision of consultation methods to include the views of people with sensory, physical and learning disabilities.</p> <p>Providing opportunities for people with disability to attend smaller meetings rather than large community gatherings can increase their participation</p>
<p>People from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds</p>	<p>Culturally diverse community groups and individuals may have varying levels of experience engaging with government. Some may have had no experience at all due to difficulty accessing government services.</p>	<p>Some groups or communities may have little interest in government projects or mistrust the government processes.</p> <p>Building trust with communities and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds is essential for</p>	<p>Effective communication is particularly important for people from cultural and linguistically diverse backgrounds, as the way information is presented, received and understood may vary across community groups.</p>

		<p>supporting positive engagement.</p> <p>English may not be a first language for many groups and individuals and other forms of communication may be needed.</p>	<p>The use of multilingual resources and interpreters may be required for people who have difficulty communicating in English. The use of easy-to-understand graphics will also be useful.</p> <p>When engaging with community groups, you should consider cultural protocols and practices, where relevant, including in relation to venues, dates and catering.</p>
Disadvantaged and homeless people	<p>For a range of reasons, there could be individuals or families within your community that are financially vulnerable, homeless or disadvantaged for other reasons. These people have a range of experiences, opinions and observations that can add considerable value to engagement processes in relation to planning.</p>	<p>These groups or individuals may have a lack of interest in the planning process and their relevance within it, motivation to engage is therefore likely to be low.</p> <p>Access to online resources and private transport is likely to be low.</p>	<p>Work with organisations and groups that support the financially vulnerable and homeless people to distribute information and encourage participation in engagement processes.</p> <p>Provide clarity on what the project is and how it will affect them.</p> <p>Focus on physical engagement techniques in easily accessible locations.</p> <p>Do not rely on online engagement tools.</p>

With all 'hard to reach groups' advice will be sought from the council's equalities officer and any others within the organisation who already engage with hard-to-reach communities.

Other universal barriers to engagement include:

Potential Barrier	Design Issues
The capacity and ability of different stakeholders to participate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Techniques and engagement methods to be used • Caring needs
Levels of community infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number and types of engagement events
Rural isolation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Location and accessibility of venue • Transport requirements
Gaps in information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Format and content of communication and publicity material
Literacy and numeracy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of interpreters and signers
Digital accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure engagement methods do not prejudice participation through non-electronic methods of communications



Engagement Methods

A number of varying engagement methods are likely required in order to achieve the aims of this consultation strategy.

Not all possible methods will be appropriate for the purposes of the design code project, however, all of those used will need to be:

- Timely
- Accessible and appealing
- Inclusive
- Community-focused
- Interactive
- Flexible
- Cost-effective

The chosen methods for the design code project will seek to inform the identified stakeholders and gain stakeholder input, feedback and collaboration to achieve the objectives of the engagement.

Potential Engagement Methods

Web-based Consultation

The use of a website to provide information to the public as a standalone process or as part of a wider engagement activity. It offers a range of opportunities for individuals to engage with the project online such as webinars, online surveys, social media etc. which will be covered individually below.

Interactive websites can support consultation by enabling people to get involved online. Web based activities enable people to choose where, when and for how long they want to participate. Any web-based engagement also needs to consider and plan for smartphone use.

Strengths

- A range of tools are available
- Can be highly accessible and gives more choice to individuals as to how and when they can participate – can greatly benefit stakeholders who are unable to attend physical events
- Provides access to a large audience quickly

- Cost effective and efficient with the ability to engage with participants directly and at less cost
- Can be interactive and highly visual whilst providing real-time, portable information (through use of a smartphone)
- Can create debate and access to a range of views
- Can improve organisational transparency and responsiveness

Weaknesses

- Participation is limited to those with access to the internet – may prejudice against some harder to reach groups
- Needs to be actively publicised to generate activity
- Requires resource to set up, maintain and moderate

Webinars

Webinars are interactive seminars preformed remotely via the internet, they provide a platform for engagement between consultee and the facilitator resulting in information and opinions being exchanged from both parties.

With communication and information flowing both ways webinars also allow trust to build resulting in greater positive engagement from the community. To maximize positive engagement webinars can also be used as ‘the first step’ of the design code development to involve stakeholders at the beginning of the project.

Can include ‘online chat hours’ which allows for participants of webinars or any other engagement method to offer feedback, ask questions and generally open up the conversation on a wider level.



Strengths

- Offers direct engagement with audience without the need for a physical venue
- Sessions can be recorded and uploaded to a website for future access. Can stimulate more interactions with the project even after the event has passed

-
- Can be used to target specific issues or groups of stakeholders
 - Can be used to build a meaningful relationship with consultees, allows for collaboration
 - Accessible for all those with internet access

Weakness

- Excludes stakeholders without internet access, including some harder to reach groups
- Will require publicity to generate activity
- Requires resource to set up, maintain and moderate

Online Hubs

Online hubs can include a 3D virtual consultation room, similar to a village hall accessed through a web browser. They can include:

- Links to interactive surveys and questionnaires;
- The inclusion of plans, images, visualisations which can be set up on walls in a virtual consultation room;
- Video introductions to provide context and information on next steps;
- Interactive maps with the ability to drop pins or draw shapes and add comments to express views and;
- Virtual white boards where general comments or questions can be included.

‘Attendees’ can leave comments on custom-designed forms and easily share the link to increase the reach of the consultation material.

Strengths

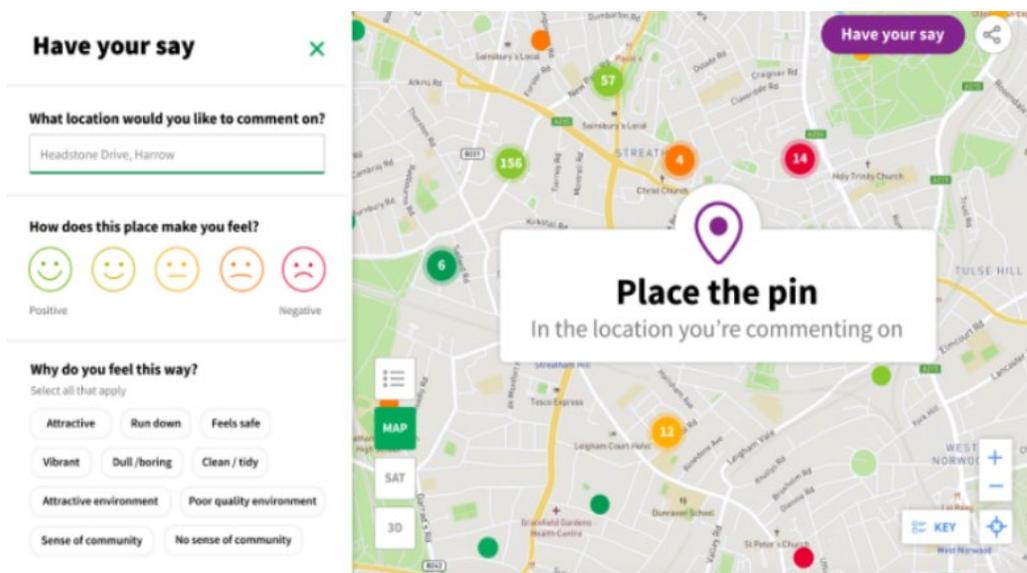
- Can combine a number of the different online engagement methods in one accessible location
- Easy for stakeholders to interpret and navigate and allows engagement and collaboration with a wider audience
- Can be treated as a live platform and updated easily for ongoing use.

Weaknesses

- Excludes stakeholders without internet access, including some harder to reach group
- Will require publicity to generate activity
- Requires resource to set up, maintain and moderate

Digital Mapping

Community mapping is a useful way to engage people of all levels of capability. A variety of aspects can be mapped including land use, community assets, facilities, and transport options to develop a snapshot of an area. It is also possible to make use of community heatmaps, a virtual walkabout with the ability to make comments on an interactive map.



Strengths

- Stimulates discussion and is interactive
- Can build strong sense of community ownership
- Can assist stakeholders to see and understand their community in different ways

Weaknesses

- Excludes stakeholders without internet access, including some harder to reach groups

-
- Will require publicity to generate activity
 - Requires resource to set up, maintain and moderate
 - May be difficult to interpret participants ideas
 - Participants need to be familiar with the local area
 - Could be expensive to host

Digital Surveys

Digital surveys allow users to complete a series of questions online through a variety of formats. This can range from standard formats similar to hard copies used in physical engagement events to visual preference surveys where users 'vote' for their preferred option from a series of varying housing types.

Surveys can be targeted to particular groups or individuals or can be made universally available on a website or consultation hub.

Strengths

- Can ask for geographic and demographic information from users to aid understanding of how representative the sample is
- Can gather a large amount of information with limited resource
- Able to target particular groups or individuals if necessary
- Accessible for all those with internet access
- Can be easily combined with other engagement methods
- Easy to visually present results

Weaknesses

- No direct communication with the user
- Great care needs to be taken in the design of the survey to ensure that it obtains the information required and is engageable for users
- Excludes stakeholders without internet access, including some harder to reach groups
- Will require publicity to generate activity

QR Codes

QR (Quick Response) codes are machine scannable images that can be instantly read using a smartphone camera. They will automatically direct the user to a webpage, social media or other digital platform.

There use in planning-based consultations often comprises their placement in high-traffic areas or relevant sites for the consultation to allow the user to be taken directly to the digital information related to that site or area.

Strengths

- Can provide a direct link to online material from any area or site
- Extremely easy and practical to use
- Requires little resource to set up and maintain
- Only requires a small amount of publicity – can target passing footfall if well positioned

Weaknesses

- Requires smartphone to use
- May be inaccessible for some harder to reach groups or individuals
- Needs to be well-positioned in noticeable locations



Podcasts

A podcast is a series of spoken word, audio episodes focused on a particular topic or theme. Users can listen to individual episodes or subscribe to a whole series.

They can be made available on a website or through an established podcast hosting platform.

For the purposes of this project, podcasts could cover various topics related to the design code or planning process in general.

Strengths

- Users can access at any time convenient to them
- Can share a substantial amount of information in a short period of time
- Individual episodes require little maintenance once produced
- Accessible for all those who have internet access
- Can be used to compliment other engagement methods



Weaknesses

- Requires internet access to use, may exclude some groups or individuals
- Only provides an opportunity to inform users rather than actively engage with them
- May need specialist equipment to initially set up

Social Media



Social media incorporates websites and digital applications which enable users to create and share content or to participate in social working.

Mendip District Council currently has social media accounts for both Facebook and Twitter which could be utilized for the purposes of the design code project.

Strengths

- Can easily access a wide range of users
- Very good tool to publicise other methods of engagement
- Requires little resource to initially set up
- Very cost effective
- Is easily recognisable for existing users

Weaknesses

- Requires users to be already actively following or monitoring the relevant social media accounts
- Requires resources to maintain and monitor
- Excludes users without a social media account
- Could facilitate uncontrollable debate or online negativity

Surveys & Questionnaires

This encompasses a range of techniques for obtaining information and opinions. They may be self-administered, conducted face-to-face, by post, or digitally as covered above.

They are often undertaken to identify the needs and views of a large number of people in a standard format.

Strengths

- Can be used to gather information from groups or individuals who would be unlikely to attend public meetings/workshops or get involved with other activities
- Can gain the views of large numbers of people
- Useful for obtaining quantitative data
- Data is easily comparable
- Results can be easily made graphical and shared



Weaknesses

- Can have limited use in isolation, often best used in collaboration with other engagement methods
- Needs to be well designed to be useable and engaging
- Can require significant resource to produce and carry out
- Information received may be limited – does not allow for open discussion or exchange of views
- Can result in ‘over consultation’ if consultees are surveyed on a number of occasions
- Typical response rates can often be quite low (10-20%)

Walking Tours

Expert or community led walking tours of a site or area are a common engagement method, especially within the summer months.

They involve small groups of consultees being led around an area to view relevant sites or buildings and then to engage and discuss relevant issues.

Tours can also be easily coupled with the use of QR codes to access digital information whilst on-site.

Strengths

- Can see issues ‘on the ground’ and get instant consultee feedback
- Allows debate and discussion with a small group
- Can build trust and relationships with participants

Weaknesses

- Takes a lot of resource to set up and run
- Requires publicity to generate activity
- Will require the same tour to be carried out on a number of different dates and times to allow inclusivity – may exclude time poor consultees
- Areas must be easily accessible

- Weather dependant
- May be difficult to adequately collect all feedback received

Public Meetings

Public meetings are a formal gathering open to all stakeholders which offer an opportunity to discuss the project and for consultees to ask questions, initiate debate and provide oral feedback.



Strengths

- Provide an opportunity to consult large numbers of people in an event which is accessible to all
 - As part of a series of events they can be a very useful way of sharing information and demonstrating openness and transparency
 - Provides an opportunity to explain processes, give information and gather feedback
 - Can attract publicity or be used as a launch event if necessary
- Enables participants to develop networks
 - Face to face meetings humanise organisations in public eyes

Weaknesses

- Results can be unpredictable with meetings potentially being taken over by interest groups or vocal individuals
- Unlikely to be representative as not everyone will have the ability or inclination to attend
- Some consultees are likely to be inhibited from speaking in a large group
- If confrontational it may lead to potential conflict and poor media publicity
- Requires significant resource to carry out and adequately gather feedback

Public Displays/Drop in events

This involves visual displays or manned stations set up in accessible locations usually within the centre of a village or town which experiences high footfall.

They can provide highly visual material for the audience to and can offer the opportunity for an officer from the authority to explain the project and answer queries from individuals attending.

Such events usually last for a single day and evening but which could be repeated if necessary.

Strengths

- Can collect the views of large numbers of people
- Consultees can access the event at a time convenient to them and engage with it at their leisure
- Allows for passers-by to become involved with the project regardless of their previous awareness of it. Can reach people who would not usually participate
- Promotes interaction
- Engages and generates interest with the local community
- Useful way of sharing information and demonstrating openness and transparency
- Face to face meetings humanise organisations in public eyes



Weaknesses

- Requires significant resource to carry out
- Requires several facilitators to engage with people
- Event may be affected by weather conditions and available locations
- Event only available for a very limited period of time
- If the event is unmanned, information may not be fully understood or may be misinterpreted by users

Workshops/Charrettes

Workshops can take a variety of formats but often comprise meetings usually limited to a certain number of participants (focus groups). They can be designed to exchange information; to discuss the strengths, weaknesses and opportunities for a project; to obtain ideas and innovative thinking for a way forward for a project; or they can specifically concentrate on a single issue or a programme of topics.

A Design Charrette is an intensive, hands-on workshop that brings people from different disciplines and backgrounds together with members of the community to explore design options for a particular area. The goal of the charrette process is to capture the vision, values, and ideas of the community from a design perspective.



Strengths

- Encourages active discussion
- Smaller groups allow potential conflict to be more easily handled
- Can be designed for a specific purpose
- Can directly target specific groups such as those harder to reach
- Can provide a more open exchange of ideas and

facilitate mutual understanding

- Useful for dealing with complex, technical issues as they allow more time for explanation and discussion
- Promotes trust and sense of purpose

Weaknesses

- With small groups, it can be difficult to ensure all stakeholder interests are represented
- Workshops can be dominated by individual stakeholders if not carefully facilitated
- Can require significant resource to facilitate

Planning for Real

Planning for Real is a practical technique, often involving a 3D architectural model of an area which used to help participants visualize elements of the project and how it relates to the local area.

The model can then be displayed in public areas in collaboration with other engagement methods.

Strengths

- Adds variety and interest to the consultation and can encourage who people who might not otherwise to get involved
- Accessible to all
- Can build a sense of community ownership of the project
- Can be used to help stakeholders understand complex spatial issues

Weaknesses

- Requires significant resource and expertise to set up and facilitate
- Stakeholders need to be able to fully understand how models relate to the real world
- Can generate ideas which are not possible to implement

World Cafes

World Cafes aim to gather the views of stakeholders in a comfortable and informal setting, like a café. Participants are encouraged to discuss individual questions or topics related to the project in small groups and then provide feedback to the facilitator.

Strengths

- An informal atmosphere encourages conversation and may persuade people who might not otherwise to get involved
- Can be flexible



Weakness

- Requires experienced facilitator to effectively carry out the event
- Success can be dependent on the questions set
- Requires publicity for stakeholders to actively engage
- Requires an accessible venue
- Event only available for a very limited period of time

Steering Groups/Forums

A forum or steering group is a regular meeting of people who represent a group or organisation and may be issue or area based. Those involved typically comprise members of civic, political, professional, economic or social groups from a local area e.g., a Parish Council working group.



Strengths

- Regular events help to maintain momentum, commitment and enthusiasm and encourages wider participation as the activities of the forum develop
- Can help identify and address specific local concerns
- Can be an effective way of involving harder to reach groups

Weaknesses

- Often comprise representatives from existing groups rather than individuals from a community
- Potential for events to become overly bureaucratic
- Potential for confusion over the respective roles and responsibilities of local representatives

Methods to be used

The approach to be taken forward in this strategy document involves a variety of engagement methods detailed above to result in a hybrid strategy comprising both digital and traditional (or online and offline) methods.

This will allow the strategy to target as many to reach a wider demographic, maximising stakeholder reach and engagement.

To achieve this the following methods will be considered:

Engagement Method	Reasons for selection	How it will be used	Collaborative methods	Stage of Consultation (see Figure 3)
Workshops	<p>Easy to target specific groups/communities</p> <p>Allow individuals with limited access to digital methods to be engaged</p> <p>Can allow multiple different stakeholders to interact and share viewpoints</p> <p>Very effective means of capturing local community interest in new developments, building relationships, and providing a platform to communicate with the project team</p> <p>Engaging and interactive</p>	<p>Workshops will be used at the 'visioning' and the 'content of the code' stage of the consultation, as well as the 'masterplanning' stage for any identified individual sites.</p> <p>Workshops will be group focused e.g. local community, built environment technical group (comprising specialist officers) with the content of each workshop relevant to each group. QR codes will be used within the events to also promote the digital elements of the consultation.</p> <p>They will be located in convenient and accessible central locations to meet the access needs of all members of the community. For larger settlements consideration will be given to hosting</p>	<p>Surveys/questionnaires</p> <p>Web-based consultation/online hub</p> <p>Steering groups/forums</p>	Stages 1 and 3

	<p>workshops in more than one location.</p> <p>Workshops will be delivered at a time suitable for the targeted group, e.g. community based workshops will included both day and evening sessions to maximize opportunities to attend.</p> <p>Public workshops will have set opening times with consultees encouraged to 'drop in' at a time suitable for them – see Public displays/drop-in events.</p> <p>Targeted group workshops will be for a set period of time with consultees encouraged to attend the whole session.</p> <p>Sessions will be interactive and facilitated at all times to explain the material and answer any queries.</p> <p>Where appropriate, local schools and colleges will be approached for targeted group workshop sessions with secondary/college students.</p> <p>Will require at least one 'event officer' with strong local</p>		
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		knowledge to lead on the event.		
Webinars	<p>Very effective for engaging large numbers of stakeholders</p> <p>Requires little resource to carry out</p> <p>Interactive method without the need for a physical venue</p> <p>Already an established method used by the authority</p> <p>Builds trust and relationships with consultees</p> <p>Can be recorded and accessed by consultees at a time convenient to them</p>	<p>Will be used as the ‘first step’ in the engagement process, but will also be used regularly throughout the process as one of the principal methods of engagement</p> <p>Will be produced and facilitated by officers and hosted on the authority’s website</p> <p>A dedicated webpage will host existing webinars through Youtube and will provide details on future events</p> <p>Webinars will be publicized through the authority’s social media accounts, e-bulletins to elected members and local councils, press release and through email to existing contacts (Agents Forum, local plan database)</p> <p>Will be either passive (e.g. an online video) or interactive – involving questions and answers from the consultees.</p> <p>Only the passive elements of the webinar will be made available for future access on the website – Q&A sessions will not be</p>	<p>Web-based consultation/online hub</p> <p>Steering groups/forums</p>	<p>Stages 1, 3 and 4</p>

		made publicly available so as not to potentially dissuade some consultees from engaging.		
Web-based consultation/online hub	<p>An easy and cost-effective way to inform stakeholders throughout the consultation process</p> <p>Creates an easy to navigate hub where all consultation information can be easily accessed at any stage of the design code development process</p> <p>Allows engagement and collaboration with a wider audience, and can be used to reach some harder to reach groups such as young people and increasingly the older demographic</p>	<p>A section of the authority's existing website will be dedicated to the design code programme. This will include access to all digital information related to the code, arranged thematically and geographically to allow easy navigation for the user. This will be available throughout the programme and will be regularly updated and publicized.</p> <p>During periods of active consultation, a separate 'consultation hub' will be available with access to relevant information, digital surveys and digital mapping. The hub will focus on the interactive elements of the digital methods of engagement. This will be hosted separately but directly linked to the authority's website.</p>	<p>Workshops</p> <p>Webinars</p> <p>Surveys/questionnaires</p> <p>Digital mapping</p> <p>QR codes</p>	All
Surveys/questionnaires (digital and physical)	Can gain the views of large numbers of people through a combination of both online and physical mediums.	Surveys will be produced to gather information relevant to the stage of consultation for which they're in use e.g. when consulting on the	<p>Web-based consultation</p> <p>Workshops</p> <p>Public meetings</p>	Stage 1 and 3

	<p>Can also be used to gather information from groups or individuals who would be unlikely to attend public meetings/workshops or get involved with other activities.</p> <p>Useful for obtaining quantitative data which is easily comparable.</p> <p>Results can be easily made graphical and accessible and shared to all stakeholders.</p>	<p>potential content of the code, consultees will be asked to select their preferences from the set menu based on the 10 design characteristics within the National Design Guide.</p> <p>The use of visual preference surveys – to understand buildings, places and streets that local people prefer, dislike or would like to improve, will also be used where possible.</p> <p>All surveys will be designed to be fully accessible, in differing languages where necessary, and available in both digital and physical versions.</p> <p>Physical versions of all surveys will be made available from relevant Council Access Points and all relevant physical events.</p>	Public displays/drop-ins	
Walking tours	<p>Can see issues ‘on the ground’ and get instant consultee feedback</p> <p>Face-to-face events can build trust and relationships with participants</p> <p>Demonstrates to local communities that the local area and issues</p>	<p>Tours will be predominantly local community based but will be open to all stakeholders. They will be carried out in partnership with a local community working group where possible.</p> <p>Tours will be carried out at the drafting stage of the coding plan to explain</p>	QR Codes	Stages 3 and 4

	<p>affecting it are well understood.</p> <p>Allows debate and discussion with a small group.</p>	<p>how the code will be implemented 'on the ground' – this will be partnered with the use of QR codes, with codes being presented at numerous locations to allow relevant sections of the draft code to be accessed and feedback provided – 4G/5G coverage of the route will be checked as part of the preparation for the event.</p> <p>Attendees could be asked to book their attendance via Eventbrite so that numbers are known before the event starts. Opportunities to inform the facilitator and/or the community working group will also be provided to ensure those without easy internet access are not excluded.</p> <p>Feedback will be manually recorded by the facilitator or through digital methods.</p> <p>Tours will be publicized through local community groups and through the authority's social media accounts.</p> <p>Will require at least one 'event officer' with strong local</p>		
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		knowledge to lead on the event.		
Public meetings	<p>Able to consult large numbers of people in an event which is accessible to all</p> <p>Provide an opportunity to explain processes, give information and gather feedback</p> <p>Useful way of sharing information and demonstrating openness and transparency</p> <p>Essential component of obtaining community buy in to the project.</p>	<p>Public meetings will be held initially at the start of the coding process to brief community representatives on the project – this will focus on parish/town/city councils where members of the public have the ability to attend.</p> <p>Other meetings will be held at important stages of the coding process e.g. upon the completion of the ‘design vision’ for the area, completion of the draft coding plan and the final draft code prior to potential adoption.</p> <p>They will be located in venue of the local council where appropriate and will be publicized through the local council website and agenda details for the public meeting.</p> <p>Will require at least one ‘event officer’ with strong local knowledge to lead on the event.</p>	Surveys/questionnaires	Stage 1 and 4
Steering groups/forums	Regular events help to maintain momentum, commitment and enthusiasm and encourages wider participation as the	The project team will seek to form working groups within the existing Parish/Town/City Councils to provide a link to the local community.	Workshops webinars	All

	<p>activities of the forum develop</p> <p>Helps to identify and address specific local concerns</p> <p>Is an effective way of involving harder to reach groups through the use of a dedicated forum for a particular group</p>	<p>Other steering/working groups will be formed with relevant planning and specialist officers, developers/agents/architects related to an individual site which is to be included within the code and any other relevant group identified within the local area.</p>		
Digital mapping	<p>Offers a fun and interactive method of engagement which can encourage all users to contribute especially younger demographics.</p> <p>Allows users to link issues and queries directly to their corresponding geographical area.</p>	<p>Interactive maps which allow consultees to comment directly on places within the area will be available within an online hub – this will be hosted separately, but be available through, the authority’s website.</p> <p>Digital mapping will be used in tandem with physical maps made available during face-to-face consultation events. A QR code will be provided to the digital map to give the user choice of which medium to use.</p>	<p>Web-based consultation/online hubs</p> <p>QR codes</p>	Stage 1 and 3
QR codes	<p>Can provide a direct link to online material from any area or site</p> <p>Extremely easy and practical to use</p> <p>Requires little resource to set up and maintain</p>	<p>A QR code will be produced to allow access to relevant individual online consultation materials.</p> <p>Codes will be available on community notice boards and local community venues such as libraries, village halls etc.</p>	<p>Web-based consultation</p> <p>Walking tours</p> <p>Digital mapping</p>	All

	<p>Printed QR codes are suitable for both inside and outside use</p>	<p>They will also be located in a similar manner to site notices for live planning applications at relevant sites which are proposed to be masterplanned or which are important to the design code process.</p> <p>Where a walking tour is proposed for an area, QR codes will be located at convenient locations along the route.</p> <p>They will also be available at all physical events to allow easy access to the online elements of the consultation.</p>		
Public displays/drop-in events	<p>Able to summarise detailed information and capture a wider audience</p> <p>Consultees can access the event at a time convenient to them and engage with it at their leisure</p> <p>Allows for passers-by to become involved with the project regardless of their previous awareness of it</p> <p>Promotes interaction between consultees and between consultees and facilitators</p>	<p>Public displays and drop-in events will be used throughout the project to pick up information/surveys.</p> <p>Unmanned public displays will be available at relevant local Council Access Points and will be coupled with the use of QR codes.</p> <p>Manned displays will be located in convenient and accessible central locations to meet the access needs of all members of the community. These will be used during periods of active consultations with local communities.</p>	<p>Surveys/questionnaires</p> <p>QR codes</p>	All

	<p>Engages and generates interest with the local community</p> <p>Useful way of sharing information and demonstrating openness and transparency</p>	<p>Hard copies of information and surveys etc. will be made available at all displays.</p> <p>Will require at least one 'event officer' with strong local knowledge to lead on the manned event.</p>		
Social media	<p>Easy and cost-effective way to publicise other engagement methods and events to a very wide potential audience</p> <p>Can help to target the hard-to-reach younger community</p> <p>The council have established social media accounts which can be used.</p> <p>Can also be used to share information and allow online participation in consultation processes and feedback.</p>	<p>Mendip's corporate social media presence on Twitter and Facebook will be used to publicise events and provide links to existing information on the project.</p> <p>This will form part of a marketing package including e-bulletins, press releases, newsletters and targeted email correspondence</p>	All other methods	All

Data Collection and Feedback

This section identifies how the data collected during the consultation events will be collected and in what format, and how the results of each significant period of consultation will be fed back to stakeholders.

What data will be collected

Different consultation methods will collect different data types, data will either be qualitative or quantitative depending on the method of data collection.

- Qualitative data is usually presented in narrative form and is collected using methods such as questionnaires and surveys.
- Quantitative data is more numerical and represents data in the form of graphs and tables, this is collected using methods such as visual preference surveys.

Data through passive methods (e.g., a survey) will be collected through direct input from the consultee via digital or physical methods of engagement. Data from interactive events will be either collected from the consultee through written comments or questionnaires or will be captured by a member of the project team during observation of an event. This data will then be saved within an internal database for assessment.

Data collected through online events such as question and answers sessions within webinars will be recorded but the recording itself will not be made publicly available.

Captured data will include:

- A full copy of the original submission (stored digitally, hard copies will be scanned)
- The date of contact
- The event in which the contact took place including the method of engagement
- Which project team member participated in the contact
- What stakeholder group the consultee is within (e.g. community member, developer etc.)
- Contact details of the consultee where possible
- A summary of the interaction, feedback or submission and the issues raised

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- Any actions that the project team needs to take as a follow-up to the interaction

How the data will be stored

All data received will be stored within the council's internal database with reports stored within an Excel file.

Any personal data will be collected and stored in line with the requirements of the UK General Data Protection Regulation tailored by the Data Protection Act 2018.

A summary of the results from each significant consultation session will be made publicly available.

Feedback

It is essential to provide feedback to the participants of an engagement process as it will:

- Encourage people to participate
- Improve relationship between the project team and consultees
- Build trust and confidence in the engagement process
- Empowers individuals and communities
- Promotes ongoing dialogue and transparency

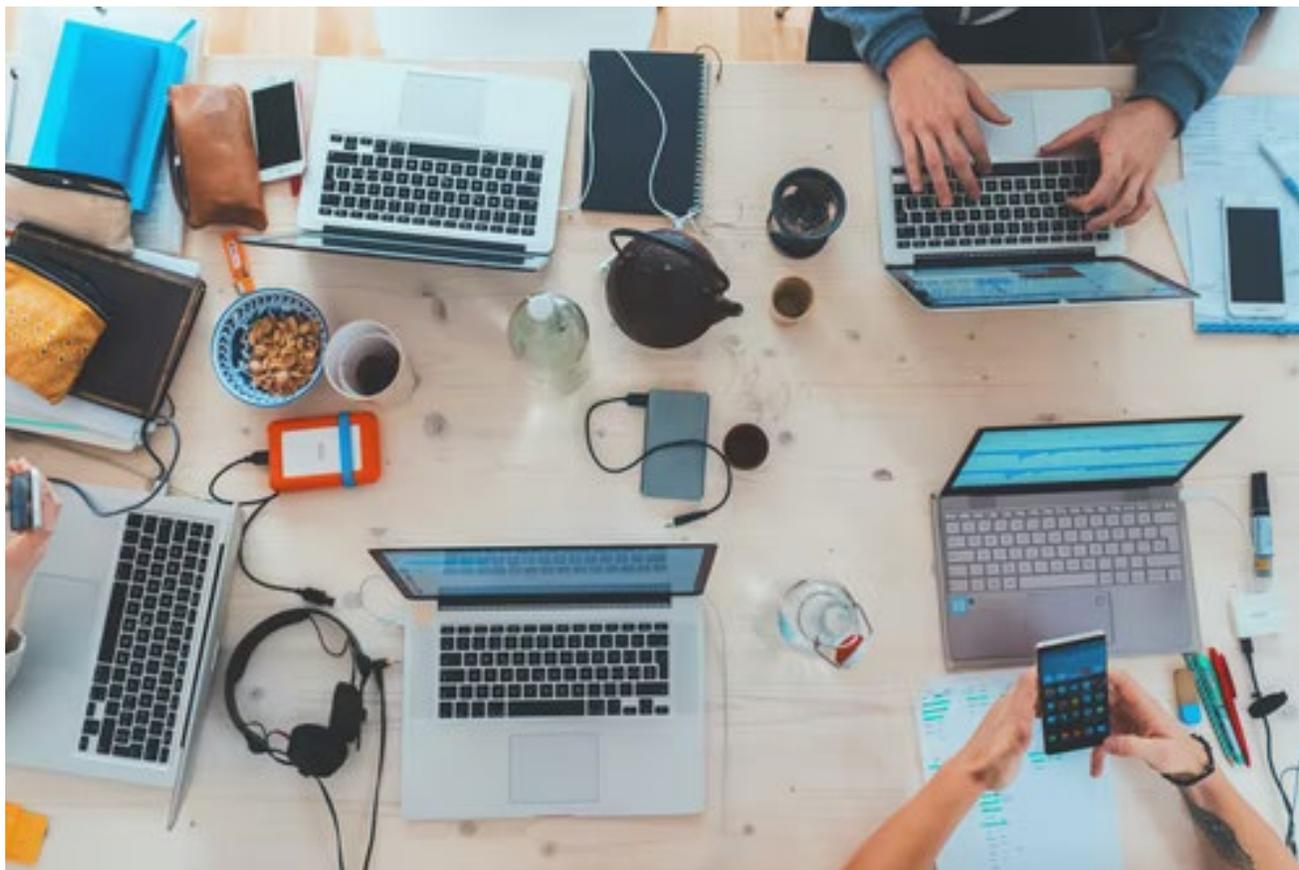
Feedback will be provided through a brief report after each significant period of consultation. This will include:

- How many stakeholders participated, including a breakdown of stakeholder groups where possible
- Key issues and topics raised
- What has happened as a result of the engagement and the next steps of the project
- Details about future opportunities for input

This report will then be made publicly available through the website with hard copies available at the relevant Council Access Points and at future engagement events. The report will be publicised through:

- Social media
- E-bulletins
- Press releases
- Newsletters
- Targeted email correspondence

A separate communications plan will be produced for the production of each individual design code which will support a broad, inclusive approach and will provide further detail on the timings of all communication and feedback and the resources required, however, it is envisaged that feedback will be provided within 2 to 3 weeks after the engagement event.



Implementation of the Strategy

This Consultation Strategy will be used to inform the strategy for each the production of each design code produced as part of the design code programme.

It is considered that a local design code could be produced through a variety of processes including:

- Produced from scratch
- Using existing design guidance for the area as a foundation e.g. Village Design Statements
- Through the neighbourhood planning process
- Through the production of masterplans/development briefs for individual sites.

All of these will follow the process for the production of a design code as set out within the National Model Design Code discussed within Section 3 of this strategy.

The timings, locations and periods of consultation will differ for each separate code and as such, these will be individually produced through an individual Content Strategy within the preparation phases of each separate project using this Consultation Strategy as a basis.

With regards to resources, it is considered that the majority of the identified engagement methods to be used will be carried out using exiting in-house resource. The following digital methods of engagement will require external assistance from specialist providers:

- Digital mapping
- Digital surveys
- Online hubs

Review

The Consultation Strategy will be kept under review to remain compliant with any legal requirements for the processing of data, changes to national legislation, regulations and polices and changes in Council policy.

It is also important for the strategy to remain fluid to allow it to be changed if necessary. Additions or amendments may need to be made as a result of its implementation in practice and taking into account feedback received throughout the duration of the project.

Evaluation

To inform the review of the strategy, the success of a significant consultation will be evaluated to measure how satisfied the identified stakeholders and the project team are with the engagement process, the quality of the input received, and how well the project achieved its stated objectives.

The benefits of evaluation include:

- Demonstrating value of engagement to internal and external stakeholders
- Knowing what works, what does not work and why
- Ensuring that successes are built upon, and mistakes are not repeated
- Being able to adapt an ongoing engagement process to increase its effectiveness
- Capturing learnings to help plan future engagement processes, such as what could be done better, and was it a balanced and inclusive process?

Robust evaluation will improve future practice by developing a sound evidence base and knowledge on what strategy works and the range of impacts different approaches can have.

Evaluation can be quantitative (e.g., the number of people involved in the process) or qualitative (e.g. feedback from consultees about whether they felt they had been listened to).

In order to effectively evaluate the success of each significant period of consultation the project team will:

- Set clear objectives at the beginning of each engagement process so that it can be evaluated whether or not these have been met
- Quantify the number of participants for each engagement event
- Ask all participants through the use of evaluation forms if they think the process was successful and how they found the engagement experience. Forms will be designed in each chosen method of engagement where appropriate
- Self-evaluate each engagement process from a facilitator's perspective, was the engagement process cost-effective, was it easy to implement?

The success of the chosen engagement methods will be evaluated both on an ongoing basis and post-completion of the project. All responses received and learnings from the project team will be taken forward to improve future practice and to amend this Consultation Strategy where necessary.

