

# Stoke St. Michael Design Code

Consultation Plan

---

# CONTENTS

1. <a href="#">Introduction</a>	2
2. <a href="#">Context</a>	3
3. <a href="#">Timeline</a>	4
4. <a href="#">Stakeholders</a>	5
5. <a href="#">Engagement Methods</a>	6
6. <a href="#">Marketing and Advertisement</a>	15
7. <a href="#">Evaluation</a>	16

---

# Introduction

The quality of design is key to successful, sustainable developments which not only look attractive but can also deliver a significant number of social, health and economic benefits to local communities.

Good design therefore is not only concerned with the visual quality and layout of new developments, but also to their functionality and liveability, it is about ‘place-making’ as a whole.

It is a clear requirement of the [2021 National Planning Policy Framework \(NPPF\)](#) for all local authorities to produce a design code to raise the quality of design in their area.

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.

Further information is available within the Council document [‘What is a Design Code’](#).

The [National Model Design Code \(2021\)](#) describes the role of a design code which is based on 10 overarching principles of well-designed places explained within the [National Design Guide](#).

The National Model Design Code provides detailed guidance on the production of design codes with consultation playing a role in every stage of its development. A robust Consultation Strategy has therefore been produced 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. This document explains how the aims and processes within the Consultation Strategy will be applied locally to the production of a design code in Stoke St. Michael.



---

# Context

Stoke St. Michael is a Somerset village 4 miles from Shepton Mallet and 8 miles from Frome and Wells. There are around 400 dwellings in the village.

The village has a strong traditional rural character set within a landscape of farmland, pastures, streams, wooded valleys and quarries.

It has a rich diversity of built form and vernacular architecture with a mixed density of housing and green space within the village boundaries.

A village design statement for the village was produced by the local community and adopted by Mendip District Council in 2016. It highlights the local distinctiveness of the area and celebrates what makes the village unique. This is then used to frame design guidelines and recommendations for future development within the village.

A copy of the Stoke St. Michael Village Design Statement can be found [here](#).

The Stoke St. Michael Design Code will build upon the existing village design statement using it as a foundation to understand the local character of the village and to take forward its recommendations and design guidance where relevant to help inform the content of the code.



# Timeline

The production of a design code for the village is expected to take 12 months from the start of preparatory work in December 2021 to final adoption in December 2022.

This process will involve 4 targeted stages of consultation (see timeline below), although engagement with stakeholders will be a constant throughout the programme.

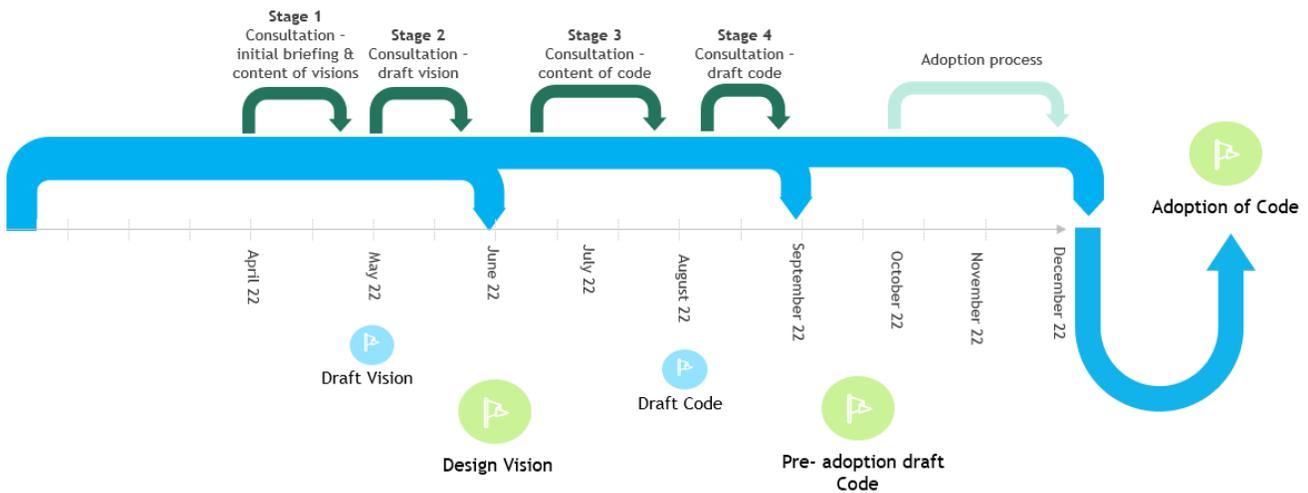


Figure 1: Timeline for the production of the Stoke St Michael Design Code

## Table showing the dates of each stage of consultation

Stage of Consultation	Consultation Date	Document	Document Date
1	April 2022	Draft Design Vision	May 2022
2	May 2022	Design Vision Final	June 2022
3	June - July 2022	Draft Code	August 2022
4	August 2022	Pre-adoption Draft Code	September 2022
Adoption process	October - November 2022	Design Code Final	December 2022

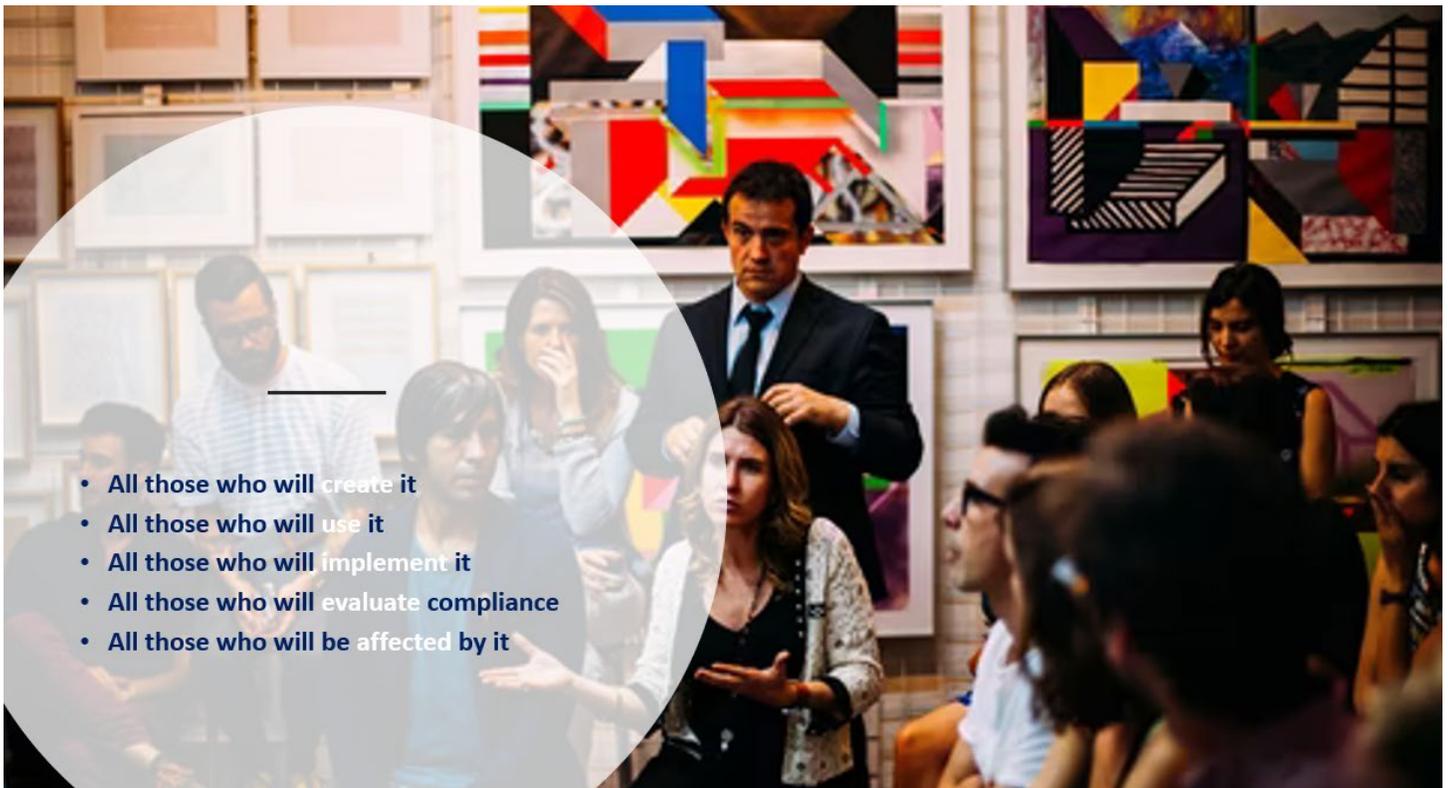
This approach will allow maximum opportunity for engagement with the community and other stakeholders and provides sufficient time for the results from each consultation period to be analysed and fed into the process.

---

# Stakeholders

The long list of identified stakeholders for the design code project can be found within the Consultation Strategy.

The list of stakeholders specific to the Stoke St. Michael design code can be found within Appendix A of this plan.



- All those who will create it
- All those who will use it
- All those who will implement it
- All those who will evaluate compliance
- All those who will be affected by it

---

# Engagement Methods

In line with the Consultation Strategy, the following engagement methods will be used in the production of a design code for Stoke St. Michael:

## Workshops

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.



### *How*

Workshops will be used in Stage 3 (Content of the Code) and will focus on 3 separate stakeholder groups:

1. Parish Council/Interested Residents/Resident Groups/Local Landowners
2. Agents/Developers/Architects
3. LPA Officers/Members

It is intended that each session will have a maximum of 40 participants to ensure that it can be managed effectively. Each session will last no longer than 2 hours.

Invitations to the events will be sent out to identified stakeholders using known contact details (see Appendix A).

With regards to ‘interested residents’, a sign-up sheet (both physical and online) will be provided within Stage 2 for the Stage 3 events.

---

## ***Platform/Venue***

The workshop for Stakeholder Group 1 will take place on a single date but will comprise 2 separate sessions to ensure maximum opportunity for residents to attend. These sessions will be provided at 10am-12pm and 6pm-8pm. It is intended that the workshop will take place within the village hall. Sessions for Stakeholder Groups 2 and 3 will be hosted at the Mendip District Council Offices in Shepton Mallet and will take place within the working day.

All sessions will be facilitated by members of the project team.

## **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.

### ***How***

Webinars will be used to provide relevant background information during all stages of the consultation programme, with one webinar released for each stage of consultation and once the code has been adopted.



Online 'Q & A' sessions on MS Teams will be offered to various stakeholder groups after the release of each webinar. These will be advertised on the website and through direct email contact.

QR codes will also be used through the village to direct users to the website and associated content.

## ***Platform/Venue***

Webinars will be recorded via MS Teams and uploaded to the design code webpage (either hosted as part of the MDC website or as part of a standalone website for the design code programme).

---

## Online Hub

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

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

### *How*

The online hub will be hosted on the design code webpage and will offer access to all online material including webinars, digital surveys and digital mapping. It will be available throughout all stages of the consultation process.

QR codes will be used throughout the village to direct users to the website and associated content.

### *Platform/Venue*

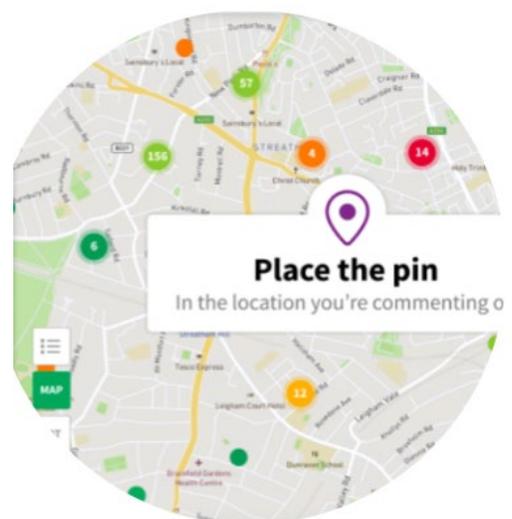
The hub will be hosted on the design code webpage and will be accessed either directly or through a link from the MDC website.

## 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.

### *How*

Mapping will be provided within the online hub and is intended to allow users to comment on a live map of Stoke St. Michael. Associated guidance will be provided which will explain the purpose of the map and how to use it.



---

It is intended that users will be able to highlight areas of importance on the map (e.g. a positive building, community asset or a well-used footpath) or areas which are felt would benefit from improvement.

### ***Platform/Venue***

Digital mapping will be available through the online hub and associated design code webpage.

### **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.

Their 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.

### ***How***

QR codes will be used to direct users to the website/online hub throughout the entire consultation process.

The code and associated explanatory notes will be printed off and laminated. These will then be located within relevant areas within the village, this will include:

- Within each existing character area as identified within the 2016 Village Design Statement
- The Village Hall
- The Church of St Michael and All Angels
- Parish noticeboard
- Village shop window
- Local bus stops
- Knatchbull Arms
- Stoke St. Michael County Primary School



---

As universal 4G coverage cannot be relied upon within the village, in addition to the above, QR codes will be provided within the local village newsletter, the school newsletter and within an information leaflet distributed to every household in the village to advertise Stage 1 of the design code project

Codes will be amended as appropriate throughout the process to ensure they are linked to the relevant online material.

### ***Platform/Venue***

QR codes will be located at various locations as identified above. Regular checks will be made of the condition of the codes at all locations and replaced as necessary.

### **Surveys**

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 described within the Consultation Strategy.

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

### ***How***

Surveys will be used at Stages 1 and 3 of the consultation process to gather stakeholder opinions on the following topics:



#### **Stage 1**

- Most important existing characteristics of the village
- What issues is the village facing which the design code could address
- What areas/characteristics within the village could be improved?
- Aspirations for the village moving forward

#### **Stage 3**

- Which characteristics of a well-designed place (see National Design Guide) are most important for the village?
- Visual preference survey for existing and potential development
- Preference over traditional/hybrid or contemporary design

- What recommendations within the Village Design Statement (2016) should be taken forward within the code, are there any additional issues which could be included?
- Are the existing character areas within the Village Design Statement still relevant?
- What features of new development are most important for the village?

These will be available in both physical and digital copies to ensure maximum opportunity for engagement.

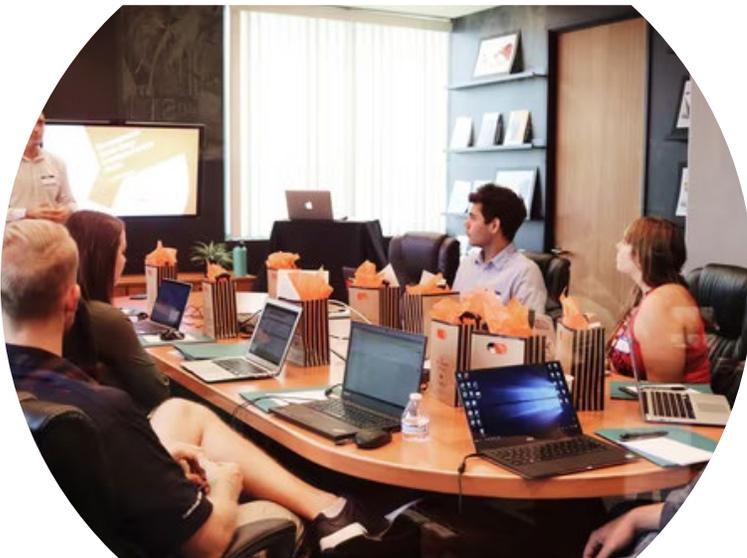
### ***Platform/Venue***

Digital surveys will be available on the design code website and the online hub. Physical copies will be provided at all physical consultation events and copies left in venues (e.g. village hall) throughout the village.

Completed physical copies will be collected at the end of each engagement event or will be asked to be left within the village hall for regular collection.

### **Steering Group**

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.



### ***How***

A working group will be set up with the Stoke St Michael Parish Council. This will comprise 2 members of the Design Code Project Team and 3 members of the Parish Council.

Its role will be to assist in the management of the production of a design code within the village and to provide local knowledge and information. The Parish Council website will also be used to publish relevant information and publicise engagement events.

---

A working group with planning and other specialist officers will be formed at Stage 3 to inform the content and viability of a draft code.

### ***Platform/Venue***

Steering groups will meet both virtually and face-to-face either within a venue within the village or within the Mendip District Council Offices in Shepton Mallet.

## **Walking Tours**

Walking tours 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.



### ***How***

Walking tours will be carried out in partnership with the local working group within Stages 3 and 4.

They will be partnered with the use of QR codes throughout the route and will be used to discuss what parts of the area are most important from a design code perspective (Stage 3) and how the draft could be implanted on the ground (Stage 4).

Groups will be limited to no more than 15 attendees to ensure that the tour can be effectively managed.

Potential users will be able to sign-up to an event via Eventbrite which will be linked through the website or through a physical sheet available within the village hall, church and parish notice board – a deadline will be provided for up to a week before the event.

---

One walking tour per stage will initially be planned for in the early evening of a date to be confirmed. This could be expanded depending on the number of interested attendees.

### ***Platform/Venue***

The walking tour will stay within the confines of the village on a set route which will be advertised leading up to the event. The route will be agreed with the Parish Council Working Group prior to its advertisement.

## **Public Meeting**

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.



### ***How***

A public meeting will be held during Stage 1 to introduce the project and Stage 4 to provide an update on progress and present the draft version of the code.

### ***Platform/Venue***

It is intended that these public meetings will form part of the meeting of the Parish Council and will be arranged with the assistance of the Parish Council Working Group.

## **Public Displays**

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 and can offer the opportunity for an officer from the authority to explain the project and answer queries from individuals attending.

---

## How

A small selection of event boards or leaflets with associated QR codes will be available for viewing throughout the consultation process.

Within Stage 3 the display will be manned by a member of the project team to explain the content of the display and answer any queries. Each date will be advertised to the local community prior to the event.

## Platform/Venue

It is intended that the manned public display will be located within the village hall. Other materials will be located within public notice boards, shop windows etc.



A table summarising what engagement methods will be used at each stage, who the relevant stakeholders will be and the proposed venue/platform to host the engagement event is available within Appendix B. Details of individual stakeholders can be found within Appendix A.



---

# Marketing and Advertisement

Each engagement event will be advertised through up to 2 weeks in advance of the event taking place. This will be achieved using:

- Mendip District Council's social media accounts
- Mendip District Council website
- Design Code online hub
- Stoke St. Michael Parish Council website
- Targeted email correspondence to identified stakeholders
- QR codes within the village linking to the MDC website
- Parish noticeboards
- Flyers within village hall/church and village shop
- Parish newsletters
- A banner located within the centre of the village, provided with the assistance of the Parish Council
- Stoke St Michael County Primary School newsletter

A separate Communications Plan can be found in Appendix C.



---

# Evaluation

Each significant engagement event will be evaluated by the project team in accordance with the requirements of the Consultation Strategy.

To achieve this 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
- Self-evaluate each engagement process from a facilitator's perspective - was the engagement process cost-effective, was it easy to implement?

## Review

In line with the Consultation Strategy, this individual Consultation Plan will be kept under review throughout the project to remain compliant with any legal requirements for the processing of data, changes to national legislation, regulations and policies and changes in Council policy.

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.

