

Neighbourhood Planning – Wiltshire Association of Local Councils

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Origins of neighbourhood planning

- Localism Act 2011
 - Give communities great influence over the planning system
 - Various forms of neighbourhood planning
 - Some changes a foot
 - Most common Neighbourhood Development Plan ('Neighbourhood Plans')
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Neighbourhood plans

- A community-led initiative giving local communities power to prepare a planning document.
 - Many thousands already produced.
 - Mainly used in deciding planning applications in local area.
 - Cannot promote less development than the Local Plan.
 - Must be in general conformity with the strategic policies in the Local Plan.
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Neighbourhood Plans

- An evidence-based community-wide shared vision for the plan period to decide, typically:
 - Where we want new homes, shops and offices to be built
 - What those new buildings should look like
 - What infrastructure should be provided
 - Which community facilities & important assets to protect
 - How to protect and enhance local natural environment
 - How to address transport and access issues
 - Same status as a Local Plan once approved at referendum. It then becomes part of the statutory development plan.
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Process for preparing a Neighbourhood Plan

1. Community consultation, review local planning framework, evidence base, site assessments etc.
 2. Draft Policies based on the evidence gathered.
 3. Consult the residents and other stakeholders on the draft plan prior to Submission – (Reg 14 consultation).
 4. Submit the Plan to the Local Planning Authority further formal consultation (Reg 15/16 consultation).
 5. Independent Examination of the Submitted Plan (assuming there are no significant changes at (4) (Reg 17 consultation).
 6. Referendum on the Submitted Plan (assuming it passes examination with minimal comments/changes).
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Reviewing a Neighbourhood Plan

- *‘Neighbourhood Plans, like all planning policy documents, benefit from being reviewed and revised from time-to-time, to reflect changing contexts and changing needs or issues around effectiveness’ –*
(Locality, How to implement monitor and review your made neighbourhood plan (2019), p.28).
 - Early days, only a handful of reviews and limited guidance, so still learning.
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Who undertakes a review?

- While the local planning authority, residents, and others may highlight the need for it.
 - Can only be done/instigated by parish councils in parished areas.
 - The neighbourhood area designation survives, so re-designation of the area is not necessary, unless changes to the boundary are proposed.
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The Review Process

- Can review all or part of the Plan.
- There are 3 types of modification which can be made to an approved neighbourhood plan (see later).
- The process will depend on the degree of change involved



Review 1. Minor – Non material

- Minor (non-material) modifications to a NP that would not materially affect the policies in the plan. These may include correcting errors or typos, for example.
 - A parish council may make such updates at any time, but only with the consent of the local planning authority.
 - Would not require wider consultation, examination or a referendum.
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Review 2 - Material Modification

- Do not change the nature of the NP. For example, the addition, or the addition of a site(s), which the independent examiner considers are not so significant or substantial as to change the nature of the NP.
 - Essentially same process as for a new NP, including consultation, independent examination but no referendum.
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Review 3 - Substantial Modification

- Material modifications which do change the nature of the NP.
 - Might, for example, involve allocating significant new sites for development or major new policy areas.
 - Essentially the same process as for a new neighbourhood plan, including consultation, independent examination and referendum.
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Review Process More

- It is possible that a review might involve a combination of different types of modifications.
 - The examiner can recommendations about the need for a referendum or not.
 - No real clarity on what the final document should look like following a 2 or 3 Review e.g. revised plan or an addendum to the original one.
 - Local planning authority cannot stop a qualifying body undertaking a review.
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Funding

- Government funding via Locality should be available for any parish council who is seeking to prepare and update their NP.
 - Basic Grant £10,000.
 - Certain circumstances e.g., high level of deprivation, includes design code or population over 25,000 more.
 - Potential for between 1 and 3 free technical support packages e.g. for a new design code (see later).
 - Government announced funding for a further financial year 2024/2025
 - Also, 'parish share' of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) receipts CIL receipts rises to 25% once NP approved.
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Other forms of neighbourhood planning

- Neighbourhood Development Orders (NDOs) grant planning permission for specific community led development by community organisations including parish councils.
 - This could include things like specified changes of use or certain kinds of alteration.
 - Can also grant outline planning permission for specified uses such as affordable housing, commercial or recreational uses.
 - Process similar to that for neighbourhood plans.
 - So far there has been limited use of NDOs.
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Community Right to Build

- Special kind of NDO.
 - Grant planning permission for small-scale community-led developments e.g. affordable housing, village halls or community energy schemes.
 - Proceeds from the disposal of assets can only be used for the benefit of the community.
 - Process similar to that for NPs.
 - So far there has been limited use of them.
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Planning Reforms more

- Some measures aimed at strengthening NPs.
 - Greater protection against development that conflicts with neighbourhood plans has been extended to older such plans).
 - Neighbourhood Priorities Statement.
 - “simpler and more accessible way” for communities to set out their key priorities and preferences for their local areas, particularly in “urban and more deprived areas”.
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Street Votes

- Contained in Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023.
 - Govt finalising details how they will operate.
 - Gives residents the ability to propose development on their street.
 - Subject to the proposal meeting certain requirements, vote on whether it should be given planning permission.
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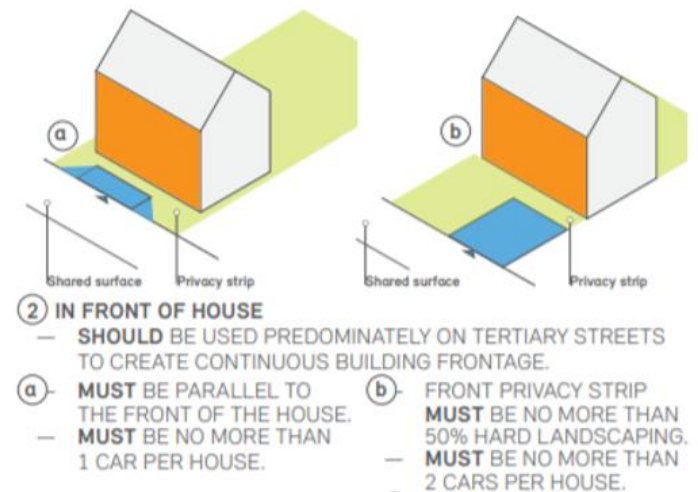
Design Codes

- ▣ What is a design code?
- ▣ How do we produce one?

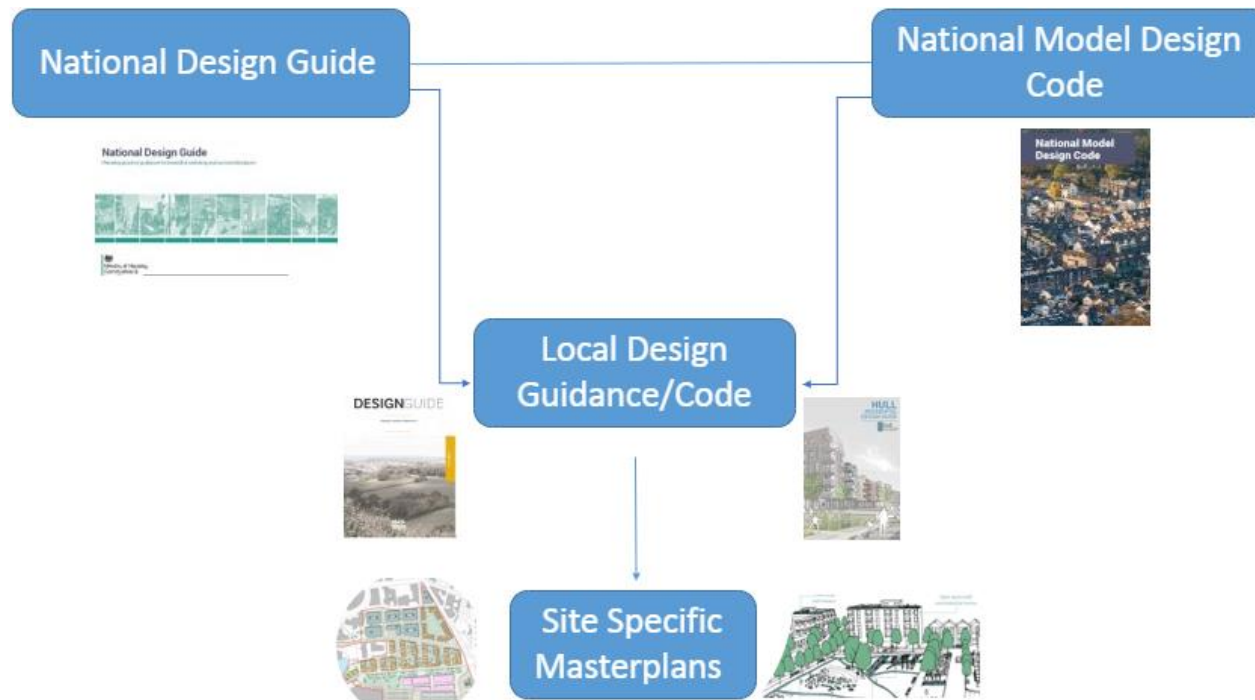


What is a design code?

- Set of illustrated design requirements
- Simple
- Concise
- Set out design requirements for new development in an area
- Focus on place-making



National Design Framework



- ☐ Context
- ☐ Identity
- ☐ Built Form
- ☐ Movement
- ☐ Nature
- ☐ Public Spaces
- ☐ Uses
- ☐ Homes and Buildings
- ☐ Resources
- ☐ Lifespan



10 Characteristics of Well Designed Places
(National Design Guide Extract)

Process



1. Analysis

Consultation

A
Scoping

B
Baseline

2. Vision

Consultation

A
Design
Vision

B
Coding
Plan

C
Master-
planning

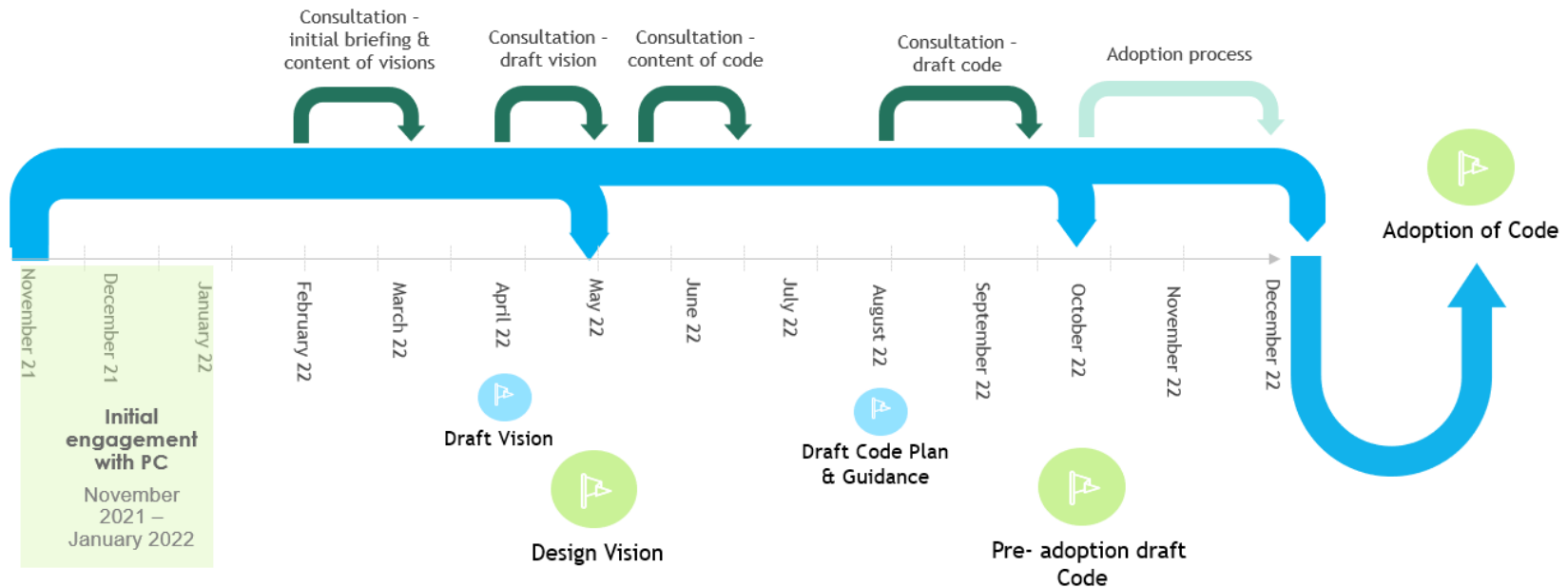
3. Code

Consultation

A
Guidance for
Area types

B
General
Guidance

Mendip Design Code: Stoke St Michael



Future of neighbourhood planning

- Change in government resulted in some uncertainty.
 - Planning reform a top and early priority for it.
 - Already seen many – “an immediate blitz”.
 - Currently consulting on a new National Planning Policy Framework (‘NPPF’).
 - Generally quiet on neighbourhood planning, but:
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Future of neighbourhood planning more

- “will enhance local communities power and voice over ‘how’ housing is built to best service local people while challenging those who question if homes the homes people need should be built at all”.
 - Community-led housing forms an important part of the Government’s plan to tackle the ‘housing crisis’.
 - A “sprint to agree new plans”.
 - “Rather than district-wide”, the focus on the preparation of design codes, masterplans and guides on “areas of most change and most potential”.
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Useful Sources of information

- Local Planning Authority.
 - SLCC/NALC/CALCs.
 - National Guidance – esp., Neighbourhood planning - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk).
 - Locality - <https://locality.org.uk/neighbourhood-planning>
 - Grant Funding - [Grant Funding - Locality Neighbourhood Planning](#)
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