

Design Codes and the Pathfinder Programme

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Overview

- 1. What are design codes?
- 2. Design legislation, policy and guidance
- 3. NMDC Testing Programme and Design Code Pathfinders



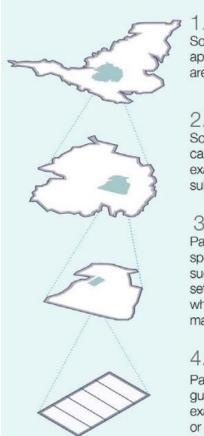
What are design codes?



"A design code is a set of simple, concise, illustrated design requirements that are visual and numerical wherever possible to provide specific, detailed parameters for the physical development of a site or area." National Model Design Code, p.1

- Different from design guides but can include guidance!
- LPA-led
- Apply at different scales

Design codes



1. Local Authority

Some elements of the code may apply to the entire local authority area.

2. Area type

Some elements of design codes can apply to types of area, for example, all villages, or all inner suburbs.

Development Sites

Parts of the code can relate specifically to development sites such as urban extensions, new settlements and other large sites where the code may be guided by masterplans.

4. Plot

Parts of the code can be used to guide individual building plots, for example relating to a single house or block of flats, whether they be in existing urban areas or new development.



Background on design policy and guidance

Design Quality

- The importance of quality, as well as the quantity of homes was set out in the Housing White Paper in 2017.
- Design quality has been strengthened in the National Planning Policy
 Framework and associated guidance, including the National Design Guide
 and the National Model Design Code.
- The Secretary of State convened the Building Better, Building Beautiful Commission in 2019 and announced the creation of an Office for Place, which will pioneer design and beauty within the planning system.



National Policy context

- Updates to the NPPF provide greater emphasis on granting permission for well-designed development and refusing it for poor quality schemes.
- Chapter 12 focuses on Achieving well-designed places.
- Other updates
 - making beauty and placemaking a strategic objective of the planning system
 - an expectation that local authorities will produce design codes or guides.



Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

National Planning Policy Framework

12. Achieving well-designed places

- 196 The condition of high quality, beautiful and randomine half sings and glaces is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good one girt is a key support of such in able development, creates before plans in which to live and work and helps for mine development acceptable to communities. Being clear about design sepaciations, and how have will be tered, is essential for any reliangith. So too is effective expagations between application, communities, local planning authorities and other intervals throughout the process.
- 127. Pure should, at the most appropriate level, set out in duar design vision and expectations, an that applicant have an extract catality as possible about when it thinky to be acceptable. Design policies about the developed with local communities as they reflect local applications, and are grounded in an undestained grand are subsort of each series desting these leaves. Neighbor shoot planning groups can play an important role in identifying the appendiqualities of each term and experience of the property of the pr
- 138. To a lovide maximum dainty about design expectations of an early stage, all local planning authorities seek and proper design added on closed considerativity. The principles set dut in the National Design Guste and National Model Design Code, and which which local character and design preference. Design guides and codes provide a rock thankwork and design preference. Design guides and codes provide in cost thankwork for covering execution and distinctive planes with a considerational highly qualifies standard of design. Their geographic coverings lead detail and degree of prescription should be balleted to the conjunctioned and scale.
- 199. Design guides and active can be prepared at an area wide neighbourhood or other-specific scale, and no convey weight in incident modeling though the produced either as part of a plan or as supplementary planning documents. Landowers and desire began may contribute to these secretics but may also choose to prepare design cacles in support of a planning application for sites they wish to develop Whoever prepared them, all guides and contains choosin to be the experience of the commands engagement and or better board supervisions to the development of their area, sharing their account of the guides of contained in the Nebrard Design Cacles or them are also also the contained to the product of the guide or the Nebrard Model Design Cacle. Them material documents should be used to guide or decident on a splicit decidance on a splicit decidance on the splice of the contributed design guides or design guides.
- 130. Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments
 - a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short form but over the lifetime of the development;
- b) are visually ethective as a result of good architecture. I eyout and appropriate and effective landscaping.

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Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities

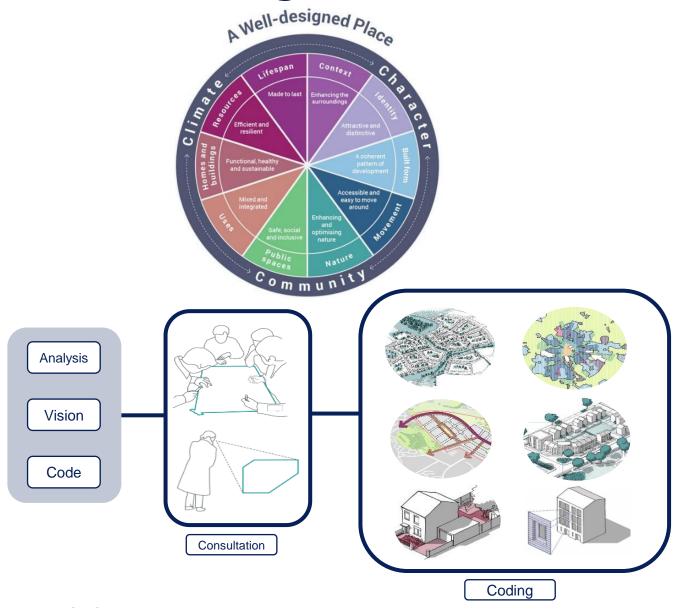
The National Design Guide

- Sets out 10 characteristics of well-designed places.
 - Context
 - Identity
 - Built form
 - Movement
 - Nature
 - Public spaces
 - Uses
 - Homes and buildings
 - Resources
 - Lifespan
- They all contribute towards the cross-cutting themes for good design set out in the National Planning Policy Framework.

National Model Design Code

 Direction on how to translate the 10 characteristics into a local design code.

Planning Practice Guidance





Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023

- Requirement that all LPAs prepare a design code at the spatial scale of their authority area ("authority wide code").
 - Consulting on design codes as part of NPPF changes.
- Supported by a new plan-making framework, which gives greater weight to the plan in decision-making, and introduces Supplementary Plans.
- Looking to review and consolidate the national design guidance to reflect changes to policy and learnings from pathfinder programme.



NMDC Pilot and the Design Code Pathfinders Programme



Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities

NMDC Pilot Testing Programme (2021)

- The NMDC Pilot Testing Programme was designed to test aspects of the process and content of the NMDC in a range of contexts working with 14 local authorities.
- We learned that:
 - Producing a design code takes time, skills and resources, particularly when engagement is required
 - Some places are more challenging and complex than others and require different approaches
 - Understanding viability at the start of the process is critical
 - Community knowledge is a valuable resource

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-model-design-code-pilot-programme-phase-1-lessons-learned

Herefordshire: guidance for NP codes



Rural authority-wide

Portsmouth: Toolkit for estate renewal



Town centres and neighbourhoods

Hyndburn: coding for garden village



Large sites and extensions

Southwark: Coding for opportunity area



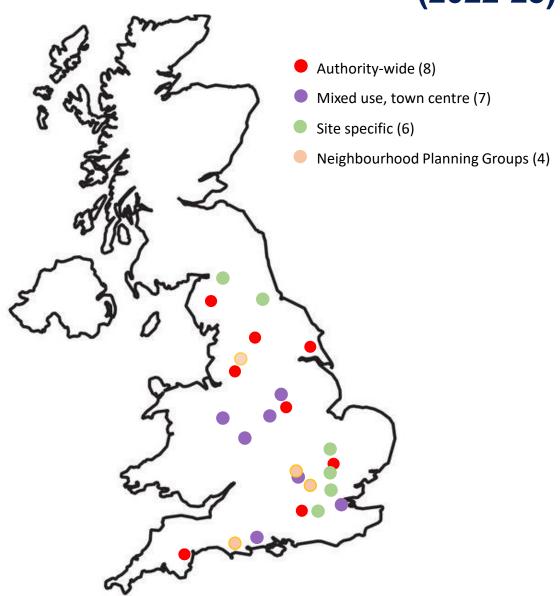
City centre regeneration



In 2022 we selected 25 pathfinders and asked them to prepare a design code over course of a year:

- Pathfinders chose scale to code: local authority area, others area specific – town centre, some site specific
- They chose what to code: some focused on streets, others existing estates, new extensions, some to raise quality of development across whole LA area

Design Code Pathfinder Programme (2022-23)





Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities

Phase 2 Lessons Learned

- This work is boosting the status of design within their authority, particularly among elected members.
- Challenge to decide on the level of detail needed in the code and making sure it is specific to their area.
- · Developing a code that does not stifle design.
- The number of people to consult with.
- Ensuring it does not become too big and remains functional and useable.
- Time and resource is poor in most authorities. This is not just related to design, but to other necessary fields.









Phase 2 Lessons Learned

- Development Management officers were key to determining the areas of focus for the content of codes.
- Multidisciplinary in-house teams, with urban design and DM experience.
- The need to test design codes from various user perspectives.
- The need and opportunities for compliance checklists.
- Training is essential to support implementation of the code.

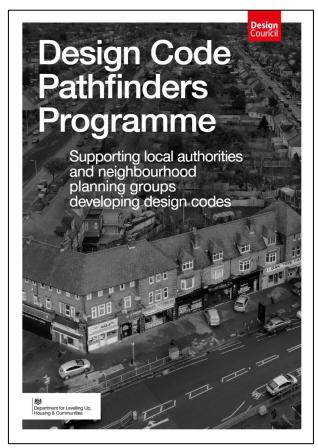




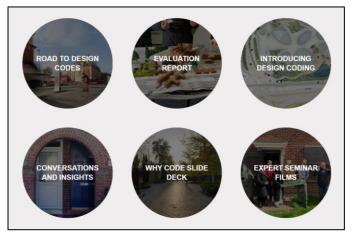
Resources – **Design Council M&E products**

- Design Council have produced a selection of products sharing findings from Phase 2 Pathfinders Programme
- o Materials include:
 - Evaluation Report
 - O What is a Design Code?
 - o "Why Code?" slide deck
 - o Pathfinder Conversations and Insights
 - Case study film
 - Road to Design Codes

https://www.designcouncil.org.uk/our-work/projects-partnerships/designcodes/



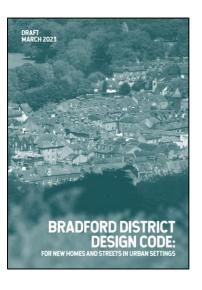






Pathfinders Programme Phase 3

- Continuing to work with pathfinders to share learning, refine and improve codes and explore the use of digital.
- Greater focus on implementation, including testing and training.
- The Design Council have published additional learning materials, including on DM officer involvement in code production.
- Design Council seminars scheduled for October.











Thank you