

Design Code Guidance Note

What is a Design Code?

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A design code sets out a number of rules for new developments in a simple concise and illustrated way which are specific to your parish area.

The National Model Design Code (NMDC) forms part of the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) and explains the 10 characteristics of good design. Herefordshire Council have produced a set of guidance notes and templates to assist your community in producing a design code for your parish. These are based on the NMDC and reflect the rural and distinctive nature of Herefordshire.

A design code is not just about the aesthetics and look of an individual building but a range of factors that help to create a healthy, safe and green environment. It will give homeowners, developers and the local community a specific steer on what is visually acceptable rather than relying on the generic policy wording which you may currently have within your neighbourhood plan.

What are the 10 characteristics of good design?

Well-designed places consist of three overarching elements: Character, Community and Climate.

Your design codes will look at each of these aspects in 10 character areas. Some elements will be consistent across the county and those elements will be within the Countywide Herefordshire Design Code but your community will be able to influence some of the more locally distinctive elements in the same way your neighbourhood plan had locally distinctive policies to complement the Herefordshire Core Strategy.



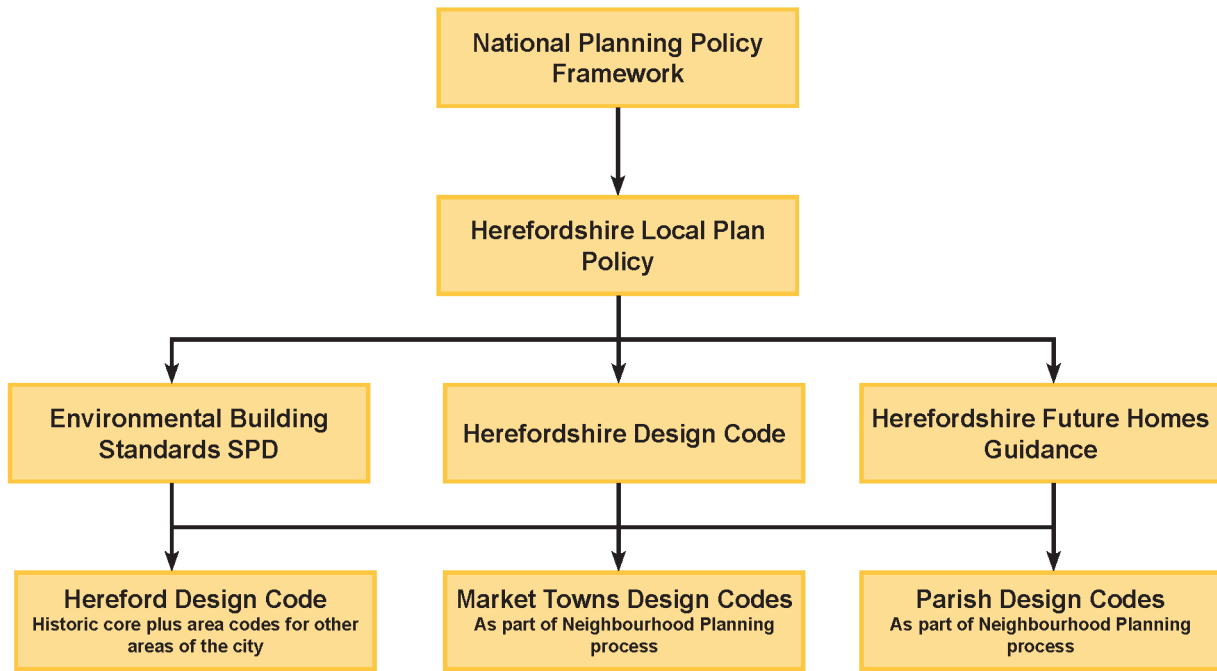
Frequently Asked Questions.

We have a Neighbourhood Plan can we also have a Design Code?

Yes, we are encouraging parishes and communities to include a design code as part of the review of the neighbourhood plan.

How do the local design codes fit with Herefordshire planning policy?

The overall design vision for the county will be set out within the Herefordshire Local Plan 2021-2041. The Herefordshire Design Code will contain some countrywide principles together with the Environmental Building Standards Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). Similar to neighbourhood plans providing the local detail to the Core Strategy, parish design code will provide the local distinctive grain to complement the Herefordshire Design Code.



How do we begin the Design Code process?

The first step is to decide the coverage and scope of your code – is this the whole parish area and will this need to be broken down into specific area types ie the historic centre, residential areas, hamlets, countryside. You may require difference guidance for different parts of the parish.

The next step will be to collate a set of baseline data to help inform your design code. This could include historical mapping, understanding the setting and landscape context of the village, what the current local character is.

This is referred to as ‘CONTEXT’. A set of guidance notes have been produced to assist you in establishing how to obtain this information and use it as the baseline for your design coding. You will notice that the Herefordshire guidance has been colour coded to match the NMDC and this is to aid cross-referencing to both national and local guidance.

Below is a summary of the step by step guide to gathering the background information to start to produce your code. You will already have a significant amount of this data as part of the background to producing your neighbourhood plan and there are additional guidance notes and worksheets for each section to advise.

Step 1.CONTEXT Consider the Context of your area

Context of your area includes overall settlement pattern/ context-rural isolated village/ hamlet, rural, rural village peripheral, low density suburb, sub-urban, urban context.

Consider cultural heritage of your area, how has your area has developed over time?

What is the landscape setting?

What are the environmental influences on the area? – geology, flooding, topography, waterways

Is it within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)?

Are there conservation areas/ historic buildings/ historic parks and garden?

Please refer to guidance notes for Cultural Heritage, Baseline Context - Mapping and Landscape Context and Settlement Setting.

Step 2. MOVEMENT

Consider Movement-how you move around the parish on foot/bike/ car- Street hierarchies

What is the street hierarchy and pattern like within the parish – main road, village street, lane, byway, private access roads, farm tracks, footpaths, pavements?

How do these link together – is it easy to get from one part to another?

How easy is it to walk, cycle around the parish and village?

Is there sufficient car parking, cycle parking for residents and visitors?

How easy is it to access available public transport?

How easy is it to reach local services and facilities?

Are the storage and movement of the refuse collections working sufficiently?

Please refer to information guides on Movement

Step 3. NATURE

Consider the Natural Environment-Nature/ trees / greenspace/ trees

What is the Landscape character area type for the parish?

What is the Farmstead character?

How does your village sit within the landscape?

Are there an existing network of greenspaces - fields, parks, commons, village greens, woodlands, orchards, footpaths/byways, rivers, former railway lines, sports pitches?

Are there areas of open Local Green Space, front gardens, allotments, private spaces which add to the visual amenity?

Are the streets tree lined?

Are there any specific native tree species specific to the area?

How far are residents from areas of open space?

Are there areas at risk of flooding?

Are there areas which would be used for biodiversity and improving habitats?

Please refer to information guides on Nature and Open Space

Step 4. BUILT FORM AND IDENTITY

Consider the Built Environment- Character, Built form/ identity

How do the buildings relate to their plots/gardens?

How do the buildings relate to each other – joined, spaces in between, laid out in street lines or blocks?

Is the pattern regular, historic or a mixture?

Are the buildings hard against the roadside or set back with drives and gardens?

What are the average heights – one or two storeys?

What do the entrances look like?

What do the roof patterns look like?

How are the windows distributed across the front of the building?

What are the architectural details?

What are the materials?

Please refer to information guides on Built Form, Character & Identity.

Step 5. USES AND PUBLIC SPACES

Use/ Public/ Private spaces

What other buildings/use are there within the village - mostly housing, employment, school, community buildings?

What is the mix of housing types – single, detached, terrace?

What is the mix of housing tenures – specialist housing, affordable, social housing, live/work?

Are there areas of land that could be used more efficiently?

Are there buildings with frontages – shops, cafes, business which are vitality to the street scene?

Are there any public meeting spaces or areas where people gather socially?

Are there any sense of personal safety issue with the current public spaces?

Guidance note for Uses and Public Spaces is still to be produced.

How will we gather all of the information required?

Some elements of the information above will be factual and can be established by a survey or background research. Further details of the help and support can be found in the accompany guidance notes.

Some components of the design code background will require a wider input from members of the community, specifically those relating to step 2,3 and 4 above. The worksheets have been designed to assist you to undertake and gather this information with the community.

It will be important to establish how you can demonstrate that the decisions made to produce the design code and the standards included within it are provably popular with the local community and have been written with the engagement of a wider audience.

What consultation and engagement methods should be used?

Similar to the production of your neighbourhood plan, a wide variety of consultation and engagement techniques could be appropriate. A specific guidance note concerning methods has been produced to provide further support.

What support will Herefordshire Council give?

Herefordshire Council are encouraging all parish councils to produce a design code with their local communities as part of their neighbourhood plan review. A named officer from the Neighbourhood Planning team will be able to offer support and advice as you work to establish the background context information, the community engagement and survey phase and the production of your Design Code.

How long will it take to produce a Design Code?

It is anticipated that the Design Code would take approximately 12 months to complete.

Will there be funding available for parishes wishing to produce a Design Code?

There has been no announcements to date regarding any grants or funding available for parish councils/ local communities to specifically produce Design Codes. Herefordshire are encouraging parish councils to produce a Design Code as part of their Neighbourhood Planning work which is grant funded.

