

PPG Consultation

Design and Placemaking

Question 6

Do you agree that the usability and effectiveness of the draft Design and Placemaking PPG has improved?

- The structure of the of the document is well laid out and simpler to use in comparison to the current 4 documents that it is proposes to replace.
- The features of well-designed places have been simplified with less overlapping which is welcomed.
- Local authorities are not required to produce area-wide design codes but may still do so where contextually appropriate. This is welcomed and supports the approach Dorset Council are taking.
- Support best practice of digital mapping of design requirements to improve usability.
- Context is within the 7 characteristics rather than on its own leading to repetition of the phrase context through each individual characteristic. Opportunity to have 8 characteristics rather than have context throughout, however, appreciate that this has the benefit of forcing the user to have an iterative consideration of context.
- Higher densities in areas with better transport links is welcomed as a sustainable growth pattern however consideration of the differences at certain locations should be given thought. For example, heritage areas or wider landscape impacts from increased heights, etc.
- Engagement and tools for design requirements is welcomed.
- The strengthened evidence base for coding environmental performance and internal space quality is welcomed.
- Giving more autonomy for producing codes and ensuring that they are specific to the area to which they are being produced is an improvement.
- The seven 'features' of well-designed places are intended to be read in conjunction with the NPPF Chapter 14 DP3 which outlines 8 No. 'key principles' for well-designed places. These principles are referred to in the NPPF with a letter (a. b. c. etc.) rather than numbers. The 'Key Principles' cross over with the 7 features in the PPG except for the addition of 'Context' in the NPPF, which as a topic is discussed under each of the 7 'Features'. This is confusing and makes it complex for a case officer to refer to these 'Key Principles' or 'Features' in a planning assessment. If the PPG Is indeed intended to be used in conjunction with the NPPF it would be helpful to rationalise how the 'principles' or 'features' are defined by aligning them. For example, referring to them in both documents as 8 Key principles or 7 Features, not both.
- The inclusion of highlighted drawings (Figures) throughout the document is very useful as a visual prompt / summary of the relevant text. It would help strengthen the guidance if there is clear crossover between these diagrams and the model design codes when they come forward.

Question 7

Are there any aspects where clarity, accessibility, or practical application could be improved to better support design and placemaking outcomes?

- Interactive tools – creating and utilising interactive tools is costly and therefore it would be useful if there was a government tool that could facilitate this.
- Digital community engagement is welcomed. However, planning specific engagement tools are extremely costly with ever decreasing budgets. A nationally based digital engagement service may better improve this situation, even if this was a budget friendly cost.
- The requirement for tree lined streets has a significant implication for development and maintenance. A diagram to show the integrated arrangement of street trees with street lighting, utilities, SuDS and building line would be useful
- Density / Effective use of land B1 – further guidance/clarity required in relation to optimising site capacity for development balanced with an acceptable quantum of Green infrastructure and need for healthy placemaking. A more permissive planning system puts greater emphasis on the need to clearly explain where design would be inadequate.
- Further clarification required on increased densification balanced with existing local character and urban grain, particularly in a rural county where major development is often located on edge of settlements/ rural edge where existing density can be low.
- B2 paragraphs 132,133 needs further clarification and distinction.
- I2 paragraph 172 considerations should include existing urban grain/settlement pattern
- I3 paragraph 175 further clarity required on when new identity would/would not be appropriate. Important to understand how this fits with local context? Perhaps 'new identity may be more appropriate in areas with weak or limited positive qualities? Concern paragraph 175 could support insensitive design, out of context with the area in rural locations.
- Further clarification on the acceptable quantum of Green Infrastructure required. A more permissive planning system must clearly explain where design would be inadequate.
- Include examples / images of development with a rural context. Important to demonstrate development considering landscape qualities, views, topography etc. (not shown in Fig 39)

Question 8

Do you agree that the principles set out in the draft Design and Placemaking PPG adequately address the needs and requirements of traveller sites?

- Although not mentioned explicitly, the seven features (liveability, climate, nature, movement, built form, public space, identity) could inform layout and access arrangements, safety, and public realm, green spaces and nature

integration, climate adaptation features, etc. However, this would be interpretative rather than a requirement specifically for travellers sites.

- We have been made aware of a piece of work called the 'The modern nomad – G & T community vision guide 2024/25', that specifically discusses design on travellers sites. It can be found on the following link [GRT-Design-Guide@300dpi-1.pdf](#) . Whilst Dorset Council does not agree with the entirety of the document recommendations, it is considered a good reference point for the specific issues relating to the design of Traveller sites, and has been informally endorsed by the Traveller community in Dorset. It may therefore be a useful tool in starting to unpick some specific design issues for traveller sites. Dorset Council intends to use national guidance, best practice guidance, and consult with the Traveller community in order to prepare a masterplan template or design guidance document for Traveller sites, to be used by developers, Council officers, and decision makers at application stage to inform the design of Traveller sites. As noted above, it would be useful if Government guidance was more explicit in setting out expectations and examples of good design for Traveller sites.

Question 9

What additional considerations or clarifications might be necessary to ensure planning practice guidance supports inclusive and culturally appropriate design and placemaking?

- The Draft PPG does not specifically reference culturally specific accommodation needs, including Traveller sites or large multi-generational households. The need for traveller sites covers all areas of the country but there may be cultural requirements for communities in the UK that are outside of the norm and require understanding. Survey work and ONS data can inform this understanding and should be incorporated in the social/community context that informs the requirements of the physical built form.
- An additional section recognising non-standard housing forms (e.g., caravan-based households, transient sites, community-led housing) could be added and clarification of how Liveability, Built Form, and Public Space principles apply to households whose living forms and space needs differ from conventional bricks-and-mortar housing.
- Further guidance on inclusive engagement methods that reach marginalised groups and how to ensure that the needs of these groups are appropriately catered for as a result of the engagement work. This could include case studies.
- More consideration of on street lighting and the relationship with trees. These issues are creating considerable issues in our Design Code. There is a need for lighting for safety, particularly of women and girls, at night but the need and desire to provide trees causes a conflict. Often with the trees being lost from the scheme. This is also true of public spaces at night.
- The focus on designing for Health & Wellbeing throughout the document is welcome. However, in today's food climate which is dominated by 'big food' and the increasing encroachment of unhealthy choices being the easiest choice consideration should be given to emphasising access to affordable

healthy food options such as community cooperatives, allotments/ growing spaces etc.

Question 10

Do you agree that tools, such as model design codes, could speed up the preparation of local design codes?

- Model design codes would support the preparation of local design codes by helping end users better understand what codes would like and how they could serve a use. Having examples would be a useful way to explain this.

Question 11

What other tools would support this

- Guidance for the production of codes should be linked with Manual for Streets, LTN1/20 and other national guidance and standards.
- It would be helpful if national policy could obligate larger sites to produce their own design code if there isn't one already in place through local policy. This would be particularly helpful in the intermediate times when local plans are not yet adopted but some sites which are expected to become allocated are already coming forward.