

STATEMENT OF

PUBLIC

CONSULTATION

V.01

2026

INTRODUCTION

Background

This Statement of Consultation has been prepared in accordance with Regulation 12 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. The Statement sets out who, when and how interested parties were consulted when preparing the North Herts Design Code Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). The statement also summarises the representations received and how they have influenced the SPD.

The Design Code SPD provides additional detail and clarity to adopted Local Plan Policy SP9 (Design and Sustainability), Policy D1 (Sustainable Design) and other relevant policies in the Plan.

The aim of the document is to set out our expectations for high-quality design for development in North Herts and offer clear codes to developers to guide the preparation of schemes and to case officers and Local Councillors in determining planning applications.



Visioning Workshop, Residents Design Forum, June 2025.

ENGAGEMENT TIMELINE

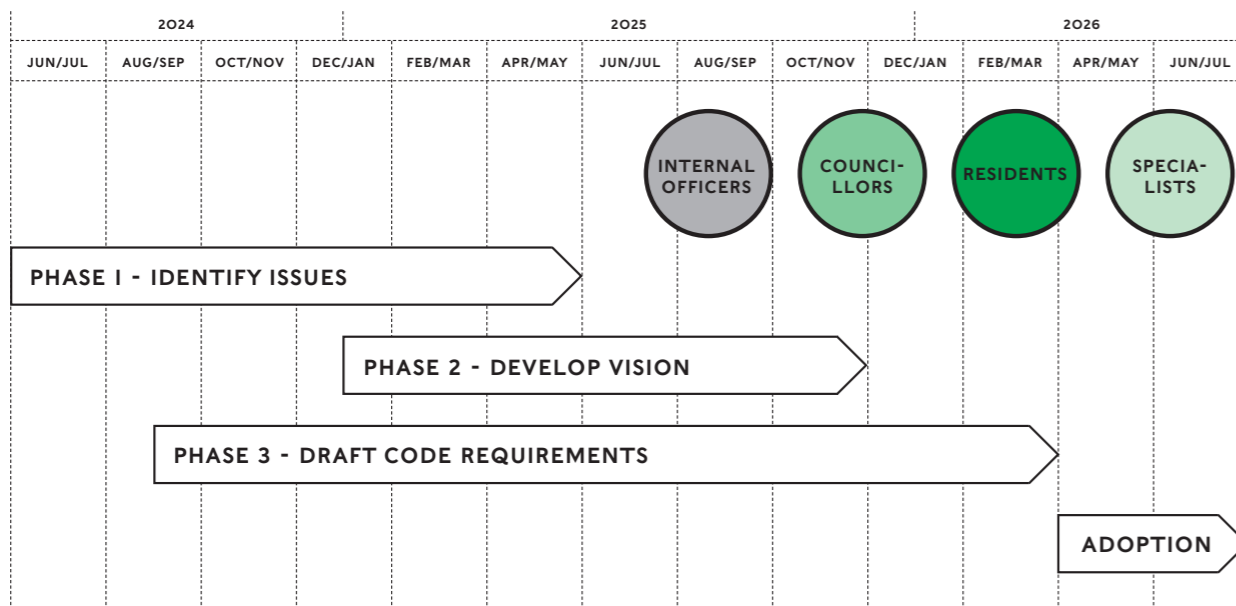
Preparation and Overview

The preparation of the North Herts Design Code involved a structured programme of engagement with internal officers, Local Councillors, residents and specialist stakeholders between June 2024 and April 2026. The engagement process was organised into three key phases: Identifying Issues, Developing the Vision, and Drafting the Code Requirements.

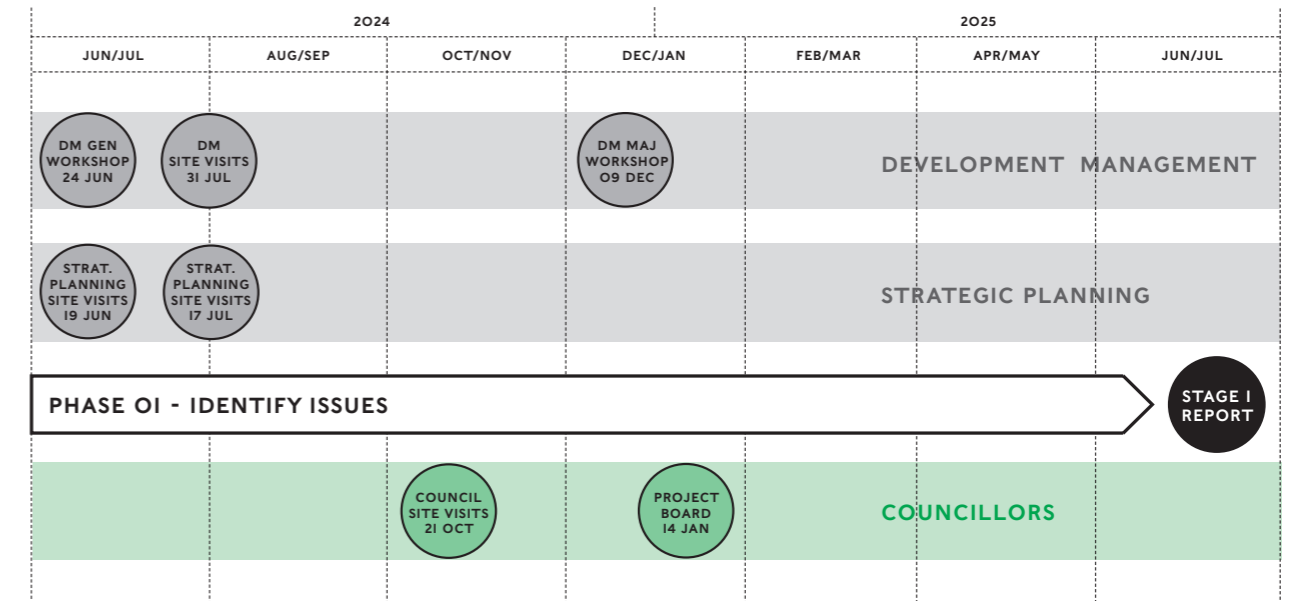
Each phase included targeted workshops, meetings and forums designed to gather feedback from different groups, including Development Management officers, Strategic Planning officers, Local Councillors, residents, and specialist stakeholders. This engagement helped ensure that the emerging design code reflected local priorities, practical development considerations and the views of the community.

The timeline provides an overview of the key engagement activities undertaken throughout the project.

ENGAGEMENT TIMELINE



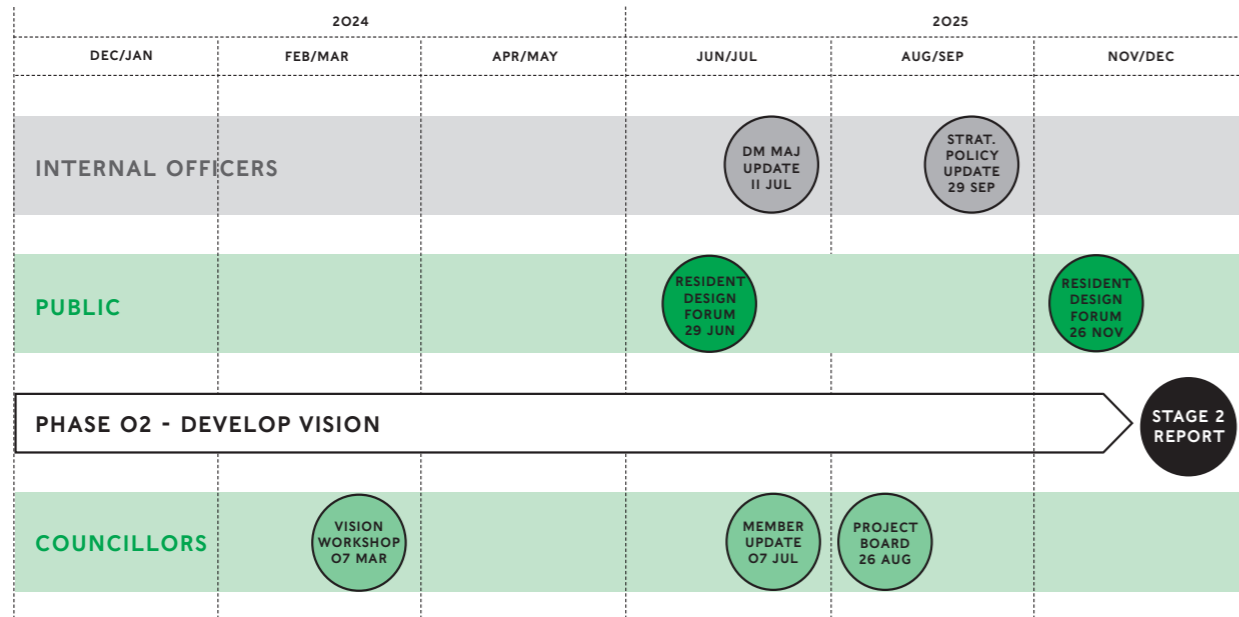
Phase 1 - Identify Issues



The first phase of engagement focused on identifying key design issues and priorities across North Hertfordshire. Engagement during this stage primarily involved internal officers and Local Councillors, supported by site visits and workshops.

These discussions helped identify the main design challenges, opportunities, and local priorities that informed the emerging vision for the Design Code.

Phase 2 - Develop Vision

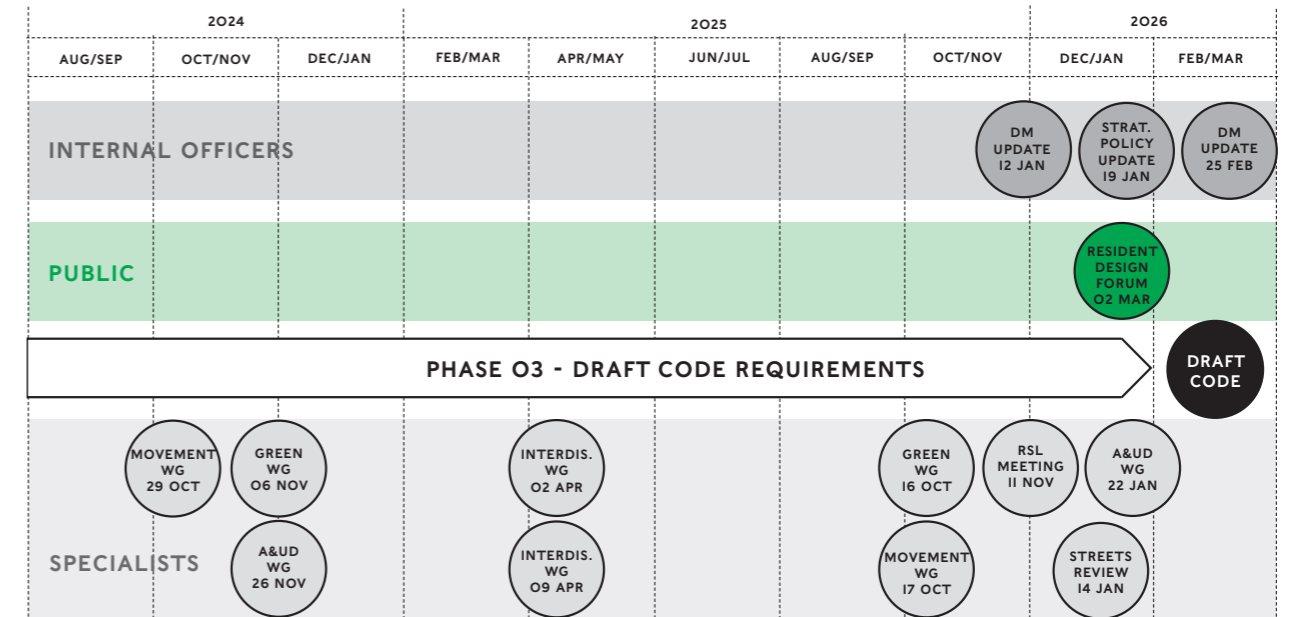


The second phase of engagement focused on developing the overarching vision and principles that would guide the North Herts Design Code. This stage broadened engagement to include residents and Local Councillors alongside internal officers.

Key engagement activities included a Vision Workshop with Local Councillors, internal officer updates and the first two Residents Design Forums held in June and November 2025. These sessions provided an opportunity to explore local priorities, discuss key design themes and gather early feedback on the emerging vision for the design code.

Feedback from these discussions helped shape the overall direction of the code and informed the development of the draft principles.

Phase 3 - Draft Design Code Requirements

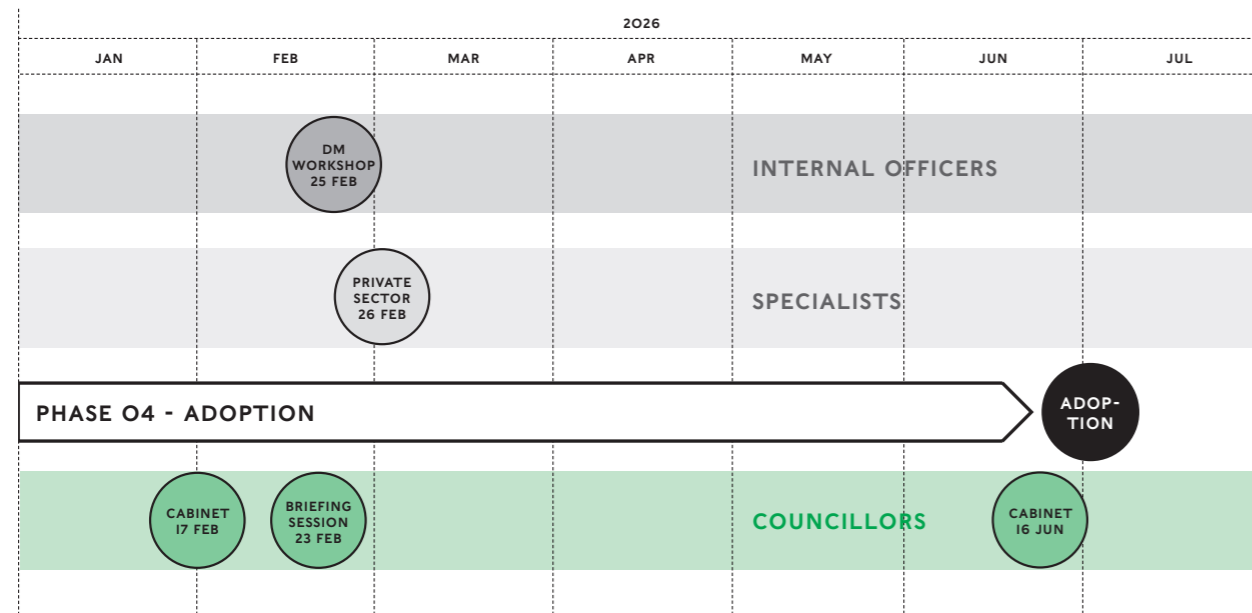


The third phase focused on developing the detailed design code requirements. Engagement during this stage involved a wider range of stakeholders, including internal officers, residents, registered social landlords and specialist working groups.

A series of specialist working groups were held to discuss specific technical topics such as movement, green infrastructure, streets and architecture and urban design. Internal officer updates and meetings with housing associations also helped ensure that the emerging codes were practical and aligned with development management processes.

The final Residents Design Forum was held in March 2026, providing an opportunity for participants to review and discuss the draft code requirements prior to the start of the public consultation.

Phase 4 - Adoption



The final phase focuses on the formal adoption of the North Herts Design Code Supplementary Planning Document. During this stage, internal officer discussion and briefing sessions were held to finalise the document prior to adoption.

Key activities included a Development Management workshop and a private sector briefing session in February 2026. Local Councillors were also engaged through cabinet briefings and Local Councillor sessions to review the draft code and the consultation outcomes where the Draft Design Code received positive feedback and praise from councillors.

Following the close of the public consultation period, subsequent amendments were made in response to the representations received, contributing towards the final version of the Design Code as presented for Cabinet’s consideration in relation to adoption.

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STAGE I SUMMARY

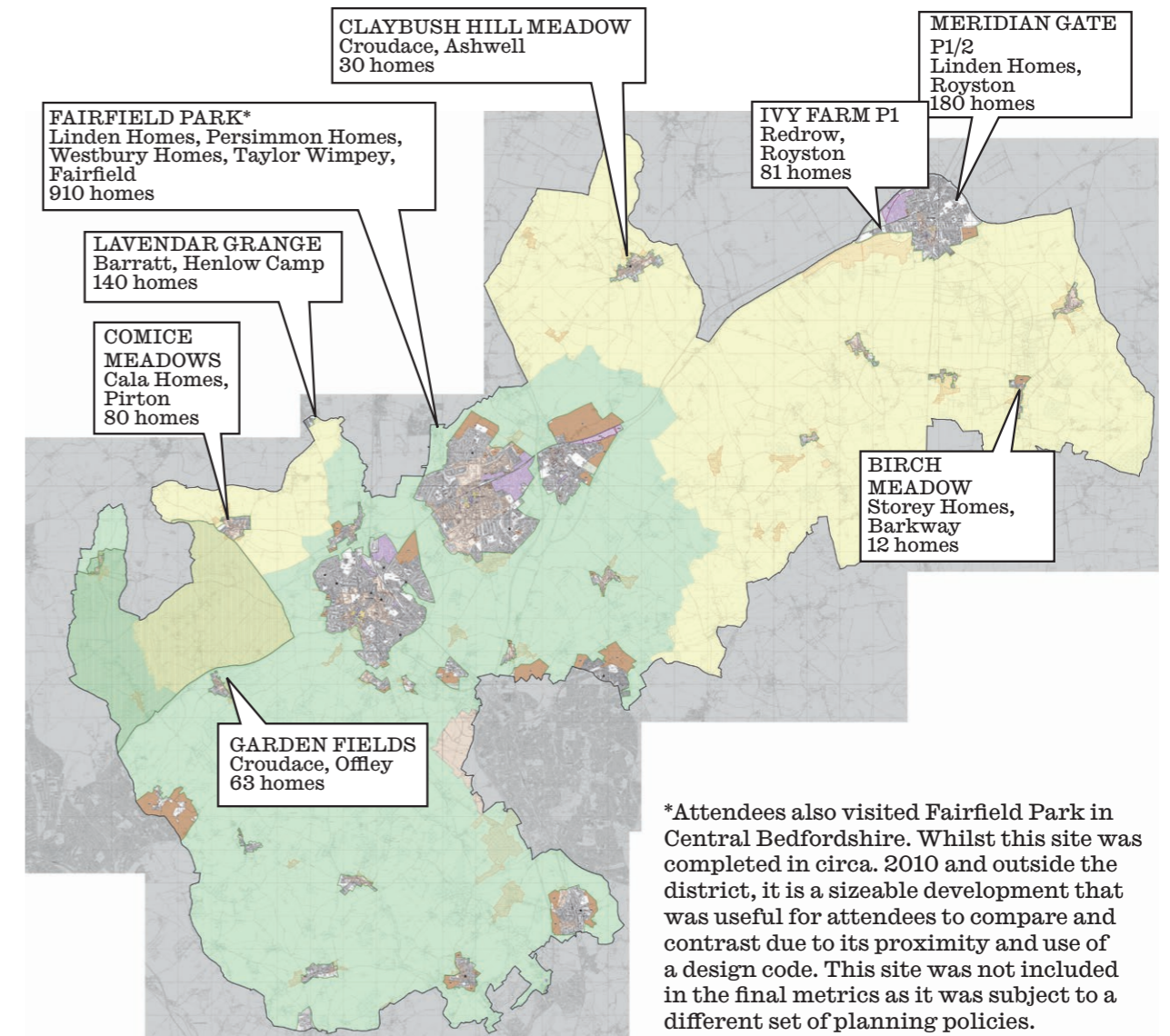
METHODOLOGY

Place Review Approach

In order to shape the strategic direction and focus for the Design Code, the Urban Design Team held a series of guided site visits with officers and Local Councillors to understand what development in North Herts was doing well and what could be improved. This process mirrors national methodology conducted by the Place Alliance, their most recent publication being 'A Housing Design Audit for England' which assessed 142 large-scale housing led developments across the country against good practice criteria.

In North Herts, attendees visited a total of 8 recently completed developments across the district (shown on the map below) of varying scale, character and location over a total of 4 days. At each site, attendees were asked to complete a design questionnaire during that assessed various aspects of urban design across six key categories. Criteria (shown opposite) were based on Buildings For A Healthy Life Guidance (2020), the National Model Design Guide and Place Alliance criteria. The form asked attendees to rate each site against a statement from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree. To look at the data, this was then translated into a score which allowed the team to rank the highest and lowest scoring statements. Key objectives from the visits were:

1. To facilitate discussions around what good and bad development looks and feels like.
2. To develop an understanding of what development in North Herts is doing well.
3. To develop an understanding of what development in North Herts is doing less well and needs to be improved.
4. To gather numerical data which will inform priority areas for the code moving forwards.



*Attendees also visited Fairfield Park in Central Bedfordshire. Whilst this site was completed in circa. 2010 and outside the district, it is a sizeable development that was useful for attendees to compare and contrast due to its proximity and use of a design code. This site was not included in the final metrics as it was subject to a different set of planning policies.

District Map showing sites visited.

OFFICERS PLACE REVIEW

Officer Site Visits

North Herts officers from across the Place Directorate took part in a series of Place Review site visits held in June and July 2024. Officers represented a range of disciplines, including strategic planning, development management, urban design, transport, ecology, infrastructure and policy, ensuring that the exercise captured a broad range of professional perspectives.

Across the site visit days, officers visited a number of recently completed residential developments across the district. These included Claybush Hill Meadows (Ashwell), Meridian Gate (Royston), Birch Meadow (Barkway), Comice Meadows (Pirton), Garden Fields (Offley), Lavender Grange (Lower Stondon) and Ivy Farm (Royston). Officers also visited Fairfield Park (Central Bedfordshire) as a comparator scheme outside the district.

At each location, participants completed a structured place review questionnaire assessing the design and performance of the development against a series of criteria covering settlement structure and layout, movement and connectivity, nature and open space, character and built form, social infrastructure, and management of public spaces.

In total, 74 officer response forms were completed across seven sites, allowing results to be collated and analysed.

Key Findings

The scoring indicated that most categories performed relatively consistently across the sites, with average scores typically falling between 2.5 and 3.5. This suggested that while many developments perform reasonably well in several areas, there are also recurring design issues that the Design Code should seek to address.

The place reviews highlighted a number of positive aspects, including appropriate buildings heights, well-maintained front gardens and streets that generally feel safe with good levels of natural surveillance. However, officers also identified areas for improvement, particularly relating to the quality and usability of open spaces, the integration of new development with surrounding contexts, and the prominence of car parking within some schemes.



Officers Site Visit Day, 31st July 2024

LOCAL COUNCILLORS PLACE REVIEW

Local Councillor Site Visits

Following the officer review, a second set of site visits was undertaken with elected Local Councillors. These visits were organised to allow Local Councillors to review a selection of recent residential developments across the district and provide their own perspectives on what was working well and where improvements could be made.

Local Councillors were asked to consider the same themes explored in the officer review, including streets and movement, parking, public spaces, building design and the overall quality of place. As with the officer review, Local Councillors recorded their views using a structured scoring form to ensure that feedback could be compared consistently across sites.

Key Findings

Local Councillors highlighted a number of positive aspects across the developments visited, including attractive streets in some locations, well-maintained landscaping and developments that generally felt safe and well overlooked.

However, Local Councillors also identified several recurring issues. These included concerns about the dominance of car parking in some streets, the limited usability or quality of certain open spaces, and the need for stronger connections between new developments and their surrounding settlement.

The feedback provided by Local Councillors helped reinforce many of the themes identified through the officer review and provided an important democratic perspective on the design issues that the Design Code should address.



Members Site Visit Day, 21st October 2024

KEY CONCLUSIONS

Local Councillor and Officer Site Visits

The officer and Local Councillor place reviews identified a number of consistent themes across the developments visited. While many schemes demonstrated positive aspects of design, the exercise highlighted several recurring issues which the Design Code seeks to address.

Across the sites reviewed, development often performed well in terms of basic layout, building height and the presence of front gardens, and most streets generally felt safe with reasonable levels of natural surveillance. Landscaping and planting were also frequently well established in more mature developments.

However, several areas of concern were identified. Car parking was often visually dominant, with vehicles sometimes defining the character of streets rather than buildings or landscape. In some locations, open spaces lacked a clear purpose or were poorly integrated with surrounding streets, reducing their usability and contribution to the wider neighbourhood.

Both officers and Local Councillors also noted that connections between new developments and their surrounding settlements were sometimes weak, resulting in developments that felt inward-looking or poorly integrated with existing communities. In addition, some developments showed limited architectural variety or a lack of distinctive local character, which reduced their ability to contribute positively to the identity of the area.

These findings helped to establish the key design challenges within North Hertfordshire and directly informed the next stage of the Design Code process, including the development of the Place Objectives and technical design codes.

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STAGE 2 SUMMARY

COUNCIL VISIONING DAY

Session Overview

The District Design Code Visioning Workshop brought together Local Councillors and Senior Officers to shape the strategic direction of the emerging authority-wide Design Code. The day was facilitated by Esther Kurland and colleagues at Urban Design Learning (UDL) and was structured around three key activities that were designed to facilitate discussions at a strategic scale down to the granular. Attendees discussed and debated what good development is and explored how the emerging Design Code could reflect and deliver on the Council's four key priorities - thriving communities, accessible services, responsible growth and sustainability.

Key objectives from the event were:

1. To facilitate discussions around what good and bad development looks and feels like.
2. To understand what the council priorities mean in the context of the code.
3. To develop a set of Place Objectives.
4. To prioritise which Place Objectives and problems the code should focus on addressing.
5. To explore the golden thread between priorities, Place Objectives and code.



Council Visioning Day, Friday 7th March 2025

ATTENDEES	ROLE (AS OF 07/03/25)
Cllr Daniel Allen (Labour/Co-operative)	Letchworth Norton Leader of the Council and Labour and Co-operative Group Interim Executive Member for Planning and Transport
Cllr Alistair Willoughby (Labour/Co-operative)	Baldock West Chair of Licensing and Regulation Committee Chair of Standards Committee Chair of Baldock and District Community Forum
Cllr Elizabeth Dennis (Labour/Co-operative)	Hitchin Walsworth Chair of Planning Control Committee
Cllr Val Bryant (Labour/Co-operative)	Hitchin Bearton Deputy Leader of the Council Executive Member for Community and Partnership
Cllr Vijaiya Poopalasingam (Labour/Co-operative)	Great Ashby
Cllr Tom Tyson (Liberal Democrats)	Arbury
Cllr Paul Ward (Liberal Democrats)	Knebworth
Cllr Clair Strong (Conservative)	Offa
Ian Fullstone	Service Director - Regulatory
Jo Doggett	Service Director - Housing and Environmental Health
Reuben Ayavoo	Policy and Community Manager
Georgina Chapman	Policy and Strategy Team Leader
Nigel Smith	Strategic Planning Manager
Deborah Coates	Principal Planning Officer

AGENDA	ACTIVITY
12:00-12:20	Registration, tea and coffee
12:20-13:20	Activity 1 - The Cool Wall - What do good places look like?
13:20-13:30	UDL Introduction
13:30-13:50	Tea and coffee break
13:50-14:20	Herts Design Code-intro North
14:20-15:30	Activity 2 - Identifying and prioritising place characteristics
15:30-15:50	Break with afternoon tea, sandwiches and snacks
15:50-16:10	How coding can deliver - presentation
16:1--17:00	Activity 3 - How coding can deliver
17:00-17:10	Short break
17:10-17:30	Wrap up and next steps

Attendees: North Herts Councillors (proportionately represented) and Senior North Herts Officers
Time: Friday 7 March 2025
Location: Committee Room, District Council Offices, Letchworth

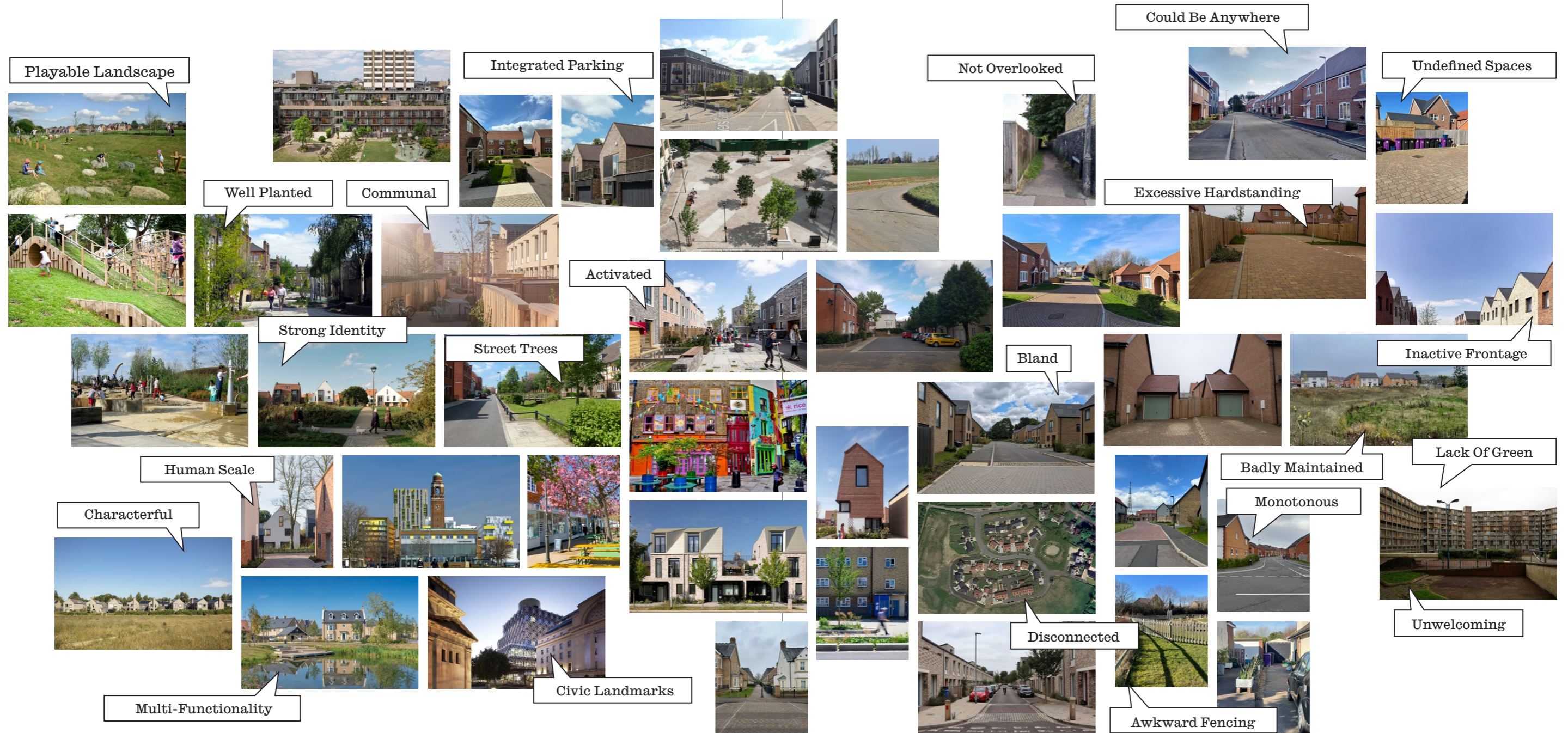
Activity 1: The Cool Wall

In the first activity, participants took part in a 'Cool Wall' exercise using a broad selection of images to discuss and debate what good and bad development looks and feels like. Images presented were a mixture of those provided by attendees, UDL and the Urban Design team, covering local and national projects. After discussion and debate, attendees placed the image on the wall, locating it somewhere on the scale from 'cool' to 'uncool.'

The activity encouraged open discussion about what makes places successful (or unsuccessful). Conversations explored elements such as layout, architectural quality, materials, greenery, walkability, the presence of community infrastructure, when buildings should stand out, parking and many other elements.

As the wall filled up, patterns began to emerge and the group began to identify recurring characteristics of successful and unsuccessful places. Common positive attributes of 'cool' development included plenty of planting/street trees, playable landscapes, strong built form identity and character, communal space, activated public realm and a human scale. Conversely, common negative attributes of 'uncool' places included excessive hardstanding, undefined and unclaimed spaces, poorly overlooked routes, bland streets that could be anywhere and disconnected networks. Images placed in the middle were debated within the group and tended to have a mixture of positive and negative characteristics. More detailed notes on the discussions are arranged into themes on the next page.

The wall has been recreated below with common characteristics highlighted.





Council Visioning Day, Friday 7th March 2025

Nature And Open Space

Multi-Functionality

Playable Landscape

Well Planted

Attendees unanimously agreed that high quality green spaces, plenty of planting and nature were integral to delivering successful places. In particular, attendees picked up on multi-functional open spaces that balanced ecology, amenity, play and active travel, creating activated and well-used spaces. An image of a playable attenuation basin in Solihull with children jumping on boulders and tree stumps was chosen as the 'most cool' for its dual function.

Attendees also highlighted that maintenance of green spaces was a key issue - an example of a poorly maintained attenuation basin attracted a lot of criticism for its lack of function and poor quality planting.

Badly Maintained

Public Realm

Activated

Communal

Street Trees

Integrated Parking

Public realm made up a significant part of the discussion with attendees agreeing that successful places tended to have activated streets with plenty of trees and areas for residents to gather. Parking was a key issue and the group debated how best to integrate parking to ensure cars did not dominate the public realm. Whilst there was no consensus, options such as integral garages, on street parking and parking courts were all discussed with general agreement that ad-hoc parking on verges and pavements was undesirable.

Unsuccessful examples were harsh, hard and unwelcoming with a lack of planting and excessive hardstanding. Safety and walkability were also discussed and it was generally agreed that routes, streets and paths should be well-overlooked to create a sense of safety for pedestrians.

The group also discussed a lack of legibility and connectivity through one such example of development in Whitwell where peripheral routes were disconnected and the development did not integrate with the surrounding village.

Awkward Fencing

Not Overlooked

Excessive Hardstanding

Lack Of Green

Unwelcoming

Undefined Spaces

Disconnected

Built Form

Characterful

Human Scale

Civic Landmarks

Strong Identity

Built form characteristics created the most debate with some attendees expressing a preference for more contemporary examples whilst others preferring traditional architectural approaches. Architectural style aside, in all examples the group agreed that characterful buildings with a strong identity driven by their context were the most successful.

Conversely, places with standard housing types that could be anywhere and lacked any identity were agreed to be unsuccessful. Scale was also discussed with the group identifying clunky transitions between building heights as undesirable.

Inactive Frontage

Could Be Anywhere

Monotonous

Bland

Activity 2: Place Characteristics

In this activity, attendees were divided into two groups; Local Councillors and officers. Using the key challenges identified during the site visits, attendees in each group worked together to prioritise characteristics they felt the code needed to address. There was also an opportunity to add or amend characteristics based on Activity 1. At the end of the activity, UDL facilitated a discussion bringing together both lists, looking for common threads and discussing differing priorities.

Across both groups, several place characteristics consistently emerged as top priorities:

- Streets as places: Both groups agreed that streets that function as social, walkable and nature-integrated spaces were foundational elements of successful places.
- Tenure-neutral design: Both groups strongly supported tenure neutral neighbourhoods where affordable tenures could not be differentiated from private/market tenures.
- Connectivity and integration: Both groups felt that well-integrated development was an important aspect of creating connected communities with access to local services and amenities.
- High-quality green spaces: Officers felt high quality green spaces with well

integrated attenuation basins should be a top priority for the code.

- Distinctiveness: Local Councillors felt that the code should push for distinctive neighbourhoods that have a sense of local identity and character, moving away from developments that could be anywhere.
- Structure first, detail second: When presenting the lists, both teams highlighted the important of getting the structure and networks right which would in turn 'take care' of the more granular or detailed elements - such as designing out unmanaged spaces on streets, etc.



Council Visioning Day, Friday 7th March 2025

Officers

1: High Quality Green Spaces

High quality green spaces that have a clear function.

Well-integrated attenuation basins that contribute to place-making.

Streets designed as places for nature with high quality planting and trees.

2: Streets That Feel Like Places

Streets that feel like places and encourage walking.

Advocating for collectiveness, sharing and chance encounters - important for an ageing population everyone.

3: Tenure Neutral And Mixed

Tenure neutral, equitable and mixed neighbourhoods.

4: Connected

Well connected routes, roads and paths - no impermeable edges.

Future-proofing edges of proposals with growth in mind to ensure connections are possible.

Developments that are stitched into their surroundings.

Local Councillors

1: Tenure Neutral And Mixed

Tenure neutral, equitable and mixed neighbourhoods.

2: Streets That Feel Like Places

Streets that feel like places and encourage walking.

3: Connected And Integrated

Developments that are stitched into their surroundings.

Should feel organic.

~~Alternative approaches to non-residential uses that promotes community use and networking do not rely on large space-take and high footfall.~~

4: Distinctive

Distinctive homes that celebrate the area's local character.

Look and continuity of theme.

Officers

Green spaces that are distinctive to the local area.

Planning for reduced car ownership to ensure infrastructure is flexible and can be adapted back into public use.

Reduce car reliance with hub, employment and public transport.

Compact settlements/walkable neighbourhoods that use land efficiently ~~to reduce pressure to release Green Belt.~~

Distinctive homes that celebrate the area's local character.

Well-integrated schools that create legible focal points within neighbourhoods - not just large fenced off sites.

Alternative approaches to non-residential uses that support community networking and do not compete with the high street.

Streets with a clear delineation of managed and private spaces - ambiguous 'grassy patches' are designed out.

Local Councillors

Future-proofing edges of proposals with growth in mind to ensure connections are possible.

High quality green spaces that have a clear function.

Streets designed as places for nature with high quality planting and trees.

Well connected routes, roads and paths - no impermeable edges.

Green spaces that are distinctive to the local area.

Well-integrated schools that create legible focal points within neighbourhoods - not just large fenced off sites.

Well-integrated attenuation basins that contribute to place-making.

Streets with a clear delineation of managed and private spaces - ambiguous 'grassy patches' are designed out.

Compact settlements that use land efficiently to reduce pressure on release of additional green belt (and promote sustainable journeys).

Advocating for collectiveness, sharing and chance encounters - important for an ageing population.

Planning for reduced car ownership to ensure infrastructure is flexible and can be adapted back into public use.

Activity 2: Testing the Code

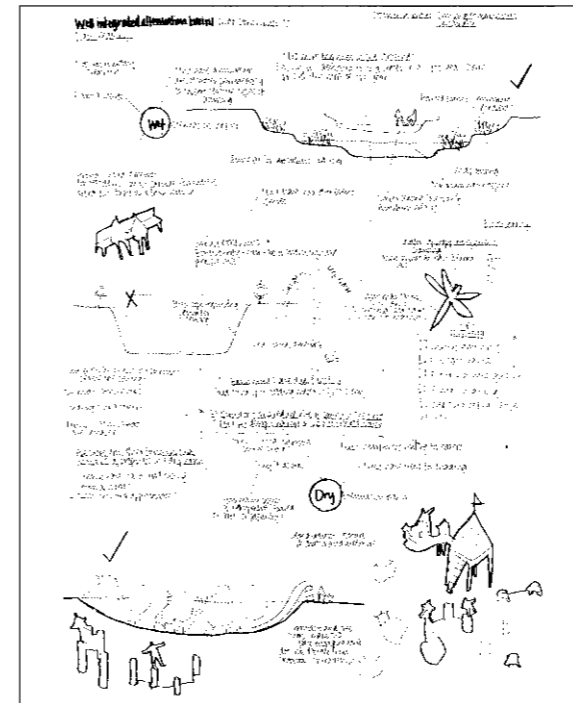
The final session of the workshop began with an introductory presentation around how coding can be used to deliver on the place characteristics and priorities identified in the previous two activities. The presentation explored the golden thread between setting an ambition such as ‘Thriving Communities’ (Council Plan Priority), translating this into a spatial characteristics such as ‘Developments that are stitched into their surroundings’ and finally turning this into code covering spatial requirements, process requirements, etc.

Participants were divided into three groups mixing officers with Local Councillors to focus on one key place characteristic. Group 1 focussed on integrating attenuation basins, Group 2 looked at embedding tenure neutrality and Group 3 discussed stitching developments into their surroundings. The objective of this activity was to encourage members to explore key requirements that would deliver on the previously identified ambitions and to gain a better understanding of how code is written.



Council Visioning Day, Friday 7th March 2025

Group 1: Well Integrated Attenuation Basins That Contribute To Place-Making



Nature-based over engineered solutions that contribute to the natural character of the green spaces they sit within

Nature-based solutions for road run-off

No holes in the ground - code edges

Must be multi-use integrating play or biodiversity rich planting

Deal with water at the source - minimising water transported

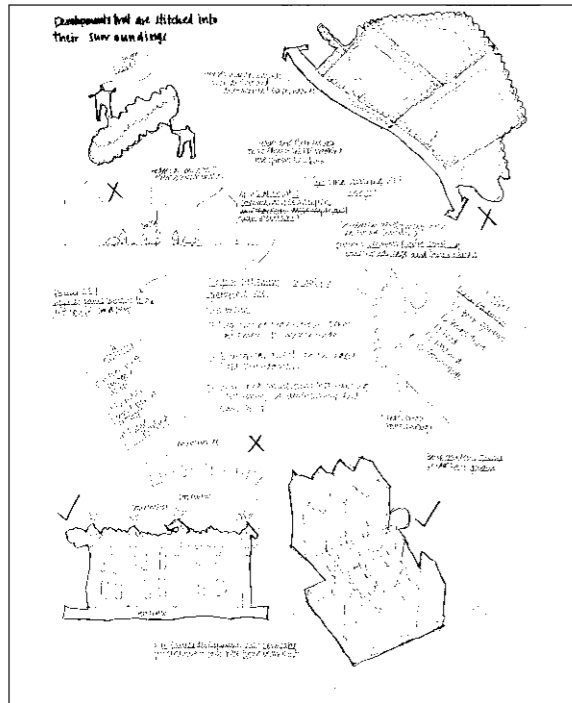
Need code for other types of SUDs such as swales and rain gardens

Code the process



Council Visioning Day, Friday 7th March 2025

Group 2: Developments That Are Stitched Into Their Surroundings



Consider tiers of ecological assets and how you could work with what's there

Require BNG on site

Include responses to each tier of ecological asset

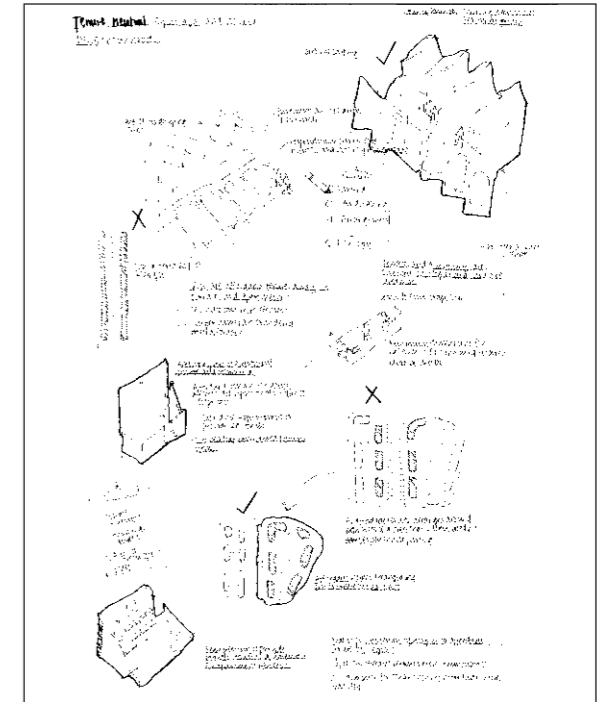
Guidance or templates showing developers what to do for eg. ancient woodland

Access and highways important

Additional active travel access for connectivity

Code for what you want as well as what you don't want

Group 3: Tenure Neutral Neighbourhoods



Parking is the biggest giveaway - usually right up to front doors of terraced blocks.

Parking amenities such as EV charging

Code for distance in front of homes

Code for flexible parking space - dual use

Private tenures have garages, affordable tenures don't

Mix of blocks and building types

Consider management

Consider letterbox provision and design

Parity of public realm

Location and access to playspace is important



Council Visioning Day, Friday 7th March 2025



Council Visioning Day, Friday 7th March 2025



Council Visioning Day, Friday 7th March 2025

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RESIDENT DESIGN FORUM #1

Session Overview

The first Residents Design Forum brought together a diverse group of 22 North Herts residents to explore and develop a vision for new development in the district and set the direction of travel for the emerging District Design Code*. The session lasted 2.5 hours and was made up of two main activities. In the first, attendees were asked to reflect, individually and then as a group, about their experience of living in North Herts. In the second session, attendees created a vision board in groups, that captured their priorities and ambitions for new development in the district.

Key objectives from the event were:

1. To foster a sense of collaborative spirit between forum members.
2. To gain an understanding of residents' experiences of living in North Herts including both positive and negative aspects.
3. To facilitate discussions around what good and bad development looks and feels like.
4. To develop a vision for new development in the district, including aspects that should be prioritised.

Agenda	Activity
18:00-18:10	Registration
18:10-18:30	Activity 1 - Ice Breaker 'Living in North Herts'
18:30-19:10	Dinner and Introductory Presentation
19:10-19:50	Activity 2 - Visioning Collages
19:50-20:10	Feedback Session
20:10-20:30	Wrap Up and Next Steps

Attendees: North Herts Residents
 Facilitators: North Herts Urban Design Team
 Time: Wednesday 29 June 6:00-8:30pm
 Location: Committee Room, District Council Offices, Letchworth

*Forum members were recruited by an external organisation (Field Locker) and advertised to the North Herts Citizens Panel. The council team set strict quotas around age, ethnicity, social grade, location and gender to ensure a diversity of viewpoints and backgrounds were represented.



Resident Design Forum, Wednesday 29th June 2025

Activity 1: Living in North Herts

The first activity, designed as an ice breaker for the group, asked participants to reflect on their experiences of living in North Herts through a series of questions. Attendees were seated in groups with others that lived close by, first reflecting individually, then in pairs and finally as a whole table. Opposite is a summary of responses and discussion points that were raised.



Resident Design Forum, Wednesday 29th June 2025

What Do You Like About Where You Live?

- Quietness
- Nature
- Green Space

The majority of responses for this question centred around green spaces and access to them. Attendees expressed the value of being close to green space as a key positive attribute of living in North Herts across the district, with quietness, long walks and natural spaces bringing a wealth of health and well-being benefits to residents.

- Wide Tree-Lined Streets
- Community Spirit
- Baby Friendly Cafes
- The Countryside
- Peaceful
- Dark Skies
- Lots Of Walks
- Historic Town

What Don't You Like About Where You Live?

- Traffic
- Parking
- Congestion

Much of the discussion around negative aspects about living in North Herts centred around vehicular traffic on the roads, a lack of parking and congestion which led to concerns around air quality and fumes along major roads. Attendees highlighted the frustration around trying to get around the district in a car and also a lack of viable alternatives such as cycle paths and/or regular bus services. There was discussion around the placement of cycle tracks which tend to be delivered along major roads - undesirable with more natural routes preferred.

This led to a discussion around over-development and general agreement that new development was not delivering an appropriate level of infrastructure to service the homes, putting pressure on existing facilities (such as healthcare).

- No Cycle Lanes
- Lack Of Lighting
- Air Pollution And Fumes
- Monotonous Town Centre Shops
- Lack Of Facilities
- Access To Amenities/Healthcare

Is There a Place in the District That Feels Special / Meaningful to You?

Broadway Gardens Western Way

The most cherished places in the district were mainly open spaces, linking back to the responses for the first question where attendees valued green spaces in the district as a key positive of living in North Herts. Well-planned and multi-functional green spaces that appealed to a variety of users were most loved with some debate around safety and lighting. Whilst some attendees claimed they felt safe out in most green spaces, others felt the opposite citing a lack of lighting as a key issue. Cherished green spaces were a mixture of historic routes such as the Icknield Way and planned parks such as Broadway Gardens.

Weston Woods Market Square Therfield Heath St Mary's Church
 The Greenway Oughtonhead Hitchin Market Kennedy Gardens
 Standalone Farm Icknield Way

Activity 2: Vision Collages

In this activity, groups were asked to produce a visual representation of their ambitions for future development in North Herts. Each group (of 5-6 attendees) was provided a set of printed references that showcased a wide range of recently completed developments both in the district and further afield. As a group, attendees looked through the examples, debating and discussing their perceived successes and failures before selecting desirable examples to stick on the board. Where the discussion focused on aspects that were not displayed in the reference images, attendees were encouraged to write or draw things to illustrate the point.

At the end of the session, a nominated member presented the completed vision board to the wider group - some chose to also highlight undesirable images that needed to be coded against.

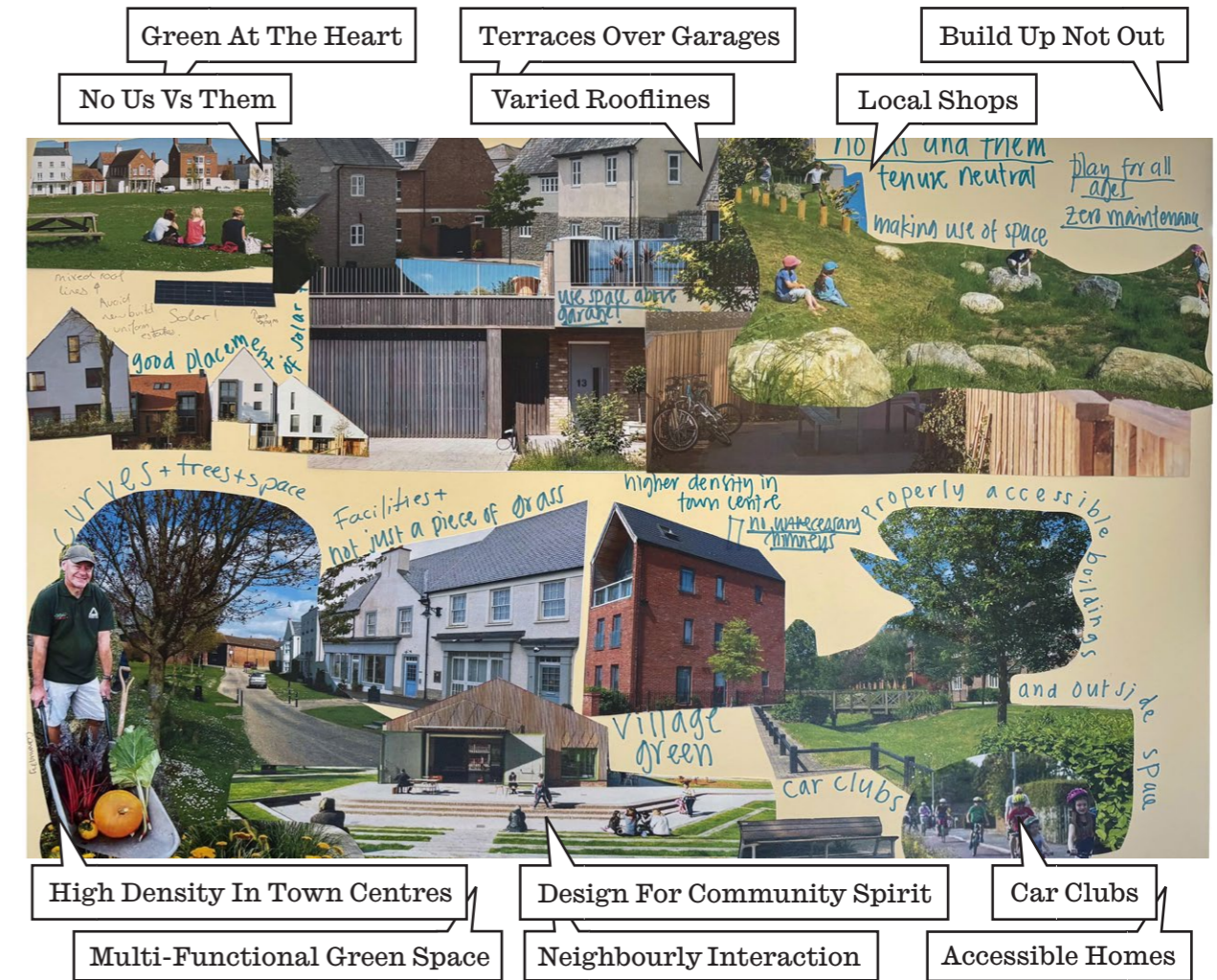


Resident Design Forum, Wednesday 29th June 2025

Group 3



Group 4



KEY PRIORITIES

- 1: Front gardens for all house types as a space to grow plants, chat with neighbours and create high quality frontage to the street.
- 2: Safer streets that prioritise pedestrians and cyclists over cars. Prompted by the image of the cyclist without a helmet, the group felt that streets should be a welcoming place for people that is not dominated by cars.
- 3: Resting spots in the public realm to encourage social interaction and walking especially for older residents who may need to stop frequently. A mixture of informal and formal seating should be used.
- 4: High quality green spaces at the centre of the community with growing spaces, allotments, wild planting and play.
- 5: Buildings that reflect the local character and are authentic to their setting. Residents expressed dislike for contemporary homes that 'pretended' to be historic.



KEY PRIORITIES

- 1: Using land efficiently and building up rather than out to protect green space in the district. To take this further, space above garages should not be wasted - group was supportive of terraces and integral solutions.
- 2: Built form should be contemporary with a nod to the context and history of the site. Authenticity is important with 'fake' chimneys cited as an example of inauthentic design. Built form and rooflines needed to be varied to avoid monotonous and bland estates.
- 3: Communal spaces that belong to a small number of residents was supported and is something generally considered lacking on new estates.
- 4: Green spaces should not just be a piece of grass. Instead they need to engender community spirit by encouraging interaction through play, raked seating, benches, etc.
- 5: SUDs should be designed like the example in Solihull incorporating low maintenance natural play.

Summary and Next Steps

The Urban Design Team at North Herts used the feedback from the first Residents Design Forum, along with insights from the Council Members Visioning Day (held in March), to help shape a vision for the new District Design Code. This Design Code was expected to be structured around six or seven core principles, turning the ideas and priorities discussed during these events into clear, practical design policies that can help us guide future development in the district.

Residents at the meeting expressed that they would like a joint session with local councillors and forum members to discuss and debate tricky issues and collaboratively review the emerging design code. The request was noted and arranged for the second Residents Design Forum on 26th November 2025.

The Council thanks all the Resident Design Forum members for their invaluable contributions and for working in a collaboratively and respectful way with fellow residents.



Resident Design Forum, Wednesday 29th June 2025

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RESIDENTS DESIGN FORUM #2

Session Overview

The second Residents Design Forum brought together the same group of North Herts residents from the first event, joined by Local Councillors, to continue collaborative work on shaping the emerging District Design Code*. The session focused on presenting the journey to the seven North Herts Place Objectives that sit at the heart of the Design Code and a collaborative workshop to further refine them.

Key objectives from the event were:

1. To present the stakeholder engagement undertaken so far to define the seven North Herts Place Objectives.
2. To review and refine the emerging Place Objectives.
3. To facilitate open dialogue between Local Councillors and Design Forum Residents about the future of development in the district.
4. To informally present examples of emerging code that deliver on the draft Place Objectives.
5. To present the programme to adoption and upcoming opportunities for Local Councillor and Resident input.

AGENDA	ACTIVITY
17:45-18:00	Arrival
18:00-18:30	Introductory Presentation
18:30-18:45	Review of Place Objectives
18:45-19:00	Dinner Served
19:00-20:00	Dinner and Group Feedback Discussion
20:00-20:15	Next Steps
20:15-20:30	Opportunity to chat with Councillors

Attendees: North Herts Residents and Local Councillors

Facilitators: North Herts Urban Design Team

Time: Wednesday 26 November 6:00-8:30pm

Location: Committee Room, District Council Offices, Letchworth

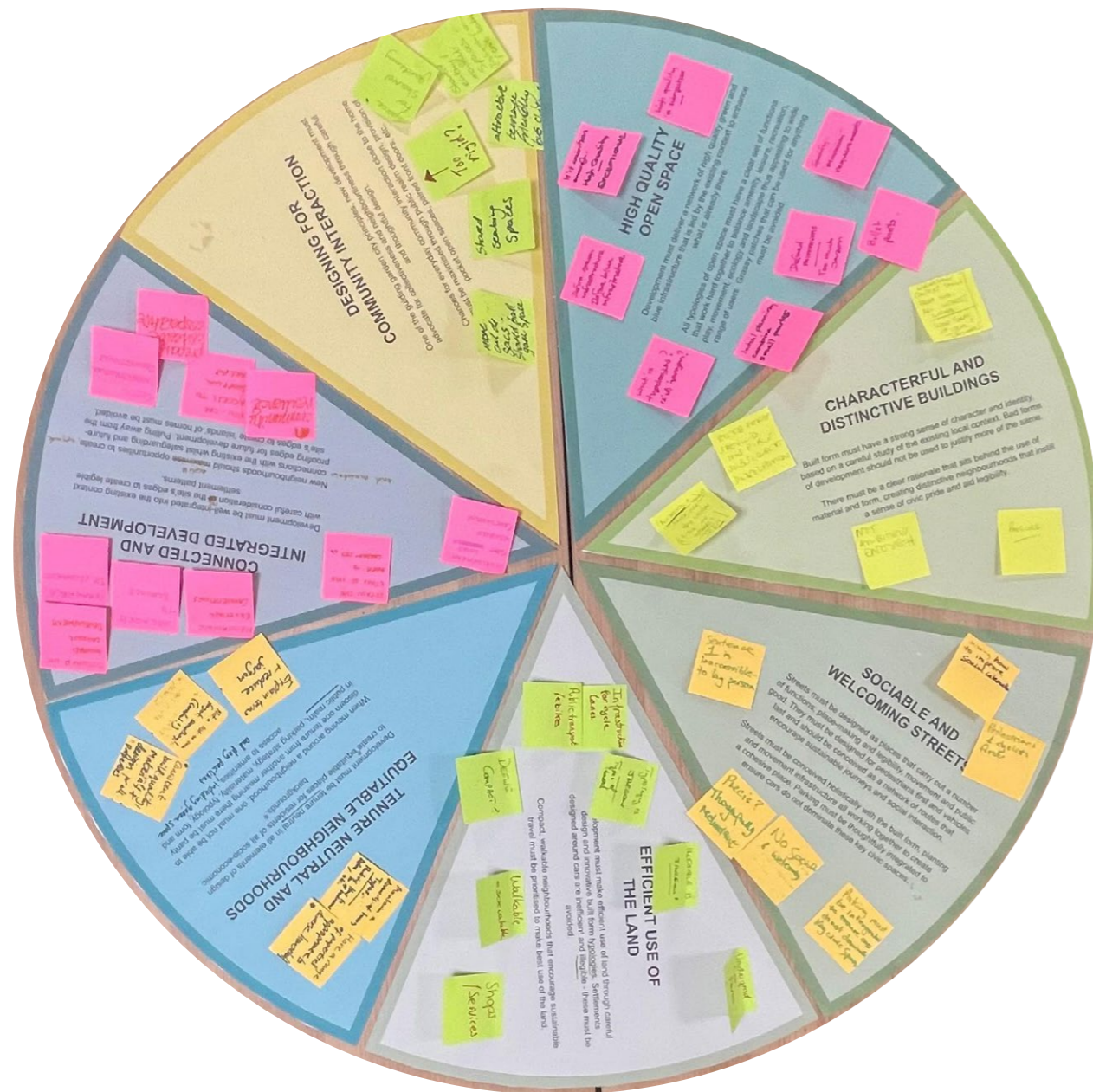
*Forum members were recruited by an external organisation (Field Locker) and advertised to the North Herts Citizens Panel. The council team set strict quotas around age, ethnicity, social grade, location and gender to ensure a diversity of viewpoints and backgrounds were represented.



Residents Design Forum #2, 27th November 2025

Place Objectives Collaborative Workshop

Attendees were split into 7 groups that combined Local Councillors and Residents, each with 4-5 participants. Each group was assigned one Place Objective and asked to collectively assess its clarity, intentions and level of ambition. Groups annotated the objectives with written comments, suggested amendments and key discussion points, considering how each objective could better reflect local character, community priorities and deliverable outcomes. The groups then presented their ideas back to the wide group for a wider discussion.

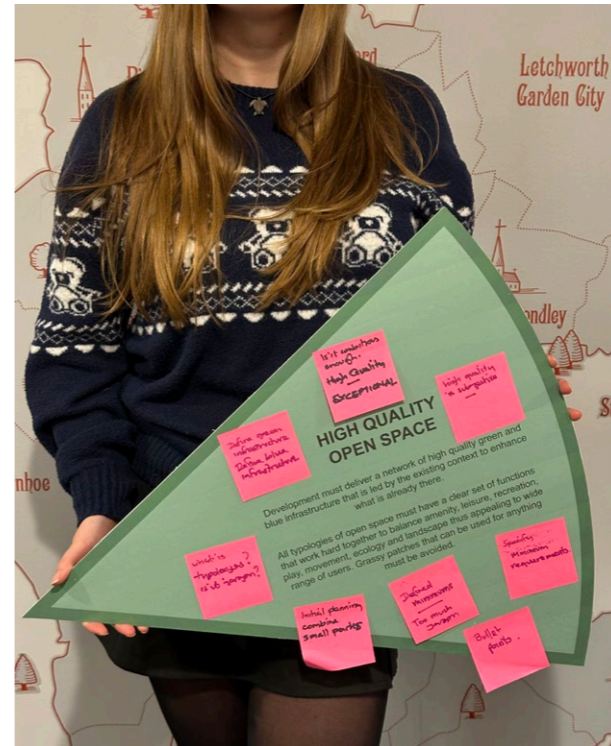


Residents Design Forum #2, 27th November 2025 - Place Objectives Assessment

HIGH QUALITY OPEN SPACE

Group Members
Cllr Bryony May
3no. Residents Design Forum Members

Development must deliver a network of high quality green and blue infrastructure that is led by the existing context to enhance what is already there. All typologies of open space must have a clear set of functions that work hard together to balance amenity, leisure, recreation, play, movement, ecology and landscape thus appealing to a wide range of users. Grassy patches that can be used for anything must be avoided.



- Is this objective ambitious enough? Perhaps we should be aiming for exceptional and not just high quality.
- High quality is subjective - is there another way of communicating this?
- Consider bullet points to break down the text and make it easier to read.
- There is too much jargon - green/blue infrastructure and typology need to be defined.
- The code must specify minimum requirements for open space on new developments.
- Small parks should have a function or they are better off being combined to create larger ones.

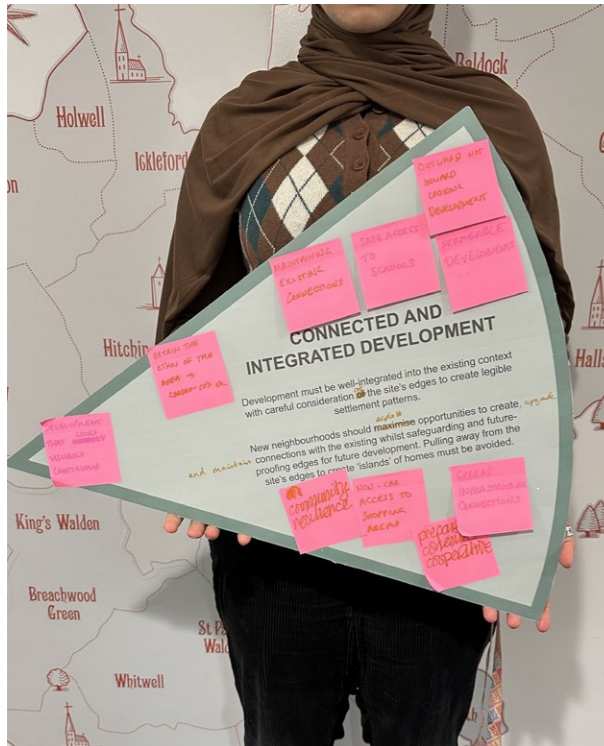


Residents Design Forum #2, 27th November 2025

CONNECTED AND INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT

Group Members
Cllr Sean Nolan
Cllr Emma Fernandes
Ino. Residents Design Forum Member

Development must be well-integrated into the existing context with careful consideration of the site's edges to create legible settlement patterns. New neighbourhoods should maximise opportunities to create connections with the existing whilst safeguarding and future-proofing edges for future development. Pulling away from the site's edges to create 'islands' of homes must be avoided.



- Development needs to be outward looking, not inward looking and permeable.
- Objective should include safe access to schools, and non-car access to shopping areas.
- Maximise is too weak, we should be exploiting opportunities to create, upgrade and maintain existing connections.
- Objective should include visually integrating with the existing settlement and maintaining the ethos of the area.
- More focus on green infrastructure connections.

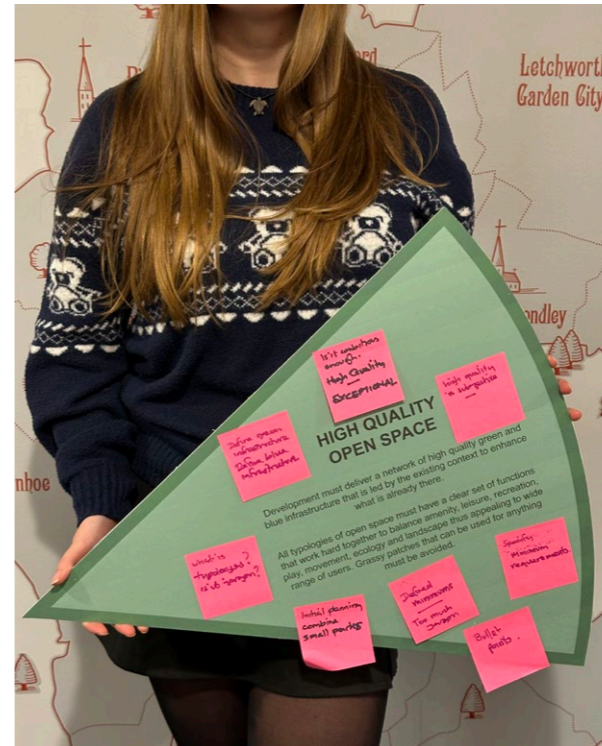


Residents Design Forum #2, 27th November 2025

EFFICIENT USE OF LAND

Group Members
Cllr Albert
2no. Residents Design Forum Members

Development must make efficient use of land through careful design and innovative built form typologies. Settlements designed around cars are inefficient and illegible - these must be avoided. Compact, walkable neighbourhoods that encourage sustainable travel must be prioritised to make best use of land.



- Consider using clear, everyday language for objectives - illegible and typology are jargon.
- Safe and continuous infrastructure for cycling is important in this objective.
- Walkable is sociable - need to link these two terms in the objectives.
- Is development designed at a compact scale that makes efficient use of land while remaining comfortable and usable?
- Parking solutions are key in delivering efficient sites.
- Consider use of underground car parks to make sites more efficient.



Residents Design Forum #2, 27th November 2025

DESIGNING FOR COMMUNITY INTERACTION

Group Members
Cllr Stewart Willoughby
Cllr Nigel Mason
2no. Residents Design Forum Member

One of the guiding garden city principles, new development must advocate for collectiveness and neighbourliness through careful and thoughtful design. Chances for everyday community interaction close to the home must be maximised through public realm design, provision of pocket spaces, paired front doors, etc.



- Paired front doors seems to rigid, consider other areas for social interaction.
- Bus shelters are important for social interaction - should be attractive and friendly.
- Shared gardening or growing spaces, informal spaces for shared eating, markets and community activity are important.
- Policy should include safe, shared spaces for informal play and activities close to homes.
- Seating as a key part of social interaction in communities.



Residents Design Forum #2, 27th November 2025

TENURE NEUTRAL AND EQUITABLE NEIGHBOURHOOD

Group Members
Cllr Winchester
Cllr Donna Wright
3no. Residents Design Forum Members

Development must be tenure neutral in all elements of design to create equitable places for residents of all socio-economic backgrounds. When moving around a neighbourhood, one must not be able to discern one tenure from another meaning there must be parity in public realm, parking strategy, materiality, typology, form and access to amenities.



- Included requirement for consistent build quality, materials and design on all properties.
- It is also important to have a range of properties to cater to diverse households.
- Walkable is sociable - need to link these two terms in the objectives.
- Terms such as tenure neutral and public realm should be clearly explained and unnecessary jargon avoided.
- Consider how to deal with parking - linked to number of bedrooms?
- List at the end needs to include green space and play facilities. Need to be careful of wording as this is not an exhaustive list.

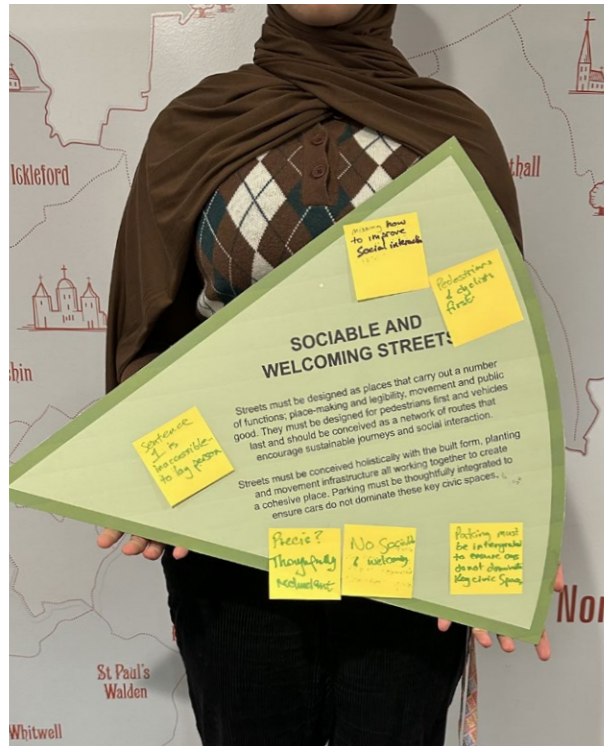


Residents Design Forum #2, 27th November 2025

SOCIABLE AND WELCOMING STREETS

Group Members
Cllr Allen
3no. Residents Design Forum Members

Streets must be designed as places that carry out a number of functions; place-making and legibility, movement and public good. They must be designed for pedestrians first and vehicles last and should be conceived as a network of routes that encourage sustainable journeys and community interaction. Streets must be conceived holistically with the built form, planting and movement infrastructure all working together to create a cohesive place. Parking must be thoughtfully integrated to ensure cars do not dominate these key civic spaces.



- Objective misses out how to improve social interaction - such as benches, community spaces, etc.
- Important that pedestrians and cyclists are put first.
- The first sentence is inaccessible to a layperson - consider rewording this or shortening.

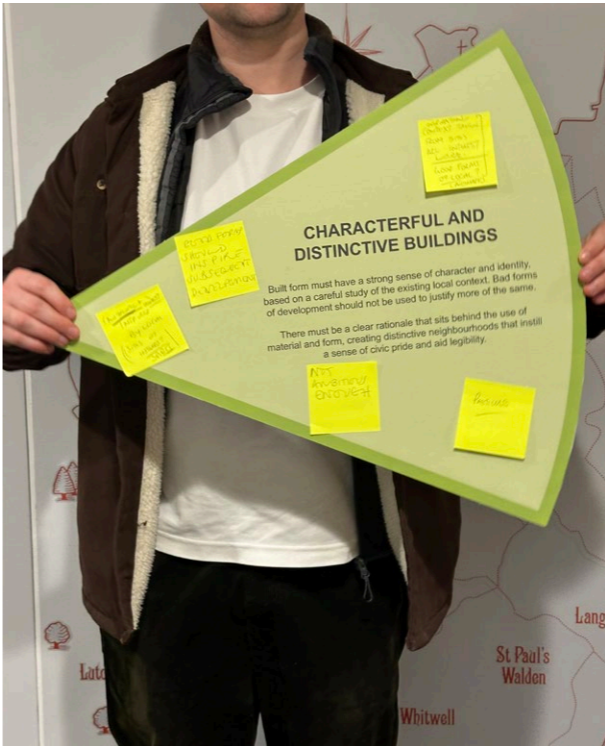


Residents Design Forum #2, 27th November 2025

CHARACTERFUL AND DISTINCTIVE BUILDINGS

Group Members
Cllr Mick Debenham
3no. Residents Design Forum Members

Built form must have a strong sense of character and identity, based on a careful study of the existing local context. Bad forms of development should not be used to justify more of the same. There must be a clear rationale that sits behind the use of material and form, creating distinctive and neighbourhoods that instil a sense of civic pride and aid legibility.



- This objective is not ambitious enough.
- Make more positive - good forms of development should inspire subsequent development.
- Local landmarks are important sources of inspiration for buildings.
- Should include reference to an area's cultural, historical and contextual influences.
- Designs should be ambitious and distinctive, rather than generic or risk-averse.
- Should include a requirement for development to set a high-quality benchmark that can positively influence future development.



Residents Design Forum #2, 27th November 2025

Summary

The Urban Design Team used the feedback from this second Residents Design Forum to refine the emerging Place Objectives that form the foundation of the North Herts Design Code. The detailed comments and suggested amendments gathered during the collaborative workshop was used to ensure the objectives are ambitious, clear and reflective of local priorities, translating shared community values into accessible and deliverable requirements for future development in the district.

The session marked a positive step forward by bringing residents and Local Councillors together to jointly review, discuss and shape the vision for the Design Code. Participants expressed strong support for the collaborative approach and the opportunity to directly influence policy as it develops.

The Council thanks all forum members for their valuable contributions and constructive engagement. Further workshops were scheduled as the Design Code evolved, including a third Residents Design Forum to present the draft Design Code ahead of public consultation.



Residents Design Forum #2, 27th November 2025



Residents Design Forum #2, 27th November 2025

STAGE 3 SUMMARY

WORKING GROUPS

Overview

A series of interdisciplinary working groups were established to support the development of the Design Code, bringing together officers and specialists across key themes. The working groups were structured around three core areas: Architecture & Urban Design, Green Infrastructure, and Movement.

Each group met up over the course of Stage 2, with sessions focussed on identifying key issues, testing emerging ideas, and refining draft design codes.

Working Group Structure

- **Architecture & Urban Design Working Group**
Included architectural professionals, focussing on built form, layout, character and placemaking.
- **Green Working Group**
Included a Senior Ecologist, Service Manager for Green Space, and a Landscape Architect, focusing on green infrastructure, biodiversity, and environmental quality.
- **Movement Working Group**
Included an engineer, a County Highways representative, and a Transport Officer, focusing on access, movement, and connectivity.

Session Structure

- **Session 1 - Issues and Opportunities**
A collaborative brainstorming session exploring key issues identified through site visits and how design codes could respond. This included sketching and discussion based on real site examples.
- **Session 2 - Emerging Codes**
Interdisciplinary workshops where groups were mixed to review early draft codes. Discussions focused on the scope, content, and whether additional codes were required.
- **Session 3 - Draft Codes Review**
A detailed review of the draft design codes, including wording, structure, and supporting diagrams to ensure clarity and effectiveness.



Movement Working Group, 29nd October 2025.

HOUSING ASSOCIATION WORKSHOP

Session Overview

A targeted workshop was held with representatives from local Housing Associations, including Settle and First Garden Cities Homes (FGCH), to gather input on key housing and delivery considerations.

The session focused on presenting emerging issues and elements of the Design Code, alongside open discussion with attendees to understand practical challenges and opportunities from a housing perspective.

Code Review and Discussion

The discussion explored a range of topics including tenure integration, layout considerations, and the practical application of design codes within residential schemes. Attendees provided insight into how design requirements can impact delivery, management and long-term stewardship of developments.

The session also provided an opportunity to test aspects of the emerging code, ensuring that it is both aspirational and deliverable in practice.

Key Feedback

Feedback from the workshop helped to refine a number of areas in the emerging Design Code, such as tenure neutrality, parking and housing mix. Key points included:

- The importance of avoiding clear visual distinctions between affordable and private housing through typology, parking arrangements and external appearance.
- The need for balancing a mix of housing types across developments rather than clustering affordable housing into isolated tenure blocks.
- Concerns regarding service charges and long-term management implications where mixed tenure apartment blocks are proposed.
- The importance of ensuring streets and public spaces are designed to encourage natural surveillance, interactions and long-term stewardship.

LOCAL COUNCILLORS BRIEFING

Session Overview

A Local Councillors Briefing session was held to update elected Local Councillors on the progress of the Design Code and to provide an opportunity for detailed review and discussion.

The session followed a similar structure to previous presentations, outlining the programme and Place Objectives, before focusing in more detail on the emerging Design Codes.

Code Review and Discussion

During the session, a selection of design codes from each Technical Code section were presented and discussed in detail. This included reviewing approximately two or three codes per section to provide Local Councillors with a clear understanding of the structure, intent and level of detail within the document.

The discussion enabled Local Councillors to ask questions, seek clarification and provide feedback on the clarity, applicability and ambition of the codes.

Key Feedback

The session generated constructive discussion with regards to the implementation and practical application of the Design Code across North Hertfordshire. Key points included:

- Questions regarding how the “comply or justify” approach would operate in practice and the level of weight the Design Code would carry.
- Discussion around how the District-wide Design Code would relate to neighbourhood plans, existing site-specific codes and future Local Plan review work.
- Concerns regarding whether some parking approaches were fully suited to the North Herts context, resulting in healthy debate around balancing parking demand.
- Support for ensuring the Design Code reflects the historic, rural and heritage character of North Hertfordshire settlements.
- Discussion around the management and long-term responsibility for play spaces and open space features.

PRIVATE SECTOR BRIEFING

Session Overview

A Private Sector Briefing session was held to present the draft Design Code to developers, planning consultants and other industry representatives. The session provided an overview of the Design Code, including Place Objectives and emerging technical codes.

Key Feedback

The session generated a range of feedback and questions from developers, planning consultants and industry representatives.

Key points included:

- Questions regarding how the Design Code would apply proportionally to smaller-scale developments and rural schemes such as sites delivering between 3-9 homes.
- Concerns that engagement with the private sector had taken place relatively late within the drafting process.
- Requests for flexibility within the Design Code to allow future adaptability and respond to changing market conditions and development requirements.
- Discussion around how the District-wide Design Code would relate to existing approved schemes and site-specific design codes.
- Questions around how the Design Code aligns with existing highways guidance and parking standards, including the Hertfordshire Country Council Place and Movement Planning Design Guide (PMPDG).
- Discussion regarding the status and weight of the Design Code and as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and how requirements relating to private amenity space and design quality would be applied through the planning process.
- Feedback that the Design Code could further strengthen references to local distinctiveness and reflect the specific character of North Hertfordshire settlements.

RESIDENTS DESIGN FORUM #3

Session Overview

The third Residents Design Forum (RDF) session focused on presenting the emerging Design Code and gathering feedback from residents on its content. Building on the previous sessions, this workshop marked a shift from identifying issues and priorities to reviewing the proposed design responses.

Residents were provided with an update on the overall programme, including the development of the Place Objectives, before being introduced to the emerging set of design codes. Members of the Urban Design Team presented a summary of the codes, explaining their purpose and how they respond to the key themes identified through earlier engagement.

Key Feedback

Following the presentation, residents were invited to provide feedback on the draft design codes through structured feedback forms. This enabled participants to comment on the clarity, relevance and appropriateness of the proposed codes, as well as highlight any areas where further refinement may be required.

Key points included:

- General support for the ambition and structure of the emerging Design Code and Place Objectives.
- Requests for the Design Code to remain clear, practical and easy to understand for both applicants and local communities.
- Support for creating safe, accessible and sociable neighbourhoods which support community interaction and inclusivity.
- Discussion around considering the balance between accommodating vehicles and creating attractive, pedestrian-friendly streets.
- Support for stronger guidance relating to landscaping, green infrastructure and high-quality public open space.



Residents Design Forum #3, 3rd March 2026

Residents' Feedback Forms Responses

The following section reveals feedback received from residents who attended the Residents' Design Forum sessions. The responses highlight participants views on the structure, content and effectiveness of the workshops, alongside overall satisfaction with the engagement process.

Overall, feedback was very positive, with 100% of respondents stating that they were 'Very Satisfied' with how the Residents Design Forum sessions were organised and delivered.

"Well organised, friendly and clear how our input has shaped proposals."

"I have enjoyed the presentations, I feel that I have been part of the whole process."

"The Design team made it such an open forum - constantly giving us time and space to voice opinion."

"Each session was well run and productive - objectives clearly stated and worked through. All participants were given a chance to contribute."

"I loved how creativity played a role in forming our thoughts - as someone with no design experience, it helped give me a foundation to build my thoughts and opinion on."

"I really enjoyed the sessions and thought care had been taken to make us feel welcome and valued."

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

METHODOLOGY

Public consultation was carried out in accordance with relevant regulations and the Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement. Notifications of the public consultation were issued via email and post to a wide range of statutory and non-statutory consultees, including developers, planning agents, parish and town councils, landowners, and individuals who have registered an interest in planning policy matters within North Hertfordshire.

The consultation was also promoted through the Council's website and social media channels to ensure broad public awareness.

The consultation ran for four weeks, from 4 March 2026 to 2 April 2026. The Draft Design Code Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) was made available to view online via the Council's website, as well as in person at the Council Offices during normal opening hours.

Additional promotion was undertaken through local engagement channels, including distribution of information at Community Forums and Local Councillor surgeries, to help reach a wider audience.

Representations were received through the Council's online consultation portal, via email and by post. An online feedback form was prepared to gather responses on two key components of the document: the Place Objectives and the Technical Design Codes. Respondents were required to complete the Place Objectives section, with the Technical Design Codes section optional.

In addition, targeted emails were sent to planning professionals and stakeholders included within the Council's planning consultation database.



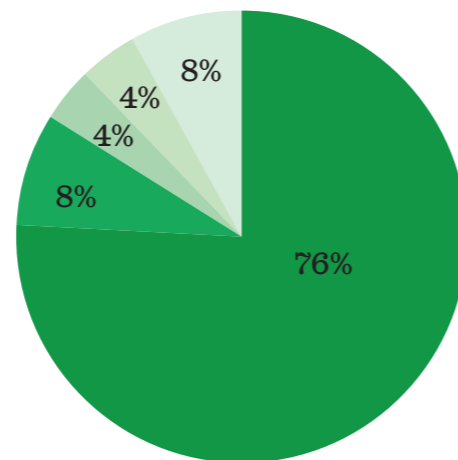
"Have Your Say" Public Consultation Poster distributed at Community Forums and Local Councillor surgeries

RESPONSES BREAKDOWN

Summary

This section provides a breakdown of responses submitted through the online public consultation form, categorised by stakeholder group and sector representation. The chart and table* below illustrate the distribution of these online responses.

- North Herts Resident
- Member of a Community Group
- Public Sector - Officer
- Private Sector - Architect/Designer
- Other



Respondent Group	Number of Responses
North Herts Resident	38
Member of a Community Group	4
Public Sector - Officer	2
Private Sector - Architect/Designer	2
Other	4

*Note: The breakdown above relates only to responses received through the online consultation questionnaire (50 responses). A further 16 responses were received separately via email and have been included within the consultation summaries but are not represented in the statistics above.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Summary

The table below summarises developer feedback highlighting concerns around viability, the role of the Design Code within the SPD process, perceived prescriptiveness, and potential conflicts with site-specific design codes. In response, it clarifies that the Design Code operates as technical guidance within an SPD and does not introduce new policy, instead supporting the delivery of Local Plan policies through design. It emphasises a flexible “comply or justify” approach to avoid overly prescriptive outcomes and confirms that existing, site-specific design codes and masterplans will take precedence where relevant. Overall, the Council’s responses intend to address these concerns by emphasising that the Design Code is a clear but adaptable framework to support high-quality design without conflicting with existing policy requirements.

Summary of Comments	Response
The SPD should more clearly embed health, equity and inclusivity within its vision to ensure long-term positive outcomes.	No Change: The Introduction to the Design Code clearly establishes that high-quality design is closely linked to mental health, wellbeing, community cohesion and perceptions of safety. This overarching ambition is reinforced through multiple Place Objectives: Exceptional Open Space, Sociable Streets, Well-Integrated Development, Convivial Communities, and Equitable Neighbourhoods. Together, these collectively set out a clear framework for delivering inclusive, healthy and high-quality places.

<p>Many developers expressed concern about limited consultation during the formative stages of the design code, with some suggesting this may not align with due process.</p>	<p>No Change: The Residents' Design Forum (RDF) provided early and meaningful engagement during the formative stages of the Design Code. This has been supported by input from industry experts, offering technical design guidance and best practice advice. Officers and Local Councillors have also contributed local insight which has informed the Place Objectives and drafting of the Code. Developers were invited to a draft Code briefing and have been given the opportunity to comment on the emerging document prior to adoption, alongside the wider general public. The reference to two stages of consultation in the Council's Statement of Community Involvement recognises it is sometimes necessary to re-consult on an SPD but this is not mandatory.</p>
<p>Respondents requested clearer flexibility within the code to respond to changing market conditions, site constraints and local character differences.</p>	<p>The Design Code adopts a “comply or justify” approach, allowing applicants to propose alternative solutions where they can demonstrate that the of the code is achieved. This provides flexibility to respond to site-specific circumstances while maintaining the ambitions of the Design Code.</p>
<p>Concerns raised that the guidance is too prescriptive and doesn't allow for responses to site-specific circumstances/conflicts with site-specific masterplans and/or design codes.</p>	<p>The Design Code has been prepared as a district-wide framework and is intended to be applied proportionately according to the scale and nature of development proposals. The Use and Application section of the Design Code has been updated, stating existing site-specific masterplans and design codes adopted or approved before June 2026 will take precedence where relevant. The Design Code also recognises that sites at different stages of the planning process may require a flexible approach to implementation, ensuring that local circumstances and previously approved design principles can be appropriately considered.</p>
<p>Concerns raised that some terminology lacks clarity such as “ecological assets”, “social spaces”.</p>	

<p>Concerns raised that the SPD positions itself as mandatory rather than guidance.</p>	<p>The Design Code will be adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and therefore forms a material consideration rather than policy in its own right. The Code provides technical guidance on how Local Plan policies can be delivered through the design of the development.</p>
<p>Concerns raised that requirements on viability or development capacity have not been considered and that new cost burdens are not accounted for in Local Plan viability testing.</p>	<p>The Design Code has been informed by a review of best practice and seeks to improve the quality of development rather than introduce additional policy requirements. The Code provides guidance on how existing Local Plan policies can be delivered through design.</p>
<p>Concerns raised that requirements for bespoke design will significantly increase costs as housebuilders rely on standard types and standardisation for efficiency.</p>	<p>The Design Code does not prohibit the use of standard house types. Instead, it seeks to ensure that development responds appropriately to local context and character. Standard house types may continue to be used where they can demonstrate compliance with the Place Objectives and technical requirements of the Code.</p>
<p>Concerns raised that the combined effect of the code reduces density, increases costs and lowers salves values.</p>	<p>The Design Code seeks to balance the efficient use of land with the delivery of high-quality and sustainable places. Efficient Use of Land is one of seven place objectives and must be considered alongside the other objectives that promote strong landscape character, connected communities, inclusive neighbourhoods and high-quality public spaces. The Code has been informed by national guidance, best practice examples and local evidence. This aims to support a balanced approach to development rather than prescribe specific development densities.</p>

EXCEPTIONAL OPEN SPACE

To what extent do you agree that the ‘Exceptional Open Space’ Place Objective (included below) is appropriate for guiding development within North Herts?

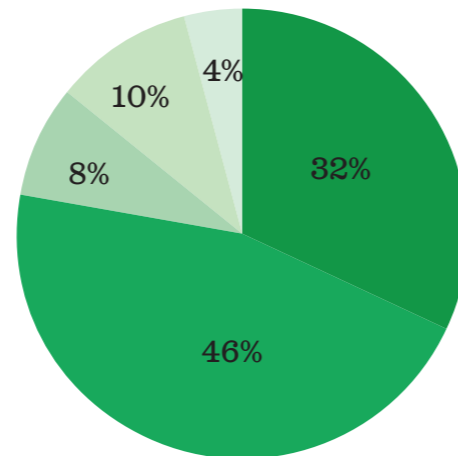
Development must create a connected network of green spaces that celebrates the area’s natural assets and strengthens the district’s landscape character.

Water-management elements such as swales, SuDS, and rain gardens must be designed as attractive, functional parts of the landscape, not hidden engineering, so they enrich these spaces and support nature.

Open spaces should be designed with intention and purpose; places that support everyday wellbeing through play, recreation, active travel, nature and community life. Each space should work hard, complementing others to form a rich, multifunctional environment that incorporates blue infrastructure and that welcomes people of all ages and abilities.

Unplanned, leftover ‘grassy patches’ with no clear use, identity, or value to the community will not be permitted.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree



Please use the box below to explain your answer, provide feedback or suggest changes to the ‘Exceptional Open Space’ Place Objective:

Summary of Comments	Action or Response
<p>Respondents supported a connected network of green spaces but stressed the importance of balancing formal, designed areas with more natural, less managed “wild” spaces. Many highlighted the ecological and wellbeing value of unplanned landscaping, cautioning against spaces becoming overly formal or regimented and emphasising accessibility, multifunctionality and local character.</p>	<p>Minor Change: Last sentence has been changed to remove the term ‘grassy patches’ and provide greater clarity on the types of open space being referenced. The Design Code aligns with Fields in Trust (FiT) standards, which recognise a range of open space typologies, including parks and gardens, amenity green space and natural and semi-natural green space. This ensures that a variety of functional, accessible and ecologically valuable spaces are delivered, rather than undefined or residual areas.</p>

SOCIABLE STREETS

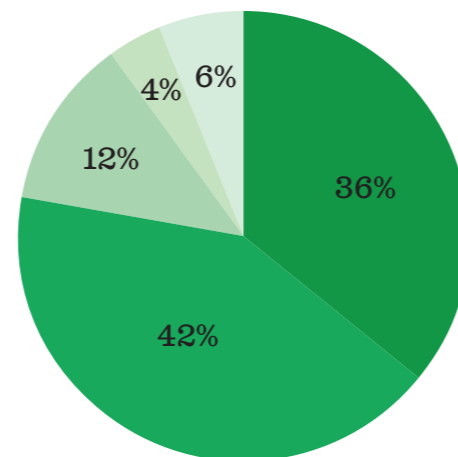
To what extent do you agree that the ‘Sociable Streets’ Place Objective (included below) is appropriate for guiding development within North Herts?

Development must create streets that are enjoyable places to be, not just routes to travel through. Streets should support everyday social life, help people find their way intuitively and make walking and cycling the easiest, safest, and most attractive choice. Vehicles must be accommodated in a way that respects the needs of people first.

Streets should be designed as complete environments where buildings, planting, street trees, lighting and movement infrastructure work together to create characterful, comfortable and inclusive spaces. Parking should be sensitively integrated so it neither dominated nor undermines the quality and feel of these important shared spaces.

Car-dominated streets, where parking overwhelms the street scene, limits planting opportunities, or creates poor pedestrian experiences, will not be permitted.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree



Please use the box below to explain your answer, provide feedback or suggest changes to the ‘Sociable Streets’ Place Objective:

Summary of Comments	Response
Respondents highlighted the need to balance adequate parking provision with reducing car dominance, noting risks of congestion and safety where parking is insufficient, especially in car-dependent areas.	No Change: The Design Code includes alternative parking approaches in PA-02: Communal Parking Typologies. However, overall parking provision is established through the Local Plan. The Design Code focuses on the arrangement, location, and design of residential parking within sites to support well-designed places and encourage more sustainable travel choices.
Many supported prioritising walking, cycling and public transport, alongside inclusive street design that meets the needs of disabled, older and neurodivergent people and other users.	No Change: Street types have been designed prioritising pedestrians allowing access to social spaces, overlooking and greenery.

WELL-INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT

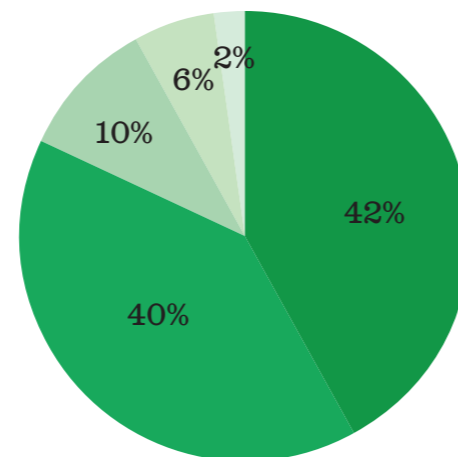
To what extent do you agree that the ‘Well-Integrated Development’ Place Objective (included below) is appropriate for guiding development within North Herts?

Development must be seamlessly integrated into its surroundings, responding positively to the site’s edges and reinforcing clear, legible patterns of settlement. New places should feel like a natural extension of the district’s towns and villages, not disconnected enclaves.

New neighbourhoods should maximise opportunities to connect with existing routes, facilities, landscapes and communities. Where development edges meet open land or areas identified for potential future growth, layouts must be designed to safeguard these edges and allow for logical, well-connected expansion over time.

Layouts that pull away from the site boundary to create isolated ‘islands’ of homes, cut off from their surroundings and offering limited future connection, will not be permitted.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree



Please use the box below to explain your answer, provide feedback or suggest changes to the ‘Well-Integrated Development’ Place Objective:

Summary of Comments	Action or Response
Respondents stressed the importance of delivering infrastructure alongside development to ensure good connectivity, accessibility and functionality. Many raised concerns about poorly integrated or isolated developments, highlighting issues such as limited access, lack of permeability and self-contained layouts.	No Change: Code SSO1 promotes rational street and plot layouts, while Code SSO3 focuses on responding to edges, both of which help to improve connectivity and integration. In addition, Code SSO4 on well-integrated schools responds specifically to concerns about ensuring schools are properly embedded within developments rather than isolated.
There were also wider concerns about the impact on existing settlements, including pressure on infrastructure, urban sprawl, and the potential loss of local character and green space, underscoring the need for a holistic and sensitive approach to integration.	No Change: BF04: Architectural Approach addresses how development should respond appropriately to the North Hertfordshire context and local character. The delivery and quantum of infrastructure for each site is determined through site allocation in the Local Plan, while the Design Code focuses on how this is arranged and integrated within the site to achieve a well-designed outcome.

CONVIVIAL COMMUNITIES

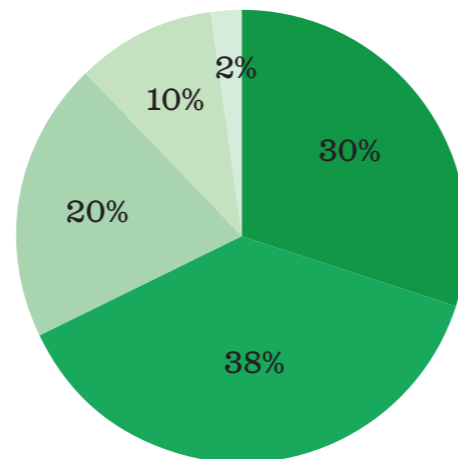
To what extent do you agree that the ‘Convivial Communities’ Place Objective (included below) is appropriate for guiding development within North Herts?

New development must foster a strong sense of community with places designed to support neighbourliness, everyday interaction and collective stewardship.

Communal solutions, such as shared bike stores, shared courtyards, community gardens and informal meeting spaces should be prioritised wherever practical. These shared elements help bring people together in their daily routines and contribute to safer, more sociable and inclusive neighbourhoods.

Designs that isolate homes, disperse facilities unnecessarily, or remove opportunities for casual social interaction will not be permitted.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree



Please use the box below to explain your answer, provide feedback or suggest changes to the ‘Convivial Communities’ Place Objective:

Summary of Comments	Action or Response
Respondents highlighted the value of shared spaces and facilities in supporting community life, but raised concerns about their long-term management and maintenance.	No Change: The codes also require the use of robust, high-quality materials in open and communal spaces that are durable, resistant to degradation and easy to repair or replace, helping to support long-term usability, safety and appearance.
There was a strong emphasis on ensuring communal spaces are inclusive and accessible to all users, alongside specific concerns about the safety, cleanliness and usability of features such as communal bin and cycle stores.	No Change: Codes BF09 and BF10 set out requirements for communal cycle and bin storage to ensure accessibility, safety, cleanliness and usability. The use of communal storage will be determined on a site-by-site basis; the Design Code establishes requirements where this is identified as the most appropriate design response.
Place Objective heading was criticised as being unclear.	Minor Change: Place Objective has been changed to Cohesive Communities.

EFFICIENT USE OF LAND

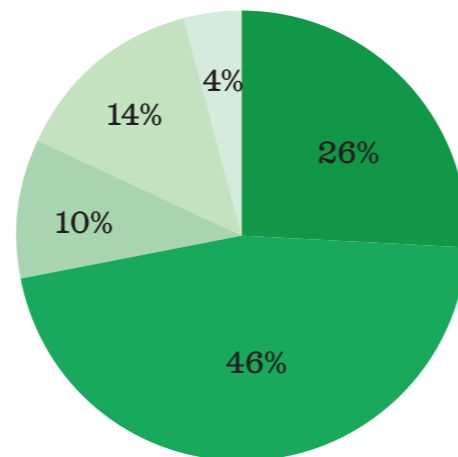
To what extent do you agree that the 'Efficient Use of Land' Place Objective (included below) is appropriate for guiding development within North Herts?

New development should make the most of the land available, creating neighbourhoods that feel welcoming, well-designed and easy to get around. Good design and thoughtful building types can help create places that feel lively and connected without wasting space.

Neighbourhoods should be arranged so that everyday trips, getting to school, visiting friends, popping to the shops etc. can be done comfortably on foot, by bike, or by public transport. Walkable, compact places not only use land more efficiently but also help support a stronger sense of community and healthier lifestyles.

Layouts that put cars first, using too much land for wide roads, scattered parking, or disconnected cul-de-sacs, will not be permitted.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree



Please use the box below to explain your answer, provide feedback or suggest changes to the 'Efficient Use of Land' Place Objective:

Summary of Comments	Action or Response
Respondents expressed concern that higher densities could undermine living quality if not well designed, particularly if developments feel cramped or lack green space.	No Change: Applicants are still required to comply with national space standards, which establish baseline internal spatial requirements. Codes BF05-BF08 complement this by setting out expectations for the quantum of private and communal amenity space, helping to avoid the under-provision of green space. The Design Code must be applied holistically, with individual codes working together to ensure high-quality outcomes. For example, open space is expected to meet both quantitative and qualitative requirements, ensuring it is not only sufficient in amount but also well-designed, functional and attractive.
There were strong concerns about existing transport and infrastructure capacity, alongside the continued need to accommodate car use through adequate parking and access.	No Change: Street types have been developed together with Parking codes PA01-03 to address concerns with low quality streetscape and accessibility.
Many also warned that reduced parking could result in overspill parking, creating safety issues and harming the street environment, underscoring the need to balance density with infrastructure, accessibility and a sense of spaciousness.	No Change: The Design Code addresses these concerns through its street typologies, which are designed to discourage anti-social and indiscriminate parking. A clear hierarchy of streets, combined with appropriate design measures such as narrower carriageways, helps to manage vehicle behaviour and reduce the likelihood of overspill parking dominating the public realm.

EQUITABLE NEIGHBOURHOODS

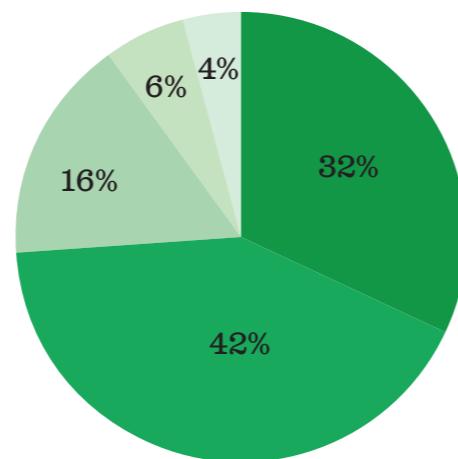
To what extent do you agree that the ‘Equitable Neighbourhoods’ Place Objective (included below) is appropriate for guiding development within North Herts?

Development must create neighbourhoods that are fair, inclusive and welcoming to everyone, regardless of tenure or socio-economic background. All homes and public spaces should be designed to the same high standards, ensuring every resident experiences a sense of pride and belonging.

Across a neighbourhood, affordable and market homes must be indistinguishable in their external appearance. This means providing equal access to well-designed public realm, consistent parking strategies, shared materials and architectural quality and the same proximity to amenities, play and green spaces.

Designs that reveal or segregate tenure, whether through lower quality materials, separate entrances, poorer landscaping, or isolated clusters will not be permitted.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree



Please use the box below to explain your answer, provide feedback or suggest changes to the ‘Equitable Neighbourhoods’ Place Objective:

Summary of Comments	Action or Response
Respondents stressed the importance of inclusive, mixed neighbourhoods. Many emphasised that affordable homes should be well designed, fully integrated and indistinguishable from market housing, and not concentrated in poorer-quality locations.	No Change: Affordable housing distribution is covered in BF01 and BF02 deals with tenure neutral typologies which ensures affordable homes are well designed and indistinguishable from market housing.

CONTEXTUAL BUILDINGS

To what extent do you agree that the ‘Contextual Buildings’ Place Objective (included below) is appropriate for guiding development within North Herts?

Development must deliver buildings with a strong sense of character and identity, shaped by a clear understanding of the site’s setting and the distinctive qualities of the surrounding area. New buildings should feel rooted in their context while contributing positively to the future character of the neighbourhood.

Material choices, building form, height, and architectural detailing must all be guided by a thoughtful design rationale grounded in local character and landscape cues. This approach should create distinctive and memorable streets and neighbourhoods that support wayfinding and foster a sense of civic pride.

Poor-quality or poorly considered development, whether existing or nearby, must never be used as justification for repeating the same approach. Designs that fail to respond to their context, or that rely on generic forms, will not be permitted.



Please use the box below to explain your answer, provide feedback or suggest changes to the ‘Contextual Buildings’ Place Objective:

Summary of Comments	Response
<p>Respondents strongly supported development that reflects local character and identity, with concerns about generic or standardised design that lacks distinctiveness and long-term quality. Issues were raised around the impact of dense or repetitive housing typologies, with calls for greater variety, space between buildings and more thoughtful layouts.</p> <p>There was also emphasis on respecting local heritage assets and using new development as an opportunity to improve accessibility and inclusivity for all users.</p>	<p>No Change: BF03: Balancing Variety and Consistency as well as Code BF04: Architectural Approach sets out code to ensure new buildings reflect local character and identity avoiding generic standardised design.</p>

SETTLEMENT STRUCTURE CODES

Overall, do you think the ‘Settlement Structure’ codes are clear and appropriate?

These codes set out the requirements for how new development should be arranged within North Herts. This includes layout, density, block structure, connections and edges.

The individual codes are listed here for reference:

- SS01 - Rational Street and Plot Layouts
- SS02 - Optimising Land Use
- SS03 - Responding to Edges
- SS04 - Well-integrated Schools
- SS05 - Legible Focal Points
- SS06 - Private Drives and Cul-De-Sacs

Feedback is optional throughout this section, you may skip any page if you do not wish to give any feedback on these codes.



‘Settlement Structure’ codes feedback via Public Consultation survey form:

Summary of Comments	Response
Some respondents found the Settlement Structure Codes difficult to understand, noting that the use of technical language and jargon limited accessibility.	No Change The Design Code is intended for use by officers, designers and developers, and therefore includes technical language where necessary to clearly define and protect key requirements. Where possible, codes have been amended to improve clarity.
Concerns were raised about the use of narrow streets and higher density layouts, with respondents highlighting potential issues around congestion, parking pressure and general functionality.	No Change Street types have been developed to provide a clear hierarchy and variety within developments, while remaining flexible rather than overly prescriptive. All street types have been designed to accommodate servicing requirements, and narrower street typologies are also intended to discourage anti-social parking, helping to create safer environments.
A small number of respondents highlighted opportunities to strengthen environmental performance, including integrating existing trees and supportive renewable energy such as solar panels through layout and orientation.	No Change The Design Code is a material consideration in decision-making; however, detailed sustainability requirements are primarily established through national policy and other North Herts Council SPDs, such as the Sustainability SPD, and therefore sit beyond the remit of the Design Code.

<p>There was support for ensuring that settlement structure considers wider infrastructure requirements, including services, facilities and connections beyond the immediate site.</p>	<p>No Change Codes SS01-SS05 acknowledge the need for wider infrastructure, including services, facilities and connections; however, the provision and strategic planning of this infrastructure is established through the Local Plan and county-level planning processes.</p>
<p>There were shared views expressed that there can be good reasons for curved roads in placemaking.</p>	<p>Changes Made: Relevant Code SS01.02: Code has been amended to remove mention of curved streets and to be more specific and focused around 'events' at points where there are changes in direction on streets.</p>
<p>Questions were raised regarding the evidence base for limiting detached housing to under 30%, including how this aligns with SHMA evidence and differing settlement contexts.</p>	<p>No Change: Relevant Code SS02.01: Justification for this policy is evidenced by 2021 Census data, which illustrates 24% average existing detached homes in North Herts, and there are no settlements that exceed 30%. The code does not differ from the SHMA as it deals with housing typology rather than bedroom numbers.</p>
<p>Concerns were raised that it may be challenging in some instances for highways to agree access from existing roads.</p>	<p>No Change: Relevant Code SS03.01 - It may be acceptable to justify alternative approaches when evidenced and supported by HCC highways and NHDC officers.</p>
<p>There was a suggestion that servicing alleys should be caveated for 'resident access only' to protect against antisocial behaviour.</p>	<p>Minor Change: Relevant Code SS03.05 - Code will be updated to include text that states that servicing alleys should be caveated 'for resident access only' to protect against antisocial behaviour.</p>
<p>Concerns were raised regarding how spur streets would accommodate emergency access and vehicle turning.</p>	<p>Minor Change: Relevant Code SS06.01 - Compliance has been checked by against building regs and amendments have been made to ensure servicing and emergency access compliant.</p>

<p>Some have noted concerns over clarity of diagrams.</p>	<p>No Change: Relevant Code: SS03.07 Diagrams place emphasis on not creating double streets and not creating back to front streets. Proposed homes in diagrams are to be served to the rear.</p>
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OPEN SPACE CODES

Overall, do you think the ‘Open Space’ codes are clear and appropriate?

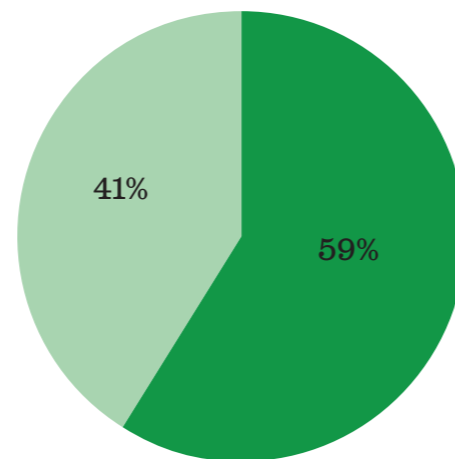
This section of the Design Code covers requirements for parks, green spaces, play areas, landscaping, rainwater attenuation and biodiversity.

The individual codes are listed here for reference:

- OS01 - Open Space Provision
- OS02 - Open Space Design
- OS03 - Tier 1 Open Spaces
- OS04 - Tier 2 Open Spaces
- OS05 - Tier 3 Open Spaces
- OS06 - Tier 4 Open Spaces
- OS07 - Play Space Design
- OS08 - Informal Play
- OS09 - Local Areas for Play (LAP)
- OS10 - Local Equipped Areas for Play (LEAP)
- OS11 - Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play (NEAP)
- OS12 - Planting Palette
- OS13 - Multi-Functional Attenuation Basins

Feedback is optional throughout this section, you may skip any page if you do not wish to give any feedback on these codes.

- Yes - all are clear and appropriate
- No - some are unclear or are inappropriate



Please provide feedback on ‘Open Space’ codes.

Summary of Comments	Response
Some respondents found the codes unclear, citing excessive jargon and overly technical language. The number and complexity of code types were also seen as confusing, with the tier system lacking sufficient standalone explanation.	Minor Change: The Design Code is intended for use by officers, designers and developers, and therefore includes technical language where necessary to clearly define and protect key requirements. An introduction to tiered open spaces has been added to aid clarity.
Some respondents preferred more natural, informal play spaces, noting that children benefit more from exploring countryside and woodland than structured playgrounds. This suggests a need to better balance formal and natural provision.	No Change: The Open Space codes clearly set out standards to provide natural and semi-natural spaces together with formal/equipped play in line with Fields in Trust National standards.
There was clear support for more inclusive design, particularly ensuring play spaces and equipment are accessible to children with disabilities, including wheelchair users.	Changes Made: Equipped areas for play now have a coded requirements for specific accessible equipment.
Concerns were raised around planting choices, including potentially harmful species. Respondents also suggested the planting palette should be strengthened and aligned with recognised guidance.	No Change: The planting palette has been developed by Local Authority ecologists and an arboriculturist and is provided as a starting point for schemes. Any planting proposals will be subject to further assessment to ensure their suitability to specific site conditions. Key considerations to guide this process are set out in Codes OS12.01–OS12.03.

<p>It was noted that bunds or mounding may exceed the gradient stipulated within the code requirements.</p>	<p>Minor Change: Relevant Code OS02.01 - Code has been updated to state that all open spaces must be DDA compliant with parity of access to all parts of the open space and gradients no steeper than 1/20 for access routes.</p>
<p>Questions were raised regarding how requirements for hedge heights not exceeding 1.5m could be effectively enforced.</p>	<p>Minor Change: Relevant Code OS02.7 - Code has been updated to state that all open spaces must be DDA compliant with parity of access to all parts of the open space and gradients no steeper than 1/20 for access routes.</p>
<p>Queries were raised regarding co-design can be achieved in instances where there is not yet an existing community to engage with.</p>	<p>No Change: Relevant Code OS04.01F - Applicant would be expected to either comply where there are existing residents or otherwise justify how the open space has been discussed through the statutory consultation process.</p>
<p>Safeguarding concerns were raised regarding the interface between metal fencing and play features.</p>	<p>Minor Change: Relevant Code OS07.02 - Incorporation of play features with metal fencing has been removed to avoid safeguarding concerns.</p>
<p>There was a request to secure the addition of accessible play equipment for children with disabilities.</p>	<p>Changes Made: Relevant Code OS07.07 - Amendment to code OS10.04A to say ‘2no. must be accessible,’ has been made. Amendment to code OS11.04A to say ‘3no. must be accessible,’ has been made.</p>
<p>A concern was the absence of reference to Sport England’s Active Design principles, which provide established physical activity into development and align with national planning policy.</p>	<p>No Change: The Design Code has accounted for the design of open spaces in line with Fields in Trust standards. This does not negate the need for Sports England’s Active Design principles to be considered on sites going forward.</p>

<p>The SPD fails to reference the Chilterns National Landscape despite covering areas within it.</p>	<p>No Change: The Chilterns National Landscape is a key component of North Herts’ green infrastructure, and all green open spaces must be delivered sensitively to their context, with specific reference set out in the Council’s Local Plan policies.</p>
<p>Public Health raised safety concerns over playable boundaries specifically where there are metal railings.</p>	<p>Minor Change: This has been removed from the code.</p>
<p>The SPD should better address the needs of diverse users, particularly older people, through accessible public realm, seating, materials and inclusive design features.</p>	<p>No Change: Design quality is closely linked to mental health, wellbeing, community cohesion and perceptions of safety. Poorly designed housing can disproportionately affect vulnerable groups, reinforcing inequality. The North Herts Design Code places people at the heart of planning to create high-quality places that support thriving, resilient communities and leave a positive long-term legacy.</p>

STREETS CODES

Overall, do you think the ‘Streets’ codes are clear and appropriate?

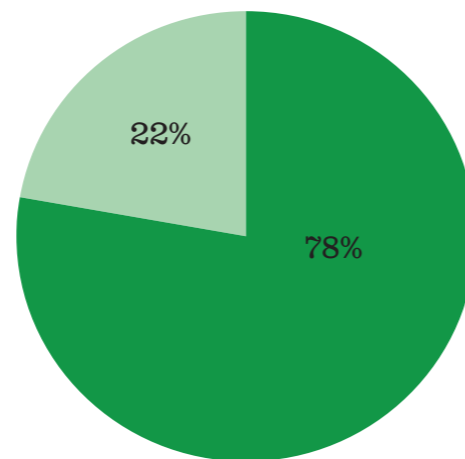
This section of the Design Code covers street design, movement, route hierarchy, active travel and accessibility.

The individual codes are listed here for reference:

- ST01 - Selecting Street Types
- ST02 - Street Design
- ST03 - Green Streets
- ST04 - Avenues
- ST05 - Neighbourhood Streets
- ST06 - Residential Streets
- ST07 - Residential Mews
- ST08 - Rear Mews
- ST09 - Spur Lanes
- ST10 - Edge Lanes

Feedback is optional throughout this section, you may skip if you do not wish to give any feedback on these codes.

- Yes - all are clear and appropriate
- No - some are unclear or are inappropriate



Please provide feedback on ‘Streets’ codes.

Summary of Comments	Response
Several respondents felt the Streets codes are overly complex and difficult to understand, with comments questioning why they are overcomplicated and not clear to a lay person.	No Change: The Design Code is intended for use by officers, designers and developers, and therefore includes technical language where necessary to clearly define and protect key requirements.
Concerns were raised that streets may be too narrow to accommodate existing parking demand, particularly in areas with multigenerational households and external parking pressures.	No Change: Street types have been designed in line with Place and Movement Planning Design Guide. The Code has been reviewed by HCC Highways and NHDC transport officer to comply with parking requirements as set out in the Local Plan.
Responses highlighting concerns around the practicality of walking and cycling proposals, alongside the need to better recognise other users and protect existing Public Rights of Way.	No Change: Streets have been developed to provide a clear hierarchy and variety within developments. The Design Code sets out a “menu” of street typologies that should be selected and applied based on site-specific conditions, including the integration of existing walking and cycling routes. This approach ensures that street design remains flexible and responsive to context, while creating well-connected, legible, and functional places.

<p>There was a question about if street widths, surfacing and junction radii conflict with HCC guidance.</p>	<p>No Change: Relevant Code ST01 - Streets have been developed with HCC Highways as part of formative working groups. Streets have been reviewed by HCC throughout the development of the District Design Code and are compliant with PPPMPDG.</p>
<p>There was a minor variation between the code and PMPDG guidance for speed and junction spacing on Residential Streets.</p>	<p>Minor Change: Code has been updated to align with PMPDG parameters .</p>
<p>It was asked whether there is a risk of duplication with existing HCC highway guidance, as the highway authority already addresses some street design matters within their own guidance documents.</p>	<p>No Change: Relevant Code ST02 - Street design has been developed in collaboration with HCC officers and in line with highways policy. The code is intended to act as a comprehensive, one-stop resource for site layouts, reducing the need for duplication by applicants.</p>
<p>There were concerns as to where parking would be located for homes on Green Streets and if they will lead to undesirable parking courts.</p>	<p>No Change: Relevant Code ST03 - Parking and servicing for Green Streets will be accommodated alongside other street types, which avoid large rear parking courts in low-density contexts. Additional off-plot parking can be provided through the communal parking typologies set out in the code.</p>

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BUILT FORM CODES

Overall, do you think the ‘Built Form’ codes are clear and appropriate?

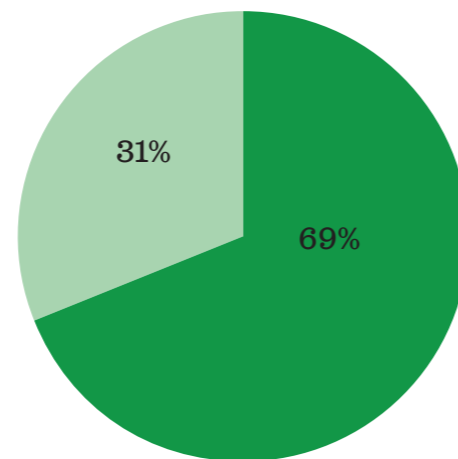
This section of the Design Code covers affordable housing, materiality, form, architectural approach, private and communal amenity, refuse storage and cycle parking requirements.

The individual codes are listed here for reference:

- BF01 - Affordable Housing Distribution
- BF02 - Tenure Neutral Typologies
- BF03 - Balancing Variety and Consistency
- BF04 - Architectural Approach
- BF05 - Private Amenity for Apartments
- BF06 - Communal Amenity for Apartments
- BF07 - Private Amenity for Houses
- BF08 - Communal Amenity for Houses
- BF09 - Cycle Parking and Storage
- BF10 - Waste and Refuse Storage

Feedback is optional throughout this section, you may skip any page if you do not wish to give any feedback on these codes.

- Yes - all are clear and appropriate
- No - some are unclear or are inappropriate



Please provide feedback on ‘Built Form’ codes.

Summary of Comments	Response
Some respondents felt development could appear overly dense and visually harsh, particularly where frontages are dominated by parking, bins and cycle storage.	No Change: Car parking codes have been designed to reduce car-dominated streets and limit on-plot provision, with Codes BF09-BF10 specifically requiring purpose-built, robust cycle and bin storage. The Design Code provides a flexible “menu” of storage solutions, including options such as gardens, garages, and communal storage, which may be more appropriate in lower-density or rural contexts. The selection of appropriate solutions is expected to be informed by a thorough assessment of the site and its surroundings, ensuring that proposals respond sensitively to local character while meeting the overarching objectives of the Code.
Feedback highlighted concerns around the delivery of affordable housing, including risks of under-provision.	No Change: The delivery of affordable housing is determined through viability considerations at the application stage and is therefore outside the remit of the Design Code. The Code does, however, address the placement of affordable housing to support mixed communities, as set out in BF01.
Respondents emphasised the need to ensure equal accessibility standards for disabled and wheelchair users.	Requirement of M4(2) and M4(3) homes are set out in the Local Plan Policy XXX. The Design Code cannot go beyond this but these concerns have been passed on to the LP team and can form part of the LP review.

<p>Some respondents raised concerns about mixing different housing types and tenure, suggesting it may impact perceptions of desirability. This highlights ongoing tensions around tenure integration and community cohesion.</p>	<p>No Change: The overall quality of development is affected where schemes are not genuinely tenure neutral, and where different tenures become visually or spatially distinguishable. The Design Code addresses this through Codes BF01-BF03, alongside the Convivial Communities and Equitable Neighbourhoods Place Objectives, which promote fully integrated and inclusive neighbourhoods. Ensuring that affordable housing is indistinguishable from market housing and distributed throughout developments is a key priority. This approach reflects feedback from the Residents' Design Forum and Councillor workshops, where the creation of truly mixed communities was strongly supported as a means to enhance the desirability and quality of all areas, rather than concentrating value solely in those intended for private sale.</p>
<p>Concerns were raised over the prescriptive nature of affordable housing cluster requirements.</p>	<p>Changes Made: Relevant Code BF01.02 - Subcode has been removed.</p>
<p>There was a question over what the evidence base was for this code, and whether it might not be supported by demand or whether it could hinder affordable delivery in certain instances.</p>	<p>Minor Change: Relevant Code BF02.01 - This code has been removed. Density will be determined through the Local Plan, which will guide appropriate housing typologies in response to the local context.</p>
<p>A question was raised about what constitutes generic design and whether efforts to avoid it could negatively impact developers.</p>	<p>No Change: Relevant Code BF04.02 - Code is taken from and supported by existing National policy in the Design and Placemaking Planning Practice Guidance pg41 Built Form. Through engagement with Local Councillors and the Residents Design Forum, there was strong support for ensuring that house types respond appropriately to local context and character. The Code does not prohibit standard house types, but seeks to ensure they are selected, arranged and detailed in a way that positively responds to the character of North Herts.</p>

<p>A question was raised as to whether smaller areas of rear amenity space may be appropriate where high-quality public open space is available nearby.</p>	<p>Relevant Code BF07.01 - The Code does not support reduced private amenity space on the basis of public open space provision alone. However, the Design Code allows the 'comply or justify' approach where private amenity is delivered in alternative or innovative ways, such as roof terraces, first-floor amenity spaces or generous front gardens. Code BF07.01 also allowed flexibility in rear garden depths where high-quality alternative amenity provision can be demonstrated.</p>
<p>Questions were raised about the amount of cycle parking proposed in the code and the amount of space it may take up within developments.</p>	<p>Minor Change Made: Relevant Code BF09.01 - Parking Ratios have been updated to clarify what is on plot and what is secondary or communal provision for clarity.</p>
<p>Concerns were raised about the extent of hard-edged boundary treatments required for cycle storage and their potential impact on the quality and appearance of the street scene.</p>	<p>No Change: Relevant Code BF09.02 - The Code has alternative solutions for accommodating cycle storage such as in garages and to the sides of homes which may be more suitable in rural locations. The Code includes a menu of options, including integrated front boundary stores, garages, communal cycle stores and rear garden storage where direct access is provided.</p>
<p>The SPD should make clear that changes within the setting of a heritage asset must consider and respond to its contribution to significance.</p>	<p>Changes Made: Historic England has provided specific revised wording for BF04.05 to strengthen clarity and policy alignment.</p>
<p>Proposals within or affecting Conservation Areas should be informed by Conservation Area Appraisals and reinforce local character.</p>	

PARKING CODES

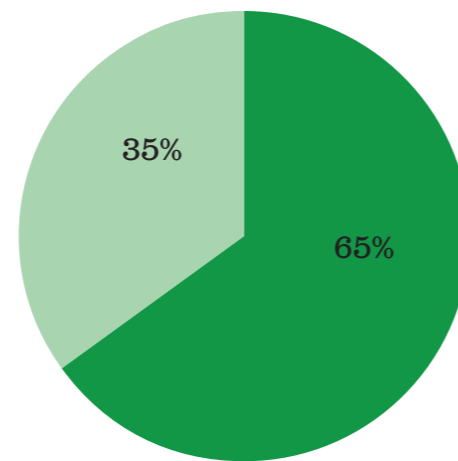
Overall, do you think the ‘Parking’ codes are clear and appropriate?

This section of the Design Code covers requirements for parking layout, communal car parking and on-plot car parking.

The individual codes are listed here for reference:

- PA01 - Parking Hierarchy
- PA02 - Communal Parking Typologies
- PA03 - On-Plot Parking

Feedback is optional throughout this section, you may skip any page if you do not wish to give any feedback on these codes.



- Yes - all are clear and appropriate
- No - some are unclear or are inappropriate

Please provide feedback on ‘Parking’ codes.

Summary of Comments	Response
A dominant concern was that parking provision is insufficient and does not reflect real household needs, with many respondents stating new developments consistently underestimate car ownership.	No Change: The Design Code focuses solely on the delivery of parking within sites rather than establishing overall parking quantum. Parking provision is set through the Local Plan, while the Design Code deals with the location and arrangement of residential parking to support more efficient site layouts and well-designed places.
Some respondents noted that regardless of policy, residents will park where convenient, often ignoring restrictions, which can lead to conflict and poor street conditions.	No Change: Street types have been designed to carefully deter antisocial parking through the use of planting, landscaping and minimised carriageway widths.
There was a clear preference for parking to be located on-plot or directly outside homes, with resistance to remote or detached parking arrangement.	No Change: For almost all situations, on-plot parking is still permitted. A secondary space is required to be in a communal parking typology within 100m of the house to gently encourage sustainable journeys where possible and use land more efficiently.

<p>Feedback emphasised the need to accommodate specific needs, including space for wheelchair-adapted vehicles and consideration of emerging requirements such as electric vehicle charging.</p>	<p>No Change: Accessible parking is provided for M4(2) and M4(3) dwellings in accordance with Building Regulations. EV charging requirements are set out in ST02: Street Design within the technical section of the Design Code. In addition, the street and parking typology illustrations incorporate EV charging to demonstrate appropriate and practical locations for infrastructure as part of well-designed layouts.</p>
<p>Concerns were raised regarding unclear parking tier definitions, the absence of a district-wide tiering map and the justification for the proposed tiered parking approach.</p>	<p>Minor Change: Relevant Code PA01.01 - The tiering system has been reviewed to improve clarity, alongside the inclusion of a new introductory section explaining how the approach should be applied in practice.</p>
<p>Questions were raised about the appropriateness of multi-storey and underground parking solutions within the North Hertfordshire context.</p>	<p>No Change: Relevant Code PA02 Code PA02 focuses instead on communal parking typologies that make efficient use of land while remaining appropriate to the character and scale of development within the district.</p>
<p>Concerns were raised that the 100m distance from off-plot parking may be too restrictive for Tier 2 parking areas, particularly on larger sites and where peripheral parking arrangements are proposed.</p>	<p>No Change: Relevant Code PA01.03 - The 100m distance is set as an ambition within the code; however, 'comply or justify' approach may be applied where off-plot parking spaces need to be located further than 100m from homes, provided this can be robustly justified and delivers better overall outcomes.</p>
<p>Concerns were raised about the lack of reference to parking barns or multi-storey examples.</p>	<p>No Change: Relevant Code PA02 - The design code does not discourage the use of innovative parking solutions where justified, NHDC encourages the development of innovative solutions to avoid car dominated plots, streets and to make the most efficient use of land possible.</p>

<p>Questions were raised regarding the necessity of placing a limit on how far garages can step back into rear gardens.</p>	<p>No Change: Relevant Code PA03.01 - Historically, garages positioned too far into rear gardens have led to excessive front garden areas being used for parking, resulting in car-dominated frontages. Garages that extend too deeply into rear gardens can also create awkward, low-quality private rear amenity.</p>
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CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

Summary

The consultation process has provided valuable insight from residents, community groups, statutory consultees, developers and industry professionals. The feedback received has informed a series of amendments and clarifications to the District Design Code, helping to strengthen its effectiveness, practicality and consistency across the District.

The Council remains committed to ensuring the code supports the delivery of high-quality, sustainable and locally distinctive development across North Hertfordshire.

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APPENDIX A

Welcome to the North Herts Design Code Public Consultation

The North Herts Design Code sets out a shared vision for how new development should look and feel across the district. Its purpose is to make sure that growth is sustainable, inclusive, and locally distinctive, creating places where people feel safe, connected and proud of the places they live. The Design Code will be adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to support the current North Herts Local Plan 2011-2031, and will also help shape the next Local Plan.

Please review the North Herts Draft Design Code SPD (the document to which this form relates) before answering this questionnaire.

It can be found at the following web address: www.north-herts.gov.uk/design-code-supplementary-planning-document

The draft code has been developed with input from a wide range of stakeholders, including residents, councillors, council officers and external specialists in areas such as architecture, urban design, civil engineering, transport and landscape.

This consultation is an opportunity to share your views on:

- The seven North Herts Place Objectives which guide development
- The technical design requirements for settlement structure, open spaces, streets, parking and built form.

This questionnaire has two sections:

- Section 1: Place Objectives
- Section 2: Technical Design Requirements

Feedback is optional throughout section 2 and you may skip any of the pages if you do not wish to give feedback.

Your feedback will help to refine the North Herts Design Code before it is finalised and adopted.

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About You (Optional)

Are you responding as: *

- North Herts Resident
- Member of a Parish Council
- Member of a Community Group
- Public Sector - MP
- Public Sector - NHDC Councillor
- Public Sector - HCC Councillor
- Public Sector - Officer
- Private Sector - Developer
- Private Sector - Architect/Designer
- Private Sector - Planning Agent
- Private Sector - Land Agent
- Other

Please provide us with your full name: *

Email/Postal Address: (we will use this to contact you regarding any updates to the Design Code SPD and Local Plan) *

Section 1 - North Herts Place Objectives

The Design Code is guided by seven North Herts Place Objectives, developed collaboratively with the Residents Design Forum and Local Councillors. The Place Objectives set out the overall principles that new development within North Herts must adhere to.

You will now be taken through each of the North Herts Place Objectives and asked questions relating to each one.

Place Objective 1 - Exceptional Open Space

Development must create a connected network of green spaces that celebrates the area's natural assets and strengthens the district's landscape character. Water-management elements such as swales, SuDS, and rain gardens must be designed as attractive, functioning parts of the landscape, not hidden engineering, so they enrich these spaces and support nature.

Open spaces should be designed with intention and purpose; places that support everyday wellbeing through play, recreation, active travel, nature and community life. Each space should work hard, complementing others to form a rich, multifunctional environment that incorporates blue infrastructure and that welcomes people of all ages and abilities.

Unplanned, leftover 'grassy patches' with no clear use, identity, or value to the community will not be permitted.

To what extent do you agree that this Place Objective is appropriate for guiding development within North Herts? *

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Please use the box below to explain your answer, provide feedback or suggest changes to the 'Exceptional Open Space' Place Objective:

Place Objective 2 - Sociable Streets

Development must create streets that are enjoyable places to be, not just routes to travel through. Streets should support everyday social life, help people find their way intuitively and make walking and cycling the easiest, safest, and most attractive choice. Vehicles must be accommodated in a way that respects the needs of people first.

Streets should be designed as complete environments where buildings, planting, street trees, lighting and movement infrastructure work together to create characterful, comfortable and inclusive spaces. Parking should be sensitively integrated so it neither dominates nor undermines the quality and feel of these important shared spaces.

Car-dominated streets, where parking overwhelms the street scene, limits planting opportunities, or creates poor pedestrian experiences, will not be permitted.

To what extent do you agree that this Place Objective is appropriate for guiding development within North Herts? *

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Please use the box below to explain your answer, provide feedback or suggest changes to the 'Sociable Streets' Place Objective:

Place Objective 3 - Well-Integrated Development

Development must be seamlessly integrated into its surroundings, responding positively to the site's edges and reinforcing clear, legible patterns of settlement. New places should feel like a natural extension of the district's towns and villages, not disconnected enclaves.

New neighbourhoods should maximise opportunities to connect with existing routes, facilities, landscapes and communities. Where development edges meet open land or areas identified for potential future growth, layouts must be designed to safeguard these edges and allow for logical, well-connected expansion over time.

Layouts that pull away from the site boundary to create isolated 'islands' of homes, cut off from their surroundings and offering limited future connection, will not be permitted.

To what extent do you agree that this Place Objective is appropriate for guiding development within North Herts? *

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Please use the box below to explain your answer, provide feedback or suggest changes to the 'Well-Integrated Development' Place Objective:

Place Objective 4 - Convivial Communities

New development must foster a strong sense of community with places designed to support neighbourliness, everyday interaction and collective stewardship.

Communal solutions, such as shared bike stores, shared bin stores, shared courtyards, community gardens and informal meeting spaces should be prioritised wherever practical. These shared elements help bring people together in their daily routines and contribute to safer, more sociable and inclusive neighbourhoods.

Designs that isolate homes, disperse facilities unnecessarily, or remove opportunities for casual social interaction will not be permitted.

To what extent do you agree that this Place Objective is appropriate for guiding development within North Herts? *

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Please use the box below to explain your answer, provide feedback or suggest changes to the 'Convivial Communities' Place Objective:

Place Objective 5 - Efficient Use of Land

New development should make the most of the land available, creating neighbourhoods that feel welcoming, well-designed and easy to get around. Good design and thoughtful building types can help create places that feel lively and connected without wasting space.

Neighbourhoods should be arranged so that everyday trips, getting to school, visiting friends, popping to the shops etc. can be done comfortably on foot, by bike, or by public transport. Walkable, compact places not only use land more efficiently but also help support a stronger sense of community and healthier lifestyles.

Layouts that put cars first, using too much land for wide roads, scattered parking, or disconnected cul-de-sacs, will not be permitted.

To what extent do you agree that this Place Objective is appropriate for guiding development within North Herts? *

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Please use the box below to explain your answer, provide feedback or suggest changes to the 'Efficient Use of Land' Place Objective:

Place Objective 6 - Equitable Neighbourhoods

Development must create neighbourhoods that are fair, inclusive and welcoming to everyone, regardless of tenure or socio-economic background. All homes and public spaces should be designed to the same high standards, ensuring every resident experiences a sense of pride and belonging.

Across a neighbourhood, affordable and market homes must be indistinguishable in their external appearance. This means providing equal access to well-designed public realm, consistent parking strategies, shared materials and architectural quality and the same proximity to amenities, play and green spaces.

Designs that reveal or segregate tenures, whether through lower-quality materials, separate entrances, poorer landscaping, or isolated clusters will not be permitted.

To what extent do you agree that this Place Objective is appropriate for guiding development within North Herts? *

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Please use the box below to explain your answer, provide feedback or suggest changes to the 'Equitable Neighbourhoods' Place Objective:

Place Objective 7 - Contextual Buildings

Development must deliver buildings with a strong sense of character and identity, shaped by a clear understanding of the site's setting and the distinctive qualities of the surrounding area. New buildings should feel rooted in their context while contributing positively to the future character of the neighbourhood.

Material choices, building form, height, and architectural detailing must all be guided by a thoughtful design rationale grounded in local character and landscape cues. This approach should create distinctive and memorable streets and neighbourhoods that support wayfinding and foster a sense of civic pride.

Poor-quality or poorly considered development, whether existing or nearby, must never be used as justification for repeating the same approach. Designs that fail to respond to their context, or that rely on generic forms, will not be permitted.

To what extent do you agree that this Place Objective is appropriate for guiding development within North Herts? *

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Please use the box below to explain your answer, provide feedback or suggest changes to the 'Contextual Buildings' Place Objective:

Place Objectives - General Questions

To what extent do you agree or disagree that the seven North Herts Place Objectives set an appropriate level of ambition to guide future development in the district? *

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Do you have any further suggestions relating to the North Herts Place Objectives?

End of Section 1 - Place Objectives

You have now completed Section 1 - Place Objectives.
Thank you for your valuable feedback and insights into the Place Objectives.

Please continue to Section 2 - Technical Design Requirements.

Section 2 - Technical Design Requirements

The following section will ask you questions regarding codes in order of appearance in the design code document:

- Settlement Structure
- Open Space
- Streets
- Built Form
- Parking

Feedback is optional throughout this section, you may skip any page if you do not wish to give feedback.

Settlement Structure Codes (SS01 - SS06)

These codes set out the requirements for how new development should be arranged within North Herts. This includes layout, density, block structure, connections and edges.

The individual codes are listed here for reference:

- SS01 - Rational Street and Plot Layouts
- SS02 - Optimising Land Use
- SS03 - Responding to Edges
- SS04 - Well-Integrated Schools
- SS05 - Legible Focal Points
- SS06 - Private Drives and Cul-De-Sacs

Feedback is optional throughout this section, you may skip any page if you do not wish to give any feedback on these codes.

Overall, do you think the Settlement Structure codes are clear and appropriate?

- Yes - all are clear and appropriate.
- No - some are unclear or are inappropriate *(please explain in the comments box below).*

Please provide feedback on the Settlement Structure codes:

Where you make reference to a specific code, please indicate which code you are referring to.

Open Space Codes (OS01 - OS13)

This section of the Design Code covers requirements for parks, green spaces, play areas, landscaping, rainwater attenuation and biodiversity.

The individual codes are listed here for reference:

- OS01 - Open Space Provision
- OS02 - Open Space Design
- OS03 - Tier 1 Open Spaces
- OS04 - Tier 2 Open Spaces
- OS05 - Tier 3 Open Spaces
- OS06 - Tier 4 Open Spaces
- OS07 - Play Space Design
- OS08 - Informal Play
- OS09 - Local Areas for Play (LAP)
- OS10 - Local Equipped Areas for Play (LEAP)
- OS11 - Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play (NEAP)
- OS12 - Planting Palette
- OS13 - Multi-Functional Attenuation Basins

Feedback is optional throughout this section, you may skip any page if you do not wish to give any feedback on these codes.

Overall, do you think the Open Space codes are clear and appropriate?

- Yes - all are clear and appropriate.
- No - some are unclear or are inappropriate *(please explain in the comments box below).*

Please provide feedback on the Open Space codes:

Where you make reference to a specific code, please indicate which code you are referring to.

Streets Codes (ST01 - ST10)

This section of the Design Code covers street design, movement, route hierarchy, active travel and accessibility.

The individual codes are listed here for reference:

- ST01 - Selecting Street Types
- ST02 - Street Design
- ST03 - Green Streets
- ST04 - Avenues
- ST05 - Neighbourhood Streets
- ST06 - Residential Streets
- ST07 - Residential Mews
- ST08 - Rear Mews
- ST09 - Spur Lanes
- ST10 - Edge Lanes

Feedback is optional throughout this section, you may skip any page if you do not wish to give any feedback on these codes.

Overall, do you think the Streets codes are clear and appropriate?

- Yes - all are clear and appropriate.
- No - some are unclear or are inappropriate *(please explain in the comments box below)*.

Please provide feedback on the Streets codes:

Where you make reference to a specific code, please indicate which code you are referring to.

Built Form (BF01 - BF10)

This section of the Design Code covers affordable housing, materiality, form, architectural approach, private and communal amenity, refuse storage and cycle parking requirements.

The individual codes are listed here for reference:

- BF01 - Affordable Housing Distribution
- BF02 - Tenure Neutral Typologies
- BF03 - Balancing Variety and Consistency
- BF04 - Architectural Approach
- BF05 - Private Amenity for Apartments
- BF06 - Communal Amenity for Apartments
- BF07 - Private Amenity for Houses
- BF08 - Communal Amenity for Houses
- BF09 - Cycle Parking and Storage
- BF10 - Waste and Refuse Storage

Feedback is optional throughout this section, you may skip any page if you do not wish to give any feedback on these codes.

Overall, do you think the Built Form codes are clear and appropriate?

- Yes - all are clear and appropriate.
- No - some are unclear or are inappropriate *(please explain in the comments box below)*.

Please provide feedback on the Built Form codes:

Where you make reference to a specific code, please indicate which code you are referring to.

Parking (PA01 - PA03)

This section of the Design Code covers requirements for parking layout, communal car parking and on-plot car parking.

The individual codes are listed here for reference:

- BF01 - Parking Hierarchy
- BF02 - Communal Parking Typologies
- BF03 - On-Plot Parking
-

Feedback is optional throughout this section, you may skip any page if you do not wish to give any feedback on these codes.

Overall, do you think the Parking codes are clear and appropriate?

- Yes - all are clear and appropriate.
- No - some are unclear or are inappropriate *(please explain in the comments box below).*

Please provide feedback on the Parking codes:

Where you make reference to a specific code, please indicate which code you are referring to.

End of Section 2 - Technical Design Requirements

You have now completed Section 2 - Technical Design Requirements. Thank you for your valuable feedback and insights into the code.

Are there any issues that are not covered by the North Herts Design Code SPD that you think should be included?

Please use the space below to provide any additional comments on the North Herts Design Code SPD:

