

West Northamptonshire Manual for Design Codes



WNDC

Foreword



As part of the Sustainable Communities and Growth Agenda, West Northamptonshire Development Corporation (WNDK) was established to deliver sustainable growth and infrastructure, in the three West Northamptonshire towns of Northampton, Daventry and Towcester. Good design quality is fundamental in achieving WNDK's aspirations for sustainable development, integrating new developments with existing communities, creating vibrant economies and providing attractive communities.

Good design does not just involve making developments and places look attractive but it also has a fundamental role in achieving sustainable development. Inclusive and high quality design is paramount in creating places that people want to live and work, both now and in the future. To achieve this it requires the development of an innovative Design Code Manual that gives clarity for communities and developers alike for the design requirements necessary to consistently achieve well designed and quality developments.

The West Northamptonshire Manual for Design Codes provides practical assistance through the planning system and advice on how Design Codes can effectively be prepared. This important document will help shape the future of our locality and will require all large scale developments to show how they have considered design and how they respond to their surroundings. From the design of individual buildings to the creation of parks and footpaths, good design is appreciated by all. This Manual gives us the tool to achieve a "sense of place" of which our communities can be extremely proud.

John Markham OBE
Chairman, WNDK



Alan Baxter

savills

Introduction

The designation of West Northamptonshire as a Growth Area will increase the pace of its development. The Manual for Design Codes aims to inform the development of this region whilst promoting its local identity.

Background

The regeneration of West Northamptonshire is a national priority. This region is experiencing significant pressure for development and growth. Northamptonshire forms part of the Milton Keynes/South Midlands Growth Area and is one of the major growth areas in the wider South East.

West Northamptonshire Development Corporation (WNDC) was established with the objective of securing regeneration and development within its Urban Development Area. This involves working across three urban areas (Northampton, Daventry and Towcester) of different sizes and with varying development and regeneration requirements to help manage, encourage and stimulate growth. WNDC is supporting the regeneration process and has been given statutory responsibility for the regeneration of the area through powers granted by Parliament and access to dedicated funding streams. These powers include responsibility for making decisions on strategic planning applications in Northampton, Daventry and Towcester.

Design Codes and the Planning System

Research completed by the Government has indicated that Design Codes are key tools to help deliver certainty and speed in the planning system through

a partnership approach that brings the interests of landowners, developers, statutory undertakers, interest groups and local communities together. Therefore with the production of this Manual for Design Codes, it is anticipated that speed, certainty, and transparency of approach will be brought to the formulation of future Design Coding within WNDC for all parties.

Purpose of this Manual

The Manual for Design Codes is a single point of reference highlighting current best practice in Coding including a context appraisal of the towns of Northampton, Daventry and Towcester and their surrounding villages. It establishes the development context in which WNDC operates whilst emphasising the urban and rural characteristics considered important to any new development within the three towns and the surrounding area providing a useful tool which could also be utilised by our partner Local Authorities.

The Manual provides further clarity for developers by setting out the minimum requirements to be incorporated within every Design Code to bring consistency and speed to the formulation of Design Code documents. An assessment matrix has also been produced against which Design Code documents will be assessed and this is included at Appendix A of the Manual.

Structure of this Manual

The Manual is divided into four sections:

Section 1 offers a background to Design Codes in the form of a policy review and collation of existing guidance on Design Codes.

Section 2 is a context appraisal of the three towns, their surrounding villages, topography and the built form, and employment areas with highlights of their key features.

Section 3 provides systematic guidance to the structure and contents of Design Codes with a list of minimum requirements for each topic area.

Section 4 contains the Appendices which include the Design Code Assessment Matrix, Consultation Report, List of Figures with Image Credits and Acknowledgements.

Methodology

The Manual is based on information collated through the following methods:

- Desktop reviews of existing documentation including books, journals, guidance and policy documents.
- Site visits with photographic documentation of the three towns and surrounding villages.
- Consultation with stakeholders

The case studies and examples within the document have been chosen in order to provide a balanced and considered approach across the three towns and their surrounding villages.

Extent of the Study Area

The Manual covers the area of Northampton, Daventry and Towcester and the surrounding rural context of the three Urban Development Areas.

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section one

Background Review

1.1 Purpose & Benefit of Design Codes

Since August 2006 the requirements for the level of information to be provided to support outline planning applications changed significantly. Amendments to the Town and Country Planning (General Development Procedure) Order 1995 require that all outline applications demonstrate more clearly how the proposals have evolved, having full regard to the constraints and opportunities of the site and in light of the policies of the development plan and all other material considerations. As a result outline planning applications must include sufficient information *“to be such as to allow for proper consideration by both decision makers and local communities. They will also provide the basis for greater and better informed community involvement in the planning process.”* (Circular 01/06).

A Design and Access Statement is also required to accompany the majority of planning applications submitted to the Development Corporation. In the case of outline planning applications these are particularly important in providing the link between the outline approval and the subsequent Reserved Matters application(s).

Design Codes are a set of written and illustrated rules to instruct the physical development of a site. They sit at a level below a Design and Access Statement and/or Masterplan, building upon the vision and principles established within these to provide further detail for a particular development. Rather than being restrictive, their use can help to achieve a variety in built form and public spaces. In the context of West Northamptonshire, their use can help the major expansion of existing towns to retain and enhance the identity and character of the existing built environment, whilst allowing new development to sensitively integrate with its surroundings.

Recent research by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) and the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) has shown that Design Codes provide a number of benefits. They are a good method for improving the quality of new developments and they benefit

planning authorities by allowing for a greater degree of control over developments. This is due to the ability of Design Codes to improve the certainty of the design and development process. Design Codes also benefit developers by potentially facilitating a swifter planning process. Subsequently, through the delivery of better design quality and a stronger sense of place, developers can benefit from higher economic values.

Design Codes can also benefit stakeholder groups by allowing a level of engagement and interaction as part of the drafting and revision process during the development of the Code.

1.2 Setting the Scene

WNDC was established in December 2004 as an Urban Development Corporation whose objective is to secure regeneration through means including encouraging development.

The East Midlands Regional Plan was published in March 2009 and seeks to provide a broad spatial strategy for the region up to 2026. In the period up to 2021 it seeks the creation of 37,200 new jobs for West Northamptonshire, and the following housing targets and broad objectives for each settlement:

Northampton: Regional Centre

- 31,500 new homes by 2021;
- Growth in stature as an important regional centre;
- Development of the town as a central focus for a range of employment activities;
- Development of the cultural heritage and tourism of the town;
- Major enhancement of the public transport network.

Daventry: Sub-Regional Centre

- 10,800 new homes and grow towards a population of about 40,000 by 2021;
- Revitalisation and extension of the role of the town centre as a Sub-Regional Centre offering improved shopping facilities and a wider range of jobs and services.

South Northamptonshire (Incorporating Towcester)

- 6,600 new homes by 2021;
- Extension of its role in providing local services;
- Accommodation of growth through developing within the existing built up areas or through a sustainable urban extension;
- Regeneration of Towcester’s historic town centre.

From the period 2021 to 2026, there will be an annual provision of 2,645 dwellings split between the administrative areas of Northampton Borough, South Northamptonshire District and Daventry District. The locations for these dwellings will be sought through the Joint Core Strategy which will identify a number of strategic locations for growth and other broad locations for growth.

While this growth is fundamental for the future success of the region, it will place the three towns and surrounding villages under immense pressure to change. Therefore, in the preparation of the West Northamptonshire Manual for Design Codes, the Manual plays a critical role in helping to ensure that future growth protects those elements considered intrinsic to Northamptonshire and in enhancing the strong character and identity of the three towns and their surrounding villages.

The Context Appraisal and the Matrix for assessing Design Codes incorporated within this Manual will make it an important tool in the preservation and enhancement of the region’s identity.

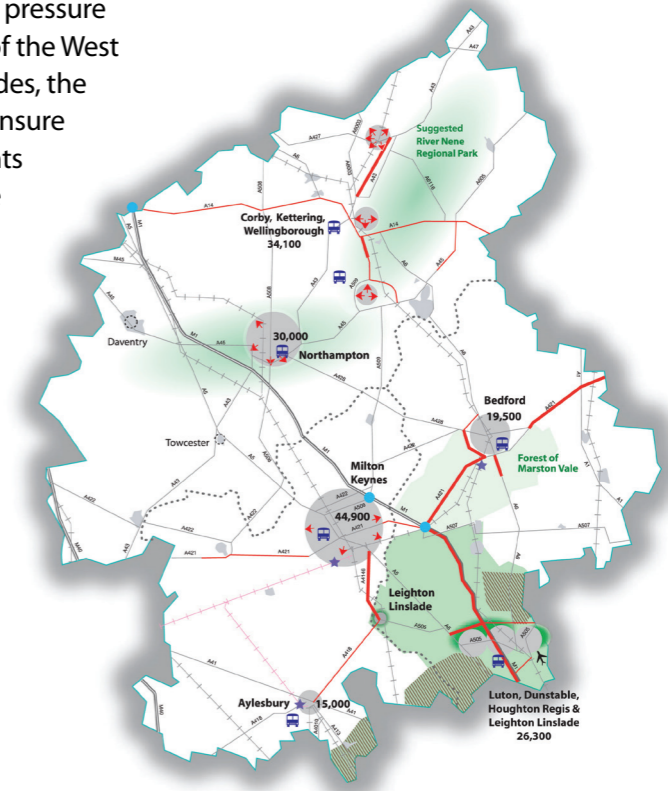


Figure 1: Milton Keynes & South Midlands Sub-Regional Strategy Spatial Diagram

1.3 The Role of WNDC, Developers & Stakeholders

In the process of developing Design Codes, a number of different parties have key responsibilities including the Design Coding team, the Public Interest team and wider stakeholders.

The Design Coding team is typically made up of the land owner and/or developer, masterplanner, and code designer. The Public Interest team consists of the WNDC, the respective Local Authority within whose area the development site is located, and statutory agencies, such as Northamptonshire County Council as the Local Highway Authority. Wider stakeholder interests are made up of both service providers, such as utilities providers, and local interests including local Councillors, the existing community and future occupiers.

WNDC endorses published guidance requiring Design Codes to be produced for major developments depending on the scale and impact of the proposal. WNDC has responsibility for administering the development control process within the Urban Development Area and will require Design Codes to be submitted through that process. The implementation of a Design Code, its monitoring and any subsequent action undertaken to enforce accordance with the Design Code will be taken through a partnership approach with the respective Local Authority. To ensure that knowledge and understanding of the local area is maximised, WNDC, in partnership with developers, will also work closely with Northampton Borough, Daventry and South Northamptonshire District Councils to develop Design Codes within each respective Local Authority area.

The following chart provides a basis for understanding the roles of different parties in the formulation of Design Codes.

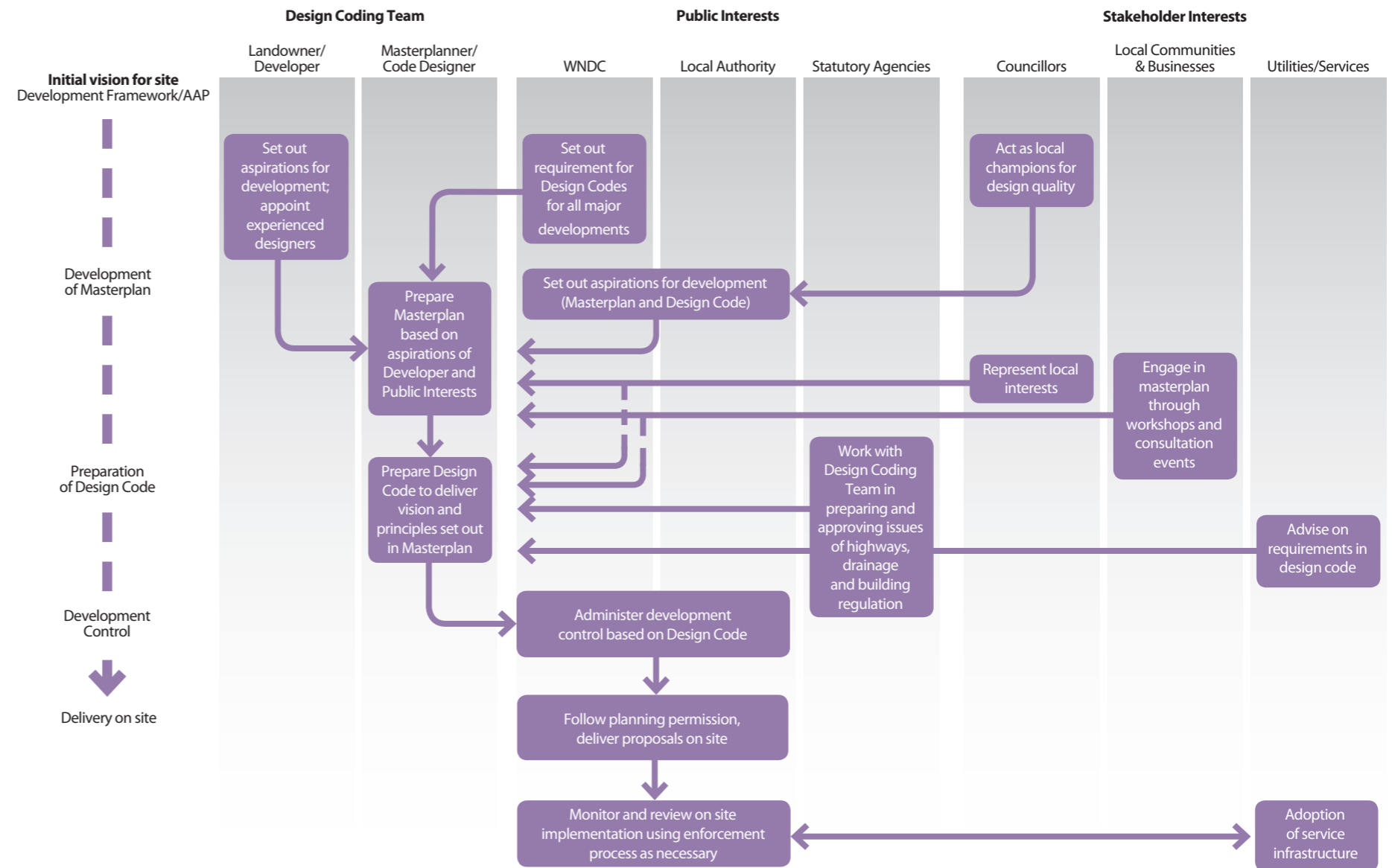


Figure 2: Diagram illustrating the planning process and actors for masterplanning and design coding from inception to delivery

1.4 Review of Policy Context for West Northamptonshire

Planning Policy Context

The following sub-section constitutes a review of the current policy context in West Northamptonshire. As policy may be subject to change in the future, there is the opportunity to update this section according to those policy changes or to add a supplementary section to the Manual should it be required.

An essential element of the Design Coding process is an understanding of where Design Codes fit within the framework of planning policy. This will ensure that Design Codes are based on sound and up-to-date planning policy and that they gain legitimacy and weight in the decision making process. Consequently, this assessment of planning policy is essential to the Manual to explain where the Design Codes sit within this process.

A firm grounding in existing policy will assist in ensuring the support of all partner organisations, most notably Northamptonshire County Council (NCC), Daventry District Council (DDC), South Northamptonshire District Council (SNDC), Northampton Borough Council (NBC), West Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit (WNJPU) and those landowners or developers who seek planning permission.

National Policy Context

PPS 1 – Delivering Sustainable Development (paragraphs 33 – 39) refers to ‘*Good design being indivisible from good planning*’. It is clearly stated that achieving high quality and inclusive design goes far beyond aesthetic considerations. It requires carefully planned, high quality buildings and spaces that support the efficient use of resources, ensuring that a place will function well over the lifetime of the development and is socially inclusive.

Planning and Climate Change Supplement to PPS 1 (paragraph 9) sets out the key planning objectives to deliver sustainable development as follows:

- *make a full contribution to delivering the Government’s Climate Change Programme and energy policies, and in doing so contribute to global sustainability;*
- *in providing for the homes, jobs, services and infrastructure needed by communities, and in renewing and shaping the places where they live and work, secure the highest viable resource and energy efficiency and reduction in emissions;*
- *deliver patterns of urban growth and sustainable rural developments that help secure the fullest possible use of sustainable transport for moving freight, public transport, cycling and walking; and, which overall, reduce the need to travel, especially by car;*
- *secure new development and shape places that minimise vulnerability, and provide resilience, to climate change; and in ways that are consistent with social cohesion and inclusion;*
- *conserve and enhance biodiversity, recognising that the distribution of habitats and species will be affected by climate change;*
- *reflect the development needs and interests of communities and enable them to contribute effectively to tackling climate change; and*
- *respond to the concerns of business and encourage competitiveness and technological innovation in mitigating and adapting to climate change.*

PPS 3 – Housing (paragraph 12 – 19) reflects policy set out in PPS 1 stating that, ‘*good design should contribute positively to making places better for people. Design which is inappropriate in its context, or which fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions, should not be accepted*’. A clear set of criteria against which to

assess design quality is set out within paragraph 16 of the PPS and requires that development:

- *is easily accessible and well-connected to public transport and community facilities and services, and is well laid out so that all the space is used efficiently, is safe, accessible and user-friendly;*
- *provides, or enables good access to, community and green and open amenity and recreational space (including play space) as well as private outdoor space such as residential gardens, patios and balconies;*
- *is well integrated with, and complements, the neighbouring buildings and the local area more generally in terms of scale, density, layout and access;*
- *facilitates the efficient use of resources, during construction and in use, and seeks to adapt to and reduce the impact of, and on, climate change;*
- *takes a design-led approach to the provision of car-parking space, that is well-integrated with a high quality public realm and streets that are pedestrian, cycle and vehicle friendly;*
- *creates, or enhances, a distinctive character that relates well to the surroundings and supports a sense of local pride and civic identity; and*
- *provides for the retention or re-establishment of the biodiversity within residential environments.*

In addition, the national guidance documents listed below emphasise the value and importance of good design:

- By Design: Urban Design in the Planning System: Towards Better Practice (DETR 2000)
- Better Places to Live By Design: A Companion Guide to PPG3 (DTLR 2001)
- Safer Places: The Planning System and Crime Prevention (ODPM 2004)
- The Urban Design Compendium 1 and 2 (English Partnerships & Housing Corporation 2007 (Homes and Communities Agency))
- Manual for Streets (DfT 2007).

The Regional Context

The Sustainable Communities Plan (2003) seeks to address a number of strategic challenges facing the East Midlands and makes clear that where new or expanded communities are needed, these should be well designed, high quality and attractive places where people will choose to live and work.

Regional planning policies provide a broad spatial strategy for the region, which in the case of West Northamptonshire comprises the East Midlands Regional Plan published in March 2009 incorporating the Milton Keynes and South Midlands Sub-Regional Strategy (MKSM). WNDC has been established by the Government to work closely with the respective Local Authorities to help deliver the key objectives set out in the Regional Plan and make West Northamptonshire a better place to live, work and invest, delivering amongst other things quality and a pride of place.

Local Policy

The Development Plan for West Northamptonshire currently includes the following documents which are relevant to the Manual for Design Codes.

A number of Saved Policies from:

- Northampton Borough Council Local Plan (1997)
- Daventry District Council Local Plan (1997)
- South Northamptonshire District Council Local Plan (1997)

A single saved policy from:

- Northamptonshire County Council Structure Plan (2001)

Although out of date, a number of policies (contained within these plans and the Structure Plan that has a single saved policy) are saved for a period of 3 years from 27 September 2007 following which they will be superseded by the Joint Local Development Framework (LDF) for the Local Planning Authorities.

A West Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit (WNJPU) has been established by the Local Authorities within the area to produce a joint LDF. The WNJPU is responsible to the West Northamptonshire Joint Strategic Planning Committee which was established by Parliamentary Order with statutory responsibility for the Local Development Framework. The delivery of the Framework involves the preparation, submission and revision of the Local Development Scheme (LDS) and those Development Plan Documents (DPDs) and Local Development Documents (LDDs) identified in the LDS.

The inaugural meeting of the Joint Strategic Planning Committee was held in October 2008. The Joint Committee will set the planning framework to 2026 for the Government's Growth Agenda as it applies to this part of Northamptonshire and the wider Milton Keynes South Midlands sub-region.

The LDS was approved by the Secretary of State in November 2008 and now outlines the programme for taking forward the production of the suite of DPDs and LDDs which comprise the LDS. Central to this will be the Joint Core Strategy which is due to be adopted in 2011.

The Joint Committee is a council-led planning authority working in partnership with WNDC in particular to ensure plans are deliverable through the Corporation's development control and regeneration powers.

A number of Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) and Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) have also been produced by the Local Authorities to provide some detailed guidance for the development of specific areas or sites.

These include:

- Planning Out Crime in Northamptonshire SPG (NCC) (2003)
- Parking SPG (NCC) (2003)
- Northamptonshire Places and Movement Guide (NCC) (2008)
- Northamptonshire's Environmental Character and Green Infrastructure Suite (NCC)
- Daventry Design Codes SPD (DDC) (2005)

Daventry Town Council has also produced the Daventry Town Design Statement SPD (2008). A number of Village Design Statements have also been produced by West Northamptonshire villages which have been approved as Supplementary Planning Documents.

In addition to the above, in February 2009 WNDC's Planning Principles document was published setting out basic principles that inform the use of the Corporation's statutory planning powers. In light of the current policy situation within West Northamptonshire, the document seeks to provide a concise statement based around four key principles. These for WNDC define the standards that need to be realised through the planning process. They are, as follows:

1. Quality Service
2. Quality Places
3. Sustainable Environment
4. Infrastructure Delivery.

The publication reaffirms the Corporation's commitment to lasting quality and sustainable construction and seeks to clarify policy guidance for the area so that decisions reflect local priorities.

A common theme of all planning policy and guidance for West Northamptonshire is that high quality sustainable development should be the aim of all those involved in the development process, providing a foundation upon which the production of Design Codes can be based. The production of a Design Code Manual for West Northamptonshire seeks to inform and provide consistency and transparency when considering the preparation of a Design Code. Compliance with regional and local policies is critical in the preparation of Design Codes to secure high quality sustainable design within every development.

1.5 Review of Policy on Design & Access Statements and Design Codes

Where required, a Design and Access Statement must accompany a planning application to explain the design rationale behind a development and to illustrate how the design responds to the access requirements of a particular site.

The development of a thorough and comprehensive Design and Access Statement is critical to provide a solid foundation from which to develop subsequent Design Codes. This relationship is of such importance that there is merit in setting out the requirements of Design and Access Statements within the Manual to reinforce the synergy and relationships between both documents.

National Policy

The Town and Country Planning (General Development Procedure) Order 1995 (GDPO) requires Design and Access Statements (DAS) to be submitted for all planning applications except where planning permission is sought for engineering or mining operations; development to an existing dwelling house; development within its grounds (and incidental); and/or a material change in the use of land or buildings.

Circular 01/06: Guidance on Changes to the Development Control System (DCLG) interprets the requirements from DAS as required by the GDPO. The Circular indicates that DAS are intended to enable Local Planning Authorities to better understand the rationale that has underpinned the design and how this has led to the evolution of the scheme. This will help negotiations and decision-making and lead to an improvement in the quality, sustainability and inclusiveness of the development.

Paragraph 60 of Circular 01/06 defines DAS as, '*a short report accompanying and supporting a planning application to illustrate the process that has led to the development proposal, and to explain and justify the proposal in a structured way.*'

Paragraph 61 goes to say '*They provide an opportunity for developers and designers to demonstrate their commitment to achieving good design and ensuring accessibility in the work they undertake, and allow them to show how they are meeting, or will meet the various obligations placed on them by legislation and policy.*'

Whilst PPS1 - Delivering Sustainable Development refers generally to the achievement of high quality and inclusive design through the development process, the use of Design Codes as an appropriate tool to facilitating efficient delivery of high quality development is more specifically highlighted in PPS 3 – Housing.

PPS 3 within paragraphs 12-19, builds upon the design policies set out within PPS 1 which promote high quality and inclusive design through the consideration of basic principles. The use of Design Codes is also promoted within PPS 3 as a mechanism to facilitate the delivery of high quality development. Design Coding is identified as an appropriate tool or technique to be used alongside urban design guidelines; detailed Masterplans; Village Design Statements; site briefs; and community participation techniques.

PPS 3 goes on to define a Design Code as, '*a set of illustrated design rules and requirements which instruct and may advise on the physical development of a site or area. The graphic and written components of the code are detailed and precise, and build upon a design vision such*

as Masterplan or other design framework for a site or area.' (Annex B, Definitions)

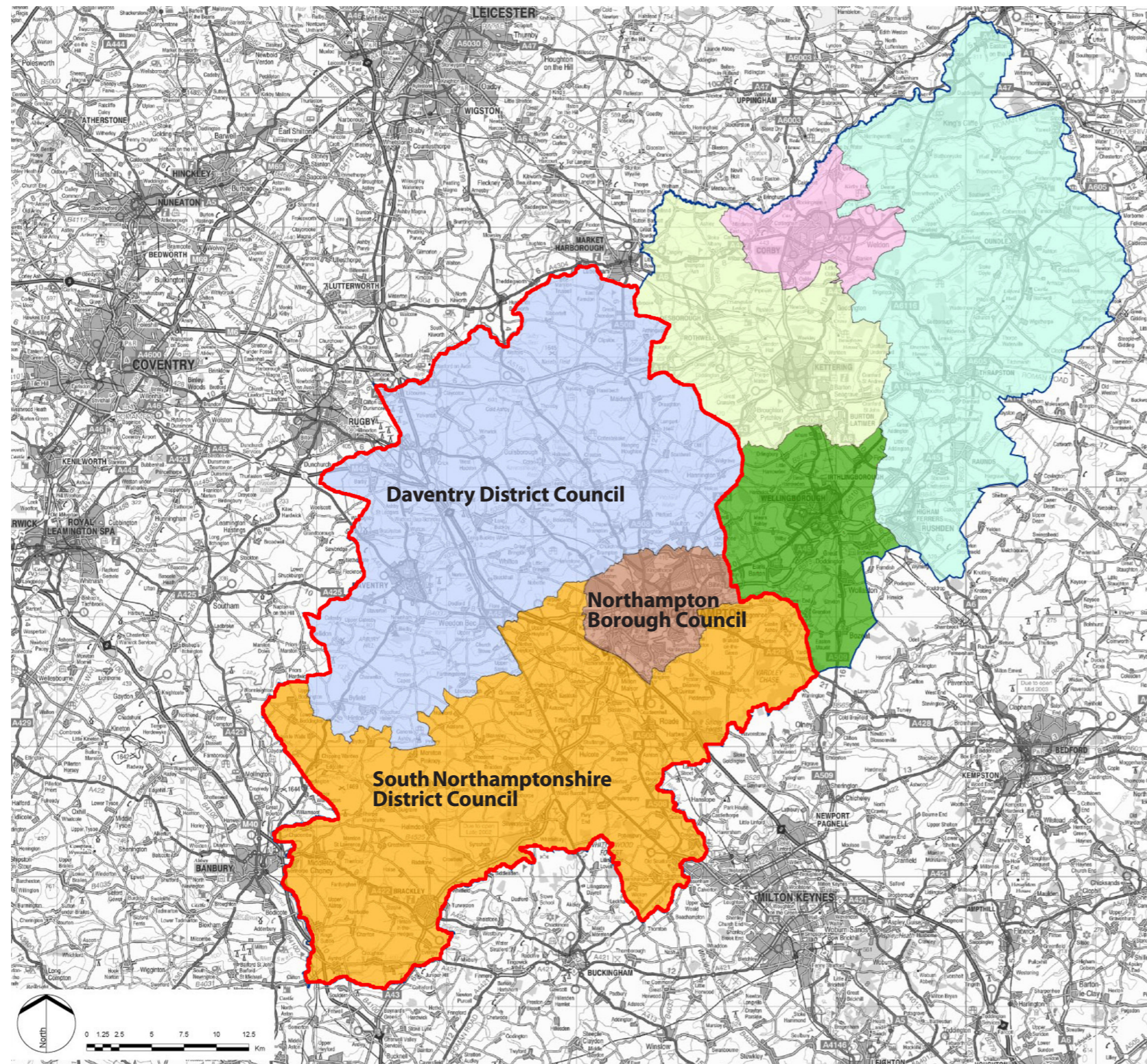
Regional Policy

Specific reference to Design and Access Statements and/or Design Codes is absent from current Regional Policy although the importance of good design and high quality development is a common theme.

Local Policy

The WNDC Planning Principles document sets out requirements for the use of Design Codes. WNDC's commitment to delivery of high quality homes supports the use of Design Codes to set a series of rules for development to follow, and to serve as a means to ensure that high quality development is delivered on the ground. WNDC Planning Principles also identifies the West Northamptonshire Manual for Design Codes as a tool to enhance the character, style and identity of existing places.

The Daventry Design Codes SPD (2005) is an over arching Design Code including principles which can be applied to a variety of land use proposals primarily in Daventry Town Centre. However the document is also intended to be used to assist in the production of more detailed design and development briefs.



-  West Northamptonshire Boundary
-  Northamptonshire County Boundary
-  Corby Borough Council
-  Daventry District Council
-  East Northamptonshire Council
-  Kettering Borough Council
-  Northampton Borough Council
-  South Northamptonshire District Council
-  Wellingborough Borough Council

Figure 3: Political Boundaries

1.6 A Review of Published Guidance on Design & Access Statements and Design Codes

Design & Access Statements

CABE: Design and Access Statements: How to Write, Read and Use Them (2006)



Overview

This document sets out what Design and Access Statements are, the issues they should cover, and provides guidance on how to write them. The following excerpts below set out the key findings of the report.

What Are Design & Access Statements?

'Statements are documents that explain the design thinking behind a planning application. For example, they should show that the person applying for permission (the applicant) has thought carefully about how everyone, including disabled people, older people and very young children, will be able to use the places they want to build.' (pg 6)

'In summary, D&A statements:

- accompany a planning application, but are not part of it,
- are needed with most types of application, but not householder applications (except in designated areas) or material change of use (unless it also involves operational development),
- are required for applications for listed building consent,
- need to explain and justify what is being applied for, and
- can be linked to planning decisions by conditions if developers are to be required to follow them.' (pg 6)

A good statement is a concise document that is tailored to the planning application. It should layout the rationale behind the design and outline and justify the objectives set. It is very much based on graphic information, which should be accurate and illustrative. Depending on the application, the input of specialists, various stakeholders and local groups should be sought from the onset. The Design and Access Statement can then be used as a negotiation tool and should be able to evolve as the scheme changes.

Guidance on Changes to the Development Control System 01/2006 (2006)



Overview

This report sets out guidance on changes to the development control system that came into place on 10 August 2006. This change made Design and Access Statements a legal requirement for large scale developments. The following excerpts set out the key findings of the report.

'Design and access statements play a particular role in linking general development principles to final detailed designs. A statement accompanying an outline application must explain how the applicant has considered the proposal, and understands what is appropriate and feasible for the site in its context. It should clearly explain and justify the design and access principles that will be used to develop future details of the scheme. Such information will help community involvement and informed decision making. The design and access statement will form a link between the outline permission and the consideration of reserved matters. Further information on the use of design and access statements in the planning application process is set out in the following section of this Circular.' (pg 9-10)

'As set out in the GDPO design and access statements will be required for all planning applications except for:

- a material change in the use of land or buildings, unless it also involves operational development
- engineering or mining operations
- development of an existing dwelling house, or development within the curtilage of a dwelling house for any purpose incidental to the enjoyment of the dwelling house, where no part of that dwelling house or curtilage is within a designated area. 'Designated area' means a National Park, site of special scientific interest, conservation area, area of outstanding natural beauty, World Heritage Site and the Broads.' (pg 12)

Design & Access Statements Conclusions

- Must accompany planning applications, where required
- Should use maps, illustrations and other graphic information to clearly explain the design concept behind a planning application so that anybody whether from the community or other professionals can easily understand
- Should begin from the inception of the project
- Should be flexible enough to change over time allowing for input from consultation
- Should be informed by the spatial, social and economic context of a site
- Should demonstrate how the scheme contributes to a high quality built and natural environment

Design Codes

CABE: The Use of Urban Design Codes (2003)



Overview

This document provides guidance on the importance of coding, what codes are and include, and how to ensure they work within the UK development process.

Why Code?

'A code can give a place a better start or a fresh start, by making sure the basics are right and by setting some clear parameters as to what can be done and what can't be done in changing and evolving the physical fabric of the neighbourhood. They can also stop bad things happening to neighbourhoods that can detract from everybody's quality of life, in particular, by making sure that developers, who may not care as much as the communities themselves, have to care if they want to build. Indeed, the development of a code can be an excellent way of capturing and expressing community values.' (pg 5)

What does a Code include?

'The code is likely to comprise two related components:

- A three dimensional masterplan of the development area (and probably an area beyond) that shows clearly the intended arrangement of spaces and buildings, including massing, orientation, distribution of uses, densities, building lines, spaces etc.*
- A supporting set of written requirements that explain the plan, including dimensions where relevant, and which address more detailed issues, including issues such as use of materials, landscaping and tenancy mix depending on the level of prescription required.'* (pg 6)

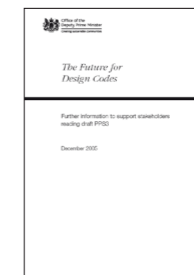
What sorts of codes are likely to work best in the UK?

'Any coding system needs flexibility in its content and application. This is particularly important for longer development programmes where a rigid code could impede the detailed design of subsequent phases, preventing learning from experience or changing economic and social conditions. This flexibility is also important to stimulate excellence and innovation, particularly in exceeding minimum standards embedded within a code.' (pg 7)

Making Coding Work

'There is nothing to prevent a local planning authority adopting a design code as supplementary planning guidance at the current time, provided the code is in line with national and regional planning guidance and derives out of and is consistent with the policies set out in the authority's adopted development plan, to which it should specifically cross-refer. The code may have been devised by the planning authority themselves, by another public body such as an urban regeneration company, by a private sector promoter, or by a public private partnership.' (pg 8)

ODPM: The Future for Design Codes (2005)



This document sets out what Design Codes are, how they can improve development, and how they can be formalised and made mandatory through the planning system.

A Design Code is 'a set of specific rules or requirements to guide the physical development of a site or place. The aim of design coding is to provide clarity as to what constitutes acceptable

design quality and thereby a level of certainty for developers and the local community alike that can help to facilitate the delivery of good quality new development.' (pg 6)

'Design codes may be formalised through the planning system, landowner agreements, or other legal means. The common approach to supporting a design code within the existing planning system is through the use of planning conditions. The new Local Development Framework (LDF) offers a range of tools to support codes in different circumstances through the plan-led approach. All local authorities would need to start by setting out in their LDF their intention to achieve high quality design, through for example, the production of a design code for a particular site. With a policy in a local development document, local authorities and their partners can develop different approaches, depending on the circumstances of the site or area. The following approaches are available under the new planning framework:

- Area Action Plans (AAPs)*
- Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs)*
- Conditions to planning permissions*
- Local Development Orders (LDOs)*
- Legal agreements attached to planning permissions.'* (pg 12)

In the case of Design Codes required by WNDK, the Development Corporation will require development to comply with the Design Code through the Development Control process.

Daventry Design Codes Supplementary Planning Document (2005)



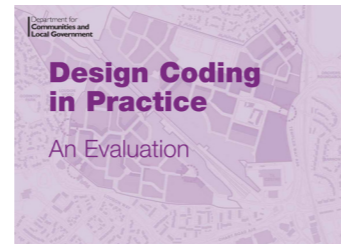
Overview

This Daventry District Council document was undertaken to provide a strategic level Design Code for Daventry and produce general design principles for new urban extensions in order

to improve the design quality of development schemes in Daventry. The SPD seeks to avoid the piecemeal introduction of inappropriate development that can dilute local character over time through the identification of local character. This is done through town wide character area analysis and detail of basic design principles and guidance characteristic of Daventry.

The Design Code applies primarily to development within Daventry Town Centre including guidance for residential, commercial and leisure development. In addition, the design principles are also intended to address the potential future urban extensions to the town. The document provides an over arching Design Code and principles which can be applied to a variety of land use proposals. For larger developments and more complex sites it is intended that this document will act as guidance in the production of more detailed design and development briefs.

DCLG Design Coding in Practice (2006)



Overview

The DCLG document provides guidance through evaluating and comparing nine case studies on three types of projects. The research tests the benefit of coding by looking at four main issues:

the speed and certainty of the development process; the quality of outcomes; the coordination of stakeholder activities and aspirations; the inclusion of the community in the design process; and the economic costs and benefits of coding.

The research suggests that Design Codes can play a major role in delivering better quality development, and this should be the major rationale for supporting them. They also have a significant role to play in delivering a more certain design and development process.

Main Benefits of Design Codes

- *'Design codes can play a major role in delivering better quality development*
- *They have a significant role to play in delivering a more certain design and development process*
- *If properly managed, can provide the focus around which teams of professional stakeholders can integrate their activities, delivering in the process a more co-ordinated and consensus driven process*
- *Provide enhanced economic value that better design and a stronger sense of place can deliver.'* (pg 5)

Conclusions

'Codes seem most valuable when sites possess one or more of the following characteristics:

- *Large sites (or multiple smaller related sites) that will be built out over a long period of time;*
- *Sites in multiple ownership; and*
- *Sites that are likely to be developed by different developers and/or design teams.'* (pg 42-43)

DCLG: Preparing Design Codes: A Practical Manual (2006)



Overview

This document sets out the case for coding and what Design Codes are. It also provides guidance on the process and structure of Design Codes.

The Case for Design Coding

For developers and landowners, design codes can deliver higher returns on their investments. *'For the public sector, many potential "sticking points" can be resolved during the coding process that would otherwise need to be tackled during the planning application process.'* (pg 33)

What are Design Codes?

- They are a set of graphic and written rules that are technical in nature
- They establish with precision the design considerations of a development or area
- They are based on a vision (Masterplan or design framework) for a site
- They focus on essential and mandatory design characteristics of a development
- They include provisions which are advisory or optional

Optimum Process for Design Coding

1. *'Initiating the design code*
2. *Coordinating inputs into the design process*
3. *Appraising local context for coding*
4. *Designing and testing the design code*
5. *Formalising the design code*
6. *Implementing the design code'*

(For further details on each of these phases, please refer to pg 25-26 of this document)

Design Codes: The English Partnerships Experience (2007)



Overview

This English Partnership's document looks at how Design Codes can improve development, and how to make Codes effective.

What Codes Can Do

- Help deliver quality
- Speed up the planning process
- Generate and maintain a consensus
- Provide certainty for developers
- Help create variety
- Help achieve environmental standards

To be effective, Codes should:

- Focus on fundamental aspects and clearly detail what is required and the rationale behind this
- Be flexible and have a clear process for incorporating improvements
- Have long term commitment from key stakeholders and clear leadership

DfT: Manual for Streets (2007)



Overview

'Manual for Streets' recommends the use of Design Codes for the implementation of larger scale masterplans, and design and access statements for all projects. It provides guidance on the street related elements within Design Codes.

'Street-related design elements and issues which a design code may relate to include:

- *the function of the street and its position in the Place and Movement hierarchy, such as boulevards, high streets, courtyards, mews, covered streets, arcades or colonnades*
- *the principal dimensions of streets*
- *junctions and types of traffic calming*
- *treatments of major junctions, bridges and public transport links*
- *location and standards for on-and off-street parking, including car parks and parking courts, and related specifications*
- *street lighting and street furniture specifications and locations*
- *specifications for trees and planting*
- *location of public art*
- *drainage and rainwater run-off systems*
- *routing and details of public utilities and*
- *arrangements for maintenance and servicing.'* (pg 33)

Design Code Conclusions

- Design Codes are a set of illustrated rules to instruct the physical development of a site
- Design Codes should be neutral and should not impose one particular type of architecture
- Codes should be informed by the spatial, social and economic contexts of the site
- Codes build on the Design and Access Statement and the Masterplan
- Design Codes have proven track record of delivering higher quality developments and speed up planning process
- Design Codes help achieve variety in built form and public spaces
- WNDC require Design Codes to be submitted as part of the Development Control process

1.7 A Review of Key Published Guidance to be incorporated into Design Codes

The following documents are considered to provide appropriate guidance which should be referred to and incorporated in the development of a Design Code document:

Policy Guidance

- PPS 1 – Delivering Sustainable Development (2005)
- Planning and Climate Change: Supplement to PPS 1 (2007)
- PPS 3 – Housing (2006)
- Guidance on Changes to the Development Control System: Circular 01/2006 (2006)

Design Guidance

- Better Places to Live By Design: A Companion Guide to PPG3 (DTLR 2001)
- By Design: Urban Design in the Planning System: Towards Better Practice (DETR 2000)
- Manual for Streets (DfT 2007)
- Safer Places: The Planning System and Crime Prevention (ODPM 2004)
- The Urban Design Compendium 1 and 2 (English Partnerships & Housing Corporation 2007 (Homes and Communities Agency))

Supplementary Planning Guidance/ Documents

- Daventry Design Codes SPD (DDC 2005)
- Northamptonshire's Environmental Character and Green Infrastructure Suite (NCC)
- Northamptonshire Places and Movement Guide (NCC 2008)
- Parking SPG (NCC) (2003)
- Planning Out Crime in Northamptonshire SPG (NCC 2003)
- Town and Village Design Statements of West Northamptonshire SPD (Various)

1.8 Consultation Report

The production of the Manual has included consultation with key stakeholders at key stages in the development of the document. The consultation process, which has informed the development of the Manual, has taken the form of sections of the Manual published on the WNDP website inviting comments from those identified key stakeholders.

In addition, three workshop sessions have been held attended by representatives of:

- Northamptonshire County Council (NCC);
- Northampton Borough Council (NBC);
- Daventry District Council (DDC);
- South Northamptonshire District Council (SNC);
- West Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit (JPU);
- Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE);
- Homes and Communities Agency (HCA);
- Other Stakeholders (including Northamptonshire Police; The Environment Agency; The Wildlife Trust);
- Architects, Planning Consultants, Landowners and Developers.

A full consultation report is included in Appendix B.