

HIGH PEAK BOROUGH COUNCIL

Economy and Growth Select Committee

25 March 2021

TITLE:	National Planning Policy Framework and National Design Code : Consultation Proposals
EXECUTIVE COUNCILLOR:	Councillor Anthony McKeown - Council Leader HPBC
CONTACT OFFICER:	Mark James - Principal Planning Officer
WARDS INVOLVED:	(All Wards);

Appendices Attached –

Appendix 1 – Draft National Planning Policy Framework

Appendix 2 – Draft National Model Design Code

Appendix 3 – Guidance Notes for National Model Design Code

Appendix 4 - Draft consultation response

- 1. Reason for the Report**
 - 1.1 To notify Councillors of the current consultation on revisions to the National Planning Policy Framework and the new National Model Design Code. A draft response to the consultation is also provided for consideration.
- 2. Recommendation**
 - 2.1 That Councillors note the consultation proposals and their possible implications.
 - 2.2 That members consider the draft response to the consultation at Appendix 4 and agree to submit it subject to comments and amendments from Councillors.
- 3. Executive Summary**
 - 3.1 A consultation on revisions to the National Planning Policy Framework as well as a new National Model Design Code are open to public consultation until 27 March. The revised National Planning Policy Framework introduces a series of changes largely focussed on design and the environment as well as other factual updates and points of clarification. The changes are mostly welcome

but concerns include the introduction of the term “beauty” into planning policy which is considered too ambiguous.

- 3.2 The new National Model Design Code sets out visual and numerical design parameters that should be used to inform developments as well as locally prepared Design Codes and Design Guides. Such documents will be a new requirement for local authorities to prepare in close conjunction with the community. Whilst the increased emphasis on the need for good design is positive, the new requirements will need to be supported by additional resources and training for local authorities if they are to be effective.
- 3.3 It is proposed that the Council responds to the consultation on this basis.

4. **How this report links to Corporate Priorities**

- 4.1 The proposals are considered to have implications for all four Aims of the Corporate Plan.

5. **Alternative Options**

- 5.1 Option 1 (recommended) – the Council submits a response to the consultation which reflects the draft response outlined in the Appendix to this report and others comments deemed appropriate by Councillors. This option will enable the Council’s voice to influence national policy.
- 5.2 Option 2 – the Council decides not to submit a response. This option would not provide the Government with an opportunity to consider the views of the Council before finalising the proposals.

Neil Rodgers
Executive Director (Place)

Web Links and Background Papers

Consultation website:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/national-planning-policy-framework-and-national-model-design-code-consultation-proposals>

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6. **Detail**

- 6.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was first published in 2012. It sets out Government policy in relation to planning to shape plan making and development management. In relation to the latter, the NPPF is a material consideration during the determination of planning applications. Updates to the NPPF were published in 2018 and 2019 following public consultation. Following the Government’s consultation on “Changes to the Current Planning System” in 2020, a further public consultation is now open until 27 March on

specific amendments to the NPPF as well as a new National Model Design Code.

Revised NPPF

- 6.2 The updated NPPF does not seek to make fundamental changes across the board. Many of the changes relate to factual updates or to provide clarification. However, meaningful amendments are proposed particularly in relation to design and the environment. They include;
- Stronger emphasis on climate change and infrastructure in the “presumption in favour of sustainable development” for plan making which sets the benchmark for Local Plans.
 - Numerous references are made to the need for “beauty” in planning and the creation of “beautiful” places in response to the recommendations of the Building Better Building Beautiful Commission.
 - Stronger support for good design, including a clear statement that poor quality schemes should be refused
 - Restrictions on the use of Article 4 Directions in relation to changes of use to residential
 - Requirements for local planning authorities to prepare local design guides or codes which reflect the National Design Guide and National Model Design Code. They could be prepared alongside development plans or potentially as Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs).
 - A requirement for the scale and extent of development within the settings of National Parks to be sensitively located and designed so as to avoid adverse impacts. This is in response to the Glover Review of protected landscapes.
 - An expectation that all new streets should be tree-lined unless there are clear reasons why this is not appropriate.
- 6.3 A more detailed summary of the proposed changes and the draft response to the consultation questions is provided in the Appendix to this report. In general, the changes are positive. However, there is concern that the term “beauty” is too ambiguous and may lead to uncertainty and delays in the planning process. It should also be recognised that tree-lined streets may not necessarily reflect the character of a local area.

National Model Design Code

- 6.4 The new draft National Model Design Code expands on the revised NPPF and National Design Guide and is intended to provide a simple and concise requirements that are visual and numerical as far as possible. Specifically, the Model Design Code considers the following as a baseline for local authorities who are expected to prepare their own Local Design Codes as well as when determining planning applications. It establishes:
- The layout of new development, including street pattern;
 - How landscaping should be approached including the importance of streets

- being tree-lined;
 - The factors to be considered when determining whether façades of buildings are of sufficiently high quality;
 - The environmental performance of place and buildings ensuring they contribute to net zero targets;
 - That developments should clearly take account of local vernacular and heritage, architecture and materials
- 6.5 A separate Guidance Note sits alongside the Model Design Code to provide further detail on code content based on the following themes; movement, nature, built form, identity, public space, use, homes and buildings, resources and the lifespan of developments. A further section to advise on community engagement is also provided which seeks to tailor consultation to the scale of development with a range of methods designed to encourage participation.
- 6.6 Local authorities will be required to work with closely communities when developing Local Design Codes and Design Guides which reflect local character and aspirations. Masterplans may also be required to help shape large scale developments.
- 6.7 The Government believes that local communities will be more likely to engage with Design Codes as they are more visual than the lengthy and detailed policies which can dominate Local Plans. It is also considered that the clear parameters defined in the codes will provide developers with more certainty and speed up planning decision making.
- 6.8 The National Model Design Code sets out the key stages that local codes will need to go through during their preparation, namely:

1. Analysis

1A - Scoping: Agreeing on the geographical area to be covered by the code and the policy areas that it will address. A consultation strategy will also be prepared.

1B – Baseline: Bringing together the analysis that will underpin the code and inform its contents.

2. Vision

2A – Design Vision: Dividing the area covered by the code into a set of typical ‘area types’ and deciding on a vision for each of these area types. The vision would be developed with the local community.

2B – Coding Plan: Preparing a plan that maps out each of the area types and also identifies large development sites from allocations in the local plan.

2C – Masterplanning: On larger sites working with land owners and developers to agree a masterplan for each of the development sites establishing the key parameters and area types.

3. Code

3A – Area Type Guidance: Developing guidance for each area type by adjusting a set of design parameters.

3B – Design Code Wide Guidance: Agree on a set of policies that will apply equally across all area types.

6.9 The consultation on the National Model Design Code seeks opinion on the content of the code, the applications and use of the guidance and the approach to community engagement. A draft response to the consultation is set out in the Appendix to this report which states the following:

- The National Model Design Code provides a thorough and structured framework for local authorities and communities to apply in establishing local codes
- It is questionable whether local communities will be more willing to engage with the Design Code process than the current planning system. Indeed, it is considered that it is likely to be difficult to obtain input into the design process unless the principle of the development itself is supported.
- The preparation of Local Design Codes will require significant resources to ensure that there is a sufficient number planners and urban designers to develop Local Design Codes and to engagement with communities effectively. Planning Officers and Councillors will also require additional training to ensure that the codes are applied effectively during the development management process.