

Appendix 2a

Addendum to the Draft Design Code

Opportunity Areas

The draft Design Code was produced in 2019-20 and helped to inform our deliberations on the content of the Neighbourhood Plan and, in particular, which of the suggested "Opportunity Areas" outlined in the draft Design Code should be emphasised in the Neighbourhood Plan's policies.

Some of the suggested Opportunity Areas in the Design Code are considered by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group to be less deliverable or desirable than others at the current time.

As a consequence, the Opportunity Areas identified in the Design Code at The Triangles and Bank Street are not referenced in policies in the draft Neighbourhood Plan, but remain in the draft Design Code.

Balance

It is important to note that achieving good design is about a balance of different approaches to what constitutes good design. The Design Code works as guidance. It does not seek to replace or override existing design guidance or standards, for example, adopted Highways Standards. Good design is a combination of design elements presented by different requirements for people, infrastructure and nature which results in the best design. In other words, one design principle or set of parameters on its own is unlikely to equate to good design in most cases. Good design is about a balance between the need to accommodate a variety of aspects, for example, a design should find balance between factors such as access for people, access for vehicles, heritage, ecology and biodiversity, leisure and crime & safety. So, the Design Code should be used alongside other design guidance and standards to achieve an outcome which can be considered good design on a site by site basis.

Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)

SuDS are identified in the design Code as important within the context of flood prevention and mitigation. However, soil type, ground conditions and local geology throughout the town and low-lying areas mean that sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) which soak away water are not often practical solutions to mitigate risk in whole or in part. The composition of local geology includes natural springs surfacing in numerous locations. If these are blocked through inappropriate development, it can have serious implications for existing properties and other parts of the town where blocked exits for spring water force water to emerge elsewhere. The success or otherwise of SuDS measures depend on a wide variety of factors and therefore the measures set out as examples in the Design Guide may not be suitable in all locations. A "whole system" approach should be taken to identify what type of SuDS might be appropriate and if other solutions are more appropriate to maintain protection against increased flood risk.

Trees

The Design Code references the importance of trees in urban environments. This should necessarily be read within the context of the challenges which inappropriate planting can pose, for example to public highways.