Appendix 2: Questionnaire (Draft Design Code consultation)

INTRODUCTION

Draft Elmbridge Design Code document contains five main sections:

1. **Introduction** - explains the purpose and objectives of the Design Code. How it should be used and applied in the design process of a proposal. This will have to be demonstrated through the submitted Design and Access Statement at the application stage once the Code is adopted.
2. **Borough-wide context** – discusses the identified residential and non-residential area types and explains why Green Belt areas are excluded.
3. **Local characteristics** – sets out key characteristics across the settlements, as identified by our residents and suggests future vision and ideas for these areas.
4. **The Code** itself – sets out codes and guidance for ten characteristics of well-designed places.
5. **Appendices** – contain Glossary and details associated with the Urban Greening Factor.

Code is a mandatory requirement and is identified by a capital letter. Design Code Index table (Fig 1.3 on pages 8 & 9) lists codes relevant to specific scale/type of development and in which area type they apply. **Guidance is advisory and is bulleted.**

IMPORTANT NOTE: Design Code can require a mandatory compliance only on matters that are set out in the planning policy (Local Plan and planning legislation/Government statement(s)). All the other requirements that are currently not a planning policy can be only advisory and if implemented in the development, these would add to the benefits arising from that development.

Through community engagement during the preparation of the Draft Design Code several key issues were raised. Questionnaire seeks your opinion on whether the suggested mandatory and advisory design requirements meet your expectations for new developments, and therefore it is focused on the 4th section of the document.

Issues raised by our residents as the most important, relating to movement (active travel and parking), nature (greening and access to green spaces), built form (height, density, rural character of edge of settlements), identity (use of materials and architectural styles) and homes and buildings (private amenity) are put forward in the questionnaire with related commentary and questions for your consideration.

However, we welcome comments on all aspects of the Elmbridge Design Code and provided a free text box for each of the other sections at the end for you to let us know your observations.

Draft Elmbridge Design Code is available below. Please click on the document (this will open in a new tab) and then proceed to the questionnaire by clicking 'Next'. Thank you.

QUESTIONNAIRE

1. **Movement** - Covers overarching principles, as well as specific issues including matters associated with the design of site access, cycle and vehicular parking. It also makes suggestions for satisfactory parking layouts where plots are subdivided, and backland development is proposed.

   During the engagement events you told us that improvements to cycling and walking infrastructure would incentivise active travel. Although the responsibility to create such infrastructure lies with Surrey County Council as the County Highway Authority, we included numerous design guidance points on pages 37 & 38.

Q1: Would you like to add any movement related design requirements in addition to those set out on pages 37 & 38?

You told us that provision of parking in new developments is a priority. Parking standards for vehicles and cycles in terms of their numbers are set out in our Local Plan. However, how the parking layout is designed on development sites is considered as part of this Design Code.

Mandatory and advisory design parameters for cycle parking are included on pages 40 and 41.

Q2: Are you satisfied with the proposed cycle parking design parameters?

Q3: Would you like to add any additional cycle parking design requirements?

Design code and guidance for new residential car parking are expressed on page 42.

Q4: are you satisfied with the set car parking design parameters?

Q5: Would you like to see any additional design requirements for new car parking?

Q6: Do you have any other suggestions for changes to the Movement chapter (pages 36 - 47)?

2. **Nature** – Provides benefits in terms of health and well-being, biodiversity and mitigates effects of flooding and climate change. This chapter is concerned with matters of street and urban greening and riverside environments.

   You told us that urban greening and street trees in new and existing spaces are your priorities. Additionally, many of you highlighted the importance of access to local green spaces that greatly contribute to Elmbridge's identity. We included mandatory requirements as well as set of guidance principles on pages 48 – 52.

Q7: Would you like to include any other nature related design requirements?

3. **Built form** - is the longest section in the Code, as it covers numerous issues highlighted during the engagement events as very important. It covers plot ratio, building heights, legibility (the ease of navigation through our urban environment), roof designs, building line, residential extensions and street rhythm. Density, building height and site coverage by buildings were the issues you were most concerned about.

   Density is not a measure of good or poor design, it is an output rather than an input of the design process and therefore it should not represent a target in design terms.

   By following the codes and guidance within this document the applicants should arrive at the appropriate density for a specific site at the end of the scheme's design process.

   As such, we have included density only as an indicator to inform the Council on wider planning policy matters, such as efficient use of land, but not design.

Q8: Do you agree that density should NOT be a target in designing new developments?

Q9: If you disagree that density should not be a target, please tell us why.

Concerns associated with **building heights** were brought to the fore during the consultation stages of preparation of the Design Code. To ensure new developments are in keeping with the heights of existing buildings surrounding the application site, we propose two types of assessment within the Code (please see page 57). New developments will need to justify their proposed height through a review of the existing heights along the street (streetscene); and within a wider area (prevailing height).

Q10: Do you agree with the proposed building height assessment for new developments?

Q11: If you disagree with the proposed building height assessment, please tell us why and offer an alternative solution.

There might be situations, where a taller building might be appropriate – please see page 58 for a list of specific mandatory requirements.

Q12: Would you like to add or change any of the proposed requirements in terms of taller buildings?

You told us you were concerned about the size of retained **space around houses** on schemes proposing new homes and where extensions to existing homes are proposed. Over the years the minimum garden depth has been used to determine acceptable size of garden space when dealing with planning applications. However, this has caused practical issues, especially where gardens are of irregular shapes. As such, we propose to use 'Plot Ratio' instead and suggest indicative ranges in each of the residential and mixed-use area types. These have been tested on numerous sites across the borough during the development stages of the Design Code and are set out on page 54.

Note: Plot Ratio is the proportion of a site that is occupied by building's footprint. Values range between zero and one. Lower the ratio, less of the site is covered by building(s).

Q13: Do you agree that Plot Ratio would indicate whether appropriate space around the building is provided?

Q14: If you disagree that Plot Ratio would be appropriate, please tell us why and offer an alternative solution.

The fringes of settlements, particularly in the southern part of the Borough, have a semi-rural character. You told us that these areas are cherished due to their connection to nature and that they deserve a separate attention in the Design Code.

We have reviewed the **edges of settlements**, where the urban areas meet the land designated as Green Belt and found that the pattern of development shares the same characteristics as the built form in suburban area type. We were unable to identify any distinctive design features that are not already covered elsewhere in the Design Code. Despite this we have included some guidance points on page 67.

Q15: Considering THE BUILT-UP AREAS located adjacent to the Green Belt boundary - are you able to identify their distinctive features the Design Code should highlight?

Q16: Would you like to propose any additional guidance or specific mandatory design requirements to apply to the new development located on the edge of settlement?

Q17: Would you like to add any other design requirements to the BUILT FORM section of the document (pages 53 - 67)?

4. **Identity** of an area is created by streets, public spaces and buildings, and by the way these are designed. As such, this section of the Design Code talks about architectural character, use of materials, shop fronts and illuminated advertisements.

   You told us that new developments in Elmbridge lack detailing, high quality materials and historic elements and that these should be priorities in achieving high quality design. To underpin this demand, we included design requirements on page 69 setting out the importance of the character of the site and its surroundings that should inform the architectural approach, choice of materials and other details in new developments.

Q18: Are you satisfied with the design parameters set out on page 69?

You expressed importance of shop front standards as these ensure the keeping of a cohesive façade along the streets. As such, we have suggested guidance for traditional and contemporary shop fronts on pages 70 and 71.

Q19: Would you like to see any other shop front related design requirements included?

Q20: Would you like to add any other design requirements to the Identity section of the document (pages 68 - 72)?

5. **<u>Homes and buildings</u>**, if well designed they provide attractive environments that support the health and well-being of their users. They meet a diverse range of needs, are adequate in size, fit for purpose and adaptable.

   Private gardens for homes and balconies for flats, as well as private and communal gardens around residential properties were expressed during the engagement events as important. As such, we included guidance on the minimum appropriate outdoor amenity space for different size homes and flats. These are set out on page 86.

Q21: Are you satisfied with the suggested guidance on the proposed minimum space for outdoor amenity for flats and homes?

Q22: If you are dissatisfied with the proposed guidance on outdoor space, please tell us why and suggest an alternative.

Q23: Would you like to add any other design requirements to the Homes & Buildings section of the document (pages 84 - 89)?

6. There are further matters including **Public Spaces, Uses, Resources and Lifespan** in the Code section of the document and these can be found on pages 73 - 95.

Q24: Would you like to include any other design requirements to the Public Spaces section of the document (pages 73 - 78)?

Q25: Would you like to see any other design requirements in the Uses section of the document (pages 79 - 83)?

Q26: Would you like to see any other design requirements added to the Resources section of the document (pages 90 - 92)?

Q27: Would you like to include any other design requirements to the Lifespan section of the document (pages 93 - 95)?

7. If you wish to share with us your observations on the remainder of the document, please do so below.

Introduction (pages 3 -14)

Q28: Do you have any observations on the first section of the document – INTRODUCTION?

Borough-wide context (pages 15 - 24)

Q29: Do you have any comment on the second section of the document - BOROUGH-WIDE CONTEXT?

Local Characteristics (pages 25 - 35)

Q30: Do you have any observations on the third section of the document - LOCAL CHARACTERISTICS?

Appendices (pages 96 - 105)

Q31: Do you have any suggestions for the final section of the document - APPENDICES?

Thank you for completing the questionnaire.