Consultation Statement:

Elmbridge Borough Council Design Code

Introduction

The Council has prepared an Elmbridge Borough Council Design Code, which sets out a clear design vision and expectations for design quality and sustainability across the Borough. It provides a set of illustrated design requirements that provide specific, detailed parameters and guidance for the physical development within the area.

In accordance with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement and Regulation 12(a) of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended), this Consultation Statement sets out:

(i) Who the Council consulted when preparing the Design Code

The Council undertook a number of public consultations that informed the preparation of the Design Code.

Initial engagement

The Council undertook an initial engagement exercise which sought to provide residents and local businesses with information about what a design code is, how it is developed and to find out who wanted to be involved and how. The consultation was open for 3 weeks between 21 January and 11 February 2022. Stakeholders and interested parties were asked to complete short survey which asked what type of engagement method they would like to see. The survey was available online on the Council's Inovem planning policy consultation platform.

Elmbridge Borough Council has a planning policy consultation database which currently has over 8,500 consultees. A direct mail out was sent to all consultees registered on the planning policy consultation database who had notified the Council that they wanted to hear about planning policy consultations by email notifying them of the engagement exercise and inviting them to participate.

The Planning Policy database includes 'general', 'specific', 'prescribed' and 'local' consultation bodies as required by legislation. The 'general consultation' bodies include voluntary bodies such as tenants and resident's associations. The 'specific' and 'prescribed' consultation bodies consulted included the Environment Agency, Natural England, Historic England, the Highways Agency. The 'local' consultation bodies consulted included individual residents and persons carrying on business in the Borough who signed up to the above database or visited the specific pages of the Council's website.

373 stakeholders responded to the initial engagement exercise, including a number of residents and resident associations, business owners and planning/built environment professionals. The results of this initial engagement (Appendix 1) were used to inform

the direction of the engagement process throughout the preparation of the Design Code.

Stage 1 engagement

The Council undertook Stage 1 engagement in Autumn 2022 to listen to and understand what people who live and/or work in the Borough like and value about their local area or neighbourhood; what could be improved and whether there were opportunities for change. At this stage the background information about the Borough set out in a story map format was published online on the Council's website for stakeholders and interested parties to review.

The engagement exercise was open between 04 October to 30 October 2022, during which the Council held a series of in person drop-in sessions at community centres located across the Borough (set out below) and asked stakeholders to respond with written comments through an online survey accessed via the Council's Commonplace engagement platform.

- Wednesday 5 October, Claygate Centre for the Community, Elm Road, Claygate, KT10 0EH, 10.00am – 12.00noon
- Wednesday 5 October, Weybridge Centre for the Community, Churchfield Place, Weybridge, KT13 8BZ, 1.30pm – 4pm
- Friday 7 October, Hersham Centre for the Community, 7 Queens Road, Hersham, KT12 5LU, 9am-12noon
- Friday 7 October, Molesey Centre for the Community, Bishop Fox Way, West Molesey, KT8 2AS, 1.00pm – 3:00pm (please note the earlier finish time of 3:00pm)
- Saturday 15 October, Esher's new Farmers' Market, High Street, Esher (Near Hare & Bone salon), 10am – 1pm
- Saturday 15 October, Walton, The Heart Shopping Centre, New Zealand Ave, Walton-on-Thames KT12 1GH, 2.30pm – 5pm
- Saturday 22 October, Thames Ditton Farmers' Market, Mercer Close car park, 9am – 12noon
- Saturday 22 October, Cobham High Street, Near Gail's bakery, 1.30pm – 4.30pm

232 individual responses were received to the online survey, with a further 59 comments made on the map on the Commonplace platform. Again, participants comprised residents and resident associations, business owners and planning/built environment professionals. The feedback received was used to understand what makes different areas in the Borough distinctive and special, and to identify potential

opportunities for positive change. The Council published a summary of the results of this stage of engagement on Commonplace.

Visioning engagement stage

On 24 January 2023, the Council ran an in-person visioning workshop at the Civic Centre, in which the Council presented draft visions for each of the areas identified in the Borough and the draft principles for the Design Code. Stakeholders were asked to provide comments and feedback, as well as their views on how they'd like to see their area/neighbourhood look and feel in the future.

Again, a direct email out was sent to all consultees registered on the Council's planning policy consultation database notifying them of the engagement exercise and inviting them to participate.

In addition to the comments provided during the in-person workshop, over 500 individual responses were made submitted via the Commonplace platform, with most comments received in relation to Cobham, Oxshott, Stoke D'Abernon and Downside (286 comments), and Hersham (192 comments). Participants included residents and resident's associations, business owners and planning/built environment professionals.

Draft Design Code public consultation

On 02 October 2023 the draft Design Code was published for a 5-week public consultation which ended on 5 November 2023. Stakeholders were given the opportunity to respond in writing to an online questionnaire which was available on Commonplace (included as Appendix 2); respond in writing via email or letter; and/or attend and provide feedback during a set of in person drop-in sessions held at the Civic Centre on:

- Monday 09 October between 16.00 and 18.30; and
- Tuesday 10 October between 13.00 and 15.00.

A communication plan (Appendix 3) set out the principles of this final consultation. A direct mail out was again sent to all consultees on the planning policy consultation database by email notifying them of the consultation and inviting comments. The Draft Design Code document and a Story Map were made available online on Commonplace. In addition to the online resources, hard copies of the Design Code were made available on request.

72 individual responses were received to the online questionnaire on Commonplace with further 8 received via email. Among the respondents were a range of residents and resident associations; local business owners; planning and built environment professionals, including architects, planning agents and developers; and other interested stakeholders and consultees such as the Surrey Wildlife Trust, Surrey County Council, Surrey Police or McCarthy Stone.

(ii) A summary of the main issues raised by those consulted on the draft Design Code

The Council has responded to each of the responses received during the consultation. The full schedule of responses is included as Appendix 4.

Letters of support

The majority of respondents expressed their support for the draft Design Code in principle. However, respondents also raised the following main issues and requested changes to the draft Design Code to address these:

- It is unclear how the design code will be applied to change of use development.
- Respondents raised concern that the design code did not fully address the issue of safety and security of development schemes.
- The movement chapter of the design code did not contain reference to the Healthy Streets for Surrey (the Surrey County wide design code for highways).
- The movement chapter should include guidance on the provision of disabled parking spaces.
- The draft Design Code does not provide enough detail on how design can address flood risk and the provision of sustainable drainage solutions.
- Bevendean Estate was incorrectly identified as being of ‘suburban area type’ in section 2.2 of the design code. It should be characterised as a ‘gated area type’.
- Concern was raised that the design code puts too much emphasis on pedestrians and cyclists and doesn’t balance the needs of traffic.

Letters of objection

The Council received no formal objections to the draft Design Code.

(iii) How those issues have been addressed in the Design Code

Many of the received supportive comments did not result in any substantive changes to the draft Design Code and a number of comments suggesting changes and amendments could largely not be taken further as they were considered to be covered by the document in its draft form or the Council’s existing Local Plan; would cause the Design Code to no longer be in conformity with national policy and guidance; or were beyond the scope of what planning can influence/control. That said, several changes were made to the draft Design Code to address the issues raised in the consultation.

The table below sets out how each of the main issues raised in the consultation have been considered and addressed:

Issue	Action
• It is unclear how the design code will be applied to change of use development.	• The Council has added change of use as a distinct development type in the design code index (section 1.4).
• Respondents raised concern that the design code did not fully address the issue of safety and security of development schemes.	• The Council has added guidance referencing and encouraging applicants to use and achieve the Secured by Design standard.
• The movement chapter of the design code did not contain reference to the Healthy Streets for Surrey (the Surrey County wide design code for highways) • The movement chapter should include guidance on the provision of disabled parking spaces.	• The Council has added guidance referencing the Healthy Streets for Surrey design code. • The Council has added guidance on the provision of disabled parking in section 4.6 of the design code.
• The draft Design Code does not provide enough detail on how design can address flood risk and the provision of sustainable drainage solutions.	• The Council has added a new sub-section to chapter 4 - Nature of the Design Code which provides guidance on how development can be designed to positively address flood risk.
• Bevendean Estate is incorrectly identified as being of suburban character in section 2.2 of the design code. It should be characterised as a ‘gated area type’.	• The Council requested further information from the residents of Bevendean Estate to justify their assumptions. This information was provided and reviewed by the Council. Due to the low existing floor area ratio (FAR), it is considered appropriate to identify the Bevendean Estate as falling within the ‘gated area type’.
• Concern was raised that the design code puts too much emphasis on pedestrians and cyclists and doesn’t balance the needs of traffic.	• The Council has amended references to putting pedestrians and cyclists first and has changed these to ensure design seeks to balance the need of pedestrians and traffic.

List of appendices

Appendix 1: Initial Consultation Statement

Appendix 2: Questionnaire (Draft Design Code consultation)

Appendix 3: Communication Plan (final consultation)

Appendix 4: Schedule of Responses (final consultation)