

Bath & North East Somerset Council		
MEETING/ DECISION MAKER:	Cllr Matt McCabe, Cabinet Member for Built Environment, Housing and Sustainable Development	
MEETING/ DECISION DATE:	On or after 6 <sup>th</sup> October 2025	EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE:
		E 3655
TITLE:	Somer Valley Draft Design Code Supplementary Planning Document	
WARD:	Midsomer North, Midsomer Norton Redfield, Paulton, Peasedown, Radstock, Westfield	
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM		
List of attachments to this report:		
Appendix 1 Draft Somer Valley Design Code Supplementary Planning Document		

## 1 THE ISSUE

1.1 To facilitate the delivery of high-quality development in the Somer Valley a design code is being prepared which it is intended to adopt as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). The design code sets out the design requirements for new housing within the Somer Valley which includes the wards of Midsomer Norton North, Midsomer Norton Redfield, Paulton, Peasedown, Radstock and Westfield. The code has been prepared following engagement with stakeholders including parish and town councils. It is intended that the code will be used alongside and to supplement the current adopted Development Plan and the emerging Local Plan so as to influence the design of housing developments. This Report seeks approval of a draft Design Code SPD for public consultation.

## 2 RECOMMENDATION

2.1 The cabinet member is asked to agree that:

2.2 The Draft Somer Valley Design Code Supplementary Planning Document (Appendix 1) is issued for statutory public consultation under Regulation 12(b) of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012; and

- 2.3 The Head of Planning has delegated authority to make any necessary editorial changes, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning, prior to consultation on the interim update draft Planning Obligations SPD.

### **3. THE REPORT**

- 3.1 Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) build upon and provide more detailed advice or guidance on policies in the adopted Local Plan (Core Strategy, Placemaking Plan and Local Plan Partial Update).
- 3.2 The council's adopted Local Plan includes policies which encourage a high level of design quality (policies D1 -D10). However, these policies are district wide and the development plan does not include any area specific policies.
- 3.3 Changes in national planning policy require councils to produce design codes. Given the varied nature of the district, area-based design codes will be of an advantage so as to reflect the specific character of local sub areas. This SPD will serve as a pilot project being the first code to be produced. It is envisaged that this approach, if successful, can be replicated in other places within the district.
- 3.4 In light of the changes to the NPPF and increased housing requirement, the council is anticipating proposals for major housing schemes coming forward outside the Local Plan process. The intention for the SPD is to ensure that new housing developments are designed to be responsive to the Somer Valley's character and to ensure high quality design.
- 3.5 The code has been drafted following meetings with parish and town councils, as community representatives, and internal stakeholders. It is intended that the code will reflect what is valued about the local area.
- 3.6 In line with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement, it is proposed to consult on the Draft Somer Valley Design Code SPD for 6 weeks. The comments received will be carefully considered by the council in preparing the final version of the SPD. This will take place alongside consultation on the Local Plan. A consultation report including setting out who was consulted, how they were consulted and a schedule of comments made during the consultation will be prepared, together with the council's response to the issues raised.

### **4 STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS**

- 4.1 Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 Regulations 11 to 16 set out the requirements for preparing Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs). This SPD has been and will be prepared in accordance with the Regulations.

### **5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCE, PROPERTY, PEOPLE)**

- 5.1 The preparation of the Somer Valley Draft Design Code SPD, public consultation on it, consideration of the issues raised and preparing the final

version of the SPD will be undertaken primarily by the Planning Policy Team, supported as appropriate by other teams, and the costs covered within the existing salary budget and the Council's Local Development Framework budget.

## **6 RISK MANAGEMENT**

6.1 A risk assessment related to the issue and recommendations has been undertaken, in compliance with the Council's decision-making risk management guidance.

## **7 EQUALITIES**

7.1 Pursuant to the public sector equality duty, an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been carried out for the Somer Valley Draft Design Code SPD. The key findings are summarised below:

- The intention of the SPD is to improve the design quality in permitted housing developments.
- The SPD does not directly address equalities groups such as age, race, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, religion / belief, marriage/civil partnership, as the objective of the SPD is to improve design quality in permitted housing developments and have benefits for all groups in society.

## **8 CLIMATE CHANGE**

8.1 The SPD facilitates delivery of development that accords with policies in the Local Plan that address the Climate Emergency including sustainable construction, sustainable transport, green infrastructure.

## **9 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

9.1 The Design Code SPD will provide detailed guidance on and supplement development plan policy requirements relating to development in the Somer Valley. The only alternative option that was considered was preparing and approving the design code as informal guidance and not adopting it as SPD. However, informal guidance carries significantly less weight in decision-making on planning applications than an SPD. Therefore, this option was discounted.

## **10 CONSULTATION**

10.1 The preparation of the SPD was undertaken in consultation with various Council Services, as well as parish and town councils. The Monitoring Officer, S151 Officer and Cabinet Member have been consulted in preparing this Single Member Decision Report.

10.2 This report recommends approval to undertake Statutory consultation on the Draft Design Code SPD under Regulation 12 (b) of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 for 6 weeks between 14<sup>th</sup> October and 24<sup>th</sup> November 2025. A consultation statement will then be

prepared setting out the details of the consultation, a summary of the responses received, and Council comments on each of the key issues raised.

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<b>Background papers</b>	Equality Impact Assessment Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Report
<b>Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format</b>	