Neighbourhood Planning
Design

A common concern for Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) Steering Groups is that modern developments are not in keeping with the local distinctiveness of an area and detract from the local character, due to poor design. Parishes are keen to protect key heritage assets and facilities to ensure that the areas that are important to the community are not adversely affected by new development. An NDP can give groups more control to influence the design of developments that can be built. Although, caution should be applied to being too prescriptive as this may affect the viability of schemes, especially those with affordable housing.

Existing Policies

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The NPPF has a requirement to secure "high quality design" and this can be addressed in NDPs to secure high quality places to live through planning policies that target the look and feel of new development for existing and future occupants.

Key references of the NPPF are inset below, whilst you can see what the NPPF says in more detail about design here.

'Permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions'. (NPPF para 64)

'Local and neighbourhood plans should develop robust and comprehensive
policies that set out the quality of development that will be expected for the
area. Such policies should be based on stated objectives for the future of the area and an understanding and evaluation of its defining
characteristics.' (NPPF para 58)

'always seek to secure **high quality design and a good standard of amenity** for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings' . (NPPF para 17)

The Cornwall Local Plan (CLP)

Policies 13 and 14 of the CLP cover Design and Development Standards. They require new development to provide areas of open space, parking provision, overall development layout and adaptability among other things. These policies can be seen here.

It also expects developers to demonstrate how their development reflects the principles of the Cornwall Design Guide.

Groups may want to create a Local Design Guide to preserve and enhance the character of their neighbourhood. A Local Design Guide should identify the key characteristics of your area, highlight the historic nature of development and the prevalent property styles. From this, your policy can require development to reflect principles within your Local Design Guide. Further guidance can be seen here.

A Shop Front Design Guide is also available here.

Historical Character

CISI (Cornwall Industrial Settlements Initiative) and CSUS (Cornwall and Scilly Urban Survey) are valuable pieces of evidence to inform design criteria.

Information gathering Template

Identifying what already exists will help to review the elements that are most important . Development that may not be sensitive to the character of the area can also be identified as an example of development that would not be supported in the future.

Area	
Sub Area	
Local Style	Are there local building forms, practices and materials that should inspire what is built today? What is the predominant architectural style, age and type of housing? Are homes predominantly detached, terraced, bungalows, flats? What commercial buildings are there? What materials are used? Think about new development – has this enhanced the local area – if not, what went wrong?
Scale	What is the general density and height of existing development? Should this be maintained in new development? How do buildings relate to the topography?
History	Are there valued historical buildings in the area – how can these be preserved and how can new development sit comfortably with and possibly enhance them? Are there historical elements that should be reflected in new development?
Identity	What is the key purpose of this part of town?
	Are there particular streets or spaces whose special character is vital to the identity of the whole area?
Setting , Skyline and views	How does this area look to people looking in from afar? – what is the view both of this area; and what is the view looking out from this area? Which views in and out are special, what features should be protected and if possible enhanced??
Green space	Think about the private gardens – how do these add to the sense of character – are they mostly open/ enclosed / used for parking? What elements work well and should be reflected in new development, or which are less desirable and should be avoided? Think about the streetscape - are there trees, verges, other small green spaces that add to the sense of place and which should be encouraged?
Commercial buildings	How do these add to the sense of place? Are there active frontages? What kind of businesses are active?
Connectivity	How is this area connected to the facilities in town? Which routes need to be protected or improved?

Using the information that you've gathered, and your own experiences / knowledge, try and answer the 3 questions below:

3 basic questions

1. What do you like about this part of your area?

2. What do you dislike about it?

3. What needs to be improved?

Once you have an understanding about what makes this part of your area special (or not special), you should be able to identify some key principles that can be applied to new development to enhance the local area and improve life for existing and future residents.

Design Principles
This should be a list of the principles that all new development in this area should reflect. **For example:**   **Roche Design Guide-** Buildings within Roche Parish historically were typically simply, of a good proportion and in harmony with their environment, built to withstand he extremes of climate or ground conditions. In general, building forms should be simple and draw inspiration from local building traditions.   **Roche Design Guide-** Development should work with the 'grain' of landscape, rather than against it. Existing landscape features such as trees, shrubs, hedges, natural water features and other wildlife habitats are valuable assets that should be accurately surveyed and incorporated into the design of new development wherever possible.