

South Kesteven Design Code

Information Sheet 1: Response to engagement

November 2025



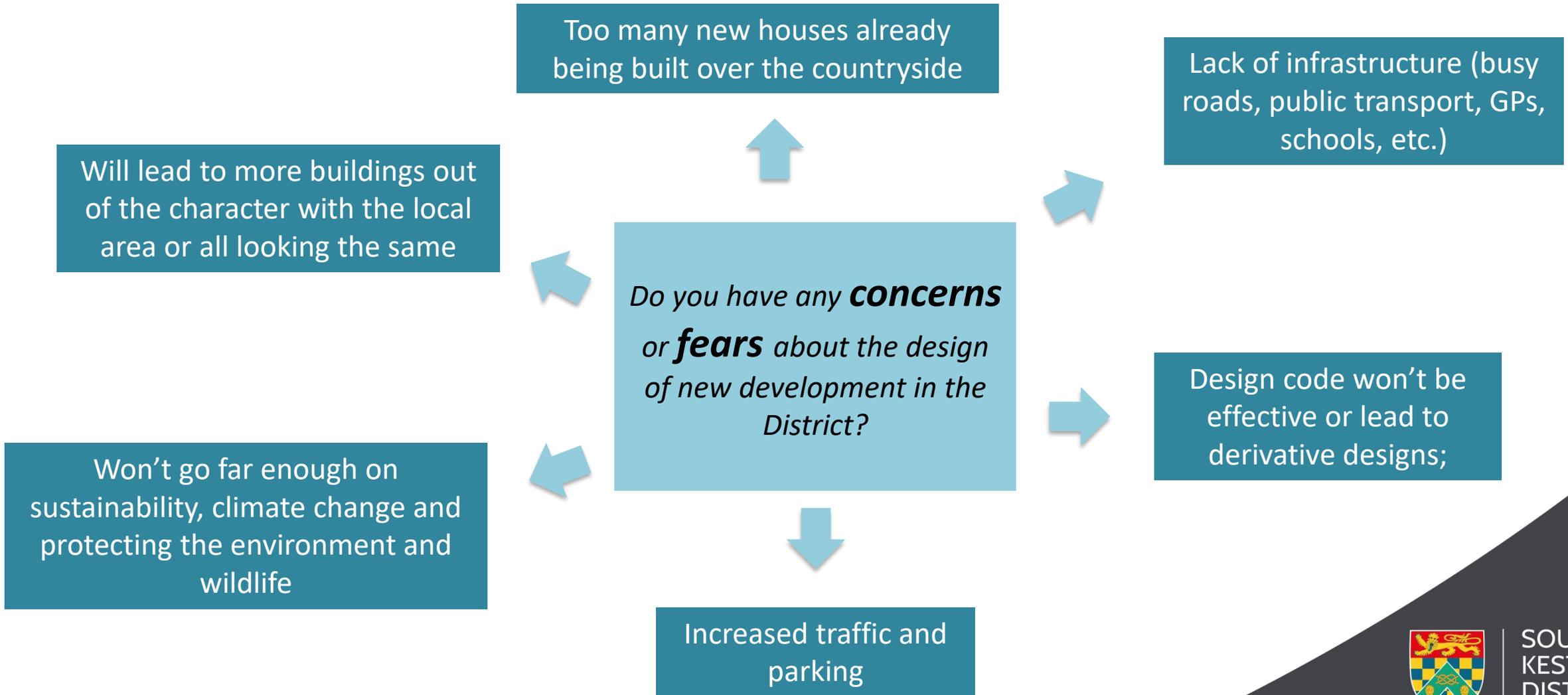
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Timeline of engagement undertaken so far...

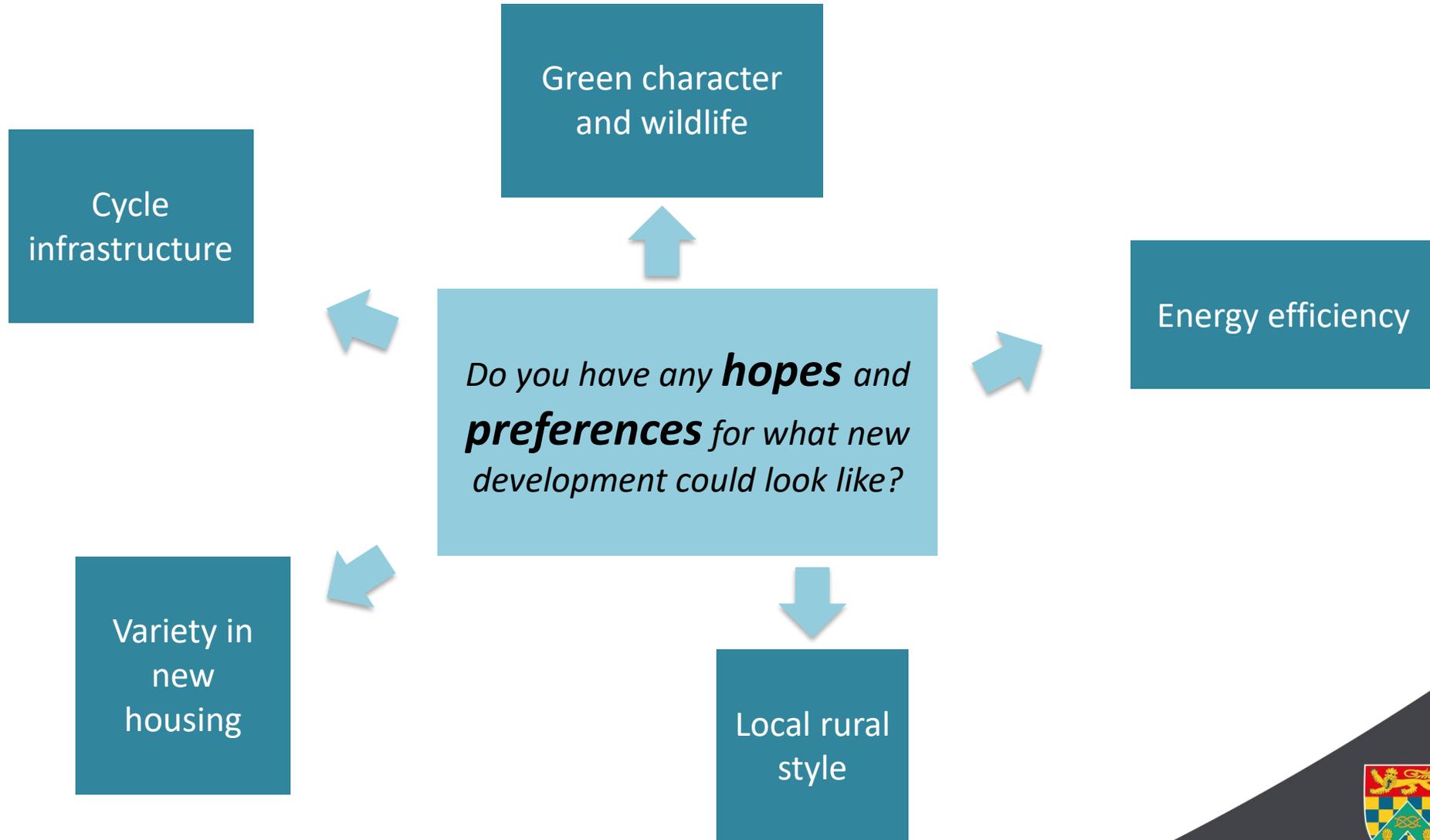
- 2021 **Survey** – for the Design Guidelines for Rutland and South Kesteven - results – [link here](#);
- 2024 **Survey** alongside Local Plan – broad ‘hopes’ and ‘fears’ for new development;
- Autumn 2024 **Workshop** - South Kesteven District Council officers and interviews;
- Autumn 2024 **Create Communities - Online interactive map** - open to all - click anywhere in District and make comments or comment on a pre-selected building or place;
- November 2024 **Workshops** - Parish / Town Council and Neighbourhood Plan Group;
- Winter 2024/2025 **Market Stalls** at Bourne, Stamford and Grantham markets;
- Winter 2024/2025 **Youth Council sessions** - South Kesteven District Council – aspirations for the future;
- December 2024 **Workshop** with development industry professionals;
- December 2024 **Workshop** with elected Members of South Kesteven District Council
- Nov 2025 – Jan 2026 **Draft Code testing** and informal consultation



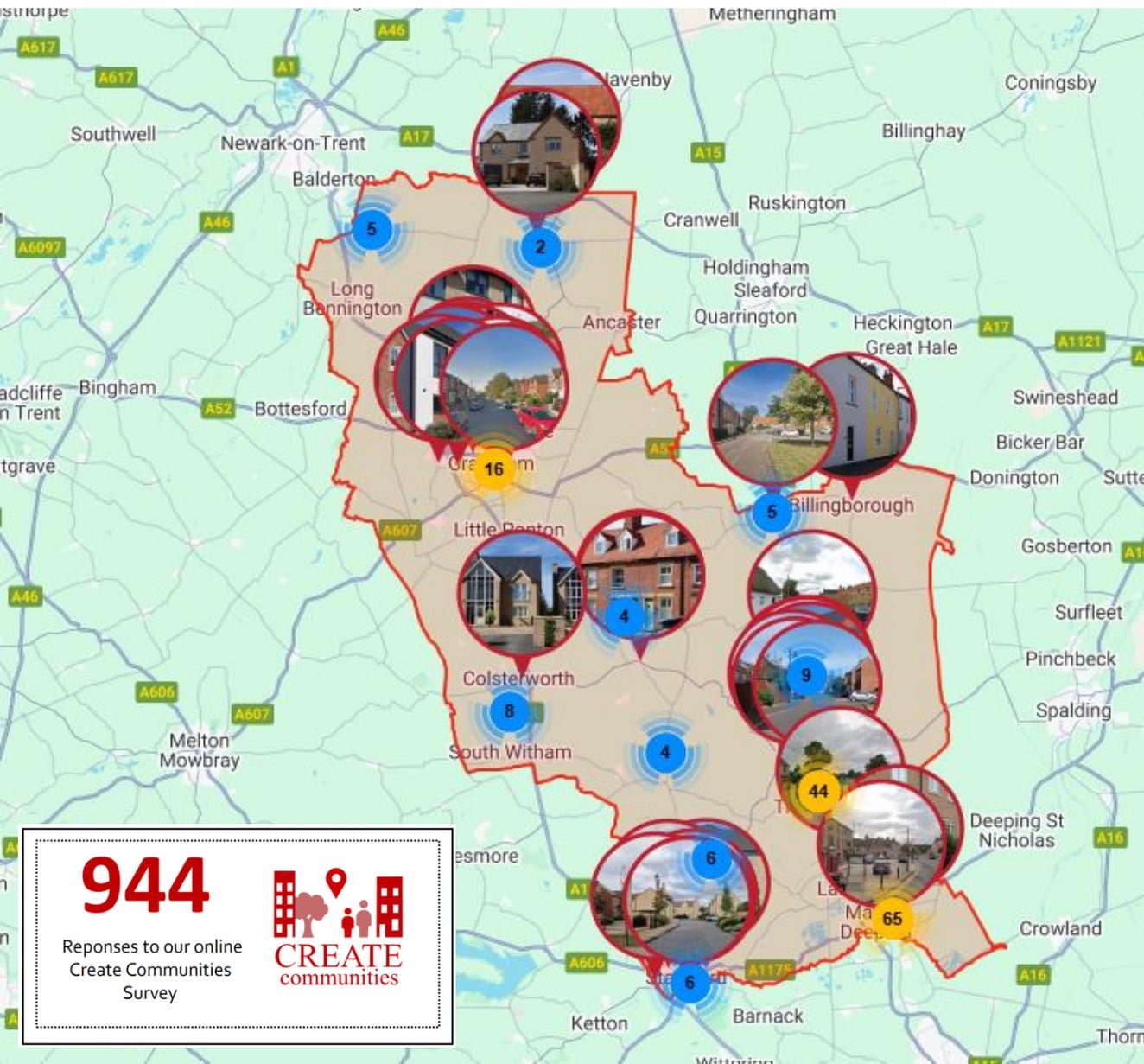
2024 Survey Results* - online form on South Kesteven website



2024 Survey Results* - online form on South Kesteven website



Create Communities Interactive Map – Autumn 2024



We asked respondents to pinpoint places they already knew within South Kesteven as well as comment on pre-selected ‘fixed points’. They were then asked to answer the following questions about their chosen place.

1. *How do you feel about this place, street or building?*
2. *What is this place called and what do you specifically like or dislike about it?*
3. *Do you think that this place, street or building is an appropriate model for future development in South Kesteven?*
4. *What particular features, if any, stand out for you?*



Create Communities Interactive Map

Across the 174 responses from the general questionnaire, five themes emerged highlighting key concerns and priorities:



- 1. Aesthetic and architectural design.** Mentioned in 21% of comments (36 responses). Buildings that harmonise with their surroundings are celebrated with references to appropriate materials, good scale and distinct character. Responses highlighted criticisms towards generic design and poorly integrated new developments.



- 2. Open spaces and greenery.** Mentioned in 19% of comments (33 responses). Access to green spaces for recreation and well-being are highly valued with green corridors deemed crucial. Some new developments are criticised for inadequate levels of planting and poorly maintained green spaces.



- 3. Connectivity and accessibility.** Mentioned in 17% of comments (30 responses). Many responses call for improved pedestrian and cycling infrastructure, including better crossings, sufficiently wide paths and better maintenance. Inappropriately parked cars are noted as disrupting footways. Overall, existing routes are appreciated but there is room for improvement regarding connectivity and maintenance, particularly in new developments.



- 4. Community infrastructure.** Mentioned in 17% of comments (29 responses). New housing developments are criticised for not including enough community facilities which puts strain on existing infrastructure. Some amenities such as Abbey Lawns are valued as important community assets with others requiring upgrades to maximise their value. Local businesses and community resources like libraries are highly valued and emphasised as key to fostering civic pride.



- 5. Historical and cultural significance.** Mentioned in 16% of comments (27 responses). South Kesteven has a rich and varied historical heritage with preserved and restored buildings holding cultural significance to respondents. There are concerns over the loss of character however due to the design of new developments and neglected historic buildings.

In total we received 944 responses, (174 responses to the general questionnaire and 770 responses across the 36 fixed points) to our online survey which was open for five weeks (1 st October to 6 th November 2024).



Create Communities Interactive Map - Fixed Points - Streets

Create Communities - Fixed Points

Which streets respondents found most appropriate for future development (top 5)



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Create Communities Interactive Map - Fixed Points - Buildings

Create Communities - Fixed Points

Which buildings respondents found most appropriate for future development (top 5)



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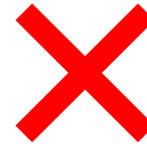
% of responses which found the selected building 'Appropriate' or 'Highly appropriate'



Create Communities Interactive Map – Fixed points questions conclusions



Q. What particular features, if any, stand out for you?



What specifically do people like?

The top three emerging reasons that respondents liked a place (out of 97 responses).

1. **Quality of architecture and character;**
2. **History and heritage;**
3. **Green spaces and wildlife.**

What specifically do people dislike?

The top three emerging reasons that respondents disliked a place (out of 65 responses).

1. **Poor layout and scale of buildings and streets;**
2. **Road safety and traffic issues;**
3. **Poor architectural style and lack of character.**



Stakeholder workshops – Autumn / Winter 2024

What we did

Workshops were conducted with Parishes, Neighbourhood Plan groups, SKDC Officers, Elected Members and the development industry. This included visual preference surveys for buildings, boundaries, parking, public spaces and streets along with more general discussions.

What did we ask

- What has worked and what hasn't with new developments?
- What are your favourite and least favourite buildings, streets and public spaces (including parks) in your communities and why?
- What do you think should be the focus of a design code for South Kesteven?
- What is your vision for South Kesteven?



Stakeholder workshops feedback



What has worked with new developments?

- Green spaces, wide green verges, and tree-lined entrances;
- Diverse house types in some developments and imaginative contemporary designs in smaller villages like Aslackby;
- Identifiable landmarks and town-specific features;
- Quality and appropriateness of smaller-scale developments;
- S106 contributions have occasionally benefited village schemes, and attractive frontages or gateways from the road have enhanced curb appeal.



Stakeholder workshops feedback

What hasn't worked with new developments?

- Narrow roads, dominance of street parking and insufficient garage sizes;
- Developments often lack connectivity with existing settlements;
- Insufficient amenities like shops, schools, and workplaces;
- Lack of adequate green spaces, poorly placed or minimal play areas, and insufficient green corridors;
- "Cookie -cutter" estates and developments that do not align with local character, eroding the unique identity of towns and villages;
- Poor planning for drainage and poorly placed services;
- Cramped layouts with houses too close to roads, and excessive density create a sense of overcrowding.



Summary of key issues from all workshops (in no particular order)

- **Strongly worded and clear Code:** The language of existing guidance is considered too loose. Use 'must' be followed to lift the quality of planning applications and make the approval process more efficient. Use checklists and be concise, clear and consistent;
- **Amenities** - Provide accessible and essential amenities and services like shops, doctors, pubs, education and green spaces;
- **Bus, walk, cycle** - Reliable public transport (including bus networks) and well-connected places with safe integrated cycle paths and footpaths for all people and avoiding the creation of car reliant places;
- **Mix of homes** - A mix of residential types to accommodate a wider array of residents, including starter homes, family homes, and accessible options for the elderly (e.g., bungalows);
- **Green** – Protect, enhance and create new green spaces, allotments and integrate wildlife into streets and public areas. Focus on play for all. Design for drainage (SuDS) from the start. Ensure spaces are well maintained;
- **Sustainable** - Make sustainability a central focus, ensuring solar panels, eco-friendly materials and planting which supports biodiversity along with homes that are built to last with quality materials;
- **Character** - Retain and be sympathetic to the unique character of South Kesteven's towns and villages and a Code with regional specificity and that covers rural development contexts, whilst ensuring there isn't a lack of variety;
- **Community** - Places for recreation and community hubs for all ages that can foster community interactions and promote a sense of place;
- **Parking** – Well designed parking in general and parking and garages that can accommodate modern vehicles. Enough parking in rural areas and avoid car-dominated streets;
- **Balance viability with quality**



Market Engagement



What we did...

In -person engagement at three market days:

- Dec 5th – Bourne
- Dec 6th – Stamford
- Feb 8th – Grantham

This engagement follows on from the Create Communities survey and the Stakeholder workshops.

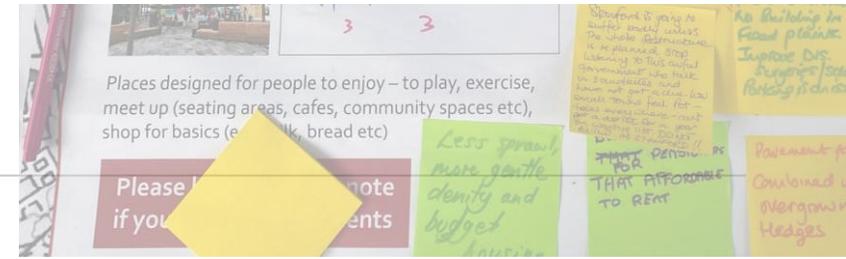
Respondents answered visual preference surveys for buildings, boundaries, parking, public spaces and streets as well as engaging in conversation.

Approximately 22 people were spoken to in Bourne, 51 in Stamford and 31 in Grantham.

Respondents were also asked which vision statement was most important to them.



Market Engagement – conversations and comments



Summary of comments:

- **Infrastructure** - Strong concerns about inadequate infrastructure (post offices, doctors, schools, shops) and amenities within walking distance;
- **Poor public transport** in new developments contribute to excessive car use, traffic congestion and parking shortages;
- **Climate-conscious building.** Desire for solar panels, better insulation, heat pumps, rainwater collection, greywater reuse;
- **Drainage concerns** with flooding issues and building on floodplains;
- **Affordable housing** is critical, especially for pensioners and multi-generational families. There is a desire for bungalows;
- **New homes are ‘featureless’.** There is a preference for traditional styles and maintaining character;
- **Parking** is a major issue, especially in Elsea Park due to narrow roads and lack of space leading to pavement parking and lack of accommodation for larger modern vehicles;
- **Support for street trees and protecting green spaces.** Developers should not be allowed to sell off community spaces. Much more ‘green’ is needed everywhere. Parks should cater for all ages, including teenagers and older people (such as through places to sit);
- **Less urban sprawl** and ‘concrete jungles’ and more gentle density. E.g. make use of flats above shops;
- **Overly narrow pavements,** complete lack of pavements in places and poor crossing points makes walking difficult.



Youth Council - what kind of place would you like to live in?

What kind of place would you like to live in?

What is most important to you?



1 Nature, wildlife, trees and green character



7 Attractive buildings – designed to fit into the local area.



5 Safe and attractive options for walking, cycling and public transport.



2 Places designed for people to enjoy – to play, exercise, meet up (seating areas, cafes, community spaces etc), shop for basics (e.g. milk, bread etc)



4 Places that function well and are designed to reflect practical considerations (e.g. bins and parking).



6 Energy efficient and low carbon buildings (and a strong focus on tackling climate change).



3 Providing a range of houses for different people's needs, budgets and circumstances.

Variety w aesthetic.

Something else? (please add)

Rankings

1. **Nature**, wildlife, trees and green character;
2. **Places designed for people** to enjoy – to play, exercise, meet up (seating areas, cafes, community spaces etc), shop for basics (e.g. milk, bread etc);
3. **Walking, cycling and public transport** (Safe and attractive options)
4. **Energy efficient and low carbon buildings** (and a strong focus on tackling climate change);
4. **Providing a range of houses** for different people's needs, budgets and circumstances;
5. **Places that function well** and are designed to reflect practical considerations (e.g. bins and parking);
6. **Attractive buildings** – designed to fit into the local area.

Members of the Youth Council (aged 11-18 from various schools and colleges in South Kesteven) were asked:

What kind of place would you like to live in?

Ranked by which of the following statements were most important to them.



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Youth Council – Postcard from the future

Imagine yourself in 2045 living in a new residential area that is a great place to live....

Write a postcard from this future place back to someone in 2025, describing what it is like to live there and why it is so good.

(e.g. sights and what it looks like, sounds, smells, what it feels like and what activities you do).

You can be your age now or imagine yourself 20 years older.

Dear - It is wonderful here, the fresh air feels great. The safe streets at night as the solar panel lights never turn off, there is no noise pollution as all cars are electric. I attend leisure walks in the nearby park which is also a sanctuary for ~~environment~~ in danger in endangered species.

Imagine yourself in 2045 living in a new residential area that is a great place to live....

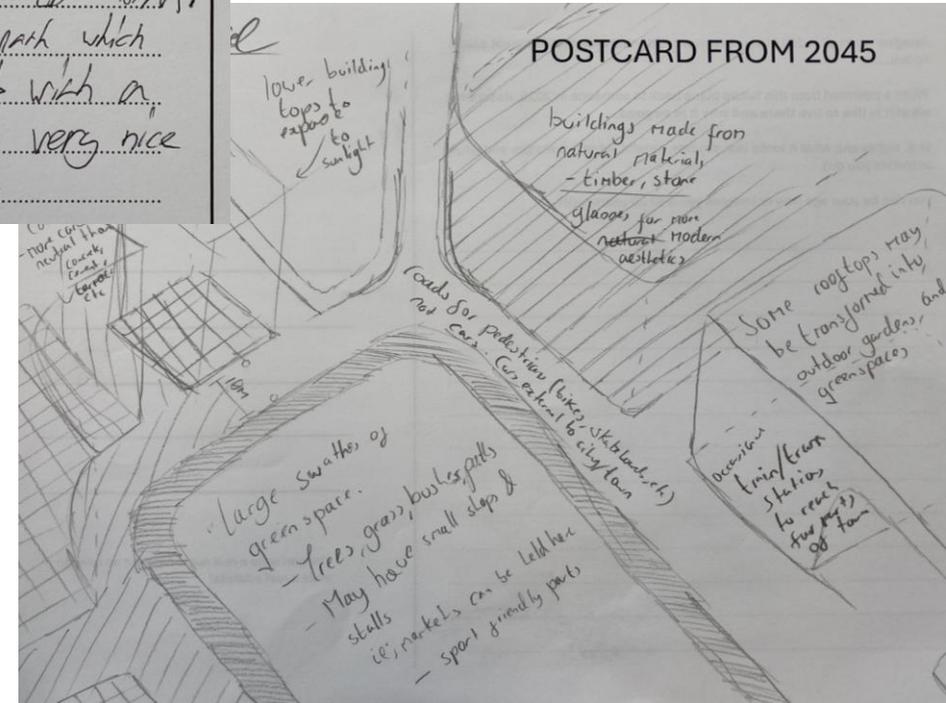
Write a postcard from this future place back to someone in 2025, describing what it is like to live there and why it is so good.

(e.g. sights and what it looks like, sounds, smells, what it feels like and what activities you do).

You can be your age now or imagine yourself 20 years older.

I am currently living in grandown and around the Borowby gate area. It is a lovely establishment and very quiet. It has accessible areas of nature to enjoy and I adore the natural sounds of birds. There is a very convenient path which takes me down to town with a pleasant walk. The residents are very nice to talk to and night times.

POSTCARD FROM 2045



Response to summary of all engagement activities

Summary of most important issues

You said...

- Green character everywhere, wildlife, trees, tranquil walks;
- Play and leisure spaces for all – places for all people;
- Climate change;
- Drainage and flooding;



Response

We did...

- Moved Nature chapter to the start, expanded it and created Musts to ensure green streets and spaces, walks and wildlife whilst also adding 'green' elements to other chapters.
- Play added in to various chapters and ensured play for all included. Well designed local centre requirements and co-location of community facilities.
- No.1 issue in code vision and recurring theme throughout document. Sustainable buildings section created, sustainable drainage section, sustainable travel section, Nature chapter;
- See climate change above, also a recurring theme throughout, but also Blue Infrastructure Sustainable Drainage (SuDS) chapter.

Response to summary of all engagement activities

Summary of most important issues

You said...

- Pedestrian and cycle connectivity and public transport;
- Parking design (e.g. narrow streets, pavement parking, frontage parking)
- Amenities and infrastructure (health, education, road capacity, shops, green spaces etc), including mixed-use;



Response

We did...

- Specific walking, wheeling and cycling chapter, public transport chapter, connectivity covered in various sections;
- Parking covered extensively and in detail, forming one of the longest sections in the code, better parking design discourages pavement parking and car dominated streets;
- Amenities and infrastructure feature in third and fifth vision points, emphasis on well-designed, grouped and accessible amenities that encourage social interaction. Actual levels of provision are beyond the scope of this code and are decided by education, health, highways departments.

Response to summary of all engagement activities

Summary of most important issues

You said...

- Variety in house styles (not standardised cookie-cutter) and also mix of types (e.g. families, older people)
- Local character, history, heritage and rural village style;
- Easy to use document, concise, consistent, with checklist;
- Many changes after the permission stages – watering down design quality



Response

We did...

- Extensive Identity section, covering house types, materials, roofs, windows, doors, building details – specific must on adapting standard house types; *(diverse and affordable homes mentioned in vision but needs a specific code)*
- Clear explanation about what is meant by local character – see also the District Characterisation sheets and the use of Area Type specific codes;
- Code compliance checklist created, also clear Musts, Shoulds and Cans within document along with diagrams and images;
- This may be beyond the scope of the Code but we are exploring ways to address negative post permission amendments;

Draft Code testing and informal consultation – November 2025 – January 2026

With promotion through e-mail we placed on our website the below:

- Draft Code;
- Draft compliance checklist;
- Information sheets about engagement activities to date and the format of the code;
- A questionnaire to feedback

We received:

- 20 written responses
- A volume housebuilder undertook detailed testing on a live development site with follow up meeting to discuss findings;
- Elected Member briefing
- Development Management Officer workshop
- Internal testing of the checklist and code



Draft Code testing and informal consultation – November 2025 – January 2026

Key findings:

- Reduce the length it takes to assess schemes against the code – reduce the number of ‘must’ and ‘should’;
- Make it more user friendly;
- Relate the code to the Local Plan as it is proposed to be an SPD;
- Some musts overly prescriptive
- Some viability concerns in terms of delivering everything in the code
- Ensure diagrams are clear and realistic – and show more of the complete picture;
- Allow scope for innovative and contemporary architecture;
- Area Types created some issues – and clarity needed on where they apply;
- Development thresholds (small, medium, large etc) could be reviewed;
- Clarity on how the code covers heritage contexts
- Many comments on wording and phrasing
- The District Characterisation work will be important to see once ready.

