

# *Annex E*

# Village and Town Design Statements



## Introduction

This annex will guide you through the process of preparing a Village or Town Design Statement; this guidance is for you and your community if you have identified a need to create design guidance for your area to be considered by developers when they are designing future developments.

### LEAD – a framework for Community Led Planning

When preparing your Village or Town Design Statement use the four key stages highlighted in the LEAD framework, these are Launch, Evidence, Agree and Deliver. You and your community will need to work through each of these stages in turn to produce your chosen document; once the accompanying checklists are completed you can move onto the next stage.



#### Framework Stage

##### Launch

##### Evidence

##### Agree & Prioritise

##### Deliver & Monitor

#### Guidance Chapters

**L1 - What to consider at the start of the process**

**L2 - Council Officer Role and Assistance**

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**Launch - Key Stages Checklist**

**E1 - Identifying Good Local Design Aspects**

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**AP1 - Drafting Design Guidance**

**AP2 - Draft Document Consultation**

**AP3 - Finalising Draft Document and Submission**

**Agree & Prioritise - Key Stages Checklist**

**DM1 - Adoption of VDS**

**DM2 - Monitoring**

**DM3 - Reviewing the VDS**

**Deliver & Monitor - Key Stages Checklist**

Please feel free to contact us at any time through the process of preparing your village or town design statement if you want to discuss any particular issues or get any further advice, you can email us at [neighbourhoodplanning@testvalley.gov.uk](mailto:neighbourhoodplanning@testvalley.gov.uk)

# Framework Stage

# Launch



## **L1 - What to consider at the start of the process**

### **What is a Village or Town Design Statement?**

A Village or Town Design Statement (VDS) is a document that describes and analyses what it is that makes a town or village distinctive and provides design guidance for future development. Its purpose is to help to guide the design of new development so that the towns or villages essential character can remain; it is a document that relies heavily on pictures and this should be considered early on in the process. A VDS does not suggest development sites or uses; its sole focus is design. A VDS can cover just the built area of a town or village or the whole parish. If it is the latter there will need to be an assessment of the landscape character, although this is also useful even if just focusing on the built-up area as this will help to protect the built edge.

### **What are the benefits to the parish and community?**

A VDS provides more locally distinctive information than our Local Plan design policies for your area. It is created by the local community which gives everybody from the area the opportunity to input their ideas into what makes their area attractive. Once adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document developers and planning officers will have to consider the guidelines in your VDS when submitting and determining future applications.

### **Who produces a Design Statement?**

A VDS is produced by the local community, either the parish council, or a working group on its behalf. The community has the local knowledge to identify the local character of your area, and you will also be able to engage with the local community which will be essential to ensure that the document has local support.

### **How long does it take to produce?**

A VDS is relatively quick to produce but it does depend on the time and resources that the working group can offer. It can take up to a year to complete but could be longer depending on the size of your working group and the depth of detail on assessing the local design styles and the different character areas of your area.

### **What are the costs of a Village Design Statement?**

From experience, the cost of the VDS averages between £2,000 and £4,000 but this depends on the scale of the area being covered and what local resources and expertise you may be able to draw upon.

## What funding is available?

Funding towards the costs associated with the production of a VDS is available from Test Valley Borough Council through a Community Planning Grant:

- £1,000 for parishes with a population over 5,000
- £750 for parishes with a population over 1,000 but under 5,000
- £500 for parishes with a population under 1,000

An application for funding can be submitted at any time during the VDS preparation for costs that are still to be met. It will be for you to decide what you spend the funding on, for example printing hard copy material for consultations or subscriptions to online survey applications, but additional spending above the grant will need to be funded from elsewhere.

For further details and online application form visit: **www.testvalley.gov.uk/cpgs**

## Involving your Councillor

Your borough councillors are at the heart of a local approach to engaging and working with communities to better understand their needs and develop sustainable solutions within communities themselves.

Your Councillor should be informed in the decision to progress a design statement in your area. This could include help with identifying local character areas, building community consensus and addressing other issues.

They will have a vital role of supporting, mediating, helping to find solutions and explaining the proposals within the borough hwide planning policy context.

Find details of your councillor here: Who is my councillor?

## L2 - Council Officer Role and Assistance

### What is our role in this process?

Our role is to guide you through the process to make sure that the final version of the VDS is in keeping with local and national planning policy. Given this we recommend engaging with us as early as possible with regular update meetings to ensure consistency and enable the VDS to be recommended for adoption swiftly once complete. The ownership of the VDS remains with the local community and should reflect your views.

Once the VDS is in its final draft stage we will undertake statutory consultation for a period of not less than 4 weeks. We will then advise you on the changes needed to the VDS from issues raised in the consultation.

Once all parties are happy with the final version of the VDS it can proceed to adoption as a supplementary planning document (SPD), which becomes a material consideration when determining future planning applications.

The Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) sets out the main elements of the VDS preparation process and the legal requirements that that we have to follow.

The SCI can be found here: **Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) | Test Valley Borough Council**

### What support can we offer?

There are a range of ways in which we can support and help you to develop your VDS. These include:

- to provide guidance and advice throughout the process,
- attend workshops or open days as an observer, where possible
- provide statistics and information on your area
- giving comments and advice on the draft planning content and wording of guidance
- help with mapping if required

## L3 - Parish Council and Community Role

We encourage communities to get us involved as early as possible in the VDS development. You will need to ensure that the wider community are aware of the VDS, support the principle of producing one, act as a critical friend to the working group and are kept involved during its production by:

- Publishing information in the parish newsletter and on the website
- Canvassing local views at key stages in the production of the VDS
- Consulting on an early draft, before the document is completed
- Gaining parish council approval for the final draft

A central part of the process is to enable wide community involvement and build towards a document which reflects local consensus. This is crucial in terms of its adoption as an SPD, as we will require evidence of the consultation undertaken for this to be carried out.

Within the community there may be architects or design professionals that may be able to help with the VDS. However, it is important not to rely too heavily on professional advice, as the key to an effective VDS is that it reflects the views of the whole community. Consider appointing a head of the working group who can make decisions after discussion with the entire group. Ideally there should also be a single group member who edits the draft VDS to ensure consistent style and content.

## Produce a Project Plan

Whilst there is not specific time period within which a VDS should be produced, on average they can be prepared and adopted within 1 to 2 years. This is driven by the multiple rounds of local consultation which should be undertaken. A project plan can help keep you on track, and the project plan template in Appendix 1 is there to help you think about the steps to take in preparing your VDS, who will progress those tasks, any resources required and the target date.

# LAUNCH

## Key Stages Checklist

Once these steps have been completed you can move onto the next stage

### Step 1 – Getting started

- ☐ Decide you want to undertake a VDS and inform us if you want to discuss the process
- ☐ Hold an initial event to attract community interest in the VDS
- ☐ Make contact with a range of volunteers who might be able to help out in different ways

### Step 2 – Establishing your working group

- ☐ Form a working group to undertake the preparation of the VDS
- ☐ Agree the purpose of the working group

### Step 3 – Taking stock and planning the way ahead

- ☐ Make sure that you have enough funding, volunteers, information and support needed to progress with your VDS
- ☐ Produce a simple project plan that will help you to plan and undertake next steps
- ☐ Apply for funding



# *Framework Stage* **Evidence**



## E1 - Identifying Good Local Design Aspects

### Initial survey to assemble and record local character

The assessment of the character of the village is based on the physical appearance of the village — what it looks like and what makes it special. Approach this stage as an open exercise with no pre-conceived ideas, using both a survey and consultation strategies including the public and local groups who may have a good amount of knowledge about the area. All the other background information needed to produce a VDS for example local history information and conservation area appraisals, should be used to support the visual survey of the village.

The initial survey should aim to record the qualities and features that contribute to the character of the village. Photos are an excellent way of undertaking the assessment because the camera is not selective in what it sees. Many people will already have old and new photographs of the village and the surrounding countryside which they may wish to contribute. To assemble a photographic survey for a VDS it is not necessary for the pictures to be perfect. It is far more important to show the diversity and distinctiveness of the area, its setting in the surrounding landscape, and its buildings and spaces and

what makes it special.

This assessment will fall under the three headings of:

- landscape setting,
- settlement pattern,
- and buildings and spaces.

And will contain evidence of :

- individual **buildings** and groups of buildings and the way they make up the street scene;
- **open spaces**. Large public areas, playing fields, greens and churchyards are important, but so are the small spaces between buildings, or private land, such as orchards and gardens;
- **boundaries**. The edges of the village. What is it like arriving or leaving the village? In the village itself, how are spaces and buildings contained for example by walls, fences, planting, or a combination of these?
- **trees**. Do trees matter to the shape and pattern of the village?

Once the evidence of local character has been gathered, then this can be used to provide the character description that will underpin the VDS.

### Structuring the character description

The VDS should describe the visual character of the village in terms of:

- the village in its countryside or landscape setting;
- the form of the settlement as a whole;
- the characteristics and details of the buildings and spaces within the village.

It helps to organise the information under these headings:

- Physical and natural influences;
- Patterns and shapes of the village, its buildings and spaces;
- Local landmarks and special features;
- Roads, streets and pathways;
- Change and village evolution

## Physical and natural influences on the village

The earliest and most fundamental influence on the development of every village was the landscape itself but this influence has diminished over time. Consider how the village has been affected by the shape of the land, the climate, water and local materials.

## Patterns and shapes of the village, its buildings and spaces

People enjoy the landscape by looking at the pattern of woods and fields, and views from favourite places. Using maps and photos is key to helping the community identify these key features. In the same way we are also able to appreciate the pattern of our villages through the rich diversity of the shapes and groups of buildings, spaces and trees within them. The shape and impact of the village in the wider landscape is also important.

## Local landmarks and special features of the village

Even in small villages there can be distinctive features or landmarks that enable you to know exactly where you are. These features could be as diverse as particular building details or materials, or a folly or simply the church spire.

## Roads, streets and pathways in and around the village

Older roads were designed for pedestrians or horse-drawn vehicles and this influenced the pattern of roads, streets and footpaths. Some older parts of villages struggle to accommodate modern vehicles, and traffic can have an adverse effect on the visual and often the physical quality of villages.

## Change and village evolution

Villages grow and evolve, and what we see today is often very different from the shape, form and purpose of the original settlement. To appreciate what a village may be like in the future it is important to consider how it has evolved. Some changes will have happened long ago, and some are likely to be more recent. Future change needs to be managed to protect local distinctiveness.

Although every VDS will incorporate all these factors, not all will be described in the same way or be of equal priority in each village. It is important that all the information that goes into the VDS answers the following key questions.

- What does this say about the character of our village?
- Will this help to inform the design decisions of designers and developers?
- Will this be compatible with local planning policies?

## EVIDENCE

### Key Stages Checklist

Once these steps have been completed you can move onto the next stage

### Step 4 – Understanding your area

- ☐ Understand the different design elements and character areas that your community believe are most important and should be highlighted in your VDS
- ☐ Gather existing facts and information about your area from as many sources as possible including through surveys, information you and the community already have, information we can provide and third-party sources
- ☐ Continue to engage with members of your community and their local knowledge of the area

# *Framework Stage*

## **Agree and Prioritise**



## AP1 - Drafting Design Guidance

In drafting the VDS the principle should be to give clear, sensible design guidance linked to the analysis of the village character — simple points, plain language and an easy-to-follow structure.

In deciding what information needs to be included in the VDS. Remember there are three key questions.

- What does this say about the character of our village?
- Will this help to inform the design decisions of designers and/or developers?
- Is it compatible with the local planning policies?

When drafting your VDS guidance it should:

- be clear and objective;
- only include information and material that is going to be relevant and effective in the planning, system — particularly for development management;
- have the support of the community;

The team drafting the VDS will need to have a broad agreement on :

- what ‘relevant’ information means,
- how the final editorial decisions on the drafts will be made,

- how responses to local consultation will be dealt with.

Every VDS will be unique and there is no model format for a VDS. The structure outlined above will help to set an initial framework for the drafting process, but don’t let it dictate the process entirely. Use the structure as a tool, modify and develop it to fit your own needs. For example, if your area has different character areas create a section that is applicable to all areas and then individual sections with specific guidance for each character area.

There may be facts you wish to include to help explain the special nature and character of the village. As a result of public consultation, there will be changes needed to the content and wording of the VDS before the final version is published. The final editing will be for the working group to decide and will be influenced by the community through the consultation process.

Under each section or topic heading the statement should:

- provide a brief introductory description of the topic as it relates to the village as a whole;
- describe the characteristics and special features which create the character of this aspect of the village;

- put forward guidance on how these local characteristics could be reflected in new development.

To identify local distinctiveness and recommend design guidance, the VDS should provide a well-structured assessment of the character and design elements of the village and its setting. You should therefore ensure that the VDS addresses the following tests;

- Does it record and describe the unique character, design and local distinctiveness of the village’s built and natural environment?
- Do the guidelines for development refer to (and are aided by) any description of village history and character?
- Will it assist in achieving a higher standard of design and informing the decisions of developers?
- Does it provide design recommendations, under the following broad topics?
  - Village setting & landscape, including views;
  - Settlement pattern;
  - Open & other spaces;
  - Building form e.g. height, shape etc.;
  - Materials, window and chimney details;
  - Streets & street furniture;

- Trees, hedges & other landscape features;
- Boundary features e.g. walls, fences, etc.
- Does it explain what is intended by the design recommendations and how they should be achieved in practice?
- Does it relate to the village as a whole including the immediate surroundings which are important in contributing to aspects of its setting? (The extent of any coverage beyond this, e.g. the whole parish, is for individual VDS determination).
- Are links made to and do the guidelines accord with policy and guidance produced by the Council for example the Local Plan and Conservation Area appraisal documents? The Conservation Area appraisal usually only cover part of the village, whilst the VDS should include the whole parish.

It should avoid the use of phrases such as “must be”, “must not”, “no more” “no development” etc? Wording could include “wherever possible”, “should” etc. Appendix 2 has draft wording on a number of topics that you might find helpful. These can be adapted to your local circumstances.

## Conservation Areas

Different planning rules apply in Conservation Areas and for Listed Buildings. It is important to avoid any confusion between the VDS and Conservation Area appraisals. VDSs are not just for these areas and they can apply to the whole parish.

## Permitted Development

Some types of minor development can be carried out without the need to apply for planning permission which is called ‘permitted development’. Although the VDS can only be formally taken into account on planning applications it can still influence minor development and householder alterations by encouraging your community to respect the character of the village

## Highways

This is the responsibility of Hampshire County Council. New footpaths and kerbs, new access to a development, signs or streetlights can change the character of a village. The county council should be consulted on your VDS, and so will be aware of the villages concerns and guidelines for highways. This will enable them to take the VDS into consideration in any highway projects that they bring forward. These matters can be covered in a “community aspirations” section to highlight the community feelings on this matter.

## Landscape

Landscape character assessments describe the landscape based on areas with similar characteristics and identify ways to help conserve and enhance them. We have undertaken a borough wide landscape character assessment and this is a good source of evidence for your VDS. The LCA and interactive map can be found on our website: <https://www.testvalley.gov.uk/planning-services/landscape/landscape-character-assessment-documents>



## AP2 - Community Consultation on the draft VDS

Once you have your draft VDS which is based off the initial community consultation, you will need to consult on the contents with the local community if you haven't already done so.

Community consultation is needed from the outset of the project and this should be well documented. This will provide the evidence needed to show the community how their comments on the VDS have been taken into account and reflects local consensus. This is crucial in terms of its adoption as an SPD, as we will require evidence of the consultation undertaken for the document to be adopted.

Below shows examples of how past working groups have demonstrated engagement within their communities on previous VDS documents.

THIS DESIGN STATEMENT



The initial step was to undertake a survey of the landscape characteristics of the parish that would record and describe its physical characteristics and character. To assist in this process, the parish was divided into five geographic areas, each of which had its own survey team. During the spring of 2017 these teams explored the relationship between the countryside and the settlements and, within those settlements, the design of the built environment. They pulled together the effects of history, geography, landscape and settlement with a view to identifying and describing the key local characteristics; the unique characteristics that make Ampfield what it is.

At the same time in 2017, each household in the parish received a questionnaire, seeking their views on a wide range of subjects, pertinent to how residents would like to see Ampfield evolve over the next 10/15 years. The answers to each question were analysed. These, plus additional anecdotal evidence gathered in the questionnaire, were used in conjunction with the results of the Landscape Characteristic Survey to prepare a first draft of the revised VDS.

The first draft of the revised VDS document was introduced to the parishioners of Ampfield in November 2017 at public exhibitions during a period of six weeks formal public consultation. Any amendments so arising were included into the VDS, thus ensuring the revised final draft of the new VDS is an accurate consensus of the current views of the parishioners.

Throughout the process the draft documents have been submitted to the officers of TVBC on a regular basis for their scrutiny. The final draft has been presented to the Ampfield Parish Council for its endorsement, before being sent to the local planning authority for a second formal period of public consultation and subsequent adoption.

VDS public exhibition



You should also consider consulting wider that just the community and think about relevant local groups and organisations that could provide helpful feedback such as local historical societies and local wildlife trusts.

This should be incorporated into a community consultation statement, that should contain the following:

- Details of the people and organisations consulted about the VDS and how they were consulted

### 2. The Views of Residents

The Village Design Statement is founded on community consultation and active feedback from villagers through a questionnaire, photo submissions, open meetings and discussion and review. The consensus views from the responses to the questionnaire, the messages from the photo submissions and feedback from the open meetings are summarised below.

Residents' responses to the question "What are the key characteristics of the parish that must be conserved and promoted?"

"Amazing 'unspoilt' scenery and setting; the way that the settlement areas merge into and are part of it and the importance of the river and its meadows"

"A mixture of buildings forming generally harmonious and historically linked streetscenes with a predominantly rural character"

"Friendly integrated rural community in a tranquil, peaceful environment - except for the A343 - with good local facilities and amenities"

**Safeguard harmonious and historically linked streetscenes**


- Only support new buildings which maintain or enhance the streetscene and character of the settlement area
- Ensure extensions, conversions or outbuildings do not detract from the character of the original building or the neighbourhood or degrade key views
- Encourage the choice of materials and building details that harmonise with the neighbourhood character help maintain the rural character

**Maintain the scenery, natural environment and setting**

- Preserve 'unspoilt' rural scenery, seen throughout the parish
- Preserve the meadows and green spaces as rural open spaces, offering long vistas and rustic 'scenes' whilst providing essential space for biodiversity
- Preserve characteristic views out to wooded skylines by avoiding any new hillside development
- Actively maintain the current mix of primarily indigenous trees and hedgerows
- Preserve undeveloped footpaths, bridleways and tracks for community recreation
- Maintain dark night skies
- Encourage energy efficient designs and technologies and the use of building materials from sustainable sources

**Maintain and build the sense of community**

- Promote a balanced mix of houses/dwellings in terms of size, affordability and sustainability
- Support necessary development that enhances the sense of community, avoiding 'satellite' developments and 'isolated' buildings
- Promote measures that encourage motorists to respect the rural community they are passing through and that reduce and minimise the impact of traffic in the parish
- Encourage boundary features that promote visual integration and sociability



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- A summary of the main issues and comments raised
- An explanation of how the issues and comments were considered and how they were addressed in the in the final version if considered relevant

An example of a community consultation statement can be found in Appendix 3.

## AP3 - Finalising Draft Document and Submission

After the public consultation the VDS will need to be amended in light of the comments and become the final draft. We would recommend that this is a word document with photos and maps rather than a fully desktop published document.

### Pictures and drawings

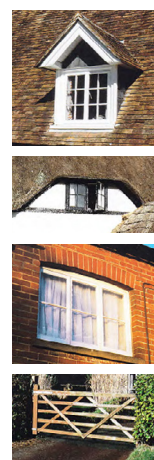
VDSs are about the visual quality and physical appearance of your area. The best way of showing this is with photos, drawings and diagrams - a picture tells a thousand words! Be careful not to include personally identifiable date (for example car number plates etc.) and be aware some in your community may not wish for their property to be pictured in the VDS, despite being publicly viewable, make sure you respect their wishes.

The VDS should be a visual document, which shows the distinct individual features in the area, or within each of the identified character areas. Don't be worried about using too many photos, as long as they are not duplicating one another and serve a purpose; captions should explain the significance of each picture.

Building details and important aspects of village character can also be shown with line drawings or similar illustrations. There may be people in the community with graphic or artistic skills who are willing to help with this.

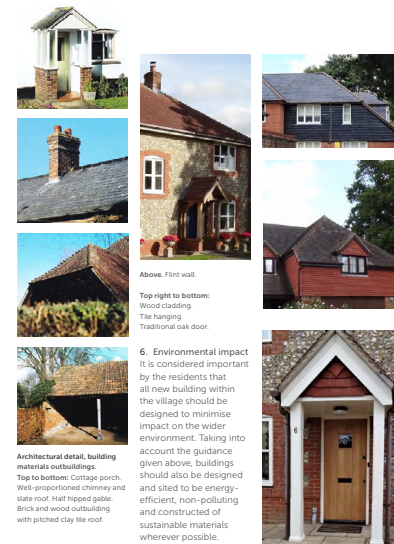
Below are some good examples of photos in an existing VDS.

Buildings  
Styles and Features



1. There is a very wide range of building styles, influenced by the ages, sizes and types of buildings and subsequent alterations.
  2. The village has a balanced mix of detached, terraced or semi-detached houses, bungalows and chalet bungalows. The mixture of styles is an important characteristic of the village and should be preserved.
  3. Architectural details It is possible to discern local rural features in some of the traditional buildings. Examples include: low rooflines, half hipped gables (Hampshire cropped gables), timber framed porches, small windows in proportion to the size of the building, eyebrow windows, cottage style windows (two pane casement), and windows with segmental arches above.
  4. Building materials The choice of building material strongly influences the overall appearance of a building. In Braishfield many different materials have been used in construction over the years. Generally, the residents prefer those where local or natural materials have been used.
  5. Local materials found in existing buildings that are particularly liked by residents include: handmade local brick or rendered chalk walls, thatch, handmade plain clay tile or slate roofs, timber framed windows and timber doors.
- Architectural detail, building materials and gates.**  
Top to bottom: Dormer window set in a clay tile roof. Eyebrow window under a thatched roof. Traditional cottage window with segmental arch. Five-barred wooden gate.

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Above: Flint wall.  
Top right to bottom:  
Wood cladding  
Tie hanging  
Traditional oak door

6. Environmental impact It is considered important by the residents that all new building within the village should be designed to minimise impact on the wider environment. Taking into account the guidance given above, buildings should also be designed and sited to be energy-efficient, non-polluting and constructed of sustainable materials wherever possible.

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#### 7. Hurstbourne Tarrant: Upton Road & The Dene

**Brick colour and texture**  
UD.3 Brick colour should be carefully selected to blend in with the typical brownish red of 18th century and older buildings and the somewhat redder tone associated with the 19th century. The Michelmersh Hampshire Stock range is an example of local bricks that can blend well with both these.



Yellow or buff bricks, prevalent in the more recent single storey dwellings, are out of keeping and introduce an urban feel. Mottled and textured bricks, such as the LBC Rustic Brick and many others in the LBC range are also incompatible.



**Windows**  
UD.4 Particular attention should be given to Planning Guidance WNS1, WNS2, WNS3, WNS4 and WNS5, particularly regarding where a house's windows are placed, and their relative proportions, as these features are often the principal influences over whether the whole building looks well designed and fits in with its neighbours. Pane size and proportions are as important as the shape and weight of the main frame.

The ideal dimensions of a window will depend on the proportions, mass and style of the building, whether an extension of a new build, and so it is only possible to illustrate a range of characteristic window designs that work in their particular context.



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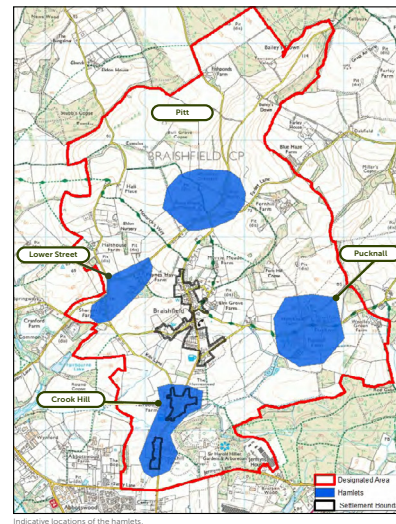
## Maps

Maps are key to showing the different elements in the village. There is no limit to the number of maps but to avoid confusion and make them easy to read it's better have different features displayed on separate maps, such as heritage information (listed buildings and conservation area) views and character areas if appropriate.

Parish councils can sign up to the Ordnance Survey's free Public Sector Geospatial Agreement (PSGA). This will licence the parish council to use a range of Ordnance Survey mapping products for council business and enable us to share Ordnance Survey mapping data with you or create maps on your behalf.

Below are some examples of good use of maps in an existing VDS.

Settlement Pattern



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View of the village looking south east.

1. The defining characteristic of the village is the presence of open countryside and farmland found right at its centre, separating hamlet from hamlet.
2. In line with its settlement pattern, Braishfield with 12 farms and associated dwellings in the locality had no defined central focus, such as a village green. However, there are several houses from the 16th and 17th centuries in what is now the central core of the village which predate the church, the arrival of which in the 19th century was the catalyst for further localised growth.
3. The area between the two churches and the social club contains many of the village amenities: churches, school, village hall and shop, social club, the Wheatsheaf public house, recreation ground, playground, war memorial and village pond. This area is generally, and locally, referred to as the centre.
4. Most of the buildings in this area line the roads. Although there has been some backland development, where houses have been built in some older and larger gardens, there are very few big groupings of houses. There are several important trees here, and the row of lime trees planted in 1935 to commemorate the George V's silver jubilee.
5. Even within this central area there is a farm (Elm Grove). Its fields along Braishfield Road and along both sides of Dummer's Road bring farmland into the heart of the village. Other important open spaces near the centre include the paddock by All Saints, the land north of the allotments, the recreation ground the fields to the west of Braishfield Road and north of Newport Lane, and the fields next to and opposite the Wheatsheaf.
6. These open spaces and the trees are highly valued by residents and ensure that the rural nature of the village is protected. They provide a mixed landscape with wildlife corridors, hedges providing sanctuary for a large variety of creatures and smaller mammals including bats.

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6. Hurstbourne Tarrant: The Square, The Hill & Church Street



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## Labels

It is important to ensure that all pictures, maps or any other feature that doesn't make up the main body of the text has a label. This helps identify these features and allows them to be referred to in the guidance and referred to in planning application reports. Make sure you don't leave this to the end of the process as this can take some of time to undertake.

## Layout

Take time to consider the layout of the document, this should be as logical and user friendly as possible, for example having a clear introduction, starting each new topic on a new page with a clear title or sub-title, making sure that supporting text is placed prior to the policies which themselves are placed within a box or highlighted in some way which makes them stand out clearly. Appendix 4 gives an example for the potential layout of a guidance page within your VDS.

The preparation of a VDS need not be an expensive exercise, but funding for the final publication will need to be considered. A member of the community with graphic design skills may be able to advise you or even be willing to design a layout for you. Costs will also be dependent upon the number of hard copies of the adopted document that you may want to be printed.

## AGREE & PRIORITISE

### Key Stages Checklist

Once these steps have been completed you can move onto the next stage

#### Step 5 – Prioritising and planning action

- ☐ Make sense of the information you have gathered about your area
- ☐ Consult with members of your community and identify the key design criteria that your VDS will address

#### Step 6 – Drafting your VDS

- ☐ Prepare some draft design guidance and consult on these with us and the community to ensure they are going to cover all matters raised by residents
- ☐ Carry out a public consultation, including us as a consultee, on you draft VDS and document all submitted comments and make changes from these comments.

#### Step 7 – Finalising your VDS

- ☐ Formally submit your VDS and consultation statement to us for the final public consultation and adoption

# *Framework Stage*

# **Deliver & Monitor**



## DM1 - Adoption of VDS

In order for us to adopt the VDS as an SPD the following information will need to be submitted:

- how the VDS working group formed.
- extent and type of publicity for the project.
- extent and opportunities for community participation and involvement during the various project stages.
- extent of further local consultation and the availability of a draft VDS in the village for public comment.
- the liaison and consultation with our planning officers during its preparation.
- that the final submission draft of the VDS has the formal support and endorsement of the parish council.

The adoption of the VDS by us as an SPD will be considered where it would contribute to higher quality development and is in compliance with local and national planning policy. Following a formal at least 4-week consultation period on the final version of the VDS, any comments received will be considered by us and the working group. A report will be written by us confirming that the VDS process has been done correctly and will recommend that the VDS be adopted taking into consideration any changes that may need to be made from the comments received as part of the consultation.

It will be considered by the councils Cabinet, and they will then recommend that the VDS be adopted. The adoption will give weight to the VDS. It will be published on our website and will then be a material consideration and used to determine planning applications in the area.

From the date the VDS is adopted there is a period of 3 months where anybody may challenge the decision to adopt the SPD and apply to the High Court for a judicial review of the process leading to that decision.

## DM2 - Monitoring

Monitoring ensures that your document is having a positive impact on the applications coming forward in area. A good monitoring strategy is an assessment of the effectiveness of the VDS, and as such should be considered an essential part of the VDS process. It is good practice to check the planning officers' reports for developments in the area to see if the document is being used and referred to.

## DM3 - Reviewing the VDS

Once adopted, a VDS should be in a form which allows it to be used for planning purposes for many years. In the long term should circumstances change leading to a potential review being considered, then this can be an issue for discussion between the parish council and us.

If a review is required for an element of the VDS, these should be highlighted using the existing document so that the changes can be easily identified by consultees and the Council, but the opportunity should be allowed for representations to be made on the VDS as a whole. After community consultation on the changes, the VDS will then need to go through the adoption process again.

## DELIVER & MONITOR

### Key Stages Checklist

#### Step 8 – VDS adoption

- ☐ We will progress your VDS to Cabinet to be considered for adoption as SPD before being recommended to the Council for adoption

#### Step 9 – Implementing, monitoring and reviewing your VDS

- ☐ Agree that either your working group or parish/town council will monitor progress being made toward the implementation of the guidance in your plan
- ☐ Understand why and when to review your plan
- ☐ Re-visit Steps 1-8 of this toolkit and give thought about how you can review your plan,

## Examples and External Guidance

### Countryside Commission VDS Guidance Village Design Statements Guidance

### Test Valley Town and Village Design Statements

#### Test Valley Design Statements

*Appendix 1*

# **Project Plan Template**

## Appendix 1 – Project Plan Template

Step/Task	Who	Resource Needed	Complete by																							
			202X												202X											
			J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Step 1:																										
Task 1:																										
Task 2:																										
Task 3:																										
Task 4:																										
Step 2:																										
Task 1:																										
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Step 3:																										
Task 1:																										
Task 2:																										
Task 3:																										
Task 4:																										

*Appendix 2*

**Guidance  
Wording  
Templates**



## Appendix 2 – Guidance Wording Templates

In order to make the Village Design Statement process as easy as possible for our communities, we have created some templates for guidance which commonly appear within adopted Village Design Statements across the Borough.

Successful Village Design Statements identify specific Character Areas within each Village or Parish and contain a mixture of general design guidelines to cover the whole area alongside additional dedicated design guidelines for each of the identified Character Areas.

### Materials

Issue	Example Wording
Appropriate Materials	[The village/Parish/each character area] has its own range of traditional materials which are identified in the character appraisal(s) of [list/refer to picture numbers], these are considered appropriate for use in new buildings and extensions. Bricks, roof slates or tiles and other key materials should reflect the colour and texture of those of the environs as a whole.
Environmentally Friendly Materials	Any new development should minimise its impact on the wider environment by using sustainable, non-polluting materials and energy efficient design. Renewable energy equipment should be positioned so as to blend in with the local street scene.
Consider including individual design guidance for roof, wall and other materials, especially if these features differ from one character area to another within your area.	

### Architectural Features

Issue	Example Wording
Similarity with Existing Design	It is possible to discern local rural features in some of the traditional buildings. Examples include: [list/refer to picture numbers] these details should be adopted to ensure new development blends well into the settlement.
Innovative Design	Designs for new development in the parish should be of the highest architectural quality. Innovative contemporary design should draw on the qualities of landscape, historic features and buildings to reinforce local distinctiveness.
Inappropriate Design	Inappropriate detailing not found traditionally in [village/parish/character area] should be avoided.
Consider including individual design guidance for features such as windows, roofing/eaves, chimneys and porches, especially if these features differ from one character area to another within your area.	

## Buildings

Issue	Example Wording
Impact of Buildings	The height of a building and its overall mass are two of the most important factors in determining what impact the building will have on its immediate surroundings. This includes how it is perceived from the street and by its neighbours, and how successfully it fits with the character of the village.
Extensions	Extensions that are consistent in design with the original building and use the same materials are supported.
New Developments	New clusters of buildings should avoid sterile uniformity of building alignment, architectural style and elevations and use a variety of different materials and finishes.
Re-use and Conversion	The sympathetic conversion of existing buildings, such as disused farm buildings, and their reuse as dwellings or business premises is an acceptable alternative to dilapidation.
Housing Mix	[The village] has a balanced mix of detached, terraced or semi-detached houses, bungalows and chalet bungalows. The mixture of styles is an important characteristic of the village and should be preserved.

## Local Character

Issue	Example Wording
Character Areas	[Village name] is not a homogeneous village, all new development should respect the local characteristics of each particular character area identified within the guidance.
Preserving and Enhancing Character	Development should respect, complement and integrate with the character of the area of [village/conservation area] in which the development is located.

## Settlements

Issue	Example Wording
Layout of settlements	Development proposals need to respect the layout of [village/Parish/character area] and its open spaces.
Development in the Countryside	Development outside the boundaries of existing settlements should not be permitted, unless there is clear evidence of overriding need for that development to be in the countryside.
Infill/Back-land Development	Infill or back-land development may be acceptable within settlement areas only where it does not adversely affect the existing overall appearance of the settlement area.
Sub-division of Plots	The subdivision of plots may be acceptable if the design and layout of the resultant dwellings fit harmoniously into the settlement area and is in keeping with the local neighbourhood street scene.

## Street Scene

Issue	Example Wording
Impact of Development	Where new development occurs, the spaces between buildings should be in keeping with the key characteristics of the neighbourhood and the existing street scene. Existing woodland, trees, hedges and verges should be maintained and protected.
Sub-division of Plots	The subdivision of plots may be acceptable if the design and layout of the resultant dwellings fit harmoniously into the settlement area and is in keeping with the local neighbourhood street scene.
Placement of Development	The way that individual buildings are positioned in relation to each other is an essential feature of village character. The space between buildings is as important as the buildings themselves in defining character.

## Landscape

Issue	Example Wording
Appropriate Evidence	Development proposals should be informed by the TVBC Landscape Character Assessment landscape strategy and guidelines.
Appropriate Landscaping	New development should be supported by an appropriate landscaping scheme that reflects the character of the immediate area and the rural nature of the village.
Protecting Landscape	To protect the landscape characteristics of [name of village/Parish], it is important to [e.g. avoid ribbon development that extends the settlement boundaries or joins up clusters of buildings and settlements].

## Boundaries

Issue	Example Wording
Appropriate Boundaries	Boundary structures should be in sympathy with the building and its environment. Native species hedges are preferable to hedges of non-native species. Where walls are necessary, they need to be of local materials and appropriate construction, in sympathy with the building and its surrounding.
Consider including individual design guidance for boundaries especially if these features differ from one character area to another within your area.	

## Views

Issue	Example Wording
Conserving Important Views	The views identified on [Map number/list] of [the village/river/countryside] are considered important by residents and should be conserved.
Development within Views	Planning applications for any new building, should explicitly refer to the identified views [Map number/list] and demonstrate how they are being maintained.

## Open Spaces and Wildlife

Issue	Example Wording
Important Open Spaces	All open spaces are very important to the setting and character of the village and need to be protected to preserve its historic character. The most important open spaces within [name of village/Parish] are [provide list or refer to a map or figure number].
Reducing Impact on Wildlife	The impact of development on wildlife sites should be minimised. New buildings and extensions should whenever possible incorporate features that encourage wildlife, such as 'swift bricks'.

## Other Matters

Issue	Example Wording
Parking	Any new development or redevelopment should comply with the parking spaces standards contained in the Local Plan and be provided within the curtilage of the site.
Outbuildings	Garages and outbuildings should be subsidiary in scale to the main building and built of materials that are in keeping with their surroundings. Barns associated with houses are traditional features and should be retained.
Utilities and Appliances	Reasonable effort should be made to site domestic utilities and appliances (e.g. aerials, satellite dishes, dustbins, oil tanks and solar panels) so that they make minimal visual impact when viewed from public spaces.

Some matters while important to residents are not covered by VDS guidance, such matters including footpaths and roads, public transport provision and alterations to the settlement boundary or conservation area boundary could however be included as community aspirations or recommendations for consideration.

*Appendix 3*

# **Consultation Statement Template**

## Appendix 3 – Consultation Statement Template

Consultation Stage	Engagement Method	Who was consulted	Who responded	Summary of Comment Received	Project Group Response	Action
1- Initial consultation event	Stall set up at village fete asking the public to complete a survey on design in the village	Community wide consultation	46 responses	Design of new development should be in keeping with the existing character Want new housing to respect the heritage and natural surroundings Different parts of the village have different characteristics Like the materials that are used in most of the houses in the village	Off the back of consultation decided to proceed with a village design statement	Feedback will be taken into consideration as part of first draft of document

*Appendix 4*

**Design  
Guidance  
Page Layout**

## Appendix 4 - Design Guidance Page Layout

Simple and logical things like introducing a new topic with a clear title can make a plan a lot more easy for a reader to navigate, especially if they are only after a particular section

Make sure visual materials such as pictures, diagrams and maps are clearly displayed in a box and labelled to allow easy reference in the supporting text or policy wording

Be sure to use paragraph numbers throughout the document, this will be useful during consultation when people want to submit comments and help readers refer to sections in the final plan

The supporting text to the policy should come before the policy wording itself and explain the rationale and background evidence as succinctly as possible

Once the wording has been agreed the text of your policies should be clear and made separate from any supporting text, we recommend showing it in a box with a title so the reader can find exactly what they are looking for.

### Topic Title

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Fig 1.1

Fig 1.2

### Policy XX—Topic

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