



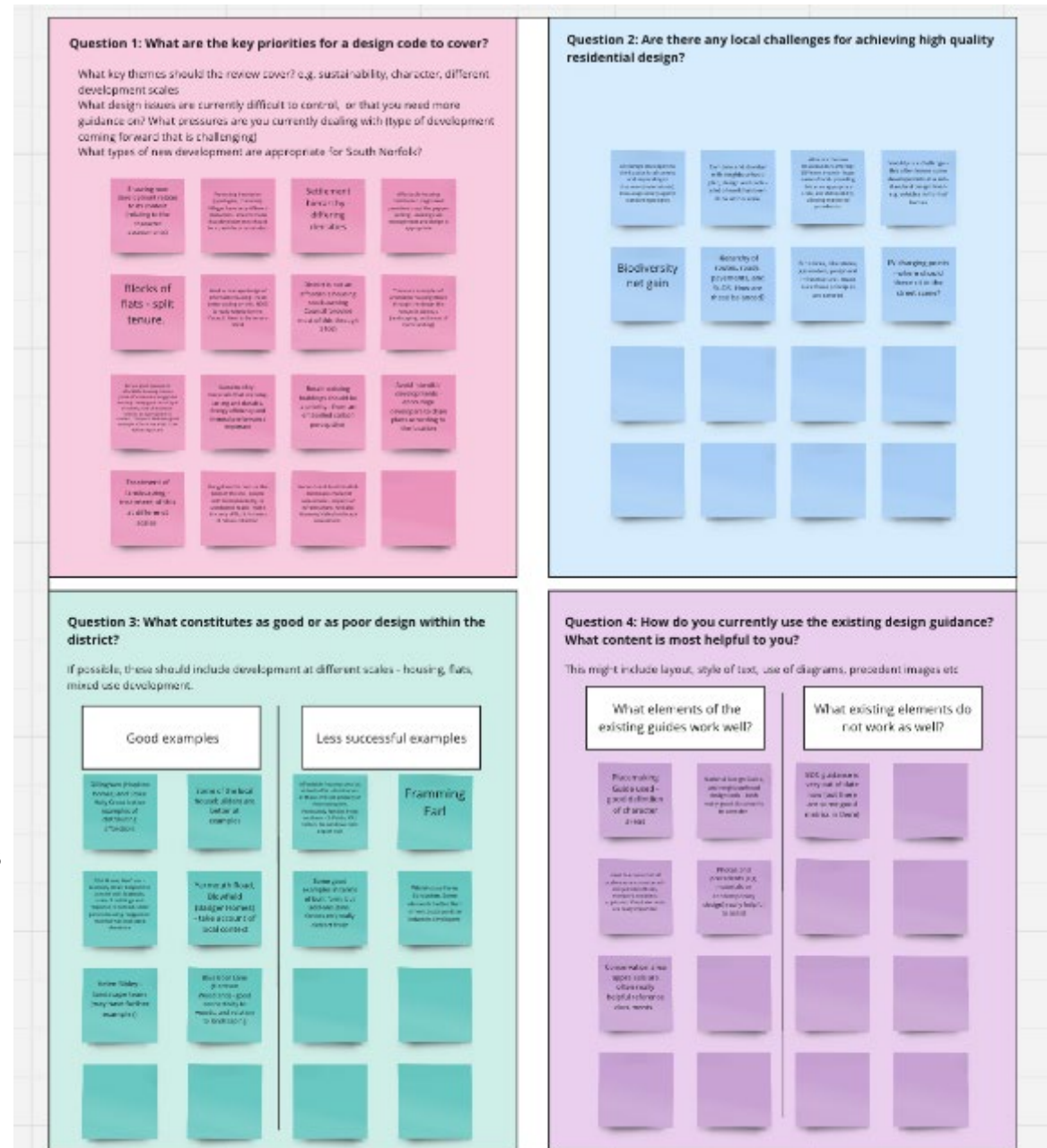
**South Norfolk Council and
Broadland District Council
Design Code**

**Stage 1 Engagement
Summary**

Engagement summary

Introduction

- As part of Stage 1 engagement for the design code for South Norfolk and Broadland, the team were keen to understand:
 - How the existing design guidance is used
 - What local people think makes South Norfolk and Broadland distinctive places
 - The challenges to achieving high quality residential design
 - The priorities that a design code should cover
- In Stage 1 (early Summer 2024), we held:
 - six online workshops** with Council officers, members, Parish and Town Councils, stakeholders, and local developers, agents and architects.
 - a **six-week online engagement**, on the Placechangers website.
- We also received written feedback from a range of statutory consultees and stakeholders, including for example Sport England, and Historic England.



Notes from one of the online workshops in Stage 1



Engagement summary

Online workshops

A series of online workshops were held across Summer 2024:

- Broadland and South Norfolk Council Officers (1 July 2024) ~ 12 attendees
- Broadland District Council Members (8 July 2024) ~ 12 attendees
- South Norfolk Members (9 July 2024) ~ 10 attendees
- Developers, agents, architects and applicants (11 July 2024) ~ 10 attendees
- Broadland Stakeholders (Parish and Town Councils) (22 July 2024) ~ 11 attendees
- South Norfolk Stakeholders (Parish and Town Councils) (23 July 2024) ~ 19 attendees

Engagement summary

Online Workshops

How is the existing guidance used? What works well, not so well.

Elements that work well

- Placemaking guide has good definitions of character areas
- Photos and precedents work really well in existing guides
- Conservation Area Appraisals often really helpful reference documents
- Some more prescriptive elements in existing guides work really well e.g. privacy distances to protect neighbouring amenity in Broadland Guide

Elements that works less well

- Existing guidance doesn't emphasise differences between the two districts
- South Norfolk guide quite long and difficult to find what you're looking for
- Having too many examples can be too prescriptive
- Not very practical
- Should have a more holistic view of development to create an integrated scheme e.g. SuDS and parking working together

Ideas for layout, form and structure of the document

- Document needs to be highly visual, with illustrations
- How do you meet this criteria? An evaluation matrix
- Web-based format with hyperlinks preferred (mentioned several times)
- Be clear on what is a 'must' compliance, and what is guidance
- Checklist of 'have you considered' could be helpful
- A suggestion that diagrams are more helpful than photos, similar to the national design guide e.g. layouts

- **Nature and landscape:** fields and landscape gaps between settlements; vistas; influence of rivers, ponds and streams; green spaces and village greens which are focal points for social interaction and play
- **Materials and architecture:** predominance of Norfolk red (and orange) brick; successful pastel render; use of flint in some areas (more common in North Norfolk); thatch in some places; “Crinkle Crankle” walls; a mixture of architectural styles from different periods
- **Built form:** linear development along key routes; distinctiveness of market towns; larger towns have higher densities, whereas villages houses are more spread out;
- **Open space and facilities:** successful village centres that provide local services should be protected; village greens and commons provide important space for people and wildlife
- **Place character and history:** rural nature of villages; agricultural history; lots of historic churches, barns, pubs that contribute to sense of local history; local details e.g. gates; general comments about the variety of areas across both districts making it difficult to identify specific distinctive features

Question 1: What design characteristics make South Norfolk and Broadland attractive and distinctive places?

For example, use of local/traditional materials; the traditional character of village centres; natural landscape features such as trees and hedges, open spaces and green gaps; views and vistas; water features

Water, local rivers, presence of the coast, better for boats and canals	Rural and historic landscape, including stone as an example	Important views/landscapes, churches, windmills and water pumps	Traditional stone buildings, agriculture and a wide range of interesting wildlife, flora and fauna in the landscape
Maintaining village centres - avoid those providing local services	Traditional stone buildings, including churches, windmills and water pumps	Highland landscape, including stone as an example	Villages and rural towns are relatively successful
Preserve and enhance the traditional quality of the landscape, including the views and vistas	Traditional stone buildings, including churches, windmills and water pumps	Highland landscape, including stone as an example	

Question 2: Think of examples of good design of new development locally and examples that have presented challenges - what makes them successful or not?

The Tingle Grove development in 2015 in Norfolk was a success in terms of its design, particularly its use of local materials and its integration with the landscape	Hospital in Norfolk - good example	Aylsham Hospital	St. Andrew's in Norfolk - good example
The new development in Norfolk - good example			

Question 1: What are the issues, challenges and key priorities for good design of new development?

Design of new development - how much can be done to make it better than the existing built environment	Parking and integrating this will be critical	Local development - how much can be done to make it better than the existing built environment	Need to have good design in the first place, not just in the second
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Question 2: What would you like a design code to achieve for Broadland and South Norfolk?

Design code should be a minimum standard, not a maximum standard	Design code should be a minimum standard, not a maximum standard	Design code should be a minimum standard, not a maximum standard	Design code should be a minimum standard, not a maximum standard
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Engagement summary

Online workshops

Key priorities for the design code:

- **Density and location of new development:** density should be carefully considered; concern that new government's agenda to push housing delivery will override design quality; should avoid linear development; development should not be placed near sources of pollution e.g. main roads
- **Character and materials:** lack of distinctiveness in new developments; need development that is sympathetic to, and reflective of local context and character; robust study/understanding of positive local character needed; balance between use of 'innovative' materials/styles and pastiche of existing styles; integrating new developments well with existing; materials should be durable and long lasting
- **Architecture and housing:** need for higher quality internal spaces; delivery of affordable housing must be prioritized; viability challenges and reduction in quality must be addressed; creating distinctive elements with landmarks to aid legibility; affordable housing should be pepper-potted, of equal quality, and not placed on less desirable parts of a site; variety of styles encouraged; demand for bungalows and specialized housing;
- **Parking:** size of spaces/garages need to fit modern cars; often not enough provision of parking spaces in new development; anti-social parking on verges/pavements that causes obstructions an issue; EV charging and communal car share schemes

Engagement summary

Online workshops

Key priorities for the design code:

- **Infrastructure/ roads:** unadopted roads are an issue in terms of future maintenance; safe vehicle ingress/egress is important (cases of one way in/out) not acceptable; new developments place emphasis on co-use of roads, often without pavements, which is bad for pedestrians; speed of vehicles needs to be lowered in residential areas.
- **Cycling/walking:** ability to walk safely and directly to local facilities and amenities mentioned several times; need appropriate crossing points
- **Nature and landscape:** need to be appropriate quality; integrated with SuDS; protect existing natural features; connections to countryside important; maintenance and management long term of open spaces mentioned frequently, cost is often passed to residents; demonstrate BNG; street trees; dark skies balanced with external lighting strategy
- **Climate change and sustainability:** surface water flooding an issue in many places – need to provide appropriate mitigation e.g. attenuation ponds; EV charging infrastructure; integrate PVs; Passivhaus principles; on-site energy generation
- **Community infrastructure:** need for amenities and facilities as part of large residential developments mentioned several times; play space and gathering spaces important; encourage all ages to be active;



Engagement summary

Online workshops

Key priorities for the design code:

General points and process:

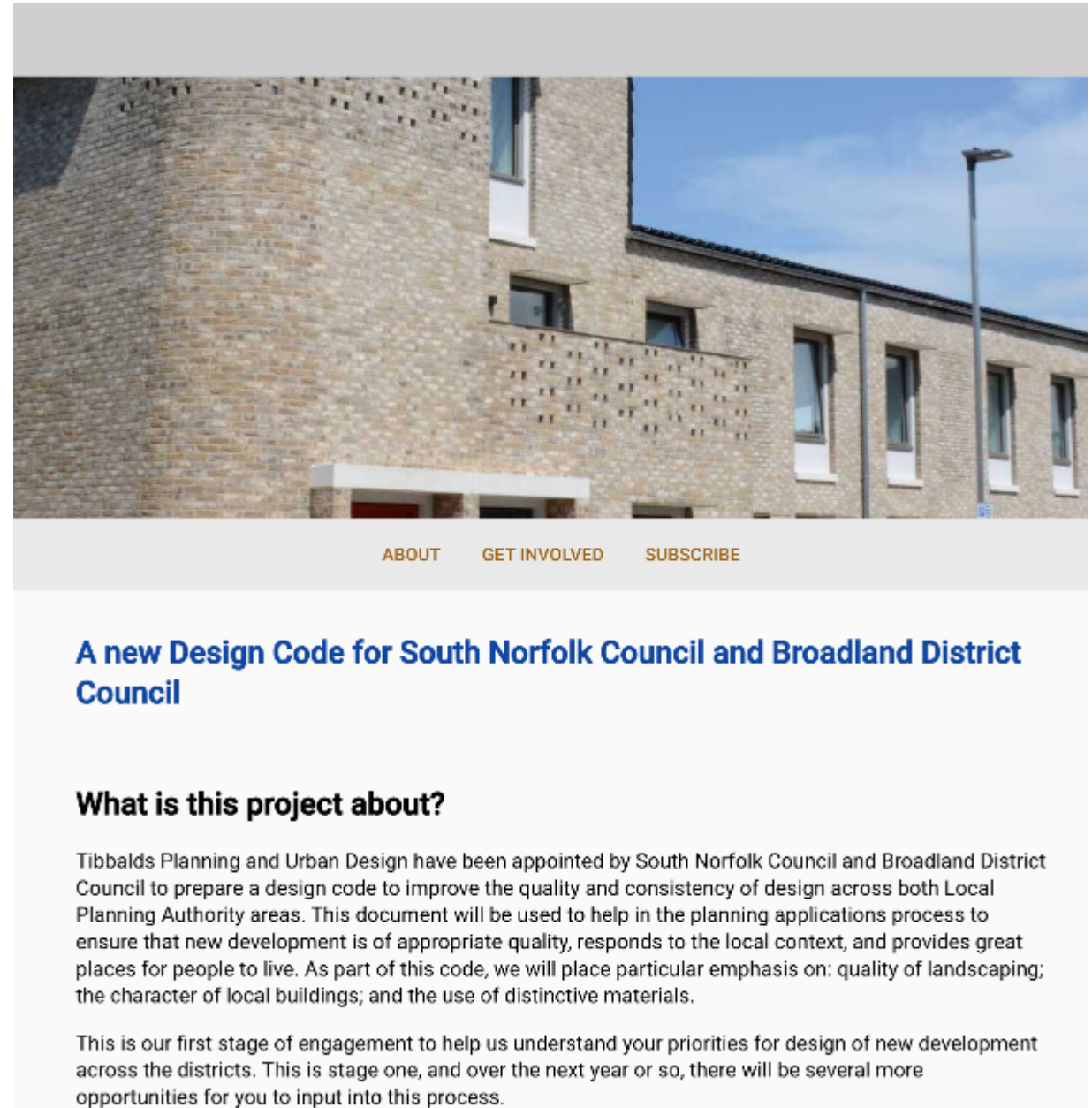
- Document should be clear, concise, and easily navigated
- Helpful to have guidance on 'exception' housing
- Should be flexible enough to future proof, and not too prescriptive
- Important to relate signpost to other strategies e.g. healthy streets approach; landscape character area assessments etc.
- Need to integrate neighbourhood plan design codes and local policies
- Code must be in line with existing (and future policies)

Engagement Summary

Placechangers website

- To reach as broad an audience as possible, a dedicated engagement website was set up
- This was advertised via press release and social media organised by South Norfolk and Broadland District Councils, and also advertised via the online workshops
- This interactive website gave an introduction to the project, including aims, intentions and indicative programme.
- Participants were then invited to leave feedback on elements of their local area that they thought were distinctive, as well as identify themes and priorities for future development.
- The website was available via URL or QR code.

<https://southnorfolkandbroadland.placechangers.co.uk/page>



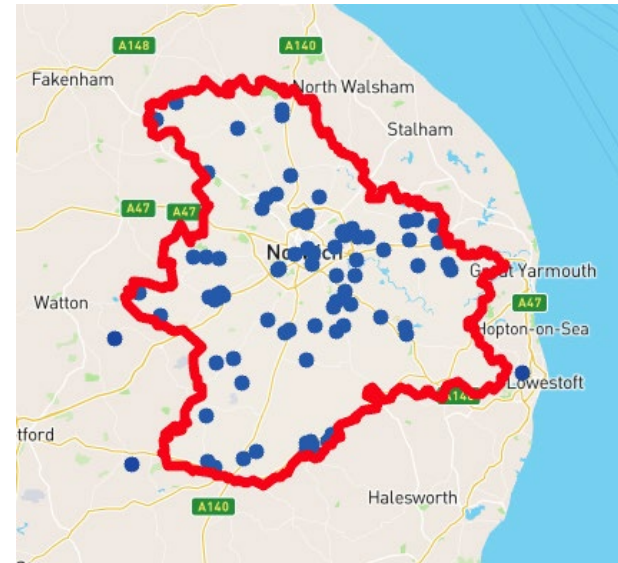
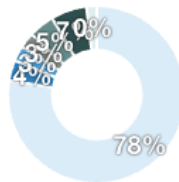
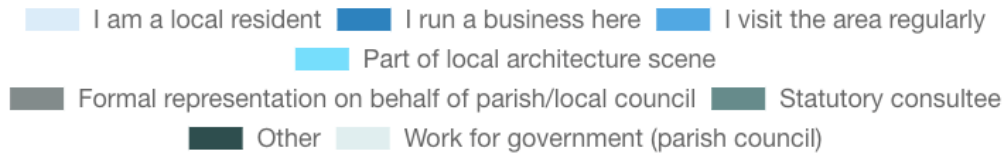
Engagement summary

Placechangers website

- 143 individual respondents
- Most respondents identified as local residents (78%). Other groups were represented in smaller numbers: 'Other' (7%); Statutory consultees (5%); local business owner (4%); and Formal representation on behalf of town/parish council (3%).

What applies to you?

107 total



- Respondents were spread out across the two authorities, including some responding from outside the authority boundaries, and some from in Norwich.

Engagement summary

Placechangers website

Question 1: Of the themes outlined above, which are the most important for you in new development? Please select your top three priorities.

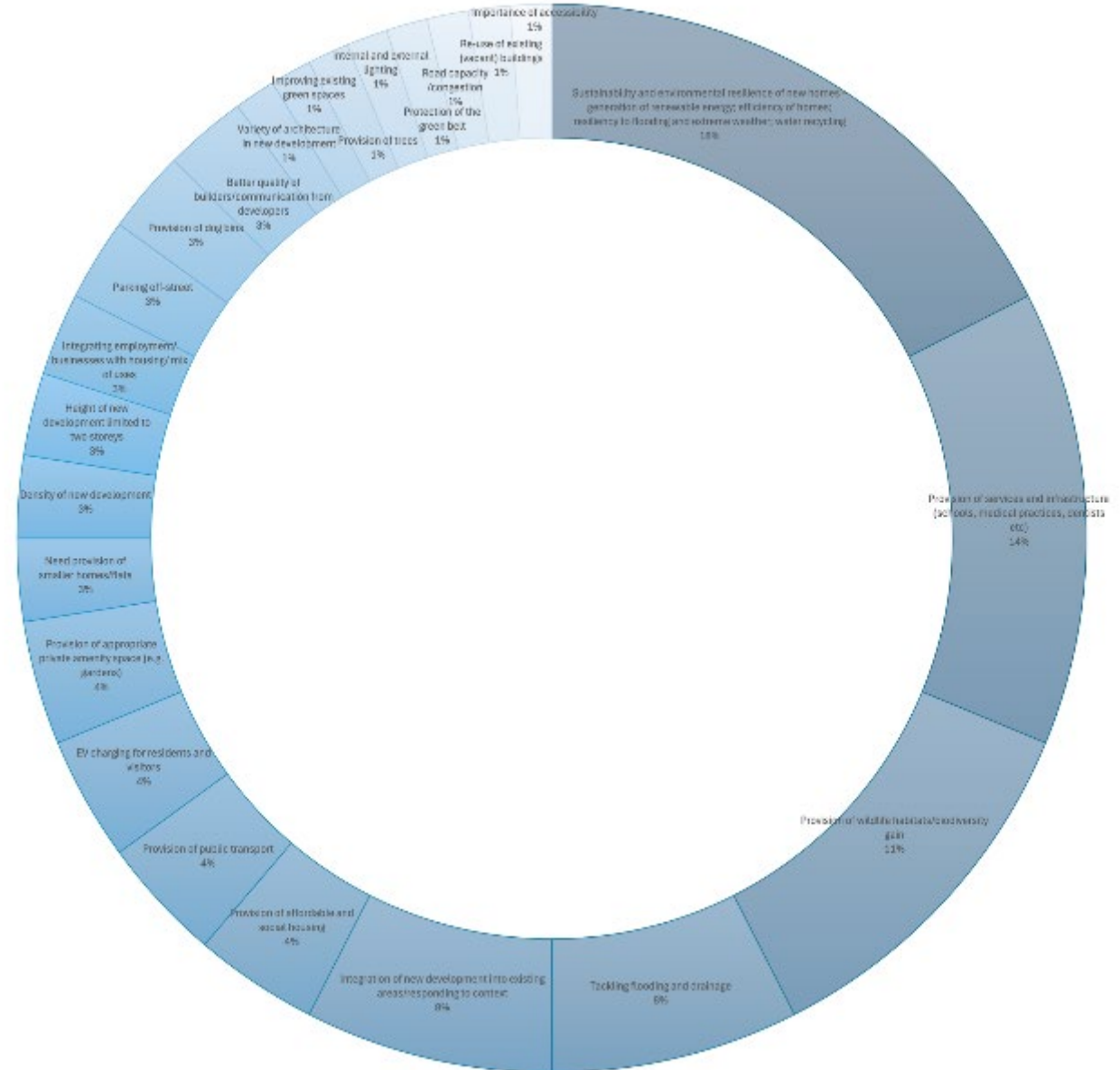
- The provision of landscaping and green infrastructure was considered the most important design element in new development (20%). Other important themes were the provision of parking (13%), the provision of open space and play space (11%), and walking and cycling connections (11%). The least important themes were the provision of public space (3%), the use of materials (4%), and building facades and detailing (5%).
- Overall, all of the themes were picked several times. This gives a fairly clear picture that all themes should be prioritised in new development. However, clearly open space, landscaping and the provision of green infrastructure are the focus for lots of people when it comes to new development. This may be because people have seen/experienced lots of examples where the provision of these aspects have been less successful in recent development, or just that people think this should be prioritised going forward.



Engagement summary

Placechangers website

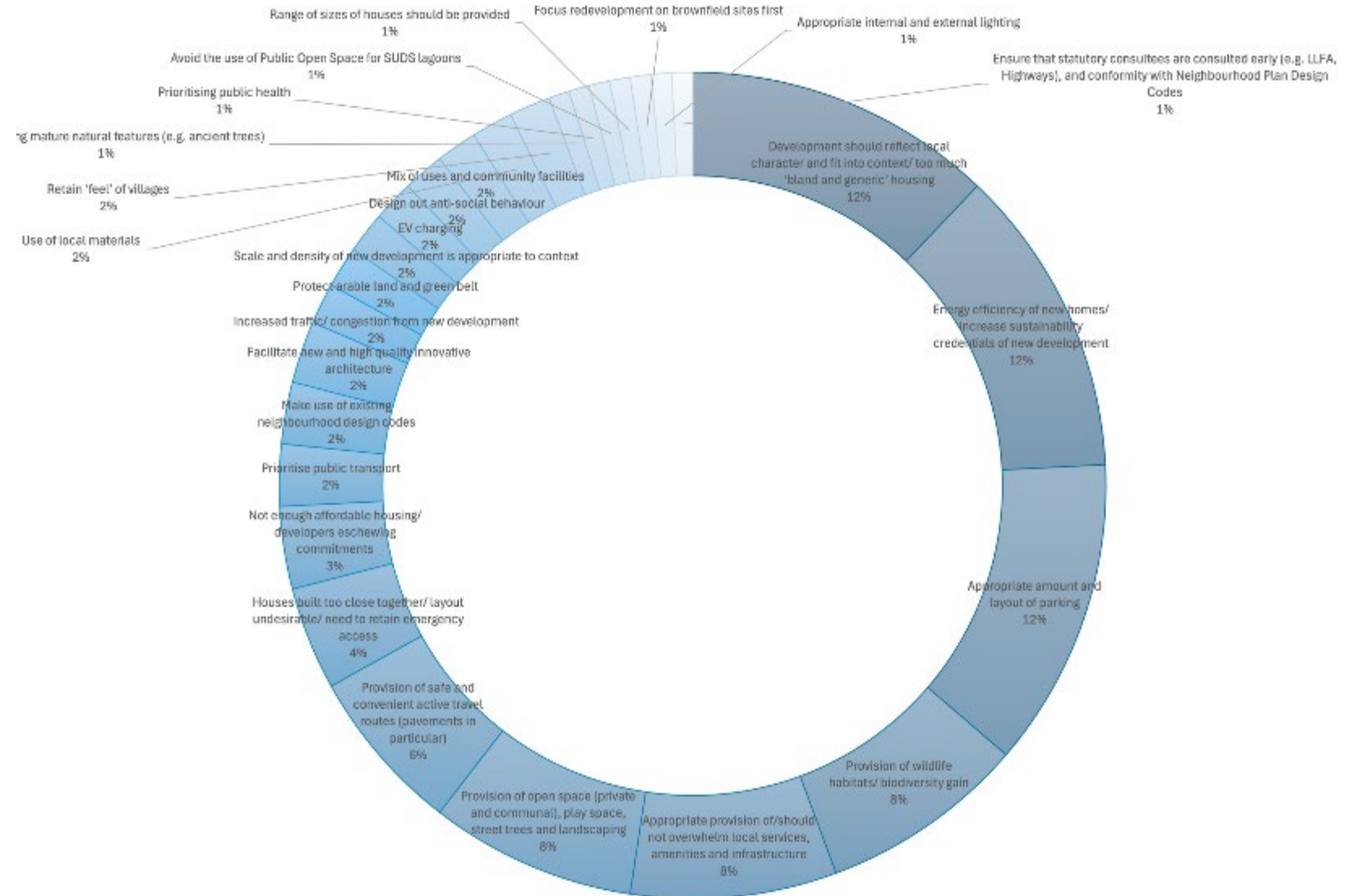
Question 1a: When asked whether there were any other themes that people thought were missing from the list above, the following responses were given:



Engagement Summary

Placechangers website

Question 2: Would you like to share any general comments on the emerging design code process:





Individual responses from stakeholders and statutory consultees

During the initial engagement period, we received a series of individual written responses, including:

- Broadland and South Norfolk Councils' Environmental teams
- Sports England
- Historic England

Quotes from Stage 1 engagement:

"The design code should have sustainability at its core, ensuring all buildings are carbon neutral, water efficient and provide a net gain for biodiversity"



"Please don't lose the character of the area. We are predominately a rural area and want to remain as such"



"More trees and wildlife areas. More play areas for children"



"There has to be adequate parking to keep pavements free"



Quotes from Stage 1 engagement:

"Please stop developers from replicating design over and over again in different parishes. Developments should be designed for the specific needs / aesthetic enhancement of individual parishes"



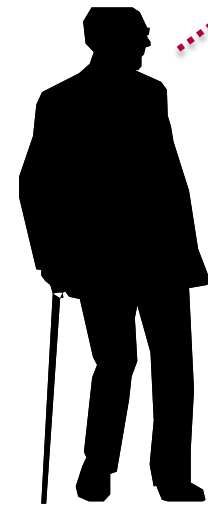
"Improve permeability between developments. Too many closes, cul de sacs, with poor parking provision"



"Please provide people with their own open space"



"Rural developments should be appropriately scaled for the local area"



Emerging key themes & priorities

- Importance of **high quality, integrated and multifunctional landscaping** and play space
- Sustainability, **energy efficiency and resilience** of new homes
- **Character, context** and reflecting/maintain the 'feel' of rural nature of the authorities
- Use of **local, contextual materials** where appropriate
- The use of cars will remain important, but it is the **design and integration of parking** which can be improved
- People would like **better and safer active travel routes** (and infrastructure)
- A range of **high quality, accessible, inclusive types of housing** (including affordable and specialized housing)
- **Local specificities should be picked up** (and retained) e.g. use of materials, local 'crinkle crinkle' walls, gates, 'romantic' rural character
- The **effects of climate change** need to be addressed from the outset e.g. flooding, increased urban temperatures
- **'Practical' elements of new developments** make a significant difference to how people feel in new developments e.g. location and design of refuse storage; management arrangements of open space; safety of walking routes
- **Priorities from brief: quality of landscaping, character of local buildings and the use of locally distinctive materials. These dovetail with the feedback received.**

