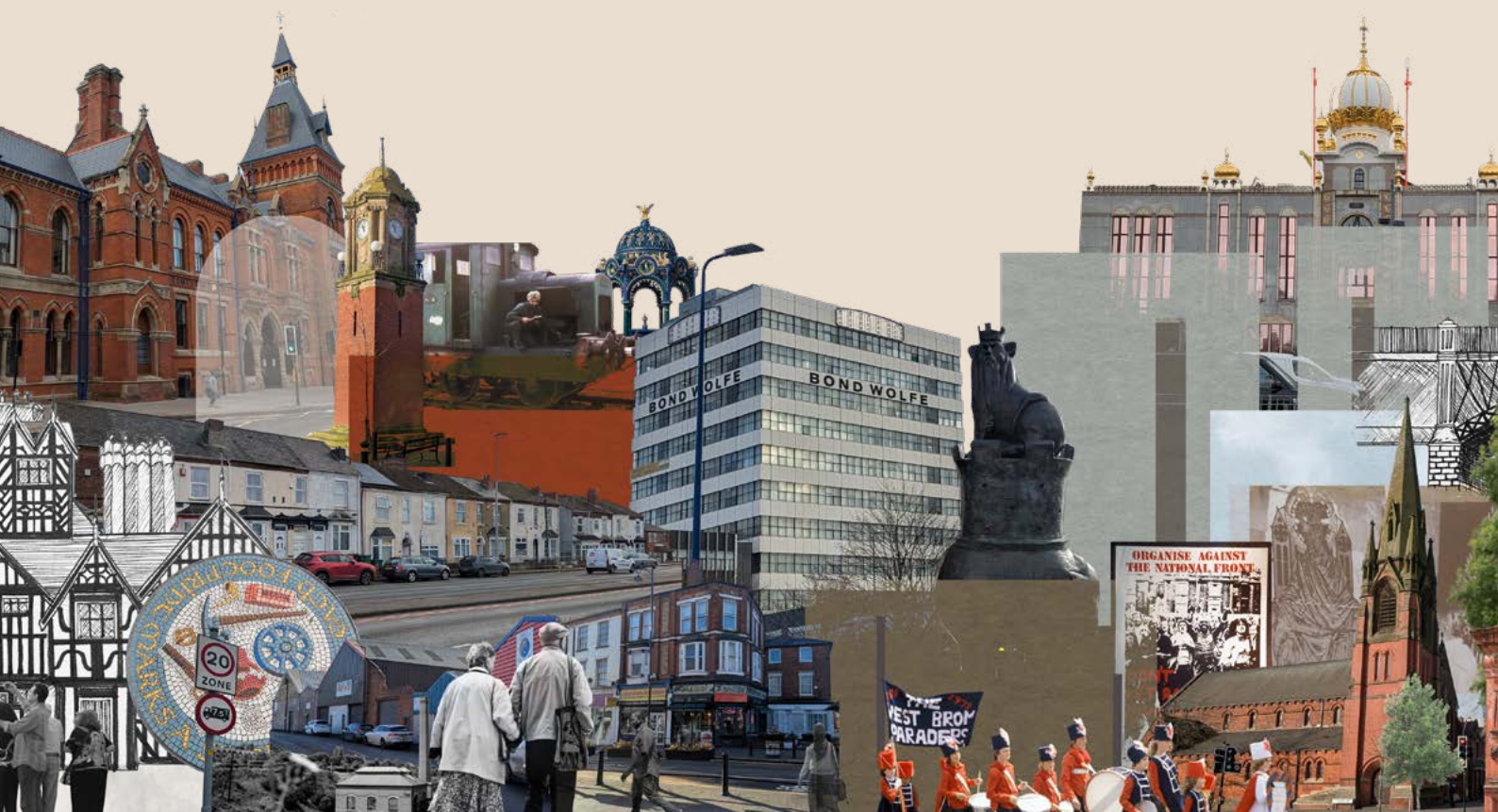


SANDWELL DESIGN CODE

Stage 1 Engagement report



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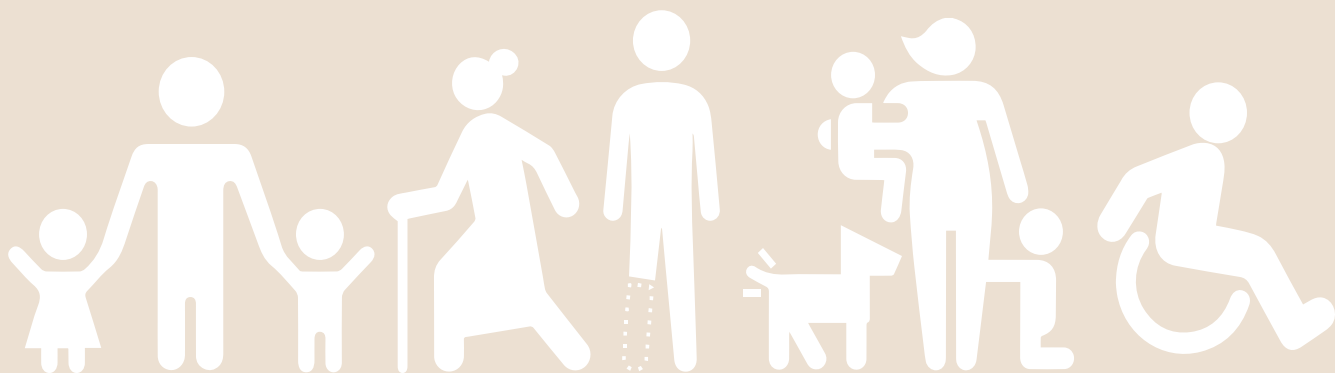
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The collage pictures used throughout this document have been prepared for the Design Code project using a mix of contemporary and historic images from the borough. This includes images from the Jubilee Arts Archive: www.jubileeartsarchive.com



How do neig



SMETHWICK



WEDNESBURY



TIPTON



www.sandwell.gov.uk/TheDesignCode

Do you want **your**
Neighbourhood
to look and feel?

WEST BROMWICH



ROWLEY REGIS



ON



OLDBURY



1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Sandwell Council has appointed a team led by Allies and Morrison to prepare a Design Code for the borough. The Sandwell Design Code will establish a set of rules which all new development in the borough must adhere to. It will help raise the quality of development across the borough as a whole and help ensure design proposals are directly informed by the character of distinct areas.

National Government requires all local authorities to establish design codes, and Sandwell is looking to develop a best practice borough-wide example. A key part of the process is extensive community engagement to ensure the Design Code is

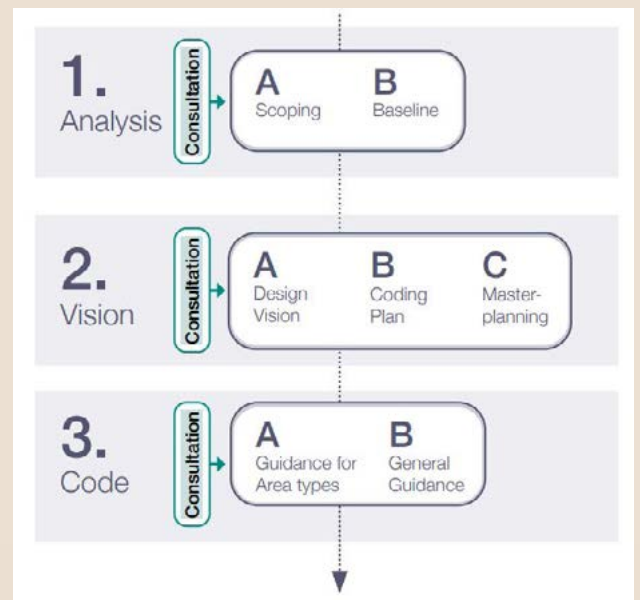
informed by local knowledge and priorities. This engagement report documents the first stage of engagement undertaken as part of the Sandwell Design Code project.

The purpose of this document is to summarise the comments that were received during the first stage engagement events. The public events included pop-up market stalls at local festival and community days, meetings with community groups and online workshops. A series of internal workshops with various Council teams was also conducted.



The Design Code will be co-produced through a collaborative approach, with community feedback playing a central role in shaping its outcome.

The National Model Design Code provides guidance on the stages of work and engagement for all design codes. There are three stages (outlined in the adjacent diagram) and this report covers the engagement undertaken as part of Stage 1.



1.2 ENGAGEMENT AIMS

The engagement for the Sandwell Design Code seeks to meaningfully involve the community throughout the process, helping to shape a collaborative strategy that reflects local insight, history, and lived experience. The stories, knowledge, and everyday needs shared by residents and stakeholders reveal what people value most about Sandwell, while also highlighting the areas where change and improvement are needed. This depth of understanding is central to creating a Design Code that is rooted in the community and guided by the people who know it best.

The core aims of the engagement are to:

- Reach a broad and diverse range of people by combining in-person and digital engagement, offered in varied formats, locations, days, and times.
- Build on existing local knowledge and feedback, establishing a bottom-up, community-led approach.
- Listen with empathy and openness to understand the full range of perspectives.
- Start the conversation early, creating space for open dialogue and keeping stakeholders well-informed throughout.
- Be inclusive by offering multiple ways for people to take part, regardless of age, background, or ability.

This participatory approach at an early stage has helped lay a positive, inclusive, and collaborative foundation for the project.

1.3 TRANSPARENCY

The project team are committed to maintaining a transparent and inclusive engagement process by providing clear, accessible, and timely information about the Sandwell Design Code at every stage. This includes sharing project timelines and regular progress updates, such as this engagement feedback report, to keep the community informed.

Updates will be communicated through a variety of channels, including the dedicated project page on the Sandwell Council website and social media platforms.

By making all relevant materials easily accessible and maintaining regular, open communication, the project team aims to foster trust, encourage ongoing participation, and ensure that the community remains well-informed and confident in the process. This commitment to transparency helps build a shared sense of ownership in the future of Sandwell.

1.4 USING THE FEEDBACK

Community and stakeholder feedback is a vital part of shaping the Sandwell Design Code. The team has reviewed responses carefully, using both thematic and quantitative analysis to identify recurring issues, key priorities, and areas of consensus or concern. This analysis will directly inform the next stages of the project. Insights gathered during Stage 1 will support the development of a set of priorities.

These priorities will be shared for further public input during future stages of engagement. Throughout the process, the team will document how feedback has been taken into account to demonstrate its influence on decision-making. This approach not only builds transparency and trust, but also helps to ensure that the Sandwell Design Code reflects the aspirations of those who live, work, and visit Sandwell.



1.5 IDENTIFYING STAKEHOLDERS

LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Sandwell is home to a vibrant set of towns, communities and neighbourhoods. A defining common feature of these diverse communities is the strength of local pride. The Black Country can-do attitude is clearly evident in the high levels of entrepreneurship and in the vibrancy of locally organised events through the borough. Local people are strongly involved in supporting communities through the network of community centres, local outreach groups, food banks and faith organisations. Many of these lean back on the history of working community clubs which were the centre of communities during Sandwell's heavy industrial activities through much of the 20th century. The communities of Sandwell identify much more with the individual towns and areas that make up the borough, rather than with the borough itself. As such the approach to external community engagement first focused at this town or place level.

EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS

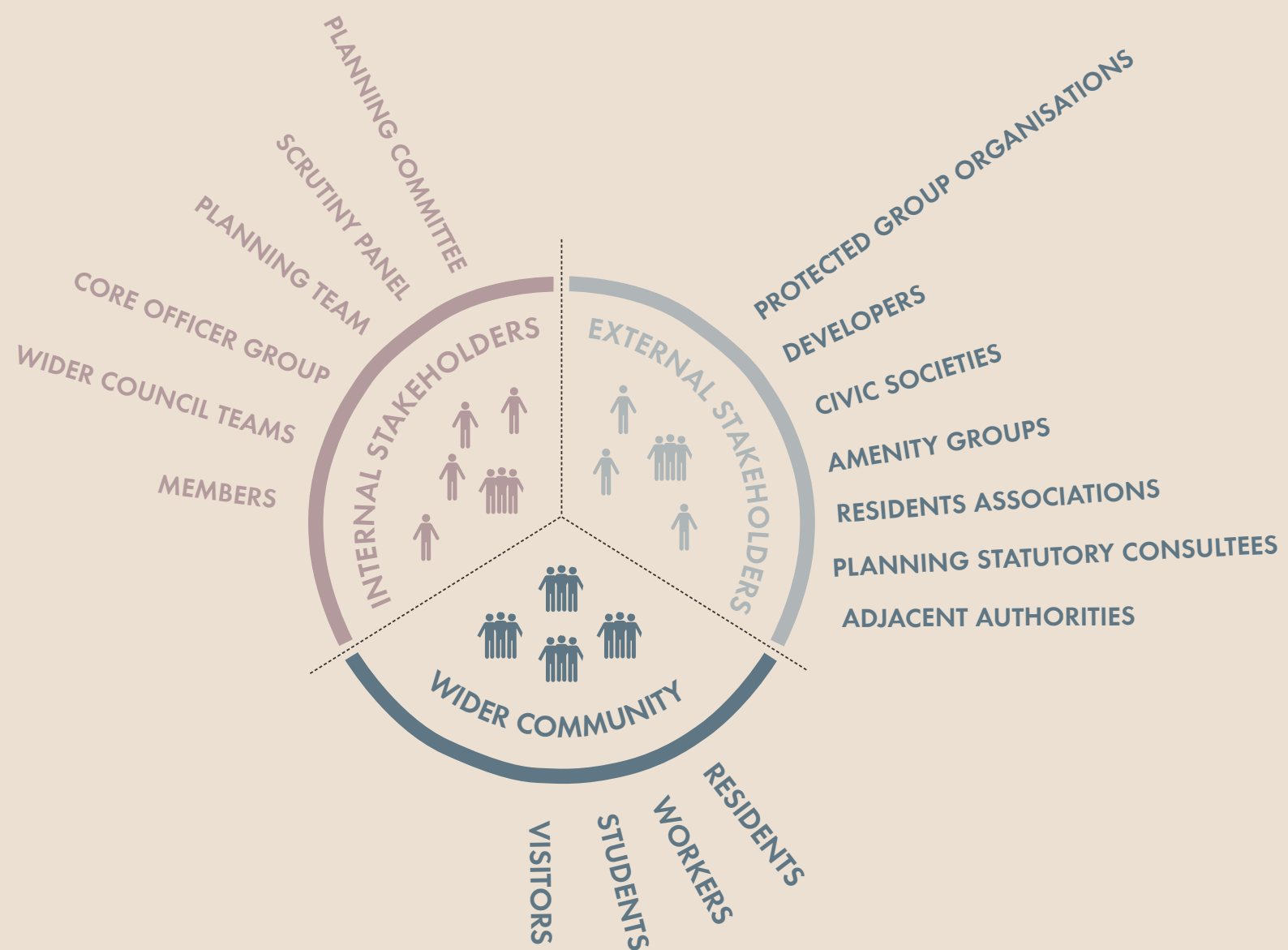
External engagement must also embrace those active in the development and design industry in the borough. Landowners, developers and design teams will have a wealth of experience of bringing forward applications and development on the ground and therefore are important voices to include throughout the process.

Statutory consultees such as Natural England, Environment Agency and Historic England will also be engaged at key points through the process.

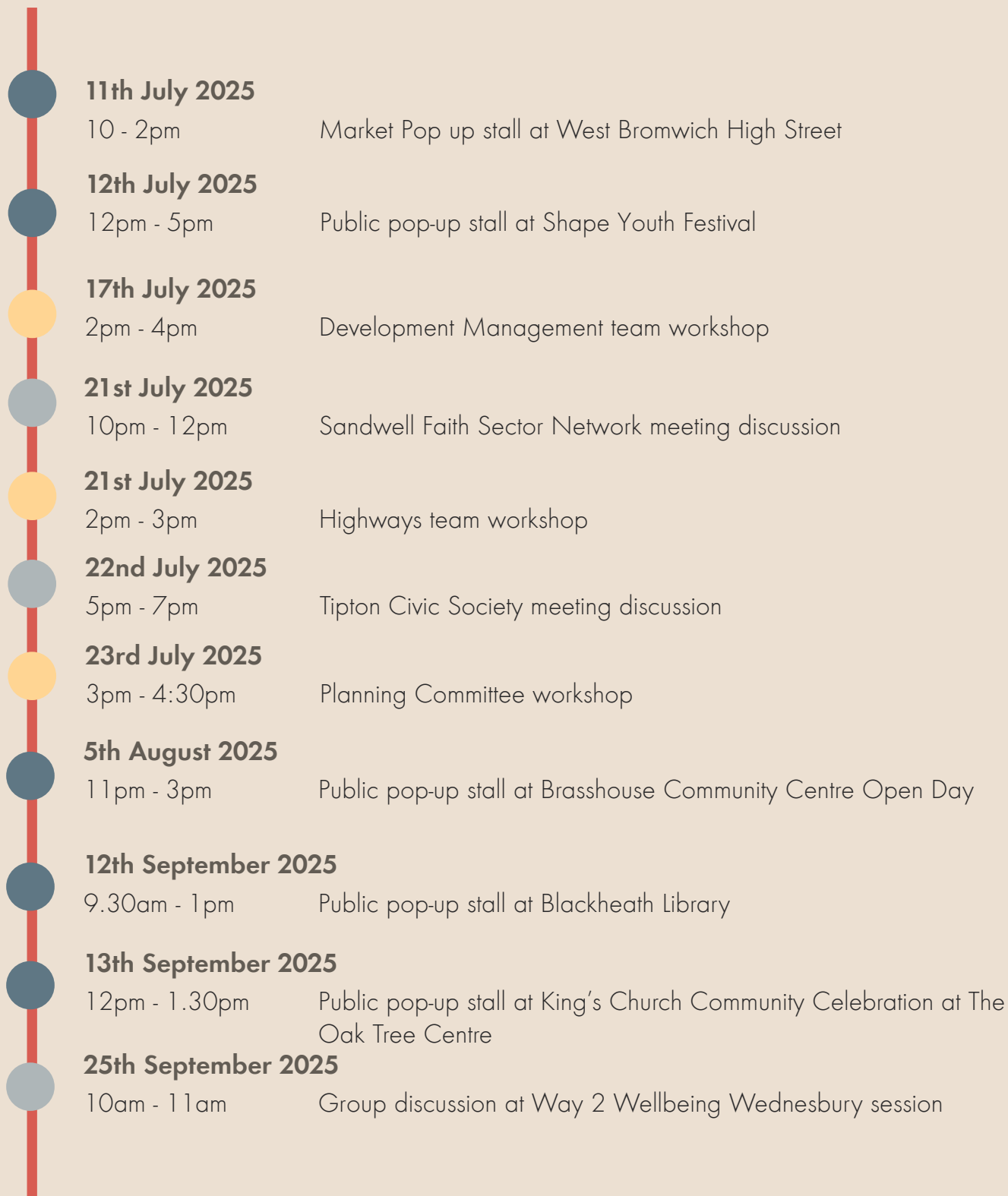
INTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS

Engagement with the Council is extremely important from the beginning as they are able to bring great insights to the table. The experience of the Development Management team, alongside the Policy, Highways, Planning, Public Health and Regeneration teams often combine to steer the priority topics or interventions in a Design Code. Throughout Stage 1, the team have been working closely and collaboratively with these teams to draw in the experience from across Sandwell's planning and wider teams early on.

Local members and councillors from the Planning Committee and Scrutiny Panel have also provided valuable early insight into local community priorities and this has been instrumental in helping the team understand the sensitivities on particular design or character issues on the ground.

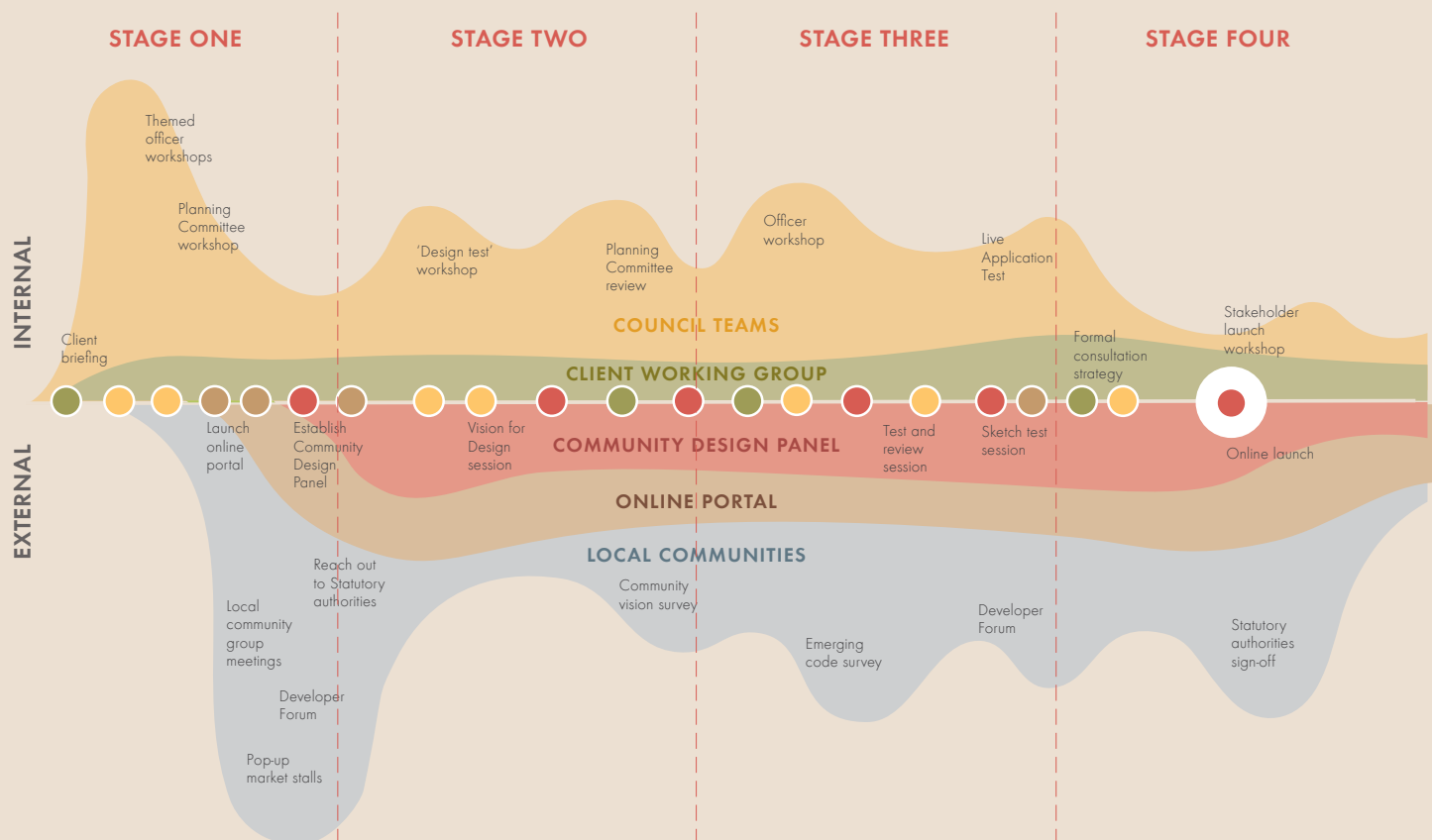


1.6 STAGE 1 ENGAGEMENT TIMELINE



1.7 WIDER PROJECT ENGAGEMENT TIMELINE

Engagement process



1.8 STAGE 1 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT METHODS

POP-UP OUTDOOR STALL

Five pop up events were held across the Summer. Each offered an informal opportunity for passers-by and visitors to get involved, ask questions and explore what is special about their neighbourhood and what should inform the design of new development. These events allowed for extensive discussions and for local people to understand the value a Design Code could have in improving the quality of local areas and addressing needs.

**West
Bromwich
High Street
Market**

11th July

**SHAPE Youth
Festival**

12th July

**Brasshouse
Community
Centre Day**

5th August

**Blackheath
Library**

12th September

**King's Church
Celebration
Day at The Oak
Tree centre**

13th September

ONLINE PORTAL

A project specific website for the Sandwell Design Code was launched in July. Whilst the baseline analysis work was taking place, some early maps and observations were added to the website. An online survey asking people for views on their neighbourhood, recent new development and their priority issues for change was open until 15th September 2025.

Online Portal

**www.sandwell.gov.uk/TheDesignCode
with an online survey open throughout the
Summer**

FOCUS COMMUNITY GROUP EVENTS

In addition to the pop-up events, the team also spoke with a range of local community groups and representatives. In-person and online discussions allowed members to input their views on local areas, design quality generally and where the priorities should be focused.

Sandwell Faith Sector Network

**21st July
(online)**

Tipton Civic Society meeting

**22nd July
(in-person)**

Wednesbury Way 2 Wellness Group

**25th September
(in-person)**

Smethwick Local History Society Questionnaire

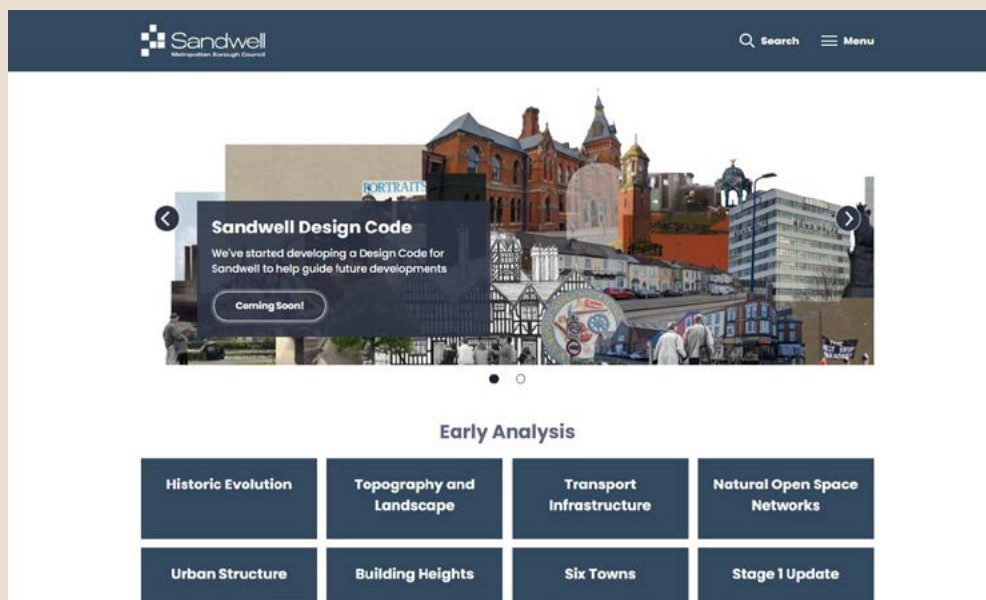
**August
(online)**

1.9 STAGE 1 COMMUNICATION TOOLS

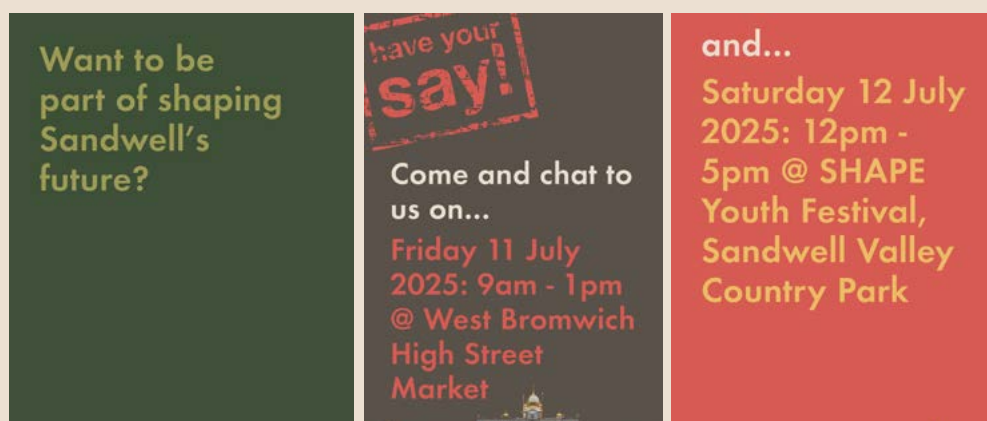
The Design Code website provided an important hub of information on the project throughout Stage 1. Here local people and stakeholders could obtain the latest information on events, make contact with the team via the project email address and complete an online survey to feed into the early work.

The Council established a targeted communication programme to promote the first stage of engagement. This involved the following:

- An introduction to the project and promotion of the Design Code web pages on the Council website in the summer edition of the **Herald**.
- **Social media** promotion through the Council's accounts using the bespoke graphics developed for the project to promote the events and online survey.
- **QR code links** to the website were circulated and provided at each event.
- **Local councillors** also helped promote the engagement activities through their community networks and encouraged local people to come along.



The Design Code website launched in July and updated through Stage 1



Events were promoted through the Council's social media channels



Example graphic from the pop-up market stall material





2

EVENTS

2.1 ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

Underpinning the wider engagement strategy for the Design Code are the following principles. These have guided the team's approach to conversations throughout Stage 1:

- **Start local** – go to where people are. Sandwell is a collection of towns and communities and the project needs to be made relevant directly to these communities.
- **Build from previous engagement inputs** – before reaching out to internal or external stakeholders, first the team reviewed all the engagement inputs to date to help build stakeholder confidence in the project and avoid re-inventing the wheel on past discussions.
- **Empower through clarity on scope** – be clear what a Design Code can and can't do and the spectrum of issues it can and can't deal with.
- **Recognise design is not at the top of many stakeholders' priorities** – make it relevant to their priorities and incentive consistent involvement in the process.
- **Don't see the project timeline and outputs as the end of the line** – recognise that building community partnership around design can have a longer role leading to funding applications and delivery.



The choice of events and community meetings was driven by two key objectives:

- to gain inputs from all parts of the borough to cover each of the six towns of Sandwell; and
- to reach a wide spectrum of lived experiences that reflect the demographic of the borough and represent as many protected characteristics as possible.

As part of the Sandwell Design Code an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) is being undertaken. The set of protected characteristics below has been used to help identify the best types of events and

activities to reach those with really valuable lived experiences to inform the design priorities for the code. As the project moves into the next stages, these characteristics will continue to steer the engagement strategy.

The table below shows how the events in Stage 1 address the characteristics so far.

Age	Young people	SHAPE Youth Festival
		King's Church / Oak Tree Centre Community Day
		Brasshouse Community Day
	Older people	Blackheath Library
		Smethwick Local History Society questionnaire
		Tipton Civic Society
Disability	All ages	West Bromwich Market
		Access officer and his contacts questionnaire
		Wednesbury Wellbeing Group
Gender reassignment		
Marriage and civil partnership		
Pregnancy and maternity		Brasshouse Community Day
Race		Sandwell Faith Sector Network
		West Bromwich Market
Religion or belief	Four main faiths	Sandwell Faith Sector Network
	Christian	King's Church / Oak Tree Centre Community Day
Sex		Brasshouse Community Day
		King's Church / Oak Tree Centre Community Day
Sexual orientation		
Carer Low income groups Veterans/Armed Forces Community Other	Carers	SHAPE Youth Festival
		King's Church / Oak Tree Centre Community Day
	Low income	Brasshouse Community Day
		Wednesbury Wellbeing Group
		King's Church / Oak Tree Centre Community Day

2.2 DATA ANALYSIS

The following chapter presents the key messages that emerged from each of the engagement activities undertaken between the end of June and mid September 2025.

These insights were drawn from conversations, post-it notes, and mapped annotations gathered during drop-in sessions, pop-up events, and focus group discussions. All feedback, whether given verbally or written on post-it notes, labels or directly on maps, was transcribed and digitised.



2.3 **SHAPE YOUTH FESTIVAL**

The team set up a pop-up stall at the Shape Youth Festival in Sandwell Valley Park on Saturday 12th July. This offered an informal opportunity for festival attendees to get involved and let us know what they like or dislike about their neighbourhood and what they would like new development to look and feel like. The core focus for this event was to engage with young people and their families and carers. The stall included activities for primary and secondary age children to gain their input in creative ways.

GREEN SPACES (24)

One of the most common themes of discussion was green spaces. Respondents shared their love of their local parks and green spaces, and that these were important assets to local character. A large number of attendees want to see more green spaces and parks. In particular, comments were made about a lack of local parks, trees and play areas. The importance of activities for children and young people (particularly secondary age children) within parks was highlighted. Participants mentioned their concerns of losing these spaces to new development. Many also flagged a wish to see the canals celebrated more as part of the green space network.

PARKING (6)

There were a number of calls for parking to be improved - concerns around the lack of parking and the need for a better strategy on parking. A number of attendees commented that cars were parking on pavements and blocking building entrances because of a lack of formal parking provision.

HOUSING/DEVELOPMENT (17)

In general, there was a preference for new development to deliver houses rather than flats, with comments expressing a dislike for flats. However, the discussions highlighted a strong desire to deliver affordable homes to address local demand. In a number of discussions, attendees were happy to consider other types of housing (including flats) as long as they were thoughtfully designed to deal with the needs of families - home learning space, good sound insulation, storage space etc. There were concerns about the variety and accessibility of housing options. A number of the children were keen to see more exciting designs for new development, they also flagged desires to see growing space and communal green areas as part of residential developments. Another common theme was the environmental performance of new homes, with people wanting to see solar panels and well-insulated homes.

CYCLING (4)

Comments were mixed around cycling with some asking for more cycle lanes and others saying existing cycle routes are under utilised. In general, younger people (and their parents) wanted to see more and better cycle infrastructure.

MAINTENANCE (6)

The theme of maintenance and supporting infrastructure came up frequently. Comments ranged from concerns about general maintenance, to bins, building maintenance and a desire to see better maintenance of public spaces.

SAFETY (5)

There was mixed views on safety with some people saying they felt unsafe and others feeling completely safe. Some of the difference depended on where they were living in Sandwell although there wasn't a clear pattern and therefore age, time of day and other factors will be influencing this.

YOUTH INFRASTRUCTURE (11)

There was a strong message that participants wanted to see more activities for young people. Many attendees said there was a lack of free social spaces for young people to go to particularly teenagers. The need for more youth clubs was flagged frequently.

TRANSPORT (9)

Comments on transport were varied with some saying places were well connected and others wanting to see improvement. Accessibility was raised in relation to needing footpaths to be wider and pedestrian routes needing to be improved. Pavements and roads being too narrow was also mentioned. An attendee noted that buses are often late and that they start too late and finish too early. There were also positive comments about public transport provision generally.

TREES (5)

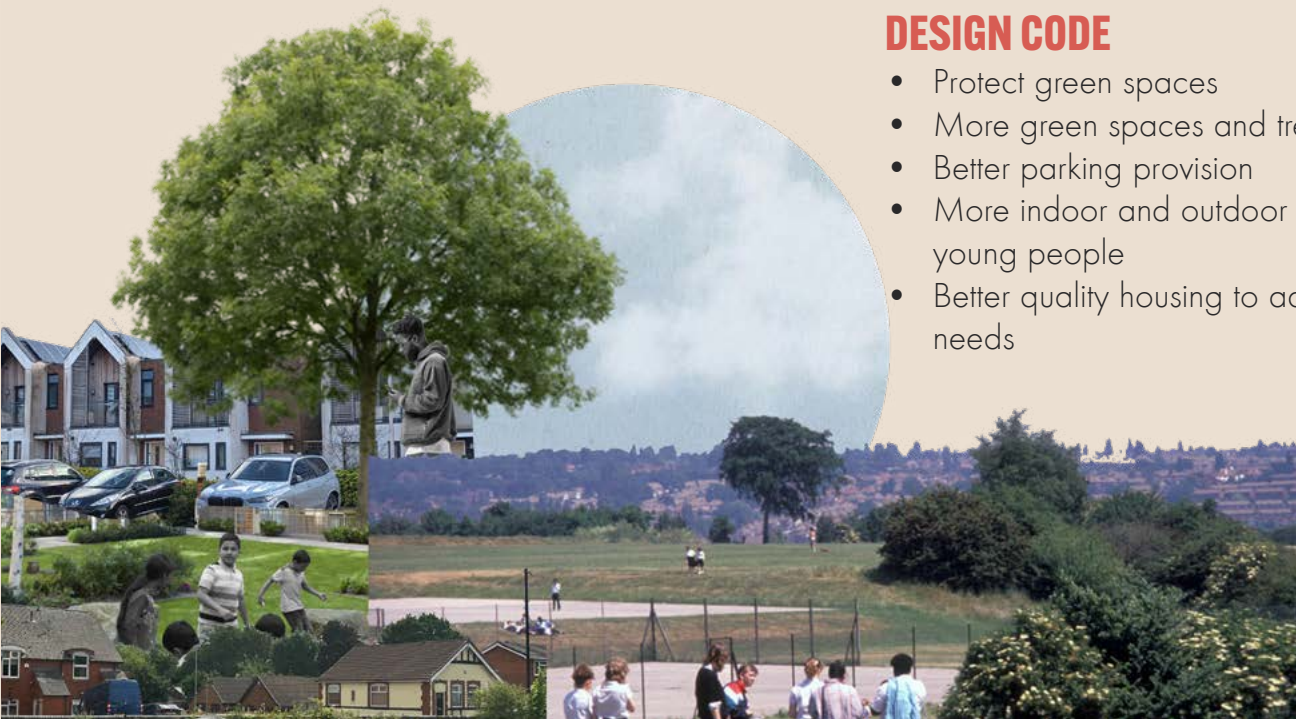
Trees were specifically mentioned by a number of children. They wanted to a stop to any trees being cut down, and to see many more trees planted across the borough. Most wanted to see more trees, with one attendee commenting that she chose her walking routes to take in streets with trees.

OTHER

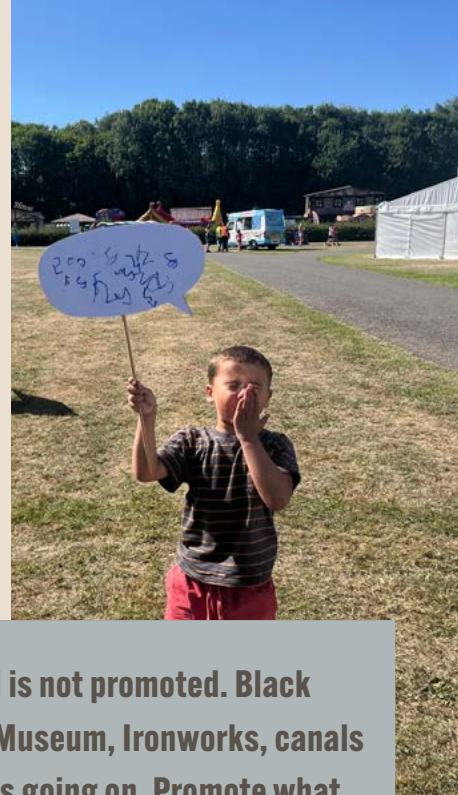
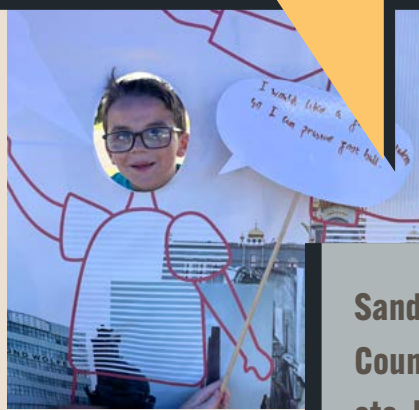
A number of participants emphasised how good the borough was as a place to live, but that there needed to be much more promotion of existing assets and activities.

HEADLINE MESSAGES FOR THE DESIGN CODE


- Protect green spaces
- More green spaces and trees
- Better parking provision
- More indoor and outdoor spaces for young people
- Better quality housing to address needs



SHAPE YOUTH FESTIVAL



Sandwell is not promoted. Black Country Museum, Ironworks, canals etc. Loads going on. Promote what we do have rather than slagging the area off. Get a map that shows all the iconic buildings and all the walking routes.



Building in the gap between historical buildings. Need to be sympathetic to them.

There needs to be culture in new development. There are no activities for young people and no music facilities in Smethwick.

Larger parks are really great

My bike got broken because people used the bike shelter for storing bins.





I would like to see purpose built green spaces in the centre of development. Including growing food spaces and space for Summer get togethers.

We need way more in the way of green spaces and quality public places in the town. Lots of good improvement over recent years which the council should build upon!

Parking really needs thinking about..



There is a street vacuum cleaner in New Square but the rest is left and not kept clean and that has an influence on all the rest. Maintenance is required.

Flats make sense for the crisis, want more detached houses but we need lots of homes. Flats should be zoned in urban areas. Detached further out, where there is less congestion.



More spaces for young people please!

Please stop speeding cars!

2.4 WEST BROMWICH HIGH STREET MARKET

The team set up a pop up stall as part of West Bromwich High Street market on Friday 11th July. This offered an informal opportunity for passers-by to get involved by having an informal conversation and write down their thoughts and ideas about design in the borough. There was a huge volume of people providing inputs from young adults through to elderly people. The market draws from a wide area with participants from across the borough as well as neighbourhoods close to West Bromwich.

SAFETY (20)

The most common single topic of discussion was safety. Many participants expressed safety concerns, and in particular suggestions that the high street and other areas were not safe after dark. However, there were also a large number of comments emphasising how safe people felt in the borough and what a strong sense of community there was. Some attendees made the link between higher footfall or activity with greater feelings of safety.

GREEN SPACES (20)

In general, people shared their appreciation of existing green spaces and parks. There is a clear demand for an increase in the quantity and quality of public green spaces. The importance of maintaining these spaces is evident, with calls for "improved green maintenance." People expressed the need for more play areas and local parks, as well as more greenery and trees generally.

RETAIL (26)

Many attendees wanted to see an improved retail quality expressing dissatisfaction with the high street's decline and the lack of quality and variety in the current retail offer. In part, this was a more common topic as the event was held as part of the high street market and many said they really valued the market.

HOUSING (22)

There were multiple calls for improved housing quality and more variety in the housing offering. Concern were expressed about both existing council homes and new developments. Comments included dissatisfaction with the condition of older council homes, describing them as "too old" and in need of refurbishment. There was also scepticism about new apartment blocks, with some questioning their desirability. People want to see quality new homes built with robust materials.

TRANSPORT (14)

A number of participants expressed concerns about a decline in bus services, with inadequate services to reach where people need to go. Other issues which were mentioned included too much traffic on the roads and the price of parking. Specific comments highlighted problems of residential parking overcrowding, including a comment mentioning cars blocking driveways.

CANALS (2)

There were positive comments about the cycle path along the canal and the need to preserve the planting and green corridors along the canal routes.

PEOPLE LOVE WEST BROM (6)

There were a large number of people expressing their love and positivity for West Bromwich. Comments included “We love everything about West Brom!”. There were also some that felt West Bromwich had gone downhill, but the majority were positive.

YOUTH ACTIVITIES (7)

Respondents emphasised the demand for dedicated youth spaces and activities, with many citing this as a priority. Many attendees made a link between concerns about safety/anti-social behaviour and the lack of facilities for young people.

ACCESSIBILITY (3)

There were calls for improved pedestrian accessibility, with improved pedestrian paths and footpaths a common ask. Step-free access to housing was also raised.

COMMUNITY (7)

There were a number of comments on the need for community spaces and activities. Comments emphasise the need for “places where people can come together” and highlight community centres and community spaces as a priority.

OTHER COMMENTS

Other comments which were mentioned included celebrating local heritage and improving cycle parking.

HEADLINE MESSAGES FOR THE DESIGN CODE

- Improve safety
- Improve housing quality and offer
- More community / youth spaces
- More and better quality green space
- Improve pedestrian access

**PRESERVE GREEN SPACES AND
DO MORE GREEN SPACES.**



WEST BROM MARKET

In West Brom there is a general lack of quality shops, although I love the market. It needs to be tidier.

We need way more in the way of green spaces and quality public places in the town. Lots of good improvement over recent years which the council should build upon!

Cycle route along canal is good. Interesting plants along canal, better maintenance is needed. Need to preserve the planting. Preservation of trees - don't chop down unnecessarily.

Don't want high rise in West Brom. Want to feel safe and that scale makes it tricky.

I love West Brom. No market like this in Dudley or Stourbridge. Keep improving it, it's great!



Renovate old vacant buildings and above shops. Empty parks.
Renovate buildings for housing. Replace old pubs in housing
development. Old factories better use.



There is too many people hanging around and need to be environments for people. I would like to see more green spaces and better quality housing!

Development needs to deliver good community offer for people to come together. Like the Custard Factory - can we do that in West Brom?



Need social spaces for young people



2.5 **BRASSHOUSE COMMUNITY DAY**

The team attended a community day at the Brasshouse Community Centre in Smethwick on Tuesday 5th August. Brasshouse Community Centre is run by North Smethwick Development Trust, which delivers events and services that include both community businesses and projects. The event hosted groups from the local area including the local sailing club and activities for the children and families. A variety of people attended the event, mainly parents of children, who were able to tell us about their experience of Sandwell.

HOUSING (15)

Housing came up regularly with a desire to see a wider variety of housing choices as a priority. Attendees highlighted the need for more flats and maisonettes, and adaptability and flexibility in new housing to accommodate changing family sizes and multiple generations. Concerns were raised about illegal adjustments to properties, the need for new social housing types, and problems of overcrowding, particularly in Smethwick. One attendee highlighted issues with existing housing in areas like Tipton, describing it as having “bad design” and feeling unchanged.

COMMUNITY (11)

Community was a strong theme, comments emphasised the importance of community as a core value in Sandwell. The need for more diverse high streets with increased community uses, and shared community hubs and civic spaces was noted. A number of attendees stressed the importance of community spaces, the need for more, and the role they play in bringing people together.

GREEN SPACE (13)

The comments regarding green space highlight the community’s appreciation for existing green areas, with a desire for better connectivity between these pockets of greenery. There was a strong message about focusing on maintaining and improving existing green spaces, and ensuring access for children. One attendee noted the need for green spaces to link to all development. It was noted that people wanted to see more types of activity in green space with a number particularly wanting to see activity inclusive of elderly people.

SAFETY (10)

Attendees highlighted several safety concerns, particularly regarding young people and public spaces. There is a strong message on ensuring young people feel safe and connected, with specific mentions of not taking kids to certain areas like West Brom due to perceived danger. One attendee noted antisocial behaviour around canals as a problem. Concerns were raised about the stigma associated with crime in certain types of housing, with a preference for council houses over flats.

13%
of comments related to
green space

69%
of these comments were wanted
to see better green links and
more accessible green space

SUPPORTING INFRASTRUCTURE (4)

Multiple comments called for improved maintenance regarding general upkeep and appearance, as well as rubbish on the streets. Comments noted the need for improvements and clean-up of high streets and town centres, indicating a desire for better maintenance of public spaces. The community group Warley Woods Trust was mentioned as a good precedent.

MOVEMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE (14)

In general there was concern over feeling unsafe with the amount of traffic and cars on the road. There were multiple calls to see improved pedestrian and cycle paths. The need for improved public transport was also flagged. Attendees emphasised that parking is poor and that there is currently parking overcrowding with not enough space for cars in some neighbourhood streets.

OTHER COMMENTS

Other comments included better wayfinding, improved pedestrian access and better youth infrastructure. One member noted accessibility issues, especially bridges, highlighting the long distanced between accessible bridges for disabled people.

HEADLINE MESSAGES FOR THE DESIGN CODE

- Improve housing quality and range of typologies
- Improve safety
- More community spaces
- More green links and improved green space
- Better pedestrian routes and more public transport



BRASSHOUSE COMMUNITY DAY



Young people must feel safe, we should make spaces for them to feel connected again



Pedestrianisation builds community, removing cars on high streets.



There is anti-social behaviour around canals with kids pushing people in.

Legacy of the industry is part of Sandwell but makes it tough for new development

There needs to be a wider choice of housing. Adaptability should be incorporated into all new housing developments.

More events for diverse demographics to attend, especially elderly.

Sandwell great place to live. I work here and always feels welcomed!

Every kid used to play in the streets, now they look empty

Pedestrianisation builds community, removing cars on high streets would help....

As well as cycling, could we introduce running routes?



2.6 **OAK TREE CENTRE COMMUNITY DAY**

The team joined the King's Church Community Celebration held at the Oak Tree Centre on Saturday 13th August. The centre is located in Brandhall in Oldbury and is an important community hub. A wide variety of local people attended the event from young children through to elderly people, and included vulnerable and disabled people.

It is important to note that this event took place in the midst of some community tension.

HOUSING (12)

The most common topic discussed was housing. Attendee's wanted to see a wider range in housing typologies particularly bungalows. The need for more affordable homes was flagged with people wanting to see more council homes. People also mentioned the need for homes to be bright, good quality and have gardens. There was an expression of interest in flats but it was noted as important that they reflect Sandwell's character. One attendee noted that getting the scale of development right is really important.

MORE LOCAL GREEN SPACE (8)

Green space regularly came up with people looking for more local parks, suggesting incorporating more pocket parks. Multiple people called for more facilities in parks such as more seating, playgrounds and woodland equipment. Attendees flagged that safety in parks is as an issue and called for improved lighting and security cameras.

INFRASTRUCTURE TO SUPPORT NEW DEVELOPMENT (12)

Comments around new development were mixed with both positive and negative sentiments about recent development in their area. In particular, people want new developments to include essential amenities. There was a strong message that parking must be improved with poor availability and issues like pavement parking. One participant suggested that they would like to see garages in houses rather than street parking. The need for improved transport links was flagged with people wanting to see more public transport connections. A number of people also mentioned traffic and busy roads as an issue. One comment expressed that busy roads prevented them from cycling.

STRONG COMMUNITY (5)

There was multiple expressions of love for the local community and how much people appreciate where they live.

22%
of comments related to
housing and new development

16%
of all comments were
related to movement

SAFETY (5)

Safety was a recurring topic with attendees feeling unsafe and fearing crime and antisocial behaviour. The need for more security cameras and better lighting was noted. There was a strong message about safety for kids with multiple people calling for the need for more safe spaces and clubs for young people.

YOUTH INFRASTRUCTURE (2)

Attendees expressed that there is a clear demand for soft play areas and youth clubs, as new developments currently has a lack of these. One attendee noted that the community heavily relies on the church for children's activities, indicating a gap in other provisions. Respondents express the need for a wider range of activities beyond just parks.

TREES (3)

Attendees loved trees, but noted that they are sometimes pushing up the pavement. One comment flagged that it would be great to see more trees in between the surrounding industry.

CYCLING (3)

There were a number of calls to see improved cycle lanes with attendees noting that the roads seem unsafe with speeding and lots of traffic. One comment suggested looking at how other countries have successfully introduced cycling infrastructure would be very beneficial.

OTHER COMMENTS

Other comments included the re-use of existing historic buildings, one comment suggested having developers always look at retrofit options first.

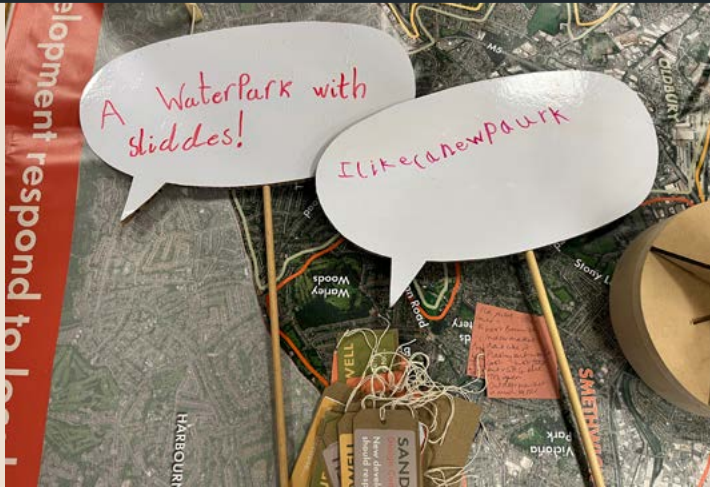
HEADLINE MESSAGES FOR THE DESIGN CODE

- Better housing typologies to address local needs
- Improve safety
- Improve housing quality
- More community spaces
- More local green space



Notice for Oak Tree Centre Community Day

OAK TREE CENTRE COMMUNITY CENTRE DAY



We have nice traditional buildings and homes in Sandwell. Sandwell Valley is nice. Good libraries in area. But could be better utilised - need to be promoted - bringing people in. People like a chance to get together - community.

New homes should be bright. They need to be close to a really good park with a playground.



Great community in Rowley Regis. Great transport links, buses into Birmingham, facilities and services, local amenities.

New homes should be aesthetic, spacious flats with gardens in between.

Developers need to look at retrofit options first. Think about our loss of heritage and heritage buildings. Don't want to see things flattened.



Lots of kids on bikes but cycle around at great speeds....but they're on the pavements because the roads are so busy! So cycle lanes would really help! Provide for the children.

Happy medium of open space that's open but also space. Not too big and needs to be safe. Cafe in the parks would be great. Warley Woods is really good - bring that energy to other parks.



For the kids there is nothing here, just the park. Rely on this church a lot to provide activities. Need other things to help.

Should have garages on the side of houses. Need to provide more garages for actual parking.

Pop up stall in Blackheath Library in Rowley Regis on the 12th August. This offered an informal opportunity for passers-by to get involved and let us what they like or dislike about their neighbourhood and what they would new development to look and feel like. A wide variety of local people attended the event with a majority of older people but still included people from quite a range of ages, cultures and backgrounds.

PEOPLE LOVE BLACKHEATH (6)

Many attendees expressed their love for living here, love the library hub, and the town centre (albeit are concerned about impact of current roadworks!). People appreciate and enjoy their local community with comments like - I've seen many changes. Loves his "place" and "the people."

NEW HOMES (16)

In general attendees recognised the need for new development and are happy to see quality developments, but they need to be done well and to properly consider needs - in particular the type of housing (e.g. independent living and bungalows) as well as well sound-insulated flats.

One member raised the importance of parking being properly built into housing schemes as a priority, with other comments about cars parking in front of driveways and a general feeling that new development is not providing enough parking space.

GREEN SPACES (7)

There was a strong message about green space with people wanting to see existing green space protected and enhanced. A number of attendees wanted their local area to feel greener and stated their desire for green space to have better pedestrian links with the suggestion of green links. There was also concern expressed about losing green space to new development.

TREES (5)

Locals expressed love for trees in their area and the desire to see more. There were concerns about trees pulling up pavement and getting too big. General maintenance of trees was stressed with concerns about large trees creating risks when not properly managed. One attendee suggested tree species, size, and tree maintenance need to be carefully thought about in the Design Code.



6%
of all comments related
to trees

38%
of all comments related to
movement were about parking

QUALITY OF DESIGN AND MATERIALS (3)

There was a number of comments about poor design and materials. Attendees wanted to see better quality of design and materials. There is concern that new developments have not weathered well and a desire for new development to built with more robust materials.

SUPPORTIVE INFRASTRUCTURE AND MAINTENANCE (6)

The theme of supporting infrastructure and maintenance came up regularly with multiple comments litter and bins. There was a strong message from these comments to see new developments and high streets make proper space for bins etc.

BUSES (6)

A number of participants commented on the current work to introduce a bus interchange by the market. There was some concern that the location of new bus stops could make accessing them less safe. In general though the views were positive with comments praising the good bus service Blackheath enjoys.

OTHER COMMENTS

Comments also included re-use of industrial buildings with interesting and well designed new development. One attendee noted that the canals needed to be used more and suggested the introduction of electric bikes to make this happen.

HEADLINE MESSAGES FOR THE DESIGN CODE

- More housing typologies (particularly for independent living)
- More green spaces
- Improved maintenance
- Better parking provision
- More trees (but smaller species)
- Improve design quality
- Better integration of bin storage



BLACKHEATH LIBRARY

More spaces required for bin storage, space in front of homes / gardens and street (refuge areas).



Boundary treatments have been lost to parking, we need to reinforce identity.

Sandwell has a wonderful sense of evolution - continually changing. It allows things to fail and try again. A space for piloting things. The big presence of industry is a key part of this.



We love trees, but just don't like too big trees, they are just too big now. Need to think hard about the types of trees planted and how big they will get.



So much industry in this borough. You can have pilot versions - test things and grow. Between the 50s - 80s here like Birmingham, Dudley, Manchester there was a real character. The canals are a key part of that character. They should be seen now as arterial parks.

Like to see new housing developments - we see it as positive. On Dudley Rd the new homes were all built on a bank - no gardens. I think the people opposite would feel hard done by as they've lost their aspect.

What I like is this community centre/ library - the variety of events and talks it has. It's been really well thought out. And really benefited the town centre. It's a real communal space and a very well-designed one (I like the ability to cordon off spaces to make it flexible for users).

We'd like to see more bungalows. And re-use of old buildings. For example the Barclays Bank - are there any new use plans? Need creative new uses for these old buildings.

2.8 **SANDWELL FAITH SECTOR NETWORK**

The team held an online discussion with members of the Faith Sector Network on 21st July. The Sandwell Faith Sector Network's (SFSN) main purpose is to be a representative voice for faith communities in Sandwell. It acts as a critical friend to the civic leadership of the borough, ensuring that the concerns and perspectives of a large proportion of the population are heard in consultations and policy-making. The network brings together faith leaders and partners from the four main religious backgrounds in the borough (Christian, Muslim, Hindu, and Sikh faiths) to discuss and work on issues affecting their communities.

COMMUNITY AND IDENTITY

Multiculturalism was mentioned multiple times with members sharing their love of Sandwell's rich diversity, with faith communities significantly contributing to its physical and social fabric through places of worship, community centres, festivals, and public events. There is a strong sense of resilience, neighbourliness, and belonging within Sandwell's diverse communities, with various faiths fostering a sense of community. Members expressed the need for more flexible, affordable, and accessible community spaces that cater to multi-generational and inter-faith gatherings.

MOVEMENT

Comments included concerns about parking with participants mentioning overcrowding and parking on footpaths. Car ownership was raised as an issue with concerns over a steep increase in the borough. Additionally, people are feeling unsafe cycling on roads, suggesting a need for improved cycle routes to ensure cycling is an attractive alternative to driving.

HOUSING

Members expressed significant concern regarding the quality, size, and affordability of housing. Overcrowding is a concern, with many families of different generations living together in inappropriate housing. There is a clear demand for a better range of homes to accommodate multi-generational living and accessible/elderly communities needs.

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

There was a strong belief that engaging with young people will contribute to the long-term betterment of the borough. Participants suggested raising more awareness, educating young people on relevant issues and involving them in local spaces and the proposed community panel.

GREEN SPACES

Members highlighted that green spaces are highly valued but could allow for more types of activity. There is a perceived lack of safe green spaces near town centres. To address this, suggestions include better lighting, signage, and transport links to these areas.

10

participants
representing each
of the 4 major
faiths

Sandwell's character is defined by its rich diversity—culturally, historically, and spiritually. Each town has its own unique identity, shaped by long-standing local communities and newer residents from various backgrounds

OTHER COMMENTS

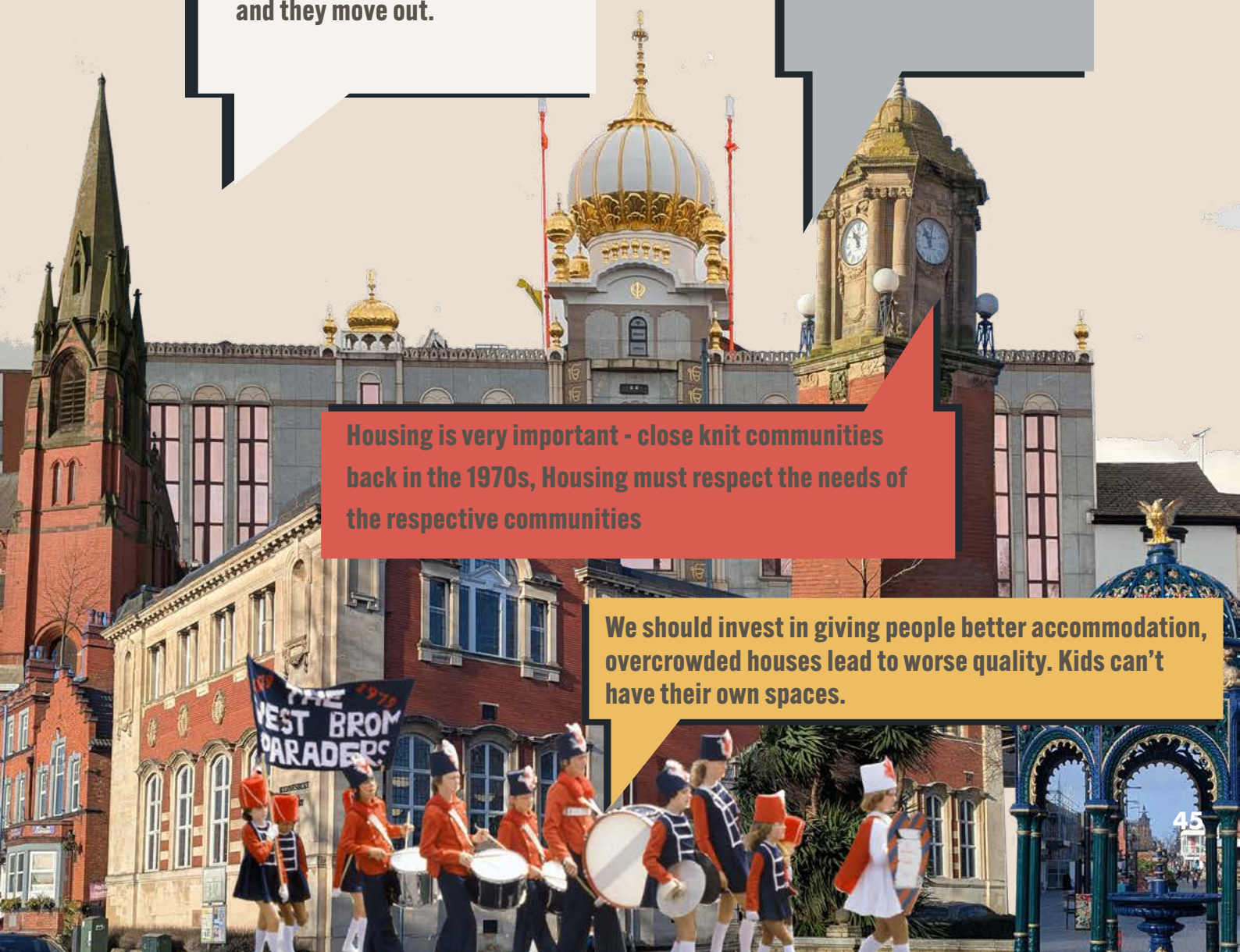
Crime and safety were flagged by members as concerning. One member noted antisocial behaviour at bus stops and questioned whether they could be designed better.

Would like to see us bringing in younger adult / teenager groups so we don't lose them and they move out.

There's often a lack of safe, green spaces near town centres for youth, elders, and families to gather informally. Better lighting, signage, and transport links could help bridge that gap

Housing is very important - close knit communities back in the 1970s, Housing must respect the needs of the respective communities

We should invest in giving people better accommodation, overcrowded houses lead to worse quality. Kids can't have their own spaces.



Focused Community Group Event

2.9 TIPTON CIVIC SOCIETY

The team held an in person meeting with the Tipton Civic Society as an informal group discussion on the 22nd July. This event was held as a discussion where members could share their knowledge and thoughts. The Tipton Civic Society promote interest in the history, heritage and identity of Tipton and campaign for higher standards of environmental quality and awareness.

DESIGN QUALITY

Members highlighted concerns about the quality and design of new constructions. Poor design was highlighted with existing new developments being criticized for being uninspired and lacking clear identity.

There is a clear desire for improved quality of design and materials that are informed by the local character of Tipton. The group commented that many recent schemes have been very plain and lack any sense of character or richness.

TRANSPORT

Parking, traffic, speeding and poor bus services were also mentioned as points which could be improved upon. The connection between new development and existing highways was flagged by one member something that could improved upon.

CANALS

The group stressed how important the canal network is to Tipton's character, but that it is not valued or celebrated nearly enough. Significant opportunities exist, but there are also basic interventions that are needed to maintain the structures and boundaries. The group highlighted the need to preserve historic links and routes, such as canals, which are often overlooked in new projects.

HOUSING

Members highlighted the need for a greater variety of housing types, particularly a need for more affordable housing and bungalow options. There is also a call for the development of new housing that is well-designed and integrated into the existing community. One attendee called for more careful planning in future large-scale projects.

GREEN SPACES

There was a strong positive message about the strength of the canals and parks to the character of Tipton, particularly Victoria Park. There was concerns about the park not being well looked after.

TREES

Trees are valued by people but need to be better maintained and thoughtfully positioned. The group noted that trees have in some places grown and blocked attractive or historic views. There was a general concern about trees becoming overgrown and generally poorly managed. One member noted that there could be more trees in parking courts particularly in industrial areas.

HISTORIC BUILDINGS

Members noted that key buildings like churches and the library are valued. The group highlighted that there is an urgent need to preserve and give new life to historic buildings like the Boat Gauging House that are at risk.

The Boat Gauging house is at real risk. its been left empty for too long. We need to give new life to these great buildings linked to the canal.

Victoria Park - not as well looked after than it was. They had a Friends of Victoria Park group that worked really hard and was successful, but they felt unsupported by the council and so had to give up.

Developers need to look at retrofit options first. Think about our loss of heritage and heritage buildings. We don't want to see things flattened.

We need more bungalows here to support an ageing population.

Need to keep the historic link through as part of new development - and keep the imprint of historic routes like the canals



Focused Community Group Event

2.10 **WEDNESBURY WELLBEING GROUP**

The team joined a regular in-person session with the Wednesbury Way 2 Wellbeing group for an informal group discussion on 25th September. The group is held weekly in the Wednesbury Sons of Rest Community Centre and is an important community support service. The event was held as was attended by range of ages from late 20s through to retired people.

COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE

There was a strong message of community as many people shared their love for their local community and appreciation for the community services provided in Wednesbury. There is great concern about the loss or lack of community facilities and a strong agreement on the need for more community spaces. Members expressed concern about poor maintenance on community spaces and noted that there is a lack of affordable community spaces to let. One member noted the need for involving existing community groups in new development. Concern was raised about the loss of shop units in local parades, and the suggestion that these vacant spaces could provide new valuable community spaces.

LOCALS LOVE WEDNESBURY'S GREEN SPACES

Members expressed their love for parks in green spaces, commenting that it is a real positive characteristic of the area.

NEW DEVELOPMENT AND HOUSING

The theme of new development and housing came up regularly with concerns about flatted developments and strong desires to see more affordable housing. Communal gardens were flagged as a priority for new development with attendees wanting to see them designed well in flatted schemes. One member noted concern about HMOs and their management with a preference for these to be managed by the council. Through discussion it came up that it was important for new development to be an appropriate height and to blend in with existing character.

PARKING

Multiple comments stressed parking as a issue, comments addressed free public parking in the town centre and over crowding of parking on residential roads.

OTHER COMMENTS

One attendee flagged that there needs to be more spaces for young people.

Communal gardens were flagged as really important for flatted schemes, and these should be well considered and designed in.

All the attendees would really like to see community infrastructure delivered as part of new development, or at the least the refurbishment or support of existing spaces to make them viable for the future. Re-purposing space at the base of towers was suggested - as has been done in Rowley Regis.

Part of blending in was about keeping development to a certain height - but that shouldn't stop intensification, indeed there was scope for flats at medium rise to be inserted in streets without the need for towers.

Another strong positive for the area is the sense that you could be in the countryside in some of the green spaces.

Lots of concern about the loss or lack of community facilities. Everyone agreed there was a big need for community spaces.

**Way 2 Wellbeing
Wednesbury**

Thursday's 10am - 12pm

Wednesbury Community Centre
(Sons of Rest, by Brunswick Park),
Foley Street, Wednesbury, WS10 9HG



Friendly, informal and welcoming
Refreshments available
Allison Hartshorn on 07976 950377
Verna Devi on 07544 820717



Focused Community Group Outreach

2.11 SMETHWICK QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSE

The Smethwick Local History Society were unable to meet the team in person, but did opt to complete a questionnaire to provide input to the study. The Smethwick Local History Society is a local society which regularly meets to discuss a wide range of subjects of historical interest. Their response is summarised here.

What do you think is particularly special about the Smethwick area?

This is a densely-populated, multi-cultural and socially deprived area, arising out of very rapid 19th-century industrialisation and post-war industrial decline.

What are the best features of Smethwick? Which buildings, streets and spaces make it distinctive?

- All listed buildings, notably Smethwick Old Church and the adjacent 18th century public houses.
- Good late Victorian and Edwardian buildings in the Bearwood area and along High Street that save it from being bland urban development
- The parks and open spaces, especially Lightwoods Park and Warley Woods
- Canal Infrastructure
- Guru Nanak Gurdwara

Are there particular heritage assets that are at risk, and are there conversion opportunities to bring new uses into vacant historic buildings that you would like to see?

The Waterloo Public House (Grade II listed) and The Soho Foundry (Grade II* listed).



What would you like to see improved about the physical character of the Smethwick area?

Greater open and green space, availability of parking, restrictions on housing development in already densely-populated areas.



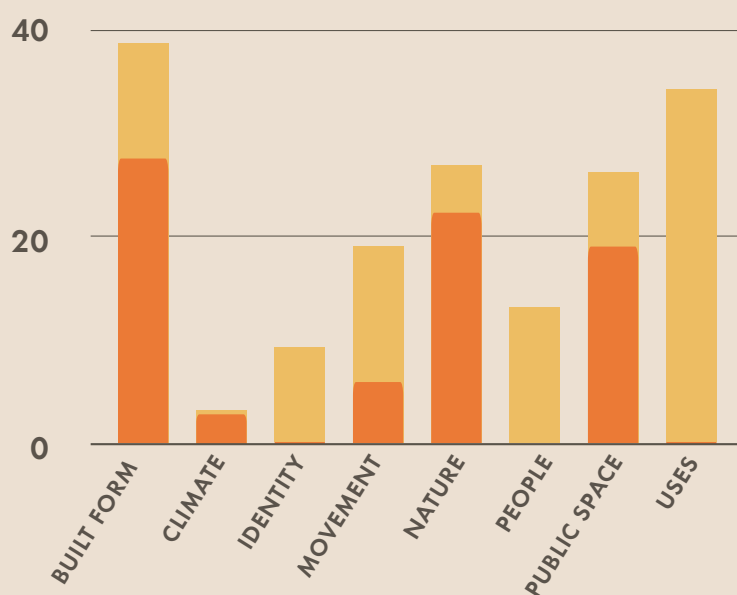
2.12 SUMMARY OF EVENTS

SUMMARY : WEST BROMWICH HIGH STREET MARKET

181
COMMENTS

HEADLINES

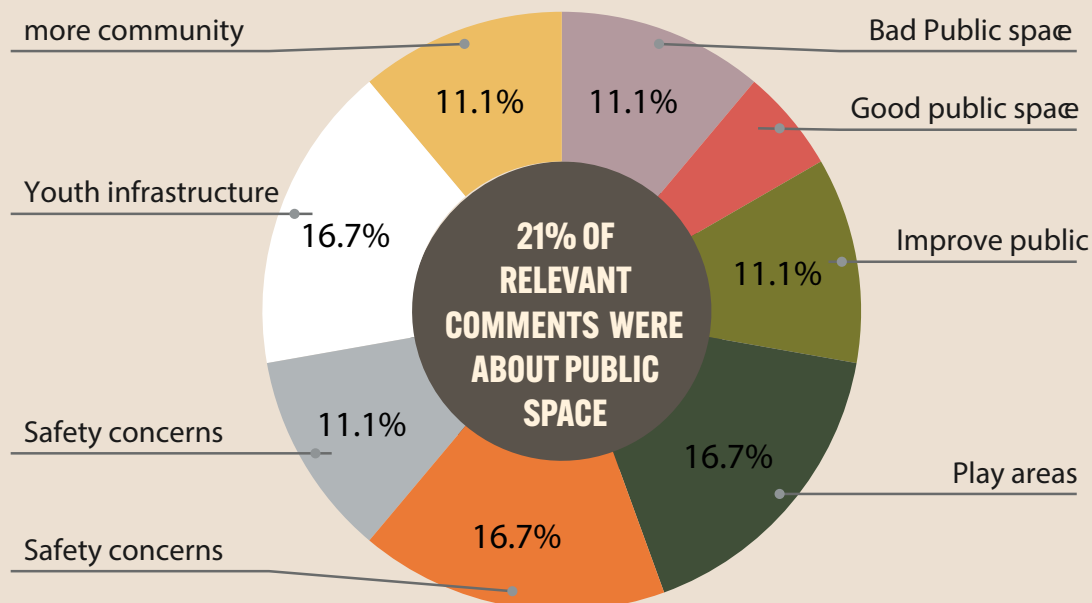
- Improve safety
- Improve housing quality and offer
- More community / youth spaces
- More and better quality green space
- Improve pedestrian access



INSIGHTS

**25% OF
RELEVANT
COMMENTS WERE
UNDER THE NATURE
THEME**

**51% OF
THESE WANTED
TO SEE MORE
GREEN SPACE AND
PROTECTED**



Key for bar charts

All comments

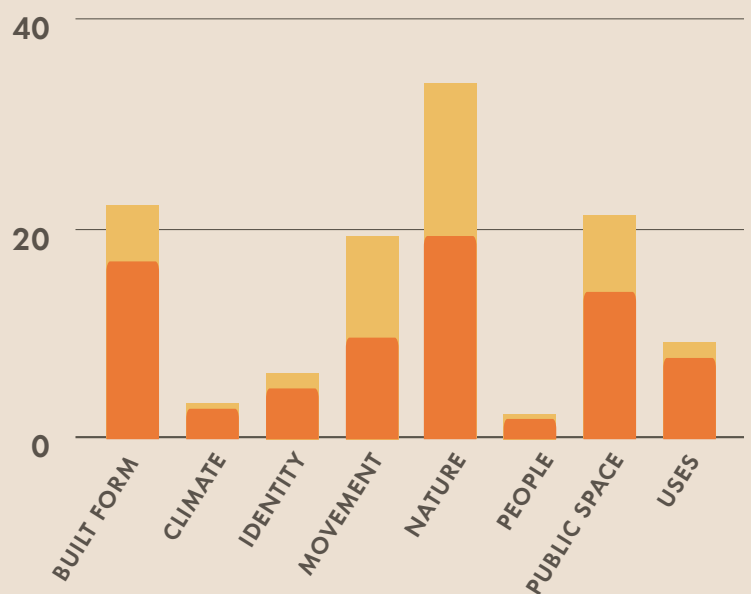
Comments relevant to the scope of a Design Code

SUMMARY : SHAPE YOUTH FESTIVAL

132
COMMENTS

HEADLINES

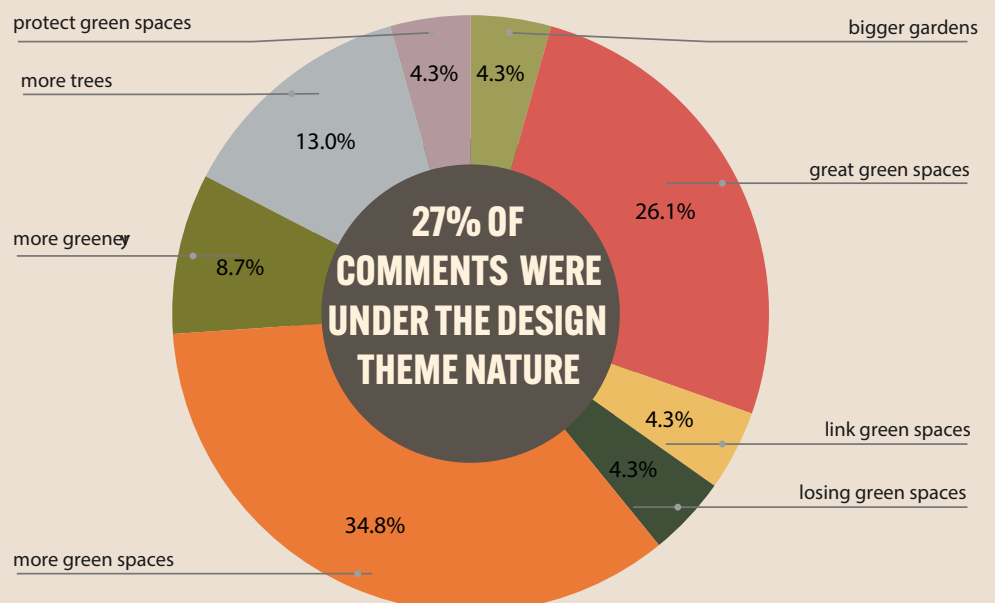
- Protect green spaces
- More green spaces and trees
- Better parking provision
- More indoor and outdoor spaces for young people
- Better quality housing to address needs



INSIGHTS

21%
OF RELEVANT
COMMENTS RELATED
TO BUILT FORM

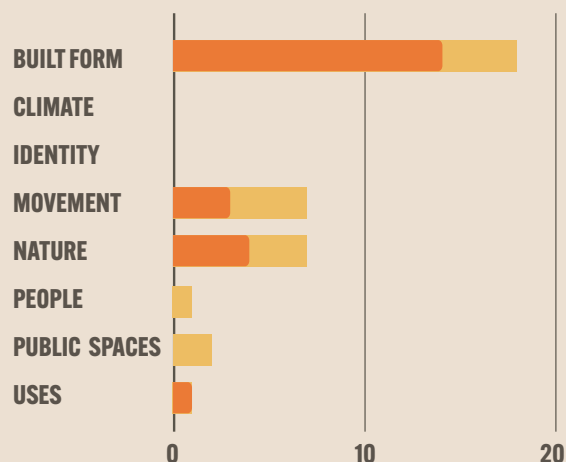
63% OF
THESE COMMENTS
WERE ABOUT
HOUSING



SUMMARY : GROUP DISCUSSION EVENTS

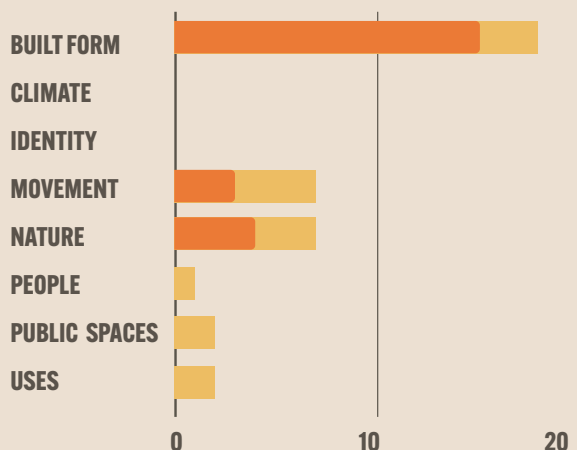
FAITH NETWORK : HEADLINES

- More community spaces
- Better quality and more affordable housing
- Wider range of residential typologies to better address local needs (particularly larger homes)
- Involve young people
- Better strategy to manage parking whilst encouraging walking and cycling



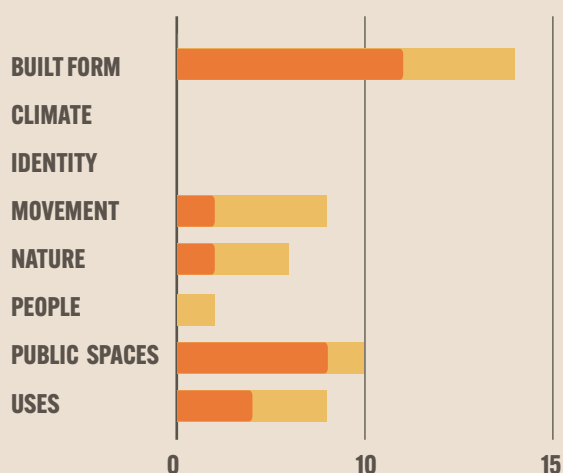
TIPTON CIVIC SOCIETY : HEADLINES

- Better quality design, informed by local character
- Celebrate and revitalise heritage assets
- Better range of residential typologies
- Improve tree management
- Better transport/highways infrastructure



WEDNESBURY WELLBEING: HEADLINES

- More community facilities
- Provide housing to meet local needs (particularly affordable housing)
- Better parking provision
- New development should blend into existing local character more



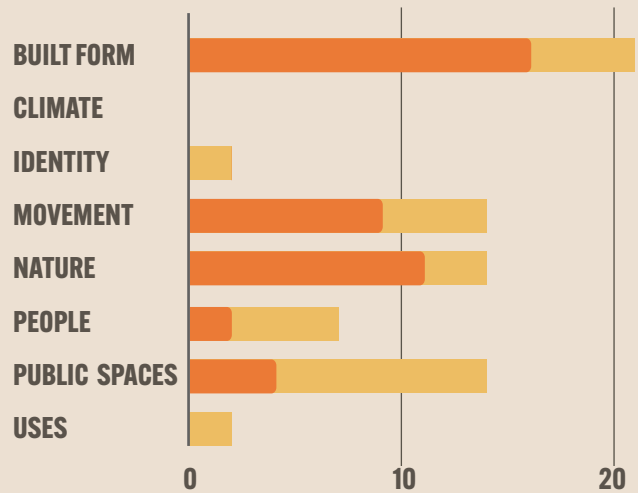
Key for bar charts

- All comments
- Comments relevant to the scope of a Design Code

SUMMARY : BRASSHOUSE COMMUNITY DAY

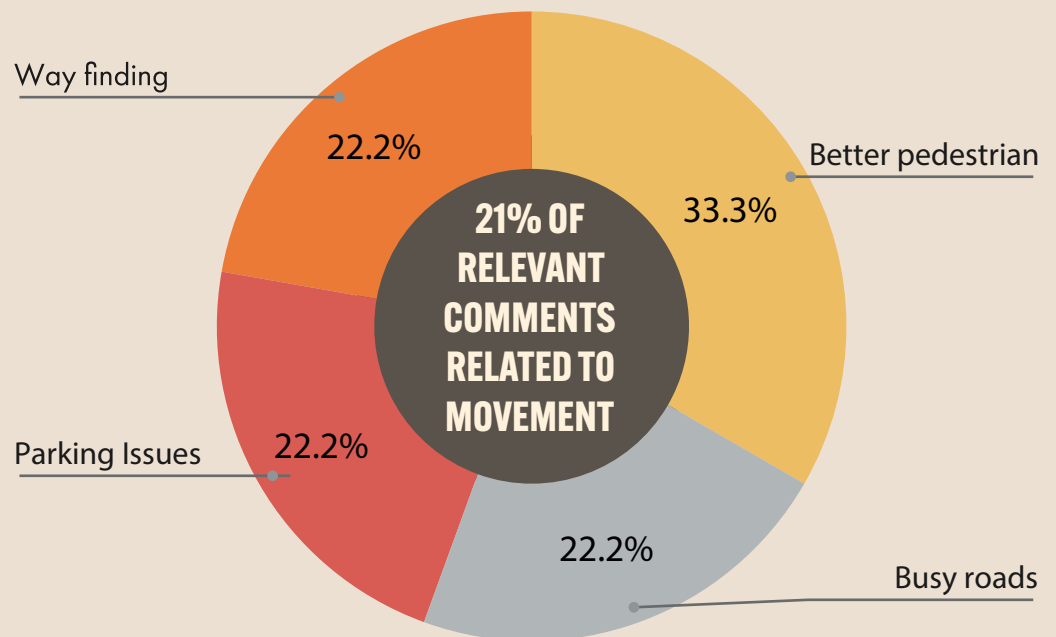
HEADLINES

- Improve housing quality and range of typologies
- Improve safety
- More community spaces
- More green links and improved green space
- Better pedestrian routes and more public transport



**38% OF
RELEVANT
COMMENTS WERE
ABOUT BUILT FORM**

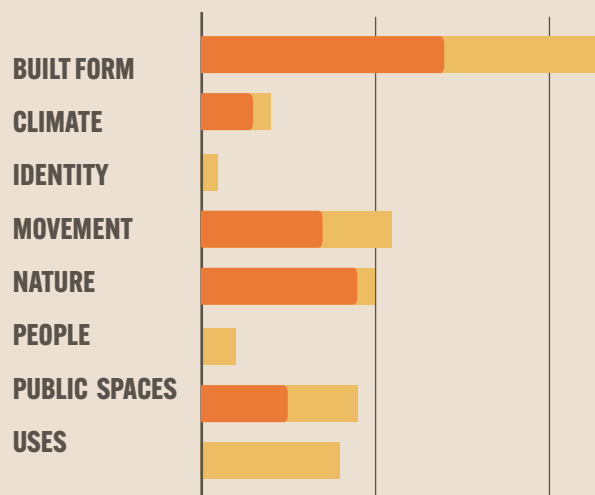
**38% OF
THESE WERE
ABOUT HOUSING
TYPOLOGIES**



SUMMARY : OAK TREE CENTRE COMMUNITY DAY

HEADLINES

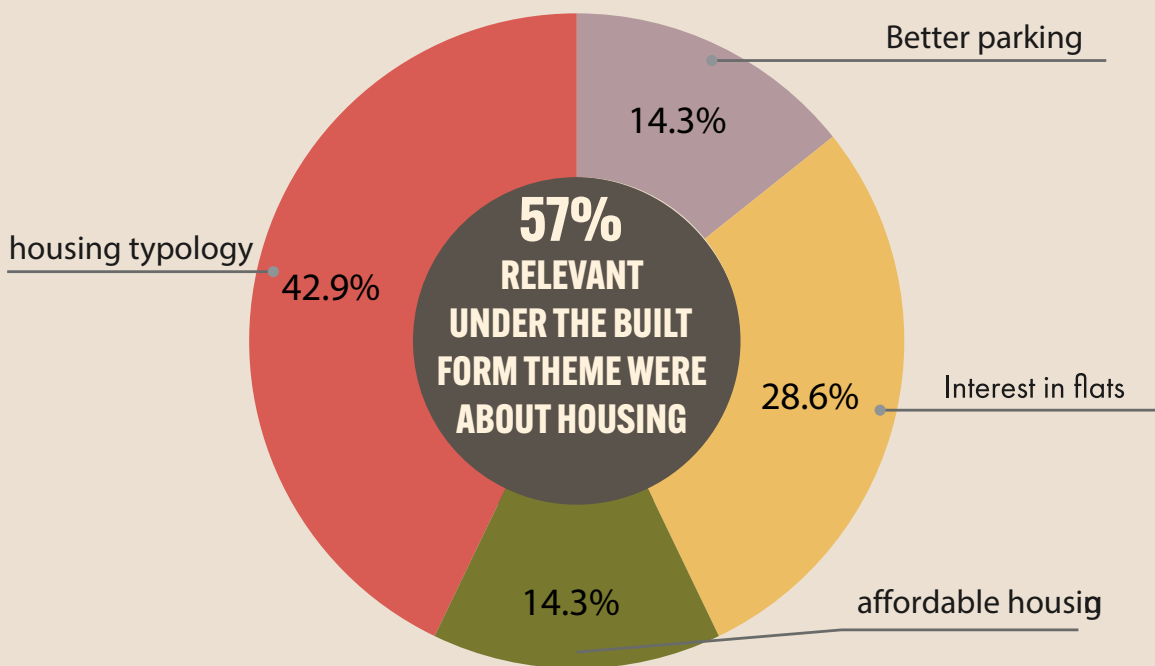
- Better housing typologies to address local needs
- Improve safety
- Improve housing quality
- More community spaces
- More local green space



INSIGHTS

18%
OF COMMENTS
WERE UNDER THE
DESIGN THEME
MOVEMENT

42%
OF THESE WERE
ABOUT CYCLING



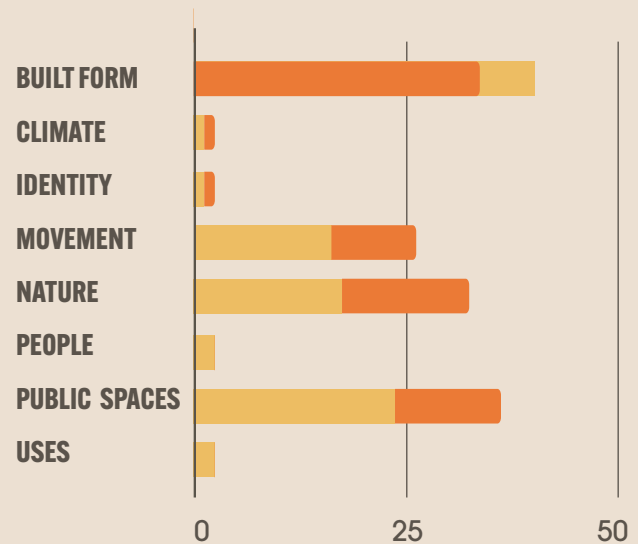
Key for bar charts

- All comments
- Comments relevant to the scope of a Design Code

SUMMARY : BLACKHEATH LIBRARY

HEADLINES

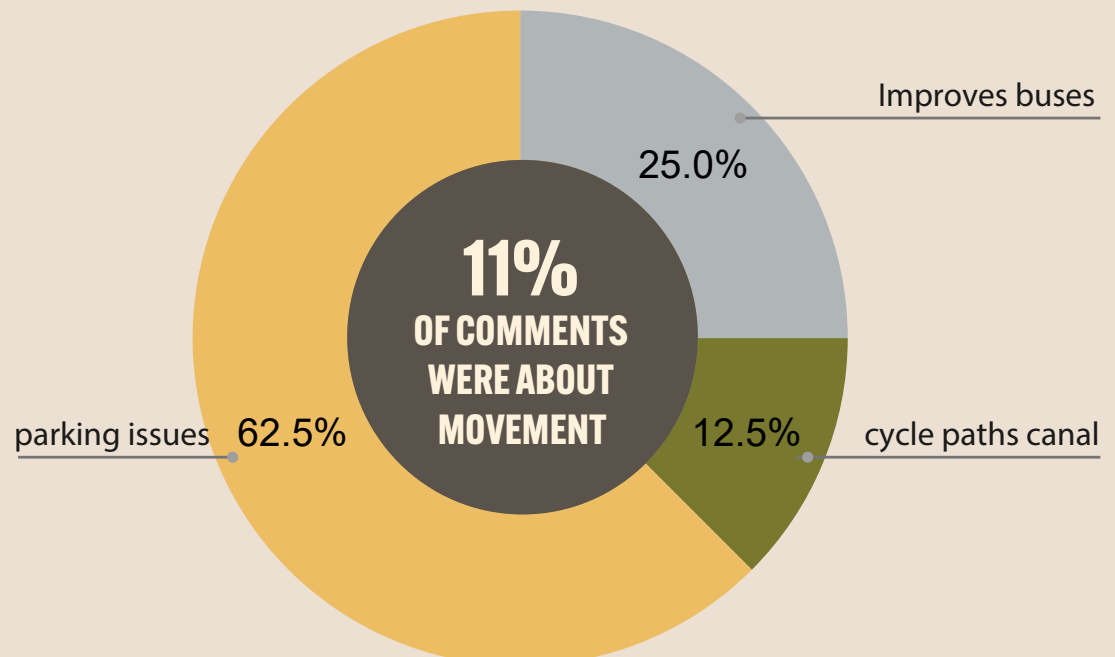
- More housing typologies (particularly for independent living)
- More green spaces
- Improved maintenance
- Better parking provision
- More trees (but smaller species)
- Improve design quality
- Better integration of bin storage



INSIGHTS

15%
OF COMMENTS
WERE UNDER THE
DESIGN THEME
NATURE

36%
OF THESE
COMMENTS WERE
ABOUT TREES





Sandwell Design Code

We've started developing a Design Code for Sandwell to help guide future developments

Coming Soon!

Early A

Historic Evolution

**Topography and
Landscape**

Urban Structure

Building Heights



3 ONLINE SURVEY

Analysis

**Transport
Infrastructure**

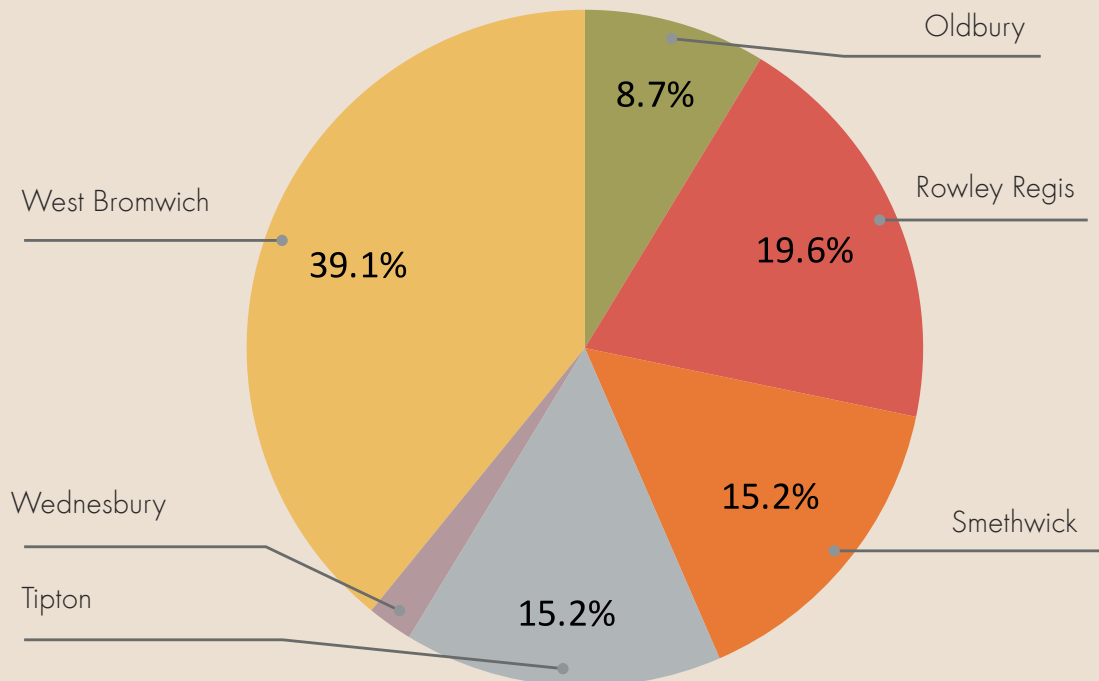
**Natural Open Space
Networks**

Six Towns

Stage 1 Update

3.1 ONLINE SURVEY RESPONSES

WHAT PART OF THE BOROUGH DO YOU LIVE IN OR KNOW BEST?



BEST FEATURES, BUILDINGS AND PLACES



WHAT ARE THE BEST FEATURES ABOUT YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD? WHAT BUILDINGS, STREETS AND SPACES MAKE IT DISTINCTIVE?

The canal network provides a link to the area's industrial past, and is also a heritage asset and bespoke urban design opportunity for adjacent development, and an area within which to promote nature conservation, enhanced biodiversity, active and sustainable travel, and general well-being.

The Bear Tavern / TC Hayes building. Victorian buildings along 'high street'. Lightwoods House. Nice greens spaces (Warley Woods and Lightwoods Park).

Haden Hill Park is a wonderful park all year round. Visit often. It is well looked after and the house is magnificent. Lots of events throughout the year.

GREEN SPACES AND TREES ARE HIGHLY VALUED

The most common features appreciated were parks, green spaces and trees. Specific mentions include Red House Park, Warley Woods, Lightwoods Park, Victoria Park, and Dartmouth Park.

LOCAL LANDMARKS AND ARCHITECTURE CONTRIBUTE TO DISTINCTIVENESS

Buildings, churches, and high streets were frequently cited as distinctive features. There is a strong appreciation for local architecture and historical buildings. Examples include: Guru Nanak Gurdwara, Oak House, Lightwoods House, Thimblemill Baths, and the King's Head Clock in Bearwood.

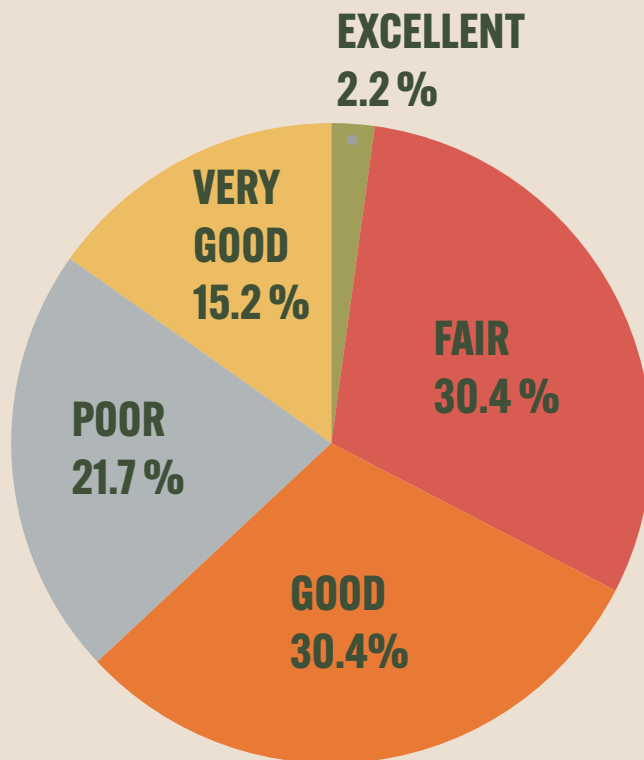
COMMUNITY AMENITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE ARE IMPORTANT

There was a strong message of appreciation for local amenities such as libraries, shops, and pubs.

THE CANALS ARE IMPORTANT

There were several positive comments about the canals with one respondent noting it as the most distinctive feature of their neighbourhood. It was highlighted that the canals are important as heritage assets, wildlife corridors and for active travel.

HOW POSITIVELY WOULD YOU RATE THE CHARACTER OF YOUR LOCAL AREA?



35%
OF COMMENTS RELATE TO
BINS AND MAINTENANCE OF
PUBLIC SPACES

11% OF THE COMMENTS
MENTIONED TREES

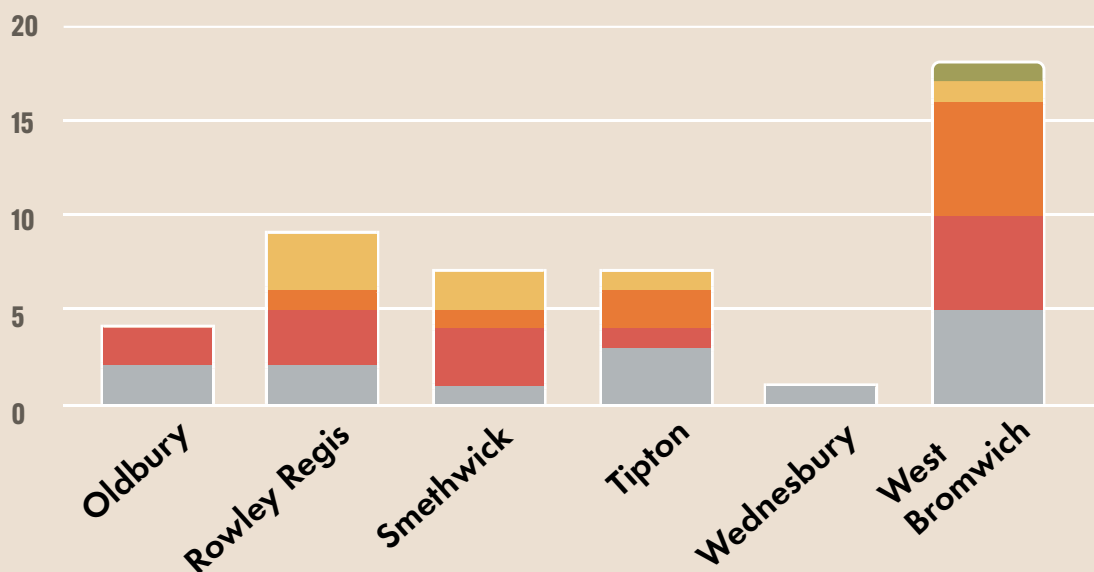


Chart showing how positively people rated local character based on which part of the borough they are from

IS THERE ANYTHING ABOUT THE CHARACTER OF THE AREA THAT COULD BE IMPROVED?

Cleaner parks. More tree planting. More litter picking and litter awareness.

Cars blocking the pavement are a constant problem and certainly dangerous for children and the disabled.

Greater attention to the historic waterway network within adjacent development.

MAINTENANCE AND SUPPORTIVE INFRASTRUCTURE

Many respondents expressed strong concerns about the general cleanliness and upkeep of their areas. Litter was a frequently mentioned issue, with multiple calls for reduction of litter and more bins. Maintenance and care of existing buildings was also noted as a problem with participants noting dilapidated shopfronts and buildings.

GREEN SPACES AND TREES

Green spaces consistently came up with respondents wanting to see more and better maintained green spaces. There were multiple calls for more trees with respondents wanting to see more trees particularly in their local streets.

SAFETY AND CRIME

Concerns about safety and crime were raised by several respondents. There was a connection made between spaces being poorly maintained and people feeling unsafe.

TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

Multiple responses expressed concern about the amount of traffic and speeding. Parking was also flagged as an issue with parking overcrowding residential streets noted as an issue. There was mixed comments around cycling with one participant not wanting to see any more cycle lanes, but for the most part respondents wanted to see more and improved cycling infrastructure.

OTHER COMMENTS

Other comments included accessibility which was noted as an issue. A number of responses flagged that footpaths need to be improved as they are uneven and in poor repair. There was also calls to see more community spaces and sports facilities.

ARE THERE ANY EXAMPLES OF NEW DEVELOPMENT IN YOUR LOCAL AREA THAT YOU LIKE? WHY?



Wednesbury town centre: the trees and benches.

WEDNESBURY TOWN CENTRE

Some development near the canals does look quite nice and links to the blue network. Can't remember exactly where I've seen some.



I like the development by the new baths at Little Burton. The houses are very attractive and varied and there are plenty of green spaces.

LITTLE BURTON PLACE

New housing at Guardian Close near the junction of Lower Church Lane and Alexandra Road in Tipton. It is situated at the top of a slope, which has been turned into a green. Not typical of the area, it gives a villagey appearance to the area.



GUARDIAN CLOSE, TIPTON

Development needs to deliver good community offer for people to come together. Like the Custard Factory - can we do that in West Brom?

New Square, Shireland CBSO Academy and the new indoor market. I think that these developments have been done in a way that has made the town look better.



I like the houses on the Cradley Print site and those on Foxoak St. Woodhouse Way are a nice mix, too.

CRADLEY PRINT SITE

HOW DO YOU THINK THE DESIGN OF NEW DEVELOPMENTS COULD BE IMPROVED TO ENHANCE LOCAL CHARACTER?

NEW DEVELOPMENT SHOULD HAVE LOCAL CHARACTER

The most consistent theme and common response was that people want new development to blend into the existing character of areas. Multiple responses noted that new development designs should reflect local character through thoughtful design. Other responses note that they would like to see unique buildings that are interesting.

CELEBRATING AND PROTECTING LOCAL HERITAGE BUILDINGS

There were multiple calls to protect and celebrate historic buildings. Respondents called for new development to reuse old buildings. One comment noted that the historic connections to the canals should be celebrated and that new development should connect and face towards the canals.

QUALITY OF DESIGN AND MATERIALS

Multiple respondents flagged material quality as an issue. Respondents expressed concern over building materials with one stating that poor render had been used and another stating that new development ages poorly.

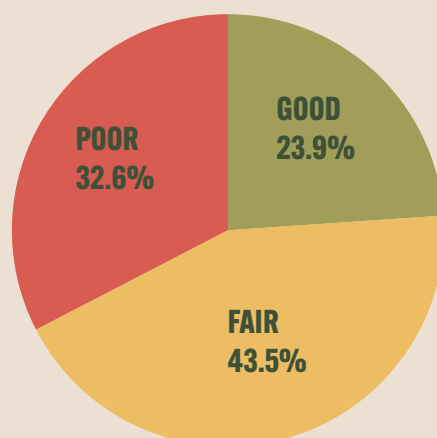
ENHANCE GREEN SPACE AND PUBLIC AMENITIES

There was a strong message about incorporating green spaces and improving public facilities. Respondents consistently wanted to see more green space and trees. There was a desire to see more community spaces and public amenities such as play areas in parks.

TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

Generally people wanted to see improved pedestrian paths and footpaths. Respondents noted that there should be enough parking in new development to avoid overcrowding and parking on footpaths. Wayfinding was flagged as an issue on canals and with signage on streets. Participants mostly wanted to see more and improved cycling infrastructure particularly along the canals.

HOW WOULD YOU RATE THE QUALITY OF RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN YOUR AREA?



SUMMARY: ONLINE SURVEY

46
RESPONSES

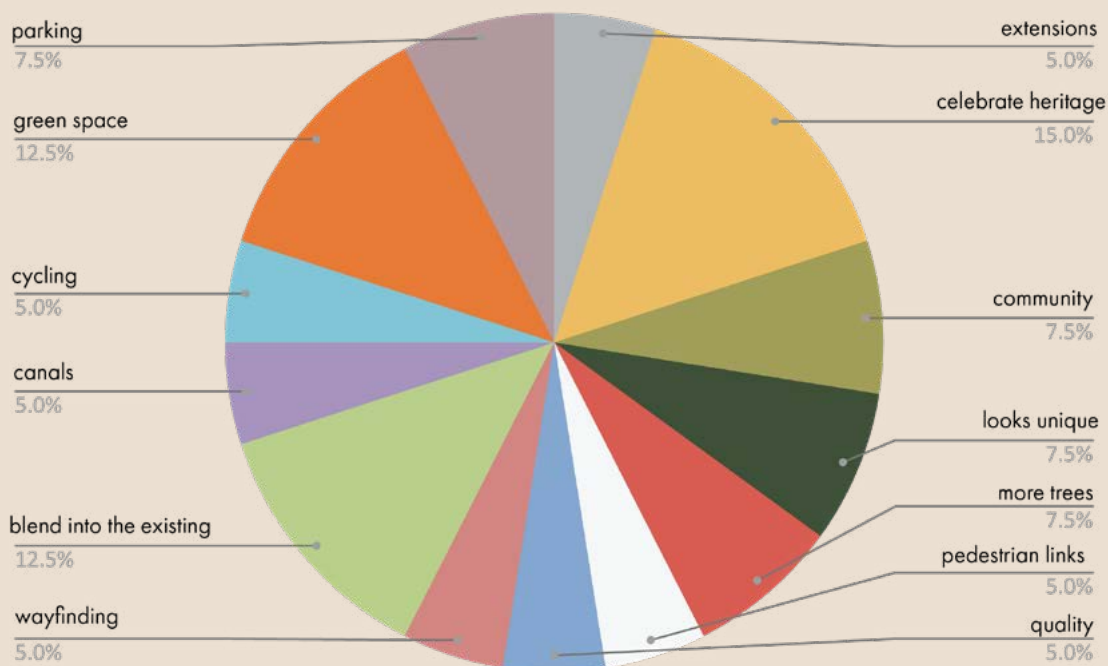
BEST FEATURES

- Green space and trees
- Local landmarks and historical buildings
- Canals
- Community spaces
- Local amenities such as libraries, shops and pubs

WHAT WAS LIKED ABOUT GOOD NEW DEVELOPMENTS

- Right scale
- Green space provision
- Supporting local character
- Variation within the development

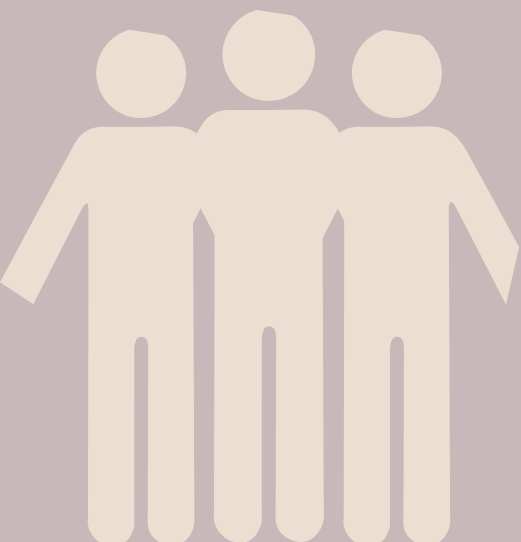
WHAT CAN BE IMPROVED ABOUT YOUR LOCAL CHARACTER?



16%
OF COMMENTS WANTED TO SEE
NEW DEVELOPMENT BLEND IN AND
RESPECT LOCAL CHARACTER

52%
OF RESPONSES SAID THERE WAS NO
EXAMPLE OF NEW DEVELOPMENT THAT
THEY LIKED IN THEIR LOCAL AREA

23% RESPONSES
MENTIONED GREEN SPACE OR
PARKS





4 CONTINUING THE CONVERSATION



4.1 SUMMARY OF MESSAGES FROM THE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Across all the in-person and online engagement activities, a wealth of information and sense of local priorities has been garnered. This report has reflected the wide spectrum of themes explored in conversations. Some of the topics raised are not aspects the Design Code can directly address, but those that aren't provide valuable context for the work. This section provides a short summary of the headline messages alongside a selection of statistics taken from all those comments which are relevant to the Design Code scope.

GREEN SPACES was the most consistently mentioned theme. Many participants wanted to see more green space, particularly locally with suggestions for pocket parks. People valued their green space and wanted to see them protected and maintained. There were multiple calls for more green links connecting green spaces and more play areas and inclusive activities in parks. Safety in parks is concern (mostly among women and children), and there were suggestions for lighting and cameras to address this. The Design Code could explore stronger rules around green space provision and design, the greening of new links between spaces and designing for safety and active use of routes and spaces.

HOUSING is another key emerging theme. Many people called for a wider variety in housing choices for example for multi-generation households and independent living. A top concern was affordable housing with many attendees wanting to see more affordable homes supplied by the council. There was a preference towards houses but an openness to considering well-designed flatted development. The provision of private and communal outdoor space in denser typologies was highlighted as important to get right. The Design Code could explore recommendations around particular housing typologies which would be acceptable and encouraged in the borough, alongside internal and external space design standards.

**74% OF THE NATURE
COMMENTS WERE ABOUT GREEN
SPACES**

**26% OF THESE
WANTED TO SEE MORE
GREEN SPACE**

**19% OF THE BUILT FORM
COMMENTS WERE ABOUT NEEDING
A WIDER RANGE OF HOUSING
TYPOLOGIES**

12% OF THE COMMENTS ON PUBLIC SPACE WERE CONCERNS ABOUT SAFETY

SAFETY consistently came up as a theme with some people feeling safe but concerns about safety and anti-social behaviour were prevalent. Attendees suggested that more spaces for young people would improve fear of crime. The Design Code could explore encouraging outdoor and indoor spaces in design proposals, and could establish designing for safe streets and spaces guidance.

COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE

Local community was highlighted as a positive in many of the comments with people sharing their love of their local community. Many expressed a desire to see more and better maintained community space. There was also calls to see existing community spaces supported by new developments. As above, across all the events there was a strong message about wanting to see more spaces for young people and involving young people more. The Design Code could look to emphasis how community spaces could be designed into proposals and the role of residential schemes in supporting existing provision.

40% OF COMMENTS ON PUBLIC SPACE WERE ABOUT WANTING MORE COMMUNITY SPACE

58% OF THESE WERE ABOUT SPACES SPECIFICALLY FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

42% OF THE COMMENTS ON MOVEMENT WERE ABOUT PARKING

TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE

There was mixed comments on transport with some saying neighbourhoods were generally well connected, but mostly people felt there could be improvement in public transport links. Comments on cycling were mixed with some suggesting that cycle paths are under used but most attendees wanted to see improved cycling infrastructure (more safe and attractive cycle paths and cycle parking) and safer roads generally.

Car parking was consistently brought up as a issue. Local people thought that some schemes had a lack of parking and that this was resulting in pavement parking and parking congestion on neighbouring streets. In general, people wanted to see a stronger strategy around parking that resolved these issues still supported active travel choices. There was a strong message about traffic and speeding with many attendees feeling roads are unsafe and too busy.

The Design Code could test car parking provision for different housing typologies to provide guidance on the preferred approaches. Guidance on street design and the incorporation of cycle infrastructure could also be explored.

90% OF THE COMMENTS ON CYCLING WANT TO SEE CYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVED

16% OF THE COMMENTS ON BUILT FORM WERE ABOUT WANTING TO SEE BETTER QUALITY OF MATERIALS AND DESIGN

QUALITY OF DESIGN AND MATERIALS

was a major concern for many respondents. There was a desire to see new development built with better quality materials that would last and weather well. There was multiple expressions of dissatisfaction with plain or boring new developments, people want to see design which is interesting but blends well with the local character of Sandwell. The Design Code could set a quality standard for both materials and design.

TREES were mentioned at every event with many wanting to see more trees and greenery. Concerns were expressed about the maintenance of trees with many comments about overgrown trees. The Design Code could explore the integration of trees into existing streets and new developments, the best species and size for certain scenarios, and how trees should be planted to support their sustainable growth.

MAINTENANCE AND BINS were common topics with many comments calling for improved maintenance regarding general upkeep and appearance of public spaces, as well as appropriate bin storage for homes and bin provision on public. The Design Code could look to provide stronger guidance on bin storage for new developments.

15% OF THE COMMENTS UNDER MOVEMENT WERE ABOUT WANTING TO SEE IMPROVED PEDESTRIAN PATHS AND ACCESSIBILITY

ACCESSIBILITY is a theme that came up at every event. Attendees wanted to see improved pedestrian accessibility, with improved pedestrian paths and footpaths a common ask. The Design Code could illustrate preferred approaches for maximising pedestrian accessibility.

BOUNDARY TREATMENTS came up at most events with attendees wanting to see improved and greener boundary treatments in housing schemes as well as in and around industrial developments. The Design Code could outline which boundary treatments are appropriate and most resilient.

CANALS came up regularly with people looking to see the historic canals celebrated. There was a strong desire to see the canals used more with improved access points and cycle paths. The Design Code could explore design approaches for sites adjacent to the canal and encourage new links into the canal network.

RETAIL

Some attendees were unhappy with the retail offer in local town centres and wanted to see a better offer of shops and less vacant shop fronts. The Design Code cannot directly address this, but can encourage the good integration of mixed uses into design.

**10% OF
COMMENTS ON PUBLIC SPACE
WERE ABOUT WANTING MORE
PLAY AREAS**

**11% OF
COMMENTS ON BUILT FORM
WERE CONCERNED ABOUT FLATS**

Key for bar charts

■ All comments

■ Comments relevant to the scope of a Design Code

200

150

100

50

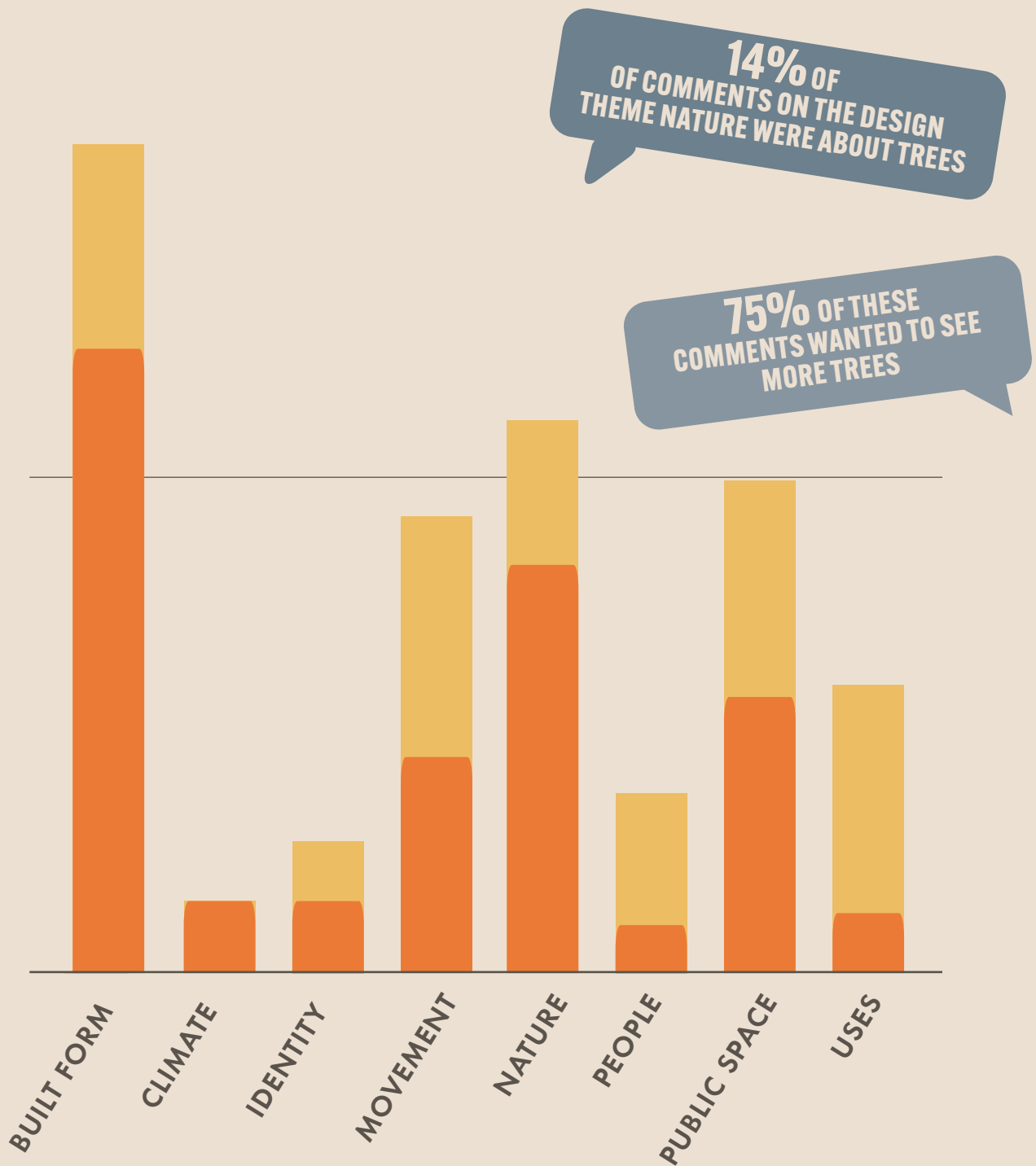


Chart showing the distribution of all comments received across the eight design themes

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