
Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities

15 January 2026

Name of Cabinet Member:

Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities – Cllr N Akhtar

Director approving submission of the report:

Director of Regeneration and Economy

Ward(s) affected:

All Wards

Title:

Urban Design Consultations – Draft Shop Front Design Guide SPD & Stage One Design Code Consultation

Is this a key decision?

No

Executive summary:

The City Council has committed through the adopted Local Development Scheme the development of a revised Shop Front Design Guide SPD and the commencement of public consultation on emerging Design Codes for Coventry. This report seeks authority to commence these consultations, prior to seeking formal approval to recommendations upon progression to adoption or further consultations.

Recommendations:

The Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities is recommended to:

- 1) Approve the commencement of public consultation on the Draft Shop Front Design Guide SPD as detailed in Appendix 1 of this report.
- 2) Approve the commencement of the first stage of consultation of the Coventry Design Code process as detailed in Appendix 2 of this report.
- 3) Delegate authority to Head of Planning Policy and Environment, following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities:
 - a) to finalise the details of public consultation (including the period of consultation) in line with established processes; and

- b) make any necessary minor editing changes to the Draft Shop Front Design Guide SPD and Coventry Design Code questionnaire prior to consultation.

List of Appendices included:

Appendix One – Draft, Revised Shop Front Design Guide SPD.

Appendix Two – Stage One Design Code consultation questionnaire.

Background papers:

Coventry Local Development Scheme – September 2025

Other useful documents

N/A

Has it or will it be considered by scrutiny?

No

Has it or will it be considered by any other council committee, advisory panel or other body?

No

Will this report go to Council?

No

Report title:
Urban Design Consultations :
Draft Shop Front Design Guide SPD & Stage One Design Code Consultation

1. Context (or background)

1.1 Shopfront Design Guide SPD

1.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) defines Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) as 'documents which add further detail to the policies in the development plan. They can be used to provide further guidance for development on specific sites, or on particular issues. Supplementary Planning Documents are capable of being a material consideration in planning decisions but are not part of the development plan'.

1.3 It is good practice to update supplementary guides over time to ensure that they remain relevant and robust. This SPD is a comprehensive review and updating of the 2014 Design Guidance on Shopfronts for Conservation Areas and Historic Buildings and will provide clear guidance for applicants considering works to retail shopfronts across the City.

1.4 The quality of retail frontages can have a significant qualitative effect upon the character and quality of streets across the City. The revision of the SPD seeks to provide best practice guidance for shop front design, establishing ten key principles of good design. The SPD also recognises and advises approaches across a range of architectural styles found across the City, seeking to ensure that the SPD can service to guide development proposals in areas of identified special character.

1.5 The SPD expands upon policy DE1 of the adopted 2017 Local Plan and policy DE1, DE2 and R5 of the Local Plan Review, which has now reached examination stage.

1.6 It is anticipated that the SPD will be developed further in recognition of the outcomes of the public consultation, however adoption of the SPD will be progressed further post the examination phase of the Local Plan Review in order to ensure that the SPD remains aligned to adopted policy.

1.7 Design Code – Initial scoping consultation

1.8 The Levelling Up and Regeneration Act (LURA) 2023 introduced at paragraph 15F, a requirement for Local Authorities to produce Design Codes which should be considered for planning permissions to be granted.

1.9 In September 2025, the City Council adopted its most recent Local Development Scheme (LDS) which sets out the initial timelines of development of Design Codes to meet the requirements of the LURA. The timeline noted an initial anticipation of a number of codes being produced to reflect the distinct variety of contexts which are present within the Local Authority area, however that this approach and the number of codes could develop further based upon the findings of public consultation.

- 1.10 This initial stage of consultation takes the form of a questionnaire to investigate what our residents view as important design characteristics and how they perceive their local context. The findings of this consultation will then inform the future progress and structure of the Design Code process.
- 1.11 The questionnaire can be found at Appendix Two of this report, and is proposed to be hosted electronically, being promoted for engagement using the Councils consultation database notifications and media channels. The commencement of this initial stage of consultation is aligned to the adopted September 2025 Local Development Scheme.

2. Options considered and recommended proposal

2.1 Do Nothing (Not Recommended)

The Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities could choose to not progress the consultation, however this would not be aligned to the adopted LDS as is therefore not recommended.

2.2 Commence a public consultation (Recommended)

Undertaking consultation upon the reviewed draft Shopfront Design Guide SPD and Design Code questionnaire is aligned to the September 2025 Local Development Scheme as is therefore recommended.

3. Results of consultation undertaken

- 3.1. This report seeks authority to commence the consultation exercise.

4. Timetable for implementing this decision

- 4.1 The decision will be implemented at the earliest opportunity. The Coventry City Council Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) July 2021 states that SPD consultation should be undertaken for no less than 4 weeks and no more than 6 weeks. Upon commencement the consultations will therefore run for 6 weeks in order to best enable residents to participate in the consultation.

5. Comments from the Director of Finance and Resources and the Director of Law and Governance

5.1. Financial Implications

The recommendation will have no financial impact.

5.2. Legal Implications

The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 sets out how to prepare development plan documents and SPDs. Before the SPDs can be adopted, it is necessary to undertake rounds of public consultation.

Design Code – Initial scoping consultation

The Levelling Up and Regeneration Act (LURA) 2023 introduced legislation to require every local planning authority to produce design codes for their areas. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), December 2024, sets out that to carry weight in

decision-making they should be produced either as part of a local plan or as supplementary planning documents.

6. Other implications

6.1. How will this contribute to the Council Plan (www.coventry.gov.uk/councilplan/)?

Planning policy documents and planning applications help deliver the aims and objectives of the One Coventry Corporate Plan by determining the type and quantum of development needed, where this should be located, areas which should be protected, enhanced or improved and the infrastructure which should be provided. In line with the Corporate Plan, the proposed consultations focus upon supporting local communities by creating an attractive, cleaner and greener city and enhancing the quality of the built environment.

6.2. How is risk being managed?

There is no risk identified associated with the recommendation

6.3. What is the impact on the organisation?

The undertaking of public consultation will be deliverable within current resource.

6.4. Equalities / EIA?

The council acknowledges that, in exercising its functions, it has a legal duty under the Equality Act 2010 to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations. This duty applies to all people defined as having protected characteristics under that legislation.

A full Equality and Impact Assessment (EIA) was undertaken as part of developing the Local Plan. As part of that analysis, the Council had due regard to its public sector equality duty under section 149 of the Equality Act (2010).

6.5. Implications for (or impact on) climate change and the environment?

There is no direct impact from the recommendations of the report.

6.6. Implications for partner organisations?

None

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