

# WEST OF ENGLAND PLACEMAKING CHARTER

Action Plan June 2022



# A CHARTER FOR HIGH QUALITY PLACES IN THE WEST OF ENGLAND

The Placemaking Charter sets out a shared vision for delivering towns, cities and rural communities that put health, happiness and quality of life at their heart. The Charter principles have been developed with a wide range of organisations in the region. They provide a framework for developers, public authorities and local communities to create places that are:



**FUTURE READY**



**CONNECTED**



**BIODIVERSE**



**CHARACTERFUL**



**HEALTHY & INCLUSIVE**



The Placemaking Charter is aligned to the strategic objectives of the West of England Combined Authority including those articulated in the Local Industrial Strategy and the West of England Recovery Plan 2020. It articulates how the region's strategic objective of clean, inclusive recovery and growth can be achieved spatially. The principles also align with national planning policy and guidance including the ten characteristics of well designed places set out in the National Design Guide.

## How to use the Placemaking Charter

The Placemaking Charter action plan is based on engagement with a broad range of built environment stakeholders. This engagement was delivered by Design West on behalf of the West of England Combined Authority and the four West of England Unitary Authorities throughout 2020/21 and included stakeholders from the private and public sector and local communities.

Stakeholders shared how they could implement the Charter principles in their practice, and this is reflected in the action plan. Some actions will be led by the West of England Combined Authority and the four West of England authorities, whilst others will require further collaborative working with partners.



## Section 1: Priority actions

Action	Lead partner(s)	Timescale	Relevant guidance, evidence and precedents
<b>Gain sign up</b> to the Placemaking Charter from a range of sector partners, building a network of Charter ambassadors to promote its use in practice.	West of England Combined Authority	2022-23	Placemaking Charter Wales
<b>Communications plan</b> to promote the Charter to a range of audiences and ensure accessibility and ease of use. a) Graphic design / branding of document and supporting material b) Online Presence (on Combined Authority website) c) Wider comms to be considered include launch event (potentially Spring 2022) / annual conference	West of England Combined Authority	2022-25	WMCA Design Charter Placemaking Charter Wales
<b>Case Studies</b> – develop and share case studies to demonstrate good practice and outcomes that reflect the Charter principles. Work with the West of England Cultural Compact to develop case studies reflecting shared aspirations for place and culture. Seek submissions of case studies from the development sector of suggested good practice examples.	West of England Combined Authority Local authorities Developers	2022-24	Essex Design Guide
Use the Charter to <b>frame pre-application discussions</b> with clients, local communities and local authorities, to establish early how development can contribute to the principles of the Charter. This could become more formalised in future through the development of a kitemark / evaluation standard.	Urban designers, developers, architects, local communities and sector professionals	2022-25	Cambridgeshire Quality Charter for Growth

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<p><b>Design Review</b></p> <p>a) Testing – The application of the Placemaking Charter will be tested through Design Review in 2021/22</p> <p>b) Embedding – Design West’s design review panel to use the principles to structure feedback and discussion</p> <p>c) Promoting – Encourage the use of design review across the region, promote across authorities and investigate policy mechanisms</p> <p>d) Leading – Encourage use of design review for publicly funded schemes</p>	<p>Design West</p> <p>West of England Combined Authority</p> <p>Local authorities</p>	2022-25	<p>Cambridgeshire Quality Charter for Growth is used proactively in Design Review, giving structure to the review and subsequent letters.</p>
<p><b>Inform design codes.</b> The Placemaking Charter provides a checklist to frame and inform the development of design codes that respond to the region’s priorities, which can be used by local authorities, developers and local communities.</p>	<p>Local authorities</p> <p>Development sector</p> <p>Local communities</p>	2022-24	<p>NPPF / Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill</p> <p>National Model Design Code</p>
<p><b>Inform future project delivery.</b> Identify milestones to strengthen approach to design and place throughout project phases and may include:</p> <p>a) Early project scoping / business case to include use of appropriate design tools to enhance placemaking outcomes</p> <p>b) Agree parameters and expectations for use of specific tools and at stages through project delivery</p> <p>c) Promote and use Charter with project partners as reference point to test and shape project development at appropriate milestones</p> <p>d) Ensure alignment of project proposals with the Charter principles</p>	<p>West of England Combined Authority</p>	2022-24	<p>West Midlands Combined Authority Design Charter</p>

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<b>Improve consistency of the planning process</b> between permission and occupation to reduce potential for decline in quality outcomes. Consider appropriate recommendations for regional implementation.	West of England Combined Authority Local authorities Support from UWE	2022-25	UWE research into post-permission design quality National Planning Policy Framework
<b>Signpost and cross-reference</b> other relevant workstreams that implement key principles such as the West of England Cultural Compact.	West of England Combined Authority Local authorities	2022-25	WofE Joint Green Infrastructure Strategy 2020-2030 Natural England GI Guidance
<b>Raise awareness</b> and promote the use of the Charter across different local authority teams involved in development and regeneration of place, including highways and transport, public health, culture, art, regeneration, housing.	West of England Combined Authority Local authorities	2022-23	Councillors Companion for Design in Planning
<b>Develop a West of England Place Network</b> providing an informal network of professionals and community leaders to share information and best practice, support learning and disseminate knowledge that will integrate the Charter ambition across a broader range of practitioners.	Design West, supported by West of England Combined Authority	2022-25	London's Good Growth by Design and Design Advocates



## Section 2: Medium/long term actions

Action	Lead partner(s)	Timescale	Dependent on further funding?	Relevant guidance, evidence and precedents
<p><b>Reflect the Charter principles in the planning policy framework</b> and relevant regional local authority strategies. Utilise the most up to date evidence / best practice to inform policy approach.</p> <p>Policy scoping across the region should consider opportunities to improve the consistency of expected use of assessment frameworks and design tools.</p>	West of England Combined Authority Local authorities	2022-24	No	Existing Charters have different planning status but all have a mechanism to ensure consistency across authorities. Spatial Planning for Health Evidence Review Placemaking Charter Final Report
<p><b>Training and development programme.</b> Investigate opportunities to develop understanding and application of Placemaking Charter principles.</p> <p>a) Use the principles as a framework for training to support implementation</p> <p>b) Use the principles as a framework for shared skill development for officers and Members, and across the region's built environment sector</p>	West of England Combined Authority Local authorities	Establish 2023, repeat annually	Yes	Councillors companion for Design in Planning RTPI training on Planning and Good Design Design Skills in Local Authorities Living with Beauty report
<p><b>Link funding opportunities with Charter compliance.</b></p> <p>Embed the Charter in Combined Authority project and grant approval processes through:</p> <p>a) Including Charter in funding assessment process (demonstrate how principles achieved through projects)</p> <p>b) Embed document in business case process</p> <p>Require Charter sign up for bodies delivering relevant funded projects.</p>	West of England Combined Authority	2023-24	No	WMCA using theirs as guidance doc for single commissioning framework

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Action	Lead partner(s)	Timescale	Dependent on further funding?	Relevant guidance, evidence and precedents
<p><b>Lead by example in public procurement</b> paying attention to the principles within the Charter.</p> <p>a) Seek sign up to Charter from framework consultants</p> <p>b) Reflect Charter principles in relevant brief templates and business case assessments</p> <p>c) Reflect Charter principles in future procurement framework objectives</p>	West of England Combined Authority	2023-25	No	GLA Architecture and Urbanism Framework
<p><b>Develop and share guidance</b> that sets out clear and consistent expectations on what is considered best practice in relation to achieving the Placemaking Charter principles. These will need to be updated regularly to ensure in line with national and regional policy framework. Guidance may cover:</p> <p>a) Co design / community engagement</p> <p>b) Wildlife / pollinator friendly planting and design</p> <p>c) Achieving zero carbon developments</p> <p>d) Stewardship and maintenance</p> <p>e) Infrastructure and highways design (including use of Manual for Streets update on publication)</p>	West of England Combined Authority Local authorities Built environment stakeholders	2023-25	Yes	WMCA Design Charter London Good Growth by Design Nottingham Design Quality Framework RIBA 2030 Climate Challenge LETI Climate Emergency Design Guide Climate People Places, Design Principles for National Infrastructure

## Section 2: Medium/long term actions

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<p><b>Improve community involvement</b> in the design of places. Seek funding opportunities to develop regional best practice to:</p> <p>a) Test the Charter with different groups to establish whether it is accessible across different audiences</p> <p>b) Develop a community version of the Charter/questionnaire to encourage discussion that can be more clearly used by neighbourhood forums, Town &amp; Parish Councils and community groups</p> <p>c) Develop guidance for community involvement in infrastructure and development proposals for use by local authorities, consultants and the development sector.</p>	<p>West of England Combined Authority</p> <p>Local authorities</p>	2023-24	Yes	<p>Cambridgeshire Quality Charter for Growth</p> <p>Nottingham Design Quality Framework</p>
<p><b>Quality Kitemark for Place</b></p> <p>Consider the development of awards and/or accreditation for good practice, building on the Charter principles and developing an assessment tool that reflects the National Design Guide characteristics. Could provide a useful tool to support monitoring and provide a platform for raising quality expectations.</p>	<p>West of England Combined Authority</p> <p>Local authorities</p> <p>Built environment stakeholders</p>	2023-25	Yes	<p>Placemaking Charter Final Report</p>





## SIGN UP TO THE WEST OF ENGLAND PLACEMAKING CHARTER

To view our action plan and sign up to the Charter visit:  
[www.westofengland-ca.gov.uk/placemakingcharter](http://www.westofengland-ca.gov.uk/placemakingcharter)

Bath & North East  
Somerset Council

