

# ADEPT President's Awards 2024

## Entry form

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**Award category** Digital Innovation/Technology

**Project Title** Healthy Streets Design Code Webtool

**Local authority entrant** Surrey County Council


**Partner/s if applicable** Create Streets, Digital Urban, Surrey Borough and District Council

### Headline summary (150 characters max.)

The digitisation of Healthy Streets for Surrey Design Code, creating an easy to use Webtool for developers and other professionals.

**Please note we need at least one supporting image per award submission. Upload your image/s below.**



 Healthy Streets for Surrey 22... .pdf

### Video - please paste links to any video evidence here. (Leave blank if not relevant.)

Link to Healthy Streets for Surrey webtool:

<https://healthystreets.surreycc.gov.uk/>

### Digital innovation: How has this project shown evidence of successful digital innovation and the imaginative use of new technology? (150 words max.)

A key user need was searchability; the ability to search and provide a list of design requirements based off criteria not present in the text. To achieve this, the project took an innovative 'policy as a database' approach. The design code was broken down into constituent parts, these were assigned metadata to allow for filtering e.g. 'category' and 'key terms'. Filtered content is presented back as a list of code for

reference. The information is organised in the database to enable individual elements of code to be presented together by the website in a traditional document layout, helping match existing mental models of our users.

The way the site is built is unique; behind the site is an excel spreadsheet allowing changes to be made quickly and easily as guidance changes. Another unique feature is the Check list feature, allowing users to filter through the Musts, Shoulds and Coulds requirements.

**Digital innovation: How has this project shown evidence of improved outcomes for users? (150 words max.)**

Our webtool was built with the end user in mind. We carried out over 63 hours of engagement consisting of, in depth interviews with a range of professionals, online survey for residents followed by interviews with residents with no knowledge in the subject and then thorough testing with users requesting they use our tool for real life projects. Our site is currently in BETA allowing continued feedback and improvement suggestions to come through. That feedback is then being used to continually improve the site and its contents.

Feedback has been overwhelmingly positive, and our web stats show the code is being accessed by over 1,200 people every month, with over 6,000 page views a month and continues to grow (during March 24 - 6,772 visits to the site were made – an increase of 12% on the month prior).

**Digital innovation: How has this project shown evidence of the transformation of a service/department/organisation by changing behaviours, delivering savings or improving ways of working? (150 words max.)**

The digitisation of Healthy Streets for Surrey has radically changed how the design code is accessed. The project carefully considered accessibility at all stages, it has fantastic usability for all, with clear interface and easy navigation for everyone. The powerful search function allows users to search for key words and have clear visibility of all sections of the code, allowing designers to robustly satisfy all criteria relevant to their design, promoting a 'right first time' approach, reducing the time officers need to spend challenging poor design, and ensuring designs meet the needs of the code in all respects. These efficiencies will speed up the planning process in addition to improving the consistency of design standards within the organisation.

These efficiencies will be built upon during phase two of the project, where AI technology will be trialled enabling a user to view design codes across Surrey, incorporating our Borough's and Districts

**Digital innovation: How can the innovation/technology in this project be applied in multiple sectors/areas? (150 words max.)**

Phase 2 of the project presents an opportunity to integrate existing and emerging design codes at county and district level into a comprehensive, centralised system to aid the quality and success of planning approvals.

The county council and Surrey boroughs are aware the anticipated proliferation of design codes across our districts and boroughs has the potential to slow down decision making, approval times and outcomes. At the same time there is duplication of effort and a lack of integration between systems that requires a technical solution.

Utilising Digital Urban's "design code co-pilot", we aim to integrate the multitude of codes to aid development towards a shared platform for the whole of Surrey, potentially impacting on 11 of our boroughs and districts and the county council.

The AI driven tool will increase transparency and certainty for stakeholders, speed up and improve compliance of planning applications, and save officer and developer time.

**Digital innovation: How does this project demonstrate scalability and resilience - the ability to use technology in a wider scope and in a way that encourages longevity of use? (150 words max.)**

Our webtool is built on a spreadsheet, allowing us to easily update the code as and when the guidance changes. This also makes it easier to share with our local district & boroughs and other councils – they could take our template, apply it to their own codes and create a site with a similar functionality. This could be extended to County Councils Nationally.

In addition to this, Phase 2 of the project that will trial the use of AI to pull together all design codes across

Surrey (potentially incorporating all 11 Boroughs and Districts) enabling a user to view design requirements across the County at both the Borough/District level as well as the County level. This will provide a more comprehensive solution particularly for planning professionals, further improving the speed and quality of the planning process experience.