

# 7.0 DESIGN PRINCIPLES



### General Principles

- Circa 80 dwellings to be built on site
- A comprehensive scheme for the whole site will be created relative to layout, architecture, landscaping and access
- Dedicated open space to be provided as part of development
- Provision of links to existing village centre
- Retention of existing landscape assets on site



### Access and Highways

- Two access points to be provided – one through the existing Fairfield development and one to north of Fairfield onto Exeter Road
- Careful design consideration will be given to addressing the new access at Fairfield and its use by existing residents
- A safe, legible layout will be created based around two cul-de-sacs that will reduce speeds and avoid rat running.
- Pedestrian links to be created across Exeter Road
- Footpath to be established from crossing point to the site
- Links to wider pedestrian linkages
- Links to areas of open space in Palstone Park via new footpath
- Consider off site works to Exeter Road to slow Traffic



### Design and Layout

- Cul-de-sac to be created in the eastern and western parts of the site that will be linked via cyclepaths and footways
- Broad mix of housing to be developed that will include a range of house types
- A series of different building arrangements from terraces to detached properties will be developed across the site.
- The fabric and grain of development will reflect built form of neighbouring areas in the different parts of the site
- Appropriate edge to be presented to the north eastern frontage of the site
- Western part of the site will be based around a more rigid formal layout dictated by its shape
- Eastern part of the site will have a looser arrangement reflecting the wider countryside
- Architecture will reflect good examples of local vernacular



### Landscape and Ecology

- Retention of existing trees and hedgerows
- Link existing play provision to all parts of the site
- Creation of landscaped public open space utilising redundant railway line to soften the connection with the surrounding countryside and provide an ecological 'corridor' for bats and other wildlife
- Potential for community fruit tree planting to be created in public open space
- Existing landscape assets to define site boundaries
- New landscaping (green areas) flow through the site with a flexible approach to planting
- Bat roosting and bird nesting to be incorporated into some new buildings
- Key habitats will be protected and enhanced within the overall layout



### Sustainability

- Consideration will be given to building both the market and affordable housing on site to Level 4 of the Code for Sustainable Homes Standard, but this may result in the need to reduce other Section 106 contributions such as affordable housing
- The design of the individual units will incorporate sustainable design features that will improve the long term affordability of each unit;
- Orientation of residential units will aim to achieve south facing properties (where possible);
- The use of local materials in the construction of the site will be prioritised;
- Local suppliers and labour will be used where possible;
- Sustainable transport links will be created to ensure that the development will be able to support local services and facilities; and
- Where practical, resource efficient solutions will be utilised to address drainage.



### Design Principles – Housing

- Affordable housing to be provided in accordance with Policy COR15 in the adopted Core Strategy (subject to viability considerations);
- The Local Housing Needs Survey will underpin the phasing and delivery of the development;
- Tenure, mix and size of the affordable housing will be informed by the Local Housing Needs Assessment; and
- The design and location of the affordable housing element will be 'tenure blind'.



The design response for the Land Adjoining Fairfield will primarily be guided by the Design Principles distilled from the Development Brief process, and will accord with Development Plan policy. The brief demonstrates that the concept and development of the concluding indicative masterplan is grounded in producing a sustainable and land efficient scheme, whose design aims to reflect the uniqueness of the National Park.

The following points outline how a proposed development strategy might respond to site, context, community comments and policy, and are summarised in the Site Response Masterplan (fig. 07, page 11).

8.1 Response to Planning Policy

The brief recognises the importance of providing for affordable housing on this site as a prerequisite of DMD Proposal SBRI. Therefore, the number, tenure and type of affordable housing units will be informed by the results of the Local Housing Needs Assessment (which is being prepared in January – February 2014). In terms of tenure and type, the development will be in line with Core Strategy Policy CO15 and the emerging Affordable Housing SPD. It will provide for an appropriate mix of social rented, intermediate and discounted open market housing. The consultation exercise demonstrated that there is a desire for a mix of affordable homes and the Housing Needs Survey will help to define the types. Additionally, the developers will locate local needs housing appropriately on site with no differentiation between the design of market and affordable housing.

The issue of sustainability is addressed throughout the brief and reflects its importance to the local community and the principles of the Core Strategy and DMD. The proposed approach to be taken by the development accords with policy. Consideration will be given to meeting higher building standards such as Level 4 of the Code for Sustainable Homes, but this is subject to viability considerations and may result in the need to reduce other Section 106 contributions such as affordable housing whose design aims to reflect the uniqueness of the National Park.

8.2 Layout/Design Issues

Both developments are to be arranged as a series of cul-de-sacs to reflect local community input and will offer a variety of parking solutions from on plot to parking courts and on street spaces. The car parking requirements of the new development will be wholly catered for within the site. The proposals will feature a broad mix of housing types to satisfy market needs. Affordable housing provision will be located in pockets throughout both sites, and there will be no distinction between the design of the affordable and market housing.

The 'west field' site is rooted in the existing urban fabric of the village, with development on three sides. Clear public/private relationships in these areas can be defined with back to back arrangements resulting in an overlooked public realm. Opportunities to relax the formal, rigid layout suggested by the shape of the site should be explored, with a mix of property types throughout.

Development on the 'east field' part of the site represents the extension of the village towards the open countryside. It will form a new edge to the village boundary, and as such the treatment of this edge is key to the success of the design. It is considered that the copse forms the gateway to the village, while the railway embankment is a strong landscape feature defining the village edge. The introduction of built facades along this feature will work well along this defined edge, fragmenting to the east as the development spreads towards the countryside.

Architectural character and sustainability will be explored further as the design development process continues, although proposals should reflect the identified community desire for a reflection of the local vernacular and elements of contemporary design.

8.3 Access & Linkage

Good design practice for the layout of new streets within residential developments promotes the interaction between users and emphasises that pedestrians and cyclists should generally share streets with motor vehicles. This provides opportunities for populated and overlooked communal areas and lessens the dominance of the highway. Short, curved or irregular street alignments can increase the sense of place and hence help to lower the speed and thus the domination of the car. The existing highway layout within Fairfield constrains the dominance of the car by virtue of both curved alignment from Exeter Road and it's shared surface within the main residential area. This layout is therefore considered to be a suitable basis upon which to extend within, and provide access for the western development site.

There is evidence to suggest that each parcel of land can be accessed individually, and this is supported by initial consultations with Devon County Council (Highways Authority). The West site accessed through Fairfield with the east site accessed from a new junction along Exeter Road. A vehicular linkage between the two sites has raised local concerns over the level of traffic associated with the East site which may route through Fairfield to and from Exeter Road. The proposals are therefore being developed with a pedestrian/cycle/emergency vehicle only linkage between the two sites. The new access onto Exeter Road to serve the East site would be in the form of a priority junction with new footways provided along the southern edge of Exeter Road linking into the existing provision.

In order to integrate the two sites with each other and the wider village, connectivity is an important consideration. Both developments need to be connected to existing routes and linkages to allow ease of access to amenities within the village and to maintain the principle of permeability seen throughout South Brent. There is an opportunity to provide an enhanced 'Village Gateway' which would reinforce the village entrance approaching from the east and could incorporate a potential crossing point linking the site with the recreation ground and South Brent Footpath 1. The opportunity also exists to provide a further potential crossing point further west along Exeter Road on the desire line from the site to the school and Village centre. Existing linkages can then be extended into the site with a new cycleway/footpath along the route of the old 'Primrose Line'.

Following meetings with both the stakeholders and the public during the consultation process, the desire for the consideration of a new controlled pedestrian crossing (i.e. Zebra or Pelican) in the vicinity of the site along Exeter Road was noted. Whilst the local perceived need for a crossing point is acknowledged, the calculation process required to justify a new controlled crossing is very defined to ensure the support of the highway authority. The calculations are based on the level of traffic along the road and the existing number of people crossing the road in a given hour. The result along Exeter Road does not currently meet the value required to justify a new controlled facility; even with the anticipated pedestrian flow from the new development the evidence demonstrates that flow falls far short of the required volume. Further options for slowing down traffic and improving pedestrian safety will be explored with the Highways Authority.

Pedestrian links may be formed between the two sites and with 'Fairfield', and also with 'Crowder Park' (subject to legal ownership).

8.4 Surface Water Drainage

The site lies within Flood Risk Zone 1 as defined by the Environment Agency indicative flood plain maps (i.e. low risk of flooding), the site is however considered to be significant as it is above 1Ha in area, therefore a Flood Risk Assessment & Drainage Strategy will be provided as part of the planning submission. All forms of flooding both upstream and downstream of the development will be considered within the report.

Ground investigation at the site has confirmed a high level of ground permeability, hence surface water run-off will be returned to ground using soakaways and infiltration techniques. Soakaways will be designed to accommodate and dispose of flows up to and including the 1 in 100 year return period storm and will have an additional 30% capacity to provide for predicted climate change over the lifetime of the development.

8.5 Foul Drainage

South West Water have confirmed that suitable capacity within the adopted sewer exists to cater for the development. The majority of the site is at an elevation significantly lower than the existing sewers to the west of the development, hence flows will be drained by gravity to a low point on the site to be pumped via a rising main to the adopted network.

8.6 Sustainability

The development's sustainability is seen as being of particular importance to the local community. This has been one of the key issues raised during the Community Consultation. The community's response to the proposals is that the development should be driven by a clear agenda and that all avenues should be explored to create an environmentally sensitive and sustainable scheme. This feedback has influenced the layout and design of the proposals.

The layout aims to maximise southern aspects where possible, whilst consideration will be given to designing to a high level Code for Sustainable Homes standard (subject to viability considerations) to comply with Policy COR 8. Each unit will have energy efficiency measures that will decrease emission rates, reduce water use and minimise heating costs. Recycling facilities will be incorporated with the aim of improving the long term affordability of each unit.

Wider measures will also be introduced to reduce the development's footprint in terms of using locally sourced materials and employing local suppliers and labour where practical.





8.7 Landscaping Principles

As a major development within a rural location it is vitally important that the landscape design forms an integral part of the overall proposal. The landscape principles established at this Design Brief are in direct response to feedback gained through community and LPA consultation.

*The landscape proposals will primarily seek to:*

- integrate the development within the local village and surrounding landscape setting
- reduce the visual impact of the proposal
- promote good ecological practice
- support heritage assets
- support where feasible the aims of local sustainability groups
- provide an attractive environment in which to live and play that complements the existing village character.

*This will be achieved, where possible, through the:*

- creation of footpath links between the new and existing housing
- advancing the broader aims of the villages POS policy
- retention, incorporation and enhancement of the ecological and landscape assets
- retention, incorporation and enhancement of the sites existing heritage feature
- implementation of good design practice and quality landscape materials

*The outcomes of which are intended to:*

- promote good social and landscape connectivity with the village
- retain the sense of the sites landscape character
- lessen the overall visual impact of the development
- safeguard the sites landscape and heritage assets
- promote good biodiversity practice
- enhance the residential setting



8.10 Distant Views of South Brent

South Brent lies in an area of comparatively low ground, gently sloping down towards the northeast. Local escarpments to the north and south, coupled with the much higher levels of Dartmoor to the east push the potential for views out into the wider, more distant landscape (as seen above) The nearest and only clear views established to date can be found along a Public Footpath approx. 1.25 km from the site. However as outlined above the site is not clearly visible as the landform of the site falls away to the northeast. Even if the land were level at this point clear views would still likely be difficult due to distance involved, scale of the site and its location nestled within existing development.

The proposals for development on this site will consider its appearance within the wider settlement context as seen from the surrounding countryside, and a planning application will be accompanied by a Landscape Visual Impact Assessment.

8.8 Key Ecological Design Principles/Opportunities: (Drawn from the Ecology Recommendations and Design Brief consultation)

The ecology principles for the design brief have responded to the ecological baseline, including the results of the habitat and protected species surveys that have been undertaken. Key elements are as follows:

- Retention and enhancement of the key wildlife habitats within the site (Devon-bank hedgerows; woodland copse; and ecological 'corridor' associated with the Primrose Line), where possible.
- Creation/retention of 'green corridors' through the site, including enhancement of the corridor provided by the Primrose Line. This and careful design of the lighting strategy will ensure that the site remains suitable for foraging and commuting bats.
- Integration of new wildlife habitats into the development such as wildflower margins and native tree/shrub planting; this will mitigate loss of the existing pasture and provide ecological enhancement.
- Where appropriate, integration of features that can be used by roosting bats and breeding birds into new buildings, such as 'bat bricks' and bird boxes targeted at declining urban species such as house sparrow and house martin.
- The retained and created habitats will be managed under an appropriate landscape and ecology management plan, which will be designed to maintain the landscape, amenity and ecological value of the site.
- Opportunity to provide sustainable, productive landscape elements, such as fruit and nut planting
- Ecological mitigation strategy informed by protected species surveys, including bat, dormouse and reptile survey.

8.9 Landscape Design Strategy

In response to the above the landscape proposals include:

- The safeguarding of the sites significant standard hedge trees and hedgerow boundaries except where footpath / cycleway links need to be provided.
- The development of green corridors, drawing in the benefits of the existing boundary hedgerows by acting as wildlife corridors for bats, birds and small mammals, as well as providing potential foraging, nesting and over wintering sites for a range of wildlife. These routeways also represent attractive recreational features for site users.
- Both formal and informal play opportunities in the form of natural play items within the railway cutting in a way that that reflects heritage aspects of the site, as well as supporting Devon Biodiversity Action Plan in its safeguarding and enhancement of the native ecological diversity.
- Access points and route ways that encourage wider public access by linking with existing popular footpaths and the neighbouring recreation ground, drawing people through the site and out into the surrounding area.
- The development of meaningful small green spaces. These are designed to support the wishes of the existing village members for areas in which to grow edible plants and trees for community management and use. 'Pocket Gardens' could act as valuable informal recreation areas for sitting or play as well as providing usable edible produce. By varying the species selection for each site, each pocket garden could have a different character thereby increasing visual diversity, seasonal variation as well a wide range of flora and fauna.
- Street trees that could also be selected for their fruit productivity although careful consideration would be required regarding species and location in order to guard against any potential undesirable side effects.
- Off-site contributions to existing play facilities will be considered



8.11 Existing Landscape Character and Site Features

The site lies within LCT ID : Inland Elevated Undulating Land of the Dartmoor Landscape Character Assessment. The site comprises of agricultural pasture land bounded by native hedgerows which contain two notable mature trees.

Along the north eastern boundary lies a stretch of former railway line represented by a linear embankment and cutting with copse planting; providing the site with an attractive, unique landscape and heritage feature.



8.12 Landscape and Ecology possibilities

- Restoration of denuded copse planting
- Retention and supplementation of sites native hedgerows and tree planting.
- Possible integration of orchard/edible planting for community harvesting.
- Specification of locally grown, indigenous planting for use throughout scheme.
- Use of landscape materials with low embodied energy



8.13 Play and recreation

- Stretch of remnant railway could be utilised to create interesting linear Public Open Space. This could comprise retained landform and copse planting interspersed with natural play items that resonate with railway heritage.
- Supplementary primrose planting could be added reflecting the heritage aspect of the space as well as supporting this Devon Biodiversity Action Plan (DBAP) target species.
- Pocket Gardens and green footpath corridors could provide both opportunities for play and the production of edible crops for community harvesting.
- Character of play items could reflect that of neighbouring Palstone Park Adventure Trail, possibly acting as an extension of it.



8.14 Footpaths and route ways

- Proposals would endeavour to tie in with existing Public Rights of Way and popular walking routes within surrounding housing, linking to village centre.
- Promotion of less formal footpaths with possible planting to act as wildlife corridors.
- Footpaths could act as areas of informal play



# 9.0 SITE RESPONSE MASTERPLAN

The adjacent Site Response Masterplan summarises the principle responses to site, context and community comments that will inform the initial design development.



Fig 07. Site Response Masterplan

COMPLETED DEVELOPMENT BRIEF (revE): 20th January 2014