Proposed Strategic Housing Allocations
Draft design guidance

Forward

The Local Plan will set out a policy for each strategic allocation site setting out site requirements and considerations. The policy will contain high level design guidelines including a concept masterplan. The master plan will define the main points of access and the broad distribution of habitat mitigation areas and other open space, framing the areas where built development would take place.

In drafting our policies for each site, Council officers are seeking an understanding of what each site can deliver. We have been clear at initial meetings that densities and quantum must be design driven and will not be considered in terms of simple formulae. Quality will need to be demonstrated by submissions in order to justify quantity.

If the time and information is available, we would aim to produce adoptable site guidance or advice to supplement the higher level local plan site policy. The site progress meetings will help us to establish broad principles for the site policies, and also to hone the supporting site guidance.

The remainder of the document is an illustration of what the site guidance could look like. We would aim to populate the document with material developed by collaborative working or produced by the site promoter whenever possible.

The current status of this document is informal officer level advice.

March 2017

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The design will be required to achieve the following outputs:

Please suggest the key design outputs for your site (i.e. relating to place, character etc.) some suggestions (drawn from the guidance discussed in the first round of meetings) are as follows:

Regarding creating a distinctive character

- Create a distinctive frontage to all key routes and spaces including xxxxxx
- Create building layouts which support the character and social fabric of the village/town of xxxxxxx.
- An extension of the village/town with a scale and character drawn from the heritage, grain/layout of the place and which underpins its sense of rural tradition – neighbourly homes, tight knit gardens dominating the character as opposed to cars, driveways and wide roads.
- Vehicle access and parking provision should be designed into the development from the outset to mitigate the potential for harmful visual impacts.
- Re-establish a sense of character based upon the traditional village/town characteristics and urban form of the area.
- An attractive living environment with a clearly define-able character – a sense of neighbourhood which does not unduly impinge upon the skyline and views from …. list important vantage points.
- An attractive and desirable living environment with a clearly define-able character – a sense of neighbourhood. This should build on the local distinctiveness of…. briefly list the elements whether that be particular neighbourhoods, villages or building types.

Regarding rural edge

- Recreate a well-defined rural edge surrounding the development using a network of mitigation spaces (SANGS) and connected public open space.
- Create a new positive rural edge to the settlement and avoid random buffer strips.
- Create well defined green infrastructure as part of any proposal allowing as much of the development as possible to have direct links to the countryside or greenspace.
- Create a transition from greenbelt countryside to residential environment. Keeping the edges of the greenbelt green, with hedges, occasional tree groups, low roofs with gaps between dwellings, deep garden spaces, small tree groups and retained field hedges and through strategically placing open space uses between the residential edge and the remaining greenbelt land.

Regarding connections

- Connect into the network of existing greenspace and lanes which offer overlooked safe school routes and a wider network of walking routes between functions along the xxxxx.
- Create choices of routes through and within the development, minimising impacts of additional traffic on the existing network of lanes and rural roads and on the tranquil rural character of the area.
- Create a network of connected streets that allows traffic to percolate through the development but also assists in relieving traffic flows through other related parts of the town. A hierarchy of key access links, pedestrian friendly streets and home zone type shared streets. Adherence to principles set out in Manual for Streets 1 and 2 will be expected.
- Create a network of footpaths and spaces which interlink and offer a choice of walking routes as part of the mitigation (SANGS) provision and which connect the development into the existing fabric of the town. (Some of these can be combined to suit specific sites they repeat similar points.)

Regarding the landscape

- Reinforce and perpetuate the rural character and heritage of the lanes including their banks, ditches, trees and hedgerows
- Respect and protect the existing character of the area (including the townscape). Briefly summarising what that is if two lines can do it. For example ‘wide views, big skies – views afforded across wide flat fields, a highly characteristic landscape type (emphasised by the isolated dwellings of The Holdings)’ from *Ringwood Local Distinctiveness SPD.*
- A development that respects the landscape character of xxxx etc - Offer examples for instance: ‘the sloping wooded edge of the New Forest Farmlands, the more intimate landscape of the conservation area and the hedgerow boundaries of the older lanes’ - all as identified in the *Ringwood Local Distinctiveness SPD.*
- Create a suitable setting for the xxxx - characteristic local designated and non-designated heritage assets and landmark in the area.
- Retain and enhance natural field boundaries – hedges banks and ditches as well as the field oaks and views of historic rural farms and cottages which will set the character for this area.
- Create a connected green infrastructure which combines informal and formal open space with the requirements for mitigation (set out elsewhere) and retaining the essential elements of existing trees, tree groups and important hedgerows.

In accordance with the council’s *Housing Design Density and Character supplementary planning document (SPD)*, the council expects applications for planning consent to include a design statement, explaining how the proposal will achieve its design outputs while accommodating the following guiding principles that all places should be **appropriate**; **fit for purpose**; and offer **richness and delight** to resident and visitor alike.

Guiding Principles

Appropriateness

The process for achieving this is set out in the Council’s *Housing design density and character SPD*. The document seeks consideration of:

A Character and sense of identity

B Access movement and permeability

C Social expectation

Applications will need to provide a design and access statement (D&AS) which should start with a thorough analysis of local context and follow a thread of design decisions through response to that context, leading through conceptual design and illustrative materials showing how that concept can be achieved. The SPD explains how this is needed before density and expected quantum can reasonably be considered. As a council we will be considering appropriateness first and foremost in order to establish likely dwelling numbers on proposed strategic allocation sites. Site promoters should also take this D&AS process as far as they can, to justify their expectations – this can assist the council in setting approximate target numbers against the objectively assessed needs of the district. As a minimum, referring to the ‘typology checklist’ contained at pages 18 and 28-29, promoters should provide a wide ranging ‘figure ground’ plan of the local area and some analysis of typical densities and scale.

Fitness for purpose

The council will set out a list of aims for each site similar to the following examples. Promoters could usefully suggest their own list to help the council to hone their proposed policy documents and/or to justify the approach to design which they intend to take. Site specific proposals can usefully be included within this list for example under legibility a proposal such as: ‘The grade II listed cottage visible on the south facing slope to the north of the site will

form a key landmark for legibility with the main street orientated to allow views etc etc'.

1 Legibility and sense of place

1.1 Perimeter block and connected streets mostly to have visual connections to countryside and greenspace.

1.2 Create a hierarchy of streets which through their design and through the characteristics of the buildings or margins that define them, are recognisable in terms of their importance as routes or as destinations in themselves.

1.3 Street and footpath network should be tied into local connections.

1.4 Streets are to be orientated to allow views outward to features and landmarks beyond, giving orientation within the wider settlement/landscape

1.5 Where appropriate streets or important and active nodes are identified, it may be possible to design areas of greater intensity and richness of character within the built form and streetscapes.

1.6 Buildings will exhibit relative consistency in scale and material use with only occasional departures from that consistency to highlight important nodes or spaces. The use of standard non contextual house types is unlikely to be supported.

1.7 Spaces and streets need to be interlinked with recognisable views.

1.8 Reinforce and perpetuate the rural character and heritage of existing lanes including their building relationships, varied alignments, banks, green spaces, ditches, trees and hedgerows

1.9 Retain any existing tree lines and tree groups within the defined public realm as part of a recognisable hierarchy of streets and spaces

2 Safety and security

2.1 Streets and public spaces (including footpath routes) should have appropriate natural surveillance from dwellings and through the promotion of active uses and connectivity through and within the site.

2.2 Rear gardens must be grouped together and boundaries must be of permanent structure where adjacent to public or semi-public areas (e.g. walls).

2.3 Streets should be designed to encourage low speeds and provide for pedestrian comfort and crossability. Segregation of pedestrians from vehicles should only be considered as a last resort or at vulnerable 'hot spots' such as immediately outside schools or to deflect a route to a suitable crossing point.

2.4 Lighting will need to define main routes and careful thought is required to mitigate light pollution. Lighting should be more muted or absent where evening activity is to be discouraged – eg next to rural edge, or across greenspace where alternative routes are easily accessible.

2.5 Front doors should be visible from neighbouring dwelling frontages or active parts of streets, never secluded behind buildings.

3 Connectivity

3.1 Existing lanes, routes, paths and access points will inform locations of proposed routes.

3.2 Dead ends should usually be avoided and there must be a clear definition between public routes and private space

3.3 Shared private drives may be used to service frontage development on some sides of each block but these will be augmented by connected paths which are overlooked alongside to ensure connectivity.

3.4 A simple hierarchy of streets will connect access points creating a loose grid network, offering a choice of routes linking neighbourhoods together, dissipating traffic concentrations and minimising pressure on local lanes.

4 Robustness

4.1 Buildings should be designed to accommodate minor alterations and smaller extensions within their foreseeable function without destroying or detracting from the forms and spaces around them.

4.2 Small business and local centre layout should continue the street pattern and block sizes should remain consistent with the housing model. Buildings which define streets and spaces are equally important in these locations. This will allow the area to remain robust for any future changes of use and/or neighbourly mixture of uses.

5 Sustainability

5.1 Overall the site needs to demonstrate a net gain for ecology - habitats and wildlife.

5.2 Efficient use of sunlight and daylight penetration should be considered in deciding layout and building designs. Features such as solar panels, if being considered, should be designed into roofscapes at the outset.

5.3 Provide transport choices. Layout and design to create a hierarchy of routes and spaces prioritising transport mode in order of pedestrian first, cycling second and motor vehicle use last. Good pedestrian/cycling connections need to link up to all key destinations and in particular xxxx

5.4 Maximise biodiversity - planting should consist of predominantly native species; open space to be managed for ecological benefit as well as functional purposes; buildings to offer provision for wildlife eg bat bricks; gardens a minimum of 12m deep (to underpin the rural context) and these gardens should be grouped to allow combined benefits.

5.5 A tree strategy for each site needs to be developed for public and private areas to ensure consistency of green canopy cover and the ability to assist with drainage and GI.

5.6 SUDS – road and roof run-off to soakaway where possible. Open spaces should not be encumbered by underground services but may be utilized for a network of swales, detention ponds and underground soakaways if designed to enhance both visual amenity and biodiversity and provided that their future management is assured.

5.7 Mitigation land (SANGS) proposed in accordance with emerging guidance.

Richness and delight

The council will set out a list of aims for each site similar to the following examples. Promoters could usefully suggest their own list to help the council hone their proposed policy documents and/or to justify the approach to design which they intend to take. Promoters might consider a particular style in justifying their approach but in setting policy and guidance the council would only seek to impose levels of quality and consistency.

A Much of the richness and delight afforded to this site will be through the landscape setting, its natural seasonal colours and the diversity of native trees. Groups of enclosed rear gardens and modest frontage plots should be created.

B Use of locally typical materials should offer a consistency across the scheme with even special highlights or landmark buildings showing variation only through form and richness but retaining a consistent use of traditional materials. Variety is expected only within defined limits so as to offer a clear sense of place which should be drawn from the materials and building forms which characterise the area.

C Quality and richness of house type and designs. Good quality details and craftsmanship will be expected with richness in texture, in brickwork and through the use of shadow lines under eaves, in window reveals and through articulating the buildings.

D Details need to be appropriate to the character of the architecture being used in each case.

E Dwelling forms should relate well to each other and to the spaces they define. Groups of buildings should work together to complement a rich and delightful place through diverse and clearly defined hard and soft landscape spaces.

F The frontage to all key streets and spaces including xxxx should be a particularly distinctive highlighted by the composition of built forms

G Xxxxx Road and yyyy Lane should offer delight through restoration of the distinctive rural hedgerows, banks, tree cover and enhanced seasonal colour.

Any application must include concept sketches for:

1 Analytical Study (map and images)

Showing context, opportunities and constraints, local landmarks, distinctive landforms and break of slopes, water courses, tree groups, special buildings or groups of buildings (ones whose character can inform development designs), typical settlement tissues and grain analysis etc etc. The critical thing is that this is analytical and that it goes well beyond the site boundaries – it is not a site survey.

2 Landscape Framework

A green infrastructure embracing the principles of: the mitigation policy (***); public open space requirements; a strategy for play; drainage patterns and any SUDS provision; habitat protection and enhancement. The framework will need to accommodate strategically located structure planting.

3 Built Framework (including access and street network)

for larger sites, promoters should consider a separate **access and street framework**.

This needs to show the key linkage between the Analytical Study and the conceptual masterplan. A structure for the layout showing: block sizes and locations; typical block density and varying grain; hierarchy of street types and layout; typical connections; typical treatment of street alignment, spaces, courtyards, squares, junctions and paths; sketch ideas for street elevations and typical dwelling types based on locally distinctive built forms.

4 Typical block(s) types

Three typical block types are given as examples. These are offered without prejudice and will be revised and augmented by additional information in liaison with site promoters where appropriate. Examples can help clarify the likely intensity of development in combination with responses to local distinctiveness and character. It will be helpful to extend these to include the street types if these are not already illustrated in a separate access and street framework. One way of illustrating the intended blocks and street types is through demonstrating a transect through the proposal site showing some level of illustrative detail.

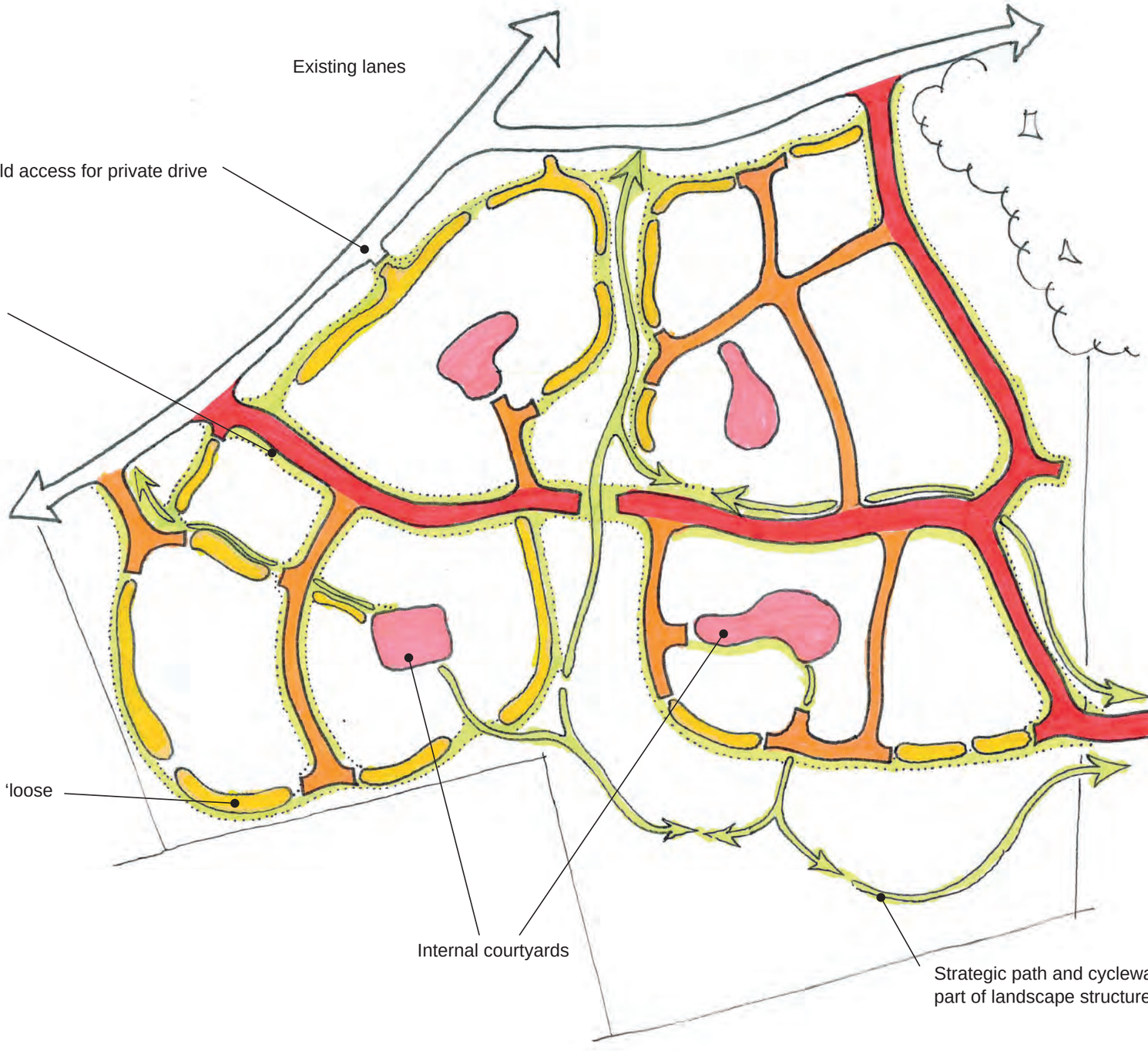
The Council's expectations for these concepts are set out as hypothetical illustrative frameworks. Drafts have been prepared and were shown at earlier meetings for further consideration in liaison with the applicants design team in readiness for creating a guidance framework to accompany the policy or to assist in the creation of D&AS and codes for applications stages.

Proposed Strategic Housing Allocations
Draft design guidance - landscape framework

Proposed Strategic Housing Allocations
Draft design guidance - built framework

Proposed Strategic Housing Allocations

Draft design guidance - access and street framework



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Typical Block Types

Design frameworks and masterplans will need to provide some indication of the character that the development expects to create and in order to determine a reasonably accurate idea of dwelling numbers, there will need to be some understanding of block types and the likely streetscapes they will create.

Perimeter blocks enable the creation of connected streets, they ensure that rear gardens can be grouped together offering greater privacy and security and they enable the public areas to have a good level of natural surveillance and activity.

Local context for many areas will suggest a fairly soft urban grain with gaps between buildings, many dwellings with individual settings and plenty of space for greenery.

The rural edge nature of most parts of the identified allocation sites suggests that the context will require landscape settings, garden space, greenery and skyline to form a significant part of most block types and street. The principle suggested in each block type below is to build in an efficient manner whilst embracing such important elements of local distinctiveness. Occasionally sites will warrant a more intense form of development with streets defined by building frontage and occasionally a landmark feature by way of special building form but these will need to be consistent with the local context, the need to provide appropriate skylines and strengthen legibility within neighbourhoods and the need to create neighbourhoods with a real sense of place.

Three perimeter block types are suggested below with some important parameters set out regarding distances and design features. These suggested types should be evolved to create distinctive settlement but these should take these types as a starting point with variations brought about by responses to local context landscape feature and the need to create individual streetscapes.

Block type 1

Standard perimeter block adjoining semi-rural communities and settlement edge locations.

This seeks gaps between buildings and enough space for taller planting (including trees) to be visible across the developed landscape both from distance and from within communities. These are to ensure that skylines are punctuated with greenery and so that such neighbourhoods do not offer an impression of inappropriately intensive development - unadulterated expanses of roof, dwellings seen as backdrops to more dwellings and rows of close board corrals characterising what purports to be garden amenity but which does not function as such.

To maximise efficiency of land use, traditional front gardens which may be contextually appropriate in such areas may need to be considered instead as much smaller spaces to offer opportunity for personalisation and decoration and to ensure that streets remain green.

Gardens contained together inside the block work better in combination as a group of tranquil green spaces – the cumulative benefit being greater than the sum of its parts. Typically these should not have vehicle access within the backs and depth should be at least 12m as trees and other taller shrub planting tends to be avoided in smaller plots.

Street frontages should not create excessive cross over of vehicle parking accessing across pedestrian routes.

block type 1, typical perimeter block

Block type 2 - Courtyard Block

The principles of the standard block are repeated but with the opportunity for car parking to be inserted within the block.

These will normally be appropriate where the quality of spaces dictates that cars should not dominate the street frontages, especially where buildings offer definition and natural surveillance to the public realm – the open green spaces, street spaces or courtyards.

Internal courtyards need to be good places in their own right – not just car parks. Rear and side boundaries will need permanent structure – walls or dwarf wall, pier and panel combinations. These will need to be designed with gaps, and 'spy-holes' to offer a sense of natural surveillance. Gardens may be less than 12m in depth and will often be walled. Therefore tree planting will need to form part of the courtyard area as well as minor planted areas associated with some gardens.

Natural surveillance is important in these courtyards so the block needs to be large enough to accommodate at least two residential units where front doors and front windows look directly into the courtyard. Such dwellings should be subservient in mass to the street frontage buildings – typically bungalow or chalet bungalow styles would suit. Flats over garage (FOGs) will normally only be used as a device for building up street frontage on the edge of the block.

block type 2, courtyard block

block type 3, rural edge block

Block type 3- Rural Lanes

Many of the proposed allocation sites include rural lanes where the agricultural hedge lines with their historic banks and ditches are a very important part of the local character. Such character needs to be protected. Where development would encompass such lanes, this block suggestion enables a limited number of dwellings to be inserted along traditional lines. Detached or semi-detached houses or bungalows set in deep garden settings should have plot divisions drawn straight from local examples. Driveway cross-overs should be kept to a minimum and enough room left to allow existing trees to grow, ditches to continue working without the need to culvert and significant sections of hedgerow to be retained.