

Concept statements

- Delivering sustainable development in the Sustainable Communities Growth Areas
 - The right scheme in the right place

The Planning Cooperative

for



2007

Concept Statements

- delivering sustainable development

Development is more than putting up new buildings. It should create a place that fits its surroundings and has a sense of belonging. It should look right, and feel right. It should deliver wider benefits. Responsibility for this is shared, but the planning system is now charged with bringing all the various elements together. There is little established practice for how to do this.

Concept statements are a way to make this happen.

- positive and aspirational, setting clear objectives
- promote a shared view of what needs to be achieved
- respond directly and immediately to emerging policy in PPS/RSS
- quick and simple to do, inclusive, accessible to all
- build cooperation, confidence and consensus
- foster effective engagement with the local community
- deliver sustainable development in practice



WHY DO WE NEED CONCEPT STATEMENTS ?

Frequent criticisms of the planning system include that it is slow, negative, over-technical and that it excludes the local community - the group likely to be the most concerned about the design quality of new proposals.

Concept statements address all these fundamental weaknesses in a single, simple, accessible and enjoyable approach.



“ Design that is inappropriate to its context, or which fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions should not be accepted.

Local Planning Authorities should develop a shared vision with their local communities of the types of residential environments they wish to see”

PPS3, November 2006

Guidance on the Preparation and Use of Concept Statements

The Planning Cooperative, 2007

Concept Statements

- the right scheme in the right place

The former Countryside Agency published practical guidance for local planning authorities on the use of Concept Statements in October 2003. A review of case studies testing the approach was published in 2005. In 2006/07 the potential within the Growth Areas was explored and further example case studies undertaken.

This document provides updated guidance on **how, when** and **why** to prepare concept statements. It promotes them as a practical way to deliver sustainable development and presents the latest case studies from the Growth Areas as an illustration of what can be achieved.

Introduction

Concept Statements are a clear expression of the kind of place that development should be creating, not in technical terms but in simple, everyday language that anyone can understand. The product of a meaningful debate between the community, developer and the local authority, they are a brief explanation of how development should contribute to the local authority's vision. They explain how the policies and objectives of the Local Development Document should apply to particular sites, in order to deliver the best possible economic, social and environmental benefits. Concept Statements have been shown to be very effective in those local authorities that have already adopted the approach.

Previous stages of this research for the former Countryside Agency presented case studies from a range of sites and locations across the country. The work presented in this document involves sites within the Sustainable Communities Growth Areas and has focussed on regeneration and larger scale urban expansion sites. It has confirmed the simplicity, wide applicability and usefulness of the approach.

Growth Areas are subject to twin development pressures of quantity and quality. The emphasis on delivery is potentially at odds with a concern for better and more sustainable design. The case studies demonstrate that the approach can be applied to all types of sites and proposals and can deal with large and diverse groups of participants.



Findings

The first and most important point is that the approach works. Every workshop run as part of this research produced a concept statement that had the support of the participants, despite dealing with complex sites that posed challenging issues.

The statements were produced very quickly, typically within one week, and therefore were in place in time to impact on future proposals. They are being used to shape emerging schemes.

This outcome was accompanied by general surprise - and sometimes amazement - at what had been accomplished. The participants were always pleased with the results of their efforts on the basis of the rough working sketches from the day, before they saw the final drawn-up version. The event left them enthusiastic both about the process and the development principles that had been established.

Team-work, personal challenge / reward, and having fun (the process has proved to be enjoyable) gives rise to a very positive atmosphere - a defining aspect of the workshops. It fosters confidence and prompts imagination making the creative process cumulative.

This was true of all of the events but was particularly marked for the most difficult sites. The technique can unlock apparently intractable problems by engendering a positive and cooperative approach.



Characteristics of Concept Statements

QUICK - the key development principles to make the proposals sustainable were established in less than a day, including a site visit.

POSITIVE - the statement sets out aspirations for the development. This establishes ambitious outcomes rather than the lowest common denominator that a problem-solving approach produces.

CLEAR - the discipline of expressing development principles in a few concise paragraphs - on a single A3 sheet - results in a clear and simple expression of what is to be achieved, not vague, restrictive opinions.

USEFUL - it promotes the right development in the right place and helps bring mutual understanding to the developer, the planning authority and the local community at the beginning of the development process, before entrenched positions are adopted.

PARTICIPATORY - because the concept statement concentrates on the kind of new place that we want to create it is not dominated by technical expertise and does not exclude contributions from the community. Findings from the case studies have shown that community representatives with diverse backgrounds and experience can be positive about development opportunities and find ways to address local concerns. Effective participation at this scale needs experienced facilitation to maintain a positive and realistic focus.

RELEVANT - the above attributes are the defining characteristics of the post-2004 planning system. Government policy in PPS requires the development industry to deliver appropriate, high quality and sustainable development that enjoys a measure of local support.

Concept statements define what that means for each individual site, through a cooperative process that builds consensus and promotes ownership of the outcome. They are practical, useful and easy to do.

"Urban design is about building real places that work, and that people like. It is not achieved by following standardised rules about what makes good design."

Nick Johnson, Deputy Chief Executive, Urban Splash

Is this scheme good enough to approve ?

CABE Guidance on Design and Access Statements

Guidance on the Preparation and Use of Concept Statements

The Planning Cooperative, 2007

Relevance and Applications

• when concept statements are useful

Concept statements are widely applicable. Because they focus on simple principles to guide a development they can be useful in a wide range of circumstances. Early intervention is particularly helpful, before design ideas have become fixed. Three key opportunities are windfall sites coming forward with little warning, problem sites that have no developer interest and as a briefing for Design and Access Statements by applicants. Concept statements can stand alone or can be given formal status as SPD. They could also be incorporated directly into an Allocations DPD as a specification for how the proposed sites are to be developed in order to achieve the required quality and sense of place.

Windfall Sites

Urban capacity studies and the drive to minimise green field losses have placed growing emphasis on existing sites within urban areas. These frequently come forward without the benefit of specific design guidance. Improving a fundamentally poor scheme within the constraints of the statutory timescales for planning permission can be very difficult.

The twin aims of higher density and design quality that has a positive effect on the area cannot be achieved without clear, useful and convincing design advice.

Concept Statements are ideally suited to this situation. Being aspirational and based on the ideas of interested stakeholders they can be put together in a very short time. The workshops ran on a one-day format - one took only half a day. They produced workable and effective guidance within a matter of hours, and the finished statement was drawn up to presentation quality within a few days. A practiced team could fit the whole process into a single week.

This compares with estimates of several weeks or months for a conventional development / design brief. This is largely due to the problem-solving approach traditionally adopted that requires detailed resolution of technical matters. Conventional briefs are too slow to influence the proposals in time, and tend to be a list of constraints not a vision of what should be achieved.

Master Plans suffer similarly from the time taken to prepare them and the added problem of needing to coordinate individual specialists seeking to resolve technical matters in detail. That work would benefit enormously from an agreed end point, established in general terms and agreed by all sides.

Concept statements are a graphic illustration of the value of front loading - agreeing what is to be achieved to act as guiding principles for all the detailed design work. A clear and agreed end point activates as well as guides creative thought and effort and encourages cooperative working. These are all essential to good design but are largely lacking from conventional planning approaches.

Design and Access Statements

The requirement to submit a Design and Access Statement (DAS) is intended to make new development more appropriate and sustainable as required by PPS1. However, in themselves while describing the design principles, they do nothing to raise the scope or ambition of them. Applicants inevitably find themselves either retro-fitting a DAS to a pre-conceived scheme, or trying to make sense of council aspirations that are usually too loosely-defined to act as effective brief to the process.

Concept Statements bridge that gap. Using the right mix of participants they identify the aspects of sustainable development that are most relevant to the particular circumstances of the site. In so doing, they narrow down and define what is needed to make that particular development opportunity sustainable. The requirement for applicants to submit DAS is an ideal opportunity to front load the whole design process with ambitious and appropriate development principles.

The aspirations expressed in a Concept Statement would form a very useful starting point for the DAS exercise. Applicants would have to demonstrate how their proposals will deliver the specific requirements that will make the development sustainable. This is the vital distinction with Design Coding. It fails to generate specific objectives that are the most relevant and justifiable for particular sites, but relies instead on standardised solutions. They will not deliver distinctiveness or preserve character.

Both LPAs and applicants stand to benefit from clear, agreed principles that reduce the time required and focus the effort involved to secure a proposal that responds properly to the relevant policies.

Concept Statements can also help applicants engage with the local community as part of the DAS process. Clear, short and visual, they are highly effective for undertaking public consultation. The case studies have shown that, when engaged through such material community representatives with diverse backgrounds and experience can become positive about new proposals and find ways to address local concerns.

“The gap between aspiration and delivery needs to close as a matter of urgency. This is one of CABE's top priorities.”

“This audit uncovers disturbing evidence about the quality of some schemes but also highlights inspiring examples of what good design can achieve.”

Dr Richard Simmonds Chief Executive CABE
Housing Audit E and W Midlands 2007

Local Development Frameworks

The new planning system encourages LPAs to prepare guidance to interpret and implement broad policies in the Core Strategy Development Plan Document. These can be as an Area Action Plan DPD or as a Supplementary Planning Document, SPD.

In Glossop, Derbyshire, the council decided to prepare an AAP for the regeneration of Woods Mill - a complex of riverside heritage industrial buildings - once they had seen the vision of what could be achieved in a concept statement undertaken in a previous phase of this research.

SPD can be prepared more quickly and modified if necessary to keep it up to date. The final guidance on Sustainability Appraisal has established that it does not need to be undertaken again for SPD that relates to a policy that has itself already been subject to SA. Once the core policies of an LDF have been approved, SPD that explains and implements them will not need its own sustainability appraisal.

A third role within the LDF is as a specification for proposed sites in the Allocations DPD. In South Hams, Devon for example, Concept Statements are incorporated into sub area DPDs that allocate sites in various settlements in the different parts of the District. They apply the core requirements of the council for delivering sustainable development to specific circumstances, making the most of the attributes of each site by identifying the most appropriate aspects of sustainability. The Core Strategy was been declared sound and is due for adoption in Spring 2007.

“It is clear that the formal LDF processes are simply unable to keep up with new ideas for what makes good development.

Concept statements allow LPAs to get ahead of the development process without slowing it down.”

Informal Use

All these processes are far more lengthy than undertaking a free standing concept statement. They all involve several months and can take over a year. The greatest scope for influencing the quality and sustainability of new development is by agreeing ambitious, relevant, clearly expressed aspirations **early in the process** - front loading. This can be done simultaneously with the site being identified so that the decision on whether development should proceed is taken with the decision on what it should achieve.

Experience from the case studies in the Growth Areas demonstrates that Concept Statements are highly effective in this way. They have weight and relevance in themselves because they respond directly to the requirement of PPSs which apply universally as soon as published. They allow the LPA to give emerging policy immediate effect rather than to wait several years for the LDF process to catch up. The urban expansion sites, cases studies 5 and 6 are good examples of this in practice.

This has become essential for responding to recent government initiatives such as climate change and zero carbon homes. It is clear that the formal LDF processes are simply unable to keep up with new ideas for what makes good development.. Concept statements allow LPAs to get ahead of the development process without slowing it down.

Guidance on the Preparation and Use of Concept Statements

The Planning Cooperative, 2007

Making it Happen

• how to prepare a concept statement

Concept statements are simple to do. Because they are not dominated by technical expertise they do not exclude contributions from the community. They are aspirational which allows them to be undertaken quickly, to influence proposals before they become fixed. The workshop is designed to make participants feel able to express their views. The cooperative atmosphere and focus on positive attributes and opportunities produces surprising results.

THE PROCESS

The process is deliberately simple. It does not rely on technical expertise so any one can take part. It is participatory, lively and has proved to be enjoyable.

It is also very flexible. There are a few essential requirements and some key steps to follow but they can be handled in a variety of ways. The case study workshops evolved in different ways reflecting the nature of the site and the mix of participants. As the process is exploratory and creative it would not be helpful to prescribe it in rigid terms.

The case studies involved groups ranging in size from four to twenty four, made up of diverse interests and skills. There is no magic mix, though a range of interests is useful. More important is a willingness to take part and to seek consensus. The style and atmosphere of the event is critical to cooperation and that requires active and effective facilitation.

ESSENTIALS

The purpose of a concept statement workshop is to generate good ideas about how the development should be undertaken and what it should achieve. It aims to do that in a very short time scale and this is best achieved by a lively, cooperative and informal atmosphere. The essential ingredients for that are:

- a venue reasonably near the site
- table(s) where a group can work round a plan
- coffee, tea, water and biscuits in constant supply
- a quick, light lunch
- plans of the site at A4 / A3 and A1
- tracing paper and coloured pens, flip chart + paper
- a verbal summary of the planning context of the site
- a group of people with a range of relevant interests
- a short time scale, no more than 10.00 - 4.00
- a positive approach centred on assets / opportunities
- a refusal to be drawn into detail and problems
- active facilitation, someone to lead the process
- someone to summarise / record the process

If most of these are present experience has shown that the process will be successful.

FORMAT OF THE DAY

The workshop starts with a short presentation on what concept statements are, why they are useful and what the day entails. A power point file with notes is available. Allow about 30 minutes including questions.

A brief introduction to the site, planning context, site history if any, and the aims of the authority (or the developer) for the development. Allow about 15 minutes including questions.

Coffee, followed by a site visit, with plans to record the assets of the site, the surrounding area and the wider location. These can be visual, functional, cultural or environmental attributes. All are important.

The process hinges on the group thinking positively about the site and the surrounding area. This is best achieved by a site visit but if that is impossible it has been done successfully using plans and photographs.

Facilitated discussion and agreement of the assets, listed on a flip chart, with priorities if they emerge, completes the morning.

Light Lunch

Working in small group(s) round a large scale plan to explore the implications of the assets for how the site should be developed. The aim is to generate good ideas for the site - the development principles. This is usually tentative at first and may require some encouragement, especially to keep a positive focus.

Once one or two development principles are established it becomes clearer to see how other aspects of the site might work. It starts to feel like a puzzle that can be solved. Participants' confidence and enthusiasm visibly grow as they feel they may be moving towards a solution.

At this stage the level of interaction (and noise) is usually high with participants keen to add more ideas and extend their aspirations. It is sometimes necessary to rein-in suggestions that are clearly unrealistic, and it is important to ensure that all participants have the chance to give their views.

" Thank you. That has been a really good day. I enjoyed it a lot and we did far more than I expected we would do."

Participant, Irthlingborough workshop

DIAGRAM

At some stage, these ideas need to be drawn on a plan. The transition from discussion to spatial expression tends to be a little awkward. Many people are uncomfortable with marking up plans. Large format felt tip pens and a deliberately "messy" approach seems to encourage them to try.

There is no prescribed form of expression for the drawing in the workshop. Much depends on the progress made in the time and the willingness and ability of the group to commit ideas to paper. Larger sites tend to show more strategic elements, smaller ones tend to have more detail. Even the most sketchy diagram is a useful starting point for the subsequent design exercise.

The development principles are the key element of the statement. The diagram illustrates one way that they might influence the design. Alternatives that secure the same aims are equally valid.

The workshop concludes with a review of what has been achieved, and a comparison of different diagrams if there are two or more groups. These tend to be quite similar which suggests that the approach is a logical way of exploring the potential of the site.

In all the case study workshops the participants were surprised and pleased at what they had accomplished. The general conclusion has been that the process is very useful in generating and expressing basic requirements for the development.

Because of the cooperative working and the link from assets to ideas, participants also showed a surprising confidence that what they were demanding was appropriate, not a random or standard wish list. This is very important if applicants subsequently question the need for some elements of the scheme.

Concept statements remain explicitly aspirational. Not all the things they seek will necessarily prove possible and constraints will have to be resolved. What is vital is that they establish an agreed desirable end-point to set a context for that technical design work.

" The positive and iterative nature of the process is very important and confirms the value of an interactive approach. Urban designers may have the skills to prepare development proposals for complex sites but a lively dialogue between people who approach development from different standpoints can stimulate more robust and imaginative ideas than technical persons working alone. "

Report of Concept Statements Pilot Workshops, 2005,
The Planning Cooperative

REALISM AND VIABILITY

It is essential that the creative part of the process is not stifled by problems, constraints and concerns about viability. The problem-solving approach has proved reasonably effective at doing just that, avoiding development that leads to problems, (though some would disagree). Unfortunately, it has usually also avoided achieving anything of value, that adds to the quality of a place or to the richness of the surrounding environment. This is not to suggest a conscious aim to converge on the average but is simply because unless such things are thought of, and then pursued they will not form part of a scheme, no matter how diligently the known problems are eradicated.

The role of Concept Statements is to input that missing element of ambition, vision, aspiration, that is otherwise absent from the process.

This needs to be realistic, notions that have no hope of being commercially viable need to be resisted while fostering better ideas and richer solutions than the current design process produces. Tactful facilitation is the key to this delicate balance.

KEY POINTS FOR FACILITATORS

- make sure that all participants contribute and that the more vocal do not dominate.
- avoid perceived problems and sliding into details
- be patient, let the discussion go round in circles at least once and possibly twice
- do not be dismissive of ideas, but do explain why the more extreme ones are simply not practical
- maintain a positive, informal, cooperative atmosphere

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applying it - Regeneration

• identifying new uses for old sites

Regeneration involves changing the nature and perception of a place. It requires creative thinking that sets aside the obvious problems and looks instead for what the place could be like, for what could be achieved. The focus on assets and opportunities is the essential element. It builds enthusiasm and stimulates ideas that would not otherwise emerge. The process is collaborative. All participants make a contribution and feel a sense of ownership.

Case Study 1 Trinity Road, Sheerness

The concept statement on the following page shows how a monolithic, listed Victorian water tower, the central feature of a fringe town centre site in Sheerness, had potential far beyond its current role. The tower was disused, council offices in nearby buildings were inefficient and drab and the closure of a local convenience store completed the air of neglect and decline. The attributes of the surrounding area were particularly important in shaping design ideas.

The Thames estuary and beaches with stunning views across the river to Southend and out to the North Sea are entirely hidden from view behind concrete flood defence barriers. Within the town-centre itself there is no sense of the sea. Looking only at the site itself the connection with the sea would not have been made. The light weight glazed structure added to the water tower was initially to provide a view of this hidden asset. It quickly became the key to the design concept, the proposed uses for the water tower, and the viability of the overall scheme.

This enhanced role for the building prompted more ambitious ideas for the rest of the site - a Victorian office building, derelict store and car park. The ideas included creating attractive pedestrian routes through the site to the main shopping area. These are to be well signed and marked by surface treatment, new planting and lighting, to match the grounds of Holy Trinity Church that adjoin the site. These links divided the car park into discrete areas that could be screened and softened by new planting to enhance the setting of the revitalised water tower.

The process was completed by routing these new pedestrian links through the glazed extension of the building itself to maximise access and awareness of the uses proposed. These included retail, residential, office, restaurant / cafe, leisure, and community exhibition / performance / meeting space all of which had been previously identified by an independent stakeholder consultation exercise.

Through the concept statement process these individual ideas emerged in a way that supported each other and hung together as a concept rather than discrete alternatives that would only partially meet community aspirations.

The listed building had previously been seen as a constraint. A number of proposals had been made and dropped. The current permission was for conversion to low cost residential use. The vibrant treatment and purpose proposed during the workshop raised aspirations both for the building and the site.

The Victorian office building lies in the conservation area adjacent the church and had been assumed to be retained. The expanded scope of the concept caused the group to consider its redevelopment with a high quality contemporary design which would make more use of the prime space between the church and the newly restored and extended water tower.

Case Study 2 Proposed Village Centre - Purfleet

The second concept statement following this page presents one option for creating a centre in the heart of a community. Renovation of the railway station in the centre of Purfleet is overdue. The number of passengers using its service to London suggested that it could be expanded into a local centre which the area lacked. The site is dominated by the level-crossing on the main road through Purfleet, the footbridge across the railway and the large industrial estate to the rear. The poor quality of buildings and complete lack of focus in the public space had been seen as limiting the success of what might be achieved.

However, the wider view from the top of the footbridge, revealed substantial stands of trees close by and fine views of the Thames and the QE bridge across land recently cleared of industrial sheds. It quickly became clear that a more ambitious concept was possible and appropriate.

"I thought the concept statement process was very helpful in enabling a small group to consider the potential offered by a site which is clearly a regeneration opportunity, but which had not really been considered in any depth. We were impressed by the ideas that emerged from the discussion, and are feeding them into work on the Sheerness Regeneration Strategy, which is currently under way."

Ross Gill, Swale Forward

The key themes for the development came from the immediate context around the site - the green setting provided by the surrounding woodland, the level of pedestrian activity due to the station, and awareness of the Thames, previously hidden and inaccessible behind an industrial complex.

Additional land was needed to accommodate the combined aspirations for what the village centre should include. The solution was to relocate the station northwards allowing longer platforms to cater for larger trains. This frees the station site for an imposing landmark building accommodating offices and residential space, linked to village centre buildings across the railway by a high quality pedestrian bridge.

[An alternative the workshop considered was to consolidate all the uses in a new station concourse as a single large building.]

New planting extends the existing woodland into the space around the site along new pedestrian routes. This prompted the idea of a pedestrian link to the river, possibly with further shops and cafe / bars to be incorporated into residential proposals for the former industrial site.

The pedestrian route had to dominate the road. This was achieved by moving the car parking into the current industrial land and developing the space vacated as a formal public square to present the new landmark building. This is a high quality public realm, with good surface materials, street furniture, signing and lighting extending out across the road towards the river, severing the road with a well defined, impressive public space. The intention is that drivers will negotiate an urban square rather than pedestrians having to cross a road.

Some of these ideas had been raised at the workshop but were seen as conflicting alternatives. Focussing debate on shared aspirations for the centre widened the view of what could be achieved. It also increased confidence of how things could be made to fit together.

The statement went far further than many of the stakeholders had assumed would be possible at the start of the day.

Residential proposals on the cleared river side site had been refused permission on design grounds and not providing sufficient regeneration benefits or making enough of the strategically important site, including the potential for public access to the river.

A subsequent appeal has been dismissed. It is intended that the Concept Statement will influence the drawing up of improved proposals.

"The day was judged to be a great success both by those who enjoyed taking part and in terms of the output. The development ideas generated in the workshop have formed the core of a brief for regeneration of the wider area which it is hoped to publish, Spring 2007."

Lois Bowser, Thurrock Thames Gateway UDC

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SWALE FORWARD

TRINITY ROAD REDEVELOPMENT

CONCEPT STATEMENT Autumn 2006

DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

A high quality, vibrant, mixed use development spearheading the regeneration of the town, catering for all age groups and sectors of the community. Providing retail, leisure, entertainment and community uses as well as high specification residential accommodation, some of which should be designed and built for the elderly.

The water tower is used as the central feature of the development. Its massive masonry and distinctive built form is complemented by lightweight transparent glass structures that extend the building. This will allow the creation of additional floorspace in this important town centre site while maintaining views of the original building from all sides. Additional storeys on the water tower could enable sea views to the north from the top floor apartments.

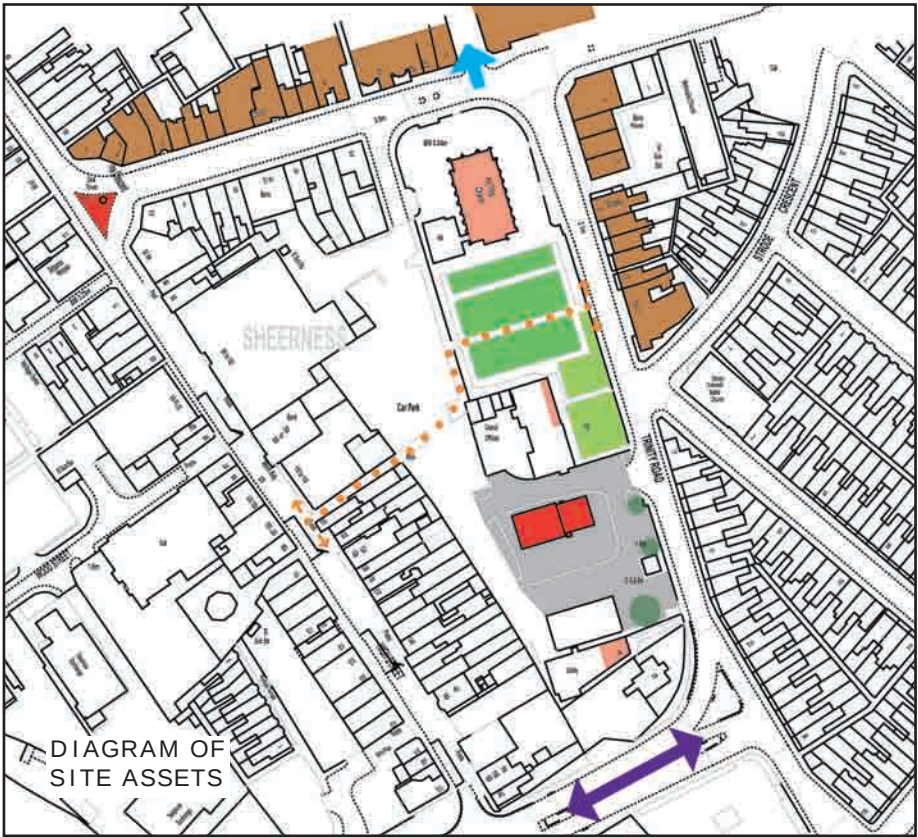
The Victorian character of the church gardens are extended throughout the site with a linear green space including a footpath along Trinity Road, and planted walkways across the site allowing for pedestrian permeability and drawing people into the area from other parts of the town centre. The green walkways could be extended into the glass extensions to the water tower and include indoor water features.

Coherent design throughout all components of the public realm reflecting the local character, to encourage public access and movement and to bring together all the elements of the scheme. This will require clear and attractive signage, high quality external materials, appropriate planting and lighting.

Access from Trinity Road should be closed and a new access provided from Millennium Way into the southern part of the site. The existing car park should be improved with shrub/tree planting and variation in surface treatment. The potential for increasing the capacity of the car park should be explored or alternatively the capacity of nearby car parks increased.

DIAGRAM OF DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

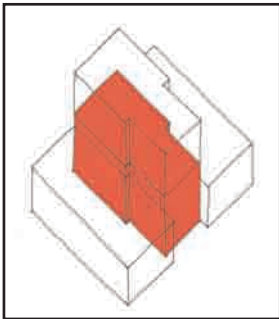
This plan indicates land uses, urban design ideas and spatial arrangements, approximate road alignments, open space provision and new structural tree planting. The plan shapes of individual buildings will vary when a detailed design is prepared.



SITE ASSETS

- The listed Water Tower is a striking structure. The surrounding area is under used with the potential to form a more appropriate setting.
- Holy Trinity Church and its formal gardens provides a tranquil space with mature trees in marked contrast to the surrounding area. There are planted gardens to the office frontage on Trinity Road.
- Attractive elements of the office building and the former library have strong victorian character
- Proximity to the town centre with footpaths to the High Street, Clock Tower and car parks. The beach is a short walk to the north.
- Large scale buildings enclose the site to the north and east.
- Millennium Way has relieved the road network round the site of through traffic.

KEY TO DIAGRAM



Water tower converted to mixed use and extended with lightweight glazed structures including additional storeys above the roof.



Mixed use development of retail, restaurants/cafes, community, leisure and entertainment uses at ground and first floor, with business and apartments above.



Ground floor retail, restaurants or community uses with two floors of apartments for the elderly over, linking to the day centre.



Landmark corner building of three storey apartments potentially for the elderly as sheltered accommodation. Day centre in the retained part of the former library.



Option to convert the existing 'Victorian' offices for residential use, or to redevelop the site with new high quality apartments.

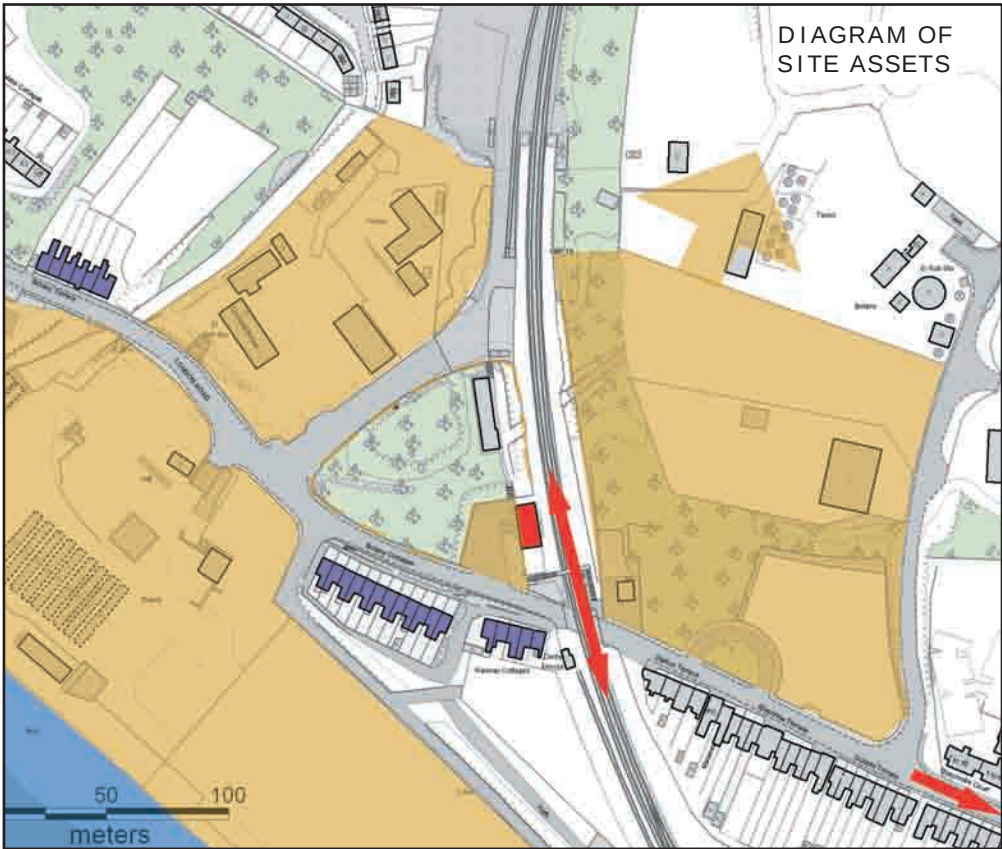


Possible vehicular access in to the development and to the existing car park from Millennium Way. Tree and shrub planting along west boundary of the car park area.



Garden area retained and extended down Trinity Road with flower beds, trees and shrubs. Footpaths linking the church garden with the new development, through the green space and across the site.





PURFLEET VILLAGE CENTRE

CONCEPT STATEMENT

Summer 2006



SITE ASSETS

- Existing mature woodland areas and tree belts and open spaces, including the playground, contribute a green and leafy character that helps to make Purfleet more attractive. This should be improved, enhanced and managed as a strong visual structure and an integral part of new development.
- Excellent access by train (London 25 minutes) and short road link to the M25. In the interests of sustainable development residents should be encouraged to use public transport. Easy and safe pedestrian and cycle access to the station will contribute to this, and longer car journeys may be discouraged by providing extensive and convenient parking at the railway station.
- Large tracts of land are suitable for regeneration in short and longer term. All are in locations that will help new buildings and related open space to establish a central focal point and a renewed sense of identity for Purfleet. The redevelopment of individual sites must be coordinated to contribute towards this central objective.
- There are local historical elements that could help to integrate new development with the older parts of Purfleet..

DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

New development should be integrated into a green woodland setting. Existing woodland areas should be opened, improved and managed and linked to new areas of open space and trees. This should create planting of sufficient scale to dominate the village centre.

Woodland north of the station should be included as a part of a safe and sustainable linear footpath and cycleway network, encouraging use of the station.

It will be important to create a direct link from the village centre to the riverside. This link should be both visual (for example along an avenue) and physical with a footpath and cycleway through any new

development. The connection should contribute to the eventual aim of creating a continuous riverside walk, linked to possible future riverside leisure and commercial activities.

There is an excellent opportunity to redevelop the station to provide improved facilities and longer platforms to serve bigger trains. One way that this could be achieved would be to move the station slightly to the north, releasing the existing station site for a mixed use building that could become the main focal point of the village centre.

Mixed use development, with office space, community facilities and housing should form the vibrant core of the village around a well-landscaped and pedestrian dominated area. This would be the

preferred location for any retail outlets, wine bars, cafés, etc. As a minimum, development should provide a convenience store, possibly linked to a petrol filling station for economic viability.

This option shows a development of apartments in an open setting, north west of the station. It is important that Purfleet's higher density apartment development should be concentrated here in the village core with the maximum number of people having direct access to the station and village facilities.

Local employment should also be encouraged with the provision of incubator units with good access for customers and generous parking. Car parking generally should ensure multiple use by residents, commuters and local businesses.

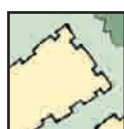
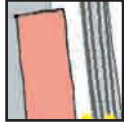
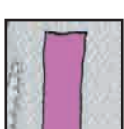
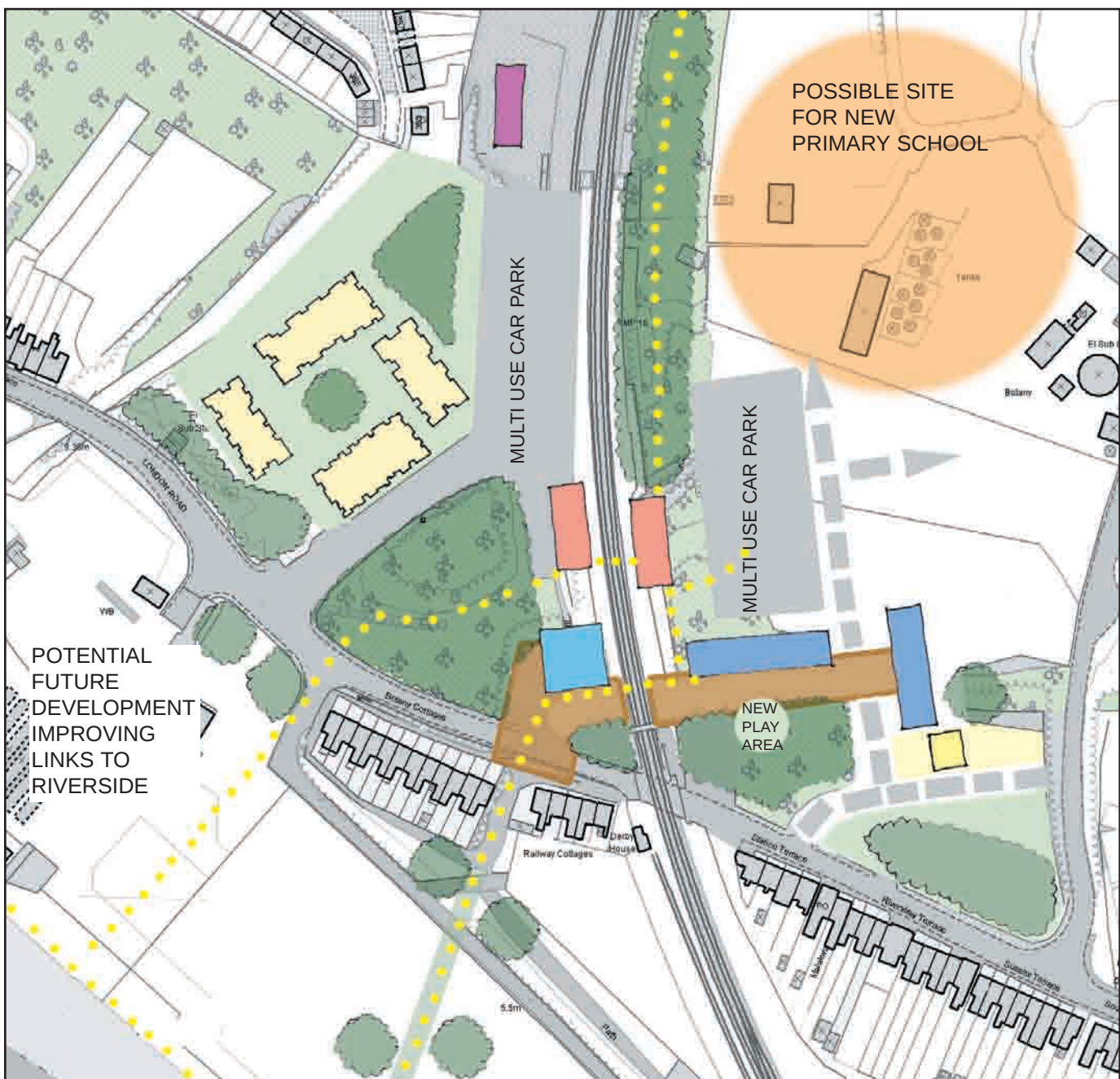
-  Three storey apartments in shared gardens with existing trees taking advantage of outward views over wooded areas.
-  Landmark building at focal point of new village centre. Mixed use with 3 floors of office space and 3 storeys of apartments above.
-  Replacement railway station with longer platforms with accommodation on both sides of track. Possible office space above concourse level. Footbridge link.
-  Mixed use buildings with community facilities at ground level, including uses such as health centre, library, creche, multi-function hall, with one floor of office space above and two storeys of apartments.
-  Local convenience shop, possibly linked to petrol filling station. Possibility of further specialist retail and/or cafés alongside community uses.
-  Incubator business units to encourage local employment initiatives, with generous parking and easy access to station.
-  Existing trees and planting in managed open space with public access. Footpath and cycleway (shown dotted) connecting to extended local network.
-  Important route from village centre to riverside walkway should be in attractive green environment with public open space and new tree planting.
-  Pedestrian priority area with varied hard surfaces and high quality street furniture and lighting, contrasting with the retained trees and open space, incorporating a new playground in a safe environment.

DIAGRAM OF ONE POSSIBLE DEVELOPMENT OPTION



applying it - Renewal

- revitalising valued existing areas

The assets of the area as well as the site are used to shape the form of new proposals. Identifying positive ideas for the site leads participants to realise ways in which adjoining sites could also make a contribution. This wider context in turn prompts new and more imaginative ideas for both the site itself and the wider area. The process is circular and cumulative, building the confidence to set higher aspirations.

Case Study 3 Blue Town, Sheerness

Overleaf, principles to guide renewal for an historic part of Sheerness. Described as a hidden gem, Blue Town has a proud and colourful past through its long association with the royal naval dockyard. It now presents striking contrasts. There is fine built form that survives from that prestigious role, sensitively respected in recent street improvements by the council. There is also a typical clutter of modern street furniture and commercial buildings that threatens to eclipse it unless the area can be given a more lively and purposeful role.

Bluetown has the potential to emerge as a new urban quarter combining serious heritage interest with new homes, jobs and recreation / relaxation. The principles to guide renewal seek to introduce life and activity back into the area using its character and heritage value to shape the form of new development.

The area has many assets - an intimate network of small alley ways, the imposing four-metre dockyard wall, individual buildings of grand scale with bold detailing and a tradition for food and drink, theatre and festival. These led to the concept for a vibrant mixed-use quarter providing all facets of modern urban living.

Discussion quickly moved to consider parts of the adjoining port area currently isolated by the wall and dock security measures, and the role they could play in meeting these aspirations. Selective access through the wall makes links to two very fine under-used regency terraces. There are other heritage buildings too including a former church and the harbour office.

In the longer term public access to the sea and the historic Garrison Point could form part of a substantial visitor draw. This could include a culture / arts centre, outdoor restaurant(s) and performance space, and access and interpretation to some of the heritage buildings themselves.

The principal road access into Sheerness forms the southern boundary to the site along an area of surface car parking, modern commercial sheds and the famous garden-ornament factory. This frontage is to be enclosed with new housing and decked parking, presented as a building with railed openings rather than as an open deck structure.

Pedestrian permeability is already high and is used as a framework for the introduction of new recreational uses. The link to the town centre is strengthened with improvements / activities / lighting at the historic moat as part of a high quality public realm stretching from the town centre eventually to the point. Pedestrian and vehicle access points are to be marked with sculpture / signage and planting to signal the presence of this lively and interesting area.

All new development should support and not further erode the essential qualities of the existing built form.

Case Study 4 The Garrison Estate, Purfleet

Built on the site of the historic London Arsenal this estate enjoys a stunning location on the north bank of the Thames adjacent to the famous Rainham Marshes nature reserve. On the edge of the built up area and separated from the rest of Purfleet by a main road and associated open space the estate has a clear identity which is positive for many of the residents but tends to be negative in the rest of the Borough. A renewal initiative was just underway and decided to undertake a concept statement as its starting point.

First impressions of the estate include familiar features of large public sector housing with poor detailing, under used, scruffy open space, soulless play areas, litter and graffiti. They were ruthlessly ignored in the discussion of assets, which produced an impressive list: a clear spatial structure, the extent and scope of the open space, good pedestrian routes, high quality heritage buildings and interest and spectacular views of the Thames and the Marshes. There was also a



large depot adjoining the site which is an under use of land in a location of such potential. Selective replacement of some of the blocks of housing was acceptable but with an overriding concern to maintain the integrity of the estate and the cohesion of the existing community. More active use of the open space quickly emerged, relocating the play area, providing a children's cycle track, improving the quality of the routes and linking them to the paths along the riverside and to the marshes. General tidying up of the whole area was a key objective, remodelling the garage courts, the balconies, the unkempt areas of vegetation along the Mardyke river and boundary fencing. Making more of the Thames and the historic connections with London was a third principle.

There was a clear aim to bring people and activities into the area through new development that exploited the river views. This was at odds with leaving the majority of the estate and community in tact. It led to the depot being brought into the scheme as a key redevelopment site to provide significant new accommodation and help fund the renewal works throughout the existing estate.

Two adjoining sites were then considered for their potential contribution, a care centre and primary school that might be relocated to a mixed use development based on the railway station reviewed in case Study 2.

With this positive atmosphere established, more ideas began to flow - a footbridge across the Mardyke to link directly to the Thames path and Marshes, features, structures and seating to add interest to the walks and signal the heritage value of the area, and planting of some of the open space to soften the built form and create new habitat corridors. These tied in with an aim to improve the quality of the public realm throughout the whole estate and the image of the area.

The concept statement has not gone beyond these broad principles because of a wish for meaningful engagement of the local community in refining them and working up the detailed proposals for their delivery.

"The Bluetown concept statement was extremely helpful in bringing together some of the key stakeholders from the public and private sectors, and coincides with an increasing interest in realising the value of the heritage of the area. The draft statement has since been taken to a wider meeting of Sheerness stakeholders and is being used to inform the next stages of work on the Sheerness Regeneration Strategy"

Greg MacDonald, CEO Swale Forward

"The best part of the concept statement approach is the quick and simple way it allowed exchange and distillation of our thoughts. I think we all came away from the day at The Garrison in Purfleet with a clear idea of the merits of the estate and its setting and a shared view of how to approach regeneration of the estate."

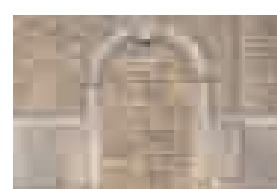
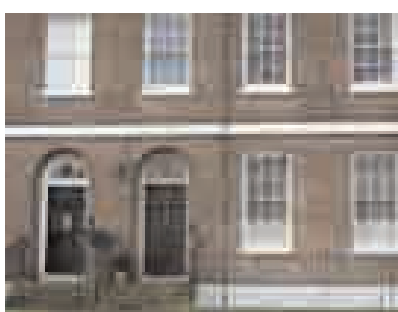
Catherine Bailey, Thurrock Borough Council

Guidance on the Preparation and
Use of Concept Statements

The Planning Cooperative, 2007

SITE ASSETS

- An enclave, well defined and enclosed by the high listed wall of the Royal Naval Dockyard
- Very strong heritage associations with high quality built form in plan, massing, materials and detailing
- Potential links to heritage buildings in part of the port area and to the sea and Garrisons point in the longer term
- Links to the town centre via the moat / bridge with scope for improvement
- Network of old lanes and alleyways forming a fine-grained and intimate character built environment
- Local facilities, including successful businesses, pubs and cafe as well as residential accommodation
- Access to the main road network, a gateway site to Sheerness
- Some fine individual buildings and High Street which forms a high quality public space, with sensitive recent improvements
- Extensive areas of surface / on street car parking

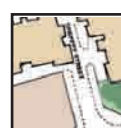


PRINCIPLES TO GUIDE THE RENEWAL OF BLUE TOWN

- Open up this historical enclave to new residents, visitors, businesses and arts
- Celebrate the heritage association with the Royal Naval Dock Yard and Blue Town's colourful past as a place of work, culture, recreation and play
- Introduce additional employment, arts and culture, and expand the residential accommodation to create a place that is lively and contemporary as well as historic
- Improve connections with the town centre, the area of historic housing in the port (programmed to be released) and eventually, the sea and Garrison Point
- Use the High Street and the network of lanes and alleys as a focus for new social facilities, cafe / restaurant / pub, plus a culture / drama / arts centre based on the former Royal Fountain Hotel, extended to re-establish the frontage to West Street
- Decking one of the areas of surface parking and planting part of the other to release land for new housing and to create a buffer to Brielle Way to complete the sense of enclosure of the area
- Create a high quality public realm based on High Street and the dock wall to promote outdoor uses and activities including eating and drinking, performance space, art / exhibition areas and further interpretation of the heritage of the area
- Possible new housing to complement naval terrace, with a pedestrian route through, mirroring Archway House in the dockyard. More use made of the green space as a pocket park, with sculpture / seating aligned with the improved pedestrian route to the town centre via the moat
- Possible improvements to Brielle Way if a new access to the Port is secured, to reduce width and speed and allow the introduction of features to signal the entrance to Blue Town Heritage and Cultural Area
- Bringing the former hospital in the grounds of the steelworks into the concept as a hotel or residential development to further consolidate the heritage and quality of the area
- The rationalisation of the Gnome factory may allow better use of part of the network of lanes and provide land for residential development
- Raise the quality of the more recently developed areas, reduce the clutter, and make better use of them while keeping the existing community in place and fully involved with the evolution and delivery of the renewal initiative



Possible new housing to complement Naval Terrace, overlooking extended and green space and presenting an impressive facade to the principal exit from the town centre. Pedestrian route through arch to High Street



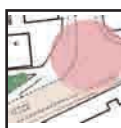
New housing on the current car-parks, in terraces facing onto the street to maintain enclosure. Decked car park, multi-storey facing the road brick elevation with openings with railings. Planting to the other frontage to Brielle Way



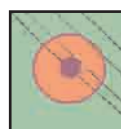
Area covered by the Gnome factory with potential for new housing, employment space or further car parking, following consolidation of the various sites. Opportunity to establish a buffer / attractive frontage to Brielle Way



Proposed access to Regency Close, as an arch through the dock wall to frame the view. High Street identified as the focus for new activities and uses, including outdoor space. Design quality to reflect the wall, and existing buildings



Potential to improve Brielle Way with traffic calming, urban trees, on street parking, if the port establishes a new access to the south. Opportunity for a series of entrance features to signal the Blue Town Heritage / Cultural Area



Sculpture celebrating the naval connection, incorporating seating / occasional performance space as the focus for a pocket park in the extended green space. Pedestrian link to the moat with further possible activities and flood lighting



Cultural / arts / drama centre celebrating the history of the area in a wide range of media. Possible meeting space, resource centre, education role. Linked to rejuvenation of the lanes as busy public realm with new pub / restaurant

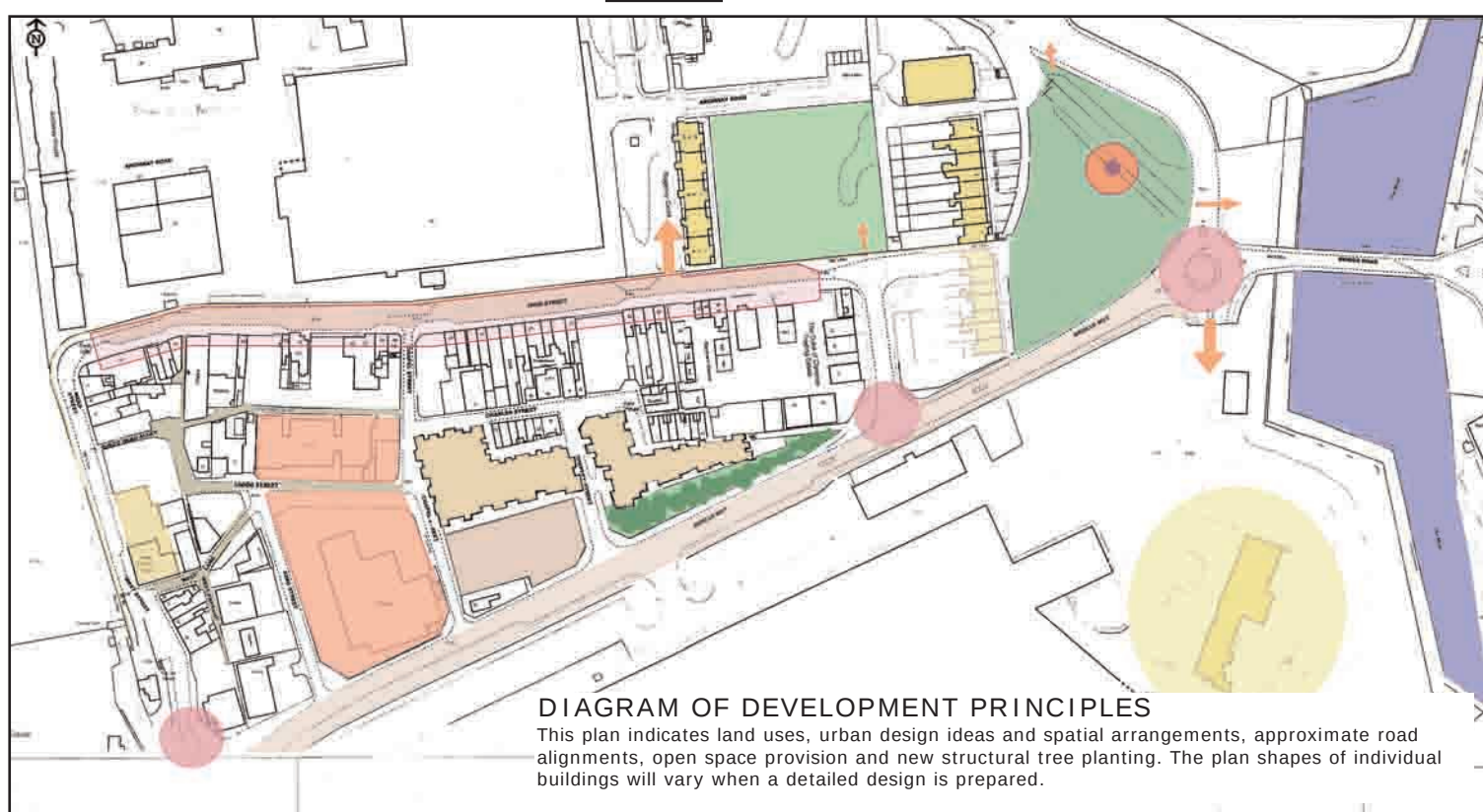


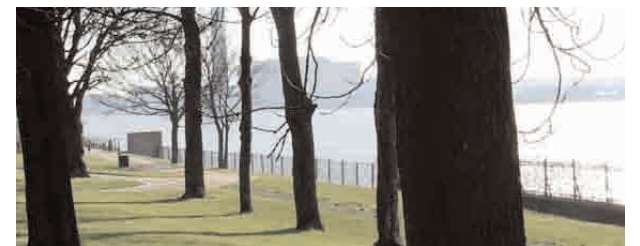
DIAGRAM OF DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

This plan indicates land uses, urban design ideas and spatial arrangements, approximate road alignments, open space provision and new structural tree planting. The plan shapes of individual buildings will vary when a detailed design is prepared.

THURROCK BOROUGH COUNCIL RENEWAL OF GARRISON ESTATE, PURFLEET CONCEPT STATEMENT Spring 2007



- Heritage value as the site of the historic London arsenal, with some fine buildings of high quality design and materials
- Extensive views of the Thames downstream and towards London
- Well defined boundaries, including the Thames and Mardyke, providing a clear sense of place and identity and discernible character areas within the estate
- Network of spaces within / around the area with scope for improvement
- Adjoining the RSPB nature reserve, of national wildlife importance
- Local facilities - shops, primary school, care centre and council office
- Major potential redevelopment site to help drive and fund the renewal process



RENEWAL PRINCIPLES

- Celebrate the heritage associations to strengthen the sense of identity and place, maintaining and restoring the historic buildings where necessary and promoting their more active use by the local community and visitors
- Review the quality and function of all the green space, improving the existing woodland, planting additional native trees and linking the spaces to the wider network of paths. Relocate the play space at Spider Park into a safer place with better casual surveillance. Create a cycle-circuit for younger children to learn to ride
- General improvement and tidying up of building details, including the balconies - colour and texture - fences and railings, sheds and garages. Raise the quality of the public realm throughout the estate with selective new surfacing, lighting, signage and new / improved boundary treatment, reflecting the quality of the heritage buildings

- New development of high design quality to widen the social mix and the role of the area, provide local facilities and help fund the renewal initiatives throughout the existing estate

- Open up views of the Thames and Mardyke, improving ease and attractiveness of access and introducing new planting and features of interest along the walks

- These basic principles are to guide the evolution of a renewal strategy. This will involve all the partner organisations agreeing to cooperate, and work together with the local community who will have a central role in shaping the detailed proposals and the delivery of this important renewal initiative

KEY DIAGRAM

-  Potential site / sites for new mixed-use quarter with employment, facilities and residential space in landmark buildings, tied into the existing built environment with open space, planting and pedestrian routes
-  Consideration given to selective renewal / replacement of existing housing blocks, reflecting the quality of the heritage buildings, set in landscaped grounds and designed to make the most of views of the river
-  New local facilities either in re-modelled open space on the current site, or as part of the redevelopment of the MOT depot, to serve both the Garrison and Mardyke estates
-  Creation of a pocket park with active management of the existing woodland, new planting, enhanced access. Potential site for the young childrens' cycle circuit and some play equipment relocated from Spider Park
-  Heritage buildings restored, with enhanced setting / landscaping, and brought into more active use as either visitor attractions or to accommodate local community needs. Used as a quality yardstick for new proposals
-  Improved pedestrian paths with planting, lighting and signage to create attractive and informative routes. Linked to the Thames path / Marshes by new foot bridge, opening up views and access to the Thames
-  Structure / civic art and seating, reflecting the historic buildings, to punctuate the pedestrian routes and mark the entrances to the estate, signalling its heritage value and the quality of the environment - historic and new
-  Manage the woodland along the path beside the Mardyke, bringing it into the open space framework of the estate, enhancing the bio diversity value and reducing the harsh urban nature of the path



DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES
This plan indicates land uses, urban design ideas and spatial arrangements, open space, new tree planting and landmark features. The details will emerge as further design work is undertaken by the various partners and the local community.

applying it - Urban Expansion

• integrating new development into the town

Many towns in the growth areas face major urban expansion raising concerns about landscape impact and the effect on the existing community. The benefits that development can bring will be realised only with the right design principles in place from the outset. Two case studies show how Concept Statements are able to identify aspirations and fears and that they can establish the basic principles to shape new development in a way that adds value to the scheme and delivers wider benefits. Integrating new development is essential for the success of growth on this scale.

Case Study 5 Urban Extension, Irthlingborough

East Northamptonshire Council identified this site for more than 600 houses in the Three Towns Plan. This scale of growth was seen as capable of supporting the strategic aim of regenerating the town as a whole. Specific objectives for revitalising the town centre were support for retailing, improving buildings in poor repair and enhancing the public realm in the historic core.

There was deep scepticism about this notion. In the recent past development had occurred without any of the promised benefits being delivered. This workshop had one of the largest groups - almost 20 - several of whom were understandably keen to stress problems that they saw as fatal to any scheme.

Keeping the debate positive, focussed on assets and opportunities was a particular challenge. At the centre of the scheme was a complete re-build of the existing school campus. This was expanded into a plan to integrate the two primary schools into a 'through school' for 5 to 18, pre-school nursery and creche.

That allowed the redevelopment of the two school sites based around retained Victorian buildings with new commercial and residential units of contemporary design adding to the regeneration of the town centre.

A second major benefit was to extend the access road through the site to make a new connection with Wellingborough Road. The proposed traffic island on the A6 improves the existing northern entrance to the town and provides a substantial landscaped buffer zone to the road incorporating ponds and other new natural habitat.

Once into their stride, the group soon found further ideas that would benefit the town. The sports field closest to existing housing had potential for residential development allowing the sports use to relocate to form part of the setting for the new campus. The elevated parts of the site provided extensive views across the River Nene and were earmarked for a series of linked open spaces with public art celebrating the importance of the town for iron working and the leather and shoe industries. These could link to others in the town centre.

The whole development was to adopt sustainable construction and resource minimisation in line with RSS 8. This was seen as marking the development out as distinctive, emphasising the quality credentials of the scheme and helping to raise the profile and image of the town in general.

By the end of the workshop the scheme that had been mapped out went far beyond the anticipated development sprawl. It was linked into the heart of the community through the school and the redevelopment of the town centre sites. It was seen as a key future part of the town rather than a mere suburban estate.

Case Study 6 Wellingborough

A large site for around 800 houses was allocated in the local plan but had not progressed towards a scheme. Integration with the existing community was both a priority and a problem due to an unresolved access and an extensive linear open space along a stream that divided the site from the adjoining part of the town.

The solution was obvious as soon as the group were on site. The linear park was an expanse of mown grass with a cycle path through it, but had the potential, along with the stream, to be an interesting, and exciting series of spaces and places, providing activities, civic art, opportunities for exercise and relaxation. Combined with new planting and other new habitat including ponds this creates an attractive and accessible spine to serve both communities.

Another idea from the site visit was to maximise the open southern aspect of the site for solar gain and outward views and to celebrate the prominence of the site with eye-catching, imposing buildings signalling a high quality and confident addition to the town.

The final basic principle involved providing good connections with the existing residential area without encouraging undue additional traffic. This was accomplished by a formal network of tree-lined avenues with right angled junctions that limit forward visibility and emphasise the street as a place for the residents rather than a road for vehicles.

"Having studied the concept statement, can I commend all those who took part, and welcome the outline plan wholeheartedly"

Cllr Andrew Langley,
East Northamptonshire County Council.

These ideas were expanded during the afternoon workshop. Local facilities were introduced into the open space to focus for community interaction there and encourage pedestrian access into the open space. A medical centre, seeking to move from the adjoining estate and a possible new primary school, as well as expanded retail provision, and a community hall form a hub, redefining the open space as the active heart of the two communities rather than as the gap between them.

The impact of bridging the stream was minimised by two narrow, elegant one-way bridges - pedestrian only if alternative vehicle access points are preferred - as a feature of interest within the linear park.

The largely featureless site is divided into discrete areas by the road layout and associated planting and by the retention of the existing hedge and its incorporation into a footpath circuit through and around the site. Various landmark items are indicated throughout the development aligned with views to prominent buildings, existing and proposed, to give legibility and structure to the space.

The resultant scheme has a clear identity and purpose, provides substantial benefits for the area and existing community and raises the profile and quality of this part of the town. That was all secured by a group of around 20 people with widely differing views, united by a shared concern that development of this size and prominence must avoid being simply a sprawl of housing.

The key to the workshop was a determination to identify the assets of the site - which emerged gradually as the day progressed - and to use them as the spur for ideas for a scheme that went beyond anything previously considered for the site.

The Agents acting for the site owner, council officers and members and stakeholders representing local interests are all enthusiastic about the basic concept.

A consensus on what should be achieved is clearly starting to emerge, allowing the scheme to progress.

"I found the day really productive and the resulting concept statement encapsulates the consensus from the workshop discussions.

I am now proposing to use the approach for key sites identified in our new Area Plan DPDs as I think the outputs will aid the public consultation process considerably."

Karen Horner
Planning Policy Manager
East Northamptonshire Council

"It made a huge difference having to think in a positive way. It led eventually to the kind of scheme that you could be really proud of, rather than one which was just acceptable. The whole exercise has given the project serious new impetus".

Andrew Middleditch, Bletsoes,
Agents for the landowner.

"The concept statement will provide a strong platform in helping us to establish key principles to be incorporated into the LDF policy for the development of the site.

Participants appeared to enjoy the day and I have no doubt that this was in no small measure due to the enthusiasm of the facilitators and the group. One Councillor remarked that a similar exercise would have been helpful in establishing principles for another site in the town where development is now under construction."

Mike Haybryne, Wellingborough District Council

Guidance on the Preparation and
Use of Concept Statements

The Planning Cooperative, 2007

SITE ASSETS

- Long views across Nene valley, and of church spires and other landmarks.
- Robust hawthorn hedges and ash trees, lime tree avenues.
- Potential good access from A6, possible route to Wellingborough Road
- Close to town centre facilities with good connections by foot and cycle
- Useful open space and recreation facilities.
- Successful local schools could be community focus and release town centre sites for regeneration.



URBAN EXTENSION OF IRTHLINGBOROUGH

CONCEPT STATEMENT Autumn 2006

DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

Development should be based on the principle of minimising use of resources, in line with policies of the emerging Local Development Framework. Development should be operationally carbon neutral, incorporating the highest environmental standards, including design and construction that minimise energy and water use and reduce waste and pollution. Three well-defined housing neighbourhoods, with distinctive and varied characteristics of density and urban design character, structured by existing hedges and natural landform.

A network of new pedestrian / cycle routes linking the housing to the school campus as a community focus, as well as to local facilities and the town centre. Routes based on existing hedges, reinforced with new planting in the form of native, deciduous trees, creating wildlife corridors and attractive landscape features.

Potential for consolidation of the three schools into a single 'through-school' on a new purpose built campus with adjacent sports grounds and possible nursery, health facilities and library complex to form a new community hub. To be funded largely by the new development. Redevelopment of the infant / junior school site to provide local community facilities in a single location, accessible to the town centre. The Victorian buildings of the school to be retained and converted to new uses including potential commercial offices.

Access improvements from A6 with B5348 connected via a new traffic island and development accessed from the B road. Road alterations set in a green, planted area including ponds to provide new wildlife habitat and sustainable surface water drainage. The through route should provide a second access from the town via the development of the Whitworth factory site. The development road layout to be inherently traffic calmed by T-junctions, changes of direction and features such as small urban squares. The main routes to be tree lined avenues.

Acknowledgement of the heritage of the town, through the use of locally appropriate materials, public art and other features celebrating its historic associations with the ironstone, leather and shoe industries located in key spaces and at gateways. Main feature on the highest point of the site commanding extensive views of the town, and across the River Nene to Higham Ferrers church spire and the surrounding countryside.

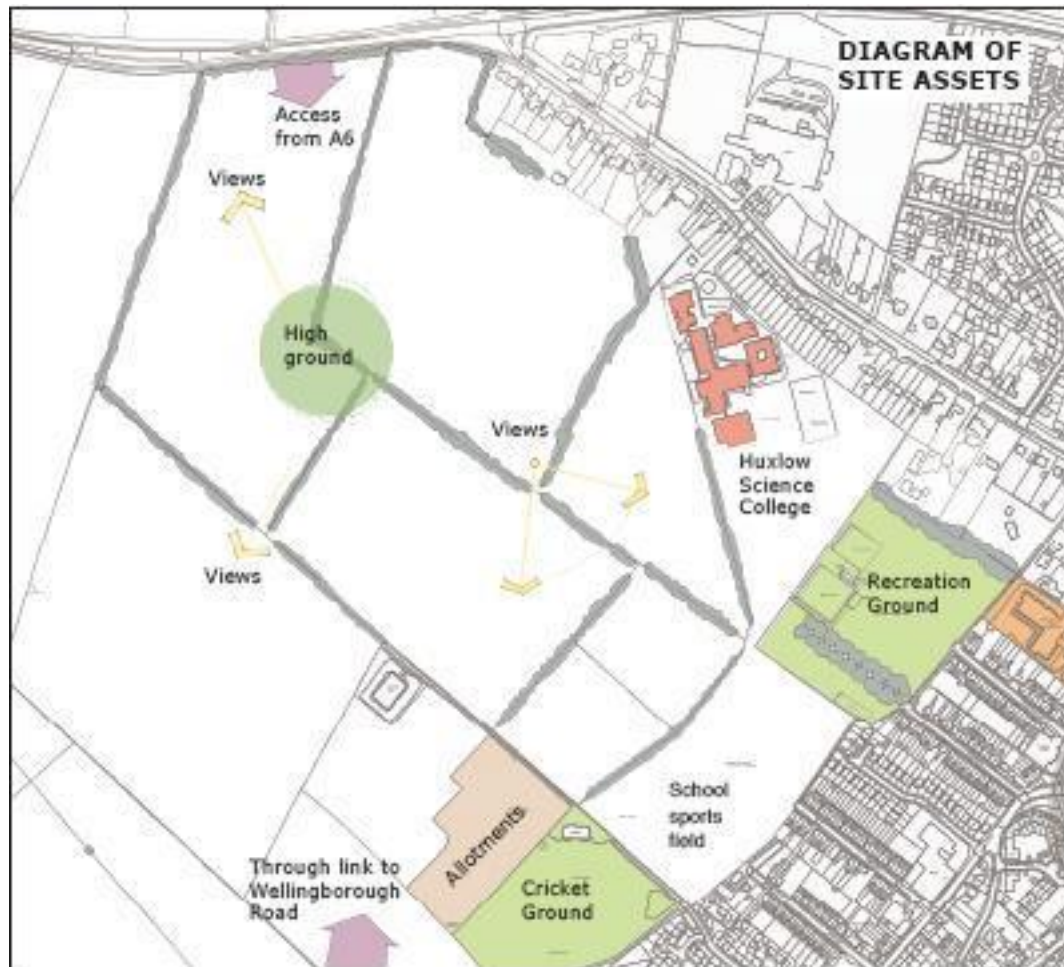


DIAGRAM OF SITE ASSETS

- DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES**
- KEY**
- DIAGRAM**
- New tree planting, wildlife habitat including wet areas incorporating sustainable drainage and earth mounding for noise protection.
 - Playing fields for community and school use, relocating existing sports field which is to be developed. Public recreation ground and local cricket ground retained.
 - Low density housing, mainly detached properties in a conventional layout with large gardens and garages. New lime tree avenue.
 - Higher density housing, mainly terraced two and three storeys, forming a traditional street scene and a square with some office or other mixed uses.
 - Medium density family housing in quiet short streets, compatible with existing housing nearby.
 - Huxlow School refurbished and linked with new infant and junior schools in a 'through school' campus. Possible nursery, health and creche facilities.
 - Potential site for new library, releasing regeneration site in the town centre for coordinated redevelopment with vacated infant and junior school sites.
 - Revised access arrangements to school campus and library, delivering highway safety benefits. War memorial relocated to town centre.
 - Public open spaces (pale green), with part of a new public footpath network (orange dots) and public art or landmark feature (red dot).
 - Potential redevelopment site following consolidation of all schools onto the improved campus. Junior school building to be retained and converted.

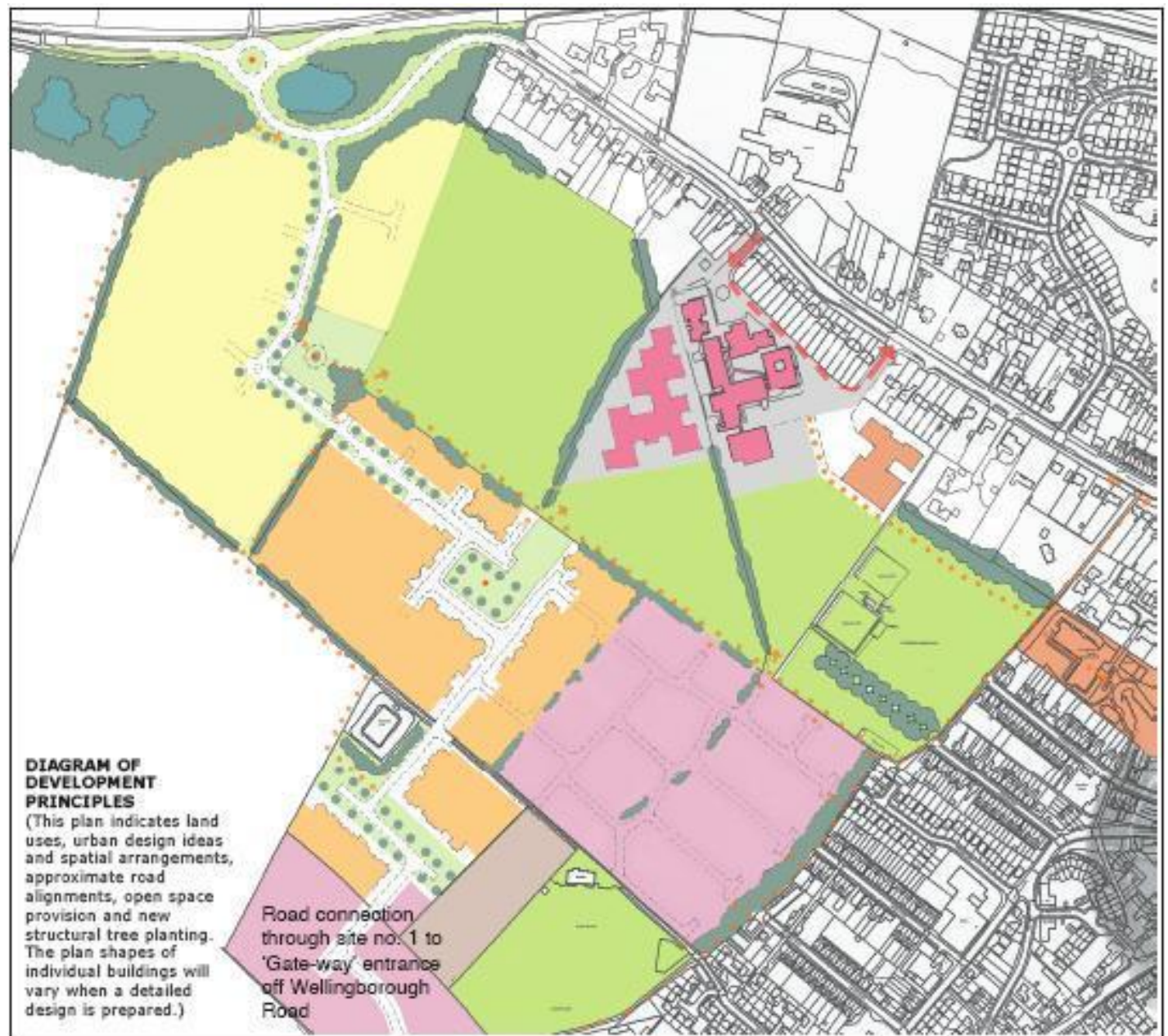
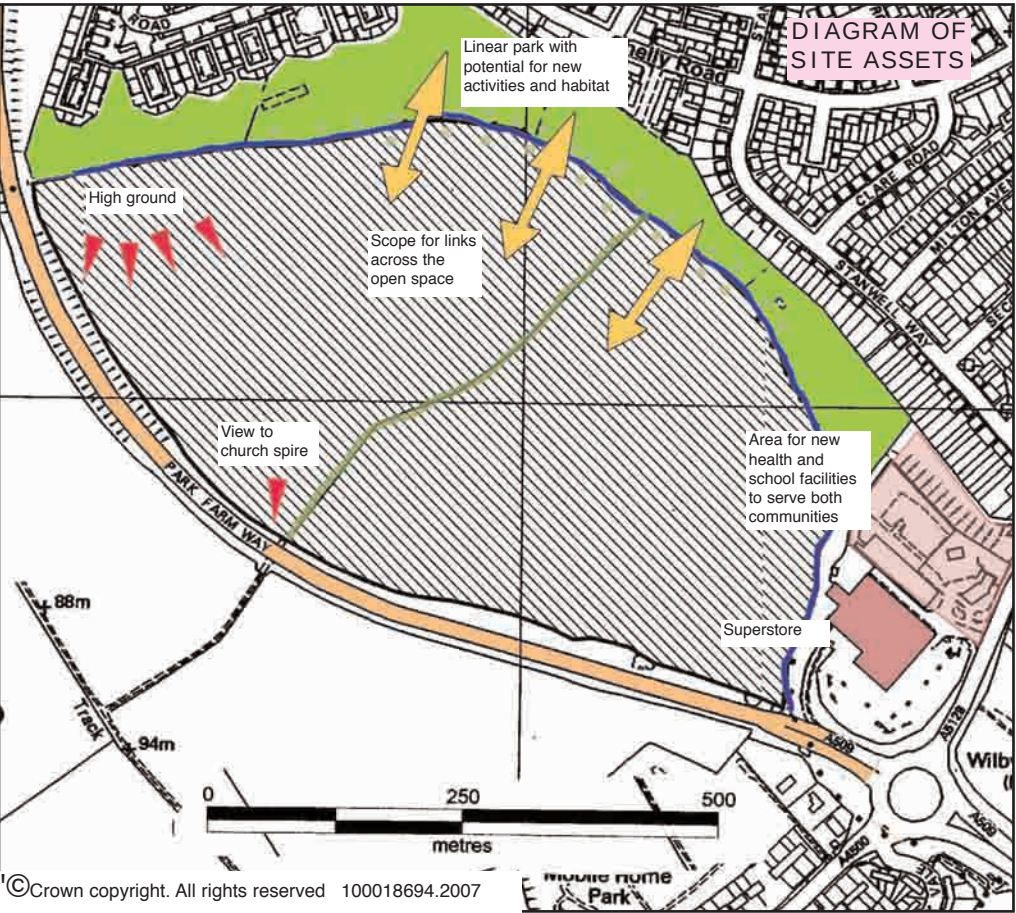


DIAGRAM OF DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

(This plan indicates land uses, urban design ideas and spatial arrangements, approximate road alignments, open space provision and new structural tree planting. The plan shapes of individual buildings will vary when a detailed design is prepared.)

SITE ASSETS

- Elevated site, prominent from the main road with long views across the town and surrounding countryside including to church spire
- Stream with trees forming a linear park, with high bio-diversity value. Scope for more varied and active recreational use and creation of new habitat
- Established hedge with trees across the site, aligned with the public footpath
- Good access to road network with options for connecting to existing housing
- Sainsbury's as a focus for new facilities, including possible new primary school
- Opportunities to integrate the new development with the existing community



SITE AT PARK FARM WAY
WELLINGBOROUGH
CONCEPT STATEMENT February 2007

DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

Development designed to tie the two communities together with physical and functional links, making better use of the existing open space by creating points of interest and activity, fostering pedestrian access through attractive, safe new routes, including a circuit all around the site.

Land to the north of Sainsbury's should be investigated as a potential site for new community facilities - a medical centre, extended retail provision, a community hall / meeting place - and if required, a new primary school to replace Wilby primary school. The location gives good access to the open space and stream for educational / recreational purposes and should become the focus of a network of new pedestrian routes. It could also provide a secondary vehicular access to the development. An alternative for the community hall would be on the connecting route to Shelley Road.

The highest part of the site is shown with large scale, landmark buildings of several storeys taking advantage of the outward views and achieving relatively high density. These should be eye-catching to act as a focal point in the view from Wilby Way, signalling the quality of the whole development forming an impressive entrance to Wellingborough.

The central part of the site is developed with medium density housing with lower density on the southern part. Other arrangements could work equally well. This ensures a full range of sizes and types including integrated affordable accommodation pepper potted in small groups throughout the site and designed to be indistinguishable from market housing. High quality development to help widen the social mix of the town. Housing should normally be orientated to take advantage of the southern aspect for solar gain and outward views, and wherever possible to overlook open space and footpaths in order to provide surveillance.

Principal access is from Park Farm Way. Secondary access could be through the land by Sainsbury's or from Shelley Road. The main route through the development is a series of tree lined avenues designed to avoid speed and rat-running and including two formal squares. These incorporate structures that align with landmark features of the development and the two bridges across the stream. They are one-way only, of light-weight construction and will be pedestrian only if vehicular access is not required.

The linear park is widened and developed with recreational spaces and new habitat including ponds also, used for sustainable drainage and better access to encourage walking and other exercise. Spoil from the development is used to create a noise bund to Park Farm Way, planted with trees and forming part of a circular walk / trim trail around the whole site.

The existing hedge is retained and reinforced with further planting. Part of it is incorporated into a tree-lined avenue leading to one of the bridges while the remainder defines a pedestrian footpath and open space that links into the circular path and crosses Park Farm Way to the wider countryside.

- DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES
- KEY
- DIAGRAM
- Footpath along the existing hedge with new planting, linking the central square with the perimeter footpath and by footbridge to the wider countryside
 - Housing for the elderly, including sheltered, close to the supermarket and overlooking the stream and open space. Three / four storeys to maximise southern aspect and outward views.
 - Low density housing, detached and semi-detached, properties in a conventional layout with large gardens and garages. New lime tree avenue.
 - Higher density housing, large imposing buildings of three storeys or more to dominate the view from the road past the site
 - Medium density family housing, short terraces and individual properties with formal front gardens and low walls / railings fronting the avenues areas
 - Tree lined avenues focused on a formal square that contains civic art / sculpture aligned with the bridges across the stream and the view to the church spire
 - Light weight narrow bridges providing pedestrian and possibly vehicle access creating a focus for activity / structures based around the stream
 - Area for new school, community hall, medical centre and new retail services with pedestrian links to the site and possible second vehicular access
 - Mounding and planting along Park Farm Way with footpath / trim trail. Linked to small square with sculpture / civic art aligned with the main square and landmark buildings on the high ground
 - Expanded linear park providing access, new habitat and activities designed with input from both the existing and new community



applying it - Regeneration

- generating ideas for the wider area

Concept statements require positive thinking. The process focuses on the assets of the site and how they can be used to shape the form of new proposals. Identifying positive ideas for the site led participants to realise how adjoining sites could also make a contribution. This wider context in turn prompted new and more imaginative aspirations for both the site itself and the wider area.

Case Study 7 Riverside

The Concept Statement on the following page shows what how an under-used site could be made to contribute to the regeneration of the whole town.

This is typical of many regeneration challenges, a site with potential to make a far greater contribution to the well being of the area than its current use, but not subject to any active proposals and with no formal policy document to prompt consideration of more beneficial use.

There were few assets actually on the site, an old drain, much overgrown and some small scale wooden warehouses dating from the era of river borne goods.

The location, however had great potential, a riverside site, close to a junction with the canal system and next to an impressive bridge carrying a major route into the town centre. There were some very large buildings in the immediate area around providing a context for larger scale buildings than the existing ones, making for much more productive use of the site.

The riverside location was the first driver for the concept with a tall hotel, of several storeys, overlooking the river and the bridge and enjoying panoramic views across the town. This includes a restaurant at river level as part of an attractive wharf area providing pedestrian access through the site to the canal towpath and accommodating moorings, services and facilities for boats.

This in turn prompted the idea of widening the lock which currently limits the size of vessel that can make the passage which would increase usage and support the new facilities.

Residential accommodation with under-croft parking establishes a new frontage to the street on the southern boundary, reflecting the new housing on sites to the south. An apartment block in the central part of the site exploits the views across the river, the canal and the bridge and has pedestrian links across the site to the town and the towpath.

The old vernacular warehouses are retained and converted into craft centre / museum celebrating the traditional industries of the town and adding to the draw for visitors to wharf, museum, riverside walk and the hotel.

Structural planting and new habitat is proposed along the existing cut, which is cleaned and restored to its original condition. It forms an attractive pedestrian area, part of the high quality public realm route while introducing bio diversity value onto an otherwise bare site.

The principles of this scheme led the participants to raise their aspirations for parts of the riverside frontage in the rest of the town to form a new riverside quarter based on high quality pedestrian / cycle access through a series of facilities and activities, eventually linking into the heart of the town centre.

What does this research show ?

The work within the Growth Areas has confirmed the universal applicability and usefulness of the approach. The case studies were highly varied. They range from large scale allocations involving hundreds of houses, through neighbourhood renewal initiatives, to individual regeneration sites.

A common factor to all was pressure for development combined with a firm requirement that the proposals should enhance rather than erode the existing environment and function of the town, adding to its distinctiveness by creating a place, rather than just new buildings.

The approach proved able to achieve this challenging task. In particular it demonstrated the following specific outcomes, all of which are objectives of the current planning regime.



- How to identify simple basic principles that will make a specific development “right” for the site and its context

- How to define what the notion of sustainable development means in practical terms for individual sites, places, and wider areas

- How to involve people with widely different interests in a single process that is not demanding of time or technical skills, and is accessible to all

- How a pause, albeit brief, to think about what development might achieve, fills a vital missing piece in the conventional development process

- How to encourage consensus and cooperation, increasing awareness of the concerns of others and fostering collaborative working in search of shared goals

- How to produce an attractive, easily understood one page document that can be used for effective consultation and engagement with the local community

- As a result, how to both speed up the development process AND improve the quality and sustainability of the resultant proposals.

Few people would dispute that this needs to happen to bring the new planning system into effect

No other planning tool currently delivers all these outcomes.

Key outcomes from the use of Concept Statements

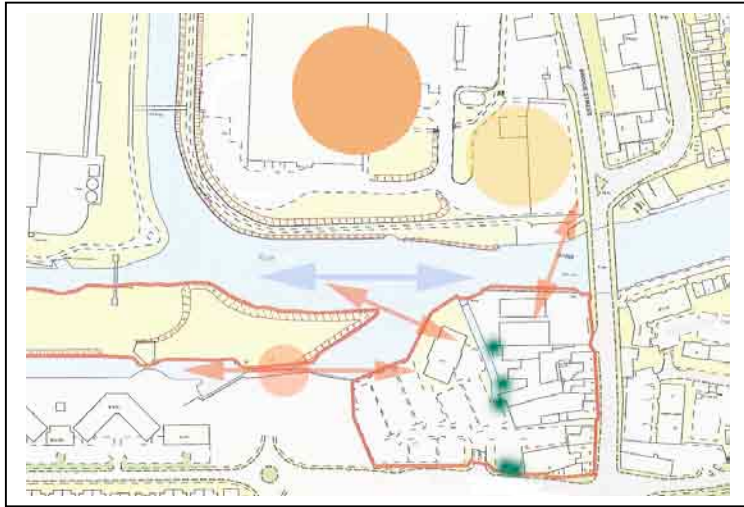
“ The whole day was a very refreshing change, a chance to do some real planning, and the outcome impressed all who took part.”

Participant, Riverside.

Guidance on the Preparation and Use of Concept Statements

The Planning Cooperative, 2007

Riverside - Concept Statement



Site Assets

- o This waterfront location adjacent to an impressive bridge carrying a major route into the town has the potential for promoting river and canal based recreation linked to existing footpaths / towpath
- o Striking large scale built form around the site affords the opportunity for buildings of considerable mass to create an impressive townscape viewed from river and road. Views of the town centre, river and canal, strong sense of place
- o Vernacular warehouse buildings on site to be retained as part of the river side heritage. Historic drain and some mature trees on site give a focus for pedestrian access to the river side from the south
- o Opportunity to widen the entrance lock to the Canal and create new moorings in the 'island' between the canal and river. Potential for boat activity / moorings area here, with pedestrian links to the site or alternatively, at the river frontage of the hotel
- o Scope on the site opposite for accommodating the displaced uses from this site in a large, new mixed-use building contributing to the regeneration of Bridge Street
- o The development has the potential for stimulating regeneration of the wider area.

Key to diagram and Development Principles

- o Hotel with restaurant and outdoor terrace maximising views of the river and canal. Tall, landmark building, up to eight storeys with under-croft parking. Quality design and materials creating an attractive public realm. Possible boat servicing facilities along the riverside
- o Apartment block of up to 5 storeys taking maximum advantage of views of the river and canal. Under-croft parking behind brick ground-floor walls containing openings with railings. Additional parking in enclosed paved and planted courtyard to south
- o Terrace of town houses / apartments fronting the road. Under-croft parking behind brick ground floor walls containing openings with railings, and planting to establish a strong street frontage
- o Conservation of vernacular buildings as workshops, specialist retail, restaurant and heritage centre linked to history of boot and shoe making in the town. [Corner building may be lost to road scheme for traffic island]
- o Pedestrian access area creating links through the site across the water feature to the river and towpath. Paved and lit, attractive and safe, retaining existing trees. Designed as a wharf along the river side creating an area of quality public realm for visitors and residents alike.

