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ISSUED



Land East of Axminster, Devon

Vision Document



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Contributors

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Preface

The Vision Document demonstrates the objectives, design principles and masterplan approach for land to the east of Axminster which is owned by The Crown Estate (TCE). TCE are committed to creating meaningful and lasting financial, social and environmental value through their land and are excited to set out their vision for a high quality and sustainable new community at Axminster.

The Vision Document provides:

- An overall vision for the land (including land to the north of the proposed allocation for nutrient mitigation and ancillary public open space)
- An overview of TCE ethos, sustainability objectives and design aspirations
- An explanation of the historical site planning context and baseline analysis
- The opportunity of the site including the design principles
- A landscape strategy with design aspirations for the area of nutrient mitigation to the north of the site.

- Key
-  TCE nutrient mitigation land / public open space (19.82 ha)
 -  TCE development parcel (12.09 ha)
 -  Third party development parcel (4.5 ha)



Site aerial including the application boundary for the Axminster masterplan

“A high quality sustainable community, through the creation of a place that is economically, socially and environmentally sustainable.

Social cohesion and interaction brings pride, ownership and opportunity to create a unique proposition for Axminster through the provision of homes for everyone and multi-functional public and natural open space.

New and existing residents will benefit from excellent connections to the Axe Valley and Mill Brook, areas which promote nature and outdoor living for the new community. Local facilities and conveniences within Axminster Town Centre are on the doorstep for this new community, enhancing sustainable connections and access is intrinsic to creating sustainable place.”



Vision objectives



Create a **high quality, sustainable and viable development of homes** (*private and affordable*), community and open spaces on the fringes of the Blackdown Hills and East Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).



Deliver a **significant area of multi-functional public and natural open space for all**, which can provide phosphate/nutrient mitigation to unlock the delivery of homes and addressing existing issues within the River Axe catchment.



Enhance community interactions and connections to nature, whilst encouraging active lifestyles through enhanced public access between indoor and outdoor destinations.



Protect, improve and **enhance existing hedgerows and woodlands**.



Rewild open spaces where built development is not proposed, creating an exemplar landscape within Axminster and Devon.



Substantially **improve biodiversity** within the Axe Valley and along Millbrook.



Support the carbon neutral targets for East Devon.

Holistic approach to Sustainability

Within a world where the environmental impacts are continuously being acknowledged and exemplified in natural disasters and countries and towns are identifying **Climate Emergency**, it is increasingly important that new development follows strict sustainable initiatives.

If this ambition is to be achieved then bold actions are required. As a significant development site for the town of Axminster, this has a clear role to play in reaching this goal and in setting a precedent for future development within the town and East Devon.







The **Crown Estate** has identified it's own sustainability initiatives;

- Climate Action
- Valuing Resources
- Enhancing Biodiversity
- Healthy People and Places

The United Nations and Royal Institute of British Architects have identified their own sustainable development goals, *seen below*.

These goals can be distilled into comprehensive agendas for the Land East of Axminster, *seen below*.

Land East of Axminster Development Sustainability Goals

-  Net Zero Carbon
-  Enhancing Biodiversity
-  Social Value
-  Sustainable Water Cycle
-  Sustainable Development
-  Health and Wellbeing

UN Sustainable Development Goals

- | | | |
|------------------------------|--|----------------------------|
| 1. No Poverty | 8. Economic Growth | 13. Climate Action |
| 2. Zero Hunger | 9. Innovation and infrastructure | 14. Life Below Water |
| 3. Good Health and Wellbeing | 10. Reduced Inequality | 15. Live on Land |
| 4. Quality Education | 11. Sustainable cities and Communities | 16. Peace and Justice |
| 5. Gender Equality | 12. Responsible Consumption and Production | 17. Partnerships and Goals |

RIBA Sustainable Outcomes

1. Good Health and Wellbeing
2. Sustainable Water Cycle
3. Net Zero Operational Carbon Emissions
4. Sustainable Life Cycle Cost
5. Sustainable Connectivity and transport
6. Sustainable Communities and Social Value
7. Net Zero Embodied Carbon Emissions
8. Whole Life Carbon Emissions
9. Sustainable Land Use and Ecology



The Sustainability Objectives

Active travel

Promote active travel by enhancing and improving pedestrian and cycle crossings and access into Axminster town centre.

People focused

Create a safe and accessible environment for all.

Materiality

Use sustainable and good quality materials in the built form and public realm.

Circular Economy

Consider future re-use and recycling, reducing waste and supporting a circular economy.

Carbon Neutral Homes

Minimising whole life carbon emissions through a fabric-first approach to reduce energy demand combined with the specification of low carbon and renewable technologies.

Net Zero Carbon



Active travel routes through green spaces and along water edges



Green Infrastructure

Provide functional amenity space such as pocket parks within the streets and spaces. There is opportunity for rewilding and natural capital enhancement.

Sustainable Urban Drainage Strategy (SuDS)

A SuDS and swales will provide further stable natural environments to help reverse the loss of habitats for wildlife.

Ecological Corridors

Retain healthy and attractive hedges and trees and utilise them to create ecological corridors to preserve and reinforce important habitats and extend them to the surrounding parks.

Enhancing Biodiversity



Community education about wildlife in the natural environment



Community Activator Projects

- There is future potential to create community projects, involving the local groups.
- Opportunity to create a people focused development, engaging the new community with existing activity in Axminster town centre
- Opportunity for growing resources (fuel i.e. timber, and food) for the community

Resources

- Water stations for the community
- Sustainable lighting through the development which is sensitive to the surrounding wildlife and community, changing through the seasons to adapt to changes in natural light
- Digitally connect the new community

Social Value



Community assets incorporated into new development, opportunity for local food stores selling local produce



Slow, hold and filter

- Integrate a treatment train solution within the new development.
- Implement roof water storage and slowed run off, integrated into a filtration system, connected to the Mill Brook.
- Integrate water storage opportunities within the development to encourage grey water usage.
- Monitor water usage in homes.

Nutrient mitigation wetlands

- Opportunity for wetlands BNG.
- Potential to incorporate educational tours, and integrate with local schools and education facilities to study the wetlands.

Sustainable Water Cycle



Development is sensitively designed around attenuation features, incorporating existing green infrastructure



Urban and social investment

- Provide mixed tenure homes for all (including affordable homes).
- Connect and promote the employment opportunities within Axminster town centre.
- Active access routes into Axminster Town Centre and surrounding assets to create a 15 minute neighbourhood within the new development.
- Implement school outreach and inclusion into the new community.

Sustainable procurement

- Eliminate waste during all processes of development, from implementation, construction of homes, final delivery and throughout the development's lifetime.
- Provide homes of high sustainable value, implementing sustainable technologies.

Sustainable Development



Example of sustainable development (*The Avenue, Saffron Walden*), which provides green streets with significant amounts of attractive green infrastructure



Play

Opportunities for formal and informal play, high quality cycle and pedestrian routes and formal sports facilities such as kick around areas will encourage physical activity.

Footpaths and cycle networks

Footpaths and cycle networks will be accessible for all and will enable families and individuals to walk or cycle to Axminster.

Outdoor growing and attractions

Allotments and leisure gardens will provide opportunities for households to grow food, encouraging outdoor activity and healthy eating while reducing the environmental impact associated with food transportation. Outdoor attractions such as Sec Tor, the Jurassic coastline, Blackdown Hill AONB, and East Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty will become accessible to the surrounding community.

Health and Wellbeing



Example of play opportunities incorporated into green streets with green infrastructure



The Site

TCE owns 31ha of land on the eastern side of Axminster, extending either side of Beavor/Evil Lane and as far south as Sector Lane.

The land is currently in agricultural use, both arable and pastoral, and is characterised by existing hedgerows and trees and an undulating topography, with the land rising steeply either side of the Millbrook in the valley floor.

The southern and western boundaries of the land are formed by the existing built-up area of Axminster. The eastern boundary is open countryside interspersed with occasional individual dwellings and/or farmsteads.

The TCE land is located approximately 1.6km from Axminster town centre where there is a wide range of retail, service, community and employment facilities. Axminster itself is the largest settlement in the eastern part of East Devon, an important and sustainable town (Tier 2 in the East Devon settlement hierarchy) benefitting from a train station with an hourly service to Exeter, some 45km to the west.

- Key
- TCE nutrient mitigation land / public open space (19.82 ha)
 - TCE development parcel (12.09 ha)
 - Third party development parcel (4.5 ha)



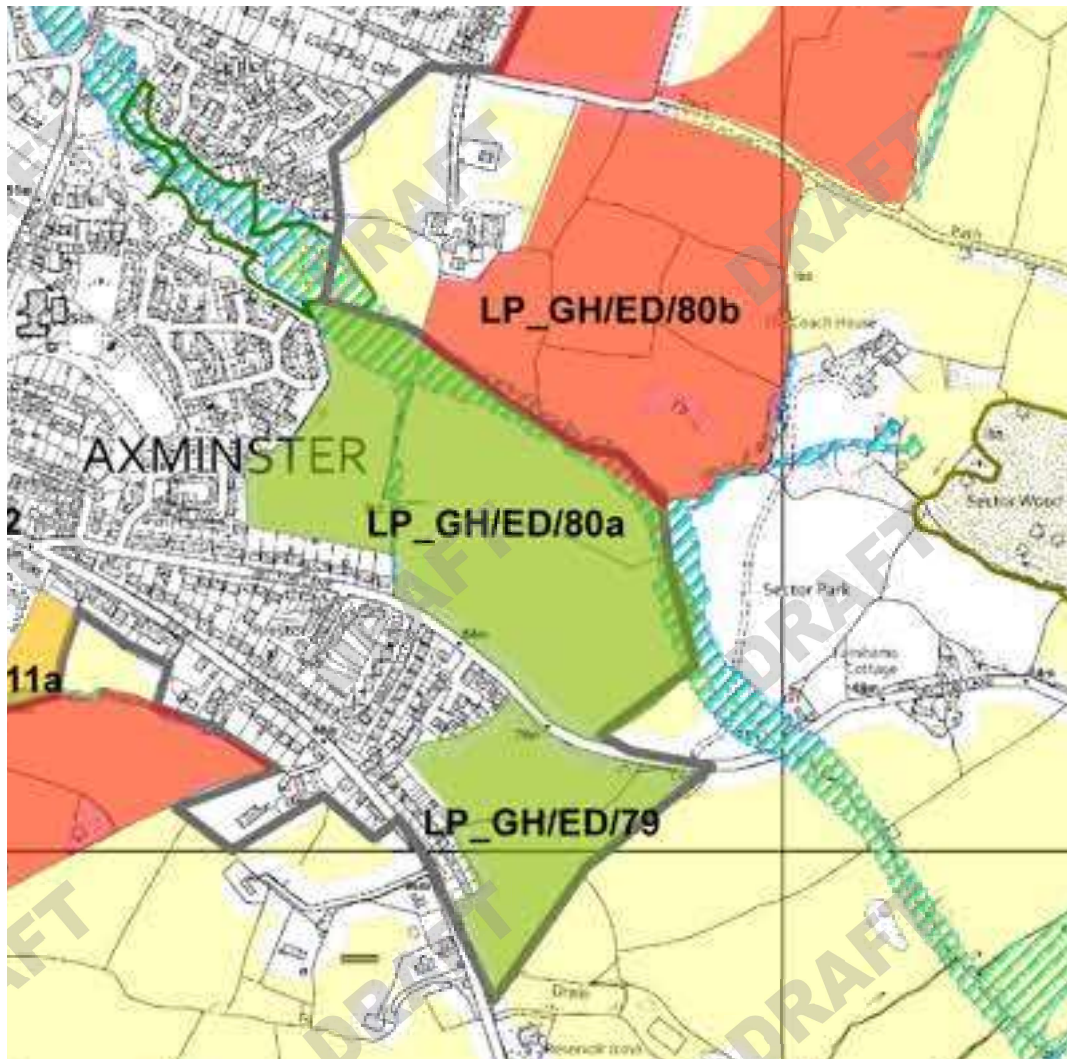
Site aerial including the application boundary for the Axminster masterplan

The Planning Context

In November 2022, EDDC published its **Regulation 18 Local Plan 2040** identifying the southern-most parcel of the TCE land, together with the Persimmon owned land (*some 17 ha in total*) or a mixed use allocation for circa 293 dwellings and 1ha employment space.

The proposed allocation reference is LP_GH/ED/79 and 80a.

- Key**
Housing and Mixed Use Allocations Preference:
- Preferred
 - Second choice
 - Rejected
 - Settlement Boundaries
 - Areas considered suitable for solar energy
 - Land of Local Amenity Importance
 - Floodzone 2
 - Floodzone 3



Settlement Map, Axminster

Planning History

The 31ha of land owned by TCE currently forms part of the allocation for a 650 dwelling mixed use development, including a relief road, under Strategy Policy 20 of the adopted East Devon Local Plan 2038. The remaining land in the adopted allocation was under option to Persimmon Homes. As part of Policy 20, a Strategic Masterplan for the allocation was produced by Hyas, in conjunction with EDDC, TCE and Persimmon, which, for viability reasons was expanded to allow for 850 dwellings and identified the key design principles that were to be incorporated within any planning application for the development – this included the fundamental principle of designing the residential development to follow the site topography and contours, maximising views across the valley and retaining and enhancing the existing landscape features to provide a natural setting for the development.

In 2018, both TCE and Persimmon submitted three planning applications for the comprehensive development of the allocation (some 443 dwellings on the TCE land and 409 on the Persimmon land) including the creation of a relief road accessing onto the A358 Chard Road in the north and Lyme Road in the south.

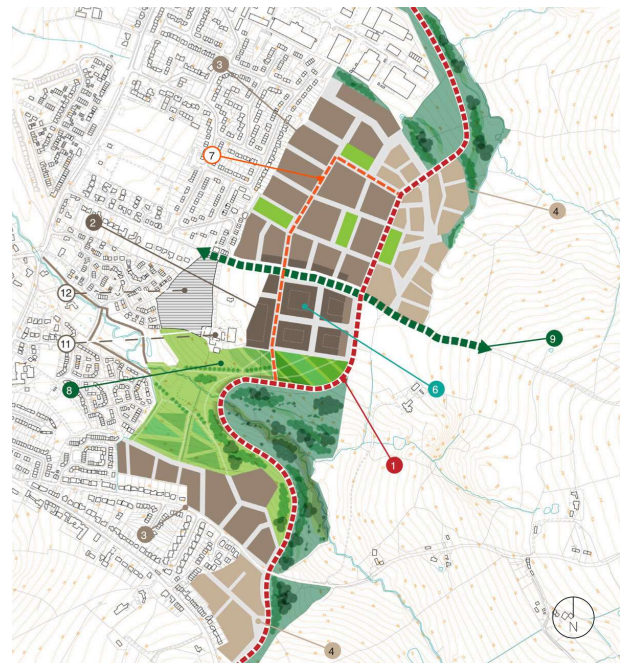
However there have been difficulties securing funding for the relief road and issues of phosphate mitigation required to be provided by all development proposals within the River Axe catchment, therefore the viability and deliverability of the allocation for 850 dwellings is considered undeliverable as currently drafted. A major contributor to this position was the viability

and deliverability of the allocation arising from the difficulties of securing funding for the relief road and issues of phosphate mitigation required to be provided by all development proposals within the River Axe catchment.

EDDC has recognised that it is highly unlikely that, in its current form, the adopted Plan allocation will come forward. The review of the Local Plan to 2040 over the past year has provided a legitimate opportunity for EDDC to reconsider all potential new sites and existing allocations and determine what may or may not realistically be delivered in the next plan period, particularly given the following key changes in circumstances in relation to the TCE/Persimmon adopted allocation: –

- The unsuccessful application for Housing Infrastructure Fund monies originally identified to assist with the delivery of the site,
- The lack of alternative funding for the relief road,
- Questions over the need for the relief road,
- The acquisition of the southern-most parcel of the allocation off Lyme Road by Persimmon coupled with the fact that Persimmon has not renewed its option agreements in respect of the northern and central parcels of the allocation land.

- 1 Road has a variety of characters along its route in response to the different types of development and open space through the masterplan
- 2 Housing at the centre of the urban extension enjoys the best access to facilities and open space. This housing would include some apartments (above shops or offices), terraced housing and smaller units.
- 3 Housing outside of the centre but not at the edge is formally arranged around streets and regular open spaces and providing a spacious and green feel. Housing will be a mixture of terraces and semi-detached houses with private gardens. The majority of housing will be 2 storeys with occasional 3 storey buildings on corners.
- 4 Housing at the edge of the settlement, generally on the steepest sloping ground and principally only two storeys high incorporating a mixture of short terrace, semi detached and detached houses with parking, overlooking green space.
- 5 3.3ha of Employment space is located adjacent to existing industrial area to allow for potential expansion of existing business.
- 6 2.5ha of Employment space provided within a mixed local centre and likely to be office, workshop and retail space.
- 7 Secondary route
- 8 A Variety of Green space throughout the masterplan includes utilising undevelopable areas as large open spaces, improving biodiversity, small local green spaces, green corridors, hedges and tree planting and providing facility for water attenuation and SUDS.
- 9 Evil lane retained as a green link. No vehicular access should be allowed along the existing green route but provided parallel if required.
- 10 Planting to the north creates a green edge to the north where views of the new employment buildings may be had.
- 11 Farm retained
- 12 Future phase development



Axminster North Eastern Urban Extension Masterplan
January 2019, by Hyas

Strategic Location

Axminster is a market town located in East Devon and is within close proximity to the Blackdown Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), the East Devon AONB and the Dorset AONB.



Axminster is 45km east of Exeter and benefits from easy access by train, with trains running every hour from Axminster Station to Exeter St David's. The town lies 8km inland from the Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site. The Site is located approximately 1.6km from Axminster town centre.

- Key**
- TCE nutrient mitigation land / public open space
 - TCE development parcel
 - Third party development parcel
 - Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty
 - Waterbodies
 - Wider Development Area
 - Railway
 - Road Network
 - 5km, 7km, and 9km radial circles
 - Local centres



Strategic Location of The Site

Historical Development

The historic maps illustrate how Axminster and its rural context have changed between 1898 and the present day. It is apparent from analysis that until the expansion of Axminster, the Site and context is largely unchanged.

Originally a cattle market town from 1210, Axminster formed around Market Square and Trinity Square. As seen in 1898, much of the immediate context of Axminster is arable farmland with clusters of woodland, as was the site.

The railway station was opened in 1860, offering direct services to Exeter and Yeovil, and attracting development to Axminster. Since the establishment of the railway station, Axminster's residential and commercial areas grew to the east and north. Following the line of the railway the River Axe flows north to south, the developments of Axminster have continued to expand from this eastern edge.

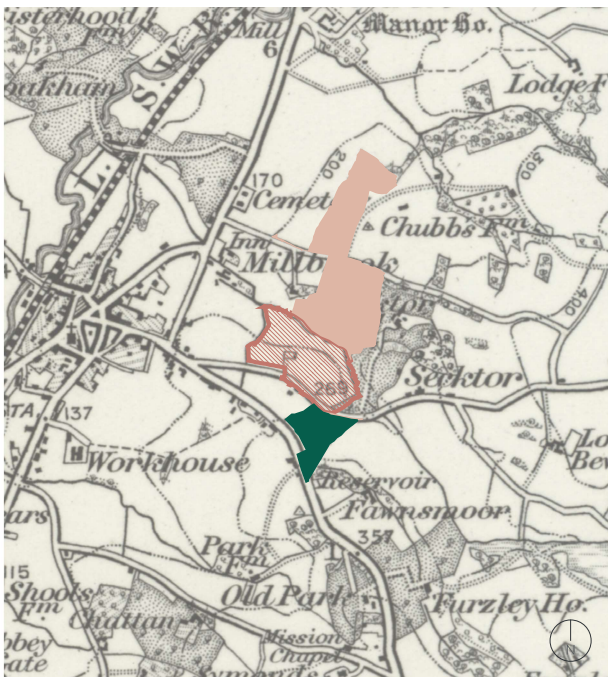
The town expanded from the historic core in a northern and eastern direction. It was from the 1950s that development expanded east along Lyme Road following the direction of Mill Brook Valley to the north.

Sector Hall, a Grade II listed Victorian house was built in 1838 and sits to the east of the Site. Sec Tor presents itself as a green buffer edge, for any development growing to the east.

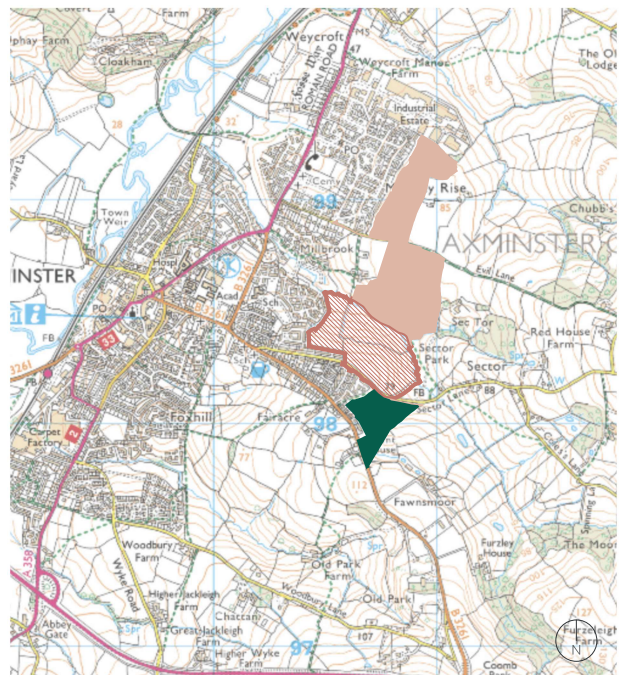
Where the River Axe is located along the north-south railway line it creates a defensible boundary. The constraint of the flood zone has encouraged development to expand north and east from the historic core of Axminster.

Mill Brook sits centrally to the site and travels along the northern edge of Axminster town. From 1960 this Brook created a valley setting and a divide between further development expanding north of Axminster and the existing development to the south.

The site has largely remained as open land, with a woodland to the north.



1898



2019

Surrounding Site Character

An analysis of the structure of surrounding settlements and urban design characteristics in Devon has been undertaken, to inform the design of the masterplan for the development at Axminster.

Given that the proposed development is moving beyond existing development boundaries into areas comprising of more rural characteristics, the proposals should draw design cues from townscape examples which have successfully integrated built form and landscape, creating a desirable place.

The surrounding areas which have been analysed are Chardstock, Membury, Musbury, Raymond's Hill and Uplyme. These village settlements within East Devon have distinctive townscape character types which reflect their patterns of growth and development. A summary of the key design features to inform the masterplan have been highlighted, as below:



Winsham



Chardstock



Axminster



Membury



Musbury

- Settlement structure are most often based around a junction on a primary route passing through the town or village;
- Older buildings are most often concentrated along the edge of the route and settlements grow organically away from it;
- Highest density and continuous building form are concentrated around an historic core on a primary route with gradation of density and scale towards the edges;
- Historic buildings focus around a landmark building such as a local church;
- Non-residential uses are concentrated along a 'High Street';
- Topography informs the street pattern and building arrangement.

Local Site Character

Axminster’s historic core is centred around Trinity Square and St. Mary's Church.

The majority of buildings in the town centre are 19th century with a mix of uses, some buildings such as The George Inn date back to 1760. The historic core and conservation area is typical of many market towns and consist of highest density buildings in the centre with a tight urban grain and formal street pattern.

The towns expansion was mainly throughout the 20th century with the additions of various suburban housing estates comprising of largely mid to late 20th century.

Axminster Hospital and the Axe Valley Community College are located to the northern side of the town centre, mid to late 20th century housing is situated to the north and accessed from the A358 and Chard Road. These estates provide little contribution to local distinctiveness.

The approach into the town from the south is underwhelming, consisting of a retail park and superstore off West Street (B3261).

Early to mid 20th century housing is predominant in the areas accessed off Musbury Road and West Street.

There are occasional areas of pre-20th century housing located around Coombe Lane.

- KEY**
-  TCE nutrient mitigation land / public open space
 -  TCE development parcel
 -  Third party development parcel
 -  Pre 20th Century
 -  Early 20th Century (Pre-war)
 -  Mid 20th Century (Inter-war)
 -  Late 20th Century (Post war)
 -  Modern (1980-2015)
 -  Formal Recreation
 -  Woodland and Farm Land
 -  Industrial Estate
 -  Town Centre
 -  Study Area of Town Centre



Axminster historical character

Local Community Facilities
















Axminster demonstrates a traditional small town centre containing a range of retail and leisure uses. The town centre is and remains the primary shopping area, notwithstanding that further small retail development in the form of large supermarkets are located along some of the secondary routes running to the south of the town centre.

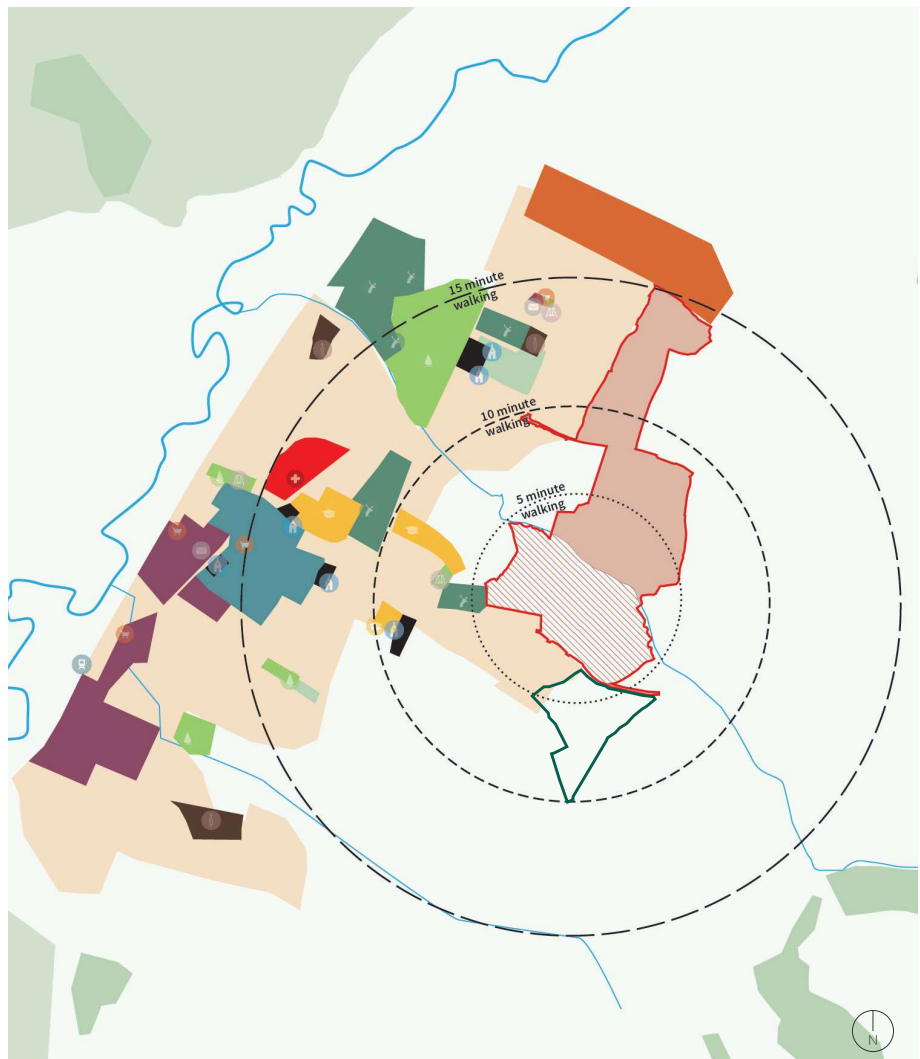
The proposed development site is within a comfortable and acceptable 10-15 minute walk from the town centre. It will be able to take advantage of the existing services, facilities and employment opportunities that are available within the town.

In relation to the existing surrounding local services and facilities the development proposals will:

- Take advantage of existing services, facilities and employment areas within Axminster.
- The Site is within a 10-15 minute walking distance which is comfortable and acceptable for the facilities.
- Axminster Town Centre will remain the primary shopping area reflecting its range of available services and facilities.
- There is potential to include a small community facility within the southern parcel (Café, leisure or information hub) which is local, community destination for residents and visitors along the Axe Valley.

Key

-  TCE nutrient mitigation land / public open space
-  TCE development parcel
-  Third party development parcel
-  Residential
-  Retail
-  Town centre
-  Industrial
-  Hospital
-  School
-  Open space
-  Leisure
-  Place of worship
-  Allotment
-  Woodland
-  AONB



Local services and facilities map with walking distances, in the surrounding area

Surrounding Density

Analysis of the different, layouts, characters, dwelling types and densities of a number of adjacent development areas has helped inform what may be appropriate for the proposed development.

Sector Lane edge;

- 20 DPH
- Predominantly semi-detached and detached homes





Upper Mead

- 47 DPH
- A mix of terraced, semi-detached and detached homes. Longer rows of terraces which front out onto the surrounding landscape
- Green corridors of hedgerows and trees run through the development parcels

Cridlake

- 30 DPH
- Mix of detached, semi-detached and terraced homes.
- Predominantly semi-detached and terraced houses with play and green areas surrounding

Key

-  TCE nutrient mitigation land / public open space
-  TCE development parcel
-  Third party development parcel
-  Density case study areas



Density plan of surrounding areas

Landscape Character

The topography of the proposed allocation site and its visibility within the wider landscape will influence the layout of roads and the arrangement of the development blocks on the site, seeking to reduce development impact on both the actual landform and views into and out of the site as little as possible. Development will best be located along the contours and may result in the need for bespoke house types where topography is steepest.

The development will create a new settlement edge and care will be needed in the design to prevent eastwards sprawl. The design will also need to respond to the sensitive views of the site.

Key wider landscape character considerations:

- The landscape remains productive whilst retaining its landscape structure of hedgerows, woodland and farms.
- Alternative uses should be found for redundant farm buildings, and land uses should take place within the existing field patterns.

Settlements thrive, and where they expand, this is done in a way which enhances their character and setting.

Wider Landscape Character

Devon has a comprehensive suite of Landscape Character Assessments, that describe Devon’s landscapes, and define a series of Landscape Character Types (LCTs) and Devon Character Areas (DCAs) within the County.

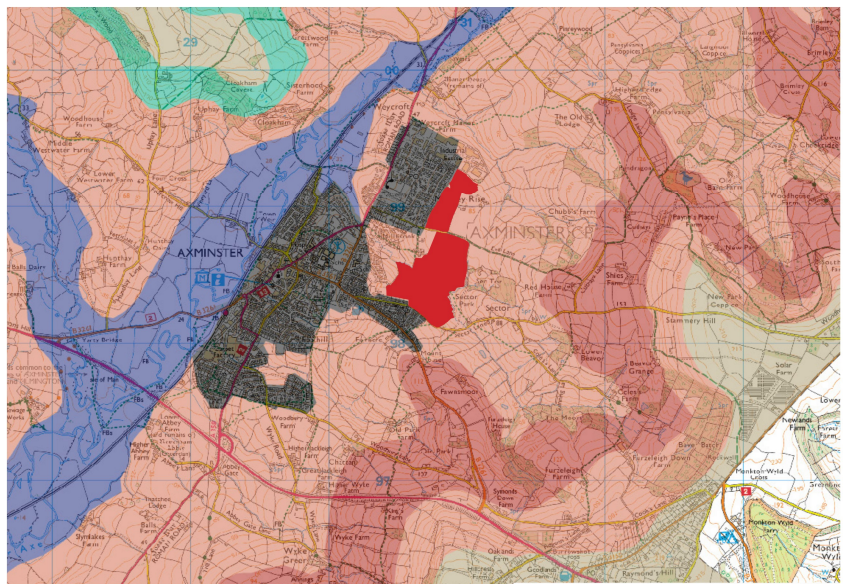
The site sits within **LCT 3B: Lower Rolling Farmed and Settled Valley Slopes**. This is one of the most extensive LCTs and occurs on the lower slopes of the valley sides, and is generally a medium scale landscape, often with long views. It is predominantly agricultural, with pastoral and arable land uses. Patches of woodland, copses, and hedgerow trees give the landscape a well-treed character. It is a well-settled landscape, with farms, hamlets and villages.

What makes this landscape special?

- This extensive LCT which forms the setting for many settlements, and also contributes to many expansive views from higher ground.
- A productive, working but still attractive landscape containing numerous historic and archaeological features.
- A diversity of settlements, with building materials and settlement pattern reflecting local geology.

Key

- Overall Site
- 1A Open inland planned plateaux
- 2A Steep wooded scarp slopes
- 3A Upper farmed and wooded valley slopes
- 3B Lower rolling farmed and settled valley slopes
- 3C Sparsely settled farmed valley floors
- 7 Main cities and towns



LCT Character Areas

Site Landscape Character

At a site specific scale, the site can be defined into four separate character areas;

- Arable;
- Valley Pasture;
- Large scale pasture, and
- Small scale pasture.

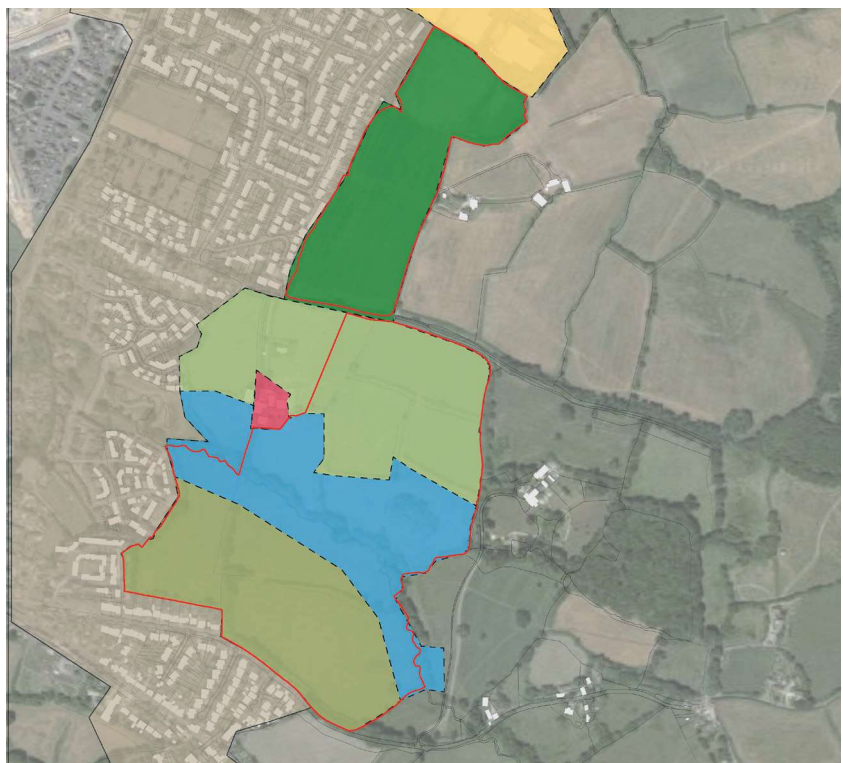
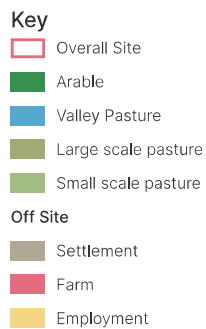
In addition, the parkland associated with Sector House has an influence on the eastern edge of the southern part of the site.

Key landscape features include Mill Brook, tree belts, copses and hedgerows, sunken lanes and the sloping land form.

Key Considerations

The development proposals will consider the following at site scale:

- The visual appearance of the development from elevated LCT views;
- Creation of distinctive entrance points to the new homes;
- Softening of settlement edge to integrate development into the wider landscape;
- Promote stronger habitat links across the site between woodland areas and hedgerows;
- Incorporate SUD's into the overall landscape layout;
- Enhance the PRoW routes to create circular trails and connections;
- Respect the character of Beavor and Evil lane and sensitively incorporate.



Site Character Areas

Visual Sensitivity

An assessment has been undertaken to understand the areas of visual sensitivity within and around the site. Wider long range and local viewpoints have been identified and assessed in combination with areas of higher and lower sensitivity. The assessment establishes the most appropriate locations for development and any potential impacts on views. This has shaped and informed the masterplan framework.



Example of local long-range view

Wider Viewpoints

These views are generally available from the higher ground within the edge of the Blackdown Hills and East Devon AONB's although intervening vegetation somewhat filters views and the site is barely discernible in views beyond 4km given the distance.

Some closer views are also possible from footpaths (Axminster 5&7) to the north of the site from elevated positions on the ridgeline.

From these locations, it is the northern parcel and the upper slopes of the southern parcel of the site which are most visible, identified by the settlement edge of Axminster.

Key considerations for the Masterplan

The most sensitive wider views are from within the three surrounding AONBs: Blackdown Hill AONB, East Devon AONB and Dorset AONB.

In all views from the higher ground, the site is visible as a small part of a wider panorama and is always seen in the context of the existing settlement edge of Axminster. New development should seek to maintain this relationship, and utilise new green infrastructure to soften edges and break up new built form.

Closer in, the general public using the public footpaths within the lower valley will potentially be impacted by new development in surrounding areas. New green infrastructure could be used to help screen built form and frame views along the river corridor.

The northern parcels of the site, although screened from the valley footpaths, are visible from Evil Lane and would also be the most prominent in wider views.

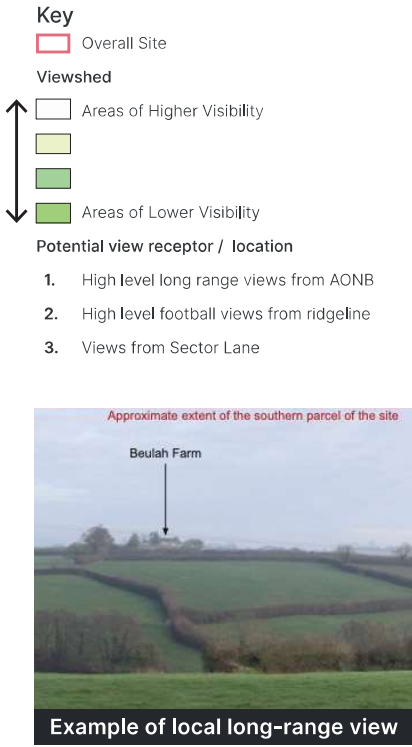
Nearby residents overlooking or abutting the site will potentially be impacted from development. Where possible, level change could be used to avoid blocking longer views from properties, or to maintain and enhance existing mature planting along boundaries that screen views in. This will also protect the character and appearance of adjacent streets and the entry points into the Town.

Local Viewpoints

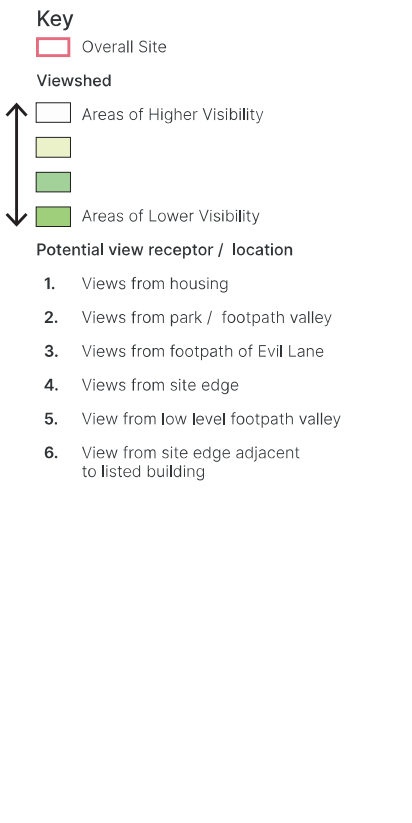
In close views, much of the site is visible from various locations both from the site boundaries and public footpaths located within the river corridor and on Evil Lane. The site is visible for many people within close proximity (within 500m of the site). This includes residents, road users and users of public rights of way and this is typical of a settlement edge location.



Example of local long-range view



Wider Viewpoints



Local Viewpoints

Landscape Capacity for Change

Landscape capacity is the extent to which a particular landscape type is able to accept a particular kind of change without significant effects on its character.

The plan opposite illustrates areas of landscape capacity across the site in terms of the capacity to accommodate new development, and the descriptions below explain the scale and nature for each capacity level. Best practice guidance has informed the landscape capacity for change plan.

Key Considerations

Medium/Low Capacity

A low amount of development can be accommodated only in limited situations, providing it has regard to the setting and form of existing settlement and the character and the sensitivity of adjacent landscape character areas.

The lower valley areas show some capacity for change, this is constrained by the locally valued landscape setting and its recreational value. Screened from the wider landscape, localised views through the valley are important.

Medium capacity

This area could accommodate some areas of new development, regard to the setting and form of existing settlement, the character and sensitivity of adjacent areas needs to be considered. The key landscape and visual characteristics must be retained and enhanced.

The small scale field network to the north of Mill Brook demonstrates potential to accommodate change, valued natural features and intact field boundary network should be protected, respecting the landscape setting.

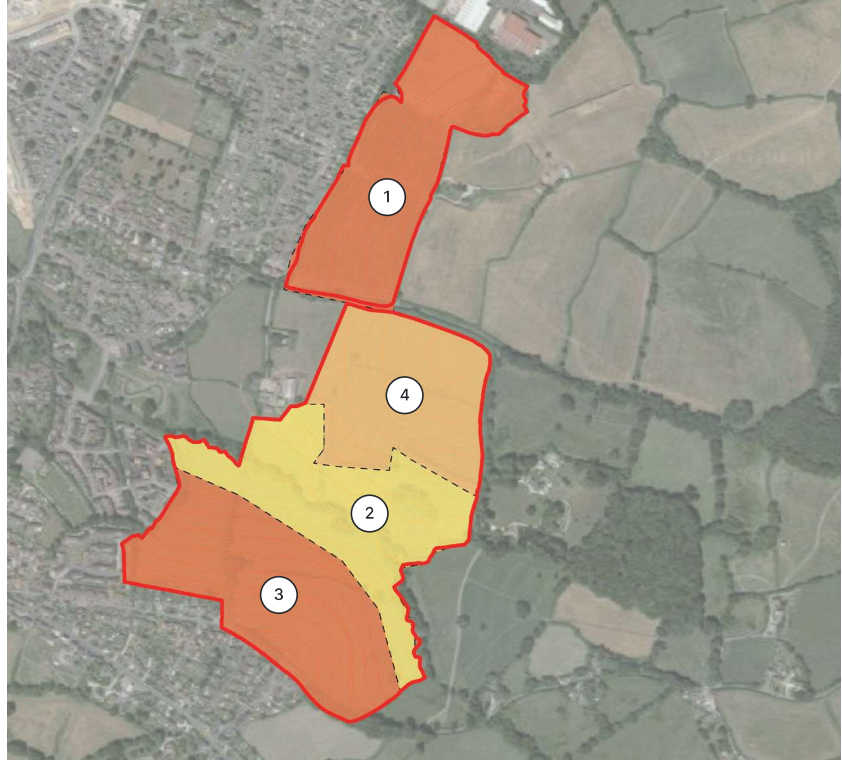
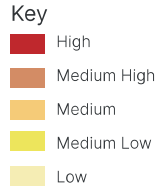
Views out from the settlement edge and lower valley footpaths into this area, combined with the sloping topography would be important considerations and require mitigation.

Medium/High capacity

Larger amounts of development can be accommodated, providing it has regard to the setting and form of existing settlement, character of adjacent areas. Protection of landscape and visual features may be required.

Both field areas to the edges of the Axminster settlement were recorded as having potential to accommodate development, demonstrating a less intact landscape structure and impacted by the urban edges of the Town.

Located on the upper slopes of the site, these spaces have a wider visual connection to the landscape, but are seen in conjunction with the existing settlement edge. New development could preserve the green appearance of the edges through sensitive design and new tree and hedgerows.



Landscape capacity for change

Site area	Stage 1: Visual sensitivity	Stage 3: landscape sensitivity	Stage 3: landscape character sensitivity	Stage 4: wider sensitivity	Stage 5: overall landscape sensitivity	Stage 6: landscape value	Stage 7: overall landscape capacity
1: Arable fields	Medium/ Low	Medium/ Low	Medium/ Low	Medium	Medium	Medium/ Low	Medium/ High
2: Valley Pasture	Medium/ Low	Medium/ High	Medium	High	Medium/ High	Medium	Medium / Low
3: Large Scale Pasture	Medium/ Low	Medium	Medium/ Low	Medium/ High	Medium	Medium/ Low	Medium/ High
4: Small Scale Pasture	Medium/ Low	Medium/ High	Medium	Medium/ High	Medium/ High	Medium/ Low	Medium

Site Considerations

Ecology

The landscape and ecological features on the site will help to shape the development, incorporating them where possible to ensure the development sensitively responds to its ecological and landscape setting.

The existing hedgerows, woodland and trees, which are predominantly category A and B, will need to be retained and will form natural green corridors for wildlife linking down to the Axe valley, as well as assisting with screening the development. The retention and enhancement of the existing waterbodies, particularly Millbrook, will similarly assist with preserving the natural assets of the site.

Drainage and Flooding

The drainage strategy for the site will need to work with the natural topography in order to reduce the need for pumping stations and large retaining walls around drainage ponds, etc.

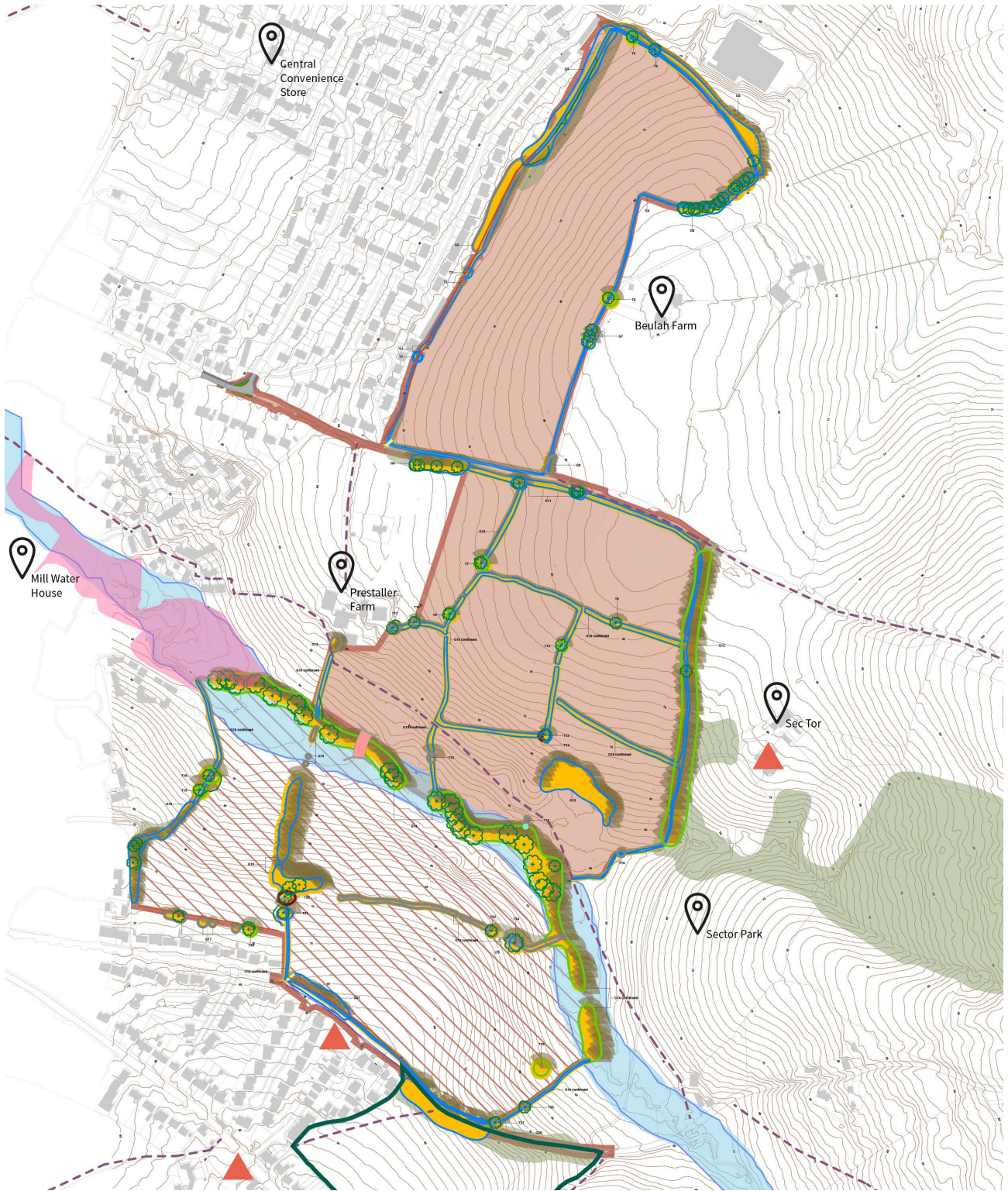
The need for all development in Axminster to provide mitigation to ensure nutrient neutrality, together with the need to ensure there is no flooding risk to either new or existing residents, means that an exemplar Sustainable Urban Drainage System will need to be designed on the site. This will take the form of a series of attractive swale features through the development and along Millbrook, creating an attractive water edge along the watercourse. This will also enable the existing PROW to be retained along the valley floor.

Access and Movement

An all-vehicle access into the proposed site will be provided from the principal estate road servicing the proposed Persimmon development to the south. It is proposed that the access road within the Persimmon site will extend up to the Sector Lane highway boundary from Lyme Road. A permeable network of streets and spaces, which prioritises pedestrians and cyclists, through the development will filter off this main estate road. Pedestrian and cycle connections, where possible, will link through to the existing adjacent development areas creating easy and accessible 15 minute access to local services and amenities and the town centre.

Summary of key issues and design principles affecting the proposed development site:

- Residential development will need to be designed to retain the landform by following the topography and contours, maximising views across the valley,
- Layout and design to be informed by the retention of existing topography, landscape and ecological features (hedgerows, trees, etc) which provide a natural setting for development, limit visual impact and provide movement and open space corridors,
- Connections to be made with existing pedestrian routes and PROW through the valley to create a sustainable and easily accessible development,
- Site drainage solutions need to ensure the risk of flooding and pollution is reduced for both existing and new residents,
- Vehicular access will need to be taken from the principal estate road through the Persimmon site (LP_GH/ED/79) to the south .



Site Considerations



Key

- TCE nutrient mitigation land / public open space
- TCE development parcel
- Third party development parcel
- Listed Building
- Public Right of Way (Part of Footpath)
- Flood Zone Two
- Flood Zone Three
- Category A Trees/Hedge of High Quality and Value
- Category B Trees/Hedge of Moderate Quality and Value
- Category C Trees/Hedge of Low Quality and Value
- Category U Trees/Hedge Recommended for Removal
- Tree Shadows
- Root Protection Areas (RPAs)
- Local Amenity Importance
- Tree Group
- One Metre Contour Lines
- Lime Kiln

Design Principles

The Land East of Axminster has the opportunity to provide high-quality, attractive and mixed tenure homes which are sensitively designed to preserve and enhance the existing landscape features, and to provide natural capital enhancement through a significant amount of multi-functional public and natural open space.

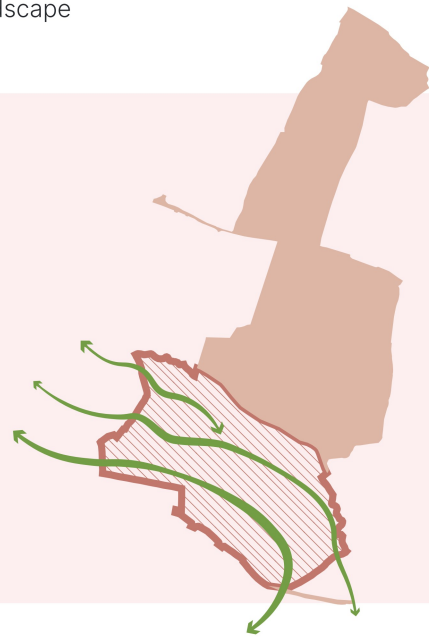
The use of strong linear green boulevards, combined with curving residential streets focused on new green parkland spaces, are defining features of the scheme, to ensure consistency in overall character and layout.

The land to the land off Sector Lane also brings;

- Working with steeply sloping topography
- Retention of existing hedgerow and trees distinctive to the valley
- Creating opportunity for nutrient neutrality
- Bio-diversity Net Gain opportunity
- Walkable neighbourhood with access to footpaths, countryside and local green spaces
- Additional footfall to the town centre
- Potential community hub which could include a café, workspace, meeting rooms, interpretation for nature conservation/BNG opportunities
- A new play space which integrates into the landscape

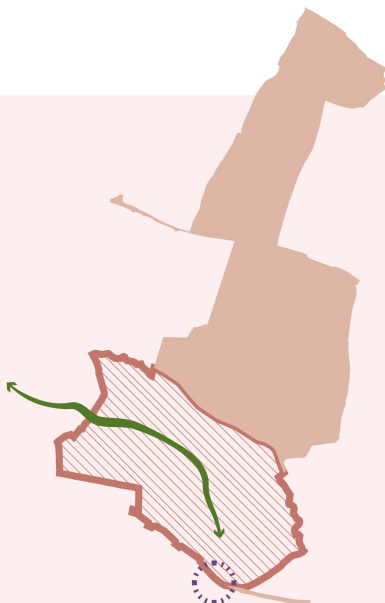
Green Streets and views

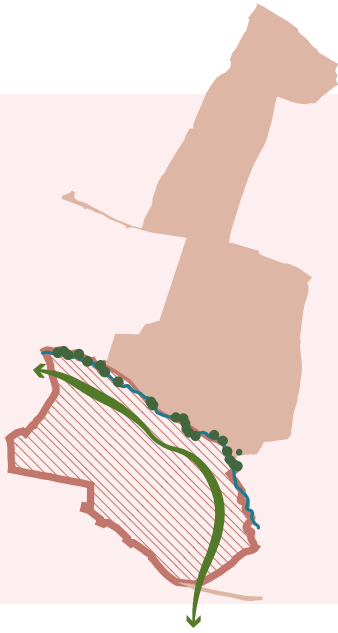
The proposed Green Streets create a strong urban structure, linking through the development and allowing views in and out of the development to the wider landscape. Defining these open corridors between development parcels and views to the Axe Valley, the extension of these routes could provide the opportunity for further Sustainable Urban Drainage systems within the scheme.



Access and movement

Creation of an attractive entrance approach to the site will help identify the new development site for vehicular traffic and pedestrian movement.





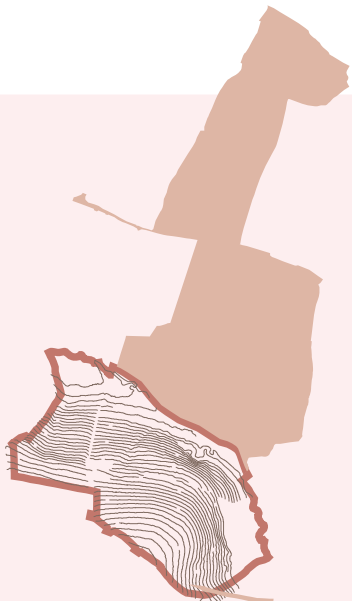
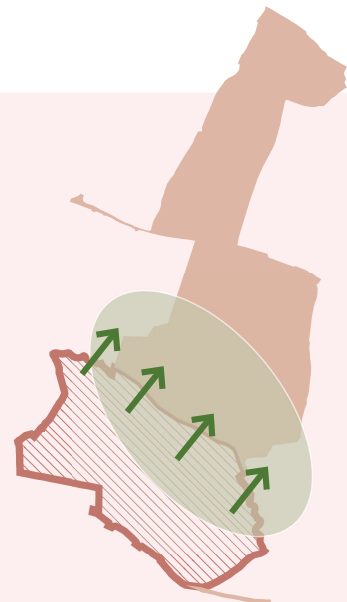
Settlement Edge

A soft settlement edge broken by areas of open space and green infrastructure which weave through into the development. Development must not project beyond the defined building line.

Open Space

Creation of significant areas of green open space along the proposed northern edge of development. The Millbrook boundary creates a buffer and natural edge to the development.

Open space to the north of the Millbrook will provide nutrient mitigation, Bio-diversity Net Gain woodland and orchards.



Approach to topography

Development needs to respond to the dramatic changes in contours across the southern parcel of land. Opportunity to address significant views from the wider landscape, PROW and surrounding streets and development areas.

Overall Opportunity

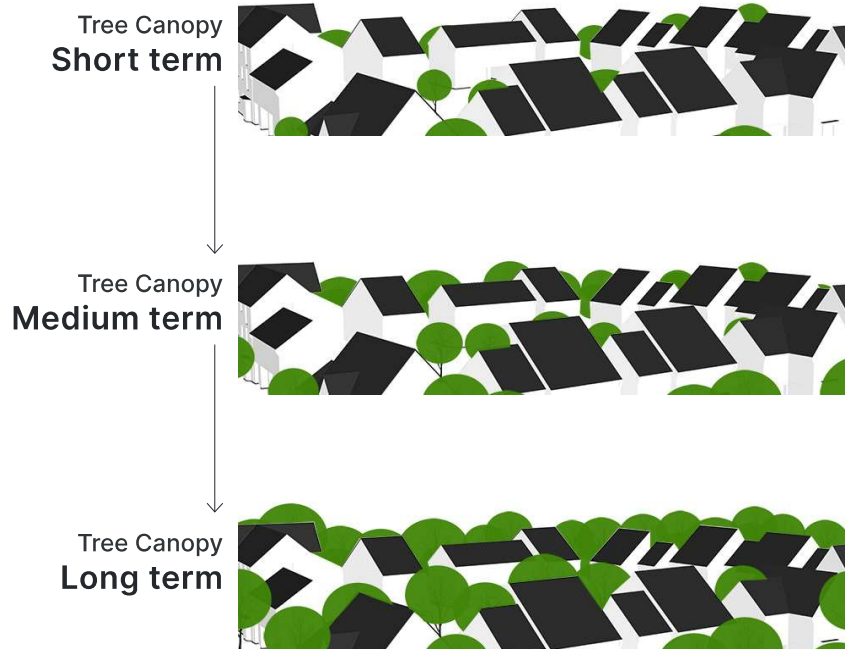
Landscape Character

The development, when viewed from both higher levels and within the site should:

- Reflect the scale of the surrounding fields in both the built form and the supporting landscape infrastructure;
- Contain new boundaries and field patterns that create containment and partial screening;
- Introduce informal settlement edges that blend with natural landscape features and boundaries;
- Retain controlled distant views to the surrounding hillsides; and
- Seek to retain the characteristic of the informal organic settlement structure within the context, incorporating East Devonshire village principles

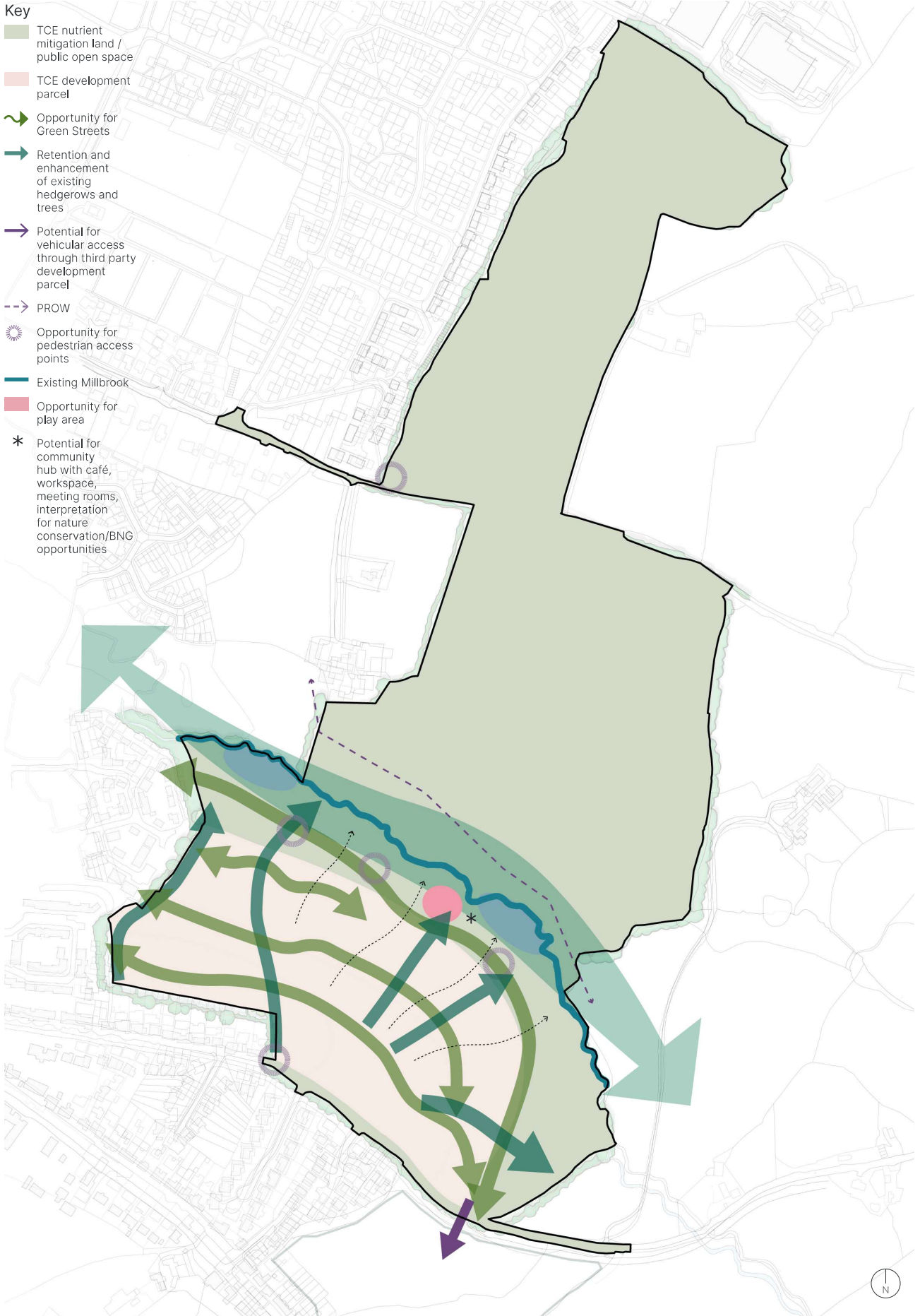
Key Opportunities include;

- Green linear spaces knit into the surrounding landscape;
- Pedestrian connections to wider landscape and PROW;
- Green linear fingers combined with layers of street trees and planting along contours, mitigate impact on sensitive views and soften roofscape;
- Skyline layering/filtered views over time;
- Oblique view of the development and a planting strategy that corresponds with topography - planting along contours, pockets of trees in rear gardens and strategic positioning of tree belts to provide screening. Views of the built form are increasingly filtered over time, with only glimpses of buildings visible; and
- Creating a positive perception and sense of a green neighbourhood when viewed from afar/elevated position.



Key

- TCE nutrient mitigation land / public open space
- TCE development parcel
- Opportunity for Green Streets
- Retention and enhancement of existing hedgerows and trees
- Potential for vehicular access through third party development parcel
- PROW
- Opportunity for pedestrian access points
- Existing Millbrook
- Opportunity for play area
- * Potential for community hub with café, workspace, meeting rooms, interpretation for nature conservation/BNG opportunities



Overall Site Opportunity principles

The Masterplan

Positioned between the urban edge of Axminster and wider countryside, the development is designed to form a transition between the urban area and the countryside.

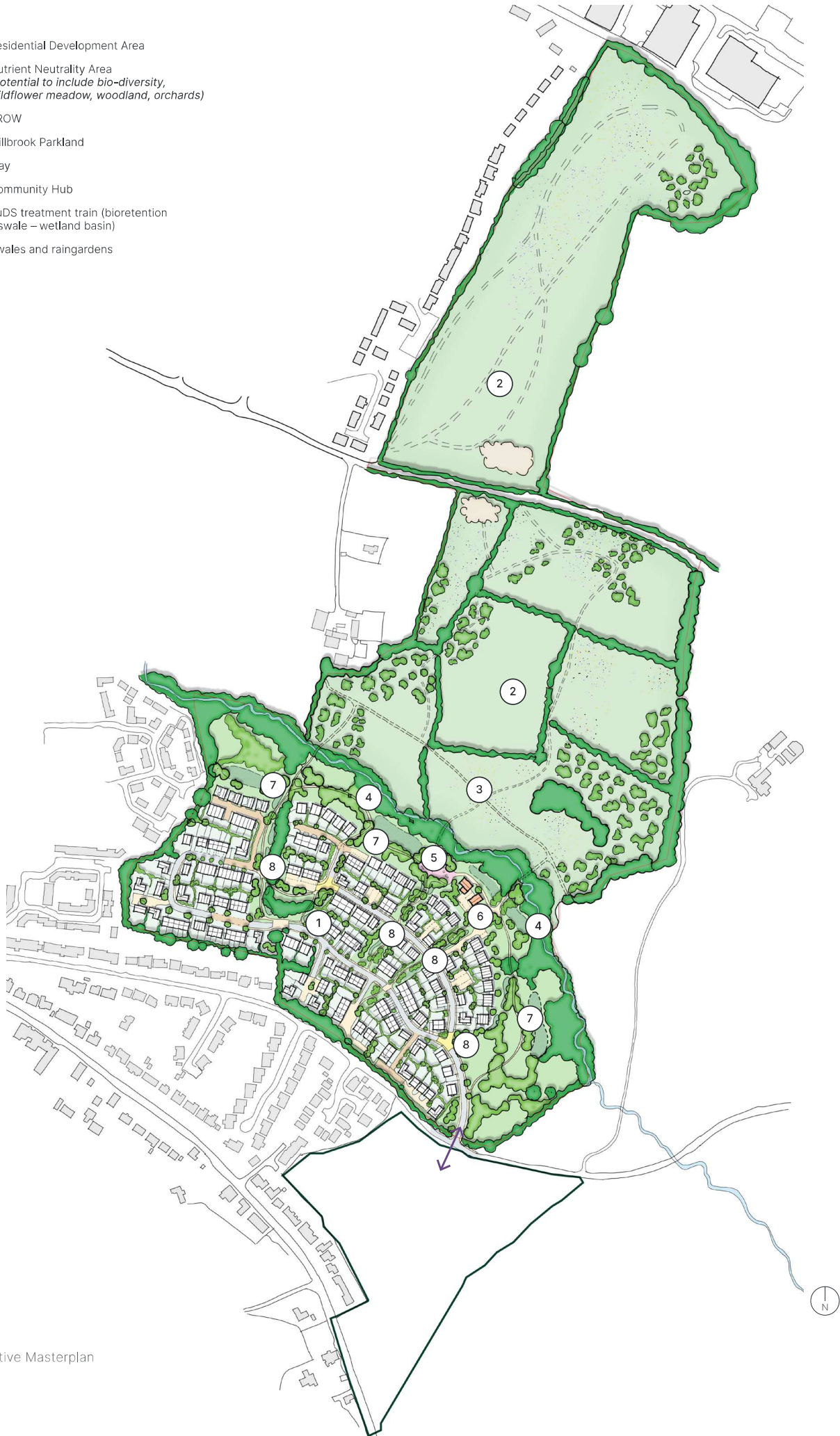
The illustrative masterplan shows how the development could be accommodated within the site. The new residential development is designed to connect to the surrounding residential area and knit into the wider landscape setting.

The development will be sensitively designed to respond to views and the steeply sloping topography of the Millbrook Valley. The site is on the edge of AONB and there is an opportunity to create a wider landscape strategy within the northern areas of the site to enhance the landscape setting on the edge of AONB and benefit the wider community.

Millbrook community hub will benefit the community, promote circular economy and dual trips, with potential to include a café, workspace, meeting rooms, interpretation for nature conservation/BNG opportunities, on the doorstep of orchards and woodland.

Its a destination for families, a place where you can play, eat and drink and learn about the local wildlife before heading off for a walk in the woodland and countryside.

1. Residential Development Area
2. Nutrient Neutrality Area
(potential to include bio-diversity, wildflower meadow, woodland, orchards)
3. PROW
4. Millbrook Parkland
5. Play
6. Community Hub
7. SuDS treatment train (bioretention – swale – wetland basin)
8. Swales and raingardens



The Masterplan

Development is nestled into the valley, a network of cascading green linear fingers, knits the residential development into the wider landscape setting.

1. **Access** is provided through third party development land.
2. **A sense of arrival** - A green space is located at the entrance to the development to create an attractive and inviting environment.
3. **Green fingers** penetrate landscape through the development to mitigate impact on views from the PROW and the northern valley. To promote recreation and an active lifestyle, a network of footpaths are located within green linear corridors that run north south, connecting to the PROW and the wider countryside. Swales are incorporated within the green fingers and designed to cascade and run north south towards the lower valley.
4. **Millbrook Community Hub** is located within the Millbrook Parkland area. This will be nestle into the landscape and screened with trees to appear to be nestle into the woodland. A circular economy will be encouraged with the potential inclusion of a café, workspace, meeting rooms, interpretation for nature conservation/BNG opportunities.
5. A play area is located at the lower part of the valley an located to benefit both the local community and new residents. Located within close proximity of the PROW, this will promote access by walking and increasing footfall. Play is located adjacent to the community hub to encourage dual use of the facilities son offer.
6. **Millbrook Edge** - A softer green edge is proposed to Millbrook, detached and semi-detached homes are proposed to allow glimpse view to permeate the development. Parking will be accessed to the rear of homes, to protect the setting of Millbrook edge as a green zone.
7. **Responding to topography** - The sloping topography underpins the layout and organisation of the streets and buildings. Terraced homes are proposed to follow the contours, avoiding awkward gardens, access issues and reducing the requirement for cut and fill where possible.
8. **Self-build Opportunities** - There is potential for clusters of self build homes, especially where the topography is particularly challenging and an imaginative and sensitive design approach will be encouraged.
9. There is opportunity for **modern barnstead typologies** framed around small courts, to be situated at key locations and pockets within the development.
10. The development **responds to the existing surrounding residential development**. The building line does not protrude beyond the existing residential development to the west.
11. Pedestrian access is designed to **connect with the surrounding movement network**, along Sector Lane and the PROW that runs along Millbrook.
12. **Road Layout and street pattern is designed to follow the contours** - The road layout will be tested in detail at planning stages to ensure that the gradients of roads, servicing and refuse collection complies with the industry standards.
13. **Layers of landscape** including trees within rear garden and streets will be designed to break p the roof-scape and allow built form to nestle into the valley.
14. **A range of typologies** respond to corners, topography, street hierarchy and location within the development to create a variety of character and richness.
15. **Enhancing the landscape with a multi-functional approach** - The northern land incorporates nutrient mitigation, new public footpaths/cycleways, areas for wild flower meadows and re-wilding. There is an opportunity to provide food growing, orchards and allotments, new green spaces and tree planting.
16. **SuDs and attenuation drainage** areas are provided at the flatest part of the site, along Millbrook.



Southern residential development area indicative masterplan

Precedents and Case Studies

The following provides examples of housing developments exhibiting good design and place making principles that have similar constraints, site and environmental considerations to the proposed allocation site.



Green corridors

- Green corridors providing walking and cycling routes through the development
- Preservation of existing trees and vegetation



Topography

- An example of bespoke split level housing designed to respond to levels
- Terraced homes follow the contours to reduce cut and fill
- Typologies are designed to respond to corners



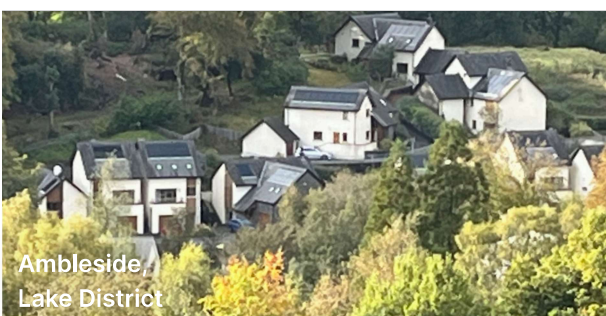
Prominent edges and landmarks

- Elevated prospect with views to the countryside
- Sloping topography
- Integrated play
- Housing typologies respond to the context
- Ribbons of landscape through scheme



Green credentials

- Natural landscape setting
- Wetland Areas
- Low density housing



Responding to the landscape and views

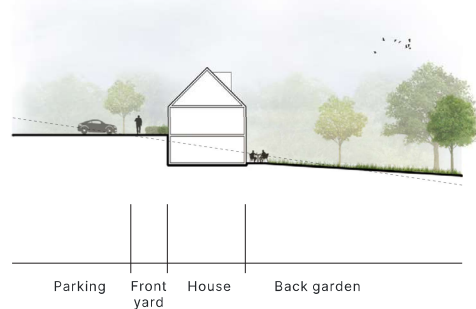
- Sloping topography
- Development nestled within mature landscape
- Variety of typologies respond to topography

Typical Sections

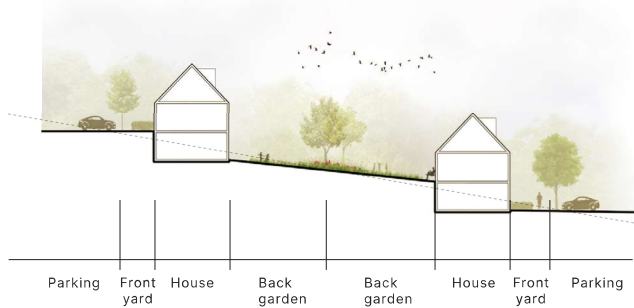
Typology scenarios

The following six sections illustrate the scenarios where different housing typologies will have to be considered due to the extreme change in levels. It is often the case that gardens will be split across two levels and access to the rear garden will be from the first floor, to accommodate for the change in level across the site. Further consideration to these scenarios will have to be considered at detail design stages.

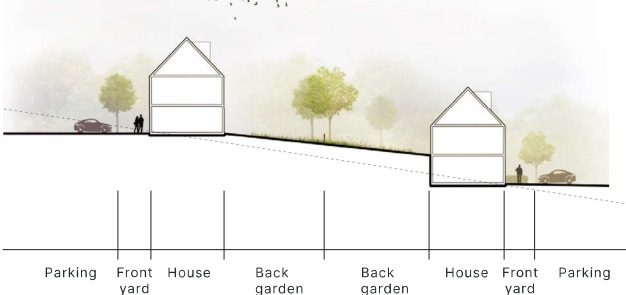
① Access to street at 1st floor



② Combined access to street (1st floor and ground floor)



③ Combined access to back garden (1st floor and ground floor)



④ Corner type



⑤ Combined access to street (ground floor and 1st floor)



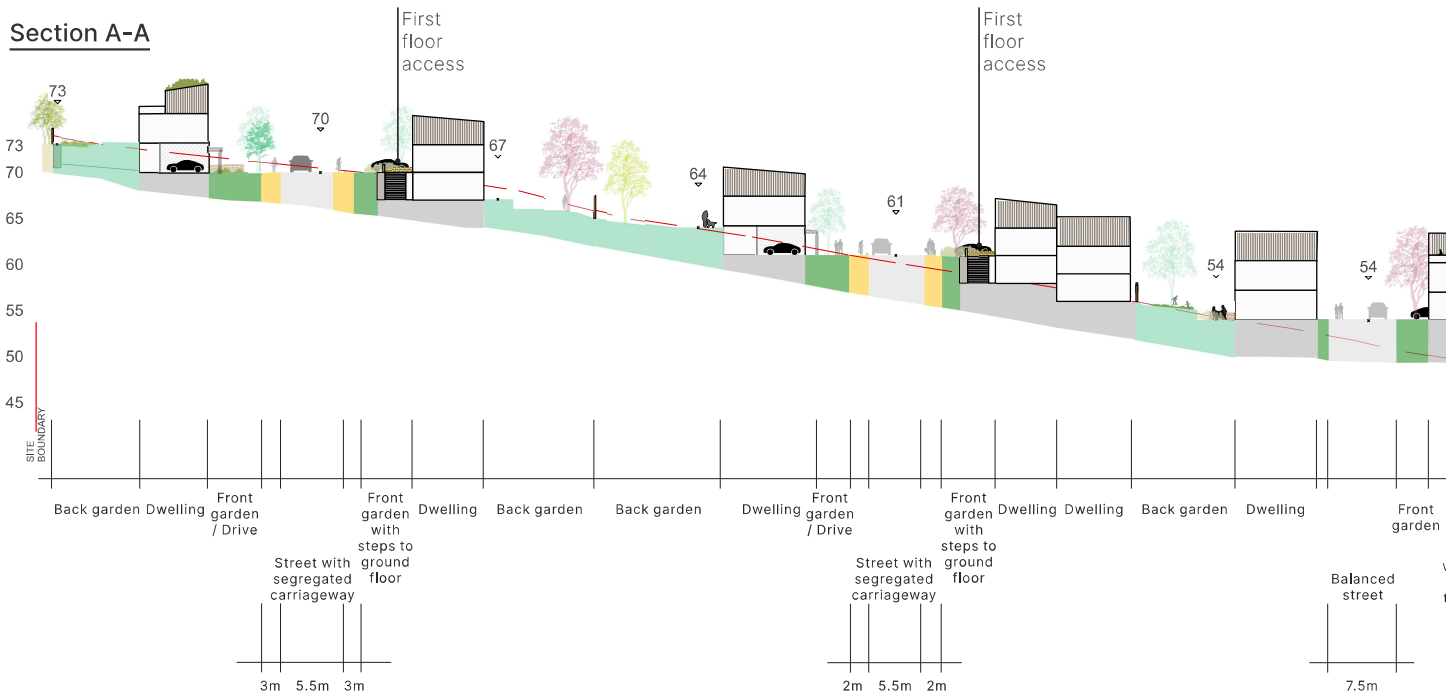
⑥ Parking accommodates level change



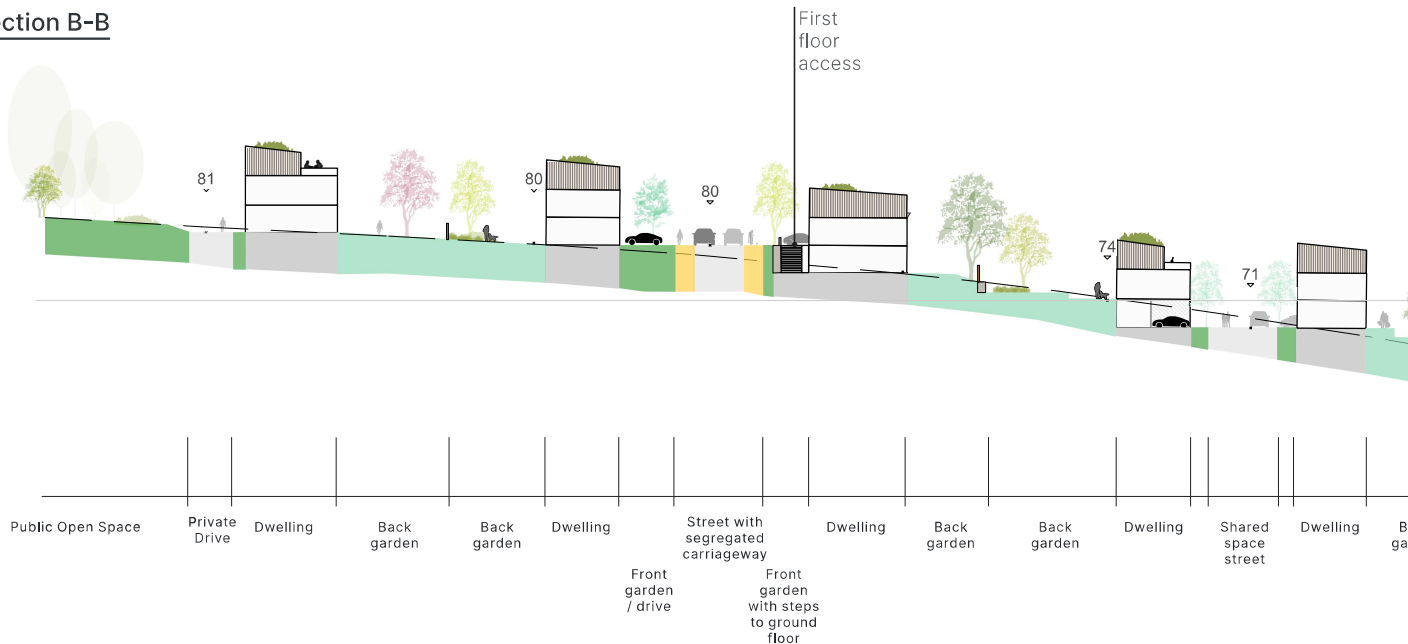
Long sections through proposed development

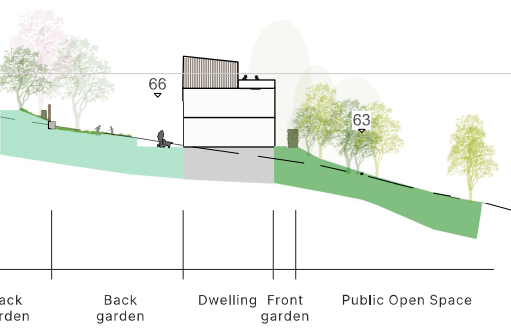
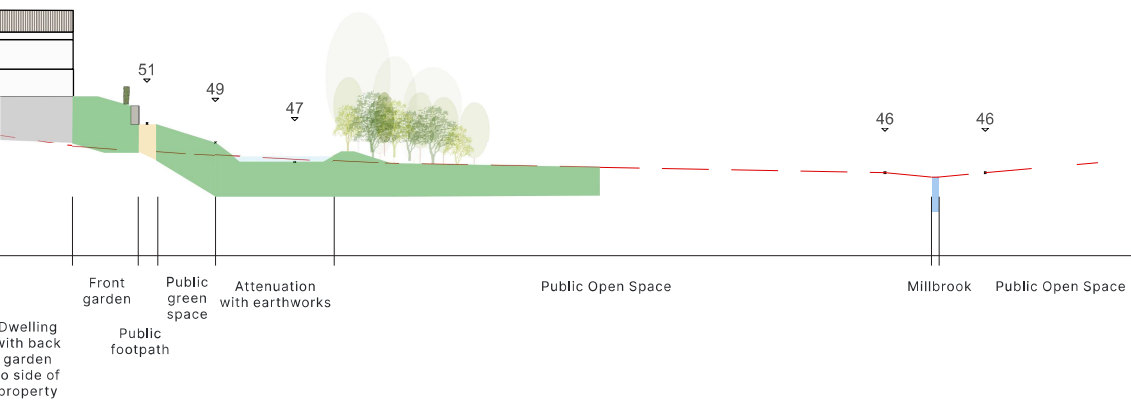
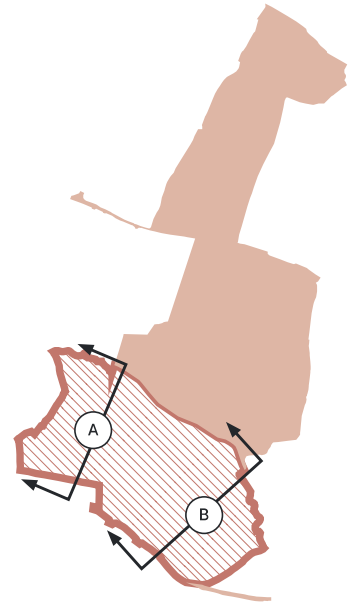
These long sections illustrate the changing levels across different sections of the proposed development. The sections indicate the steeply changing topography and how the landscape and built form can work within the existing valley setting.

Section A-A



Section B-B



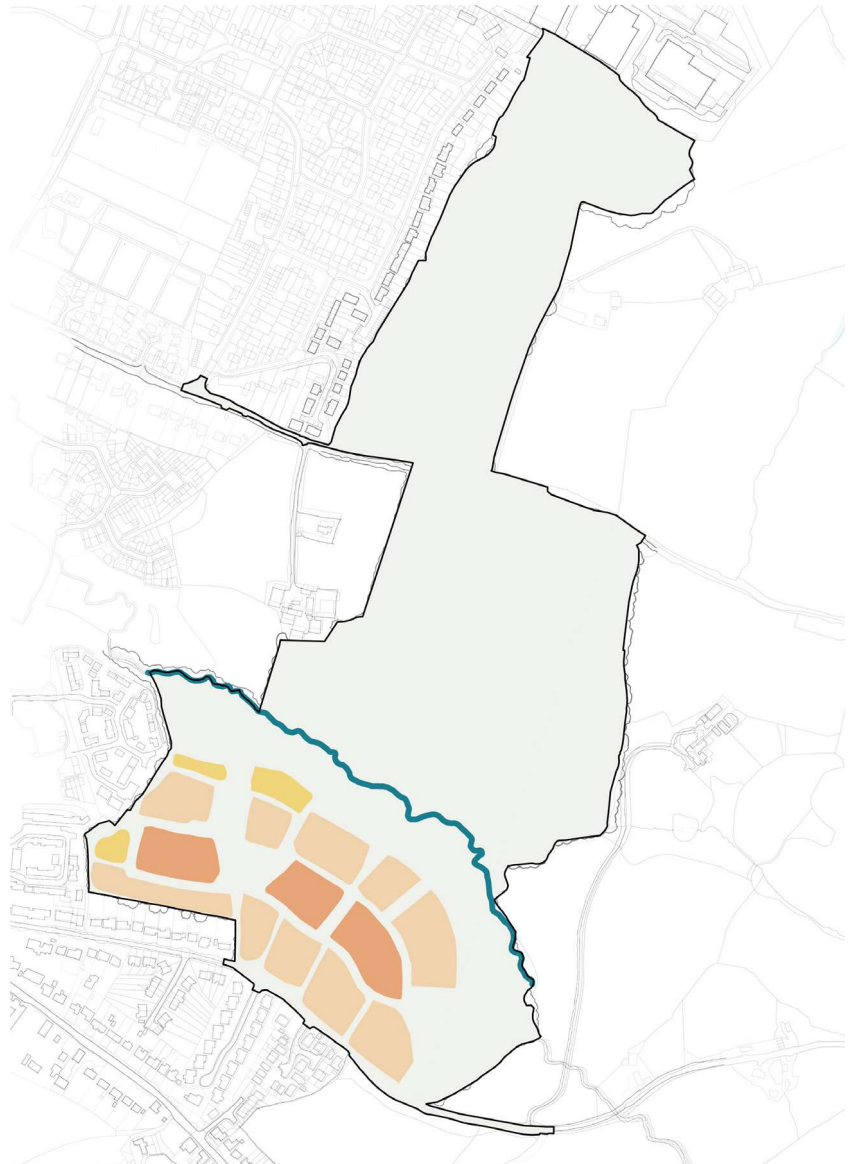
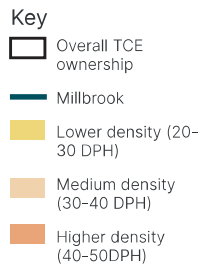


Masterplan Framework

Density Framework

The approach to distributing the density of development across the site is based on an analysis of the surrounding neighbourhoods and site character. The overall number of homes proposed on the site is approximately 225 homes which will be distributed following the principles set out below:

- The denser development (40dph-50dph) will be located within the central part of the site, along the main movement routes. These areas will create efficient and attractive terraced streets based on traditional typologies and enhanced through new tree planting.
- The areas bordering the existing dwellings will be of medium density(30dph-40dph), largely following the character and patterns found in surrounding streets. Development stepping down into the valley will also be of similar density to allow for views and green connections.
- Along the lower parts of the site and in certain other areas of the site, lower densities (20dph-30dph) might be appropriate to create variety in character and respond to the landscape.



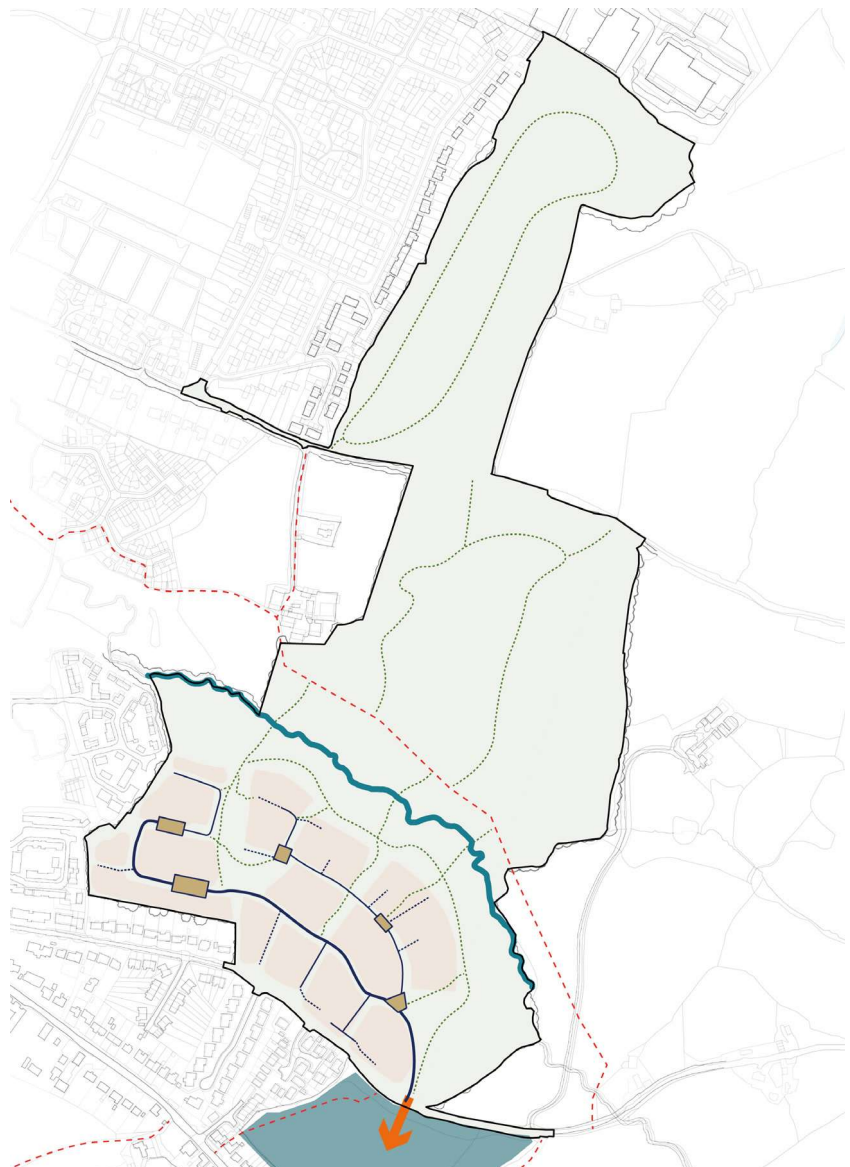
Density Framework Plan

Movement and Access Framework

The illustrative masterplan proposes to provide safe and secure pedestrian movement across the site through the provision of:

- An attractive vehicular and pedestrian access is provided through third party land;
- Attractive and safe pedestrian and cycle links that provide access to the local facilities and amenity;
- Connections to the existing network of Public Rights of Way, pedestrian connections and countryside beyond;
- Green streets and corridors that provide access to the wider landscape and surrounding area;
- Balanced streets and pedestrian/cyclist priority streets to help reduce traffic speed;
- Well connected roads that create a permeable development, avoiding cul-de-sacs and the need for over engineered turning heads.

- Key**
- Overall TCE ownership
 - Third party development parcel
 - Millbrook
 - Development parcels
 - Balanced areas
 - Access provided through third party development parcel
 - Primary road
 - Secondary roads
 - Private drives
 - PRoW
 - Potential pedestrian routes







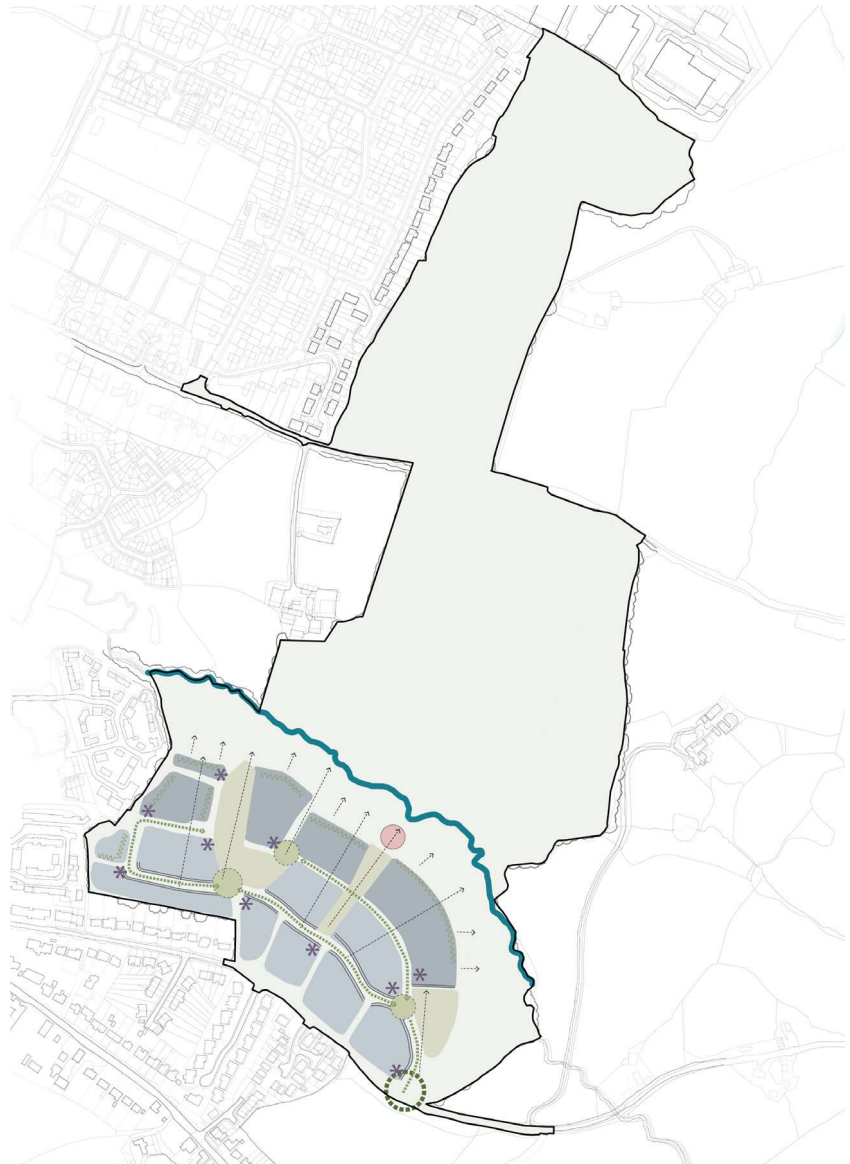
Movement and Access Framework Plan

Urban Design Framework

The masterplan incorporates design principles which can be adopted to make the development legible and easy to understand including:

- A clear gateway and accent feature buildings creating architectural reference points to assist with legibility.
- A clear spatial hierarchy of wider primary routes linking the main site entrance to the development centre, and a network of narrower and more informal lanes served from them.
- Creating sequences of public spaces of varying shape and character to assist with creating distinctiveness and variety.
- Streets designed to create a more balanced environment for pedestrians. Well designed street features to help reduce vehicle speeds in sensitive locations. These will be integrated and will not be add-on physical features such as speed humps or chicanes.
- Building forms vary between the edge and the centre. At the edges, the buildings generally have a softer relationship to their context with a more broken building form, softer landscaping, hedge boundaries and front gardens. In the centre, buildings can form a much stronger sense of enclosure.

Key	
	Overall TCE ownership
	Millbrook
	2-2.5 storeys (subject to detail design)
	2-3 storeys (subject to detail design)
	Landmark building
	Urban frontage
	Landscape frontage
	Indicative location for play
	Views
	Green spaces within development
	Green node
	Green Streets



Urban Design Framework Plan

Green and Blue Infrastructure Framework

The green and blue infrastructure both within the development parcel and the wider TCE land holding is designed to be multi-functional, providing well in excess of the policy requirement of 1.66ha ‘open space’.

The development itself will be nestled into the valley landscape through the creation of green streets and corridors through the use of new and existing tree and hedgerow planting which will act as green movement corridors/routes for both people and wildlife. These landscape strategy principles help create a rural edge and gradual transition to the wider TCE land and countryside.

Community Hub

The Community Hub could include a café, workspace, meeting rooms, interpretation for nature conservation/BNG opportunities within the built form. Including outdoor play close to the hub will further activate the space and Millbrook edge. There is opportunity to include community growing areas (allotments) and a community orchard, for the residents use and to be sold within the hub.

Drainage/Attenuation

As part of the principle of rewilding the Millbrook Valley edge new drainage ponds and swales are to be created to provide attenuation that integrates into the landscape and also provides new habitats, enhancing the site's biodiversity. The attenuation proposals include 3 stage infiltration, incorporating naturally

planted areas. Waterside walks and boardwalks across the Millbrook into the wider countryside can be incorporated.

Nutrient Mitigation

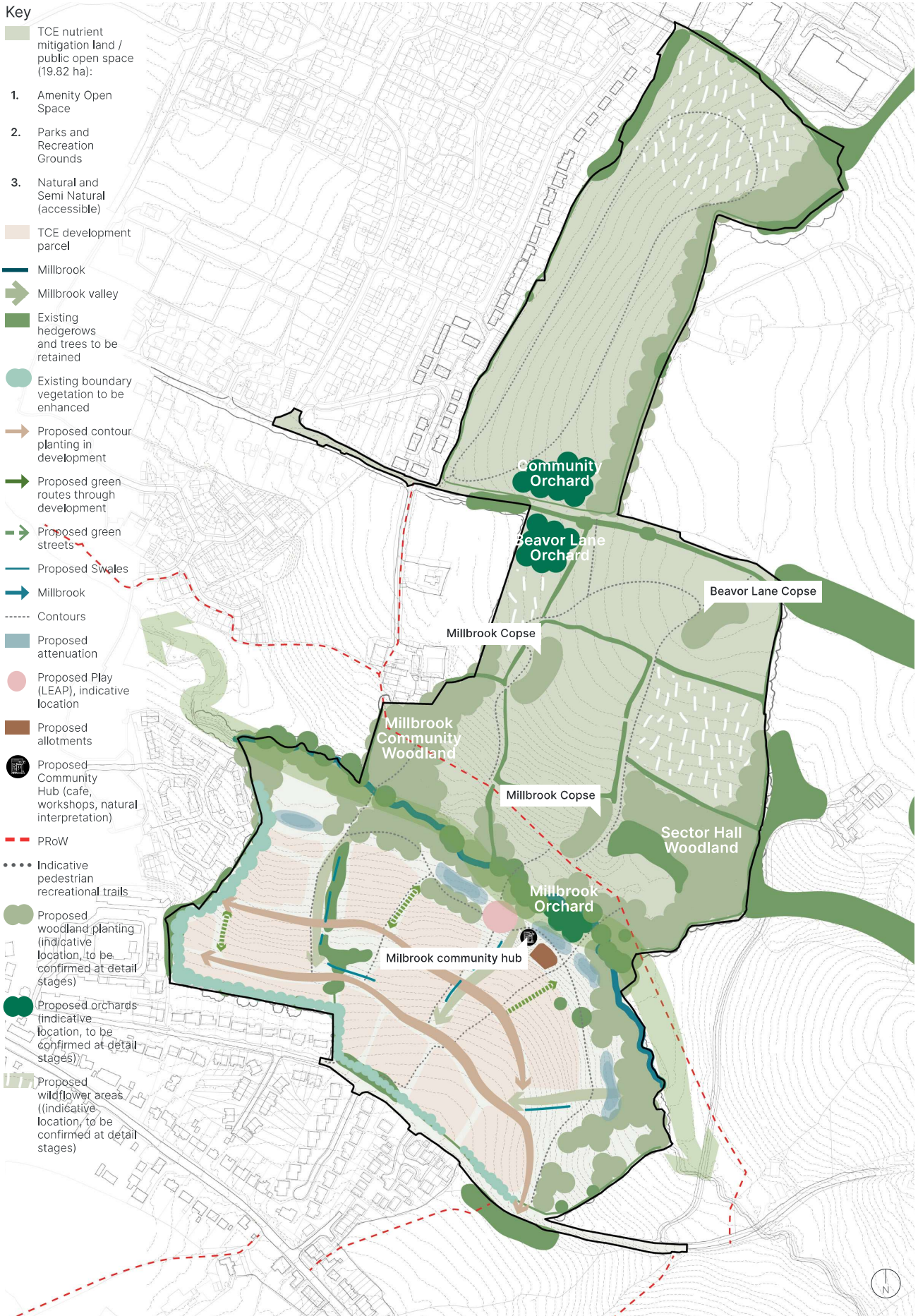
TCE has commissioned a preliminary assessment to ascertain the potential of its adjoining land to the north of the proposed allocation to provide mitigation to deliver nutrient neutrality. The assessment, undertaken by Stantec, has demonstrated that if the circa 20ha of land is taken out of agricultural production, the mitigation potential will be sufficient to enable the delivery of all of the development land within the draft allocation. To maximise the benefit of the mitigation land, TCE will consider the inclusion of a SuDS treatment train (bioretention – swale – wetland basin) as part of the development, to reduce the surface water element of the nutrient budget.

Biodiversity Net Gain

The land also has potential to deliver a significant Bio-diversity Net Gain and to provide wider health and wellbeing benefits, such as public access to woodland trails and the creation of community orchards. Other uses the land can provide, include:

- Natural open landscape / grassland
- Community Woodlands
- Community Orchards
- Wildflower areas
- Biodiversity Zones

Open Space Typology	Space type	General landscape features	Potential activities
<p>TCE nutrient mitigation land / public open space (19.82 ha):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Amenity Open Space 2. Parks and Recreation Grounds 3. Natural and Semi Natural (accessible) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural open landscape / grassland • Community Woodlands • Community Orchards • Wildflower areas • Biodiversity Zones 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural open landscape (wildflower meadow/ semi-natural grassland/ • Retained hedgerows and existing trees of value/ tree planting along key boundaries and development edges to enhance existing habitats and create new habitat zones • Natural water bodies • Recreational pedestrian footpaths • Pedestrian footbridges and boardwalks across the Millbrook 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informal sports, recreational activities (jogging, football, rounders, cycling) • Children's play and exploration • Relaxing/ contemplating • Recreational walks • Commuting / walking to schools and Town Centre



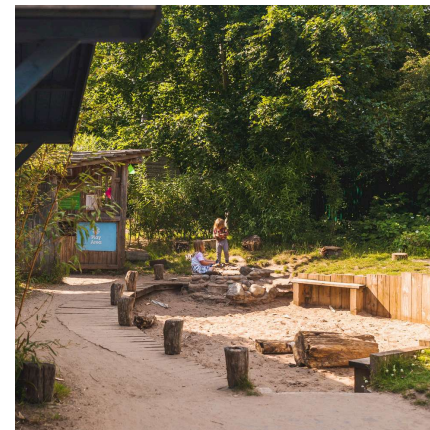
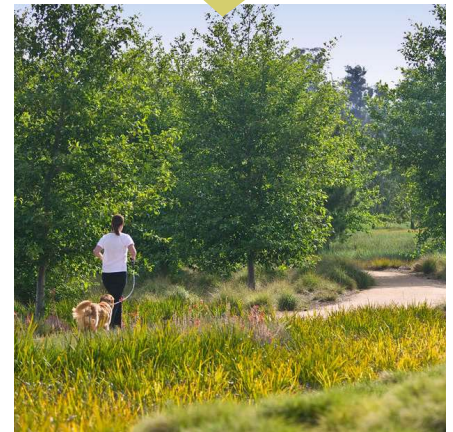
Nutrient Mitigation / Parkland

- Natural open space
- Woodland
- Ecology areas
- Natural waterbodies
- Grassland
- Natural play
- Recreational routes



Community greenspace

- Semi natural greenspace
- Local playspace
- Grassland
- Local greens
- Enhanced hedgerows
- Recreational routes



Community Hub

- Play space (LEAP)
- Community building for potential cafe, workshops, nature interpretation and educational facilities
- Community growing areas
- Community orchard

Key Benefits

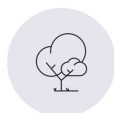
This document has demonstrated that a high quality, responsive and sustainable development is achievable and deliverable. The overarching vision is to deliver a sustainable urban extension to Axminster with a community hub and nutrient mitigation / open space to provide a natural destination for future residents and the wider community. Its design will draw on and reflect the local character of the area.

- Creation and provision of 225 homes that are high quality, sustainable and viable development of homes (private and affordable), with community and open spaces on the fringes of the Blackdown Hills and East Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)
- The development has the potential to include new electric charging points for vehicles
- Delivery of around 20 ha of multi-functional public and natural open space for all, which can provide phosphate/nutrient mitigation and BNG benefits to unlock the delivery of homes and address existing issues within the River Axe catchment.
- 2 ha of SuDS for the new development

- Enhancement of community interactions and connections to nature and encourage active lifestyles through enhanced public access between indoor and outdoor destinations.
- The proposed new development protects, improves and enhances existing hedgerows and woodlands.
- Proposed rewilding of open spaces where built development is not proposed, creating an exemplar landscape within Axminster and Devon.
- Opportunity to support the carbon neutral targets for East Devon.

The emphasis of planning policy is on achieving sustainable development which has a social, environmental and economic function. The ability to achieve this is in large part down to location and good design. The Vision Document has set out how a high quality sustainable community can be achieved through the creation of a place that is economically, socially and environmentally sustainable.

The proposed development is viable, achievable, realistic, logical and deliverable – it is unfettered, being in one ownership. The proposed development represents an ideal opportunity to assist EDDC in fulfilling its ambitions for the District including carbon reduction, improving access to and delivering areas of multi-functional public and natural open space, enhancing community interactions and connections to nature and encouraging active lifestyles, improving biodiversity and water quality within the Axe Valley and providing phosphate/nutrient mitigation to unlock the delivery of much needed homes within Axminster.



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