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# East Devon Local Plan 2020-2040: Preferred Options Consultation Draft Plan

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Prepared by Savills  
on behalf of Taylor Wimpey Strategic Land

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# 1. Introduction

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This Representation is made in response to the consultation on the East Devon Local Plan Review 2020-2040 Preferred Options Consultation. The representation is submitted by Savills on behalf of Taylor Wimpey Strategic Land who have an interest in land to the north west of Feniton, known as 'Land at Sherwood Cross, Feniton'. The extent of the land is outlined in the enclosed Vision Document at **Appendix 1**.

By way of context, the land at Sherwood Cross has been promoted previously through the current adopted Local Plan, as well as through the now made Feniton Neighbourhood Plan. It has also been submitted in the past to the Council's previous SHLAA. Alongside these representations however, an updated 'call for sites' submission has been made to provide officers with the latest technical work relating to the site as well as an indicative masterplan.

It is important to note that Taylor Wimpey control additional land outside of that being promoted through these representations and the plan attached at **Appendix 2** outlined the full extent of the land control.

Our comments on the consultation and supporting evidence base are set out below and are made in accordance with paragraph 35 of the NPPF, to assist in ensuring that the Local Plan is found sound when examined in the future. We note that there is an ongoing consultation in regard to the changes to the NPPF, and that it is likely, given the published timelines for the Local Plan that these will be made prior to the Local Plan reaching a sufficiently advanced stage, and thus it will be this revised Framework upon which it will be examined.

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## 2. The Spatial Strategy

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### Strategic Policy 1 – Spatial Strategy

Whilst we acknowledge that there is a need to focus the spatial strategy on development at the most sustainable towns in the district, we consider that more focus should be placed on the districts most sustainable villages.

In order to ensure a deliverable and sound Local Plan, a range of housing sites should be allocated. For example, focussing purely on large scale development will have issues with deliverability, whereas too much of a focus on small sites will face difficulties in providing the requisite infrastructure.

Reference within the Draft Plan to an allowance for 'limited development to meet local needs at the Service Villages' should be amended with more of a focus on the opportunities to deliver sustainable development at the most sustainable villages, including Feniton.

There are clearly sustainable villages within East Devon which are able to support growth at a higher scale than that currently proposed, and indeed there are examples, such as Feniton, where the village's rail station means that it is able to offer a greater opportunity for sustainable travel than a number of the main towns; whilst also support existing and new services and facilities within the village.

Overall, the Council must prepare a robust evidence base to support the proposed housing requirement, and this can then inform the spatial strategy, which as set out above should place a greater focus on delivery at the most sustainable villages.

### Strategic Policy 2 – Housing distribution

As well as the need to ensure the Local Plan Review is supported by a robust evidence base to support the spatial strategy, we consider that further work is required on the proposed housing distribution.

Key to this will be the need to demonstrate that the proposed housing requirement of 18,920 has been carefully considered and planned for. When reviewing the proposed housing distribution it is clear that land for only 18,167 homes has been identified within the table on p16. This amounts to a shortfall of approximately 753 homes.

This shortfall should be planned for and should certainly be accounted for within the proposed housing distribution. In our view, sustainable settlements such as Feniton provide a good opportunity to accommodate a higher level of growth than that currently proposed and this would also assist in addressing the current shortfall in planned supply.

Furthermore, when reviewing the table on p16 of the Draft Plan, it is unclear why the supply of 18,167 homes has been calculated through a combination of both preferred sites and 'some' second choice sites. Logically, if sites are counted within the proposed supply then they should therefore be 'preferred' sites and not 'second choice'.

As contested in our previous representations, the land at Sherwood Cross, Feniton, should be identified as a preferred site and ultimately allocated given the potential for the village to accommodate growth much higher than the proposed 42 additional dwellings through one single site allocation.

### Strategic Policy 3 - Levels of future housing development

In addition to the points outlined above in relation to the spatial strategy and housing distribution, we do support reference within the draft strategic policy on housing levels to the need for the plan to be sufficiently flexible and provide 'headroom' for housing supply. We therefore also support the proposal that supply in East Devon should be 10% above the proposed housing requirement, equating to about 20,800 dwellings.

### Strategic Policy 4- Employment Provision and Distribution Strategy & Strategic Policy 5 - Mixed use developments incorporating housing, employment and community facilities

We have concerns over the proposal within draft policy 4 to require development at the tier 3 and 4 settlements to provide employment floorspace as part of mixed use schemes, as expanded upon within Strategic Policy 5.

Whilst we acknowledge the reasons and justification provided within the Draft Plan for this approach, we disagree that providing a proportion of employment as part of mixed use sites would directly assist with reducing commuting and increasing self containment. The Draft Plan appears to be placing a significant emphasis on the fact that a) such employment floorspace on all qualifying sites would be deliverable and viable, and b) that the new residents of each site would seek employment in the employment floorspace provided on the same sites. Such an approach is neither proven nor justified.

With specific reference to draft policy 5 we have fundamental concerns over the requirements to include a proportion of employment floorspace on all sites over 25 dwellings in the tier 3 and 4 settlements. It is noted that the reasons given for promoting this policy is to provide workspace for new and existing residents, to improve settlement self-containment, and to reduce the need to commute to work.

It is also interesting to note that the Draft Plan states:

*Working on the basis of around one economically active person on average per each new home built and with an aspiration on qualifying sites for each resident to have the potential to 'work on site' it generates the site space requirements established in policy.*

Such an approach, along with the statement above, is entirely inappropriate and unjustified. Key to the delivery of employment across the district is robust evidence to justify demand and distribution. There is a complete lack of evidence to justify either of these with the Draft Plan simply seeking to base a strategy around the need to deliver both housing and employment across the District in tandem to promote self containment. The Council has presented no evidence to demonstrate that a proportion of new or existing residents in each respective location would potentially be able to work in the workspaces provided on the qualifying sites.

The delivery of new employment must be based on demand, and should therefore be located in the right locations to address such identified demand. By seeking to provide a proportion of employment floorspace on all qualifying developments (i.e. over 25 dwellings) this is highly likely to result in employment development in the wrong locations in areas where the demand for such floorspace will simply not exist.

Furthermore, by increasing the number of jobs at a settlement does not necessarily mean that more residents of the settlement will work in that employment. There is therefore a risk that such a strategy will in fact have the opposite effect, by spreading a number of jobs to settlements which then encourage employees to travel greater distances often by private car.

We therefore strongly object to draft policies 4 and 5 in relation to Feniton, and fundamentally disagree that employment provision should be required on the land at Sherwood Cross, Feniton which would fall over the proposed threshold.

#### Strategic Policy 26 - Development at Service Villages

In line with our comments to the other draft strategic policies above, we consider that there should be a greater focus on growth at the service villages and particularly at Feniton.

It is noted that the strategy for Feniton has not yet been fixed and to a degree is left open as part of the Draft Plan for consultation, with the document stating that:

*“It should be noted that at Feniton the local plan (as drafted for this consultation) does not show 2nd Best performing sites as proposed allocations. However, we are consulting on the potential for differing scales of growth at Feniton and feedback received will inform potential for additional land to be allocated for development”.*

*“Notwithstanding constraints on development there were a range of sites at Feniton that were submitted for development and assessed as second best possible options. These sites could accommodate a substantial number of new homes. We would welcome feedback on whether a more substantial number of homes should be accommodated at the village and if appropriate which sites could be most suitable for development”.*

The Draft Plan only includes a single allocation at Feniton, ‘Feni\_05 - Land and buildings at Burland Mead’ for the development of 42 dwellings.

This scale of development in our view does not reflect the sustainability credentials of Feniton and the village should accommodate a higher scale of growth through further allocations. Feniton is entirely suitable for a higher scale of development than that currently proposed within the Draft Plan. As set out within these representations, there are significant opportunities to focus development on one of the few villages served by the rail links providing for sustainable travel.

In our view, the delivery of only 42 dwellings through FENI\_05, is a missed opportunity, and the spatial strategy should instead ensure that growth is focussed on the most sustainable settlements which provide opportunities for sustainable travel.

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### 3. Draft Policies

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#### Draft Policy 27 – Climate Emergency

We support the Council's desire to address the climate emergency and welcome the ambition to become carbon neutral by 2040. support the recognition that new development must respond to health and wellbeing, and consider that the consultation document accurately reflects the range of elements that this covers; active lifestyles, community facilities, quality of place and the natural environment. This is reflected in the NPPF, paragraph 91, which clearly identifies the role of local plans in facilitating the delivery of health, inclusive and safe places.

The challenge for East Devon, which is consistent with all authority areas, is the need to balance the response to the climate emergency with development to meet ongoing need in the long-term. This is not just about viability, although viability is an important consideration, but it also needs to take into account the way in which improvements to Building Regulations will enable to continued improvement to development in this respect.

#### Draft Policy 28 – Net Zero Carbon Development

It is concerning that the Council's approach to this policy has not changed since the previous Reg 18 version of the Draft Plan was issued for consultation. At the Reg 18 stage we highlighted that any approach seeking standards higher than Building Regulations would have significant impacts on the development industry.

In accordance with the 2022 Building Regulations, the role of developers is to achieve a reduction in carbon emissions by at least 31% (compared to the old regulations). This is the first step towards the Future Homes Standard in 2025, which will reduce emissions by 75 to 80% (compared to current standards).

Whilst we generally support the Council's ambition to ensure that new developments mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change, we have significant concerns over the proposals within draft policy 28 to achieve zero carbon which not only set a much higher bar than the revised Building Regulations but also set a requirement much earlier than the proposed timelines set out by the Government.

Any standards set above the national Building Regulations, will need to be demonstrated as feasible, viable and achievable in practice, and will need to be balanced against wider aspirations in the Local Plan, such as the delivery of affordable housing.

In particular, we note that the PPG confirms that:

*“The National Planning Policy Framework expects local planning authorities when setting any local requirement for a building’s sustainability to do so in a way consistent with the government’s zero carbon buildings policy and adopt nationally described standards. Local requirements should form part of a Local Plan following engagement with appropriate partners, and will need to be based on robust and credible evidence and pay careful attention to viability”. [Paragraph Reference ID: 6-009-20150327]*

#### Draft Policy 40 – Affordable Housing

Whilst we support the aspiration to deliver much needed affordable housing across the District, including in locations such as Feniton, we are concerned that the draft policy has not yet been the subject of viability testing and this will be crucial to demonstrate that the percentage and mix of affordable housing is viable within the plan.

Our view is also that the size and type of affordable housing should be a matter for negotiation on a site by site basis. Proposing, for example, a rigid 36% of all affordable housing to be first homes is not sufficiently flexible. Going forward, and until an updated SHMA or other assessment of local housing need has been published, along with supporting viability evidence, the tenure mix should not be prescriptively applied and the Council should apply a bespoke approach to addressing local affordable housing need. In so doing it will also be necessary to take into account the mix of housing types and sizes which are appropriate to the location of a planning application. A particular affordable housing mix should not be enforced to the extent that it causes harm to other planning considerations.

#### Draft Policy 87 – Biodiversity Net Gain

We have significant concerns with the approach set out in draft Policy 87.

The approach to net biodiversity gain is being set out a national level to ensure a standardised approach is taken across England. This pertains both to the scale of net biodiversity gain required (at 10%), but also the mechanism through which it should be delivered, i.e. onsite, offsite, and then a strategic financial contributions. Our understanding is that there will be no flexibility for the Local Plan to set out an alternative approach to this proposed legislative requirement.

Fundamentally, seeking to introduce a requirement for developments to deliver at least a 20% biodiversity net gain is not only contrary to the Environment Bill but also will potentially have significant impacts on development sites, particularly on smaller sites which as we have highlighted have an important role to play in order to ensure the plan delivers a mix of suitable sites across the District. It is often challenging enough under the current Metric used to calculate BNG to deliver 10% net gains on sites and therefore introducing a higher requirement of 20% will be simply unachievable for some sites, if not the majority.

The NPPF also only refers to the need for ‘net gains’ and does not set out a specific percentage requirement.

In order to ensure that delivering housing to meet the identified needs is at the heart of the Draft Plan and ensure delivery is not compromised we strongly recommend that the Council review the approach to BNG, and change the requirement to 10% in line with the draft national requirements.

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## 4. Land at Sherwood Cross, Feniton

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Feniton has consistently been identified as the highest rated village in terms of sustainability – see the 2009 and 2013 assessments which supported the now adopted Villages Plan. This has not changed, and the latest supporting evidence in the form of the Sustainability Appraisal continues to conclude that the village is a sustainable location for growth.

It also relatively unique; benefiting from a rail station which provides a direct rail link to Exeter St David's and London Waterloo. In accordance with the NPPF, the opportunity that this presents to deliver a sustainable pattern of development through maximising the potential for sustainable travel modes should not be overlooked. According to the Census 2011 – a significant proportion of the village's residents worked in Exeter (25%), and 7% in Honiton – both accessible by rail; with 41% of the village either working from home, not working or having no fixed address<sup>1</sup>. Given the subsequent extent of employment development at the West End, we consider it likely that the percentage of Feniton's residents travelling towards Exeter for work will have increased substantially over the ten year period.

This, we consider, provides substantial benefits when exploring future development. Indeed, we consider that Feniton is one of the most sustainable settlements in the District which is capable of accommodating future growth.

### The Site

The land at Sherwood Cross, Feniton, is suitable, available and deliverable, and there is no restriction to it contributing towards meeting the housing needs for Feniton.

The site is approximately two minutes' walk from the mainline railway station, and is therefore ideally placed to encourage future residents who work in Exeter to walk to the station and catch the train rather than use private vehicles. Feniton Railway Station operates on the West of England Main Line, with services calling at Salisbury, Yeovil Junction, Cranbrook, Axminster, Honiton, Exeter Central and Exeter St Davids. Feniton Railway Station provides step free access and includes eight bicycle parking spaces, a manned ticket office and ticket machines. From Feniton by rail, Exeter City Centre can be accessed in approximately 23 minutes.

The nearest bus stop to the site is located on Colestocks Road, just to the south of the Railway Station. Additional stops are provided on Station Road, approximately 300m from the site. The 382 bus route runs between Sidmouth, Ottery-St- Mary and Whimble with 4 services per day. The 387 bus route runs between Sidmouth and Taunton twice a day on Mondays and Thursdays. The 694 bus route runs between Honiton, Feniton and Cullompton twice a day on Tuesdays and Fridays.

In addition, the National Cycle Network cuts through the middle of the site. As a result, there are a variety of opportunities to travel by sustainable modes of transport. There are clear opportunities for the development to tie into the existing network of roads and pedestrian footways. Given the proximity of the site to a range of services in the centre of Feniton, a walkable neighbourhood in the western part of the village could be achieved.

Furthermore, Feniton Primary School lies approximately 500m to the south east of the centre of the site. In addition, there is a small cluster of shops located close to the train station, with a convenience store, public house, hairdresser and takeaway. Feniton Post Office operates from the Village Hall on Wednesday mornings and Friday

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<sup>1</sup> <https://commute.datashine.org.uk/#mode=allflows&direction=from&msoa=E02004132&zoom=12.0&lon=-3.4529&lat=50.8046>



afternoons. There are a number of sports facilities within the village, including football, cricket and bowls clubs. There are also two play areas and allotments.

The site does not fall within any protected landscape or planning policy designations, and the considerable technical assessment and environmental work undertaken by Taylor Wimpey Strategic Land demonstrates that the site is both suitable and deliverable for residential development. Full details of the assessments have been provided as part of previous call for sites submissions.

In terms of accessibility, it is important to note that the Sustainability Appraisal indicates that the score for a site will be based upon its accessibility to a list of local and strategic services<sup>2</sup> which it has identified, and regular public transport services.

In this respect, the site is within 400m of a primary school, convenience store, childrens play space<sup>3</sup> and open space, Feniton sports club, and a public house. These are accessible via walking and cycling routes – and opportunities to improve these can be considered through the development management process. The rail station is within 400m of the site, providing frequent services (10 each way per day), and this is supported by a regular bus service (with 4-6 per day depending on the day of the week).

When reviewing the supporting Sustainability Appraisal, the site (referred to as FENI\_11) scores well on the majority of assessment criteria, and indeed is scored similar to the preferred allocation FENI\_05. The conclusions for the site (FENI\_11) simply state that “the site is moderately open and exposed in landscape terms”.

In response to this, the site is situated on the northern settlement edge of Feniton and development on the site would represent a logical and integrated extension of the settlement with some degree of containment within the existing settlement framework. The creation of a landscape buffer on the northern, eastern and western extents of the site, with associated native structural tree planting, would substantially reduce landscape and visual effects with respect to sensitive visual receptors. Furthermore this would provide an new defensible landscape buffer to the north of Feniton, creating a softer and more integrated settlement edge to the village than exists at present.

A carefully considered landscape strategy following the principles set out in the Concept Plan could achieve the landscape and visual objectives, as well as providing a landscape that integrates with the existing Green Infrastructure network of trees and hedgerows.

The Concept Plan for the site also sets out a strategy for a network of public open spaces with amenity benefits that connect to the existing settlement of Feniton, incorporating accessible play areas and recreational routes.

The site specifically scores well in relation to its proximity to the railway station and connectivity to local services and facilities.

The SA confirms the site scores negatively in relation to land resources, as a result of a loss of agricultural land. However, all of the land around the village falls within the higher agricultural land grades (best and most versatile) and therefore the loss of some agricultural land will be required in order to deliver residential development to meet local housing need.

Overall, it is clear the site scores well and is generally unconstrained as acknowledged in the supporting SA.

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<sup>2</sup> Sites assessed by their proximity to the following services – primary school, secondary school, shop, GP surgery, pub, library, community hall

<sup>3</sup> Notwithstanding that new play space would be delivered as part of any future scheme.

## Vision for the Site

The latest proposals for the site are outlined in the Vision Document enclosed at **Appendix 1**. This includes a change compared to the previous call for sites submissions, predominantly that the masterplan for the site has been revised to remove development in the western parcel, west of Colestocks Road. As a result, the red line boundary for the site now only contains the land east of Colestocks Road, with the red line for the northern boundary pulled back in line with and to reflect the existing development and sports pitches situated on the eastern boundary.

As a result of the changes, the revised site area and associated masterplan now accommodates a development of approximately 120 residential dwellings, along with supporting infrastructure including a multi purpose community facility. This is a significant reduction compared to the plans submitted through the previous call for sites process covering fields east and west of Colestocks Road accommodating up to 350 dwellings.

The reduction in the scale of development down to 120 dwellings has been made in response to comments set out in relation to the site as part of the emerging Local Plan to date. Specifically, the site assessment work confirms that the wider site (LP\_Feni\_09 and LP\_Feni\_11) would appear a reasonable development option with no obvious constraints, but that both sites combined provided a substantial area and unless strategic larger scale growth were sought it may be that parts of the site, particularly more southerly parts, would deliver development commensurate with the size and scale of the village.

Whilst the site area and scale of residential development has been reduced, the site is still capable of accommodating the necessary public open spaces, landscaped area and supporting infrastructure. Indeed, the masterplan shows the provision of substantial areas of public open space, an equipped play area, a multipurpose community facility (with potential to collaborate with the existing village sports facilities to the immediate east), allotments and meadow in the northern part of the site, and an area of attenuation in the south west corner.

The multipurpose community facility on the eastern boundary of the site is proposed to directly assist in ensuring that additional growth at Feniton is supported by supporting community infrastructure. There is also potential for links to be provided through the existing playing fields towards Feniton Primary School on Station Road, ensuring such facilities are linked.

The Concept Plan is also capable of delivering at least a 10% biodiversity net gain consistent with the objectives set out in the Government's Environment Bill. In addition, drainage attenuation will be provided within the open space to the west of the site and will be designed to create new ecological habitats within the site. There is also the potential for dwellings to utilise sustainable energy systems, with streets orientated east/west where possible giving the potential for roofs facing south to maximise gains. Indeed, the scheme offers the potential to address the wider existing flooding issues within Feniton

Electric vehicle charging points could also be included on the exterior of dwellings to enable car charging at home.

The masterplan ensures that the extent of built development on the site matches the existing settlement edge, therefore avoiding a development which would protrude north into the open countryside.

The enclosed masterplan and Vision Document sets out further detail in relation to the site proposals and outline the potential for the site to deliver a high quality, sustainable development to build on the opportunities for growth at Feniton.

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## 5. Summary and Conclusions

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We welcome the Council's decision to progress with the Local Plan despite the national uncertainty in terms of plan-making, and recognise that it is currently at an early stage.

Overall, we consider that the Draft Plan should be doing more to allocate additional land to ensure that the housing requirement is planned for, and this can be achieved partly by planning for a higher level of housing at the sustainable villages.

Of greatest concern is the approach in draft policies 4 and 5 and the requirement for mixed use sites to be brought forward based on a standardised threshold. This is inappropriate for locations such as Feniton.

Overall, Feniton has consistently been identified as one of the most sustainable villages, and this has been enhanced within the NPPF, and the declaration of the climate emergency, given the substantive benefits the rail station brings to the sustainability of the town. The land at Sherwood Cross is ideally placed to assist in delivering sustainable development in this location. Indeed, the site represents a logical solution to addressing the identified housing needs of both the village (including the delivery of affordable housing) and wider East Devon, and we strongly support the inclusion of the site as a draft allocation in the next stage of the Local Plan.

We believe that the development of the site to accommodate new homes together with a new community facility would be best located in a walkable village such as Feniton, a highly sustainable village with excellent local and regional road and rail links.

We trust our comments should be fully taken on board and changes to the Draft Plan made as a result.

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## Appendix 1: Vision Document

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An aerial photograph of a rural landscape. In the center, there is a dense cluster of buildings, likely a village or town. Surrounding this central area are numerous rectangular fields of various colors, including green, brown, and tan, indicating different stages of agricultural use or crop types. A road or path runs through the fields, and there are some trees scattered throughout the landscape. The overall scene is a typical rural setting.

**Taylor  
Wimpey**

# Land at Sherwood Cross, Feniton

Vision Document

January 2023

# 1. Introduction



## 1.1 Summary

- 1.1.1 This Vision Document sets out a preliminary site analysis and a conceptual proposal for sensitive residential development on Land at Sherwood Cross, Feniton.
- 1.1.2 The site sits within the north of Feniton, to the east of Colestocks Road.
- 1.1.3 The proposals have been informed by input from preliminary technical reports on the site. This document sets out headlines of all the environmental and technical findings relating to the site and demonstrates the suitability of the site for development.
- 1.1.4 The document reviews the site within the context of Feniton and seeks to demonstrate how the development of this site can help deliver growth in a sustainable manner.

## 1.2 The Team

**Taylor Wimpey**



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## 2. Site Context

### 2.1 The site within Feniton

2.1.1 Feniton is located approximately 17km east of Exeter, 9km west of Honiton and 5km north of Ottery St Mary.

2.1.2 The village is formed of two parts:

- The eastern part of the village lies adjacent to the 13th Century Saint Andrews Church, and contains the majority of the Listed Buildings in the area.
- The western part of Feniton originally contained a small number of dwellings associated with the operation of the train station, with the area being expanded greatly from the 1960s onwards.

2.1.3 The western part of Feniton is less constrained for new development due to its flatter topography and less historic built environment.

2.1.4 Feniton Railway Station is located approximately 150m to the south of the site. It operates on the West of England Main Line, with services calling at Salisbury, Yeovil Junction, Cranbrook, Axminster, Honiton, Exeter Central and Exeter St Davids. Feniton Railway Station provides step free access and includes eight bicycle parking spaces, a manned ticket office and ticket machines. From Feniton by rail, Exeter City Centre can be accessed in approximately 23 minutes.

2.1.5 The nearest bus stop to the site is located on Colestocks Road, just to the south of the Railway Station. Additional stops are provided on Station Road, approximately 300m from the site.





















2.1.6 The 382 bus route runs between Sidmouth, Ottery-St-Mary and Whimple with 4 services per day. The 387 bus route runs between Sidmouth and Taunton twice a day on Mondays and Thursdays. The 694 bus route runs between Honiton, Feniton and Cullompton twice a day on Tuesdays and Fridays.

2.1.7 Feniton Primary School lies approximately 400m to the south east of the centre of the site.

2.1.8 There is a small cluster of shops located close to the train station, with a convenience store, public house, hairdresser and takeaway. Feniton Post Office operates from the Village Hall on Wednesday mornings and Friday afternoons.

2.1.9 There are a number of sports facilities within the village, including football, cricket and bowls clubs. There are also two play areas and allotments within the village.

2.1.10 Other settlements, including Ottery St Mary and Honiton are located within approximately 5km and 8km of the site. These settlements include a wider range of facilities, including supermarkets and other retail stores, a secondary school and medical centres.

	Site Boundary		Primary school
	A30		Convenience store
	Walking route to key facilities		Post Office
	Railway line		Public house
	Railway station		Hairdresser
	Bus stop		Takeaway
	Bus route		Sports facilities
	Buzzard Regional Cycle Route		Play area
	Village Hall		Allotments
	Church		Listed Buildings





Context Plan

# 3. Background Technical Information

## 3.1 Transport

3.1.1 The site is well located for access to the facilities and services within Feniton, as set out in the previous section

### Vehicular Access

3.1.2 The site will be accessed via a priority junction. The existing alignment of Colestocks Road is retained, with the carriageway widened where necessary. This will require the relocation of some of the existing hedgebanks which run alongside Colestocks Road.

3.1.3 The existing speed limit change from 60mph to 30mph will be moved to the north of the proposed access.

3.1.4 The access design is indicative at this stage and is subject to ongoing technical work.

### Pedestrian Access

3.1.5 New footways will be provided along both sides of the widened Colestocks Road to provide safe access for pedestrians from the development towards the train station and other facilities in Feniton.

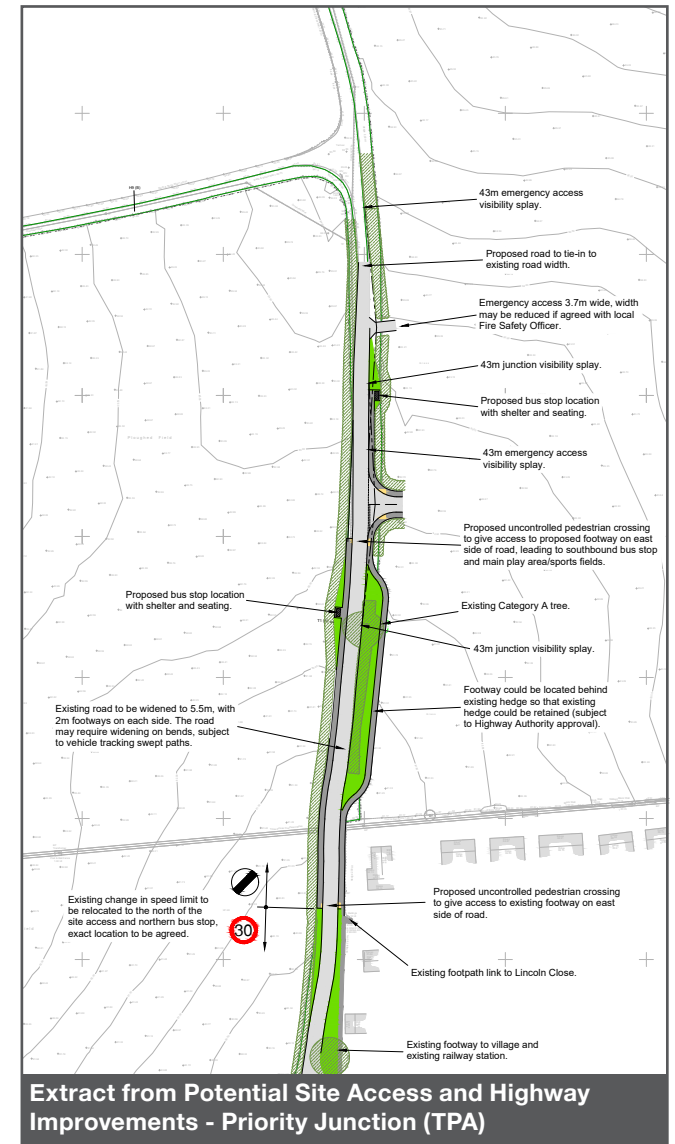
3.1.6 The eastern footway will be detached from the carriageway for part of its length to allow for the retention of a greater amount of existing hedgerow and an existing Category A tree.

### Bus Access

3.1.7 New bus stops are provided as part of the access design, which will serve the 694 bus route. These will be accessed via new footways and have a shelter and seating.

### Buzzard Regional Cycle Route

3.1.8 The Buzzard Regional Cycle Route is a recognised 80-mile cycle route around East Devon. The Route travels along Colestocks Road through Feniton, past the frontage of the site. The route also travels through Honiton, Axminster, Sidmouth, Ottery St. Mary and Exmouth.



## 3.2 Flood Risk and Drainage

3.2.1 The Environment Agency and SFRA mapping shows the site to be entirely within Flood Zone 1 having the lowest flood risk, less than 0.1% or 1:1,000 annual exceedance probability of flooding.

3.2.2 Historical Flooding records and the Environment Agency Critical Drainage Area details identify incidents of property flooding. East Devon DC are implementing the 'Feniton Flood Alleviation Scheme' to reduce flood risk to existing properties in the east and south of Feniton resulting from run-off from agricultural land to the north. East Devon DC has been asked to provide details of any existing drainage and flooding issues in the northwest and west of Feniton and for their advice on the surface water discharge from the proposed development.

3.2.3 A Sustainable Drainage System SuDS will be used to manage surface water run-off from rainfall, to ensure that the site is safe from flooding and that it will not increase flood risk elsewhere. The Preliminary Drainage Strategy assumes discharges to watercourses however if following the Phase 2 Intrusive Geotechnical Investigation, infiltration tests, and groundwater monitoring the soils are found to be permeable and suitable then infiltration SuDS such as soakaways, permeable/porous surfaces, infiltration basins, etc. will be used to drain surface water run-off from the site to the ground.

3.2.4 Based upon the Environment Agency information the site is located within an area of high sensitivity in terms of Hydrogeology and Groundwater Resources. The proposed SuDS will provide treatment to the surface water run-off from the development and follow the guidance provided in Ciria C753, 'The SuDS Manual' to ensure groundwater and watercourses are protected from pollution and to ensure that Water Framework Directive objectives and current standards are not compromised.

3.2.5 Flood routes will be provided to protect the development from localised failures of the drainage system and exceedance flows.

3.2.6 South West Water has been consulted and suitable points of connection for the foul and surface water sewers from the proposed development have been identified.

3.2.7 In conclusion there are no drainage or flooding issues that will prevent the land from being developed for residential use. The proposed development will be safe from flooding, will not increase flood risk elsewhere, and will comply with local and national policy and guidance.

3.2.8 The flood risk to adjoining homes will be reduced by the SuDS management scheme proposed, which will represent a betterment to the existing conditions in the area which are currently unregulated.

## 3.3 Ground Conditions

3.3.1 The site slopes gently from east to west with the highway, Colestocks Road, being incised below adjacent ground levels by 1m to 1.5m.

3.3.2 The British Geological Survey mapping indicates the site to be underlain by deposits of the Triassic Helsby Sandstone Formation. Whilst not mapped, Head deposits would be anticipated overlying the solid geology.

3.3.3 The Envirocheck report indicates that radon protection is not required at the site.

3.3.4 No significant sources of contamination are identified in the site history or the adjacent land use.

3.3.5 No significant contamination or stability issues have been identified that would be anticipated to preclude appropriate redevelopment of the site.



Landscape Opportunities and Constraints Plan (fpcr)

## 3.4 Landscape

- 3.4.1 The site comprises grazing land largely bounded by hedgerows and occasional trees. The northern extent of the site is not defined by a physical boundary but is a continuation of an agricultural field that is part of Sherwood Farm
- 3.4.2 Residential development along Lincoln Close lies to the south of the site, with fences and a variety of boundary treatments dividing the back gardens of these properties from the site. Hedgerows/hedgebanks form the boundary with Colestocks Road that runs along the western boundary of the site.
- 3.4.3 To the north the landscape rises gradually in a mosaic of agricultural fields. Playing fields and a new residential development lie to the east of the site.
- 3.4.4 There are no landscape designations that cover the site or the immediately surrounding area, the Blackdown Hills AONB lies over 3km to the northeast and southeast of the site. The Grade II Listed buildings, Sherwood Cottage and Sheridon lie nearby to the northwest of the site.

3.4.5 The site contains no Public Rights of Way (PROW) and is not used for any formal or informal recreation. There are PROW in the area surrounding the site, notably Feniton Footpath 8, that runs to the west of the site connecting with Long Park to the south of Feniton and Sherwood Farm to the north. The development of the site could improve footpath connectivity with the surrounding network.

3.4.6 The landscape of the site and its surroundings is characterised by an agricultural landscape on the settlement edge of Feniton, with a large scale field pattern with well formed hedgerows and hedgebanks and occasional trees. The landscape is generally in good condition with well maintained hedgerows, but with sections along the boundary with residential areas of Feniton where long sections of hedgerow are entirely absent. Direct views of backs of properties on Lincoln Close, new residences to the east of the site and crossing overhead power lines are detracting influences on the character of the site. Overall the site and the immediate surrounding area is considered to be of Medium Landscape Value.

## Proposed Development

- 3.4.7 The site is situated on the northern settlement edge of Feniton and development on the site would represent a logical and integrated extension of the settlement of Feniton with some degree of containment within the existing settlement framework.
- 3.4.8 The creation of a landscape buffer on the northern, eastern and western extents of the site, with associated native structural tree planting, would substantially reduce landscape and visual effects with respect to sensitive visual receptors.
- 3.4.9 Furthermore this would provide an new defensible landscape buffer to the north of Feniton, creating a softer and more integrated settlement edge to the village than exists at present. A carefully considered landscape strategy following the principles set out in the Concept Plan would achieve the landscape and visual objectives, as well as providing a landscape that integrates with the existing Green Infrastructure network of trees and hedgerows.
- 3.4.10 The Concept Plan also sets out a strategy for a network of public open spaces with amenity benefits that connect to the existing settlement of Feniton, incorporating accessible play areas and recreational routes.

## 3.5 Ecology

3.5.1 A desk study and Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey were undertaken in February 2020, along with surveys for great crested newts, breeding birds, dormice and bats in 2021. This information was used to identify any ecological constraints and opportunities and provide a preliminary appraisal for development of the site.

3.5.2 The surveys identified that the site comprises largely low value agricultural grassland, bound by high quality species-rich hedgerows with a small number of trees. The hedgerows were used by low numbers of house sparrow and dunnock as well as for commuting bats. A single tree in the western hedgerow also had potential for roosting bats. No great crested newts were recorded in nearby ponds and dormice were absent from the hedgerows within and adjacent to the site.

3.5.3 It is envisaged that important habitats and protected/notable species can be accommodated within the design by applying the mitigation hierarchy: avoidance, mitigation and compensation. The following design principles are recommended to minimise impacts on important ecological features:

- Retain higher quality habitats such as hedgerows and trees

- Maintain north-south habitat connectivity for bats and other species, for example by buffering key hedgerows with public open space and drainage features
- Measures to ensure a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) for all habitats will need to be implemented, which should be demonstrated using a metric (or similar tool). This could include a new hedgerow or scrub buffer running east-west to enhance connectivity along the northern edge of the development, an orchard and species-rich grassland.
- Hedgerows should be kept outside of property boundaries to allow future management
- Prevention measures will need to be implemented to ensure no pollution / excess run-off to downstream ecological receptors
- If the oak tree is found to support roosting bats, this will either need to be retained with a suitable buffer to prevent light spill/ disturbance, or a Natural England licence obtained to remove it along with suitable compensation
- A lighting strategy may be required to show there will be no adverse effects on nocturnal animals such as bats, for example along key hedgerows
- Landscaping should include native species, fruit, berry and seed-producing varieties and those on the RHS Plants for Pollinators list to enhance the Site for a range of wildlife
- Hedgehog holes should be provided through solid fences

- Bat and bird boxes should be included within new properties, along with refuges for reptiles in open space.

3.5.4 The Concept Plan presented is capable of delivering at least a 10% biodiversity net gain. Further details of the exact nature of the ecological habitats to be created will be determined in due course.

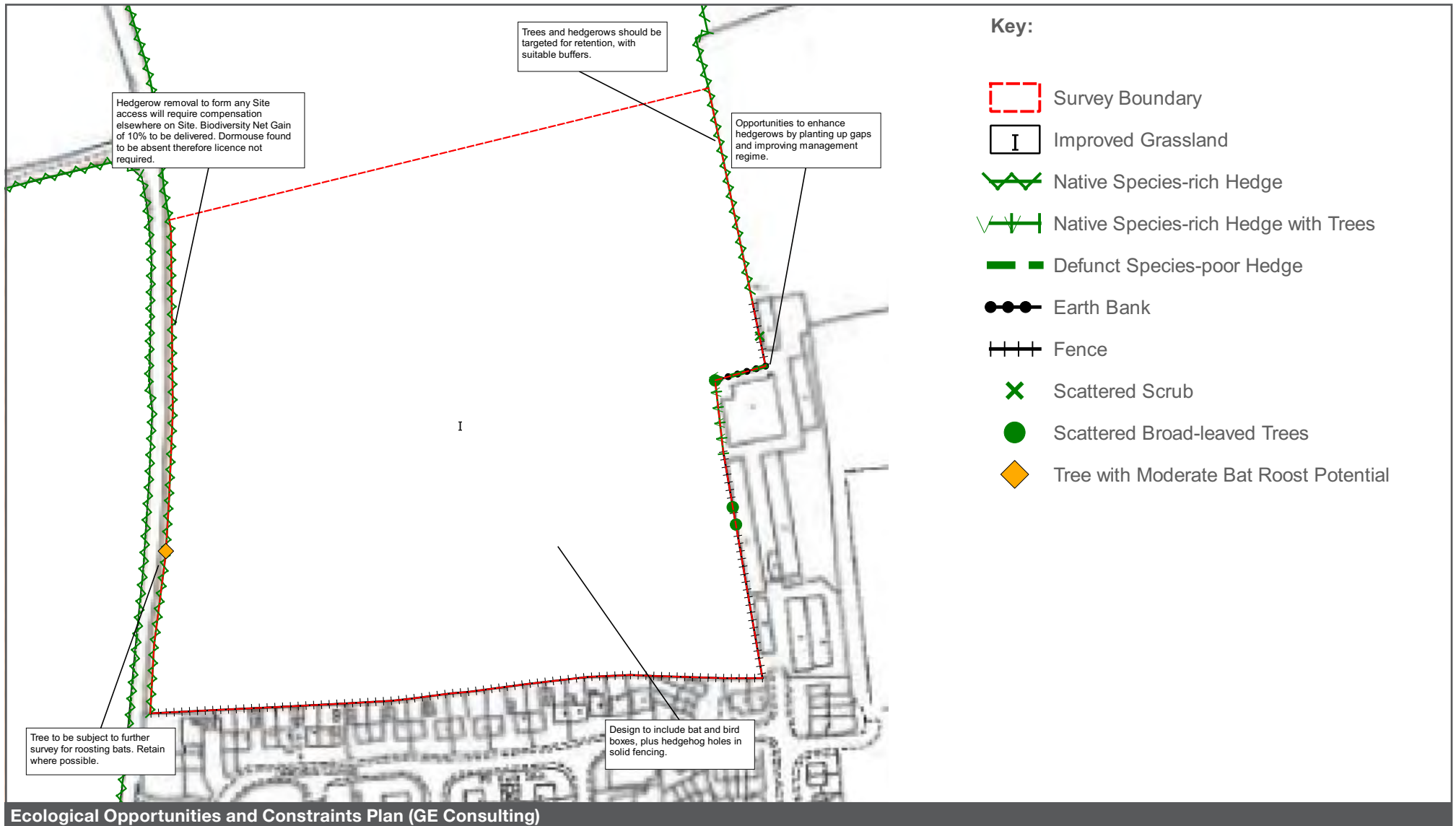
## 3.6 Arboriculture

3.6.1 Four of the trees which have been surveyed are subject to TPOs. These are the ash and the oaks along the eastern boundary of the site. The site does not fall within a Conservation Area.

3.6.2 There is a Category A oak tree along the western boundary of the site. This tree should be retained and incorporated into the scheme design.

## 3.7 Noise

3.7.1 A noise feasibility study has been undertaken for the proposed development at Sherwood Cross, Feniton. The currently proposed site would not be significantly affected by any railway noise. The proposed dwellings should be built in accordance with Approved Document O.





**Mature trees within adjacent development to the east of the site**



**Variety of boundary treatments with dwellings on Lincoln Close**



**Looking north east towards Cheriton Hill and Hembury Hill Fort**



## 3.8 Archaeology and Heritage

- 3.8.1 An Historic Environment Desk-based Assessment has been prepared in order to assess the potential impact on the historic environment arising from development on land at Sherwood Cross in Feniton.
- 3.8.2 The study site is not considered to lie within the setting of, or contribute to the significance of, any designated archaeological assets. Therefore, development on the study site would have no impact on any such assets.
- 3.8.3 Development of the study site would have the potential to truncate or destroy any archaeological remains should they be present within the study site. Based on the current evidence the study site is assessed as having a medium potential for the Prehistoric period and a low potential for all other periods, with the exception of historic field boundaries or similar evidence of the agricultural use of the land from the Roman period onwards.
- 3.8.4 Archaeological deposits, should they survive within the study site, would be of no more than local (low) significance for any period, and likely to have been truncated by historic and ongoing agricultural activity. As such it is considered that any archaeological remains that may be present on the study site are unlikely to be of such significance to preclude development.

- 3.8.5 The study site has been identified to lie within the setting of, and therefore has the potential to affect the significance of, two designated heritage assets: Sheridan (Grade II listed; NHLE 1162244) and Sherwood Cottage (Grade II; NHLE 1098181). Development of the site would have a minor impact on these assets.
- 3.8.6 The study site is not considered to lie within the setting of, or contribute to the significance of, any non-designated built heritage assets. Development would therefore have no impact on any such assets.
- 3.8.7 Hedgerows are deemed historically important under the Act if they can be demonstrated to exist on the appropriate pre-1845 parish tithe or enclosure map. The western and part of the eastern hedgerows which form the boundaries of the site are deemed historically important hedgerows and should be preserved in so far as possible in proposals.
- 3.8.8 Although heritage is as consideration for future proposals, heritage issues are unlikely to constrain development of the study site.

## 3.9 Utilities

- 3.9.1 A desktop feasibility study has been undertaken to appraise the availability of electricity, gas, potable water and telecommunications services to the site. The Opportunities and Constraints Plan in the following section shows the position of existing utilities within the vicinity of the site.
- **Electricity** - There are existing overhead cables which run along the southern boundary of the site. Reinforcement may be required in order to provide a suitable supply to the proposed dwellings and to accommodate Electric Vehicle charging.
  - **Gas** - The closest gas supplies lay within the existing residential development to the south of the site. Reinforcement may be required in order to provide a suitable supply to the proposed dwellings.
  - **Water** - A water distribution main is located to the west of Colestocks Road. This will be diverted within the new alignment of Colestocks Road.
  - **Sewer Water** - There are several sewer mains (foul and combined) located within the existing residential development to the south of the site. The development is not affected by any sewer network.
  - **Telecommunications** - An existing overhead line and supporting poles runs along Colestocks Road. These will be relocated along the new alignment of Colestocks Road.

## 4. Site Features

4.1.1 The adjacent plan provides a summary of the features of the site, drawn from the preceding technical work and plans. This sets a brief for the development of the following concept masterplan.





## 5. Development Concept

- 5.1.1 The development concept plan has been developed in response to the technical studies and site appraisal outlined in the previous sections. The concept plan shows development of approximately 120 dwellings and a multipurpose community facility, with a substantial area of public open space, which is greater than policy requirements.
- 5.1.2 Site access will be taken from a new priority junction along Colestocks Road. The road will be widened to accommodate the new road and footways on each side. This will require the relocation of the existing hedgebanks in some places, which are within public open space to ensure their future management.
- 5.1.3 The proposed footways will provide safe walking routes to the south of the site towards the facilities and services within Feniton. The eastern footway will be detached from the carriageway for part of its length to allow for the retention of a greater amount of existing hedgerow and an existing Category A tree.
- 5.1.4 New bus stops could be provided as part of the access design, which will serve the 694 bus route. If required, these will be accessed via new footways and have a shelter and seating.
- 5.1.5 The access design is indicative at this stage and is subject to ongoing technical work.
- 5.1.6 Key spaces are created within the development, which sit along the main access loop and will aid legibility within the development.
- 5.1.7 A large area of Public Open Space is located along the northern and western boundaries of the site, creating a landscape buffer to the north of Feniton, which will provide a softer and more integrated settlement edge to the village than exists at present. A new hedgerow is proposed to be created along the northern boundary. The provision of new planting within streets and public open spaces will further soften long range views of the development.
- 5.1.8 The public open space within the site could contain allotments and an equipped play area. The Concept Plan presented is capable of delivering at least a 10% biodiversity net gain.
- 5.1.9 The new dwellings along the southern and eastern boundaries are proposed to back on to the existing dwellings with extended gardens and new planting along this boundary to provide additional amenity for residents.
- 5.1.10 Development will be set back from Colestocks Road behind the relocated hedgebanks. The development area proposed is in line with the existing built up area extent of Feniton.
- 5.1.11 A new multipurpose community centre on the eastern boundary of the site is proposed and can provide passage through the existing playing fields towards Feniton Primary School on Station Road.
- 5.1.12 Drainage attenuation will be provided within the open space to the west of the site and will be designed to create new ecological habitats within the site.
- 5.1.13 There is the potential for dwellings to utilise sustainable energy systems, with streets orientated east/west where possible giving the potential for roofs facing south to maximise gains. Electric vehicle charging points could also be included on the exterior of dwellings to enable car charging at home. Energy efficient dwellings will be provided, designed in accordance with the fabric first principal.



## 6. Conclusions & Key Benefits

- 6.1.1 The scheme will create a new northern edge to Feniton, with the opportunity to create a landscaped transition between the countryside and town. The site will provide a choice and mix of sizes of new homes, including affordable homes.
- 6.1.2 The development concept plan shows the site can provide residential development along with a substantial area of public open space, which is greater than policy requirements. The Concept Plan presented is capable of delivering at least a 10% biodiversity net gain.
- 6.1.3 New bus stops could be provided along Colestocks Road and the speed limit change will be moved to the north of the proposed access, giving the opportunity to provide a new gateway into Feniton from the north.
- 6.1.4 The site is well located for the use of sustainable modes of transport by new residents. The train station is a short walk to the south of the site which provides fast links to Exeter and other surrounding destinations.
- 6.1.5 The site is also conveniently located for access to local facilities and services. Development at Sherwood Cross will foster the long term viability and vitality of local facilities and services, through financial contributions and increased patronage from new residents.
- 6.1.6 Additional key benefits of the scheme are set out on the adjacent page.



Existing gateway to Feniton



Mix of family homes, including affordable properties, increasing opportunities for home ownership and rental in the local area



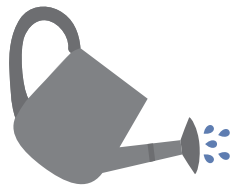
Excellent walking & cycling connectivity, with new footpaths created to link the development to the existing network



Excellent public transport connectivity, with increased use of existing train & bus routes by new residents travelling in the area



Highway and public transport improvements including new bus stops



New community recreational facilities, including potential allotments



Access to new open spaces for leisure and recreation, including children's play space and natural green space



Good links to the facilities and services in Feniton and the surrounding area



Employment opportunities including full time and supply chain jobs during the construction period



The team are committed to the provision of high standard of design and construction enabling an enhanced residential amenity



The protection and enhancement of existing landscape features including an increase of at least 10% in biodiversity habitats



Economic support for Feniton businesses and services from new residents



Section 106 agreement, CIL and New Homes Bonus opportunities to benefit Feniton and East Devon District

**Taylor**  
**Wimpey**

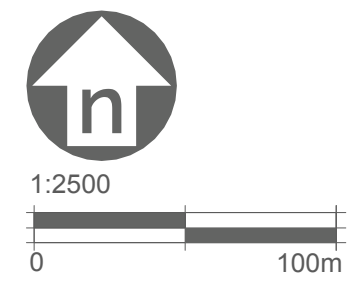
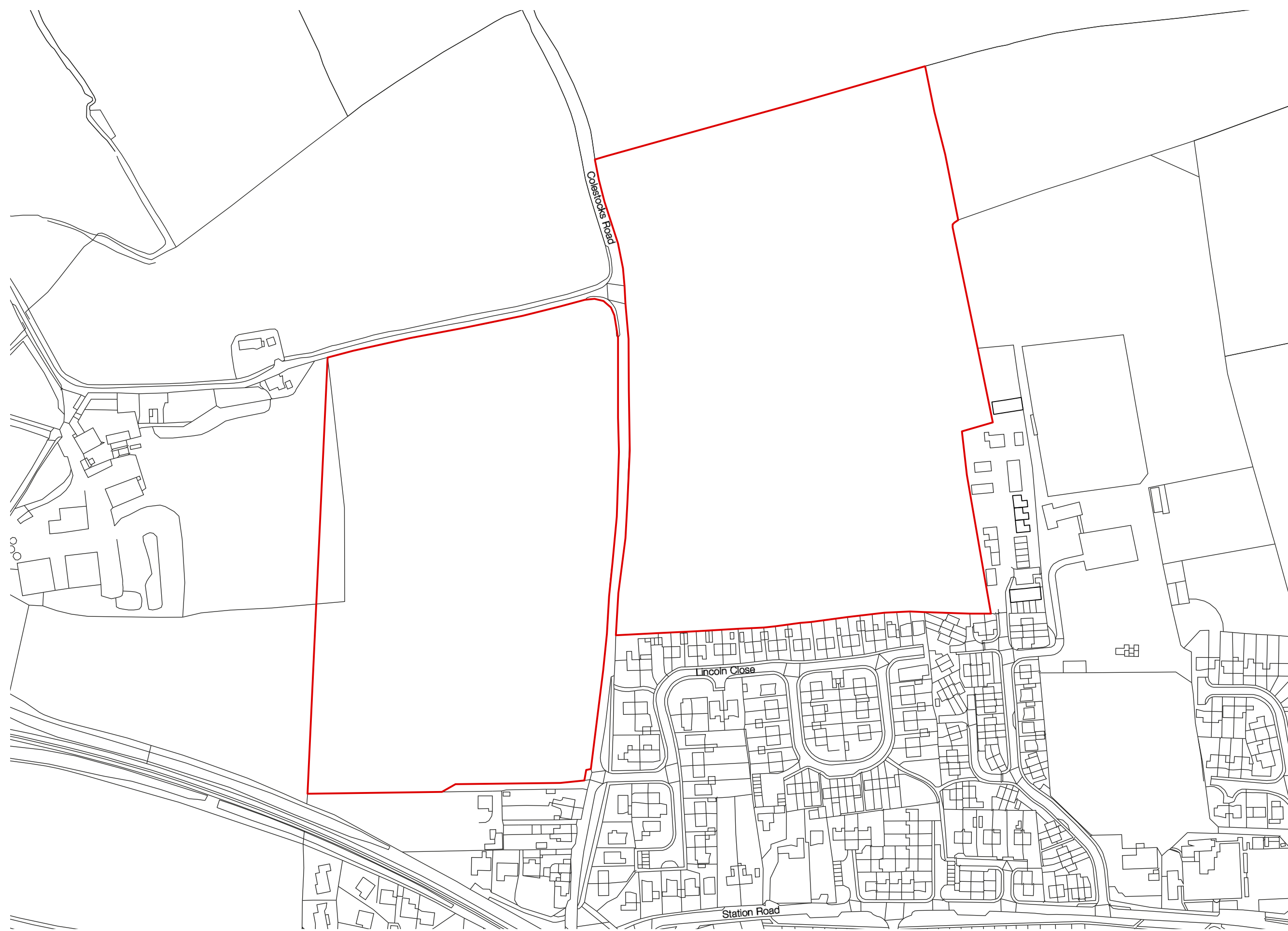


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## Appendix 2: Land Ownership Plan

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Site Boundary



client:  
**Taylor Wimpey**

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project:  
**Land at Sherwood Cross, Feniton**

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drawing title:  
**Site Boundary Plan**

job number:  
**TAY104**

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scale:  
**1:2500 @ A3**

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date:  
**March 2021**

drawing number:  
**1001**

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drawn:  
**AJ**

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status:  
**Preliminary**

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