

Church Road, California : Development Brief

Supplementary Planning Guidance

March 2011



Falkirk Council
Development Services





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1. Purpose of Brief

- 1.1 The purpose of this development brief is to set out for the benefit of landowners and potential developers, the Council's requirements and expectations to be taken into account when preparing proposals for the site. The brief will be a material consideration to be taken into account in the determination of any planning applications for the site.
- 1.2 The brief identifies key design, environmental and infrastructural issues as well as developer contributions likely to be required to offset the impacts of these.

2. Planning Application Submission

- 2.1 It is important that this site is planned in its entirety and not in a piecemeal manner. Any Planning Permission in Principle (PPP) application for the site should cover the whole site and be accompanied by a masterplan setting out:
 - housing layout and orientation;
 - road layout;
 - sustainable urban drainage systems;
 - open space; and
 - landscaping.
- 2.2 Any planning permission granted will be on the condition that any subsequent Matters Specified in Conditions (MSC) application will require to conform to the masterplan e.g. applications for Planning Permission in Detail for individual plots or parts of the site.
- 2.3 As well as this brief, developers will have regard to relevant Scottish Government planning policy and advice, Falkirk Council's policies as expressed through the existing development plan (the Falkirk Council Structure Plan and the Falkirk Council Local Plan) and the Council's suite of Supplementary Planning Guidance. (A list of the relevant documents is attached at Appendix 1). It should be noted that this list is not exhaustive and that advice changes and is added to from time to time.
- 2.4 Development of this site will not constitute 'major development' as defined by the Town and Country Planning (Hierarchy of Developments) (Scotland) Regulations 2009. As such, there is no requirement for mandatory pre-application consultation and a Proposal of Application Notice will not be required.

Background

Planning Status of Site

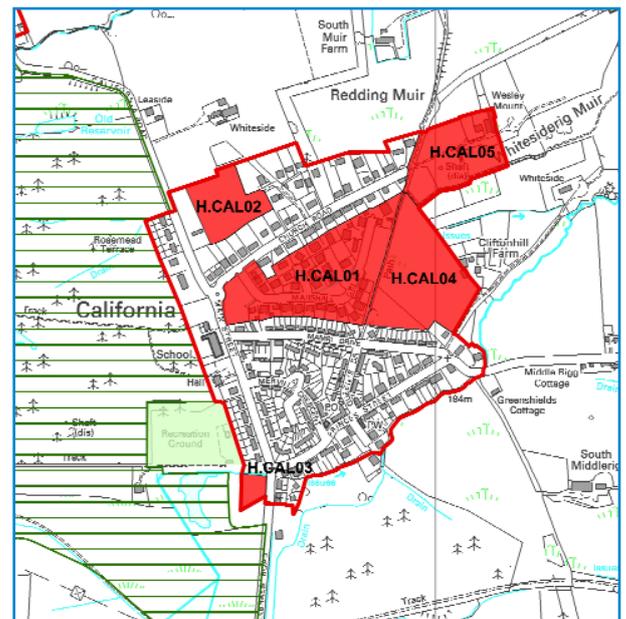
3. Background

- 3.1 The brief is not intended to be overly prescriptive in terms of the final layout and design, but rather to set out a clear set of guidelines regarding key components of any development, and to assist prospective developers in drawing up detailed designs. The brief also provides an opportunity to highlight any possible constraints to development.
- 3.2 California is a small village with a population of approximately 700, located 2.5miles/4km south of Falkirk.
- 3.3 The village grew up around the coal industry supplying fuel to the Carron Company via a railway line in the late 1800s. Miners' cottages were concentrated along Main Street, Church Road and Princes Street. In the inter-war period further housing was built along Main Street, Melville Crescent and Mamre Drive on the site of a former football ground.
- 3.4 Further houses ribboned out along Church Road in the latter half of the 20th century and early years of the 21st century and a new plotted development was built at Cockmalane on the site of an old quarry.
- 3.5 The site covered by this brief was originally a coal pit and is now part of Wesleymount Farm. In recent years it has been sold to various landowners and its condition has been allowed to degrade. A number of temporary dwellings occupy areas of the site. Now that the status of the site as a housing opportunity is confirmed, the Council wishes to see development in a style and manner sympathetic to the surrounding townscape and countryside setting.

4. Planning Status of Site

- 4.1 The site is identified as a housing opportunity in the Falkirk Council Local Plan. The following text is taken from the Local Plan:

H.CAL5:	Church Road 3
Site Area:	1.9 ha.
Capacity:	12
Developer:	Private
Status:	New Allocation
Comments:	When complete should provide a defensible boundary to preclude further expansion. Retention and upgrading of path along the western boundary to adoptable standard will be required, as will a well integrated link to the community woodland to the east.

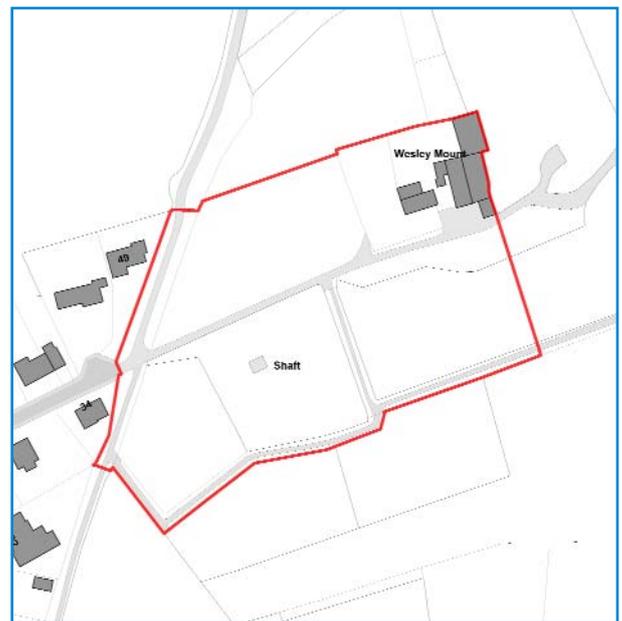




5. Development Vision

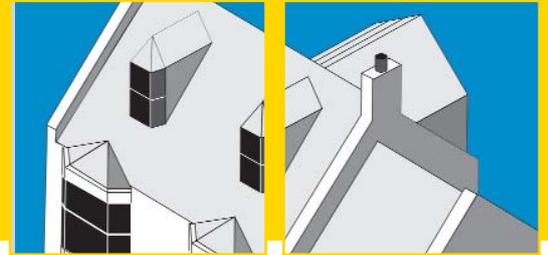
Layout and Form

- 5.1 The plot layout should retain and relate to the five sub-divisions which presently define the internal arrangement of the site i.e. Wesleymount Farm Steading, the single land area to the west and the three sections forming the southern area.
- 5.2 The existing tracks and roadways should remain in use and be interconnected to ensure good use of the countryside footpath system.
- 5.3 House frontages should as far as possible give accessible frontage and surveillance to the roadway/footpath system and the right of way. House designs which avoid blank gables are suggested to support this principle. It is recognised that not all external edges will be able to be treated as such and robust planting will be necessary to conceal any exposed stockaded fencing and to provide a softer screening edge to the countryside. An open landscape buffer between housing frontages and the right of way will be appropriate to address potential disturbance issues.
- 5.4 Two potential layouts for the site illustrate how the above principles could be applied. These are shown at Appendix 2 and 3 of this document.
- 5.5 If it is proposed to develop the site for more than 12 new houses (in addition to the existing farm and steadings on site.) then, in accordance with policy SC6 of the Local Plan, it should be clearly demonstrated that this will assist in achieving design excellence.



Landscape and Visual Treatment

- 5.6** The site has wide visibility from the north and north east in particular, due to its position on a prominent spur of land and the lack of existing tree / vegetation cover in the surrounding area. The current degraded image of the site is therefore particularly visually prominent. However, recent woodland planting has taken place in fields to the east and this will provide some screening in the future as it matures. Visibility from the west and south is less prominent due to the existing development pattern, landform and sporadic tree groups.
- 5.7** Structure planting of 12-15m width is required on the northern boundary comprising native trees edged with native shrubs. Structure planting is also required on the eastern boundary to provide a long term defensible boundary to the village. Such planting would also provide valuable integration with the recently planted community woodland to the east.
- 5.8** Depending on house types (house design/appearance, height, numbers), the need for extensive structure planting could be relaxed to allow some filtered views out to the north, but at the same time allow reasonable screening as seen from outwith the site.
- 5.9** Specimen tree planting within the site should also be incorporated into front gardens and open space and this should naturally integrate into the external structure planting to provide a tree covered character of high amenity.
- 5.10** Policy EQ26 of the Falkirk Council Local Plan indicates that felling detrimental to landscape, amenity, nature conservation or recreational interests will be discouraged. There is a stand of trees on site close to Wesleymount Farm Steading which are considered to have considerable amenity value. These trees should be retained.
- 5.11** The height of dwellings on the site should be kept to a maximum of two storeys and ensure that rooftops are not prominent over or through the trees as seen from the north or east. Similarly, to avoid visual massing, the overall density should be no higher than existing adjacent areas in the locality.
- 5.12** The right of way passing along the site boundary to the south should be well integrated into any proposal, not separated behind high fences and walls. Specimen tree planting along this route, with the path and trees well integrated into the open space of the development would be appropriate.



Site Access

- 5.13** The site should be accessed from either Church Road or the adjacent H.CAL4 "Church Road 2" site. Any internal estate roads will need to be 5.5m wide with 2m wide footways or service strips either side. Internal road access should terminate short of Wesleymount Farm Steading, A suitable method of demarking the end of the public highway should be provided short of Wesleymount Farm Steading which would continue to be served by a minor road track.
- 5.14** Alternative site access arrangements and internal estate road proposals will be considered where they conform to national policy as set out in the Scottish Governments Designing Streets.

Building Design

- 5.15** Buildings should be a maximum of two storeys in height. Single storey buildings would be acceptable, but only in a linked or steading form.
- 5.16** In general term the design advice given in paragraph 3.2 of the Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance Note on Housing Layout and Design should be followed.
- 5.17** If redevelopment of the Wesleymount Farm Steading is proposed then the conversion of the westernmost of these buildings is encouraged as it is considered to have sufficient character to be worthy of conversion.

Sustainable Urban Drainage

- 5.18** Foul water should ideally connect to the public sewer. Scottish Water have advised that foul flows for 12 units should not greatly affect the network but this would require closer scrutiny once firm proposals have been submitted. In order that they can make a thorough assessment the developer is required to complete a Development Impact Assessment form which is available to download from Scottish Water's website at www.scottishwater.co.uk. As the results of this assessment could have an impact on the number of houses which can be built on site, it is strongly advised that any developer undertakes an assessment early in the design process.
- 5.19** If it is not possible to connect the entirety of foul flows from the development to the public sewer then, subject to some portion of the development connecting to the foul sewer, the remaining properties may be able to connect to a secondary treatment system with disposal via a soakaway or partial soakaway, depending on a suitable investigation into ground conditions on site.
- 5.20** Surface water for all hardstanding areas including roads will be required to go through one level of treatment prior to discharge. SEPA would expect this to be a source control measure. Attenuation features are still likely to be required to control the rate of surface water discharging from the site so in practice two levels of treatment prior to discharge are more likely. Detailed requirements with regards to SUDS can be found in the Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance note Flooding and Sustainable Urban Drainage.
- 5.21** The site at Church Road sits at the crest of a small hill and as such water draining from the site drains to the north, south and east.
- 5.22** The northern part of the site drains to the north and any pre-treated surface water discharge for this part of the site could be released to existing drainage ditches at a rate of no more than 3.2 litres per second.
- 5.23** The south western part of the site drains to the south. An attenuation structure would be ideally located in the south western portion of the site and should be integrated into any on site open space. A connection of the outflow from the attenuation structure to a watercourse does not appear to be feasible. This part of the site can potentially connect to the existing public sewer which runs north south to the rear of 34 Church Road, but this will require to be approved by Scottish Water who have indicated that they will require the developer to demonstrate that they have fully investigated all other methods of discharging surface water (including via a soak away) before considering a direct connection to the public sewer.
- 5.24** The south eastern part of the site drains to the east. An attenuation structure would be ideally located in the south eastern portion of the site and should be integrated into any on site open space. There is no public sewer or water course for the outflow from the attenuation structure on this part of the site to connect to and connection to the Gardrum Burn would have to be negotiated with neighbouring landowners. The potential to dispose of surface water flows from this part of the site via a soakaway should be investigated.

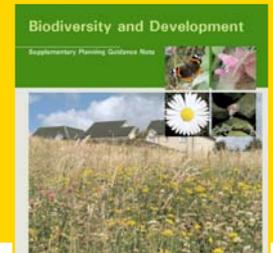
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Development Vision - Open Space and Play Provision

Development Vision - Access and Recreation

Development Vision - Ecology and Nature Conservation

Development Vision - Waste Management



Open Space and Play Provision

5.25 Policy SC13 of the Local Plan requires that new housing development should contribute to open space and play provision. Policy EQ21 of the Local Plan requires developers in urban fringe locations to contribute to landscape and/or access improvements in association with new development.

5.26 The plot size of housing on site lends itself to large private gardens so it is considered that rather than the provision of any substantial area of on site open space, the Council should be provided with financial contribution towards the maintenance of paths in the local area. A combined financial contribution of £10,000 will be required towards the maintenance of the following paths:

Wallacestone Right of Way.
Church Road and California Right of Way.
Burnside Community Woodland network.

5.27 There will be a requirement for a certain elements of on-site open space as follows:

- To accommodate SUDS attenuation features at the south west and south east corners of the site; and
- At the point of the site where the 5.5m central access road narrows to become a narrower shared surface/private road, in order to better define the change in road hierarchy, and help form a defensible longterm boundary

Access and Recreation

5.28 All existing paths on site should be retained and incorporated into the overall design layout. Buildings should front onto these paths rather than presenting garden fences. This would have the added benefit of providing a level of passive surveillance.

Ecology and Nature Conservation

5.29 As set out in the Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance note on Biodiversity and Development, an initial site audit should be undertaken to help to identify areas/ issues that require further investigation. This should be undertaken by a suitably experienced ecologist or landscape architect.

Waste Management

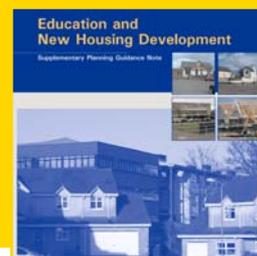
5.30 Space for collection, segregation, storage and possibly treatment of waste (e.g. individual and/or communal bin stores, composting facilities, and waste treatment facilities) should be allocated within the site layout. Recycling facilities shall be provided and houses must have enough space for three bins and a box. In addition, the site must have surfaced access for refuse collection vehicles and emergency services.

6. Development Constraints Contaminated Land

- 6.1 There are several potential sources of contamination associated with the historical background of the site and surrounding area, including: a coal pit and associated buildings and structures; a mineral railway line; shafts and made ground. In addition, there may be several other contaminative sources not yet identified.
- 6.2 Consequently, there may be potential contamination issues/constraints. For any proposed development of the site, a contaminated land risk assessment should be undertaken in accordance with current legislation and statutory guidance.
- 6.3 In order for an adequate contaminated land risk assessment to be undertaken, a desk study (Phase 1) should be completed. The desk study should assess ground conditions at the site and include information such as the current and historical usage of the site and surrounding area, geology, hydrogeological and hydrological conditions underlying the site.
- 6.4 Any potential source-pathway-receptors should be identified. Should any significant contamination risks be identified (which is likely given the historical use), then an intrusive (Phase 2) site investigation would be required.

Ground Conditions

- 6.5 There may be potential ground instability issues due to the presence of a mine entry on site and mine workings underlying the site at shallow depth. These issues will need to be thoroughly investigated by the developer and may require remedial works. The effects of any remedial works on neighbouring properties will also require thorough investigation. Any development layout should ensure that no building takes place over the on-site mine entry. If the mine entry is incorporated into any on-site open space then it should be made safe for this purpose. Consideration should also be given to whether any remnant shallow coal could be extracted in advance of development, as this would not only avoid their unnecessary sterilisation but may also provide a sustainable option for treating any coal mining related land instability issues in the process. If extraction of remnant shallow coal is proposed then this will also require planning consent.
- 6.6 Developers should be aware that any intrusive site investigation and/or treatment works that would intersect with or disturb any coal or former coal mine workings and mine entries will require permission from The Coal Authority. Further information on The Coal Authority's permissions process can be found at:
www.coal.gov.uk/services/permissions.



School Capacity

- 6.7** Financial contributions may be required to the following schools depending on the capacity constraints at the time of planning permission:

California Primary School.
Braes High School.
St Andrew's Primary School.
St Mungo's High School.

- 6.8** Any financial contribution will be calculated based on advice contained within the Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance note on Education and New Housing Development. It is strongly advised to contact the Council's Forward Planning Officer in Education Services for the updated position before making a planning application.

7. Officer Contacts

- 7.1 The following Council Officers should be contacted in advance of submitting a planning application for the site:

Danny Thallon - Planning Officer,
Development Planning
Tel: 01324 504927
Email: danny.thallon@falkirk.gov.uk

John Milne - Planning Officer,
Development Management
Tel: 01324 504815
Email: john.milne@falkirk.gov.uk

Richard Teed - Forward Planning Officer
Education Services
Tel: 01324 506621
Email: richard.teed@falkirk.gov.uk

(i) National Context

Scottish Planning Policy (February 2010)

Designing Streets

PAN 45 (Annex)	Planning for Micro Renewables
PAN 51	Planning & Environmental Protection
PAN 60	Planning for Natural Heritage
PAN 61	Planning and Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems
PAN 65	Planning and Open Space
PAN 67	Housing Quality
PAN 68	Design Statements
PAN 69	Planning and Building Standards Advice on Flooding
PAN 76	New Residential Streets
PAN 77	Designing Safer Places
PAN 78	Inclusive Design
PAN 79	Water and Drainage
PAN 81	Community Engagement: Planning with People
PAN 84	Reducing Carbon Emissions in new Development

(ii) Local Context

Falkirk Council Local Plan

Policy EQ1	Sustainable Design Principles
Policy EQ3	Townscape Design
Policy EQ4	Landscape Design
Policy EQ5	Design and Community Safety
Policy EQ6	Design and Energy Use
Policy EQ25	Biodiversity
Policy EQ26	Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows
Policy EQ27	Watercourses
Policy EQ29	Outdoor Access
Policy SC4	Special Needs and Affordable Housing
Policy SC6	Housing Density and Amenity
Policy SC11	Developer Contributions to Community Infrastructure
Policy SC13	Open Space and Play Provision in New Residential Development
Policy SC14	Education and New Housing Development
Policy ST1	Core Path Network
Policy ST2	Pedestrian Travel and Cycling
Policy ST3	Bus Travel and New Development
Policy ST5	Managing Travel to School
Policy ST7	Transport Assessments
Policy ST11	Sustainable Urban Drainage
Policy ST12	Flooding
Policy 12A	Sewerage Infrastructure
Policy ST13	Telecommunications Development
Policy ST16A	Light Pollution
Policy ST19	Waste Reduction in New Development
Policy ST20	Renewable Energy Development

Supplementary Guidance Notes

Housing Layout and Design

Sustainable Design and Construction (Draft)

Flooding and Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems

Design Statements

Education and New Housing Development

Biodiversity and Development

Trees and Development

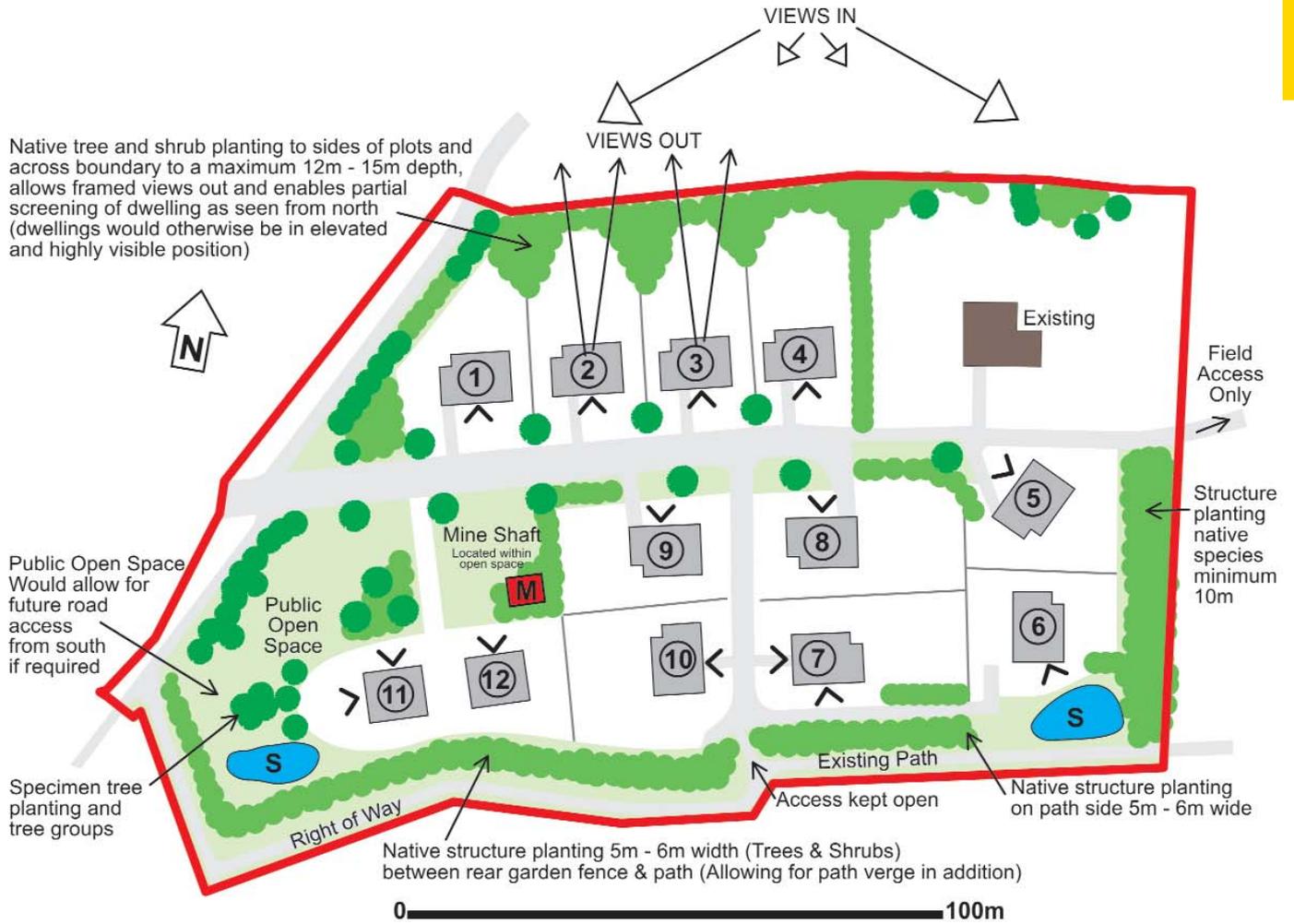
Affordable Housing

Development of Land Affected by Contaminated Land: Guidance for Applicants and Developers

Public Open Space, Falkirk Greenspace and New Development (Draft).

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APPENDIX 2 : Design Guidance/Possible Approach



Key

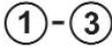
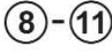
-  Site Boundary
-  SUDS pond
-  Specimen trees/tree groups in open space and at house frontages
-  Native tree & shrub mix in open space and at house plot boundaries
-  Public Open Space/Communal

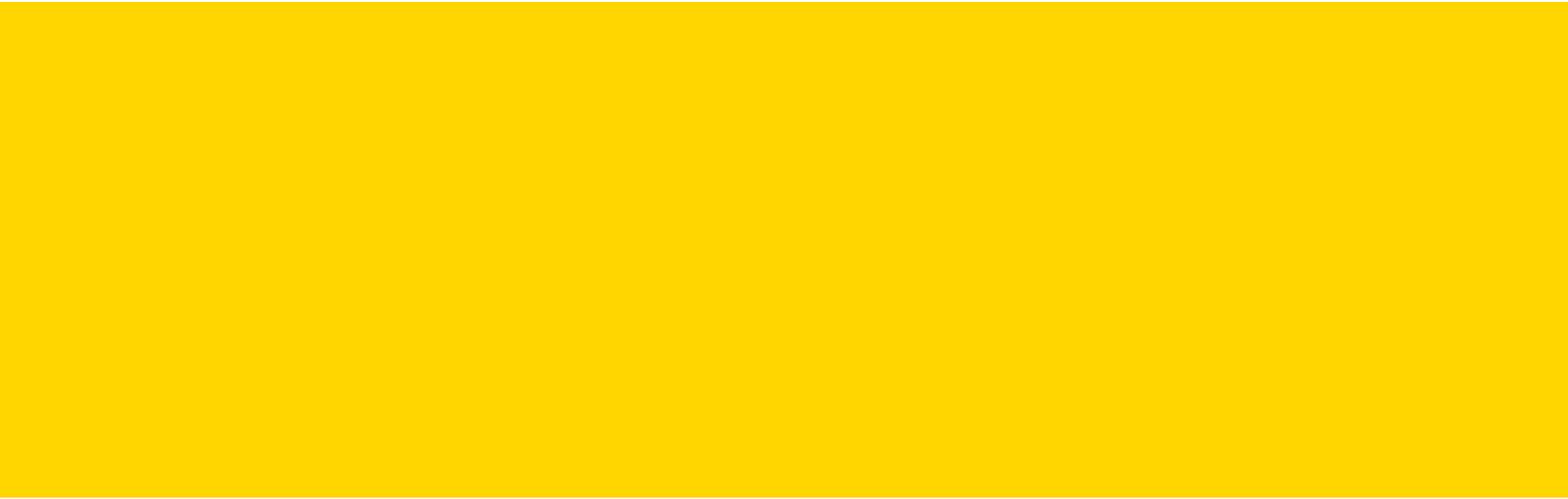
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APPENDIX 3 : Design Guidance/Possible Approach



Key

	Site Boundary		Core Path to link to development
	House Plots (frontages to all public roadways)		Public Open Space/Communal
	Surveillance/open outlook to right of way (ROW)		Landscape screen enclosure/ wall-hedge to street/ swathe at countryside edge
	Corner houses		Mine shaft
	Entrance from Church Road		SUDS pond
	Right of Way		





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Development Services