

3.0 Next Steps

3.1 EbD Sites

Under the recommendations of this report (Section 2), the PFBE suggests that two pieces of work are carried out to ensure consistency & quality across the district with new development (Section 2.1.3). These are suggested as the most important next steps in this process.

In addition to the 2016 and 2026 sites, many of the towns and villages identified for growth had 'EbD sites' identified during the course of the workshops. These sites were either offered up by owners who had missed the opportunity to do so during the call for sites at the outset of the SHLAA process, or were recommended by community representatives. Either way these sites now have to be assessed by the local authority through the SHLAA and STA processes. Once this is completed, they will be either recommended for inclusion as a 2016 or 2026 site, or will be withdrawn.

3.2. District Wide Design Guidance

There is a clear aspiration across the district, from both the community and local councils, that the character of new development should

respect and blend with the traditional character common across the South Hams district. If this is to be effectively achieved over the long term a coherent and consistent approach must be adopted to provide the planners with the necessary tools to facilitate the delivery of a quality of development that reflects local desires and needs.

This has been partly achieved with design guidance based on generic traditional urbanist principles and sketch designs for the 2016 sites recommended in this report. However, it is important to reiterate that the concept sketches provided are merely a graphical representation of the recommended principles and NOT a proposal. They show possible access points, pedestrian connections, potential block layouts and indicative plots. They also show potential



Above - Totnes: next steps and feedback session, Totnes EbD

higher density areas and mixed used locations. These are not Masterplans and a competent designer taking local context, topography plus their brief into account may produce a different plan, BUT the principles of permeability, simple block definition and structure will and should remain. This early guidance, although supported by generic principles and assessment criteria, only refers in any detail to the 2016 sites. The 2026 sites and the major growth areas of some towns like Kingsbridge would require further guidance to ensure the desired quality.

Future development in South Hams must respect the context, quality and character of the place as an essential prerequisite of the development process. Understanding the importance of

local distinctiveness across the district and

the role played by its towns and villages, is something developers and some agencies will, perhaps, need to relearn when determining new development. The South Hams district is arguably one of the UK's most outstanding areas of natural beauty with the built environment having formed a seamless bond with the rolling landscape. Unfortunately, the skill and careful planning of building within such a landscape has been notably lost in recent times. Most post war housing development is mediocre and most of the main towns are showing considerable signs of structural fragmentation as they begin to sprawl through sub-urban housing development.

The design and context of all new development should, therefore, evolve from this special local character. This means:

- ◆ Reinforcing positive design characteristics of an area
- ◆ Respecting scale, street patterns, landscape, local materials, colour palettes and style and detailing of surrounding areas
- ◆ Managing differences in building heights
- ◆ Including public areas that draw people together and create a sense of place
- ◆ routes which make a positive contribution to the quality of life
- ◆ Avoiding a wide variety of building styles and/or mixture of materials
- ◆ Creating and maintaining good quality views and vistas
- ◆ Forming harmonious composition with surrounding buildings or landscape features

These principles should be embedded within an adopted design guidance document for the district that builds on a character assessment of South Hams district and on its building and spatial typologies.

3.3 Guiding Growth: Masterplans

The Enquiry by Design opened up considerable debate and discussion around the future of towns and rural settlements across South Hams. Whilst much of the discussion was centred around growth numbers and affordable housing, there was considerable consensus around the need to masterplan in detail development patterns for the four main towns of Totnes, Dartmouth, Kingsbridge and Ivybridge.

All four towns are under pressure to accommodate new growth to 2016 and beyond. Some of this growth is already underway in places like Totnes and Dartmouth, where it is noticeably impacting

on the quality of the built environment. Ivybridge and Kingsbridge are also experiencing demand for development opportunities, which, because of their respective topographical and broader infrastructure constraints, means careful consideration needs to be given to long term, physical and economic growth and how this might impact on existing neighbourhood and town centres.

1 - Ivybridge Masterplan

During the Ivybridge workshop much discussion took place around the preferred locations for growth. Whilst there is an aspiration by the Town Council and community for further growth at Ivybridge, there is a recognition that further development can also bring problems, not least that of traffic and infrastructure provision.

Ivybridge has absorbed substantial growth during the last 40 years. However, much if not all of this development has been incremental and unplanned strategically and has failed to take account of neighbourhood evolution using the context of the town centre as a starting point. Housing estates in Ivybridge are composed almost entirely of cul-de-sac layouts with no integration between neighbourhoods or into their local context. As a direct consequence there is a general lack of local services within an acceptable walkable catchment. This encourages most people to get around Ivybridge by car and because there is only limited choice for shopping in the town centre, once in the car, most people are likely to continue their journey to Totnes or Plymouth. This has clearly impacted on economic growth and investment in the town centre in recent years.

Ivybridge is constrained in its pattern of growth to the north by the railway and to the south

by the A38. This has significantly affected the town's evolution, effectively 'squeezing' development between these two barriers and forcing development east and west. Any future proliferation of development at Ivybridge in this way, without a coherent plan being in place, will further exacerbate the problems of traffic and centrally located facilities.

SHLAA has identified a considerable short-term land bank to 2016 and beyond. It is clear that an already less than perfect growth pattern exists for Ivybridge, but it must accommodate growth in both the long and short term. In this way any new growth must look to 'retro fit' and address some of the highlighted weaknesses of the town. In this regard sufficient land has been identified along the eastern edge of Ivybridge as being the preferred location to accommodate future growth requirements to 2016 and beyond. A new Masterplan should explore the potential to create a new neighbourhood centre with provision for local services.

The area identified for growth is substantial and any consideration of this area through a Masterplan should ideally take a town wide view as to what impact this growth may have on Ivybridge. One suggestion from the workshops was the development of a sports 'zone' south of the A38 and the town centre releasing the rugby club land for development and contributing towards this eastern growth. There was also a wish to see a new junction on the A38 aligning with the eastern extension of the town.

2 - Dartmouth Masterplan

The historic town of Dartmouth is located along the banks of the River Dart at the head of the estuary leading into the English Channel and overlooked on all sides by green rolling

landscape. The history of the town along with its location has resulted in a dense fine grain town centre with winding streets and alleys. Due to high percentage of second home ownership, most residents can now not afford to live near the centre and waterfront. This has led to incremental growth along the main route into the town resulting in the growth of the adjoining village of Townstal.

This is now generating demand for new local services in Townstal, such as shopping, hospital and schooling. More recent development at the top of Townstal Road on entering Townstal is leading to a fragmentation of the urban grain and a poor sense of arrival into Dartmouth. As is common across South Hams in the recent past, this rapid growth on the fringe of Dartmouth at Townstal has produced sub-urban housing with poor links back to the historic centre. Townstal does not reflect the high quality built fabric and rich urban grain found in Dartmouth and is more typical of the post war sub-urban sprawl found in Totnes, Ivybridge and Kingsbridge.

Nevertheless, with this growth and the more recent creation of the beginnings of a neighbourhood centre, the EbD workshop identified land around the western edge of Townstal as the most likely expansion point to Dartmouth. However, the release of land here is likely to be ad hoc in the short-term, which in itself is a reason to produce and adopt a coherent Masterplan.

There is an opportunity at Dartmouth to plan for a vibrant new neighbourhood centre that will create a new sense of arrival into the town. The EbD workshop explored a range of options as to how far towards Venn Lane development might happen. Whilst none of these was conclusive, a Masterplan should explore how the boundaries

between Dartmouth and Stoke Fleming could be treated guarding against coalescence.

3 - Kingsbridge Masterplan

The workshop at Kingsbridge explored a large number of sites for potential allocation. The key constraints were sites being too difficult to develop due to steep or complex topography and town centre sites not capable of early assembly or delivery due to multiple ownerships.

Kingsbridge has typically started to grow away from its historic centre, particularly to the south. This has resulted in the town form fragmenting as it expands away from the centre. The workshop tried to rectify this by accepting steep sites as possible opportunities for growth, but these were further constrained by access and narrow lanes. The result was a strategy for the town that would follow two routes – firstly a town centre Masterplan or plans to consider how the centre could accommodate more employment and higher density residential without destroying its original character and, secondly, to consider the western growth of the town onto land that was both available and suitable.

A Masterplan is, therefore, required to assess how development might be structured and phased along the western edge of Kingsbridge. The guidance offered in this report does suggest a way in which this may occur, but apart from these principles and constraining the plan to the north western quarter of the town, ideally a town

wide strategy should be considered which may result in a series of linked Masterplans.

During the workshop there was also a tendency to relocate commercial and other uses to large single use sites out of town. A Masterplan should explore how mixed-use development, including the provision of new homes be incorporated into the development of new neighbourhoods along the western growth area of the town.

4 - Totnes Masterplan

The future pattern of growth in Totnes is likely to be complex and challenging and will require a thorough and coherent approach in bringing about delivery of growth and regeneration. The town has some notable constraints due to the River Dart and the surrounding topography. Nevertheless, sufficient land for housing and employment uses has been identified to 2016 as part of the EbD exercise. The grouping of sites, plus the fact that there were limited opportunities near the town centre, suggested a Masterplan for the area surrounding the railway station including a longer term view of Borough Park and the employment area along Babbage Road. In addition, the area would extend out to the north west of the town incorporating the Meadowside sites, KEVICC, and the Dairy Crest site. Development planned for KEVICC upper school site allied to these available and deliverable sites, means that development is likely to happen between now and 2016.



Above - Totnes: feedback discussions regarding site allocation and masterplans; Opposite page -



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