

**SOUTH HAMS DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE**

**SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF SMALL  
SITES**

**D R A F T**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

1. This document sets out the Council's objectives and targets towards achieving high quality and sustainable development on small sites. It applies to small developments of approximately 20 dwellings and under, or sites of up to 0.5 hectares for housing, employment or mixed-use schemes.
2. Such developments will typically be located within or adjoining the smaller rural settlements scattered across the District, but the guidelines equally apply to small sites within the market towns and other larger urban areas, whether on greenfield or previously developed land. In many cases these sites will have been proposed in the local plan. However, the criteria also apply to other small sites which may come forward for development, such as windfall sites or applications for alternative use.
3. The District Council has a clear responsibility to help deliver Central Government's commitment to the principle and objectives of sustainable development. The South Hams Local Plan has a key role in helping to achieve this at a local level. The objectives which underpin the government's approach to sustainable development are the foundations of this guidance.
4. In simple terms, the concept of sustainable development seeks to meet the needs of the present generation while protecting and enhancing quality of life and the environment for future generations. This inter-relationship of local and global issues is complex. However, it is important to recognise that the way in which the local environment is developed and managed can both raise environmental standards and the quality of life for people today and make a contribution to the long term goals of sustainable development.
5. This document therefore includes matters such as the use of renewable natural resources, locally distinctive design, access for local people to the housing market and how to sustain and enhance the environment (good arable land and water quality, diversity of wildlife and habitat, adequate woodland cover and so on) for successive generations.
6. It is critical that the principles and objectives of sustainable development and quality design are taken into account throughout the planning process, from the initial site appraisal and design and the materials and techniques of construction to the sense of community achieved within the development and in its contribution to the existing settlement. This document is therefore intended as a guide to help developers work with the District Council to deliver sustainable quality small site developments. All development proposals will need to demonstrate, as part of the planning application submission, how the guidance has been considered and how the required measures and targets set out in Appendix 1 will be met.

### **A STEP BY STEP GUIDE TO SUSTAINABLE SMALL SITE DEVELOPMENT**

7. The Council will expect development proposals to follow three main steps:
  - Site appraisal
  - Design principles

- Planning application and implementation

The planning application should include the site appraisal and design principles as additional information. At each stage in this process, it will be useful to particularly bear in mind:

- (a) How the development reflects local distinctiveness, and
- (b) If the development is environmentally sustainable.

### **Site Appraisal**

8. An assessment of the site – essentially an environmental audit – should cover the following:

- a) The planning policy context, including local plan policies and proposals, supplementary planning guidance or concept statements and identification of any protected designations, including:
  - landscape, such as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Areas of Great Landscape Value;
  - nature conservation sites, such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest, County Wildlife or Geological Sites and Local Nature Reserves;
  - historic areas/structures, such as Conservation Areas, Listed Buildings and archaeological sites and monuments;
  - mineral reserves;
  - agricultural land (grade of site and adjoining land).
- b) Current land uses on the site and adjoining land and opportunities to re-use buildings or land.
- c) Summary of available infrastructure, including:
  - Public transport to a range of facilities (such as shops, post offices, schools) and to the nearest town;
  - Nearby pedestrian and cycle routes to local facilities (within ½ mile);
  - Immediate local road network;
  - Local facilities such as post offices, shops and schools (either within the village or within 1 mile in an urban area);
  - Capacity of local primary and secondary schools to accommodate further development;
  - Capacity of statutory utilities (gas, electricity, water supply and disposal) to accommodate proposed development.

The developer should identify both the existing provision and shortfalls resulting from the proposed development.

- d) A description of the site and its relationship to its surroundings, both natural environment and built form, to demonstrate that the proposal has taken into account both the local setting and the characteristics of the site itself.

- e) An analysis of the surrounding landscape character and local topography (valley, hill, forest and farmland). Existing and proposed site levels and, where appropriate, cross sections should be identified to demonstrate how the development will fit into the local setting and landscape. This should include proposed building heights in relation to local topography and adjoining existing development. To assess the visual impact of the development, key views into and out of the site should be considered. Account should also be taken of privacy in respect of existing properties and within the new development.
- f) An assessment of settlement character, building pattern and local materials. The form and layout of new development should take account of its position in relation to the character and building pattern of the locality, adjoining landscape characteristics and function of the development (i.e. whether residential or mixed) in addition to any density requirements set out in the Local Plan. A description of local traditional building materials should be included alongside a schedule of the proposed construction materials (for buildings, hard landscaping and access provision), to be used. A high percentage of recycled building materials, locally sourced aggregates and wood from managed forests should be used (see Appendix 1).
- g) A review of all existing natural and historic features and wildlife within the site and on its boundaries. These include trees and hedgerows (variety), habitats and species, watercourses and ponds and should be detailed on a site plan.
- h) An investigation into the effect of the proposed development on any archaeological, historic or other special/protected feature must be carried out in consultation with the appropriate body, including local amenity or wildlife groups.
- i) An assessment of the site condition. This should include consideration of potential flood risk (in consultation with the Environment Agency), ground stability, subsoil structure and condition and land contamination. Areas of the site thereby constrained from development should be highlighted on a site plan.
- j) The local climate and ecology can be used to contribute to the sustainability of the development and these need to be assessed prior to the design stage as they will affect matters such as site levels and type of soft landscaping (especially trees) used for windbreaks and so on. Site layout, the orientation of buildings, design, density and landscaping are important considerations in using climate factors to reduce energy consumption. It will be important to demonstrate how these have been inter-related.

### **Design Principles**

9. This section sets out the way in which the design of the development should be approached to help achieve the measures and targets highlighted in Appendix 1. The site appraisal should be used to inform the design and final detailed scheme.

The following design principles are aimed at achieving high quality design in a sustainable way.

## **a) Locality**

The principle of 'locality' should be a key starting point for sustainable planning and quality of design. The aim is for each locality to be as self-sufficient and distinctive as possible with different types of housing, local jobs and facilities and developed using local resources (such as building materials, water and energy) to reduce travel, pollution and waste. Each new small site development should aim to make a contribution to the quality and self-sufficiency of its locality.

## **b) Design**

The design of all new development needs to go beyond the standard building pattern and design often seen today. It should reflect and enhance the distinctive character of the locality (whether greenfield site or urban infill) and incorporate where possible other uses within the site (for example workshops, play areas, quality open space) to increase quality of life, local diversity and self-sufficiency. All new developments should complement the existing pattern of development in the area.

## **c) Housing**

A diversity of housing type is important both to meet local housing needs and to sustain and create balanced communities. It is also important to consider the needs of any specially identified groups such as the elderly or young families. Consideration of factors such as gradient of site, public transport and proximity of local facilities will be important (for instance, schools ideally should be within 500m of young families).

For developments of up to 5 units there need not necessarily be a range of housing type on site but the development should enhance, complement and diversify the range of housing in the locality.

For developments of approximately 6-20 units, there should be a mix of dwellings and garden size. The latter should not be entirely based upon housing type.

## **d) Movement**

A greater proportion of journeys made by foot and cycle improves quality of life, reduces pollution and provides a safer and less stressful environment. People can be encouraged to walk or cycle by the design of new development. A circulation plan is helpful to indicate pedestrian and cycle networks within the site and to nearby routes and facilities. The pattern of development should aim to incorporate easy, safe and pleasant pedestrian and cycling routes. 'Safe routes' to schools and playgrounds should be incorporated where relevant. Pedestrian and cycle routes, including school routes, should be safe and where possible overlooked by houses or local facilities.

Traffic calming should be achieved by carriageway design if possible rather than humps, as the latter create a noisier environment and increase pollution. The development should aim to give pedestrians and cyclists priority within the site and vehicular traffic 'calmed' to 20mph in residential parts of the development.

## **e) Energy**

Energy efficiency and reducing the need to travel should be key objectives. The Government is committed to reducing CO2 emissions by 20% by 2011. Private transport and housing energy each equal about half a family's energy budget.

Developments should use as much locally sourced material, including re-used materials, as local availability permits. The proportion, investigation into availability and type of material should be specified. The use of resilient and energy efficient building materials (including insulation), a good level of solar orientation and aspect will be important.

Every development between 6-20 dwellings should detail an energy strategy, specify the NHER performance and the probable range of energy consumption.

## **f) Water**

Development should be designed to safeguard the availability and quality of water supplies, avoid problems of flooding and create water-related habitats where possible. Water features can add to the quality and distinctiveness of the development.

The long term sustainability of water availability and quality is linked to reducing extraction from rivers and groundwater, grey water recycling, replenishing ground water supplies, providing wildlife havens, and avoiding drainage systems which cause flooding downstream and destroy habitats.

The proposal needs to demonstrate that it has taken these matters into account, has protected the local water systems from pollution, incorporated sustainable urban drainage systems and consulted with the Environment Agency on potential flooding, sewage disposal and water quality.

## **g) Open Space and Wildlife**

Development should aim to provide increased local open space provision, enhance wildlife habitats and contribute to local greenspace and footpaths and wildlife corridors. This can include the provision of a playground or public landscaped area but the design should also consider open space networks within the site and at site entry/exit points. Existing site features, such as hedgerows, mature trees and wildlife habitats should be retained where possible and incorporated into the design. New natural features to encourage wildlife should also be incorporated into the development.

It may also be possible to incorporate space for allotments for householders with small gardens on site or on adjacent land, subject to agreements secured as part of the planning permission.

## **h) Archaeology, Historic and Other Special Features**

Some features will need to be entirely protected from development whilst others can be incorporated into the scheme to add interest and individuality.

## Planning Application And Implementation Strategy

10. The developer should demonstrate that all the above matters have been taken into account in the proposal. A written explanation should accompany any application for planning permission describing the site appraisal and assessing the proposals against the design principles set out in this guidance. In addition, a schedule of the targets and measures achieved should be included. This should detail matters such as site layout in relation to design considerations (local distinctiveness, quality of living, climatic factors and so on), the percentage of locally sourced building materials and means of sustainable construction methods (soil protection and retention for example) and energy consumption levels (such as home energy, including insulation, design considerations and distance to local facilities).

The District Council will consider and determine small site development proposals against a checklist which will include the following:

- a) Do the design principles achieve local distinctiveness and sustainable development?
- b) Does the development include a range and mix of housing types, including provision of secured affordable housing to meet local needs?
- c) Measures for environmental protection and mitigation of impact.
- d) Minimising waste.
- e) Provision of community infrastructure and its management, including voluntary involvement.
- f) Measures for pedestrian and community safety.
- g) The proportion of locally sourced building materials, the estimated energy consumption per size of dwelling and the extent of the use of local labour.
- h) What additional facilities and features have been incorporated into the design, such as pedestrian cycle ways, wildlife habitats and community focal points.

Appendix 1 sets out the detail of the sustainable development targets and measures each small site proposal should aim to reach.

A) Objectives and Principles	B) Targets / Measures	C) Some Suggested Actions
<b>1.0 Resources</b>		
<u>1.1 Mimimise use of non-renewable resources</u>	Energy audits should be prepared for each building type	Use recycled building materials Use locally sourced aggregates and stone Use wood from local managed forests Recycling and composting of waste
<u>1.2 Minimise energy use</u>	Essential services nearby High quality insulation	Super insulation (such as triple glazing windows) South facing window exaggerated & north facing minimised Use low energy embodied products and building materials Natural ventilation and air conditioning
<u>1.3 Renewable energy production</u>	On-site energy generation Imported energy from renewable sources	Solar/ photo-voltaic/wind power Combined heat and power/passive solar heating through design
<u>1.4 Minimise water demand</u>	Maximum water use of 60 litres per person per day, falling to 40 litres (pppd) by 2025 Metering of 100% of dwellings No potable water to be used for toilet flushing	Grey water recycling Promotion of water saving devices such as cistern devices Spray taps on sinks used for hand washing
<u>1.5 Conserve water resource</u>	Zero negative impact on all water courses such as contamination and storm water scouring, instead aiding the replenishment of the water table	Wherever possible installation of 'sustainable urban drainage systems' Maximise permeable surfaces Minimise excessive water abstraction
<u>1.6 Soil conservation</u>	Avoid high grade agricultural land and areas prone to flooding No import or export of soil from the site during construction	Reed bed filtration for surface water drainage Protect soil heaps from erosion during construction and cover to avoid washing into local watercourses
<u>1.8 Maximise the re-use of existing land and buildings,</u>	If possible locate new development on previously used land	All new housing to ensure adequate internal and external space

<b>A) Objectives and Principles</b>	<b>B) Targets / Measures</b>	<b>C) Some Suggested Actions</b>
<u>minimise the use of greenfield sites</u>	New housing densities to be developed at a minimum of 30 units per hectare net	Combine different housing types and tenures
<b>2.0 Environment</b>		
<u>2.1 Safeguard, protect and promote the natural environment</u>	Protect, enhance, create and manage landscape quality and character Protect, preserve, enhance, create and manage valuable site habitats, such as ponds and mature trees Promote river and floodplain rehabilitation	Provide green spaces to create a pleasant environment, minimise environmental impact and promote urban wildlife and biodiversity Provide sustainable urban drainage systems such as reed beds to clean run off water and provide important habitats Maximise trees and greenery to integrate into the surrounding landscape and provide a variety of habitats
<u>2.2 Clean Air</u>	Existing site air quality maintained or improved	Minimise use of private car Protect and plant trees and greenery where possible
<u>2.3 Minimise light pollution</u>	Particularly between 23.00 hrs and 07.00 hrs No outdoor/street lighting in daylight hours	Photo-sensitive lighting to avoid wasted day street-lighting
<u>2.4 Minimise noise disturbance during construction and after</u>	Sound insulation Locate noise sensitive uses away from major roads	Design, layout and materials Quieter technologies and buffering Highway design to minimise noise from traffic
<u>2.5 Minimise and re-use all types of waste, and minimise any adverse environmental impacts</u>	Effective waste collection and recycling Opportunity to compost	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compost facilities in street or neighbourhood areas</li> <li>• Sufficient, convenient and accessible sites for community recycling</li> </ul> Suitable bins Re-use and recycle building materials <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimise waste output from domestic and commercial sources</li> </ul>
<b>3.0 Design</b>		

<b>A) Objectives and Principles</b>	<b>B) Targets / Measures</b>	<b>C) Some Suggested Actions</b>
<b><u>3.1 Adaptability</u></b>	Adaptable homes and offices for life	Adaptive design to allow easy conversion for changes such as adding extensions or provision of downstairs bathroom and bedroom • Maximum use of roof space
<b><u>3.2 Housing - provision of a full range of housing types including an appropriate level of social and affordable housing</u></b>	Range of housing types and tenures to accommodate all age groups and household sizes Appropriate provision of affordable housing, mixed throughout site	Work with Housing Associations and registered social landlords Integration of rented accommodation, housing for the elderly, family homes and property at each end of the market to create sense of mixed community
<b><u>3.3 Local distinctiveness – design of all buildings, must provide strong links to local and historic patterns, traditions and materials, creating a strong sense of place</u></b>	Design for diversity, interest, scale, and to create a sense of place Sustainable technologies	Traditional local materials; subtle inclusion of new technologies Designs in keeping with their surroundings Concept statements, development briefs and design guides
<b>3.4 Personal safety and freedom from crime</b>	Neighbourhood watch schemes Cycle and pedestrian network 100% 'Secured by design' approval for all buildings 20 MPH 'Home zones' for residential areas through design	Design and layout of development to minimise crime and maximise feeling of safety Safe pedestrian crossing points on roads and pedestrian priority/slow speeds in residential areas CCTV, automatic domestic sprinklers & other design features to improve safety

<b>4.0 Community</b>		
<u>4.1 Services should be accessible by all residents by sustainable modes of travel, especially walking and cycling. Opportunities to participate in culture, leisure and recreation are readily available to all.</u>	<p>Maximum accessibility distances</p> <p>Local area for play (LAP's) – 100M</p> <p>Equipped LAP's (LEAP) – 400M</p> <p>Neigh'hd LEAP's (NEAP) – 1KM</p> <p>Local Shop – 400M</p> <p>Bus Stop – 400M</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allotments – 400M</li> </ul> <p>Crèche/Primary School – 500M</p> <p>Pub/social meeting place – 1KM</p> <p>Community Hall – 1KM</p> <p>Library/Cultural Centre – 1KM</p> <p>Leisure centre – 1KM</p> <p>Secondary School – 1KM</p> <p>Health Centre – 1KM</p> <p>Town Square/Retail Centre – 1KM</p> <p>Woodland/informal open area – 1KM</p> <p>Composting Facility – 1KM</p>	<p>Ease of movement and access via foot, cycle and public transport</p> <p>New housing developments to be developed at a density of at least 30 units per hectare net</p>
<u>4.2 Community Health</u>	Integrated healthcare	<p>Consult and make contribution to regional hospital/appropriate health provider</p> <p>Integrated health care includes overall lifestyle options and access for all, including the disabled, to leisure facilities such as parks, gymnasiums and allotments</p>
<u>4.3 Service integration</u>	Integrated service provision	
<u>4.4 Community mix</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incorporate mixed uses and accessibility to job opportunities, mixed house types and tenures</li> </ul>	<p>Locate employment uses in accessible sites</p> <p>Integrate/mix housing types and tenures</p> <p>Mix land-uses where appropriate</p>
<u>4.5 Community information</u>	Community information via intranet	All residences to have easy potential access to the internet

<b><u>4.6 Social Cohesion</u></b>	Sense of community	Minimise isolation through design
<b><u>5.0 Economy</u></b>		
<b>5.1 Localise economic activity so money remains longer in the local economy.</b>	Enable as many of the community as possible to work locally Effective public transport	Adequate provision of employment land and buildings

<p><u>5.2 Reduce travel need and increase community cohesion by mixing land uses</u></p>	<p>Trips to employment by foot, cycle or public transport</p>	<p>Dwellings a maximum of 400 metres away from public transport</p>
<p><b>6.0 Transport</b></p>		
<p><u>6.1 Maximise sustainable travel, reduce car travel and provide routes for cycling and walking</u></p>	<p>Provision of and links to footways, cycle ways and public transport to link home and place of work, school, leisure, etc. by an effective network of routes 20 MPH home zones for residential areas through design Designs should meet the expectations of all users, including the disabled High quality facilities for pedestrians, cyclists and mobility impaired</p>	<p>Homes, places of work and facilities should all be easily reached by public transport Safe and direct public footpaths and cycle lanes should receive priority Safe road crossing points and pedestrian priority where appropriate Safe cycle lock up points and secure and covered storage facilities for bicycles, including at home Quality lighting and CCTV as appropriate Access for all to services and facilities</p>
<p><u>6.2 Local route network</u></p>	<p>Zero personal injury accidents target</p>	<p>Existing smaller routes and lanes retained for non-car use New roads should include cycle lanes Ample pedestrian walkways and safe crossing points</p>
<p><u>6.3 Parking strategy</u></p>	<p>Provide sufficient parking whilst reducing the dominance of the car</p>	<p>Provide 1.5 spaces per dwelling on site and some residences sharing parking areas.</p>