

TAYLOR WIMPEY LTD

Application for approval of reserved matters following Outline Application 42/14/0069 for the appearance, landscape, layout and scale for the erection of 70 No. dwellings, hard and soft landscaping, car parking including garages, internal access roads, footpaths and circulation areas, public open space and drainage with associated infrastructure and engineering works (Phase 1a Parcel H1b) on land at Comeytrowe/Trull

Location: LAND AT COMEYTROWE/TRULL

Grid Reference: 319891.123359

Reserved Matters

Recommendation

Recommended decision: Approval

Recommended Conditions (if applicable)

1. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:

(A1) DrNo PL-TW-03 Rev N Planning Layout

(A1) DrNo PL-TW-04 Rev F Materials Plan

(A1) DrNo PL-TW-05 Rev E Boundary Treatments plan

(A3) DrNo PL-TW-05.1 Boundary Treatments

(A1) DrNo PL-TW-06 Rev D Presentation Layout

(A3) DrNo HT-TW-PT21-01 Rev D Housetype Planning Drawing PT22

(A3) DrNo HT-TW-NA20-01 Rev C Housetype Planning Drawing NA20

(A3) DrNo HT-TW-NA20-02 Rev C Housetype Planning Drawing NA20

(A3) DrNo HT-TW-NT30-01 Rev C Housetype Planning Drawing NT30

(A3) DrNo HT-TW-NT30-01 Rev C Housetype Planning Drawing NA30

(A3) DrNo HT-TW-NT31-01 Rev C Housetype Planning Drawing NT31

(A3) DrNo HT-TW-NT31-02 Rev D Housetype Planning Drawing NT31

(A3) DrNo HT-TW-NT31-03 Rev C Housetype Planning Drawing NT31

(A3) DrNo HT-TW-NT32-01 Rev D Housetype Planning Drawing NA32

(A3) DrNo HT-TW-NA32-02 Rev E Housetype Planning Drawing NA32

(A3) DrNo HT-TW-NA32-03 Rev C Housetype Planning Drawing NA32

(A3) DrNo HT-TW-NA32-04 Rev E Housetype Plannong Drawing NA32

(A3) DrNo HT-TW-NA42-01 Rev C Housetype Planning Drawing NA42

(A3) DrNo HT-TW-NA42-02 Rev C Housetype Planning Drawing NA42

(A3) DrNo HT-TW-NA45-01 Rev D Housetype Planning Drawing NA45

(A3) DrNo HT-TW-GAR-01 Rev A Single Garage Single Owner

(A3) DrNo HT-TW-GAR-02 Rev A Double Garage Double Owner

(A1) DrNo SS-TW-01 Rev D Street Scenes & Site Section

(A1) DrNo SS-TW-02 Street Scene F-F

(A0) DrNo BRL-L-N1-PL200 Rev A Planting Plan

(A0) DrNo BRL-L-N1-PL201 Rev F Planting Plan Sheet 1

(A0) DrNo BRL-L-N1-PL200 Rev A Planting Plan

(A1) DrNo 02-ATR-1001 Rev F Fire Tender Tracking Plan

(A1) DrNo 02-ATR-1101 Rev F Refuse Vehicle Tracking Plan

(A1) DrNo 02-DR-1001 Rev G Preliminary Drainage Layout

(A1) DrNo 02-GA-1001 Rev E Preliminary Highway Levels Plan

(A1) DrNo 02-GA-1002 Rev E Preliminary Highway Levels Plan

(A1) DrNo 02-GA-1201 Rev E Preliminary Junction Visibility

(A1) DrNo 02-RP-1001 Rev C Preliminary Road Profile

(A1) DrNo 02-RP-1002 Rev C Preliminary Road Profile

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

2. Prior to the construction of the buildings above damp proof course level (dpc), samples of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details and thereafter maintained as such, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To safeguard the character and appearance of the building/area.

3. Prior to the construction above base course level of the roads, footways and cycleways show on on the approved plans, a hard landscape scheme shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority showing details of the hard surface treatment of the roads, footways, cycleways, driveways and paths and a programme of implementation. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of the appearance of the development and the surrounding area.

Notes to Applicant

1. Your attention is drawn to the original conditions on permission 42/14/0069 which still need to be complied with.
2. Development, insofar as it affects a right of way should not be started, and the right of way should be kept open for public use until the necessary (diversion/stopping up) Order has come into effect. Failure to comply with this requirement may result in the developer being prosecuted if the path is built on or otherwise interfered with.

3. In accordance with paragraph 38 of the National Planning Policy Framework the Council has worked in a positive and pro-active way with the applicant and entered into pre-application discussions to enable the grant of planning permission.

Proposal

Reserved matters approval is sought, for the appearance, landscape, layout and scale of 70 dwellings, hard and soft landscaping, car parking including garages, internal access roads, footpaths and circulation areas, public open space and drainage with associated infrastructure and engineering works (Phase 1 - Parcel H1B) on land at Comeytrove/Trull. This is the first reserved matters approval sought in relation to the appearance, landscape, layout and scale of housing at this strategic site, and follows the approval by committee of reserved matters relating to strategic infrastructure for the western neighbourhood.

The outline application for this 2000 dwelling development was accompanied by a viability assessment, which made assumptions around the costs and timescales for delivery of this strategic site, with the delivery of affordable housing being agreed at 17.5%. However, it is noted that following the allocation of funding by Homes England, affordable provision across the site is being supplemented with 'additionality' affordable units (to be delivered on the Vistry sub-phases), raising affordable housing delivery to a total of 35% across the urban extension.

The 70 dwellings (58 market, 12 affordable) in parcel H1b are a sub-phase of Housing Phase 1 which will comprise a total of 600 dwellings, in accordance with the agreed Phasing Plan. Phase H1B is located centrally within the western neighbourhood, and will be surrounded on all side by future phases consisting of residential development to the north, south and west, and employment development to the east. Future development is also expected to include a play area within an area of open space to the north east of sub-phase H1B.

Plans show the layout of dwellings in two blocks, each side of the approved primary road (also known as the spine road), which travels from the site access in an east/westerly direction. The northern block also fronts onto a "cycle lane" to the north, which provides a cycle route from this development to connect to the existing cycle path off Lloyd Close.

The primary road also includes a shared cycle and pedestrian path, which will provide a cycle link through the site from the entrance to the western neighbourhood at the A38 and the entrance to the eastern neighbourhood at Trull. The principle and layout (within the western neighbourhood) of this cycle path were approved as part of the Outline (42/14/0069) and Infrastructure Reserved Matters (42/19/0053) consents. In order to ensure the safety of cyclists, parking has provided in rear access courts for properties on the northern side of the primary road.

To the east of the parcel the existing public footpath travels in a north-south direction, this footpath is incorporated into the proposed layout.

The proposed dwellings are all two storey properties, the majority being houses, with three FOGs (Flats over Garages) at the entrances to parking courts. Twelve

affordable dwellings are provided to the south of the site, in accordance with Section 106 obligations.

The proposed dwellings consist of a mixture of detached, semi-detached and terraced properties. The majority of dwellings are of a simple rectangular floorplan with pitched roofs. All dwellings have allocated parking as well as cycle storage in shed or garages.

Landscaping is proposed within the parcel including trees on all streets, hedges to provide boundaries, landscaping within parking courts and vertical planting.

Houses are provided with water butts to provide an on-plot sustainable drainage solution, with permeable paving provided in communal areas of hard landscaping. These measures compliment the strategic Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SuDS) agreed as part of the Infrastructure reserved matters application (42/19/0053)

Since submission a number of amendments to plans have been sought and submitted. These are set out more fully below but in summary provided additional detailing to the proposed dwellings, amendments to better respond to urban design principles and improvements to proposed landscaping.

Site Description

Outline consent with all matters reserved (except points of access) has been granted for a residential and mixed use urban extension at Comeytrove/Trull to include up to 2,000 dwellings, up to 5.25ha of employment land, 2.2ha of land for a primary school, a mixed use local centre and a 300 space 'park and bus' facility (application ref. 42/14/0069). The site area for the outline application was approx. 118ha and was bounded by the A38 Wellington Road to the north-west, the suburb and parish of Comeytrove to the north and north-east and the farmland of Higher Comeytrove Farm to the south. The Blackdown Hills AONB is located approximately 2.5 miles to the south of the site.

The area submitted for approval with this application comprises sub-phase H1B (approximately 2.4ha) of the site and includes land within the parishes of Bishop's Hull, and Trull, with the majority of the sub-phase falling within Trull.

The majority of the site is currently in agricultural use, with small groupings of housing and farms scattered along the existing lanes, none of which adjoin this sub-phase. The site is characterised by a rolling landscape, with a number of substantial hedgerows and trees that help to define the existing field boundaries of the site. This sub-phase includes such a field boundary to the western boundary, which has been incorporated into the proposed layout.

The land gently undulates, with the highest points on the wider site in the north and north-west and lowest points around Galmington Stream. Within this sub-phase the highest points are at the north-west and south-west, with the land gently sloping down both towards the centre of the sub-phase where the primary road is located, and towards the east of the sub-phase.

There are no trees of note within this sub-phase.

On the north of this sub-phase some former chicken sheds are sited. These have been granted approval for removal under the prior approval process and this demolition has recently been taking place. A number of Public Rights of Way and historic lanes cross the wider site, with a Right of Way situated to the western boundary of this sub-phase and providing a footpath link between the junction of the A38/Jeffreys Way to the north and Higher Comeytrove farm to the south.

Relevant Planning History

Ref. 42/14/0069 - Outline planning permission with all matters reserved (except access) for a residential and mixed use urban extension at Comeytrove/Trull to include up to 2,000 dwellings, up to 5.25ha of employment land, 2.2ha of land for a primary school, a mixed use local centre and a 300 space 'park and bus' facility. Approved 8 August 2019.

Ref. 42/19/0053 - Application for approval of reserved matters following outline application 42/14/0069 for construction of the strategic infrastructure associated with the Western Neighbourhood, including the spine road and infrastructure roads; green infrastructure and ecological mitigation; strategic drainage, earth re-modelling works and associated retaining walls on land at Comeytrove/Trull. Approved 18 March 2020.

Ref. 42/20/0005/DM - Prior notification of proposed demolition of chicken coops on land south west of Taunton. No objection subject to conditions 21 February 2020.

Ref. 42/20/0022/FPD - Footpath Diversion Application Public Footpath reference T29/11 South West Taunton Comeytrove. Concurrent application still under consideration.

Ref. 42/20/0024 - Application for approval of reserved matters following outline application 42/14/0069 for the erection of a foul pumping station, water booster station and gas pressure reducing station to serve the permitted 2000 dwellings on land at Comeytrove/Trull. (Deemed invalid)

Ref. 42/20/0031 - Application for approval of reserved matters in respect of appearance, landscape, layout and scale, following outline application 42/14/0069, for Phase H1A for the erection of 75 No. dwellings, hard and soft landscaping, car parking including garages, internal access roads, footpaths and circulation areas, public open space and drainage with associated infrastructure and engineering works with additional details as required by Condition No's 7, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 18, 19, 20, 21 and 23 on land at Comeytrove/Trull. Concurrent application still under consideration.

Consultation Responses

BISHOP'S HULL PARISH COUNCIL – Objection:-

- No public open space, play provision or local amenities provided as part of this sub-phase.
- Spine road and school both need to be constructed at an early stage in the

development.

- 2014 Flood Risk Assessment is inadequate, a new survey should be required.

COMEYTROWE PARISH COUNCIL – Comments:-

- Proposal at odds with climate emergency.
- Application should be accompanied by an Environmental Impact Assessment
- Spine road and school both need to be constructed at an early stage in the development.
- Impact on local area needs careful consideration.
- Need to ensure development does not impact on flooding.
- Hedgerows along the A38 have been removed without consultation.
- Comments provided in relation to future sub-phases regarding density and green infrastructure, and in relation to future enforcement issues.

TRULL PARISH COUNCIL – Objection:-

- Application is not in accordance with Trull Neighbourhood Plan.
- SUDs scheme is not acceptable.
- Application requires the removal of hedgerows.
- Affordable housing is grouped together.
- Inadequate space for refuse storage.
- Design of houses and layout is poor quality and not in accordance with garden town initiative.
- Inadequate provision of parking spaces.
- Lack of renewable energy provision.
- Inadequate consultation.

NATURAL ENGLAND – No objection.

ENVIRONMENT AGENCY – No objection

HIGHWAYS ENGLAND – No objection

HISTORIC ENGLAND – No objection

SCC - TRANSPORT DEVELOPMENT GROUP – Comments:-

- Proposed layout broadly acceptable
- Detailed points made that will need to be considered by the developer as part of their technical highways submission for the road.

SCC RIGHTS OF WAY – No objection:-

- Informative note to advise regarding proposed works which must not encroach on the right of way

SCC ASSETTS – No comments.

LEAD LOCAL FLOOD AUTHORITY – Objection 2 March 2020:-

- On-plot SuDS required in addition to strategic SuDS features already agreed.
- Features that encourage natural losses, manage shorter, intense storm events and minimise blockage and pollution risk (source control) to the strategic network are considered necessary here to ensure the longevity of the overall scheme.
- Thorough review of sub-phases ability to provide on-plot SuDS features required.

LEAD LOCAL FLOOD AUTHORITY – Comments 22 June 2020:-

- More robust review of the SuDS opportunities has now been undertaken.
- Subject to conditions to cover the necessary technical details no objection to this phase.

TREE OFFICER – Comments:-

- Layout doesn't give much scope for larger, broader trees to be incorporated.
- There are sufficient trees shown but too many are narrow varieties, replacement of some narrow trees with rounded or oval shaped required.
- General issue with small trees that are not in public open space, it is difficult to prevent these being removed/damaged by residents.
- Arboricultural technical notes acceptable.

LANDSCAPE – Comments 14 April 2020:-

- Right of Way to west of site should be revised to provide a clearer experience for pedestrians
- Gaps between the in line parking spaces for properties T32 to T21, if this necessary?
- Palette of planting limited which does not provide sufficient variety for visual interest.
- Bulb drifts required for flush of colour in public facing grassed areas.
- Additional trees should be provided within parking courts where space allows.
- Insufficient landscaping between parking for plots T6-T17.
- Perennial planning for verge along spine road to create rain gardens.
- Hedged boundaries along spine road should sit behind railings, with estate-style railings suggested.

LANDSCAPE – Comments 19 May 2020:-

- All previous comments have been picked up and responded to.
- Need to ensure there is not a complete dearth of trees to the south side of spine road, this can be picked up as on future sub-phases.
- Concern over use of brick walls when stone walls are more typical of Trull/Comeytrove.
- Shape and size of trees along spine road now acceptable and agreed with Tree Officer.

HOUSING ENABLING – Objection 18 March 2020:-

- Affordable Housing Unit mix is acceptable for this reserved matters application.
- House type NA30 meets space requirement for 3 bed/4 person unit but not 5/6 person. Some larger units required to meet the needs of larger families.
- Proposed parking arrangements for affordable housing are not tenure blind.

HOUSING ENABLING – Comments 25 June 2020:-

- Affordable Housing Unit mix is acceptable for this reserved matters application.
- Affordable housing is clustered in a row at the south of the site. However, the affordable units are visually indistinguishable from the market housing on site and is therefore acceptable.

PLACEMAKING – Objection 3 April 2020:-

- Layout is angled and does not provide street continuity or curvature.
- Key building missing at T52/53 and secondary key building missing at T29/30.

- Layout and landscaping of affordable dwellings is not tenure blind.
- T23 does not effectively terminate the view from the secondary road frontage
- Weak corner buildings e.g. T33/34 and T47/48 would make a stronger cover presence by stepping forward slightly the building on the primary road frontage.
- Car parking courts have inadequate natural surveillance and landscaping.
- House types do not reflect local distinctiveness and do not reflect the character of traditional building types shown in the approved Neighbourhood Design Guide for Comeytrove.
- No differentiation between design quality of key and secondary key buildings.
- Buildings have casement windows rather than sash.
- Gable ends in the street scene are blank without any windows openings for natural surveillance and visual interest e.g. T55.
- Railings and hedges required to provide substantive strong boundary along primary frontage.
- Screen walls should wrap around plots rather than stopping at corners.
- Materials include weatherboarding which is not in the Neighbourhood Design Guide for Comeytrove nor a locally distinctive material.
- Brick windows cills are not a local detail.
- Design of FOGs have no architectural expression and are completely bland.

PLACEMAKING – Objection 25 June 2020:-

Previously unresolved:

- Layout is angled and does not provide street continuity or curvature.
- Key building at T52 does not effectively terminate large landscape area
- Layout and landscaping of affordable dwellings is not tenure blind.
- T23 does not effectively terminate the view from the secondary road frontage
- Corner buildings minimum that could be expected and not appropriate for a primary frontage.
- House types do not reflect the character of traditional building types shown in the approved Neighbourhood Design Guide for Comeytrove.
- Buildings have casement windows rather than sash.
- Design of FOGs have no architectural expression and are completely bland.

Additional concerns:

- T1-T5 do not provide sufficient enclosure to the local square
- Scale of T1 is inappropriate, building should be 2 ½ storeys
- No hierarchy in the scale, proportion and appearance of house types
- FOGs do not provide sufficient amenity for future residents
- Cycle storage could be incorporated to the front of dwellings rather than the rear
- Majority of materials are manmade with an over-dominance of red brick
- No inclusion of green roofs or walls

GARDEN TOWN CO-ORDINATOR – Comments:-

- Site has lengthy history, having first been identified for allocation more than a decade ago.
- Since that time there have been lengthy negotiations eventually leading to the grant of Outline planning permission.
- While the Outline permission was issued in summer 2019, the Outline application was formulated many years before this.
- A key part of the former Taunton District BC bid to Government to secure Garden Town status for Taunton was the ability of the Council to deliver substantial new

- housing around the town from the 3 planning communities (including Comeytrove)
- The Comeytrove site has a significant role in delivering housing and is central to the Council's ability to demonstrate a 5 year housing supply
 - The Outline approval was formulated before the Garden Town Vision, Design Charter and Checklist, however the Council have worked closely with the applicants on a comprehensive landscape and green infrastructure delivery scheme for the Comeytrove site.
 - The overall development area will deliver substantial areas of open space and tree planting in line with the Garden Town Vision.
 - This application for Reserved Matter brings forward housing, including affordable housing, and green infrastructure, which deliver key elements of the Vision for the Garden Town.

AVON AND SOMERSET CONSTABULARY – Comments:-

- Vehicular and pedestrian routes are visually open and direct and likely to be well used enabling good resident surveillance of the street. Surface changes within the development would help reinforce defensible space.
- Dwellings overlook the street and public open spaces, providing surveillance. Many dwellings are back to back which is advantageous as it restricts unauthorised access.
- Dwelling boundaries appear to meet requirements for security and surveillance.
- Rear access footpaths should be gated as near as possible to front building line to deter unauthorised access.
- Communal parking is close to owners homes, well overlooked and few in number which is recommended. Courtyard parking is discouraged.

Representations Received

A site notice has been posted and neighbours notified of the application. The council is in receipt of 2 representations.

The comments made can be summarised as follows:-

Principle of development

- The development does not meet Garden City principles.
- Proposal does not respond to climate emergency.
- Inadequate facilities in walking distance of development.

Layout

- Application should be taken to Design Review Panel
- Play area will be too far away for children to access.
- Houses will be too close to proposed employment development to the south west of the site.

House types

- Houses only just conform to minimum space standards.
- Houses do not meet lifetime homes standards.
- Use of space under FOGs unclear.

Affordable Housing

- Affordable housing is not tenure blind due to lack of variety in materials used for

these units.

- Three bed affordable homes are smaller than three bed market houses.

Parking

- Garages only just fit an average car inside.

Landscaping

- Insufficient landscaping.
- Too much impermeable surface.

Refuse

- Concern over ability of any future disabled residents to arrange refuse collection at collection points.

Planning process

- It is difficult to keep track of various applications relating to the development as each application is stored on a new file.
- It is not clear what has been approved in the Outline and what is yet to be approved as part of reserved matters, the approach seems piecemeal.
- It is difficult to track the discharge of conditions.
- Comments on other applications made relating to this development.

Planning Policy Context

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that applications are determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The development plan for Taunton Deane comprises the Taunton Deane Core Strategy (2012), the Taunton Site Allocations and Development Management Plan (2016), the Taunton Town Centre Area Action Plan (2008), Somerset Minerals Local Plan (2015), and Somerset Waste Core Strategy (2013). Both the Taunton Deane Core Strategy and the West Somerset Local Plan to 2032 are currently being rolled forward with the aim of producing one new Local Plan covering the entire administrative area.

Relevant policies of the development plan are listed below.

- SD1 - Presumption in favour of sustainable development,
- CP1 - Climate change,
- CP4 - Housing,
- CP5 - Inclusive communities,
- CP6 - Transport and accessibility,
- CP7 - Infrastructure,
- CP8 - Environment,
- SP2 - Realising the vision for Taunton,
- SS7 - Comeytrowe / Trull - Broad Location for Growth,
- DM1 - General requirements,
- DM4 - Design,
- DM5 - Use of resources and sustainable design,

A1 - Parking Requirements,
A2 - Travel Planning,
A3 - Cycle network,
A5 - Accessibility of development,
ENV1 - Protection of trees, woodland, orchards and hedgerows,
ENV2 - Tree planting within new developments,
ENV3 - Special Landscape Features,
I4 - Water infrastructure,
D7 - Design quality,
D8 - Safety,
D9 - A Co-Ordinated Approach to Dev and Highway Plan,
D10 - Dwelling Sizes,
D12 - Amenity space,
TAU1 - Comeytrove / Trull,

The Trull Neighbourhood Plan is part of the development plan and a material consideration.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and National Planning Policy Guidance are material considerations. The National Design Guide is also a material consideration.

Other documents including the consultation draft of the Somerset West and Taunton Design Guide (February 2020), Taunton: The Vision for our Garden Town (October 2019) and the Taunton Design Charter and Checklist do not form part of the development plan but remain material considerations albeit with limited weight.

All policies and material considerations can only be considered as far as they relate to the details for which reserved matters approval is sought, as defined in the Development Management Procedure Order (DMPO) 2015.

Local finance considerations

Community Infrastructure Levy

Creation of dwellings is CIL liable.

Proposed development measures approx. 7332sqm.

The application is for residential development in Taunton where the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is £70 per square metre. Based on current rates, the CIL receipt for this development is approximately £513,250.00. With index linking this increases to approximately £729,000.00.

Determining issues and considerations

Principle of development of the site

The principle of developing this site to provide an urban extension has been established by the outline approval. This reserved matters application seek approval for detailed matters in relation to layout, scale, appearance and landscaping and consideration is limited to these issues.

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)

A full and detailed Environmental Statement was submitted with the Outline application, and officer opinion is that there is no need for this to be updated as there has been no significant change to the status of the land nor any other relevant factors since the outline consent was granted.

Amendments negotiated to the scheme

In accordance with paragraphs 38-46 of the NPPF, officers have worked proactively with the applicants for the urban extension to secure improvements to the proposal. A summary of amendments made following officer comments both pre and post-application is as follows:

Amendment	Responding to
<i>Pre-application (Neighbourhood Design Guide)</i>	
Strategy of traditional rather than contemporary house types included in Neighbourhood Design Guide	Placemaking
Interpretation of detailing from the traditional vernacular in and around Taunton included in Neighbourhood Design Guide	Placemaking Planning
Amendments to Design Principles Plan for Sub-Phases H1A and H1B to include clearer indication of built form turning the corner, clear distinction of gateway and primary frontages, and amendments to key/secondary key building locations.	Placemaking Planning
<i>Amended plans 5 June 2020</i>	
House types <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Updated to include interpretation of locally distinctive detailing to brick units (rendered units kept simple)• Chimneys added to key buildings	Placemaking
Layout <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Amendments to southern street containing affordable units, central terrace split into semis and brought forward slightly to provide some differentiation. Study provided showing street in context.• Corner plots pulled forward to provide additional enclosure a primary street junctions.	Housing Enabling Placemaking
Materials <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Weatherboarding removed• Contrasting buff brick detailing included• Natural slate roofing included• Brown tile included• Panelled doors added	Placemaking Landscape
Landscaping <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Permeable paving added to communal parking areas to reduce rate of surface water run-off• Water butts added to gardens to reduce surface water run-off and water consumption• Black estate style railings added to boundary along primary	Local Lead Flood Authority (LLFA) Landscape Trees Placemaking

<p>frontage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional soft and hard landscaping provided within parking areas for T6-T17 (affordable units) and on street to contain and frame car parking provision. • Additional trees added along right of way route • Feature tree/shrub interest added to corner plots • Palette of ornamental planting diversified • Bulb planting added • Tree species list amended to add greater diversity 	
<i>Amended plans 23 June 2020</i>	
<p>Layout</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rearrangement of T1-T4 to better enclose the local square • FOGs provided with bin storage/external amenity space 	<p>Planning Placemaking</p>
<p>House types</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key building T52 provided with bay window to provide additional detailing. • Windows added to side elevations of T50, T55 & T62 to improve surveillance of public realm • Additional chimneys added 	<p>Planning Placemaking</p>
<p>Materials</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buff brick included as primary walling material 	<p>Planning Placemaking Landscape</p>
<p>Landscaping</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional landscaping added to parking court • Minor amendments to rear boundary treatments to ensure these are brick walls where visible from the public realm 	<p>Planning Placemaking Landscape</p>
<p>Finished Floor Levels for all plots supplied</p>	<p>Planning</p>

Layout, design and appearance

Core Strategy Policy DM4 Design, Site Allocations & Development Management Plan (SADMP) Policy D7 Design Quality and Section 12 (Achieving well designed places), together with paragraphs 124-132 of the NPPF and the National Design Guide are relevant. The Garden Town vision document, Charter and Checklist and the Somerset West and Taunton Design Guide consultation draft are also material considerations.

While the Somerset West and Taunton (SWT) Design Guide is not yet formally adopted, this document is intended to assist designers, and those reviewing design proposals, in achieving good urban design. Many of the principles and approaches set out in the consultation document represent acknowledged best practice. For this reason, despite the draft SPD's unadopted status which would perhaps prevent significant weight being given to specific wording, taken as a whole it represents a useful guide to best practice and how this could be locally interpreted.

Section 2.1 of the SWT Design Guide sets out the recommended design process, including a diagram entitled 'Sequence of considerations for design appraisal, negotiations & design statements'. The methodology suggests a hierarchical approach to design considerations, with broader considerations to be resolved at the start of the design process, with narrower considerations coming later.

Sequence of considerations for design appraisal, negotiations and design statements (taken from SWT Design Guide)

1. Context and Site
2. Structure
3. Building & Plot
4. Materials
5. Details

Given the strategic nature of this site, the design process is taking place over a number of years, with broader considerations around the site context and structure being considered in principle as part of the Outline application, with parameter plans setting expectations regarding access and movement, green infrastructure, scale, density and land use as part of the approval.

A condition (4) on the Outline application required the submission of a Site-specific Neighbourhood Masterplan and Design Guide. This document is intended to build on the approved parameter plans and provide a more detailed framework against which mid-level matters of design such as the proposed arrangement of development blocks, streets and spaces can be assessed. A Neighbourhood Design Guide for the Western Neighbourhood (Neighbourhood Design Guide) was discharged in March 2020 after several months of negotiations.

An Appearance Palette is also required by Outline condition (5) for each sub-phase. This in turn builds on the Neighbourhood Design Guide and provides a framework to assess narrower design considerations such as building design, building materials, surface materials, street furniture and tree species. An Appearance Palette for sub-phases H1A and H1B was submitted as part of the Neighbourhood Design Guide (pages 168-179) and was likewise discharged in March 2020.

This application is accompanied by a Compliance Statement setting out how the applicant believes the proposal accords with the parameter plans, Neighbourhood Design Guide and Appearance Palette.

Context and Site

Principles relating to site setting, landscape integration and mix of land uses were established at Outline stage and where appropriate secured through parameter plans.

This application now under consideration provides housing, including affordable housing, within the context of established principles. The proposed layout is in accordance with the approved parameter plan for land use.

Structure

Principles relating to the strategic network of green infrastructure, access and movement, appropriate density and heights were established at Outline stage and secured through parameter plans. The proposed layout is in accordance with these.

As highlighted in the comments from the Council's Garden Town Co-ordinator, the Comeytrove urban extension will deliver a comprehensive landscape and green infrastructure scheme, with substantial areas of open space and tree planting in line

with the Garden Town Vision. Much of this green infrastructure was approved under application 42/19/0053. This application also approved the strategic Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) and earthworks to create level building plots.

The SWT Design Guide states that the creation of a design concept, to identify key groupings, focal points/features, character areas, and street and space hierarchy is a very important stage in the design process. The Neighbourhood Design Guide sets out a framework regarding the creation of character areas and nodes, key frontages and groupings development of principles on development blocks, density and height ranges, development block structure, and street and space hierarchy for the Western Neighbourhood.

Positioning of sub-phase H1B within the Western Neighbourhood

Sub-phase H1B is situated within the Northern Slopes Character Area. The site access node is situated to the west of the sub-phase, with the primary access off the A38 leading to the primary street which runs through the centre of H1B. Housing Phase H1A and the Gateway Frontage adjoins the A38, the first impression that will be met on entrance to the site. The primary street within H1B form a secondary, but still important, part of the entrance vista.

The adjoining Employment Character Area situated to the west of H1B is also part of the entrance vista, with a local square to be provided between the employment area, H1B and the primary street. To the north-east a pocket park with play area will provide a green connection through H1C to the North Park (approved under application 42/19/0053). To the east of H1B, the primary street will continue through housing sub-phases H1E, H1D and H2A to the local centre.

Northern Slopes Character Area

The Neighbourhood Design Guide states that the development pattern in the Northern Slopes Character Area is to be determined largely through a response to topography, due to the hilly nature of this part of the site, which is being levelled in places but will retain a gradient of 1:12 within the building parcels. The general characteristics of this character area are:

- Leafy residential area; lower scale buildings on higher ground
- Formal streets, many of which follow contours
- Lower density around fringes
- Strong integration of green infrastructure
- Housing piercing the tree line

The Northern Slopes Character Area includes six housing sub-phases (H1A – H1F) so it is not expected that all sub-phases will contribute to every characteristic, rather the character area will include all elements with gradual progression in the characteristics of built form across the area.

As it is situated at the centre of the character area, the majority of streets on H1B are formal, and follow the contours of the topography in an east-west direction. This approach also enables the majority of houses in H1B to take advantage of passive solar gain and daylighting. Along the primary street formal repetition in the built form and street tree planting provides rhythm that will be repeated through H1D and H1E.

At the northern edge of H1B, adjoining H1A and H1C the dwellings start to become

a lower density, in anticipation of the expected lower density and more leafy character expected to the northern edges of the development.

In response to the topography, the buildings are stepped gently, preventing excessive areas of exposed wall, as demonstrated in examples within the SWT Design Guide.

Green infrastructure is strongly integrated, with trees provided on every street providing links with the many and varied parks and green spaces. This is in line with the expectations of the first principle of the Design Charter and Checklist, which expects that green infrastructure will be fully integrated into the design of new residential developments.

Key Frontages and Groupings

There are no key nodes/spaces within H1B, however the access node and associated Local Square adjoin to the west. The primary street travels into the site from the Local Square and so forms an important part of the entrance vista.

Key Frontage – Primary Frontage

As set out in the Neighbourhood Design Guide, the primary frontage is formal in nature and ensures rhythm and repetition of the built form. Interruptions in the continuity of the building line have been provided through the stepping forward of the building line at junctions, and through the use of rendered buildings providing accents. This provides greater enclosure of the street at junctions and is in accordance with the approach to minor street corners recommended by the SWT Design Guide. Enclosure of the street is also achieved through the use of larger street trees along the spine road.

A key building on adjacent H1E is expected to complete the vista with a focal point and provide termination of the view when travelling down the primary road towards the local centre. Overall, the primary street provides a suitable continuation of the entrance vista, and the part that H1B plays in contributing to the creation of a distinctive local identity has been articulated clearly.

There is a detailed objection from Placemaking to the positioning of T23 as it does not provide a suitable vista when approaching from a secondary street. The applicant has considered whether the plots could be repositioned as suggested, however removing gaps would prevent residents being able to gain rear access for refuse collection, which would be unacceptable. On balance, it is considered that considerable work has been put into creating a suitable entrance vista and rhythm for the primary street, and that the applicant's approach of prioritising these elements over a vista from a secondary street is acceptable.

Key Grouping - Local Square

The Local Square is primarily addressed by the adjacent employment character area, but will also be addressed by plots T1-T5 of H1B, and by adjacent housing on H1A. There is an objection from Placemaking to plots 1-5 as they are detached, and therefore do not provide the expected level of enclosure of the square, and to plot T1 as it is not of a sufficient height. It is noted that while plots 1-5 do not provide a continuous terraced frontage, the applicant has amended the layout to reduce the size of gaps between the dwellings.

The SWT Design Guide describes key groups as small groups of units at critical points in the townscape, stating that individual units should be closely grouped in terraces or other linked arrangements. The Neighbourhood Design Guide set expectations that the square include a taller employment building to the south, semi-detached housing to the north on H1A, and link-detached housing to the east on H1B. The housing is all separated from the square by roads, while the employment building fronts immediately onto the square.

The applicant has made the case that the employment building defines the public space and is intended to provide its primary relationship, and that street trees within the square will also form part of the definition of this space. However, while it is accepted that the employment building has the strongest relationship with the square, units T1-T5 play a supporting role, and these units are not delivering the expected level of enclosure.

The move from link-detached to detached on plots T1-T5 is a change in approach, that the applicant has advised is necessary reduce the need for rear access paths. Given that these paths would need include access from the primary street, it is reasonable to conclude there could be some security implications arising from such an arrangement. However, there are ways that this could have been addressed, such as a single access path through the centre of a terrace.

With regard to the height of T1, there is no expectation in Design Principles Plan within the Appearance Palette for H1A and H1B that T1 would be greater than a two storey building. The applicant has responded that this building is playing the expected role of a secondary key building, and has been differentiated through use of contrasting materials appropriately. The Design Principles Plan identifies a plot on H1A (to the north of the square) as providing a key building that will respond to the Local Square and form an important part of the entrance vista.

Key Grouping - Pocket Park

A 'pocket park' (small open space set within the housing) with play area is to be provided on adjacent H1C and development to the north east of H1B forms part of the key grouping for this park. The key building at plot T52 provides a focal point through the use of variation in materials and fenestration, assisting in terminating the view for the park and providing legibility.

There is an objection from Placemaking to the detailing and scale of T52. However, the applicant has responded, correctly, that rendered key and secondary buildings were provided with minimal detailing at the request of Placemaking. In the light of this the level of detailing cannot be considered unacceptable.

Consideration was given by the applicant to the inclusion of additional dwellings to accompany T52, and thereby increase the scale, however this approach would have required the addition of a private driveway into the park and so was decided against. As T52 is already a large 5 bedroom house it is not practical to increase its scale without adding additional units.

Density and Scale

The SWT Design Guide sets out how a density hierarchy can be delivered across a large site, with higher density housing to be located in close proximity to hubs and bus routes, with medium and lower density located respectively further away. The

Neighbourhood Design Guide progressed the density and scale parameter plans to provide greater detail over the densities and heights expected across the site.

Density and heights are expected to be lowest at the edges of the neighbourhood (low density, two storeys), with the highest density and heights (highest density, between 3-4 storeys) expected in the Local Centre. Between these two extremes the density and heights will gradually increase to provide a natural progression of development across the neighbourhood, in line with the expectations of the SWT Design Guide.

The density of H1B provides an average of 40 dwellings per hectare (dph), which is in line with the expectations that this site be medium density.

All dwellings on H1B are two storey. Dwelling height is expected to begin increasing on the adjacent phases H1D and H1E as the primary street progresses towards the local centre.

Development Blocks

The Neighbourhood Design Guide sets out typical block types to be used, with the most relevant for H1B being 'Back-to-back' being used to the south of the primary street, and 'Rear courtyard' to the north.

By primarily using 'Back-to-back' blocks (more commonly known as perimeter blocks) housing is surrounded by streets on all sides, giving a clear distinction between public and private space. This provides good security to both the public spaces, through natural surveillance, and the private spaces which cannot easily be accessed by potential intruders. It is described in the SWT Design Guide as "the optimum method of achieving higher densities at lowest height" and is supported by the Avon and Somerset Constabulary.

The proposed parking for the back-to-back blocks is located on the street side either on-plot or on-street parking that is closely related to the development it serves, also supported by the Avon and Somerset Constabulary.

The use of 'Rear courtyard' blocks to the north of H1B is a design response to the need to reduce the number of vehicular accesses over the shared pedestrian/cycleway. Plots fronting onto the primary street to the north retain their main access point to the street but parking is provided to the rear in small courtyards. The parking courtyards serve small groups and are accessed through passageways under Flats over Garage (FOG) units. This approach prevents gaps in the street scene and provides additional surveillance for the parking courts. For other streets making up the 'Rear courtyard' blocks the principles used for back-to-back blocks apply, making these development blocks as secure as possible.

The proposed block layouts makes use of corner turning buildings which positively address both directions with active frontages at T1, T5, T18, T21, T33, T40, T41, T48 and T67 – the vast majority of corners. Where corners are less prominent at T55 and T62 additional windows in the side elevations provide surveillance. This approach is in accordance with SADMP Policy D7, which requires that buildings turn street corners well.

Street Typologies

The SWT Design Guide describes good practice principles, these include the creation of legible hierarchies of street (major to minor). The Neighbourhood Design Guide includes details of six street typologies, which work to create a hierarchy of roles and functions for the neighbourhood's streets, all of which include street trees. The aim is to provide legibility and variety through function, and changes in materials.

The proposed streets for H1B sit either side of the primary street which has previously been approved under 42/19/0053. The primary street is the main route through the site and as such is the widest, with larger trees to provide a sense of enclosure. A 'cycle street' is situated to the north of H1B (approved under 42/19/0053) and another is proposed travelling to the south-east of this sub-phase. These include shared pedestrian/cycle ways on one side of the street and are narrower than the primary street, with the dwellings set closer to the street, contributing to a sense of hierarchy. Street trees are regular but less formal.

The rest of the streets surrounding H1B are a mixture of garden lanes, mews and private drives. The garden lanes are narrower again, with similar set back of dwellings to the cycle streets and with the same approach to street trees. The 'mews' typology provides dwellings set close to the street at either end to provide a sense of entrance and enclosure, this is to be further defined through the use of variation in street surfacing. This leads to dwellings set further back from the road behind parking interspersed with feature trees.

Private drives are provided adjacent to area of open space to the north of H1B. These are narrow shared surfaces serving small groups of dwellings.

Overall, the proposed street layouts deliver the expected hierarchy and high level of street tree coverage.

Building & Plot

Building typologies

The Site Allocations and Development Management Plan policy D7 requires developments to create a high standard of design by "creating places with locally inspired or otherwise distinctive character and materials." The SWT Design Guide also requires design to consider how to respond to, and create, local distinctiveness, which is defined as "the positive features of a place and its communities which contribute to its special character and sense of place".

The Neighbourhood Design Guide includes an analysis of local architectural style and materials which is required to inform the Appearance Palettes created for each sub-phase of the development. The analysis focuses on architectural styles and materials found in the centre of Taunton.

The H1A & H1B Appearance Palette provides guidance on the expected architectural appearance of buildings in H1B. It sets expectations for buildings in the primary frontage (along the primary street) and the secondary frontage (the rest of this sub-phase). The applicant has provided a Compliance Statement which explains how they have interpreted the guidance in the Appearance Palette.

Across H1B, dwellings are expected to be provided in a "traditional building form".

This has been interpreted by the applicant through the use of simple form and massing with rectangular floorplans.

There is a Placemaking objection to the proposed dwelling typologies on the grounds that they do not represent “traditional building form”, and that the dwellings should be closer related in height and width to historic buildings, which tend to have higher ceilings and sit on narrower plots. However, “traditional building form” is not a technical term and there is no set definition of how this should be interpreted. The applicant has responded that, while the scheme is based on standard house types, the elevations have been designed to reference the local character of Taunton, with detailing and materials interpreted from their studies in and around Taunton.

It is noted that the viability exercise that was carried out at the Outline stage assumed that the site would have standard build costs, which would assume the use of a standard house type product. It is considered that the applicant’s approach is in accordance with the requirements of Policy D7 and the SWT Design Guide. There is therefore no policy basis to require the reproduction of historic buildings on this site, and to do so could impact the viability, requiring renegotiation of affordable housing delivery.

There is also an objection from Placemaking on the grounds that there is no hierarchy in the scale, proportion and appearance of house types. Many of the houses on H1B are of the same type. However, it is important to remember that H1B is a small element of a much wider site, and that there are greater expectations of hierarchy when considered on a site-wide basis than within an individual sub-phase. As set out above, dwelling heights are expected to increase as development moves closer to the Local Centre (where development will have a minimum height of 3 storeys).

A further objection from Placemaking relates to the rectangular shape of all housing typologies, with no use of curved house types which could be used to create curvature in the street scene. The SWT Design Guide includes examples of the creation of curvature in the street, including through the use of curved buildings or through curved boundary walls. The proposal includes the use of curved boundary walls to create curvature to link T51, T52 & T53, which is where the proposal curves to address the pocket park. There is no policy basis to require the use of one accepted solution to the creation of curvature rather than another.

Primary frontage

The Appearance Palette requires dwellings in the primary frontage to have “a greater richness of detailing around openings and through use of materials including banding to support gateway frontage” (the gateway frontage being to the west on adjacent parcel H1A). The proposed dwellings include dog-tooth detailing around window openings and brick banding in contrasting materials, referencing detailing on historic buildings within Taunton.

The proposed roofing is expected to have a “greater level of detailing i.e. dormers, gables etc.” The majority dwellings on the primary street have simple pitched roofs, with use of cross gables on secondary key buildings. Chimneys are provided to plots in key locations. Dormers are expected to come into use on adjacent phases as the primary street moves towards the Local Centre. The detailing within the primary frontage meets the standard set in the Appearance Palette.

Secondary frontage

The Appearance Palette requires dwellings in the secondary frontage to include “simple detailing and fenestration including horizontal banding to key groupings”. The proposed dwellings in the secondary frontage include banding to key grouping, for both market and affordable tenures, as well as banding and window detailing on prominent corner-turning buildings such as plots T5 and T18. FOGs are similarly provided with banding.

Roofing is expected to be simpler, which is reflected in the use of simple pitched roofs. The detailing within the secondary frontage meets the standard set in the Appearance Palette.

Gardens

Garden size meets minimum expectations and standards, with all units excepting T49 (a two bed market flat) provided with an area of private external amenity space. This is a higher density part of the urban extension so gardens are not large, but where the density starts to reduce to the north of H1B garden sizes start to increase. Garden sizes are therefore considered acceptable.

Refuse and Recycling

Hardstanding for bin storage is provided to the rear of all units. Where collection cannot be made from the immediate front of properties designated collection points are provided a short distance from properties. Paths provide rear access for terraced properties where necessary.

Parking and cycle storage

As described above in the section ‘Development Blocks’, parking is provided in a mixture of parking courts, on-plot parking and allocated on-street parking. Visitor parking is also provided on-street. The level of car parking, and size of garages, is adequate to meet the requirements for phase H1B and is in line with the parking standards in Appendix E of the Site Allocations and Development Management Plan.

External storage of cycles is in garages and sheds, again this is in line with parking standards. Where cycles are stored in sheds these are located adjacent to access gates.

Materials

Building materials

The SWT Design Guide states that the diversity and mixing of building materials is a feature of Taunton. It goes on to state that in the suburbs of Taunton, red (and to a lesser extent buff) brick and natural slate are dominant, but often supplemented and enhanced with stone dressings.

A palette of materials has been chosen that reflects these locally distinctive building materials. This includes walls of red and buff bricks (with detailing in contrasting colour), with render to key/secondary key buildings. Roofing materials are natural slate and brown roman tiles, chosen to minimise the visual impact of the urban extension when viewed from the Blackdown Hills AONB.

Streets generally have a dominant material to provide consistency, with the use of secondary materials to highlight or provide variety within the street scene. The materials assist in the creation of a hierarchy, with red brick and render used along the primary frontage, with more buff brick within the secondary frontage.

There is an objection from Placemaking on the basis that most of the materials to be used are man-made, with an over-dominance of red brick. However, the materials proposed are standard building materials in use today and there is no policy basis to seek all natural materials. The use of all natural materials would be very costly, affecting scheme viability. It is noted that the applicant has amended the previously proposed grey and red tiles, replacing them with natural slate and brown tiles at the request of Placemaking and Landscape.

The use of red brick as a primary walling material was established in the Neighbourhood Design Guide. Further, red brick is referenced as a dominant Taunton material within the SWT Design Guide. It is noted that at the request of officers the applicant has added buff brick to the scheme, so that this now includes all the locally distinctive materials identified in the SWT Design Guide.

As officers have yet to see samples of all proposed building materials, a condition is proposed (2) requiring that these be submitted. The condition allows for flexibility should there be a need to change materials during construction, which may be necessary due to the current nationwide shortage in stocks of building materials.

Surface Materials

The surfacing of hard landscaping in communal areas makes use of permeable paving, providing short term storage of surface water and reducing the rate of surface water run-off.

Details of surfacing materials for roads, footways, cycleways etc. can be conditioned, this approach continues the approach taken to infrastructure application 42/19/0053.

Boundaries

Boundary treatments in the primary street are hedgerows with black metal estate railings, as expected. This will provide a strong frontage to this primary route.

Within the secondary frontage hedgerows and shrubs are used to define the boundaries of front gardens. Within parking courts boundaries are softened using landscaping.

Where rear gardens adjoin the public realm brick walls are used (rather than fencing) to provide additional security and enhance the quality of the street scene.

Details

Fenestration

The proposed fenestration takes the form of panelled front doors with simple canopies, with casement windows. Bay windows are included on the key building at T52, and at T4. In general the windows are larger at ground floor than at first floor, adding some vertical hierarchy to the buildings. The windows serving habitable rooms generally have horizontal proportions, so are wider than they are tall.

There is an objection from Placemaking to the use of casement windows, stating that sash windows, or windows with vertical proportions, would be preferred as these would be more akin to the shape of windows on Taunton's historic buildings. The applicant has responded that the potential appearance benefits of windows with vertical proportions needs to be balanced against the likelihood of such openings being smaller in a modern dwelling than casement windows, requiring increased use of artificial lighting inside the dwelling and reducing ventilation opportunities. The use of non-standard windows would also introduce unanticipated costs, affecting scheme viability.

It is considered that given the location of H1B at a considerable distance from any historic assets that could require the use of historically accurate windows, there is no policy basis to require an alternative window style.

Water butts

Water butts are provided within the rear garden of each house, performing the dual purpose of reducing surface water run offs from roofs, and storing water that can be used for garden watering, reducing water consumption.

Landscaping

The proposal includes trees on every street, reflective of each street's position within the street hierarchy. The scheme also provides vertical planting (climbing plants) in front of screen walls. Hedgerow boundaries, shrubs and perennial plants are provided in front gardens, and within the public realm, with bulbs providing spring interest within public grassed areas.

The landscaping treatments are continued into parking courts, softening the appearance of these areas and taking the opportunity to provide managed trees to the rear of development blocks.

There is a Placemaking objection to the proposal due to the lack of inclusion of green roofs or walls. Such initiatives are more common in high density urban areas such as city centres, where there is limited space for more conventional planting. There is no policy basis under which these elements could be required at an urban extension which is providing significantly greater green infrastructure and open space across the wider site than is required by policy. Such measures would introduce unanticipated costs, affecting scheme viability. However it is noted that, as requested by Landscaping, the landscaping scheme does make a feature of vertical planting (climbing plants) against screen walls in the public realm and within parking courts.

Landscaping of the street to the south, where the affordable dwellings are located, is of the same standard in terms of spacing between trees and, planting types and stocks as elsewhere on the site. However, there is a Placemaking objection to the layout and level of landscaping proposed in the southern street on the basis that it prevents tenure blindness. It is noted the applicant has made significant changes to the quality of landscaping in this street and both Landscape and Housing Enabling Officers considered these sufficient to overcome their similar objections.

The Council's Landscaping Officer has worked iteratively with the applicant's landscape architects in drawing up the proposals, and it is considered the resulting

detailed landscaping proposals are of a high quality.

Residential Amenity

Impacts on Neighbours

There are no existing immediate neighbours to H1B as it sits within the centre of the urban extension, and the proposal sets an appropriate standard regarding expectations for future phases.

Standard of amenity for proposed dwellings

Internal floorspace and layouts meet the space standards of SADMP Policy D10. The Housing Enabling Team have confirmed that the affordable units are of a satisfactory size and layout.

There is an objection from Placemaking to the size of windows in the living rooms of the proposed FOGs. The living room windows are of the wider than bedroom windows across the site, but of the same height. However, such arrangements are fairly common in flatted development and while a larger window would provide greater amenity the outlook (onto the street) is considered acceptable.

External amenity space is provided for the vast majority of dwellings, the only exception being T49, this unit being located in very close proximity to the pocket park and play area to be provided as part of H1C. This is considered acceptable.

There is sufficient space between the windows of dwellings to prevent unacceptable overlooking, and gable ends are positioned so as to avoid over-shadowing of neighbours.

Overall it is considered the proposed dwellings will provide a good standard of amenity for future occupiers.

Conclusion and planning balance

The principle of development of an urban extension on this site, together with access connection to the existing road network and principle drainage issues, was agreed with the outline planning permission. The reserved matters application accurately reflects and builds upon the outline approval.

The proposal provides the first housing phase, including affordable housing that will deliver the first dwellings as part of this urban extension. The delivery of the urban extension will make a significant contribution towards meeting housing needs in Taunton and the wider council area.

There remain concerns and an objection from Placemaking to the proposal. There has been engagement by the applicant in pre-application discussions as well as amendments to plans during the application stage. A number of issues have been fully or partially resolved, however it has not been possible to fully resolve all the issues raised. Of those issues that remain, explanations have been provided by the applicant as to why they have chosen to progress this design for a decision without making changes. It therefore falls to consider the outstanding concerns against the potential benefits of the scheme.

As the Garden Town Co-ordinator has commented, this site has a lengthy history,

having first been identified for allocation more than a decade ago. The Outline approval was formulated before the Garden Town Vision, Design Charter and Checklist, however the Council have worked closely with the applicants on a comprehensive landscape and green infrastructure delivery scheme for the Comeytrove site. The site is delivering substantial areas of open space and tree planting in line with the garden town vision.

This strategic allocation played a key part (along with allocations at Staplegrove and Monkton Heathfield) in the bid to secure Garden Town status for Taunton, as it enabled the Council to demonstrate it was possible to deliver substantial new housing around the town. The Comeytrove site plays a significant role in delivering housing in SWT and is central to the Council's ability to demonstrate a 5 year housingland supply.

Lengthy negotiations, including in relation to viability, took place prior to the grant of Outline planning permission in 2019. Many of these negotiations pre-dated the designation of Taunton as a Garden Town. These resulted in the grant of Outline permission delivering 2,000 dwellings, 17.5% to be affordable. Following this, funding was secured from Homes England to deliver 'additionality' affordable housing on the site, this funding will increase the level of affordable provision to 35%, but is time limited.

The fundamental concerns raised by Placemaking relate to the architectural appearance of the proposed dwellings, and materials to be used. It is acknowledged that the approach requested by Placemaking would be visually appealing, and would create a distinctive urban extension. However, the use of bespoke house types and expensive materials has not been budgeted for in the viability work, which was undertaken prior to the designation of Taunton as a Garden Town.

To require a change in approach to architectural appearance at this stage would result in the need to re-open viability negotiations, this would be likely to lead not only to the loss of the time limited 'additionality' affordable housing but also a reduction in affordable housing delivery across the site. It is possible that increased build costs could be reflected, at least in part, in higher sales values for market dwellings, however this would likewise result in the market dwellings being less affordable to local people.

When assessing the design that has been proposed holistically, taking into consideration its place within the strategic site and its relationship to adjacent sub-phases, there is much to recommend it. The applicant has undertaken a design appraisal approach that is very much in accordance with the draft SWT Design Guide. The approach to street and green infrastructure hierarchies, the level and quality of landscaping are at the level that would be expected from a Garden Town. On-plot SuDS measure are included. The development blocks are well designed and secure, oriented to take advantage of passive solar gain and daylight. While the architectural appearance does not meet the high aspirations of Placemaking it does deliver locally distinctive detailing and materials, and will provide good standards of amenity for future occupants.

This application would deliver housing, including affordable housing, and its positive determination in a timely manner would keep delivery of the 'additionality' affordable

homes on track. Having had regard to the representations of objection and support and the advice of the various consulted parties, it is considered that the benefits of the scheme significantly outweigh the impacts. Overall, within the parameters set by the outline consent, the proposal represents sustainable development.

In preparing this report the planning officer has considered fully the implications and requirements of the Human Rights Act 1998.

Contact Officer: Ursula Fay