

# Appendix 5 - Gillingham Southern Extension – Concept Statement and Design Principles

## 1.1. Concept Statement for Gillingham Southern Extension

### Overarching Vision for the Southern Extension:

- 1.1.1. Gillingham’s southern extension will be a new, sustainable mixed-use community, primarily of housing, that is fully integrated with the existing town to increase self-containment. It will be able to meet its own local needs whilst also having highly accessible links to the existing town and employment opportunities. The new community will be designed to a high standard, reflecting agreed design principles, and provided with supporting infrastructure to create a high quality environment in which to live and work.

### Placemaking Overview:

- 1.1.2. The southern extension will be designed to reflect the best Dorset traditions and local character, as articulated in the Gillingham Town Design Statement<sup>1</sup>. Overall the built environment will strike a successful balance between variety and harmony, and smaller, recognizable neighbourhoods within the development will be set within a network of green infrastructure.
- 1.1.3. The southern extension will be designed to create new townscape, where intrinsic variations in development form (e.g. layout, density, scale and massing) create an easily understood pattern of streets and other spaces. Within the layout focal points, landmarks and gateways will be highlighted with distinctive buildings and spaces.
- 1.1.4. Public spaces will be well designed, with suitable management and maintenance arrangements in place to ensure their continued upkeep. All public spaces and routes will be overlooked to ensure they feel safe.
- 1.1.5. All buildings will exhibit architectural quality. The external appearance will avoid rootless or amorphous design whilst preserving contact with the best local building traditions, not least in the use of high quality materials.

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<sup>1</sup> Gillingham Town Design Statement, Gillingham Town Design Statement Steering Group (June 2012).

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- 1.1.6. The development will promote innovation in residential, commercial and infrastructure design with a view to achieving more sustainable ways of living and a place that is future-proof.

### **Tackling Climate Change:**

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- 1.1.7. This new part of Gillingham shall incorporate a range of site-wide features to reduce its environmental impact, including sustainable drainage systems and recycling facilities. The Council will also promote design solutions that incorporate low carbon energy generation and building performance that exceeds statutory minima (e.g. building regulations) adhering to relevant policies in the Local Plan.

### **Integrating the Southern Extension into the Landscape:**

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- 1.1.8. The development will sit comfortably within the gently undulating landform south of Gillingham and retain and enhance the river corridors that run through the site. Particular care will be taken along its southern edges to ensure a sensitive transition between the extended town and the surrounding countryside.

### **Providing a Range and Choice of Homes:**

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- 1.1.9. The development as a whole shall include a range of house sizes, offering choice in the amount of indoor and outdoor space provided. The mix of homes and tenure types will reflect evidenced needs and where practicable the design of housing shall provide opportunities for homeworking. Building designs shall be as robust as practicable, with careful consideration given to the adaptability of internal spaces and opportunities for future conversion or extension. In all cases sufficient space will be provided for the discreet storage of recyclables and bins, etc.

### **Creating Job Opportunities:**

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- 1.1.10. Sufficient employment land and buildings will be provided to ensure a wide range of job opportunities, and these will be closely integrated with residential uses where practicable.

### **Providing and Delivering Infrastructure:**

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- 1.1.11. Essential infrastructure and services will be fully integrated in the design of the place from the outset and delivered in phase with the building work.
- 1.1.12. All properties will have convenient access to public transport and to a finely branched network of safe and direct walking and cycling routes, linking people to schools, work places and services, both within the development and beyond. Integration with

existing streets and paths in the vicinity will ensure this new part of Gillingham is well connected to the rest of the town and the countryside beyond.

- 1.1.13. Residents will have convenient access to community facilities such as schools, local shops, healthcare and play areas.
- 1.1.14. A network of green infrastructure will successfully incorporate the retention of significant trees and hedgerows within the development. A variety of formal and informal public open spaces will also help to 'green' the place. Allotments and gardens will provide opportunities for residents to grow their own food.

## 1.2. Design Principles for Gillingham Strategic Site Allocation

### Character - Landscape Setting:

- 1.2.1. The proposed development shall be successfully integrated into its wider landscape setting through careful design of layout, scale (height and massing), density, materials and structural planting. Particular care will be taken along its southern and eastern edges to ensure a sensitive transition between the extended town and the surrounding countryside, and retain important views into and out of the whole site.

### Character - Landscape Assets:

- 1.2.2. Significant existing landscape and ecological assets, including river corridors and watercourses, important trees, hedgerows, ponds and other natural habitats, shall be successfully integrated within the public realm of the development. These assets will be retained and enhanced within a network of Green Infrastructure.

### Character - Mix of Uses:

- 1.2.3. At the macro-scale this will be a mixed-use development comprising employment, housing and community uses etc. In particular it shall include a fine-grain, mixed-use local centre, to meet the day-to-day needs of residents and employees. Whilst concentrations of certain uses will be directed towards appropriate parts of the site (e.g. employment land, or the local centre) rigid allocation of uses that would not prejudice residential amenity, or have other detrimental impacts, will be avoided.

### Continuity and Enclosure – Definition of Public and Private Spaces:

- 1.2.4. The distinction between public and private space shall be clearly defined throughout the development. In order to achieve this distinction in a way that is legible, buildings shall be arranged within a coherent layout that successfully defines public and private spaces.

### Ease of Movement – Permeable Networks:

- 1.2.5. The building layout shall take priority over the streets and car parking, so that the highways do not dominate. The building layout will help to create a permeable network of well-defined streets and spaces, which are pedestrian, cycle and vehicle friendly. In addition to an interconnected network of streets, a finely branched network of footpaths and cycleways, linked to existing routes, will form a highly permeable grid of movement for pedestrians and cyclists, connecting the development to destinations within the town and in the surrounding countryside.

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### **Ease of Movement – ‘Principal Street’ and Public Transport:**

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- 1.2.6. The layout shall incorporate a through route ensuring good connectivity with the existing main routes into the town. This route shall be designed to enable a bus service through the development to be conveniently established.

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### **Ease of Movement – Parking:**

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- 1.2.7. The development shall incorporate a range of car parking solutions that form part of the urban design strategy. These shall be designed to ensure that car parking is well integrated, accessible and situated so as to support rather than dominate the street scene.

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### **Quality of the Public Realm – Usable Public Spaces:**

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- 1.2.8. The streets, squares and parks within this development will be the focus for community activity and social interaction. Streets and junctions will be designed as public spaces, accessible for all, rather than merely as functional routes for vehicular traffic.

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### **Quality of the Public Realm – Public Spaces Designed to a High Standard:**

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- 1.2.9. All outdoor areas shall display the highest standards in terms of design, including careful consideration of materials, planting, street furniture, boundary treatment, lighting and accessibility.

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### **Legibility – Townscape:**

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- 1.2.10. The development shall be designed to create new townscape, where intrinsic variations in development form (e.g. layout, density, scale and massing) create an easily understood pattern of streets and other spaces. Coherent street scenes will be created by striking an appropriate balance between variety and harmony in terms of external appearance.

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### **Legibility – Buildings and Landscaping:**

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- 1.2.11. Specially designed buildings and groups of buildings, together with landscaping, will help to define important gateways, landmarks and spaces.

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### **Adaptability – Flexibility for Future Uses:**

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- 1.2.12. Building designs shall be as robust as practicable, with careful consideration given to the adaptability of internal spaces and opportunities for future conversion or extension. In all cases sufficient space will be provided for the discreet storage of recyclables and bins, etc.

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### **Diversity – Range of House Sizes:**

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- 1.2.13. The development as a whole shall include a range of house sizes, offering choice in the amount of indoor and outdoor space provided. Where practicable the design of housing shall provide opportunities for homeworking.

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### **Energy Efficiency and Environmental Performance:**

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- 1.2.14. The Council will promote design solutions that incorporate low-carbon energy generation and building performance that exceeds statutory minima (e.g. building regulations) adhering to relevant policies in the Local Plan. The development shall incorporate a wide range of site-wide features to reduce its environmental impact, including sustainable drainage systems and convenient access to allotments and recycling facilities.

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### **Safety and Security – Natural Surveillance:**

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- 1.2.15. A permeable network of streets faced by homes, businesses and community facilities will provide natural surveillance and reduce people's perception of their vulnerability to crime. Through successful enclosure and natural surveillance, public spaces will impart a feeling of security for all users.