



Staplegrove West Garden Town Neighbourhood

Design Guide

April 2025

Delivering a distinctive place

BLOOR HOMES

FINAL **ORIGIN3**



The Vision for Staplegrove West Garden Neighbourhood

Bloor Homes aim to deliver Taunton's Garden Town aspirations to build a flourishing, distinctive, and healthy Garden Town neighbourhood at Staplegrove West, where future and existing residents will be proud to live and work in a place where the outstanding natural environment contributes to the quality of life and well-being.



The four driving themes to achieve the vision are as follows;

- **Growing the town greener – ‘giving the neighbourhood a green makeover’,**
- **Branching out – ‘improving the quality of active travel’,**
- **Growing quality places – ‘place making driven and locally distinctive’,**
- **New shoots and blossom – ‘nourishing partnership, prosperity, and growth in building community’.**

Introduction

Who is the document for?

This Design Guide is intended to be for developers, architects, engineers and landscape architects, the local community and Somerset Council who will be working together to deliver subsequent Reserved Matters applications.

What is the document for?

The purpose of this Masterplan Design Guide is to discharge the following design and placemaking conditions, including, 'condition 3- phasing and place making strategy', 'condition 4- neighbourhood masterplan and design guide', and 'condition 5- appearance palette' respectively. These are in accordance with the original planning conditions ref: 34/16/0007 and subsequently updated via an Section 73 variation reference: 38/23/0347.

This document forms the component parts of the required Design Guide and provides information on the proposed arrangement of green infrastructure and open spaces, development blocks, streets, green spaces, overall character and grain of the Neighbourhood Area in accordance with the National Model Design Code.

The design of future development phases will comply with the established principles of good architectural, urban and landscape design. Reserved Matters proposals should demonstrate compliance of the design guide principles and relevant policy referenced at the beginning of each chapter.

The Design Guide has been produced in collaboration with engineers, planners, landscape architects, architects, ecologists, and the Bloor Homes design team. The success of this scheme will depend on the continued multidisciplinary design approach throughout the subsequent Reserved Matters stages of design.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024

The NPPF attaches great importance to the design quality of the built environment, with an emphasis on the provision of beautiful places and buildings. The requirement for authority-wide design codes to be adopted will ensure added robust contextual analysis as part of the design process which will enable the creation of appropriately beautiful development.

Paragraphs 132 and 133 of the NPPF state that:

'132. Plans should, at the most appropriate level, set out a clear design vision and expectations, so that applicants have as much certainty as possible about what is likely to be acceptable.'

'133. To provide maximum clarity about design expectations at an early stage, all local planning authorities should prepare design guides or codes consistent with the principles set out in the National Design Guide and National Model Design Code, and which reflect local character and design preferences. Design guides and codes provide a local framework for creating beautiful and distinctive places with a consistent and high-quality standard of design. Their geographic coverage, level of detail and degree of prescription should be tailored to the circumstances and scale of change in each place and should allow a suitable degree of variety.'

ORIGIN3

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Structure of Document

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Site Description

Location

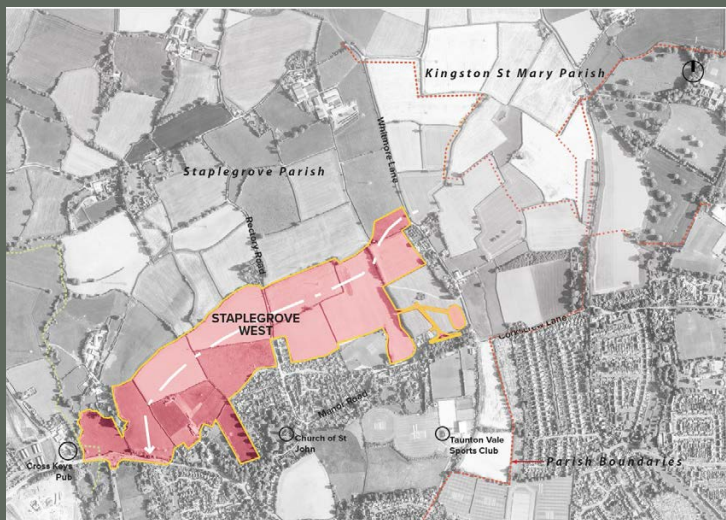


Figure 0.01: Staplegrove West location plan

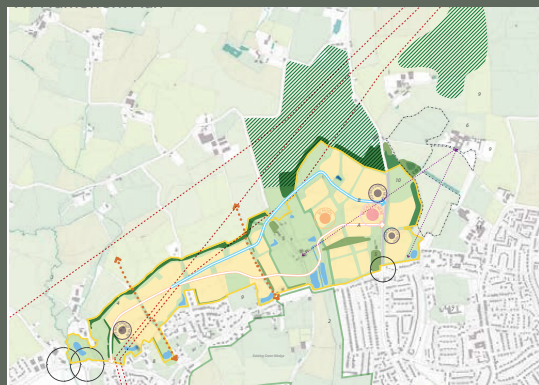
The Application Site

The application site is 56.72ha in size, lies adjacent to the existing settlement of Staplegrove as defined by the Application Boundary Plan opposite and is currently agricultural land.

As indicated above, this application covers the majority of the Staplegrove West land - apart from a small pocket at the junction of Whitmore Lane and Corkscrew Lane. The separate planning application being prepared for the Staplegrove East development will include proposals for that area.

Staplegrove West Planning History

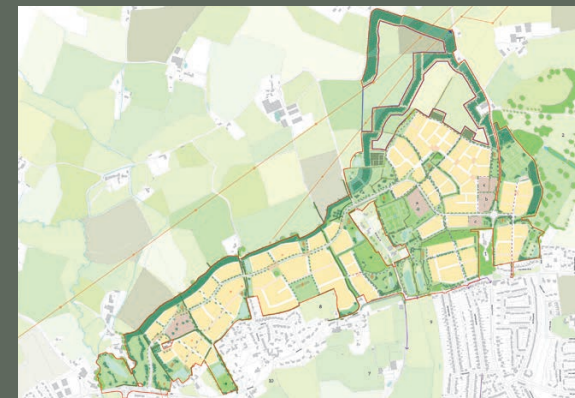
2015



North Taunton Framework Masterplan and Development Brief

This Masterplan Design Guide reflects the landscape led design principles established at the North Taunton Framework Plan and Design Brief stage back in 2015. In addition, the design principles will also accomplish the Garden Town Vision aims to provide a landscape and ecological setting for the new housing neighbourhood at Staplegrove West.

2019



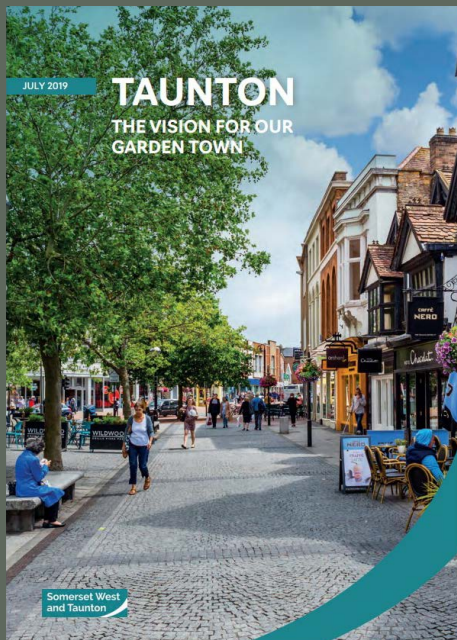
The Outline Consent

Outline permission for Staplegrove West(ref: 34/16/0007), was granted on 15th April 2019 for up to 713 new dwellings and 1 ha. of employment land set within an area of 56.72 ha. The overall scheme includes a new link road proposed to connect the A358 Staplegrove Road and Taunton Road, new pedestrian and cycle linkages, 11.09 ha of public open space including play areas, allotments and community orchards, as well as water management features landscape and ecological enhancements. The diagram above illustrates the various components of the consented masterplan and show the scale of the wider scheme for Staplegrove West in relation to the Design Guide.

Parameter Plan Accordance

The Design Guide is broadly compliant with the approved Staplegrove West Parameter Plans as set out above.

July 2019



Taunton Garden Town Vision

Taunton was designated a Garden Town in 2017, and in 2019 a formal vision document was adopted and issued by Somerset County Council (SCC) which highlights design aspirations for all future development within the town.

November 2022

Approved Phase 1 Green Infrastructure

This Design Guide should be read in conjunction with the approved Green Infrastructure Application Phase 1. Ref: 34/22/0011.

Phase 1 (P1) focused on delivering the Northern Buffer, the Back Stream corridor, West Hill Park, and part of the eastern Green Wedge. The area covered by Phase 1 reflected the need to provide circa 7.11 ha. of habitat enhancement along the northern and western edges of the site without Staplegrove East coming forward, and 6.83 ha. of habitat enhancement with Staplegrove East being delivered. The habitat enhancement is to be delivered as the first phase of the development as per condition 16 of the Outline planning permission.

March 2023



Phase 2 Pre application discussion with SWTC

Bloor Homes engaged with SWTC and SCC to discuss the delivery of the site. As part of this process, the consented masterplan was updated in response to an increase in drainage and cycle infrastructure requirements. Swales were also integrated into the urban structure, providing conveyance of surface water through the site to key attenuation features. In addition, as part of the masterplan review process, the employment hub was relocated to the core of the masterplan, adjoining Rectory Road.

Section 73 Approval

Approval of the Section 73 application granted in 9th April 2025 following agreement between SBC and Bloor Homes (ref:38/23/0347)

Design Guide

Submitted April 2025 to discharge conditions 3,4 & 5 from the Staplegrove West Outline planning conditions.

Reserved Matters

Subsequent Reserved Matters applications to be submitted in line with approved Design Guide

Design Guidance

The National Design Guide, the National Model Design Code, changes to the NPPF and the publication of the Building Better, Building Beautiful Commission's report, Living with Beauty (January 2020), through to the SWTC's own regional Design Guide, demonstrate the importance being placed on enhancing beauty, quality and environmental standards within towns and cities.

There are cross cutting themes across all these documents that ultimately aim to improve how the built and natural environment come together to provide better quality places. In response to this guidance, this Design Guide provides a set of guiding 'detailed design strategies' to create a distinctive place. Reference is made to specific national and local design guidance objectives listed at the beginning of each chapter page in this document to follow at a subsequent Reserved Matters planning stage.

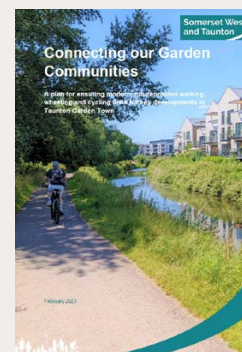
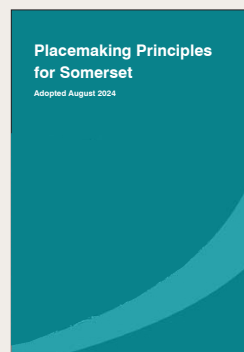
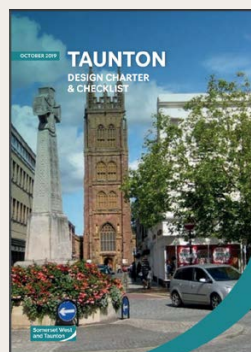
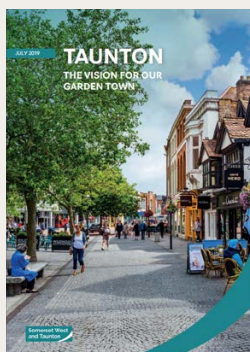
There is a strong emphasis on achieving a recognisable scheme identity, that integrates into its immediate setting and is locally inspired. The neighbourhood masterplan demonstrates a landscape led approach which creates a green and blue infrastructure and public spaces that will also contribute to enhance the setting of the place and provide significant biodiversity net gains.

To promote healthier lifestyles, the Design Guide sets out to deliver an exemplary active travel network across the masterplan area to existing cycle and pedestrian routes. The aim is to provide linkages from home to places of work and areas of play.



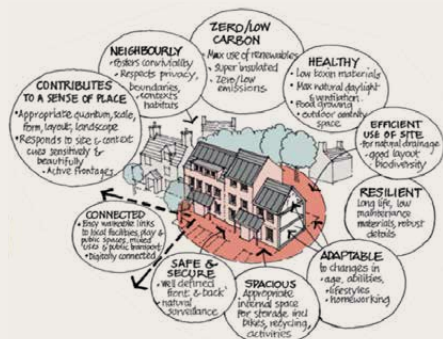
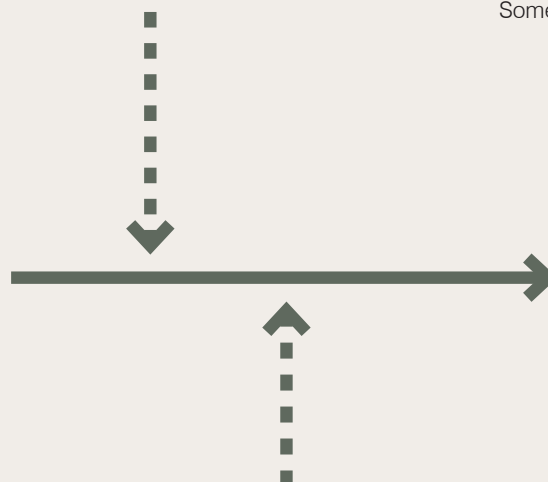
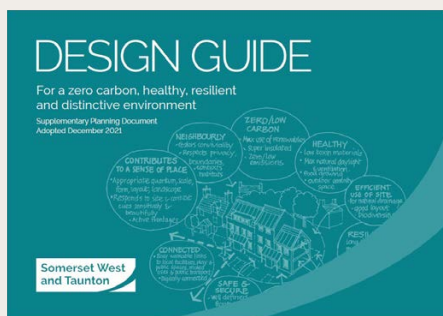
Figure 0.02: Design Guidance

The ten characteristics of well-designed places. From National Design Guide, 2021



Placemaking Principles for Somerset (Adopted Aug 2024)

Connecting our Garden Communities (Feb 2023)



The aims of the Somerset Design Guide complements the aims of the National Design Guide with a focus on local context and distinctiveness.

Guidance documents help shape the structure of Staplegrove West Garden Town Neighbourhead Design Guide, with Create Streets acting in an advisory role through the process.

Placemaking Policy

The vision and overarching principles inform Bloor Homes approach to placemaking which is the basis for the guidance within this Design Guide.

Placemaking is important; places are where life 'occurs'. A place where home is close to work, where a commute is possible by foot, bike or train and where leisure, community and nature are on the doorstep. All enable residents to make easy choices about day-to-day life that impact positively on the community and environment.

Placemaking is centred on people, their needs and connection with their community, and day to day activities.

It is about more than detailed design; considering how the wider environment can 'set the scene for life' and create a place where everyone can thrive.

Our approach to placemaking is informed by National and Local policy. The NPPF promotes sustainable patterns of movement and high-quality design to create attractive, welcoming, and distinctive places to live, work and visit.

1. The Garden Town Vision

“Grow the Town Greener - Transform open spaces and streets”
Taunton Garden Town Vision Document

The planning policy and design codes referenced throughout the document, have each been carefully researched and considered throughout the design process, to ensure that development at Staplegrove Garden Village is compliant with both national and local place making related policy requirements.

NPPF

- Chapter 2: Achieving sustainable development
- Chapter 12: Achieving well-designed and beautiful places
- Chapter 15: Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

National Design Guide (Jan 2021)

- C1: Understand and relate well to the site, its local and wider context
- B2: Appropriate building types and forms of development
- N1: Provide a network of high quality, green open spaces with a variety of landscapes and activities including play
- N3: Support rich and varied biodiversity
- H1: Healthy, comfortable and safe internal and external environment
- L1: Well managed and maintained
- L2: Adaptable to changing needs and evolving technologies

National Model Design Code (2021)

- C.1.I: Character types
- C.1.II: Site Context
- N.1.i: Network of Spaces
- N.1.ii: OS Provision
- N.1.iii: Design
- I.1.i: Local Character
- I.1.ii: Legibility
- I.1.iii: Masterplanning
- I.2.i: Design of buildings
- U.1.I: Efficient Land Use
- R.1.I: Energy Hierarchy
- R.1.II: Energy Efficiency
- R.2.I: Embodied Energy
- R.2.II: Construction
- L.1.i: Management Plan
- L.1.ii: Participation
- L.1.iii: Community

Taunton Deane Borough Core Strategy (2011-2028)

- Strategic Objective 1 (Climate Change)
- Strategic Objective 2 (Economy)
- Strategic Objective 3 (Town and Other Centres)
- Strategic Objective 4 (Housing)
- Strategic Objective 5 (Inclusive Communities)
- Strategic Objectives 6 (Accessibility)
- Strategic Objective 7 (Infrastructure)
- Strategic Objective 8 (Environment)
- Policy CP3 Town and Other Centres
- Policy CP4 Housing
- Policy DM4 Design
- Policy CP6 Transport and Accessibility
- Policy CP8 Environment
- Policy SP2 Realising the vision for Taunton
- Policy SS6 Staplegrove – Broad Location for Growth

Taunton Deane Borough Site Allocations and Development Management Plan (December 2016)

- Policy C1: Reserved Land for Educational Purposes
- Policy C2: Provision for recreational open space
- Policy C5: Provision of Community Facilities
- Policy C6: Accessible Facilities
- Policy A5: Accessibility of Development
- Policy D7: Design Quality
- Policy TAU2: Staplegrove

Somerset West and Taunton Districtwide Design Guide SPD (Dec 2021)

- Section 3.0 – Context and Distinctiveness (Section 3.37 – Taunton)
- Section 4.0 – Sustainable Placemaking (particularly Section 4.1 – Integrated Placemaking with sustainability)
- Section 5.0
 - Section 5.2 – Towards zero-carbon design and construction
 - Section 5.6 – privacy, safety, and sociability
 - Section 5.8 – property boundaries and the streetscape
 - Section 5.11 – non-residential development
 - Section 5.13 – mixed uses
- Section 6.3 – Masterplans, Parameter Plans and Design Coding

Taunton Garden Town Public Realm Design Guide SPD (Dec 2021)

- Chapter 2.1 – Public Realm Standards
- Chapter 3.1-3.3 – Town/General/Green Standard – Paving
- Chapter 3.7 – 3.18 – Street Furniture
- Chapter 4 – Application to Places
 - Chapter 4.2 – Gateways and Approaches
 - Chapter 4.4 – Neighbourhood Centres

Garden Town Neighbourhood for the C21

The principles of the Garden City Movement were drafted in the latter years of the Victorian era but have a resilience that gives them relevance today.

The integration of town and country favoured by Ebenezer Howard, anticipated a human scale of settlements; the objective of local access from home to work and play, whether by walking, cycling or good public transport, underlies a contemporary approach to creating a successful masterplan.

Following the completion of Letchworth Garden City, which was the first physical incarnation of Howard's ideologies, its architects Sir Raymond Unwin & Richard Barry Parker were engaged to masterplan Hampstead Garden Suburb to be sited on 243 acres of land north of London. While design ideologies and characteristics were clearly influenced by Howard's Garden City principles and by the experience of Unwin & Parker in designing Letchworth Garden City, Hampstead Garden Suburb was not intended to be 'self-contained' or self-sufficient, but was intended to provide housing beside excellent transport links to the larger conurbation of London while achieving the following goals:

The approved urban extension to Staplegrove draws on many of the Garden City principles in providing new homes and employment opportunities in a 'Town-Country' setting; low to medium density development set in a verdant landscape connected both to urban infrastructure and open countryside.

- It should cater for all classes of people and all income groups
- There should be a low housing density (roughly equivalent to no more than 20 dwellings per hectare)
- Roads should be wide and tree-lined
- Houses should be separated by hedges, not walls
- Woods and public gardens should be free to all
- It should be quiet, with no church bells



Figure 1.01: Interpretation of the Garden City structure for Taunton

Bloor's Early C20 Arts & Crafts styling of new housing sits well with the Garden Town aesthetic; brickwork, render, and plain tile roofs will sit with comfort and familiarity among landscaped roads and hedged boundaries in a rolling landscape. But beyond aesthetic considerations, the masterplan is landscape and ecology led with formal and informal parks combining with a network of landscaped north-south pedestrian, cycle and vehicle routes to link suburban landscape features to open countryside.

Rather than adopt a geometrically driven masterplan favoured in the early C20, this masterplan is driven by the Main Street and its interaction with the topography and wider landscape setting; it goes beyond the deliberate organic styling explored later by Unwin and Parker by responding specifically and deliberately to existing topography, landscape features and settlement context.

Provision of formal and informal open spaces, play areas, allotments and sports facilities within walking distance of all dwellings is a key characteristic of the development. Also essential to the development's success is its ability to provide sustainable pedestrian, cycle and public transport links to areas of employment, retail and public amenity at a local and national level.

Garden Village Principles - Lessons Learnt from Precedents

There are a number of successfully delivered Garden Village examples throughout the country which display exemplar design principles which can be incorporated into Staplegrove to ensure the highest quality of development. The image palette below demonstrate key placemaking features with emphasis on the interface between dwelling and green/blue infrastructure, plus well constructed street compositions using terracing and repeated gables.



Figure 1.02: Alkderden Heights - Kent



Figure 1.03: Derwenthorpe - York



Figure 1.04: Bailrigg Garden Village - Lancaster



Figure 1.05: Burnside - Aberdeen



Figure 1.06: Alconbury Weald - Huntingdon



Figure 1.08: Welborne Garden Village - Hampshire



Figure 1.10: Tadpole Garden Village - Swindon



Figure 1.09: Canalside - Witchebstowe



Figure 1.07: Welborne Garden Village - Hampshire

FINAL



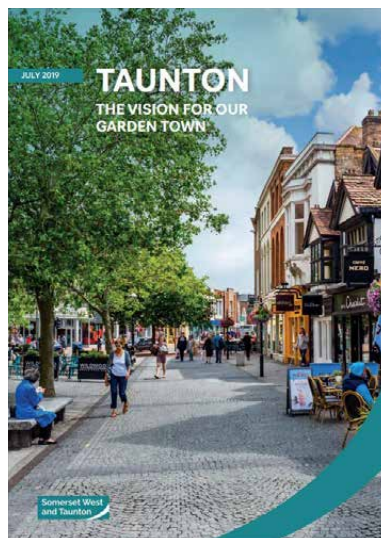
The Masterplan Vision

Taunton Garden Town

Taunton was designated as a 'Garden Town' in early 2017 following a submission to Government. The aim of this vision was to nurture housing growth and create new garden neighbourhoods supported by essential infrastructure and an enhanced network of green infrastructure.

The plan to deliver the Garden Town requirements is set out to meet the following five core needs;

- **Protect, maintain, link and enhance our green spaces, water and woodland for people and wildlife;**
- **Maximise our mental, emotional, physical and intellectual well-being by improving our educational, sporting, leisure, artistic and cultural life from being just 'good' to 'outstanding';**
- **Create a built environment, not just of houses but of neighbourhoods, that reflect the very best practice and a town centre of vitality and adaptability as the setting for a sociable and delightful experience;**
- **Transform the transport network, inside and outside the town, embracing new technology to meet everyone's needs while we reduce our carbon footprint, encourage walking and cycling and green the town;**
- **Cultivate a Taunton economy that creates competitive advantage and then develops it to be bigger and bigger through talent, technology and technique, building businesses that prosper in the global market.**



TDBC Garden Town Vision Document

Taunton Garden Town Green Infrastructure Diagram

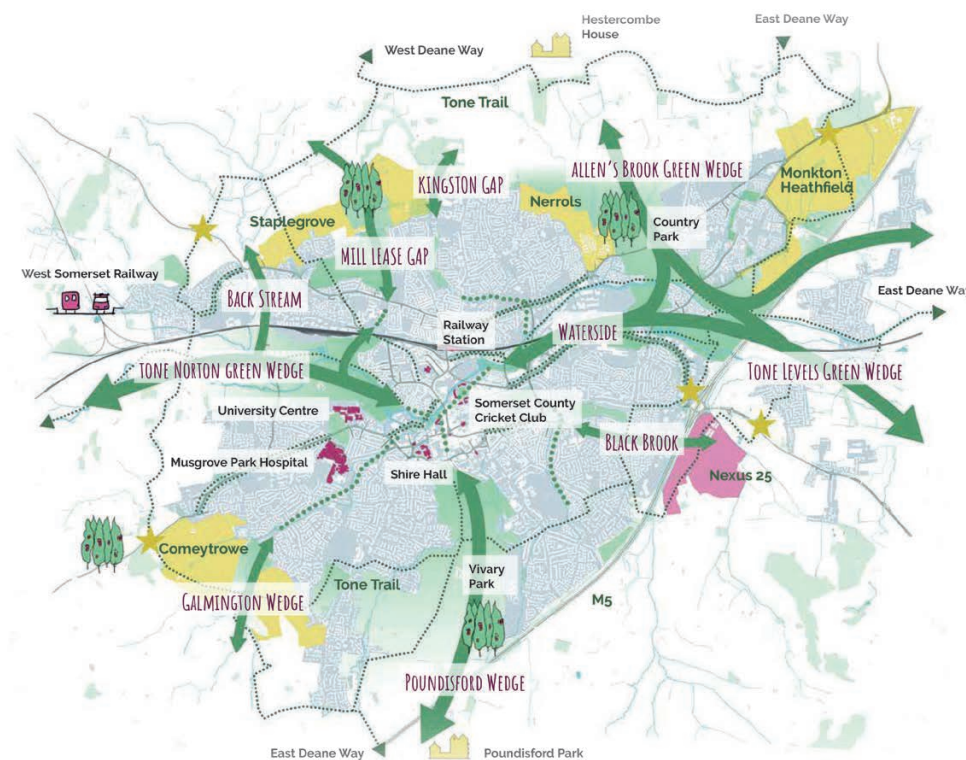


Figure 1.11: Extract from the Taunton Garden Town Vision Document

Taunton Garden Town Vision Document outlines 4 themes for which Garden Town activity will be structured;

- **Grow our town greener** – transforming Taunton's open spaces and streets, joining up existing green spaces, planting more street trees and woodlands, and managing water more imaginatively.
- **Branching Out** - moving cleaner and smarter, improving bus links and prioritising active travel opportunities,
- **Growing quality places to live**– town centre, new and existing neighbourhoods, delivering an outstanding built environment focused on play and spaces, with homes and buildings that are distinctly local in appearance.
- **New shoots and blossom** - a dynamic and prosperous community founded on knowledge, culture and business,

Bloor Homes Garden Town Philosophy



Figure 1.12: Extract from the Bloor Homes Design Document

Bloor Homes prides itself on building high quality new homes and taking a design lead approach to its schemes.

Through a tested, robust design framework, inspired by the principles used in the original garden cities, such as Letchworth and Welwyn, Bloor Homes ensures the delivery of successful, high quality new communities that continue to provide for healthy and fulfilling lifestyles today.

The neighbourhood structure within Bloor developments is designed around a network of attractive footpaths, cycle paths and streets that connect people to stimulating open spaces and natural environments.

Where possible every home is provided within a short walk of public green space and bus stops.

The concept of providing well-designed new developments that compliments rather than destroying the natural environment is a key influence on the Garden City Movement, and has remained as such within the design approach of Bloor homes.

The provision of a diverse and multi-functional network of green spaces, including play spaces, allotments, movement routes, and sustainable drainage features is a key principle to this design approach. Existing landscape features are, where possible, retained and incorporated into the design as

spaces, wildlife corridors, and walking or cycling routes, providing a feeling of spaciousness and greenness to residential areas, whilst improving biodiversity.

For Bloor Homes, harmony within the street is a key objective, with careful consideration given to tree species, boundary treatments, materials and roofscape. The enduring qualities of tree-lined, attractive avenues defined by interesting and appealing houses is perhaps the greatest legacy of the Garden Cities, and is one that Bloor Homes seek to capture within present and future developments. Each proposed house type will be designed and detailed in a way that ensures each street is an interesting, attractive, and enclosed place, as advocated by the Garden City Movement.



Design Principles

The Staplegrove West Outline Consent provided a development framework to integrate into the northern edge of the existing Staplegrove, whilst respecting the open countryside to the north.

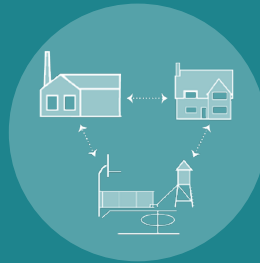
The Outline development principles from the earlier masterplan process have been reviewed and updated with a more holistic approach as to what a C21 Garden town neighbourhood environment should aim to deliver.

The Staplegrove West Garden Village Principles are inseparable and an interlocking framework for their delivery include the following TEN PRINCIPLES...



1. Respect Existing Communities and Reflect Local Character

Ensure the development respects existing communities and follows good urban design principles to deliver an attractive place that reflects a local arts and crafts character.



2. Integrated Live-Work-Play

Create desirable places to both live and work and relocate the employment hub into the heart of the masterplan accessible by all within a 10 minute walk.



3. Encourage Healthy Lifestyles

There is scope to encourage residents to live more healthily through the inclusion of allotments and community orchards to encourage people to participate in food growth.



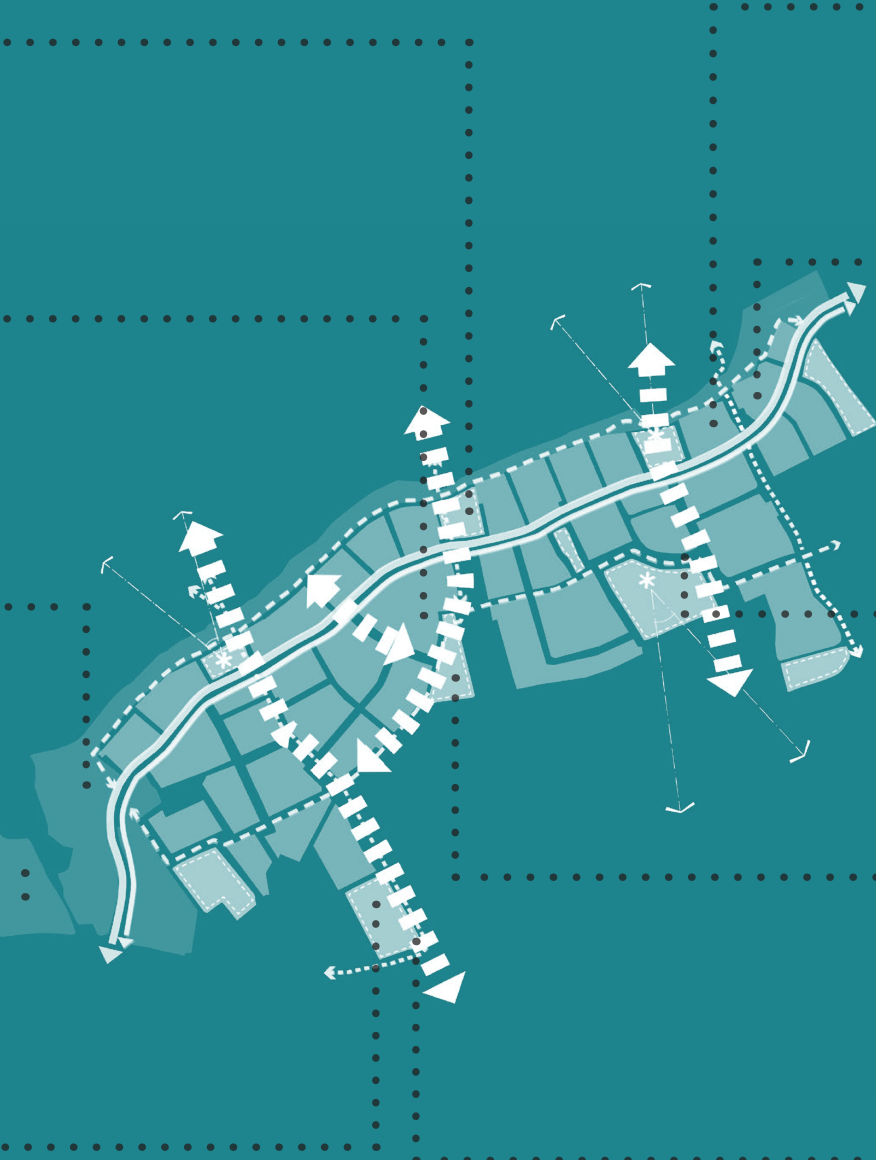
4. Blue Infrastructure

Create an interconnected blue-green infrastructure to build climate resilience through natural water retention and integration of sustainable drainage systems within streetscapes and public realm.



5. Create Memorable Green Spaces

Provide a network of quality open spaces throughout the site, street side verges and courtyards will be planted with street trees which in time, help to provide a 'leafy' character to the neighbourhood. All residents would be within a 5 minute walk of an open space or the wider countryside footpath network.



6. Mixed-tenure Homes, Housing Types, and Densities

Provide a mix of housing types and tenures to encourage diverse and intergenerational communities. Deliver beautifully designed homes with gardens will combine the best of town and country to create healthy communities.



7. Low Carbon Community and Climate Resilience

Contribute to a carbon neutral community and build climate resilience from construction to occupation through sustainable materials and construction techniques, renewable energy measures, sustainable drainage systems within a comprehensive blue-green infrastructure network.



8. Building a Strong Community

Enable the long-term sustainability of the garden town neighbourhood through a management model that encourages community ownership.



9. A Strong Identity and Sense of Place

Support a Garden Town identity and character through conserving and enhancing landscape and ecological features of the area and creating opportunities for people to interact with exemplar community green spaces.



10. Facilitate Pedestrian and Cycle Connectivity

To encourage active lifestyles, increase connectivity and maximise sustainable modes of travel within Staplegrove and to Taunton and beyond. Exemplar walking and cycling infrastructure will transform the area into a sustainable movement network.

