A guide to developing the western end of Lake Lothing

Western End of Lake Lothing Concept Statement
Supplementary Planning Document
Adopted March 2016
Why produce this Concept Statement?

This Concept Statement is intended to guide developers in drawing up proposals for development within the Western End of Lake Lothing. The Concept Statement will be used as a framework for assessing new planning applications within the site.
1. Introduction

1.1. The Lowestoft Lake Lothing and Outer Harbour Area Action Plan was adopted by the Council in 2012 to provide a spatial policy framework for the revitalisation of Lake Lothing and the Outer Harbour area.

1.2. This Concept Statement supports and expands on the strategic development allocation of Policy SSP6 (Western End of Lake Lothing) within the Area Action Plan.

1.3. Since the publication of the Area Action Plan, one site within the Western End of Lake Lothing area has been approved with planning permission for residential development. Whilst this application was considered to be appropriate for the site, there is a risk that future applications may stray from the original vision for the site, leading to ad hoc development.

1.4. This Concept Statement will help manage development in the Western End of Lake Lothing by setting out a clear, informed vision, which will ensure that a comprehensive approach is used to redevelop this site. Through innovative and progressive urban design, the site will become a better connected, more attractive location that enhances the waterfront and promotes sustainable development.

1.5. However there are significant constraints facing the regeneration of the area, such as the risk of flooding and the poor access from surrounding roads. These issues must be mitigated and controlled appropriately to ensure the site can meet its full potential.

EVIDENCE BASE

1.6. The land use suggestions set out in the document are supported by several forms of evidence to ensure that they are appropriate and achievable. The main sources of evidence used were:

- Lowestoft Lake Lothing and Outer Harbour Area Action Plan
- Land ownership and availability
- Constraints and opportunities
- Urban design and masterplanning capacity
- Public consultation

ROLE AND STATUS

1.7. This Concept Statement will be adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document; this means the information provided within this document will be a material consideration when deciding planning applications made within the Western End of Lake Lothing.

FORMAT OF THIS DOCUMENT

1.8. Section 2 provides an overview of the site’s current land use and context. Section 3 provides an analysis of the constraints and opportunities for the area. Section 4 sets out the proposed land use distribution. Section 5 provides information about design principles and section 6 provides an indicative masterplan of how the site could be redeveloped.
2. Site Context

LOCATION

2.1. Lake Lothing is an artificial channel that runs through the centre of Lowestoft linking the sea and outer harbour in the east with Oulton Broad in the west. This part of central Lowestoft has historically been used for marine based employment but has experienced a move away from industry which has left some of the area underutilised.

2.2. The Broads, which are part of the National Park Network and an important area for both landscape and ecology, are situated close to the western edge of the Western End of Lake Lothing. The Broads form an important part of the setting of the Western End of Lake Lothing and Lowestoft. Regeneration of the Western End of Lake Lothing has the potential to protect and enhance the Broads and their setting.
2.3. The site is a flat, low lying area on the southern shore of Lake Lothing, next to where it joins Oulton Broad at Mutford Lock. The site is bounded to the west by the railway bridge across the water, which acts as a restrictive western boundary to the site. Oulton Broad lies further to the west, whilst the Brooke Peninsula and former Sanyo factory are located to the east. Victoria Road acts as the southern edge and provides the only means of access into the area.

2.4. The three main access routes into the site are from side roads leading off Victoria Road. They are Crompton Road, South Elmham Terrace and Stanley Road. These are narrow roads that offer limited access to and from the site, particularly for larger vehicles. On site boat building businesses also face considerable problems when moving boats from the waterfront out onto Victoria Road, due to the width of South Elmham Terrace. However South Elmham Terrace will see some improvements as a result of the proposed residential development, as the road will be resurfaced and visibility splays will be added onto the junction with Victoria Road.

2.5. There are also existing cycle routes in the area, and the Area Action Plan also proposes improvements to the cycle network, which are shown in figure 2.3 below, and where possible these should be linked with cycle access in the Western End of Lake Lothing.
EXISTING LAND USES

2.6. The Western End of Lake Lothing is composed mainly of residential and light industrial uses, some of which are focused on marine based employment. The map below highlights the site’s current land uses and the surrounding area in more detail.

2.7. There is no public open space on the site; however, there are some areas of privately owned unused open space. A smaller area of open space lies between Crompton and Stanley Road. The large area west of the site is subject to planning permission for residential development.
3. Constraints and Opportunities

3.1. Analysis of the site has raised a number of issues, some of which have the potential to affect future development.

3.2. A colour coding system has been used to indicate whether issues raised on the site are considered to be opportunities, constraints or potentially both.

**CONSTRAINTS**

1. Rail line
   Restricts access to Saltwater Way.

2. Junction of Victoria Road and South Elmham Terrace
   Potential congestion and poor visibility; limited access for heavy goods vehicles.

3. Crompton Road
   Narrow road that is unsuitable for large amounts of traffic, parking along the road restricts HGV movements.

4. Stanley Road
   Narrow road that is unsuitable for large amounts of traffic, parking along the road restricts HGV movements.

**OPPORTUNITIES**

5. Existing quay jetties
   Potential to improve quay jetties and open up the waterfront to the public, providing tourism/leisure based employment.

6. Waterfront west of Lake View Road
   Potential to bring quay heading and slipway back into use for marine based employment.

7. Under utilised space along Crompton Road
   Site to the north of the factory could support additional development.

8. Unused open space
   Potential for housing development with landscaping.

9. Improved access from Stanley Road
   Opportunity for an additional access route into the site by providing a new road to the east of the site.

*Figure 3.1 Map of constraints and opportunities*
10. **Land with planning permission**

Provides a good catalyst for development in the area, though is reliant on only a single access route into the site which needs improvements.

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11. **South Elmham Terrace**

Improvements will be made as part of the planning permission; however congestion and restricted visibility may continue to limit this route’s functionality.

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12. **Access to Lake View Road from the west**

Private access limits movement between the west and east parts of the site; however this road could be used to join the site together.

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13. **North of Lake View Road**

Low quality fencing restricts views across Lake Lothing. However, there is the potential to improve this frontage with any redevelopment of this area in the future.

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14. **Flood Risk**

A large part of the site falls within a flood zone, however, there is an opportunity to protect new developments from flooding which may also help to protect other parts of the site. Development on the site should take into account the impact on flood risk in the surrounding area and should not increase risk in other parts of Lake Lothing.

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**FLOOD RISK**

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3.3 One of the main constraints facing development in the Western End of Lake Lothing is the risk of tidal flooding from Lake Lothing. The site is divided in terms of flood risk, with the western half of the site falling entirely within the flood zone, whilst the eastern half of the site largely falls outside of the flood zone. The hazardousness of flooding also varies across the site with the most hazardous area of flood risk in the central part of the site.

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3.4 Development within the Western End of Lake Lothing should minimise the risk of surface water flooding, which is caused by excessive rainfall. Developments will be expected to provide details of measures to deal with surface water as part of a planning application.

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3.5 Due to these threats it is considered that employment uses are best suited for the central and north western side of the site whilst residential development, which is much more vulnerable to flooding, should be focused on the south eastern side of the site.

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4. Land Use

**HOUSING**

4.1. Residential development is suggested for the eastern part of the site as it would act as an extension to existing residential buildings in the area; this location also falls outside of the flood zone, making it more suitable for residential development rather than employment. Additional housing development also offers an opportunity to improve the aesthetic profile of this part of the site.

**EXISTING PLANNING PERMISSION**

4.2. A large section of the site to the west is covered by planning permission for residential development. Whilst an outline planning application has been approved, the design of the proposed buildings has yet to be established. The design guidance set out in this concept statement can therefore be used to influence the final design of the proposed development.

**EMPLOYMENT**

4.3. By utilising the existing slipways, the central part of the site can provide marine based employment in a location with good access to the waterfront. The site currently has a large area of underutilised open space, which could be used to provide additional employment land.

4.4. A smaller part of the employment area has been suggested as live/work accommodation. This type of development not only provides a mix of employment and residential uses but also provides a unique solution to flood risk, in that ground floor employment uses would be less vulnerable to flooding.

**TOURISM**

4.5. The northwest corner of the site has been recommended as an employment area with a focus on tourism. This strategically important location has excellent potential. With existing quaysides and access to the waterfront this area could provide a more public friendly environment that uses the waterfront for the promotion of tourism and leisure uses.

**MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT/ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT AREA**

4.6. Land to the north of Lake View Road has been identified as an environmental improvement area. This area is made up of several small plots of land and is already developed. However, this part of the site may be suitable for some sensitive infill development and environmental improvements, particularly if they improve views towards Lake Lothing. However due to the limited options for development in this part of the site, no detailed design guidance for this area will be given within this document.
5. Design Principles

5.1. Whilst planning applications submitted for the site will provide detailed information regarding the design and layout of proposed buildings, the opportunity has been taken to provide a flexible design framework which is considered to be sympathetic to the site’s character. Key design principles such as strong frontages, suitable building materials and sustainable design will help the site meet its full potential.

5.2. Whilst successful schemes reinforce local architectural styles, they also relate well to their surrounding context by making the most of existing landscape features. In the case of this site, Lake Lothing is a unique element which can be used to enhance the site’s profile.

5.3. This section breaks down the Western End of Lake Lothing into four smaller zones to help provide more in depth details on the individual design needs of the area.

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**DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS FOR ALL ZONES**

**Pedestrian and Cycling Network**

5.4. All development within the area should encourage sustainable modes of transport such as cycling and walking. A single continuous cycle/footpath that runs along the southern edge of Lake Lothing would improve Lowestoft’s connectivity and help to decrease the level of car use in town. For this reason all applications within the site should consider ways in which to enhance the cycling/walking network.

**Road Improvements**

5.5. Lake View Road has the potential to join the west and east parts of the site together, which would improve accessibility. The western point of Lake View Road is currently fenced off, but could be improved to allow a new access road to be built, which could link up to the new residential development to the west. Any development within the site should prioritise improving access, and encouraging walking and cycling as alternative methods of travelling. A continuous route throughout this area would also promote the vision for transport and access set out in the Area Action Plan.

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*Figure 5.1 Design principle zones*
Landmark Buildings

5.6. Landmark buildings are distinctive structures that can be placed in an area to aid orientation and provide visual variety. They can also be used to indicate to people that they are entering an area of special character. Landmark buildings tend to be slightly taller than surrounding structures and are designed to be seen over a wider area. However, careful consideration should be given to the design details of taller buildings to ensure that privacy and overlooking of surrounding properties is not affected. Height is not the only way in which a building can be considered to be a landmark; exceptional or innovative building designs can also be used to create this status. The Concept Vision on page 19 identifies a number of locations where landmark buildings would be suitable.

Rail Crossing

5.7. Increasing pedestrian and cycle links to and along the waterfront around Lake Lothing is a key principle set out in the Area Action Plan. A crossing over or under the rail line in the west part of the site would provide pedestrians and cyclists with an alternate route when travelling towards Oulton Broad and north Lowestoft.

Car Parking

5.8. Parking spaces within the site are limited, particularly along Crompton and Stanley Road. Parking along these roads restricts access for HGVs, causes difficulties for local homeowners and makes exiting or entering Victoria Road hazardous. To ensure that no additional burdens are placed on parking spaces, all applications brought forward in the site must prove to the satisfaction of the Council that adequate levels of parking provision will be provided in line with the Suffolk Guidance for Parking 2014.

Noise, Light and Security

5.9. The redevelopment of the Western End of Lake Lothing should create a safe, publically friendly environment that supports a mixture of land uses which work in harmony to create a sense of character and place. Applications which would result in a detrimental level of noise or light pollution, or those which would decrease the security of the site will be considered unsuitable for development.

Flood Resilient Buildings

5.10. Waveney District Council is working with its partners to improve flood protection for the Lake Lothing area but it will still be necessary to ensure that all new development is designed to be safe from flooding.

5.11. All applications brought forward in the Western End of Lake Lothing that fall within a flood zone will be required to provide a detailed, site specific flood risk assessment which demonstrates that an adequate level of protection will be provided for new buildings. The use of porous surfaces and other innovative flood defence designs will be encouraged. Development proposals must also demonstrate that they do not increase the risk of flooding elsewhere in the Lake Lothing area.
5.12. For developments within the flood risk zone a flood risk assessment should identify the type and level of flood risk on a development site. It should also identify the measures needed to reduce flood risk to levels that are acceptable in the National Planning Policy Framework and whether these flood mitigation measures will increase the risk of flooding elsewhere. A flood risk assessment should also include a warning and evacuation plan to ensure that residents can move unaided to a place of safety.

5.13. The Western End of Lake Lothing was not included in the Council’s cumulative Land Raising Study and so it is important to be aware that land raising work on this site could increase the risk of flooding elsewhere.

5.14. The diagram opposite provides examples of flood mitigation measures designed into new developments which would help them to pass a flood risk assessment. However the measures recommended will vary depending on the findings of a flood risk assessment and not all of those detailed below will be necessary in any given development.

5.15. Another requirement of the flood risk assessment is that development should take account of climate change. This means that residential development should remain safe from flooding from 100 years after the date of assessment, employment development should remain safe for 75 years. In both cases climate change could lead to the length of time being increased. Development will therefore have to be designed to withstand future flood risk, even this this will not occur at the present time.


5.17. New development should be sensitive to nearby heritage assets. Where appropriate developers should provide information to help visitors and local residents understand and appreciate historic buildings. This can take the form of plaques and information boards.
Sight Lines

5.18. The map opposite shows the potential sight lines through the Western End of Lake Lothing site. Sight lines are vistas that create views across the site from one part to another. Sight lines not only make the site more attractive but they will also encourage people to visit and travel through the area. There is the potential to create key north facing sight lines towards Lake Lothing, including along Crompton Road and Stanley Road. These south to north vistas will increase views of Lake Lothing and the visual linkages between new development and the waterside. Another vista running east to west along an extended Lake View Road would further help to link the site together and would likely encourage walking and cycling. Landmarks placed throughout the site will provide navigational reference points that will enhance the appearance of these sightlines.
5.19. **Buildings:** Residential buildings in this zone should take the form of terraced housing, providing a strong north facing frontage. These should be of a fairly high density (approximately 50 dwellings per hectare) to be in keeping with the surrounding area. Residential buildings should typically be of two storeys in height although a taller landmark building on the corner of Lake View Road and Stanley Road would help to raise the profile of this area and provide a reference point for those navigating their way through the site.

5.20. **Design and appearance:** The building frontage facing Lake Lothing along Lake View Road should provide a strong, unbroken streetscape which would improve the street’s built continuity and help to create a more distinct image from the northern side of the water.

5.21. New residential development in this area should exhibit designs that promote local distinction, such as those in the style of traditional quayside buildings, maltings and dock warehouses. Exterior materials should include bricks and timber cladding to remain sympathetic to existing terraced buildings and to reflect the marine setting of the northern part of the site.

5.22. **Landscaping** will form an important part of any residential development on this part of the site. This means that landscaping should be integral to the preparation of any residential development proposal and not simply added as an afterthought. Landscaped areas should be accessible for local residents to use as well as enhancing the amenity of any residential development. Examples of landscaping include lawns, trees and hedges, as well as areas of decking and patios.

5.23. **Car parking:** Car parking is of paramount importance to ensure that roads through the site remain clear and free from congestion. Driveways in the front curtilage of houses should be avoided to ensure that high quality frontages are provided. Possible options for providing parking include:

- Secure parking to the rear of dwellings
- Secure communal parking areas
- Carports underneath dwellings
ZONE 1  Good examples of existing buildings

Below are some examples of residential buildings that address some of the design considerations identified for Zone 1. Common design themes are high density and the use of styles that are appropriate to the surrounding area. One of the examples is of a converted warehouse. In all cases these buildings create interesting shapes that add to the surrounding area.

ZONE 2

5.24. Buildings: The Lake Lothing waterfront is one of the most visible parts of the site and development here has the potential to greatly enhance the quality of a much wider area. A strong development along the waterfrontage is of upmost importance. Therefore all buildings in this area must be of the highest architectural quality due to the site’s prominent location. The design of buildings along the waterfront should also enhance public views onto Lake Lothing and ensure that the water is visible from across the site.

5.25. Buildings on this part of the site should provide a strong frontage along Lake Lothing, which would require buildings to be 2 storeys tall. However building heights will have to be sufficient for functional employment use and so may in some cases be taller.

5.26. The south west corner of zone 2 should be used for live/work units. These are three storeys in height with employment uses on the ground floor and residential apartments on the upper floors. It is quite common that the owner of the ground floor business will live in the apartment directly above it.

5.27. Design and Appearance: The design of buildings associated with employment uses often focus on functionality over aesthetics. However, there is no reason why commercial buildings should not seek to create attractive and inviting environments. The illustrations and examples provided show how functionality can be successfully combined with aesthetic quality. Attention should be given to the use of materials, for example, the use of timber cladding over a steel frame will create an interesting building that is cost-effective to construct and sensitive to its surroundings. Wooden buildings at Southwold Harbour (see page 14) provide examples of structures that are sensitive to the historic area, attractive to look at and are functional.

Figure 5.5 Zone 2

Left: This landmark building is used to good effect on a corner in Southwold, which helps to avoid any blank frontages on either side of the road.

Right: Townhouses demonstrating a modern design with a strong frontage in Harlow.

Left: An example of a landmark building designed in a traditional style in Lowestoft.

Left: Converted warehouse in Ipswich used for residential development. This is taller than those in the Western End of Lake Lothing site but gives an example of design that is in keeping with its surroundings.

Right: Townhouses in Ipswich that strengthen the surrounding townscape.

Left: This landmark building is used to good effect on a corner in Southwold, which helps to avoid any blank frontages on either side of the road.

Right: Townhouses demonstrating a modern design with a strong frontage in Harlow.
5.28. **Materials:** Live/work units should also demonstrate a high quality of design. For example, the lower levels may be of brick construction and the upper floors might use timber cladding in keeping with surrounding buildings and the maritime character of the area. The imaginative use of glass and windows on the upper floor should also be considered.

5.29. **Waterfrontage:** There is strong potential for new employment uses to exploit their waterfront location. This part of Lowestoft has a history of marine related uses and future uses could include small boat builders, chandlers and marine equipment makers. Public access could also be possible where employment use allows.

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**Zone 2 Good examples of existing buildings**

These are examples of buildings in other parts of Suffolk. They combine functionality with visual interest, using materials that are common in the surrounding area. Designs are in keeping with local building traditions.

The live/work units combine ground floor employment with upper floor residential accommodation. These examples incorporate traditional brick and tile construction with a more modern design.

**Top:** Example of a Live/Work unit in Reydon.

**Middle:** Huts at Southwold Harbour

**Bottom:** Waterfront structure that retains traditional quayside features in Oulton Broad.

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**ZONE 3**

5.30. **Buildings:** Zone 3 forms an important and prominent part of the waterside. A taller landmark building on part of this site would help to create a distinctive and attractive area, and one that draws attention from the other side of Lake Lothing. To ensure that the building will be visible from the surrounding area (including from the other side of the railway line) a building of 3 or 4 storeys should be considered.

5.31. **Design and Appearance:** Flexibility of design should be employed when considering the design and layout of the landmark building and should take account of its intended use. For example, if marine uses are intended for the building it could take the form of a curved structure centred on the boats that are involved in marine uses.
5.32. **Materials:** The materials used in this zone used should take account of the waterside setting of the area, the maritime heritage and nearby terraced housing. Timber cladding, which could be painted as per the examples from Southwold Harbour, could be employed. A building used for tourism purposes could employ large windows to create a feeling of openness and good views across water.

5.33. **Waterfrontage:** This is a prominent site within the Western End of Lake Lothing and a landmark building on the waterfront could be used for tourism activities, such as a departure point for tour boats and water taxis. A prominent building here could attract visitors and residents to the waterfront.

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**Zone 3 Good examples of existing buildings**

**Buildings in zone 3 should be in keeping with their lakeside location. The landmark building in particular should be prominent and attract people to visit zone 3 but without overshadowing the surrounding area.**

**Above:** The Royal Norfolk and Suffolk Yacht Club in Lowestoft is a prominent building that is in keeping with the surrounding area and is sensitive to its location overlooking the marina.

**Above:** Attractive waterfront development with a strong frontage, such as this example in York, should be encouraged in the Western End of Lake Lothing area.

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**ZONE 4**

5.34. **Buildings:** The general layout and type of development in this zone has already been decided through an approved outline planning application; however the design of buildings within the site can still be influenced before a full planning application is submitted.

5.35. **Buildings within this zone should be three storeys high which will help to create a sense of enclosure around a central area of open space and provide better views across Lake Lothing. A landmark building on the north-east corner of this zone would also help to aid navigation through the site and enhance the visual variety of the development. This building should be either 3 or 4 storeys high. Taller buildings should be focused along the north and east edges of this area, to help create a strong distinctive frontage.**
5.36. **Details and appearance:** Ground floor living space and bedrooms in this zone should be avoided due to the risk of flooding. Garages and carports on the ground floor will provide spaces for cars and help to lessen the impact of flooding. Care should be taken to avoid repetitive and bland frontages to buildings when accommodating integral garages and carports. Buildings in this zone should promote a design style that reflects local character by following the styles of traditional quayside buildings, maltings and dockside warehouses. The taller height of buildings in this zone means that design is particularly important as the frontages may be seen throughout a large part of the site.

5.37. **Materials:** The marine setting of this area should be reflected in new development; traditional materials such as brick and timber cladding can help to achieve this. Glass could also be used to good effect in this location; as large north and east facing windows would help to enhance views over the waterfront and would provide an attractive frontage to be seen from the other side of Lake Lothing.

5.38. **Public space:** The centre of this development will provide an area of publically accessible open space. This open space should be overlooked by as many dwellings as possible to ensure the space is well supervised. An area of open space that is visible from the surrounding area will improve the local amenity. The open space should also provide appropriate seating and shading, and could also include a piece of public art, which would help to define this space as a centrepiece to the development.

5.39. **Landscaping:** Appropriate use of trees and greenery can help to create a sense of enclosure surrounding a central point, which in this case would be the area of open space at the centre of the development. Rows of trees surrounding the central square of the development will help to add distinction between the open space and surrounding houses and will help to soften the overall urban fabric of the site. However careful placement of trees will be required to ensure that overlooking of the open space from surrounding houses is not restricted.

5.40. Smaller areas of landscaped space within the development which are not obviously useful or visually pleasant should be avoided. Arbitrary areas of open space that are used to fill in areas of a development are not useful or attractive, and can be expensive to maintain.

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**Zone 4 Good examples of existing buildings**

These examples from the Accordia development in Cambridge and Turret Lane in Ipswich show how modern townhouses (of the sort granted outline permission) can be designed to create an attractive development that would also enhance the surrounding area.

*Right:* Strong unbroken frontages, such as this development in Ipswich should be encouraged in all residential development within the Western End of Lake Lothing area.

*Below:* Accordia in Cambridge demonstrates a good use of open space which is overlooked by surrounding houses.
6. The Concept Vision

6.1. This masterplan sets out the Council’s vision for the site which promotes a mixed use development that includes employment, residential and tourism based land uses.

6.2. It should be noted that the vision is an indicative layout, whilst it sets out land use recommendations which correspond with the site analysis set out in this document, ultimately it will be the detailed designs of planning applications that will set the level of development in the site. However, developers will have to demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Council why an alternative approach to the proposals set out in the vision might be more appropriate.