

CHAPTER 23

Swimbridge Action Plan

INTRODUCTION

23.1 Swimbridge is a large village located to the south of the North Devon Link Road approximately 2 kilometres south east of Landkey and 10 kilometres north west of South Molton. The village is situated in the valley of Venn Stream with hills to the north and south of the main settlement, although Swimbridge extends up Station Hill to Archipark, Hooda Close and Yarnacott Corner to the north. Swimbridge is located within the Priority Area for Rural Regeneration.

ENVIRONMENT

Landscape

23.2 Swimbridge is situated within an Area of Great Landscape Value extending from Codden Hill in the west towards the foothills of Exmoor. The hills to the south of Swimbridge and Landkey create a distinctive series of 'whale backed' limestone and chert ridges, which are uncharacteristic of the surrounding landscape types in North Devon. Hooda Hill, to the north of the village, is very prominent from the North Devon Link Road.

Nature Conservation

23.3 There are no sites of national nature conservation importance around the village. However, the countryside surrounding the village contributes to the biodiversity of the locality.

Historic Environment

23.4 The village centre retains much of its historic pattern and character and is centred around the Church of St James which is Grade I listed. The Conservation Area covers all of the village apart from modern developments to the south and north. It also includes open space to the north east of the village, which is considered to be important to the setting of Swimbridge. The extent of the Conservation Area is shown on Inset Map 12 where proposals will be considered against Policy ENV16.

Flood Risk

23.5 The Venn Stream flows through the village. Properties either side of the stream are situated within the area subject to flood risk based on the Environment Agency's indicative floodplain maps, as shown on Inset Map 12. To prevent the risk of flooding all proposals will be assessed against Policy DVS6 and must incorporate sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS) in order to control and manage surface water in accordance with Policy DVS7.

Sewage Disposal

23.6 The foul sewerage system in Swimbridge is at capacity and is unable to cater for further development. Any significant new developments will require major sewerage infrastructure improvements including the replacement of the existing pumping station.

HOUSING

23.7 A development boundary is identified for Swimbridge on Inset Map 12 outside of which the principle of residential development will not be acceptable unless it complies with Policies HSG8, HSG9, HSG9A or HSG10. Within the development boundary, residential development will be permitted in accordance with Policy HSG2.

Tannery Site (SWM1a)

23.8 The Tannery site is the only large previously developed site within the village and is proposed for residential development to include at least 35% affordable housing in accordance with Policy HSG7. The existing stone buildings contribute to the diversity of the character and appearance of the Swimbridge Conservation Area. The setting of Tannery House should be protected. The site is well related to the village centre. The current access via Hannaford Lane is narrow and poorly aligned at its junction with the main road through the village. To improve the situation in accordance with Policy TRA6, a new access to the Tannery site should be provided through the proposed housing site immediately to the north. This access should pass around rather than through the stone wall and the bridge required over the leat should be designed to minimise impact on nature conservation interests in accordance with Policy ENV8. Contributions will be sought towards improving bus services to the village in accordance with Policy TRA1A.

23.9 The Tannery site is partly within the flood risk area identified by the Environment Agency and located adjacent to the Swimbridge Flood Defence scheme. Any redevelopment proposal must not prejudice the maintenance and performance of these works and should be designed to meet the requirements of Policy DVS6 and include sustainable urban drainage systems in accordance with Policy DVS7. Any contamination will need to be remediated in accordance with Policy DVS4.

Land Adjoining Jubilee Hall (SWM1b)

23.10 This site is situated to the south of the main road and Vicarage and to the north of the Tannery site. It is proposed for residential development to include about 50% affordable housing in accordance with Policy HSG7. Any development of this site should provide or safeguard a vehicular route through to the Tannery site, as well as providing pedestrian and cycle access to the proposed recreation area at the Glebefield to the west. The site is located within the Conservation Area where a high standard of design will be required in accordance with Policy ENV16. The main sewer serving Swimbridge runs under the roadway from the Jubilee Hall car park to the pumping station. No new buildings should be sited within 3 metres of this main sewer. Contributions will be sought towards improving bus services to the village in accordance with Policy TRA1A. Any redevelopment of the adjoining Jubilee Hall site will only be permitted if a replacement hall has been provided.

PROPOSAL SWM1 (RESIDENTIAL PROPOSALS)

1. THE FOLLOWING SITES, AS SHOWN ON INSET MAP 12, ARE ALLOCATED FOR RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT PROVIDED THE ELEMENTS IDENTIFIED FOR EACH SITE ARE PROPOSED:-

THE TANNERY SITE (SWM1a)

- A) A RANGE OF DWELLING TYPES AND SIZES INCLUDING AT LEAST 5 AFFORDABLE HOMES;**
- B) THE SETTING OF TANNERY HOUSE BEING PROTECTED;**
- C) ACCESS FROM THE JUBILEE HALL LAND PASSING AROUND THE EXISTING STONE WALL;**
- D) FLOOD ALLEVIATION MEASURES;**
- E) IN ADDITION TO THE ABOVE ELEMENTS, CONTRIBUTIONS WILL BE SOUGHT TOWARDS:-**
 - ◆ UPGRADING THE SEWAGE PUMPING STATION; AND**
 - ◆ PROVIDING THE RECREATIONAL OPEN SPACE ON THE GLEBELAND.**

LAND ADJACENT JUBILEE HALL (SWM1b)

- A) A RANGE OF DWELLING TYPES AND SIZES INCLUDING AT LEAST 8 AFFORDABLE HOMES;**
- B) THE PROVISION OF VEHICULAR ACCESS THROUGH THE SITE TO THE TANNERY (TO THE SOUTH) AND PEDESTRIAN AND CYCLE ACCESS TO THE GLEBEFIELD (TO THE WEST); AND**
- C) IN ADDITION TO THE ABOVE ELEMENTS, CONTRIBUTIONS WILL BE SOUGHT TOWARDS:-**
 - ◆ UPGRADING THE SEWAGE PUMPING STATION; AND**
 - ◆ PROVIDING THE RECREATIONAL OPEN SPACE ON THE GLEBELAND.**

2. A PLANNING OBLIGATION OR CONDITION WILL BE USED TO SECURE ANY CONTRIBUTIONS PROVIDED.

EMPLOYMENT

23.11 There are limited employment opportunities within the village. The local economy is based primarily on agriculture and the provision of local services. The nearest major employment opportunities are located at Barnstaple and Pathfields Industrial Estate, South Molton.

23.12 Proposals to diversify the economy of the village will be supported where they are in accordance with Policy ECN3.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Sport and Recreation

23.13 There is currently no public open space within Swimbridge, although the churchyard around St James' Church provides an important visual open space within the village centre. The Open Space Strategy undertaken for the District has identified the following deficiencies for Swimbridge:-

- ◆ *Equipped children's play area*
- ◆ *Multi use games area*
- ◆ *Informal open space*
- ◆ *Sports pitches*
- ◆ *Facilities for young people.*

23.14 Land at the Glebefield to the west of the housing proposals at the Tannery site and adjoining Jubilee Hall (Proposal SWM1) is proposed for a variety of recreational uses including adult and junior football pitches, a children's play area and informal open space, together with a public car park. Planning permission has been granted for these uses on the land identified on Inset Map 12 and will be protected in accordance with Policy REC6. To help implement the recreational open space, developer contributions will be sought from all new residential development in the village. To further support and facilitate its provision, a limited number of houses may be permitted on the Glebefield immediately abutting the southern boundary of the Old Vicarage. Due to the exceptional circumstances, these dwellings will only be permitted in connection with the development of the recreational area.

23.16 Vehicular access to the Glebefield will be onto the main road opposite the Primary School, with a pedestrian and cycle access through the proposed housing development to the east (see Proposal SWM1b). Traffic calming measures should be provided along the entrance to the village to reduce vehicular speeds by the school.

23.17 The land between Station Hill and the Venn Stream is identified as an important visual open space within the village and is shown on Inset Map 12. This land will be protected as such in accordance with Policy REC6.

Education Provision

23.18 Swimbridge primary school has spare capacity, although its current site is restricted and offers no opportunity for expansion. Consequently, a replacement primary school, which should include new community facilities, may be required within the Plan period. The village also falls within the designated area of South Molton Secondary School and Community College, which also has spare capacity.

Car Parking

23.19 There is a lack of car parking within the village. Support will therefore be given to the provision of a new car park. In addition, a new car park to serve the open space provision is proposed on the northern part of the Glebefield site.

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