

CHAPTER 27

Combe Martin Action Plan

INTRODUCTION

27.1 Combe Martin is identified as a Local Centre that provides localised services and facilities for the surrounding rural community. The village is located within the Area of Strategic Landscape and Development Constraint identified in the Structure Plan.

27.2 Combe Martin is a long, linear village situated within the UMBER Valley either side of the A399 between Ilfracombe and Blackmoor Gate. The village is approximately 5 kilometres east of Ilfracombe. The boundary of Exmoor National Park runs along the top of the valley on the northern side of the village.

ENVIRONMENT

Landscape

27.3 The landscape setting of Combe Martin is typified by rising land either side of the UMBER Valley. To the north and east, the valley slopes retain historic field patterns with Hangman Point and Exmoor National Park beyond. To the south and west of the village the landscape is dominated by Clorrige and Newberry Hills, where the wooded slopes emphasise the linear form of the village.

27.4 The whole of the village is situated within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) which extends up to the boundary of the National Park, and where Policy ENV2 will apply. Proposals affecting the landscape setting of Exmoor National Park will be considered against Policy ENV4.

27.5 The village is also situated within the Heritage Coast where proposals will be subject to Policy ENV3. Inset Map 15 identifies the development boundary for Combe Martin which also defines the extent of the Coastal Preservation Area (CPA) which surrounds the village. Development within the CPA will be subject to Policy ENV5.

Nature Conservation

27.6 The coastline at Combe Martin forms part of a Voluntary Marine Conservation Area (VMCA) which stretches from Hangman Point (within Exmoor National Park) to Downend at Croyde. The VMCA recognises the ecological and geological importance of the cliffs along this stretch of coastline. Combe Martin Bay has been designated as a SSSI to protect the ecology and geology of the coastline, where proposals will be considered against Policy ENV10.

Archaeology

27.7 A medieval field system remains on the slopes around the village where hedgerows mark many of the original strips. Other strips have been incorporated into the long gardens of dwellings within the village. The remains of the field system contribute to Combe Martin's landscape and heritage. The largest remaining area of the field system is situated to the north and east of the village up to the National Park boundary and west of Badgaver Lane. The pattern of lanes also forms an important feature of the field system. A smaller area of the field system is situated to the south and east of Furze Park. Both areas are identified on Inset Map 15.

POLICY CBM1 (COMBE MARTIN FIELD SYSTEM)

DEVELOPMENT WILL NOT BE PERMITTED WHERE IT WOULD HARM THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL HERITAGE OR SETTING OF THE MEDIEVAL FIELD SYSTEMS IDENTIFIED ON INSET MAP 15.

27.8 Combe Martin was once an important centre for silver and lead mining and there are a large number of quarries and mine shafts within and around the village. Knap Down Engine House and chimney is the best preserved above ground structure of the area's mining heritage and is the only engine house of its type in North Devon. The industrial archaeological and mining heritage of the area will be protected by Policies ENV13 and ENV14. Any new development within the locality will need to consider the safety implications of any existing mine shafts in accordance with Policy DVS4.

Historic Environment

27.9 The original village of Combe Martin was centred around the Parish Church and has since extended down the valley. The Church of St Peter ad Vincula is Grade I listed. West Challacombe Manor to the north of the village in Exmoor National Park is also an important historic building and is graded II*. There is no Conservation Area within the village. However, the designation of a Conservation Area will be considered within the Plan period focusing on the following areas:-

- ◆ *Around the Parish Church*
- ◆ *The Seafront*

Support will be given to proposals to enhance the streetscene throughout the village, including the undergrounding of wires.

Flood Risk and Water Quality

27.10 The River Umber flows along the southern side of the village and forms the development boundary for much of its length. The flood plain includes parts of the back gardens of properties on the south-west side of the main road through the village. Any proposals that are likely to flood or increase the risk of flooding elsewhere will be assessed against Policy DVS6. All schemes must therefore incorporate sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS) where appropriate in accordance with Policy DVS7. For sites near the River Umber, soakaway systems are unlikely to be effective due to the high water table. Any discharges will need to be strictly controlled with on-site storage. Elsewhere within the village, water draining from the surrounding hills also causes localised flooding, where improved land drainage systems are required.

27.11 The foul sewerage system in Combe Martin has limited spare capacity. The combined effects of the housing developments proposed for the village could be significant requiring improvements to the sewerage system. Developer contributions will be sought towards the costs of improving the system.

27.11A Development proposals should include appropriate measures to safeguard or enhance water quality of the River Umber and Combe Martin Bay in accordance with Policy DVS6.

HOUSING

27.12 A development boundary is identified for Combe Martin on Inset Map 15, 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.

27.13 Three sites have been identified for residential development in Combe Martin. Two of these sites are on previously developed land. The third housing proposal identified for the village is on a greenfield site where it rounds off existing development.

27.14 Each of the sites identified for residential development includes specific elements that should be incorporated into any proposal. However, in addition to these elements, each proposal will also need to comply with and incorporate other requirements in accordance with the general policies contained in Section 1 of the Plan. Many of these policies are not referred to in either the proposal or accompanying reasoned justification. Particular policies that will apply are contained in the chapters on Development Standards, the Environment and Travel, Transport and Communications. In addition, Policy HSG7 will be relevant to all sites with an affordable housing target, whilst Policy REC5, which sets out the open space requirements, will be applied to all residential proposals.

Previously Developed Sites

Rows Garage (CBM2a)

27.15 Rows Garage is situated to the south of the main road and to the north of semi-derelict greenhouses at Brookdale Nurseries. Residential redevelopment of the site should include at least 3 affordable homes or 33% of the total provision proposed in accordance with Policy HSG7. The existing access from Rows Lane is narrow with limited visibility onto Victoria Street. Consequently any redevelopment should provide a new safe access in accordance with Policy TRA6. Provision should be made to safeguard a route for vehicular access to the Brookdale Nurseries site to the rear and for potential pedestrian access to a future riverside walk (see Policy CBM4). This site is surrounded by

archaeology and a full archaeology assessment will be required prior to any redevelopment. Development proposals will be required to submit a flood risk assessment and additional flood defence measures may be needed on site. Soakaway systems may not be effective and surface water discharge will need to be controlled and managed through the use of SUDS in accordance with Policy DVS7. Any contamination on the site will need to be remediated in accordance with Policy DVS4.

The Telephone Exchange and Land West of Western Gardens (CBM2b)

27.16 The Telephone Exchange site and land west of Western Gardens includes a series of domestic garages and a small factory. Residential development of the site should include at least 10 affordable homes or 35% of the total provision proposed in accordance with Policy HSG7. Much of the site is under-utilised and there is a paddock leading towards the River Umber. Redevelopment will need to provide a new, safer access onto King Street in accordance with Policy TRA6, with possible replacement of the existing garages. No new buildings should be sited within 3 metres of the trunk sewer crossing the southern part of the site, which is also within the flood plain. The land at the rear, which adjoins the River Umber, will be safeguarded to achieve a riverside walkway to reflect Policies DVS6 and CBM4. Development proposals will be required to submit a flood risk assessment and additional flood defence measures may be needed on site. Soakaway systems are unlikely to be effective and surface water discharge will need to be controlled and managed through the use of SUDS in accordance with Policy DVS7. Any contamination on the site will need to be remediated in accordance with Policy DVS4.

PROPOSAL CBM2 (RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT ON PREVIOUSLY DEVELOPED SITES)

1. THE FOLLOWING SITES, AS SHOWN ON INSET MAP 15, ARE ALLOCATED FOR RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT PROVIDED THE ELEMENTS IDENTIFIED FOR EACH SITE ARE PROPOSED:-

ROWS GARAGE (CBM2a)

- A) ABOUT 9 DWELLINGS INCLUDING AT LEAST 3 AFFORDABLE HOMES;**
- B) IMPROVEMENTS TO THE ACCESS ONTO CASTLE STREET;**
- C) FLOOD ALLEVIATION MEASURES INCLUDING SUDS;**
- D) AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF THE SITE PRIOR TO DEVELOPMENT COMMENCING;**
- AND**
- E) IN ADDITION TO THE ABOVE ELEMENTS, CONTRIBUTIONS WILL BE SOUGHT TOWARDS:-**
 - ◆ **PROVIDING A WALKWAY ALONG THE NORTH BANK OF THE RIVER UMBER;**
 - ◆ **PROVIDING ADDITIONAL PLACES AT THE PRIMARY SCHOOL AND ILFRACOMBE COMMUNITY COLLEGE.**

THE TELEPHONE EXCHANGE (CBM2b)

- A) ABOUT 25 DWELLINGS INCLUDING AT LEAST 10 AFFORDABLE HOMES;**
- B) IMPROVEMENTS TO THE ACCESS FROM KINGS STREET;**
- C) FLOOD ALLEVIATION MEASURES INCLUDING SUDS; AND**
- D) IN ADDITION TO THE ABOVE ELEMENTS, CONTRIBUTIONS WILL BE SOUGHT TOWARDS:-**
 - ◆ **PROVIDING A WALKWAY ALONG THE NORTH BANK OF THE RIVER UMBER;**
 - ◆ **PROVIDING ADDITIONAL PLACES AT THE PRIMARY SCHOOL AND ILFRACOMBE COMMUNITY COLLEGE.**

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

Greenfield Site

Land off Spurway Gardens (CBM2c)

27.16A Land west of Skirhead Lane is proposed for residential development to complete existing development at Spurway Gardens. At least 50% of the total number of dwellings proposed on the site should be affordable in accordance with Policy HSG7. The sole vehicular access must be off Spurway Gardens, with the existing boundary hedges retained along Skirhead Lane to protect this feature of the field system. SUDS will be required to control and manage surface water discharge in accordance with Policy DVS7 and contributions will be required towards providing a walkway along the River Umber in lieu of public open space provision in accordance with Policy CBM4.

PROPOSAL CBM2C (RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT ON LAND OFF SPURWAY GARDENS)

1. LAND OFF SPURWAY GARDENS, AS SHOWN ON INSET MAP 15, IS ALLOCATED FOR RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT PROVIDING THE FOLLOWING ELEMENTS ARE PROPOSED:-

- A) ABOUT 6 DWELLINGS INCLUDING AT LEAST 3 AFFORDABLE HOMES;**
- B) ACCESS FROM SPURWAY GARDENS;**
- C) AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF THE SITE PRIOR TO DEVELOPMENT COMMENCING;**
AND
- D) IN ADDITION TO THE ABOVE ELEMENTS, CONTRIBUTIONS WILL BE SOUGHT TOWARDS PROVIDING:-**
 - ◆ **A WALKWAY ALONG THE NORTH BANK OF THE RIVER UMBER;**
 - ◆ **PROVIDING ADDITIONAL PLACES AT THE PRIMARY SCHOOL AND ILFRACOMBE COMMUNITY COLLEGE.**

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

EMPLOYMENT

27.17 There are limited employment opportunities within the village. The local economy is based primarily on the provision of local services and facilities serving the local tourist economy.

Parkhills Industrial Estate

27.18 Parkhills Industrial Estate is the only major employment site within the village. Given the general lack of suitable sites, there is a need to promote additional employment opportunities particularly for small business and workshop units to help diversify the local economy and provide all year round jobs. Consequently, the existing industrial estate at Parkhills will be safeguarded from redevelopment for other uses in accordance with Policy ECN2. Land to the north of the estate is proposed for future employment development within Classes B1, B2 and B8 of the Use Classes Order. The site should be developed for small businesses and workshop units to meet the latent demand. As the site is on sloping land within Park Quarry, any new buildings should be sited, designed and landscaped to minimise their impact on the surrounding countryside in accordance with Policies DVS1, DVS2, ENV2, ENV3 and ENV5.

PROPOSAL CBM3 (PARKHILLS INDUSTRIAL ESTATE)

LAND AT PARK QUARRY, AS SHOWN ON INSET MAP 15, IS PROPOSED FOR EMPLOYMENT PURPOSES WITHIN CLASSES B1, B2 AND B8 OF THE USE CLASSES ORDER.

Retail and Commercial Activities

27.19 Combe Martin is a small holiday resort that acts as a gateway to the western part of Exmoor. The village has a range of shops and commercial outlets serving both tourists and the resident population. These are concentrated within the seafront area but also distributed along the main village street, which forms part of the village's character. Further smallscale commercial development will be encouraged to diversify the local economy and meet the needs of the local community and visitors in accordance with Policy ECN3. Larger development proposals (i.e exceeding 280 square metres gross) would be generally out of scale in the village and harm the character of the streetscene.

27.20 The abattoir in Rectory Road is the only one within the District and is an important facility for the local farming community. The existing site will be safeguarded against alternative uses in accordance with Policy ECN2.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Sport and Recreation

27.21 Existing public open spaces for Combe Martin are identified on Inset Map 15. The main sports provision is at Hollands Park on a sloping site with poor vehicular access onto the High Street. Proposals for Hollands Park include football and cricket pitches, a larger clubhouse with indoor sports provision, a multi use games area and skateboarding/BMX facilities.

27.22 Additional open space is provided at Blackmore Ham Pleasure Gardens along the River UMBER and the Bowling Club. These facilities are all in the central and western parts of this linear village and will be protected from other uses in accordance with Policy REC6.

27.23 The North Devon Coast Path passes around Combe Martin Bay providing public access to the coastline and countryside on both sides of the village. An additional footpath is proposed along the north bank of the River UMBER connecting the beach with the London Inn, although some stretches may be required along the southern bank. This footpath will provide a riverside walkway through the length of the village, which would link with the coast path. Development proposals along the River UMBER will be required to facilitate the provision of this riverside walkway by safeguarding land and through financial contributions.

POLICY CBM4 (RIVERSIDE WALKWAY)

DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS ON SITES ADJACENT TO THE RIVER UMBER WILL ONLY BE PERMITTED WHERE THEY FACILITATE THE PROVISION OF A RIVERSIDE WALKWAY BETWEEN THE BEACH AND THE LONDON INN.

27.24 The Open Space Strategy undertaken for the District has identified the following deficiencies within Combe Martin:-

- ◆ *Football and cricket pitches*
- ◆ *Facilities for young people*
- ◆ *Informal open space at east end of village*
- ◆ *Multi use games area*
- ◆ *Equipped children's play area.*

27.25 Land adjoining Wood Lane and land south of Buzzacott Road has been identified as suitable sites to provide additional public open space at the eastern end of the village. These sites are indicated on Inset Map 15. The land south of Buzzacott Road would be suitable for a new cricket pitch, whilst the site adjoining Wood Lane could be used for informal open space at one end of the Riverside Walk. As the site is located within the AONB, CPA and Heritage Coast, any ancillary facilities required will need to be sensitively developed to reflect Policies ENV2, ENV3 and ENV5 and overcome any flooding issues in accordance with Policy DVS6.

PROPOSAL CBM5 (PUBLIC OPEN SPACE PROVISION)

LAND ADJOINING WOODLAND AND LAND SOUTH OF BUZZACOTT ROAD, AS SHOWN ON INSET MAP 15, ARE PROPOSED FOR PUBLIC OPEN SPACE.

27.25A Land adjoining the disused lime kiln should also be suitable for new public open space if access and security issues can be overcome and provided there is no harm to the landscape and medieval field system in accordance with Policies TRA1A, TRA6, DVS1, ENV2, ENV3, ENV4 and CBM1.

Cemetery

27.26 The existing cemetery in Combe Martin may reach capacity during the Plan period. Land south of Park Lane is proposed for a new cemetery, as shown on Inset Map 15.

PROPOSAL CBM6 (COMBE MARTIN CEMETERY ALLOCATION)

LAND SOUTH OF PARK LANE, AS SHOWN ON INSET MAP 15, IS PROPOSED FOR A NEW CEMETERY.

Education and Healthcare Provision

27.27 Combe Martin has a primary school that has no spare capacity. It also falls within the designated area of Ilfracombe Secondary School and Community College, which also has no spare capacity. Contributions towards additional places at these schools will be required for residential development that incorporates family type housing of five or more dwellings. The level of contributions will be based on the emerging Code of Practice which will be produced as Supplementary Planning Guidance.

27.28 A Sure Start Programme has been established covering Combe Martin, Ilfracombe and Berryarbor that aims to improve the health and wellbeing of young children and their families. St John's House at High Cross is under utilised and would be suitable for use by children and youths of the village.

PROPOSAL CBM7 (ST JOHN'S HOUSE)

ST JOHN'S HOUSE, AS SHOWN ON INSET MAP 15, IS PROPOSED FOR FACILITIES FOR USE BY CHILDREN AND YOUTHS.

27.28A The health centre in Castle Street will be safeguarded in accordance with criterion 2 of Policy COM4.

Car and Coach Parking

27.29 The existing car parks within Combe Martin are situated in the seafront area and adjacent to the Parish Church, meeting a demand from both residents and tourists throughout the year and particularly during the summer months. The Kiln, Parade and Cormelles Court car parks, which are identified on Inset Map 15, are of strategic importance and will be safeguarded from redevelopment in accordance with Policy TRA8A unless alternative provision is made available.

27.30 A new coach park has been provided on land adjacent to the Pack O'Cards. This site is also considered to be of strategic importance and will be safeguarded from redevelopment unless alternative provision is made available within the village.