



Garden Towns, Villages and Suburbs

A prospectus for Warwick District Council

May 2012

Introduction

The Council has agreed a Strategy for the Future and Sustainable Prosperity of Warwick District. This includes supporting growth in the District on new allocated housing sites which will be well designed, distinctive neighbourhoods based on principles of Sustainable Garden Towns, Villages and Suburbs.



Bournville

The planning context

Warwick District Council is preparing a new Local Plan which will shape how the District develops over the next 15 years. It is vital that as the District grows and changes, we develop communities which allow people to live sustainable lives, enriched by a high quality environment and

convenient facilities and services. These communities can be places which people are proud of and which address our housing need, generate jobs, provide facilities and services and create beautiful and inclusive places. These can be communities which remain attractive for many generations

to come. It is a tough challenge. But by working with communities and developers and by drawing on the past to rediscover the many strengths of Garden Towns and Suburbs, we hope to look forward to building enduring, high quality and sustainable communities for the future.

This prospectus

To help develop it's vision, the Council commissioned consultants URS to prepare this Prospectus for Garden Towns, Villages and Suburbs. In preparing the prospectus the consultants have studied garden suburb neighbourhoods across

Warwick District, discussed the principles of the approach with elected members and amenity and stakeholder groups and drawn on the wider experience of the garden cities and suburbs.

The aim is not to provide a 'blueprint' for future development but rather to illustrate the overarching principles and potential of the approach so that this can be developed into more detailed planning and design guidance in consultation with community groups and other interests.

Why is there interest in this approach now?

We need to find new ways of creating high quality and sustainable homes at a price people can afford and in neighbourhoods where they will want to live.

Today there is growing interest in how the Garden City approach can help unlock the creation of sustainable new communities for the 21st Century. The new National Planning Policy Framework explicitly recognises that “The supply of new homes can sometimes be best achieved through planning for large scale development, such as new settlements or extensions to existing villages and towns that follow the principles of Garden Cities.” (para. 52 from the NPPF)

The Garden City approach is seen as having key benefits in terms of:

- working with communities and new models of community ownership in the design and management of neighbourhoods;
- taking a comprehensive and integrated approach to development which includes not just new homes but all the facilities and services needed to support a new community;
- providing more open space and natural areas that can support biodiversity and allow for more tree planing and landscaping. This is increasingly important in planning for a changing climate in terms of providing summer cooling and shading and allowing rainwater to infiltrate naturally;
- creating a leafy and green character of neighbourhoods which is highly attractive and has proven popular over time. This can provide a high quality setting for a range of housing opportunities.

The principles of the approach are applicable at a range of scales from the planning of a freestanding garden town or suburb to the detailed design of an individual street or group of homes.

In Warwick District the approach is most likely to have greatest relevance in the design of new suburbs and in the development of new or expanded Garden Villages.

The following sections set out some of the enduring qualities of the approach, consider some of the key characteristics of Garden Suburbs and Villages and present some of the more detailed planning and urban design principles applicable in a range of different contexts.



Broadway, Letchworth Garden City

What is a Garden Town, Village or Suburb?

The concept was developed by Ebenezer Howard as a new way of creating communities that combined the best of town and country living. The principles were first applied in the design of Letchworth and Welwyn Garden Cities. This represented a golden age in British town planning and was admired and emulated around the world.



Welwyn Garden City

Key attributes



The Quadrangle, Welwyn Garden City

Letchworth and Welwyn Garden Cities demonstrated how completely new communities could be planned and developed following Howard's vision. They included not just new homes, but also industry, services, shops, community facilities and open space. Surrounding each town was a 'green belt' of agricultural land intended to separate the town from other communities and to provide for local food production.



Hampstead Garden Suburb

Garden City planning principles were also applied in the design of numerous Garden Suburbs such as at Hampstead and Brentham, as well as in a number of smaller Garden Villages. The same principles were applied in the development of a number of neighbourhoods across Warwick District. These places have succeeded in meeting the housing aspirations of successive generations and remain popular today. In many cases the special character and quality of the areas is recognised by Conservation Area designation.



Northumberland Road, Leamington Spa

Key planning and design principles

A comprehensive and well planned approach

A well planned town structure with efficient definition of blocks for development and routes for movement. Providing homes, jobs, and community facilities in a green and leafy environment.



Well managed tree lined landscaped streets

Green tree lined streets help create safe and convenient places to walk and cycle. These streets and public spaces benefit from appropriate planting and are maintained to high standards by establishing management programmes that ensure they are preserved over their lifetime.



Larger and greener development blocks

Larger street blocks provide good levels of security and benefit from substantial enclosed areas which provide opportunities for large gardens, allotments, recreation, bio-diversity and wildlife as well as a setting for mature landscape and trees.



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The home

Each home is carefully designed and detailed. Streets in Garden Cities and Suburbs often stand out because of the time and attention paid to the design of individual groups of homes to create variety and character.



Relationship between town & country

A clear and harmonious relationship between town and country was a key objective of the Garden City movement. In this example the transition between the town and the open space is defined by a wall with entry through clearly marked gateways.



Accommodating cars

Although streets like this were not originally designed for cars, many have adapted to create attractive and safe streets for pedestrians and vehicles. In planning new neighbourhoods, care will be needed to design streets appropriate to their function and to maintain safe vehicle speeds.



Garden Suburb Attributes

A well planned Garden Suburb will integrate with surrounding communities and provide the full range of housing choices and local services for new and existing communities. Families, singles, young couples, older people and those with special housing needs can benefit from living in an environmentally-friendly green setting that will mature and improve over time.



Typical Key attributes

Homes	c.500 - 2,000
Population	c1,150 - 4,600
Facilities & Services	District or Local Centre
	Local Employment (shops, services, workshops, own-door office)
	Regular public transport service to town centre
	Community Centre
	Primary school
Amenities	Local parks, greens and linear routes
Sustainable Development opportunities	Medium or low density housing
	Integrated water, waste and energy systems may be possible
	Car use and parking required
	District heating may be possible
	Environments that encourage walking and cycling

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A typical Garden Suburb street



Facilities and open spaces that add to the quality of life for existing and new residents



Civic and community buildings and infrastructure instil a strong sense of identity and community.



Streets are designed to meet the needs of public transport providers as well as being comfortable, attractive and safe for pedestrians and cyclists



Attractive local centres provide residents with basic services that are within easy walking distance from their homes

Garden Village Attributes

A Garden Village shares many similar qualities as those found in the Garden Suburb. The planning principles can help with the expansion of existing village communities so that they are able to support a better range of local facilities and services.



Typical key attributes

Homes	c.50 - 200
Population	c100 - 500
Facilities & Services	Local/Neighbourhood centre Home based employment, local services and agriculture Hourly public transport Community Centre
Amenities	Village green, local play park and countryside setting
Sustainable Development opportunities	Low density Large gardens for food production Car use and parking required

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A typical Garden Village street



Opportunities for residents to grow their own food



Homes set within a greener and more spacious environment



Improving the quality of life - reaping the benefits of outdoor living

How it all works together

A comprehensive design approach brings together the elements of Garden Suburbs and Villages. The key characteristics include a coherent and well planned layout, high quality design and consideration of long term management arrangements.

The new garden suburbs and villages in Warwick, Leamington Spa and Kenilworth, will be planned to integrate and support existing communities.

For the purposes of this prospectus and in the context of new development envisaged for Warwick District, we have broadly defined three general levels of development and urban structure. Depending on size, local context and constraints, new developments will fall within one or more of these levels.

Local centres: these are the hubs of the new suburbs and villages and the focus for local facilities and public transport services.

Neighbourhood general: these areas host the majority of residential development and will be the predominant form of development, appropriate to the amount of development around.

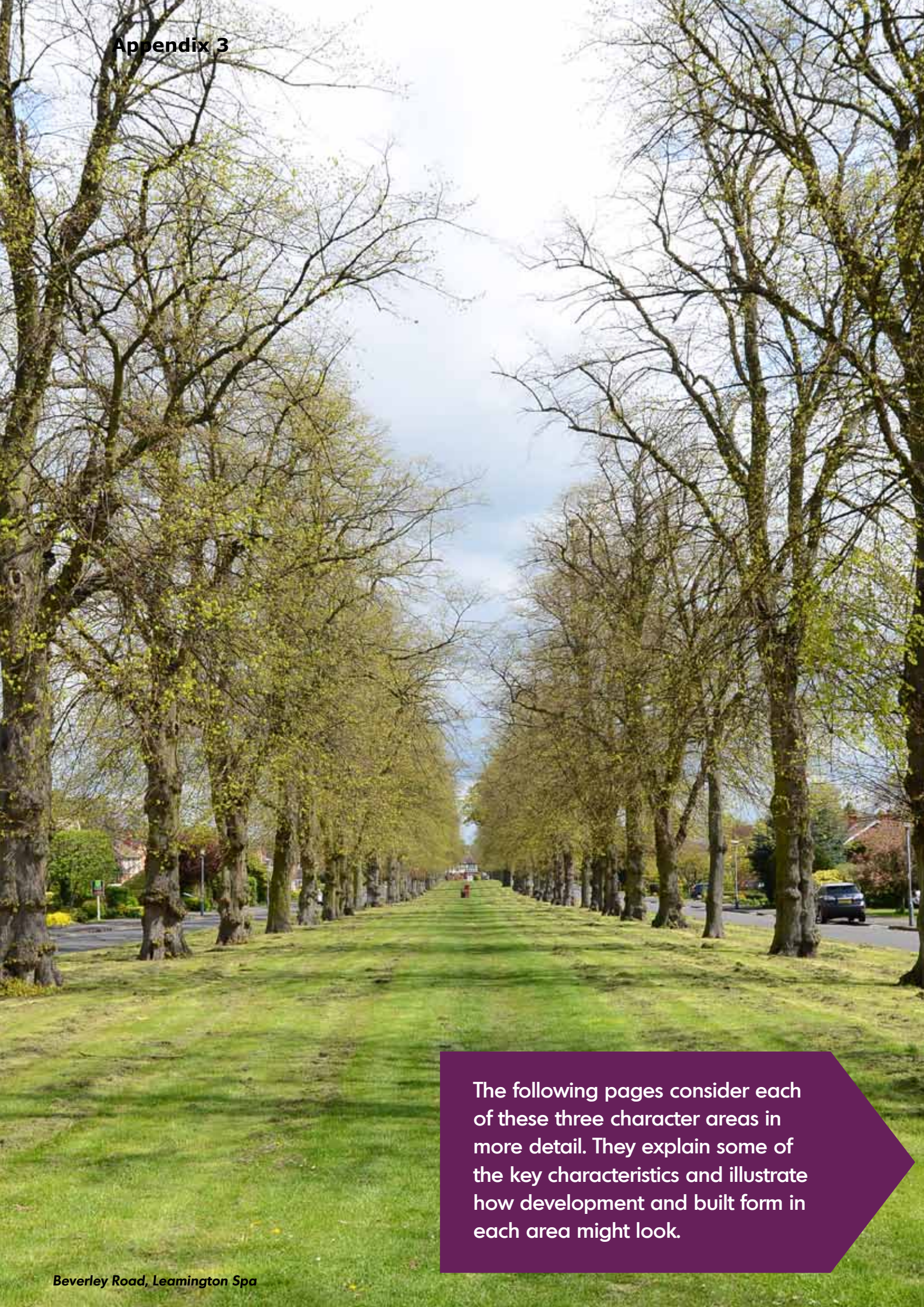
Neighbourhood edge: these areas lie at the edge of the developable areas and will typically adjoin the countryside or other non-developable areas.

The means by which these components are integrated is the design of the public realm and, in particular, the street. Much of the character and structure that distinguished this design approach derives from the quality and character of the street scene. Typically, the street

is designed to accommodate larger tree species, whose size and form is as important as the built development in creating a recognisably garden suburb of village character. Maintenance of these larger trees, both in terms of their own health and their interaction with other development components, especially utilities and services, requires careful consideration.

The diagram below illustrates how these different character areas relate to each other, in particular how the Garden Suburb integrates with surrounding communities, bringing benefits to new and existing residents:



A wide-angle photograph of a long, straight green space, likely a park or a wide pedestrian path, lined with mature trees on both sides. The trees have light green foliage, suggesting spring. The path is grassy and leads towards a distant building. The sky is overcast with grey clouds. A dark car is visible on the right side of the path.

The following pages consider each of these three character areas in more detail. They explain some of the key characteristics and illustrate how development and built form in each area might look.

District or Local Centre

Character:

The focus and heart of the community lies here. Shops and some facilities are gathering points. Restaurants / pub / cafes with outdoor seating animate the street. Buses regularly link with the main town and it is easy and safe to cycle.

Density range:

35-40 dwellings per hectare

Potential mix of uses:

- retail / shops / services at ground floor
- residential / offices in upper floors
- community facilities

Built form:

Built form tends to be compact and higher than the rest of the neighbourhood. Fronts of plots are narrow to provide variety and rhythm. The roof line is also varied in materials and movement. The buildings keep a strong and consistent built line.

Public realm character:

Pavements and street furniture are of high quality materials, durable and easy to maintain. There is a line of trees along the street usually defined by tree grilles, but no grass verge. Buildings are placed hard on pavement without setback. Where appropriate outdoor tables and seating are allowed to animate the street.

Car parking arrangements:

- on street with time restrictions
- rear of buildings but not centre of block parking courts
- surface car parking

Exemplars



District centre in Brentham Garden Suburb



Local centre at Bournville

Illustrative elevation



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Illustrative plan

On street parking

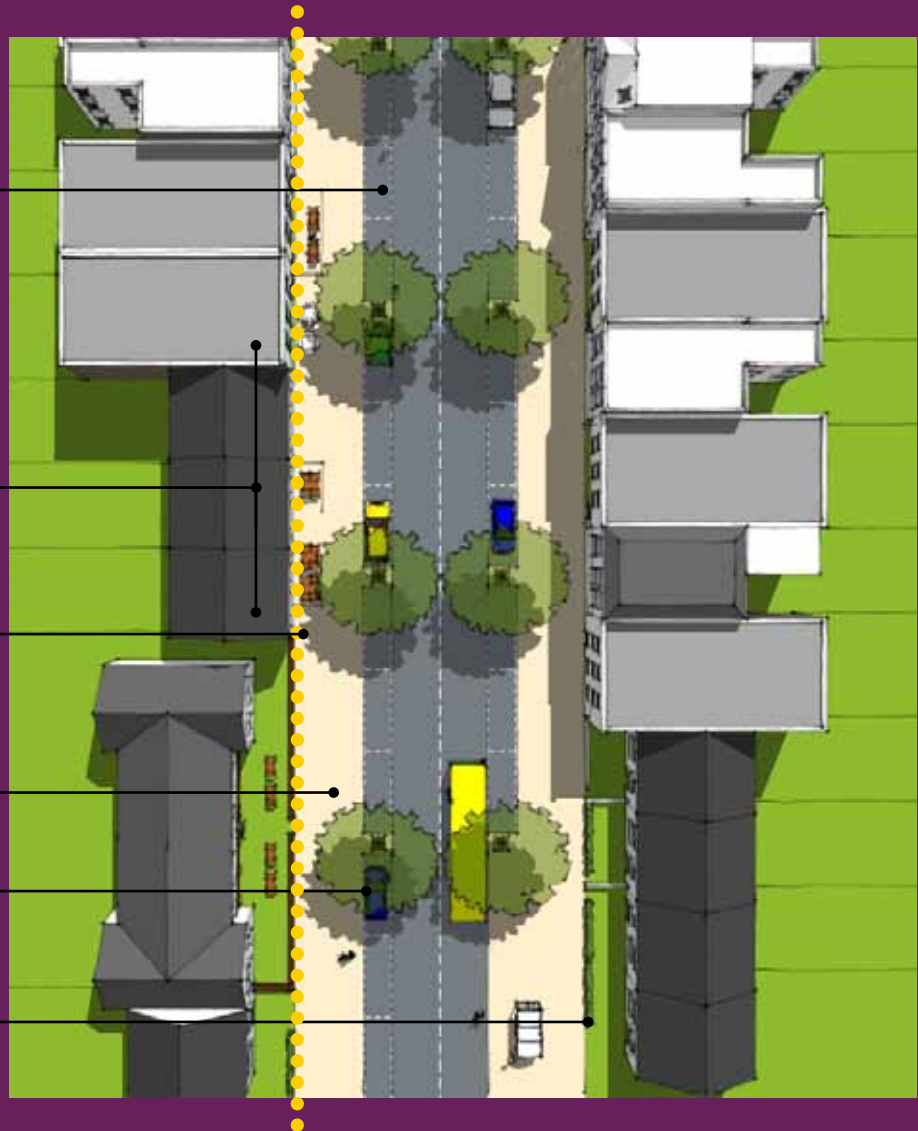
Built form is tight and compact

Consistent built line

Wide pavements

Tree line

Walls and hedges help to provide continuity of built line at edge of local centre



Illustrative street scene

Outdoor seating animates the street

Boundary treatments help to provide continuity of built line at edge of local centre



Carriageway allows for bus and safe cycling

Footways & treeline

Neighbourhood General

Character:

This is the predominant form of the new neighbourhoods and will define the character of most of the homes. It comprises mainly houses with potential for a small component of apartments. It has an attractive leafy, suburb feel to it, with tree lined streets that feel intimate. There is sufficient room in the carriage way for safe cycling and walking.

Density range:

30-35 dwellings per hectare

Potential mix of uses:

- residential
- open space, parks and playgrounds
- local shops (at selected key locations only)

Built form:

Houses are the predominant typology and are arranged in pairs or groups of 4 and 6 homes; a few apartment blocks are possible at key locations. Buildings have a recognisable built line allowing for recessions or protrusions of groups of buildings that provide interest and rhythm. This is reinforced by a consistent front garden and boundary treatment along the length of the streets. Buildings are designed to 'turn the corner' to avoid blank facades at the end of blocks; corner houses constitute a special and consistent typology. Back of blocks are occupied by generous gardens with large trees, hedges and planting. No rear court car parking or hard surfaces are included.

Illustrative neighbourhood layout



Illustrative elevation



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Neighbourhood General

Public realm character:

Pavements tend to be linear to frame the arrangement of buildings. Private front gardens contribute to the green feel of the street by favouring hedges and planting over hard materials. On the public road there is a verge with a tree lined character and grass, although it can have occasional breaks to allow for crossings or tree grille treatments.

Car parking arrangements:

The majority of car parking spaces are on street and parallel. Cars form an orderly element in the street. There are some on plot parking at side or front of properties.

Illustrative park street view



Illustrative typical street view



Consist boundary treatment

Traffic calming allows safe cycling and reduced car speeds

Pavement, verge & treeline feel

Predominantly on street car parking with some on plot

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Elmdene Road, Leamington Spa



Avenue Road, Leamington Spa

Neighbourhood Edge

Character:

These are areas at the neighbourhood fringe. They show houses. It has a looser leafy, edge of suburb feel to it. Tree lined streets provide a strong identity. Communal areas for allotments and community activities are possible here due to larger blocks. Streets are quiet and safe cycling and walking. There is a positive outlook and transition to the countryside.

Density range:

20-25 dwellings per hectare

Potential mix of uses:

- residential
- open space, allotments, parks
- back of block communal spaces

Built form:

Blocks are well defined in perimeter. The linear layout is less regimented. The urban pattern is looser with semis and detached houses being the norm. Buildings tend to have consistent built line. Front gardens are larger allowing for on plot car parking and planting. Boundary treatment tend to be aligned providing definition to plots; whilst materials and treatment are more varied responding to different edge situations and transition with the countryside. End of block houses are designed to 'turn the corner'. Back of blocks are occupied by generous gardens with large trees, hedges and planting. No rear court car parking or hard surfaces are allowed. In larger blocks there is the opportunity to create communal spaces, for example allotments, play and sport areas.

Illustrative neighbourhood layout



Illustrative elevation



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Neighbourhood Edge

Public realm character:

Pavements tend to be linear, although irregularities are the result of responding to local conditions. Private front gardens contribute to the green feel of the street by favouring hedges, large trees and planting over hard materials. There is a verge with a tree lined character, made predominantly of grass with occasional breaks to allow for crossings or tree grille treatments. Parts facing the countryside may not need a formal pavement to provide a softer edge.

Car parking arrangements:

The majority of car parking spaces are on plot at the front or side of property. There is potential for on street parking.

Illustrative view of communal areas



Illustrative typical street scene



Mostly on plot car parking with on street potential

Consistently aligned boundary treatment with planting and trees on plot

Pavement, verge & treeline feel

Use of traffic calming to allow safe cycling and low car speeds

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Telford Avenue, Leamington Spa



Northumberland Road, Leamington Spa

Towards a new generation of garden towns, suburbs and villages

This Prospectus sets out a vision for new Garden Towns, Villages and Suburbs in Warwick District. It takes forward the Council's Strategy for the Future and Sustainable Prosperity of the District and at the same time builds on the renewed interest in Garden City principles as envisaged by the National Planning Policy Framework.

The Prospectus has been prepared to encourage active engagement and participation by community groups, development interests and other stakeholders in further developing the vision for the new communities to be built in the District in the years ahead.

The lessons and principles underpinning the English Garden Cities and Suburbs provide a sound foundation for planning for the future. It is an approach which has stood the test of time and

met the needs of successive generations and which remains relevant to the needs of today. It provides a clear vision of the sorts of communities we want to create for the future and the opportunity to build a lasting legacy of attractive and sustainable neighbourhoods.

The approach set out in this Prospectus creates many opportunities but it also presents a number of new challenges. In particular it requires a more fully integrated approach to the planning,

design and long term management and governance of new communities. The Council will want to work closely with the full range of stakeholders to develop the approaches needed to unlock the full potential of this initiative for the long term benefit of the District.

Next steps, comments and feedback

Following the publication of this Prospectus, a wider consultation and dissemination effort will follow. This forms part of Warwick District Council's consultation on its Preferred Options for a new Local Plan. The consultation period runs from early June to the end of July.

If you have any comments, you can use the response form available at:
www.warwickdc.gov.uk/newlocalplan

or write to:

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