

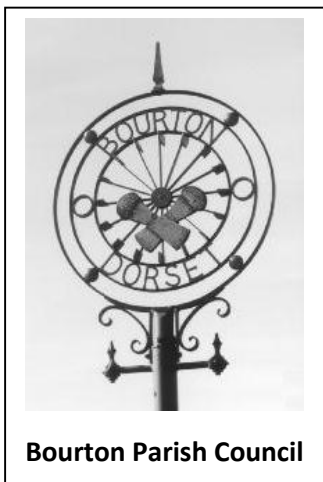
Village Hall and Amenity Space

Bourton, Dorset

Site Appraisal and Selection



Final April 2016



Bourton Parish Council

Liz Beth MRTPI



1. Background

1.1 The village hall, built in the 1970s serves not only Bourton but also the wider community. It is a much used facility despite its limitations, but it is facing increasing maintenance issues and is inadequate in several key aspects, including energy efficiency, parking provision and amenity space. There are serious problems due to its age, construction, location, access and inadequate facilities that will only get worse with time. There is strong community support for a new village hall on an easily accessible site, with adequate parking and a sizeable outdoor amenity area.



Figure 1: Existing Village Hall, Access Lane and Parking

1.2 There is also strong support in the village for future developer contributions to be spent in the village and for the Village hall to be the principle beneficiary. Local opinion stated here was canvassed in a survey undertaken in 2013 and during work on the Village Plan in 2008. There is a perceived need and local support for providing affordable 2/3 bedroom homes for families. The provision of smaller more affordable accommodation for local people is seen as a priority, but opinion for and against further residential development generally is divided and inconclusive (*evidence from the 2013 survey*).

1.3 The planning context of Bourton in the adopted Local Plan is that of a village in the Countryside with a tight settlement boundary, on the edge of the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB. When Bourton Parish Council commenced work on their Neighbourhood Plan (NP), the village was not seen as suitable for significant new housing allocations. Originally the emerging Local Plan proposed that the village would be designated entirely as 'countryside' for the purposes of planning policy. This changed however during the plan-making process, and the recently Adopted North Dorset Local Plan has kept the Bourton settlement boundary and classified Bourton as a 'larger village' where some further development could be allowed. Given that there are existing planning permissions for 43 dwellings at the Mill and other sites in Bourton, any additional allocation in the ongoing review of the Local Plan is currently unlikely.

1.4 The Parish Council has long wanted to build a new hall on a better site, and the Neighbourhood Planning Group (NPG) consulted with the residents of Bourton on the option of negotiating a site for the village hall and associated amenity land from a local landowner in return for also allowing on site a small number of dwellings. The dwellings would provide informal surveillance for the village hall, as well as contributing in a small way to the current housing shortage. They would be above and beyond

Table 1:**Sites Considered for the New Village Hall and Amenity Land**

	Location	Site Area ha	In NDP Area?	Comments	Potential Site?
1.	Bourton Mill	0.3	Yes	This site lies within the flood risk 3 area of the River Stour and is too small.	No
2.	Opposite Silton Surgery	0.5 est	No	This site lies outside the Neighbourhood Plan Area and is too small.	No
3.	Brickyard Lane	1.0 est	No	This site lies outside the Neighbourhood Plan Area and would not have much amenity space	No
4.	Rear of Miller's Close	0.6	Yes	This site is too small to accommodate a new hall, car parking and recreation space.	No
5.	Behind Reserve Cemetery	2.1	Yes	This site has difficult access through the future cemetery land, is a steeply sloping site and is very visible from the nearby AONB.	No
6.	Opposite Sandways	0.5	Yes	The site is too small for the proposed development, and has the same slope and difficulty of access that affects the existing and neighbouring Village Hall.	No
7.	Telephone Exchange (Kittymead)	0.7	Yes	Following sewage works carried out by Wessex Water the remaining site is too small to accommodate all the development proposed.	No

	Location	Site Area	In NDP Area?	Comments	Potential Site?
8.	White Lion	1.7	Yes	The site appears large enough and is on NDDC's SHLAA list. Whilst a sloping site, a new hall and housing development could be situated on the higher ground to the east and a recreation area nearer to the White Lion. Its closeness to the PH provides complementary uses.	Yes
9.	Voscombe Farm	1.9	Yes	From earlier discussions with landowners the site proposed includes land belonging to a neighbour where the proposed housing could be sited. The exact amount of land needs to be ascertained before inclusion but there is potential.	Yes
10.	Chaffeymoor Farm (Jubilee Field)	3.9	Yes	This lies on the opposite side of the road to 9 above. It is a clear plot of land with sufficient space to include all the elements. The slopes are fairly modest and road access is reasonable.	Yes
11.	Maggs Field	0.8	Yes	Access and site presence are poor and the site is too small for all the elements. Also adjacent to the AONB.	No
12.	Land adjoining Sandways Farm	3.1	Yes	Centrally located on modest slopes and opposite the existing hall. Provides ample space for all the elements. Housing can be sited in a discrete area.	Yes
13.	Rear of Garage	1.5	Yes	Centrally located but there is no possible access to it. The land is also quite boggy and unsuitable for recreation.	No
14.	Old Pound Court	0.2	Yes	This site is too small.	No

3. Initial shortlist and Assessment

3.1 The preferred requirements for the Village Hall, car parking and amenity land is a site with a minimum area of around 2 ha, although a site of 1ha will provide some amenity space. This immediately rules out many of the potential sites as they are less than 1ha, as does a location outside of the NDP area (sites 2 and 3) because the plan cannot legally consider them or allocate the Village Hall on them. A site in the SHLAA was also discounted due to its small size and current planning permission for housing. Sites bounding the AONB (sites 5 and 11) have also been ruled out due to the potential visual and environmental impact of any development in this sensitive location.

3.2 This left four sites that were short-listed for more detailed consideration:

Site 8: White Lion

Site 9: Voscombe Farm (1ha offered during discussions June 2015)

Site 10: Chaffeymoor Farm (Jubilee Field) (3.9 ha)

Site 12: Land adjoining Sandways Farm (3.1 ha)

Discussions with Landowners revealed that only three of these sites would be available for the proposed development of the Village Hall with amenity land and some residential enabling development. This has resulted in Sites 9, 10 and 12 making the final shortlist. The sites are described briefly below (3.3 – 3.5)



Figure 3: Panoramic View of Jubilee Field Site

3.3 Jubilee Field is a site of 3.9 ha, and the required 2ha plus for the Village Hall development is offered on a site with highway access in the northern section of the field. It lies to the south of Main Road and slopes gently down to the south in the direction of West Bourton Road. The site is currently pasture. It lies on the western edge of the village of Bourton, and is bordered by farmland and a farm to the west and south and residential development to the east.



Figure 4: Voscombe Farm Site from Main Road - Panoramic

3.4 Voscombe Farm is a site of 2ha, although only 1ha is offered for the Village Hall and amenity land. It is located opposite to Jubilee Field to the north of Main Road, and has several modern agricultural buildings near the gated access to Main Road. The site rises from the road in a northerly direction with a gradient of 1:11. It lies on the western edge of the village of Bourton, and is bordered by woodland and farmland as well as several dwellings to the south and east.



Figure 5: Sandways Farm Site from Main Road - Panoramic

3.5 Sandways Farm is a site of 3.1 ha and the required 2ha plus for the Village Hall development is offered. The site has similar direct access onto Main Road as the other two shortlisted sites have. It is located to the south of Main road, nearer the centre of the Village, defined here as the Post Office and garage. This site also slopes gently down to the south, and has some residential development to either side, with farmland to the south.

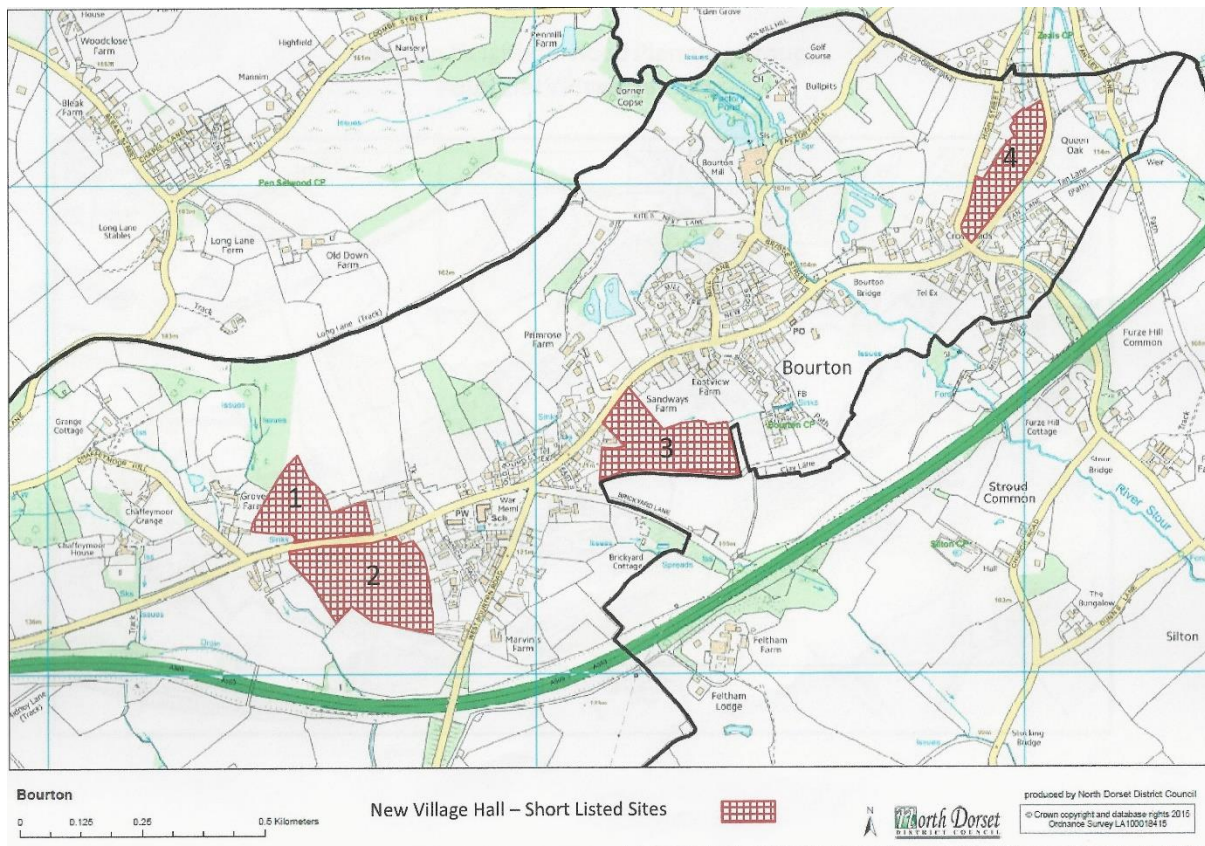


Figure 6: Short-listed Sites – includes White Lion Site (4) subsequently withdrawn by owner.

3.6 The three short-listed sites were then assessed against the criteria set out in Table 3, with the weightings shown. The scores for each site are shown in Table 2 below. Certain factors have not been assessed as all the sites have them in common. They are all in Flood Zone 1 so fluvial flood risk is not assessed, and surface water flood risk is not significant on any site. They all have reasonable vehicular access and are within easy walking distance of a bus stop – although the service is very limited making this attribute unimportant anyway. None of the sites impact on the Rights of Way network.

3.7 All the sites have effective vacant possession and, as all are agricultural land, none are brownfield sites. Some of the sites have redundant buildings on them, and here it is felt that the visual bonus of replacing a building that is not attractive is balanced by the extra cost to the development of demolition. The opportunity to create employment opportunities has not been assessed, as it is similar for each site, and provision of renewable energy is not considered for the same reason.

3.8 While it is best to treat any such assessment matrix as a guide rather than select based on scores alone, the initial assessment shows two sites as broadly comparable, while the Voscombe Farm Site is less favoured. The owners of the Voscombe site were not interested in re-arranging development proposals for the site around in order that more amenity land was provided, and the resulting site for the Village Hall and amenity land is significantly constrained and subject to less than ideal gradients. Thus the final selection was between the Jubilee Field and Sandways sites.

Table 2: Short-Listed Sites Assessment

Criteria	Land adj Sandways Farm	Voscombe Farm	Chaffeymoor Farm – Jubilee Field
Size of site offered enables good community benefit	20	0	20
Site is level	8	4	4
Access to village centre	10	0	0
Opportunity to create wildlife area	12	6	6
Agricultural Land Grade	4	8	4
Pedestrian access to Hall and links	12	6	12
Water Course affected?	4	8	8
Mature trees or hedgerows affected?	0	0	10
Biodiversity and wildlife	20	20	20
Visual impact on main road and village	4	4	4
Visual impact on AONB and surrounding countryside	12	6	6
Impact on heritage assets	10	20	20
Impact on residential neighbours	0	0	10
Quality of the amenity land	20	0	20
Nature and location of housing	10	0	10
Development sits well on site and protects treasured views	6	6	6
Total Score	152	88	160

The attributes were weighted as low, medium or high, and given the following scores:

Criteria assessment	High	Medium	Low
Good Fair Poor	20 10 0	12 6 0	8 4 0

Table 3: Criteria used for site assessment

Criteria	Factors considered	Weighting
Site can deliver desired community benefits	Size of amenity space. 1.2 Ha is just adequate; over 2Ha is good, else fair.	High 20/10/0
Site is reasonably level	Gradient of land is less than 1:20 = good, less than 1:10 = fair, else poor	Low 8/4/0
Accessible to centre of village	Centre of village < 250m = good, ,500m = fair, else poor. Centre of village is garage/PO	High 20/10/0
Creating a wildlife Area possible	Yes/Maybe/No	Med 12/6/0
Agricultural Land Grade	1-2 = poor; 3 = fair; 4-5 = good	Low 8/4/0
Pedestrian links and access to the site?	Footway access and level and separate pedestrian access to the site. All three attributes = good, 2 = fair else adequate.	Medium 12/6/0
Is there a water course that could be harmed	Good water course within site = poor, on boundary or ditch within site = fair, else good.	Low 8/4/0
Will any mature trees/hedgerows be affected by the development	Hedgerow/mature tree within site = poor, trees on boundary = fair, else good.	High 20/10/0
Impact on biodiversity and wildlife	Any nationally or locally designated sites in the site = poor, adjacent = fair; none = good.	High 20/10/0
Impact of the site on heritage assets	Area Archaeological importance or Listed building and curtilage within 20m of site boundary = fair; on the boundary or within site = poor. Else good.	Medium 12/6/0
Visual impact of the site from the village and main road.	Visual impact minimal for both the village and main road is good, Noticeable on either is fair, noticeable on both = bad. Impact on village to be visual impact on over 10 properties.	Low 8/4/0
Visual impact of the site on the surrounding countryside/AONB	Minimal = good; noticeable impact = fair; considerable = poor	Medium 12/6/0
Impact on existing neighbours	Residential property bordering the site each side= poor; residential property under 20m from proposed hall and parking site = fair; else good.	High 20/10/0
Quality of amenity land	Amenity land is level and there is 1.5Ha or more of a regular shape = good; reasonable amount of space but not all together or of a regular shape = fair; else poor.	High 20/10/0
Nature and location of the housing	Six or less homes with at least 2 having only 2/3 bedrooms = good; either one of these criteria complied with = fair; neither with = poor.	High 20/10/0
Does development sit well on the site, including impact on existing treasured views	Minimal impact on treasured views and economic and visually sensitive development layout = good; one attribute only = fair; neither = poor.	Medium 12/6/0

4. Site Selection

4.1 The final two sites are considered broadly comparable. Jubilee Field is not central to the village and has a greater visual impact, but has less impact on wildlife and heritage assets than the Sandways site. Thus when the technical assessment had been done, the final choice between these two sites was going to be made after a consultation exercise with residents of the village.

4.2 Consultation so far, including a public evening meeting in November 2015 has shown no clear local preference for either site. Thus it has been decided to proceed with the Neighbourhood Plan on the basis of designating two options in the planning document, either of which are suitable subject to complying with the specified requirements.

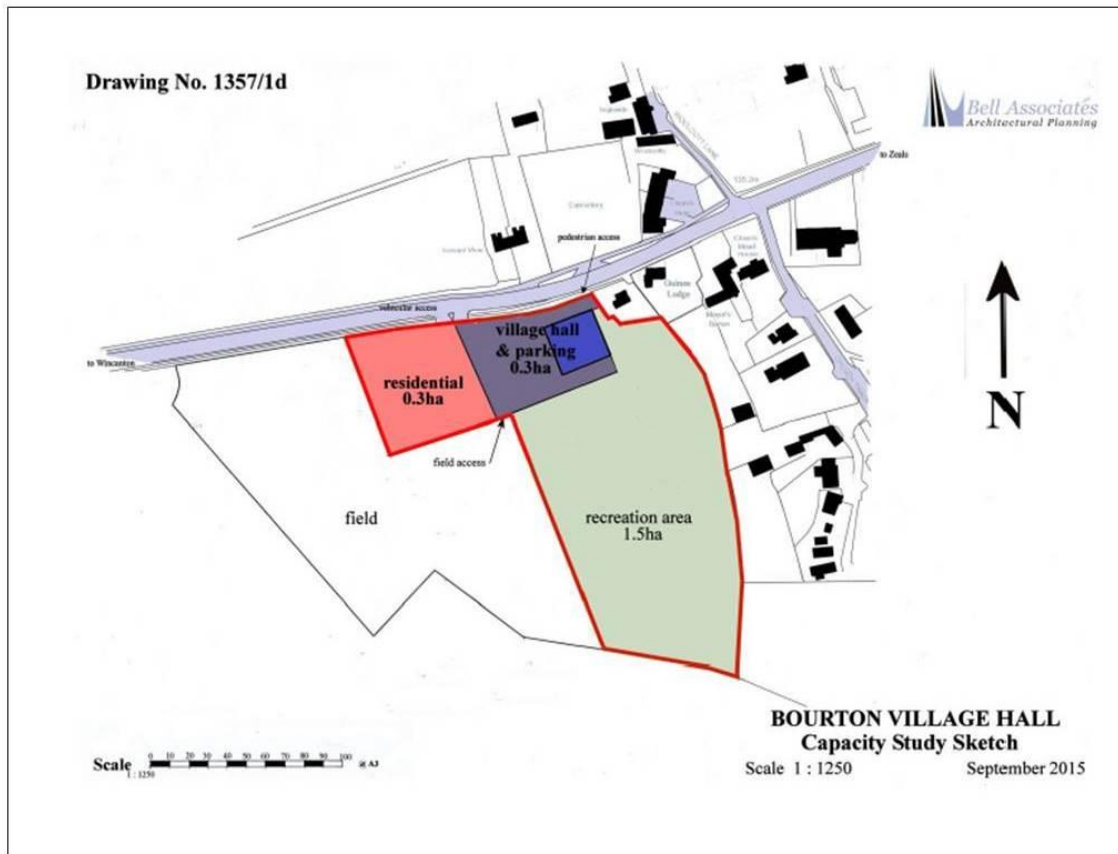
4.3 The resulting draft planning policy was as follows:

Policy 5. New Village Hall.

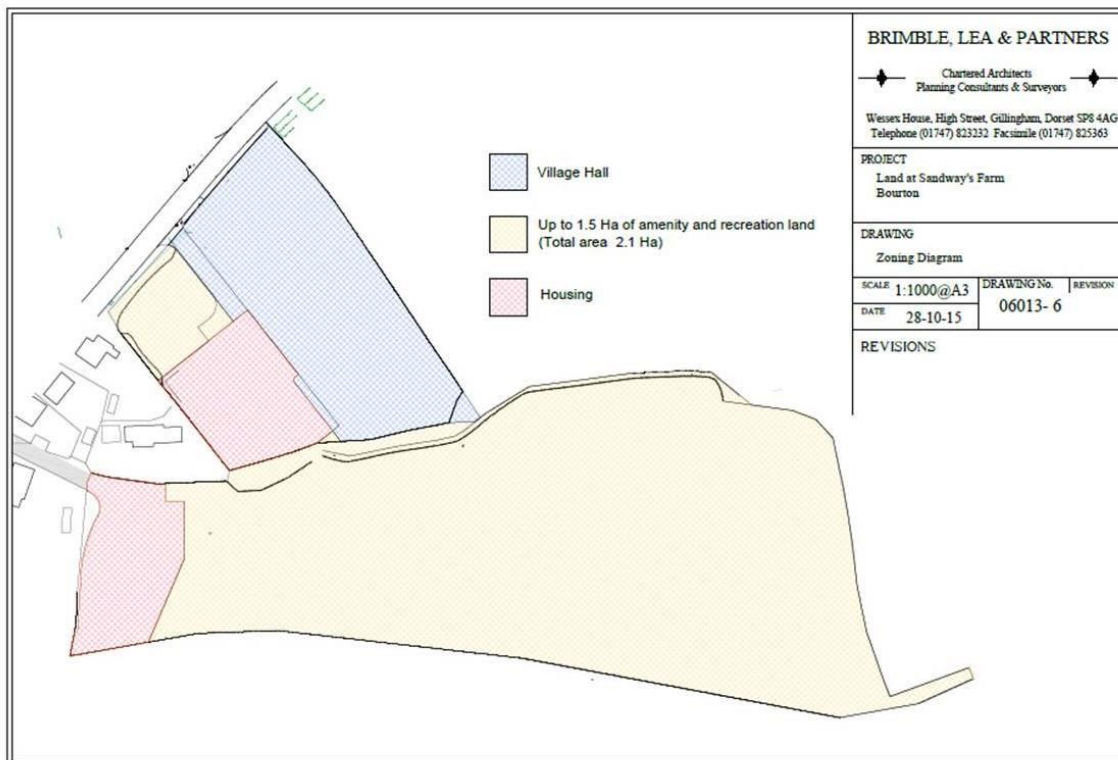
- a) Either of the two sites indicated on the proposals map is deemed to be suitable for the development of a village hall and the provision of associated amenity space. A small housing development may also be provided on the site in order to make the release of the land viable for the use of a village hall and associated amenity space.
- b) The chosen site shall provide an area of at least 2.1 ha to be allocated as follows:
 - approximately 0.3 ha to the village hall and a parking and manoeuvring area, and;
 - approximately 1.5 ha to amenity space of a reasonably level gradient and quality immediately adjacent to the village hall building, and;
 - approximately 0.3 ha to the housing development.
- c) The land for the village hall and amenity space, as specified in criterion b) above, shall be made over to the Parish Council before or at the same time as any outline planning permission is granted for the housing by means of a legal agreement or other agreed process.
- d) Development proposals for this site are required to include:
 - screening, using native species planting to lessen visual impact and to limit the impact of noise on neighbouring households;
 - the augmentation of ecological value on the site as discussed in the ecological report;
 - housing consisting mainly of small family homes. ¹
- e) The decision-making process on planning applications for the proposed site options will be carried out by the Local Planning Authority in accordance with this policy as part of the plan-led process and having taken into account any other material considerations including the identified wishes of the residents as expressed through the Parish Council

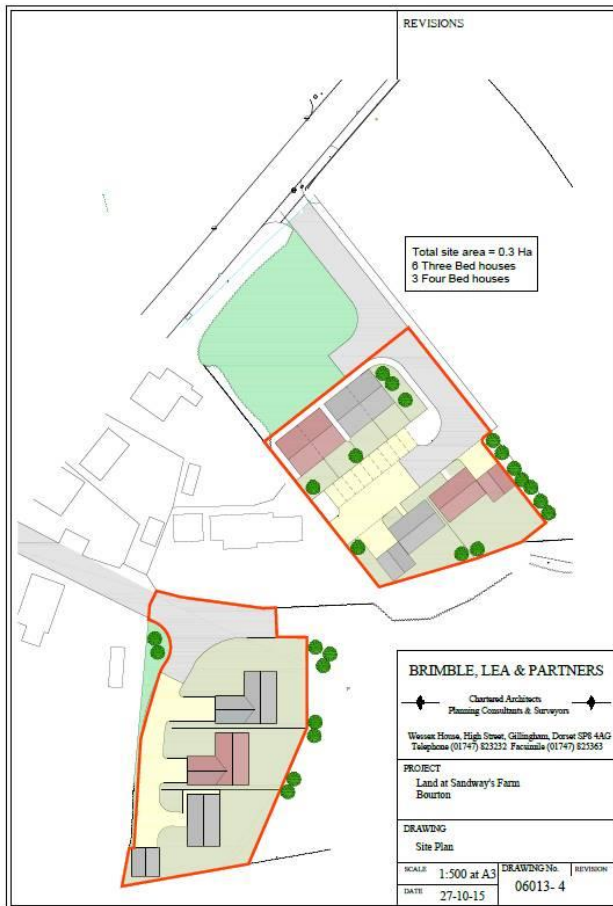
¹ See NPQ1 Q2.06

Appendix 1: Short-listed site plans



Above: Jubilee Field Proposals Below: Land adjacent to Sandways Farm Proposals





Above: Indicative Residential layout for Land adjacent to Sandways Farm Site.