

The Taunton Garden Village Project



**Taylor
Wimpey**

A new community shaped by Somerset

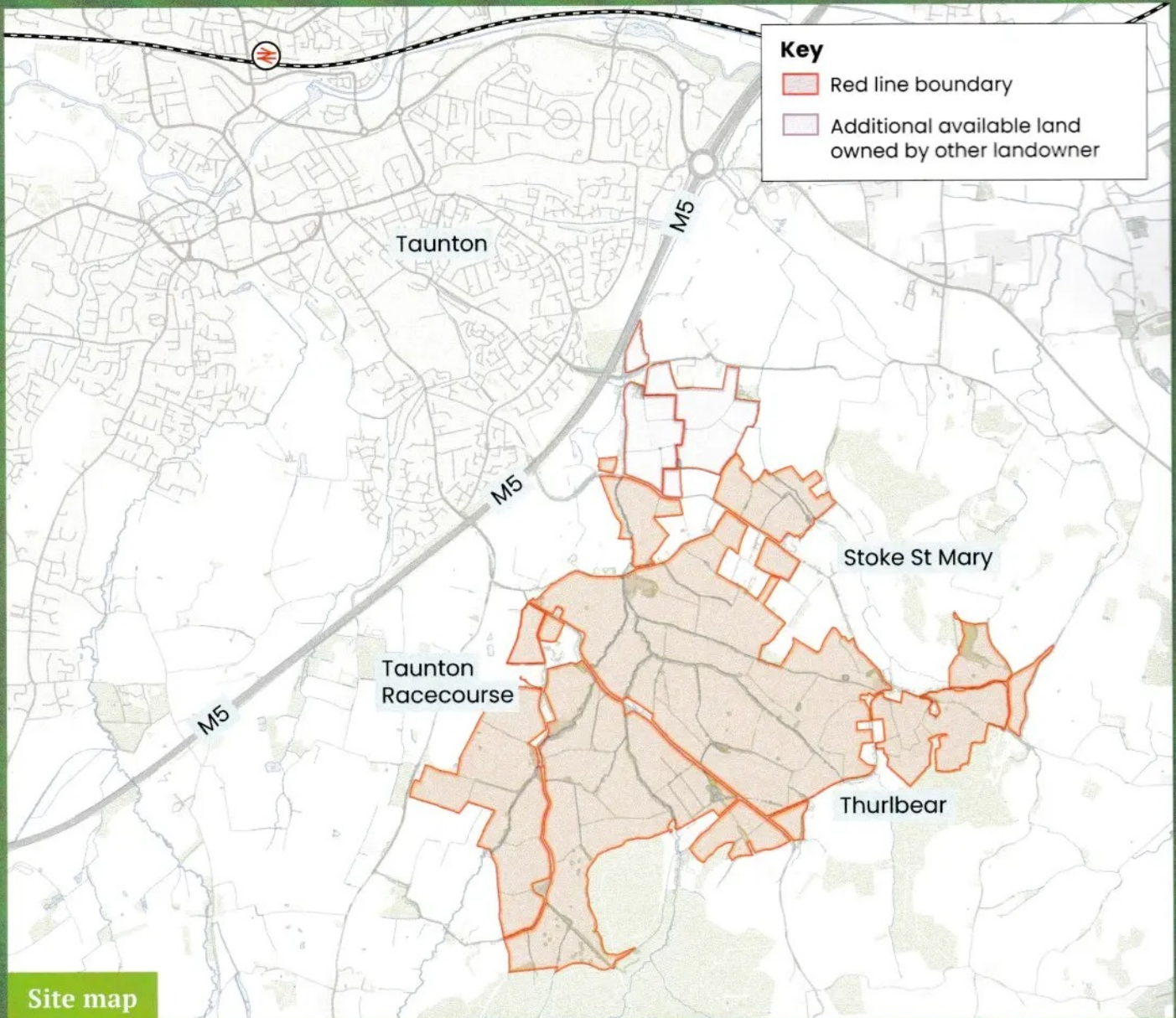
September 2025



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Introduction



The Taunton Garden Village Project is a visionary approach to building the new communities we need.

This document reports on the early engagement being held with organisations who are best placed to advise on what needs to be incorporated into the plans to ensure this new community benefits Somerset.

It sets out what we've heard, how we've understood it and what we're doing about it.

This is a live document. We will update it regularly to track progress. It will act as a brief to our masterplanner, a basis for communication with local communities and make us accountable for the progress of our site through the promotion, planning, construction and occupation phases.



Taunton Garden Village

Taunton Garden Village is an exceptional and unique opportunity for Somerset. Due to the scale and land ownership, it is an opportunity which is capable of providing thousands of modern, energy efficient and sustainable homes alongside the schools, healthcare facilities, community spaces and other infrastructure needed to create a self-sustaining community.

But how can the Taunton Garden Village be the best version of a Garden Village that it can be? For that we need to understand and work with a wide range of organisations including local schools, care home operators, the NHS, Somerset Council and many others.

It's a project of the future and we want the proposals for Taunton Garden Village to be a project for the community, shaped by the organisations that will ultimately create and foster that community. We have the time to get this right and an opportunity to design a place for future generations.

Somerset Council Plan 2023-2027: Four priorities

Somerset Council's corporate plan sets out four key priorities for the growth of Somerset, against which it measures its policies and actions:



A greener, more sustainable Somerset



A healthy and caring Somerset



A fairer, ambitious Somerset



A flourishing and resilient Somerset

These priorities provide a holistic and over-arching framework within which to build our understanding of 'community' in Somerset.

This document illustrates how early engagement carried out as part of The Taunton Garden Village Project aligns with the priorities set out in the corporate plan. It demonstrates how Taylor Wimpey is responding to these priorities through the masterplanning process, to design a scheme which delivers these priorities for the Garden Village.



Bridgwater and Taunton College

Who are they?

Bridgwater and Taunton College is a further education institution with more than 3,000 students. It is the UK's largest provider of apprenticeship schemes and the only college currently offering nursing degrees. The college also delivers higher education and adult learning courses for students aged 18+ at its University Centre Somerset.



What did they say?

- The college is on a steep growth trajectory. It has a clear appetite for expansion to support skill development, training and recruitment. It is particularly keen to develop its vocational courses in nursing, engineering and electrical installation.
- Development of student accommodation with easy access to Taunton and the college is both highly desirable and high on its agenda.
- University Centre Somerset currently has 350 nursing students enrolled. Expected to reach between 500 and 600 by 2027/28 in response to NHS demand, the college anticipates running out of capacity so is keen to expand its facilities.
- Having worked closely with Agratas in Bridgwater – which is building the largest battery manufacturing facility in the UK - its mission is to develop a curriculum which supports the growth and skills required for the electrical installation industry.
- The college is bringing forward a growth strategy in 2025 which will include how it uses its estate to increase its capacity and respond to demand.
- The college is well-connected, forward-thinking and carries out successful partnership work across the county and UK, including working closely with the Somerset NHS Foundation Trust.

“
We’re really keen to expand our key worker and student accommodation offer to support the growth of the College and University Centre.
”

24 October 2024
Director of Strategy and Partnerships & Head of Business Growth

What are we doing?

- Continuing discussions with Bridgwater and Taunton College to explore opportunities to support the college’s expansion and skills development.
- This could include incorporating new nursing or engineering facilities and student accommodation into the masterplan.
- Exploring the potential for collaborative arrangements for apprenticeships in the construction sector.
- Engaging with the college’s student body to draw insights to help inform the designs.



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Bishop Fox's School

Who are they?

Bishop Fox's School is a mixed secondary academy school located in Taunton. It provides education for approximately 1,200 pupils aged 11 to 16.

What did they say?

- While the school has no specific expansion plans, it is most interested in the landscaping improvements and development of green open space to the east of Thurlbear to support the educational needs of its pupils, including for outdoor education use.
- The school suggested incorporating a maze and BMX track into the scheme.
- It owns and uses its own sporting facilities in Taunton (such as for rugby, football and tennis), all of which are of a good standard.

What are we doing?

- Investigating how the masterplan can meet their needs. Particularly the southeastern part of the site closest to Thurlbear, which could include space for educational purposes, such as an outdoor amphitheatre, high rope courses, areas for local food production and biodiversity enhancements.
- Coordinating the design and layout of this area with other organisations who could contribute to maximising the benefit of the area.
- Engaging with Somerset Council's adult and children's social care services to understand capacity and admissions numbers to help meet local need.
- Exploring the possibility of incorporating a maze and BMX track into the masterplan designs.
- Engaging with Bishop Fox's School's student body to draw insights to help inform the designs.



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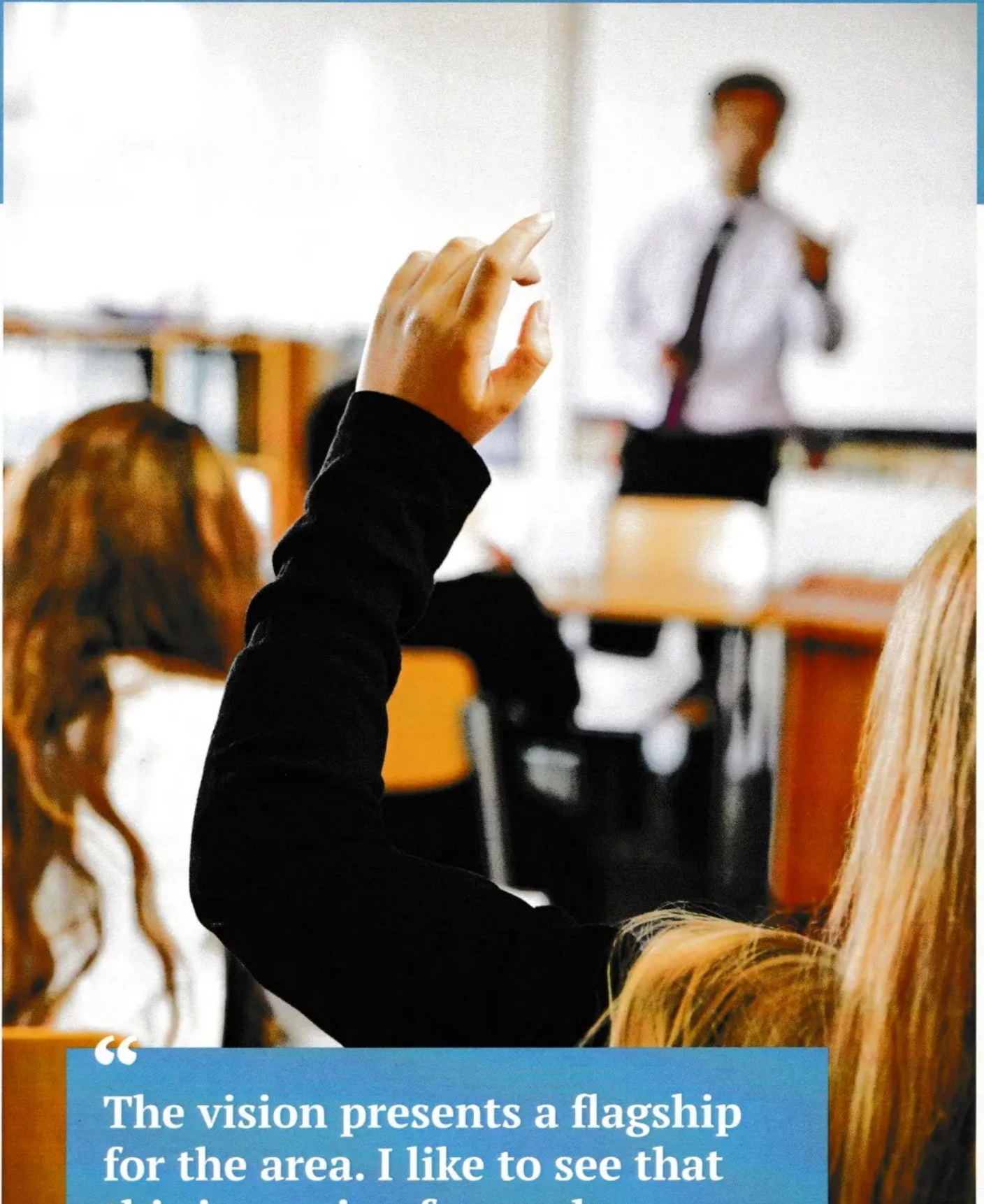


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“

The vision presents a flagship for the area. I like to see that this is moving forward.

12 November 2024
Estate Manager

”

Conquest Centre

Who are they?

Conquest Centre is an independent equine charity based in Norton Fitzwarren covering around 17 acres. It offers bespoke therapeutic support involving equines, small animals, nature and physical activity for individuals with neurodiverse conditions and complex needs to enable them to thrive.



“
We want to bring more to the community and to diversify our offering and facilities.

19 March 2025
Chairman

”



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What did they say?

- There are clear synergies between the aspirations of the Conquest Centre and Taunton Garden Village in terms of developing the outdoor education, recreation and equine-related offering to support special educational needs (SEND) provision in the wider community.
- Conquest Centre has ambitions to expand its centre but finding enough suitable land is a challenge. It doesn't currently have a secure long-term tenancy and would be interested to relocate to a site where it can create a stable and secure the future of the charity.
- The charity is also seeking to diversify to enhance its offering and facilities to its students, the local community and its fundraising efforts. The main aspiration is to deliver a new café or community hub on-site which could be operated by its students and support local people and businesses. Other ideas include allotments, a greenhouse, play areas and high ropes.
- On a broader scale, Conquest Centre welcomes the prospect of integrating its offering with care homes to create a more balanced offering.
- Improved bus and cycle routes are important in a new community to empower the charity's students when travelling to and from the centre which promotes independence and safety. Existing connections to their current facility was noted as inadequate.

What are we doing?

- Engaging Somerset Council's adult and children's social care services to understand and explore how Taunton Garden Village could best support SEND provision and address challenges around funding in Taunton and across Somerset. This could include the delivery of specialist facilities, infrastructure, children's homes and specially adapted foster care.
- Designing a mix of bespoke adapted and accessible Taylor Wimpey Homes. These would be delivered to a high specification and across different locations (at the peripheries and more central to the community hub) to offer choice and variety.
- Investigating how the masterplan can meet their needs. Particularly the southeastern part of the site closest to Thurlbear, which could be maximised and incorporate an equine-related offering. It could include space for educational purposes, such as an outdoor amphitheatre, high rope courses, areas for local food production and biodiversity enhancements. There is potential for the Conquest Centre to relocate to this area, and to integrate their existing and expanding facilities.
- Designing a vision underpinned by sustainable movement, connectivity and transport. This includes a strong active travel network with improved walking, cycling and public transport routes, both within the site and connecting to the existing town.
- Continuing to build on the relationship with the Conquest Centre with aims to support their future ambitions.

Incredible Edible

Who are they?

The Incredible Edible Network is a community network and national project which seeks to bring people together and build resilient communities through the power of food. This can be embraced through urban gardening, food activism, local food production, volunteering, education and community allotments.

What did they say?

- Incredible Edible offers a strategic vision and holistic approach to the development of new communities.
- It is keen to explore what a 'good' community looks like and what principles empower people to have pride in their place. It emphasises the essential need for supporting infrastructure, delivered at the right time and in the right locations.
- Key infrastructure priorities include open space for community grow patches and recreation, quality of housing, affordable and accessible homes, personal green infrastructure, healthcare facilities, schools and community energy. Incredible Edible values genuine partnerships between public and private sectors.
- Incredible Edible has close links with the Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA) and recommends that Taylor Wimpey engages the organisation to understand its perspectives and further inform the vision.

What are we doing?

- Supporting local food production through the integration of community grow patches for collective food growing, kitchen gardens and a community shop supporting local produce.
- Employing a holistic approach to development and placemaking to deliver a new community which meets the needs of its residents and fosters a sense of belonging.
- Delivering mixed tenure, accessible, and high-quality homes designed with access to community grow patches, kitchen gardens and a community shop for everyone.
- Considering how the site is phased, including how infrastructure can be delivered at the right time and development sequenced in the way to ensure people have access to facilities when they need them.
- Engaging the TCPA to draw insights from its priorities and perspectives.
- Bringing Incredible Edible into more detailed discussions with wider project team consultants and the TCPA to discuss the principles in more detail.



“
It’s very exciting that Taylor Wimpey owns the land. It’s fascinating. It has lots of potential. We’d be interested to engage further over the detail.

22 January 2025
Founder & Chair

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Keys Group

Who are they?

Keys Group supports more than 2,000 people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) by delivering specialist therapeutic services and operating schools across England and Wales. It comprises three of the UK's leading providers of specialist education, social care and outdoor activity: Accomplish, Keys and Peak. Keys Group operates the Somerset Progressive School's sites in Hambridge and at Bath House Farm, West Hatch, situated five miles south east of Taunton.

“

Location is so important. Accommodation should be delivered in areas with good accessibility to local amenities to foster cohesive communities.

16 December 2024
Business Development Manager

”

What did they say?

- Care providers often encounter issues in finding suitable accommodation that is appropriately designed, meets the needs of its residents and meets ADA Standards for Accessible Design.
- Location is also key. Accommodation is often on the outskirts of communities with poor connections. Somerset's rural setting and inadequate transport network reinforces this challenge. It is important to consider proximity to nearby schools, neighbours and amenities to support integration, empower individuals and foster inclusive, connected and cohesive communities.
- Keys Group recommends incorporating event space, a community hall and affordable community space for rent (operating keep fit classes, for example) - all of which could benefit those with complex needs and disabilities.
- If a new outdoor education offering was to come forward as part of Taunton Garden Village, Keys Group could be interested in using the facilities.
- Keys Group is looking for a new residential home in Somerset, which could include a sandpit for sensory play. It considers there to be an urgent need for more specialist residential accommodation in the county.



What are we doing?

- Engaging with Somerset Council's adult and children's social care services to understand the need for residential and supported living accommodation across the county.
- Incorporating residential and supported living accommodation into the scheme to support the social care sector, which would deliver a significant cost saving for Somerset Council.
- Designing a mix of bespoke adapted and accessible Taylor Wimpey Homes, as well as foster care homes. These would be delivered to a high specification and across different locations (at the peripheries and more central to the community hub) to offer choice and variety.
- The concept masterplan for Taunton Garden Village includes outdoor event spaces and woodland for education recreation, new schools, neighbourhood centre and community spaces.



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“
The equestrian centre and
bridleways are an important
element of King’s College’s
student offering.”

3 October 2024
Director of Finance and Operations

King's College, Taunton

Who are they?

King's College is an independent day and boarding school located to the south east of Taunton and north west of Taunton Garden Village. It provides education for pupils aged 2 to 18 years with a student population of around 450 students.

What did they say?

- King's College has no major expansion plans and currently has capacity for additional students.
- The school suggested further engagement with Taunton Racecourse as a close neighbour to the site.
- King's College makes regular use of the equestrian centre on the Taunton Garden Village site, leasing it from Taunton Polo Club. Along with the surrounding bridleways, it's an important part of their offer and something they'd be keen to see provided by Taunton Garden Village.
- The school expressed interest in other opportunities across the site, including spaces for outdoor recreation and the proposed green open spaces and woodland to the east of Thurlbear.



What are we doing?

- Further understanding the needs of King's College and other existing and potential users of the equestrian centre and polo club to explore how provision could be incorporated into the masterplan.
- Investigating how the masterplan can meet their needs. Particularly the southeastern part of the site closest to Thurlbear, which could include space for educational purposes, such as an outdoor amphitheatre, high rope courses, areas for local food production and biodiversity enhancements.
- Engaging Taunton Racecourse, a close neighbour of Taunton Garden Village to understand if there are synergies with equestrian uses across the site.
- Retaining designated bridleways across the site and exploring opportunities to design more into the masterplan.
- Continuing discussions with King's College and other users of the equestrian centre in Orchard Portman around collaborative opportunities.
- Engaging with the college's student body to draw insights to help inform the designs.



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Somerset Activity and Sports Partnership

Who are they?

Somerset Activity and Sports Partnership (SASP) is a charity dedicated to promoting health, wellbeing and happiness in Somerset through participation in sport and physical activity. SASP is one of 43 independent Active Partnerships (funded by Sport England) which seek to reduce inequalities and barriers to sport.

What did they say?

- SASP has a strong interest in the proposed green space for play and recreation. Safe and fully accessible areas for young people and people with disabilities are essential to help discourage antisocial behaviour in unsafe and unwelcoming areas, particularly at nighttime. SASP suggests incorporating adequate paving, lighting and rest points.
- Accessible active travel must be prioritised to support public health and wellbeing. It is important that this intention is set from the beginning to support behaviour change around car use and dependency. Active travel routes must also provide good connections to existing communities and facilities.
- Timely and effective delivery of infrastructure will be essential to support new and existing communities. The recent closure of five sporting facilities across Somerset has placed greater pressure on existing infrastructure while also further cementing reliance on cars to access amenities.
- In some of Somerset's towns, there's a real lack of indoor community space that's available in the evening for public use.

What are we doing?

- Investigating how the masterplan can meet their needs. Particularly the southeastern part of the site closest to Thurlbear, which could include space for educational purposes, such as an outdoor amphitheatre, high rope courses, areas for local food production and biodiversity enhancements.
- Rather than designing out the car entirely, designing a new sustainable community which embraces the car in a different way. It will respond to people's living patterns and minimise vehicle trips by providing a strong network of sustainable travel connections which promote active travel in and around the site.
- Engaging with Somerset Council's public health services to understand its priorities for supporting healthy and prosperous communities and how this can be reinforced through masterplan design.



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“
Designating some safe and welcoming open spaces that are equipped for different age ranges would be great.
”

19 December 2024
Chief Executive & Deputy Chief Executive

Somerset Chamber of Commerce

Who are they?

Somerset Chamber of Commerce is a membership-based business support organisation and employer representative body which promotes and lobbies for business development in Somerset. It is one of 52 Chambers accredited by the British Chambers of Commerce, supporting around 500 member businesses and representing over 2,000 businesses across Somerset.



“
There is a clear opportunity for Taunton to be positioned as a knowledge economy to attract business start-ups, technology firms and local highly skilled, high-paid tech jobs.

28 May 2025
Managing Director

”



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What did they say?

- Taunton is facing challenges of retaining young talent, an ageing population and a lack of apprenticeship provision. The town has a significant opportunity to address these issues, build its own identity and be a leader in the region's growth.
- Bridgwater and Yeovil are experiencing successful economic growth and carving their own distinct identities, which is increasingly attracting young people and families from Taunton. This has been driven by major developments at Hinkley Point, Gravity Smart Campus and iAero Centre which have delivered industrial and aerospace innovation.
- With a number of schools highly rated by Ofsted, Taunton benefits from a well-educated and highly skilled student population. Alongside the already existing global tech firms in Taunton, there is a significant opportunity for Taunton to be positioned as a knowledge economy to attract more innovation, business start-ups, technology firms and local highly skilled, high-paid technology jobs.
- To work most effectively, a new community must deliver the right mix of employment land alongside modern, flexible workspace without long-term leases. The value and demand for investment in office space is making a return.
- There is limited choice for alternative office space in Taunton. Somerset Chamber of Commerce would consider relocating to Taunton Garden Village, but allocated parking spaces will be important.
- Internal and external connectivity should also be a key focus. Taunton train station is one of the town's main assets with good connections to London, Bristol and Exeter.
- The outstanding environment and countryside around Taunton is a key asset to the town.

What are we doing?

- Investigating how Taunton Garden Village could provide a catalyst for economic growth in Taunton and developing an economic growth strategy for the new community which integrates with the wider strategy for the area.
- Exploring the delivery of a centralised campus for innovation, employment and education with excellent connectivity to the existing town to attract and retain talent and work towards establishing a distinct identity for Taunton. Alongside modern, flexible workspaces and facilities geared towards the technology industry, the campus could also deliver new student accommodation to respond to the needs of Bridgwater and Taunton College.
- Designing modern, sustainable Taylor Wimpey homes with the technology industry in mind, to help attract the workforce.
- Designing a community that will respond to people's living patterns to minimise vehicle trips by providing a well-connected centralised employment hub, as well as a strong network of sustainable travel connections which promote active travel in the site, but also to the town centre, the train station and key business parks in Taunton.
- Delivering a high-quality environment which connects the new homes and future workforce with the outstanding countryside close to the site.
- Exploring the challenges and opportunities that are facing global tech firms based in Taunton. This includes research into local businesses and what the wider demands are in the town to better understand how Taunton Garden Village could help address these demands.



“

**Somerset NHS welcomes
this early engagement and
opportunity to discuss the
vision.**

25 October 2024
Director of Strategy and Digital Development

”

Somerset NHS Foundation Trust

Who are they?

Somerset NHS Foundation Trust manages and operates Musgrove Park Hospital in west Taunton, caring for approximately 340,000 people and providing specialist services for around 544,000 people. It also manages Yeovil Hospital, 13 community hospitals and mental health units across the county.

What did they say?

- The trust shared its approach and vision around healthcare, which aligns with the government's aspirations:
 - **Hospitals at home:** Treating only what's needed to be treated in acute hospitals and utilising other community-based assets to support people locally. This is particularly relevant in rural Somerset. While nursing homes are important, specific and adaptable housing types are also important.
 - **Sickness prevention:** Provision that would allow earlier intervention. Designing new communities that keep people well and promote active travel to support public health and environmental sustainability.
 - **Analogue to digital:** Using video calls instead of travelling to an appointment, remote management of healthcare using wearables but also things in peoples' homes so an opportunity to design in.
- The trust provided the Victoria Park Health and Wellbeing Hub in Bridgwater as an example where children services, audiology, maternity and a range of other NHS services are now delivered in what was formerly a GP surgery.

What are we doing?

- Engaging with others at Somerset NHS Foundation Trust to explore required provision and how Taunton Garden Village could respond to increasing demand in accordance with the trust's aspirations.
- Engaging Somerset Council's health services to further understand local challenges, demands and its aspirations for addressing these.
- Embedding principles of designing a place which promotes health through active travel to support public health and environmental sustainability.
- Incorporating residential and supported living accommodation into the scheme to support the social care sector and help address the need across Somerset.



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“
A new sports facility at Orchard Portman for pupils to use on a regular basis would be superb.

Regional Executive Head & Associate Head Teacher

”

Somerset Progressive School

Who are they?

Somerset Progressive School is an independent special educational needs (SEND) school providing specialist support tailored to individuals' unique needs. The school is based at Bath House Farm, West Hatch, five miles south east of Taunton. A stone's throw from the east of Taunton Garden Village.



What did they say?

- Its Somerset sites are nearing capacity. The school is interested in expanding its offering for students – particularly around functional and vocational skills post-16.
- Somerset Progressive School uses local sport and leisure facilities in Taunton, including parks and surrounding woodland. Their students could benefit from new outdoor spaces and facilities at Taunton Garden Village.
- There's also an opportunity to help inform the plans more generally by understanding the perspective of their students through the school's student council and more general engagement.

What are we doing?

- Incorporating ambitious new sports and leisure facilities to meet the needs of Somerset Progressive School. Particularly in the southeastern part of the site closest to Thurlbear, which could include space for educational purposes, such as an outdoor amphitheatre, high rope courses, areas for local food production and biodiversity enhancements.
- Working to further understand what SEND provision could helpfully be incorporated into the proposals and how this would tie into the existing Somerset Progressive School facilities.
- Tapping into the perspectives of Somerset Progressive School students through their student council to help inform the plans.
- Engaging with the school's estates management and social care teams at Somerset Progressive School.



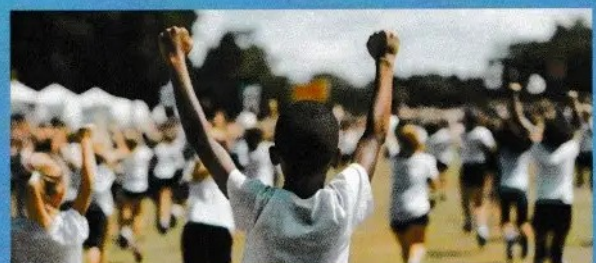
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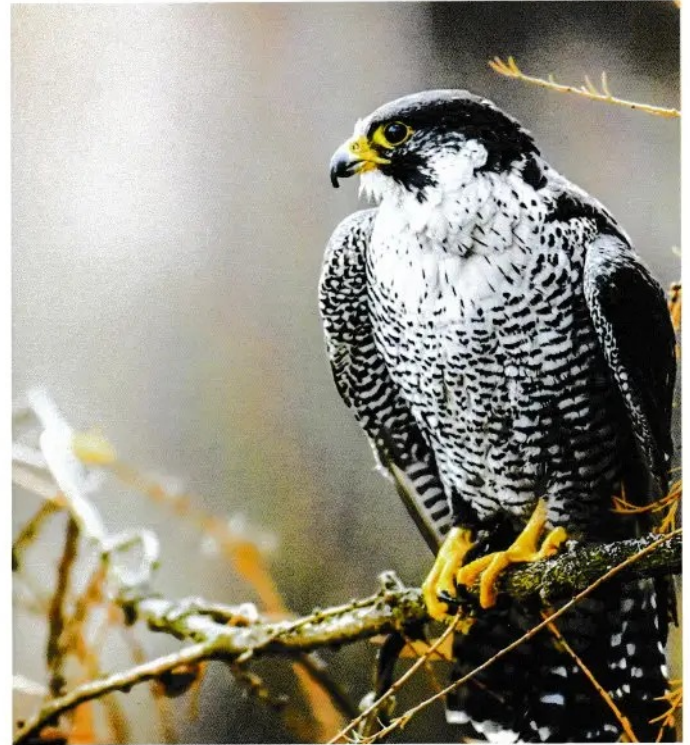
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Somerset Wildlife Trust

Who are they?

Somerset Wildlife Trust is the county's leading environmental charity and science-led movement. As one of 46 Wildlife Trusts across the UK, it is dedicated to protecting and restoring habitats, wildlife and diverse ecosystems. It works with organisations, landowners and communities to connect wildlife sites and empower people to care for wildlife. Thurlbear Wood, an ancient woodland on the outskirts of Taunton, is the closest reserve hugging the east of the site.



“

Your interpretation of the landscape is very much in keeping with our rationale for Tone Vale and desire to change the habitat. That's amazing.

22 January 2025
Director of Nature Recovery
& Nature Recovery Manager

”



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What did they say?

- The Trust manages over 1,700 hectares of land and almost 80 nature reserves across Somerset. Its aim is to make 30% of the county nature rich.
- Somerset Wildlife Trust is exploring how it could link up the Quantock Hills with the Blackdown Hills through the Tone Vale. The Tone Vale is important because of its framing and how it sits within the context of the National Landscape.
- Given the site's proximity of Thurlbear Woods, which has the potential to be 50% nature rich, the Trust believes a woodland approach is most interesting and is keen to feed into it. The area presents an opportunity to improve biodiversity flow. It is keen to see existing habitats, species and buffers enhanced to develop corridors and create a landscape that works for them.
- The Trust suggested exploring Broughton Brook and how natural features and processes such as Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDs) could be introduced to improve and strengthen it.
- Given the locality of the site and Taylor Wimpey's relationship with Somerset Highways, the Trust suggested installing wildlife bridges to allow for the transition of small mammals.
- The Trust's aim is to provide space for nature in new development and seeks to end the assumption that urban areas are barriers to environment. The Trust works proactively with developers and communities at an early stage to ensure sensitive development, transience of wildlife and the connection of corridors. It is in conversations with public sector organisations about how house and garden design could optimise wildlife and natural features.

What are we doing?

- Allocating over half of the site to open green space which will achieve a significant Biodiversity Net Gain uplift, surpassing the statutory quota. Across the site, the proposals will incorporate and enhance a wide range of habitats including pockets of grassland, streams, hedgerows, a wildflower meadow and native scrub.
- Designing corridors to make them multi-functional, such as installing runoffs into Broughton Brook. We want to make them function for the landscape, support wildlife and improve water quality.
- Undertaking a species overlay survey to further inform the design of key corridors and a buffer along edge of woodlands.
- Focusing on what happens around the site as well as within it. The area has a strong ancient woodland characteristic so we're looking at the framing of the southern area and how we can wrap it round to eastern side.
- Exploring improved wildlife and habitat connectivity to the Quantock Hills and opportunities to strengthen low-diverse areas.
- Incorporating a natural amphitheatre on the eastern side of the site and enhancing woodland to provide accessible spaces for forest schools, recreation and outdoor activity. We're giving great thought about how we can bring people into newly created woodlands.
- Converting one of the existing roads to Taunton into a superhighway for wheeling. This would provide the fastest and primary route into Taunton within 20 minutes.

Sustrans

Who are they?

Sustrans is a charity dedicated to making it more accessible and enjoyable for people to walk, wheel and cycle to improve everyday journeys and create healthier, happier and more sustainable places. Sustrans is the custodian of the National Cycle Network (NCN) – a UK-wide network of over 12,000 miles of signed paths and routes. Routes 3 and 33 are the closest NCN networks to the site.

What did they say?

- Sustrans believes that active travel should be prioritised in any new community. It champions a vision-led approach to community design to ensure that people can comfortably, pleasantly and sustainably access facilities.
- Sustrans is interested to see how Taunton Garden Village could enhance and connect into the nearby NCN routes. It might consider alignment with Route 33. The vision aligns well with its new upcoming strategy (due April 2025) which sets out how it can improve access to the NCN.
- Alongside promoting sustainable movement, the NCN also makes space for wildlife and nature, including planting, installing bird boxes, cleared vegetation and litter picking.
- Sustrans is keen to work closely to drill down on the principles and detail for Taunton Garden Village.

What are we doing?

- Designing a new community in which the active travel network is the primary movement network and daily mode of travel. A change in focus involves designing and delivering walking and cycling routes first and roads second.
- Continuing discussions with Sustrans to explore how Taunton Garden Village could enhance and strengthen the NCN. Exploring how an east to west corridor through the site could be connected to the NCN and considering how this corridor functions to the west of the site.
- Prioritising the scheme's relationship with Taunton to leverage strong connectivity to support the town and wider area, such as Nexus 25. Rethinking the road network to better serve the community, including the routes crossing the M5.
- Maximising local interactions and the provision of services and facilities so that 70% to 80% of all daily activities are internalised within the community.
- Exploring work on behaviour change and intergenerational divide with Sustrans and how their insights could be incorporated.
- Rolling out a vision-led planning tool to quantify the effectiveness of facilities on local interaction and opportunities for containment. Seeking to work with Sustrans to develop the vision for the development.



“

We're looking to bring more people into the National Cycle Network to serve the everyday journey. There's definitely scope for working together to improve access to our network.

19 December 2024
Project Manager – Network Development (Somerset, Dorset, BCP, Southampton, Portsmouth) & Planning Technical Officer

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Taunton Racecourse

Who are they?

Taunton Racecourse is an independent thoroughbred horse racing venue located adjacent to the Taunton Garden Village site. Beyond horse racing, it operates as a conference, entertainment and accommodation venue.

“

Horse racing is a key part of Taunton's identity. Taunton Racecourse is dedicated to supporting the longevity of thoroughbred horseracing in the town.

13 December 2024
Chairman & Managing Director

”

What did they say?

- Taunton Racecourse is dedicated to supporting the long-term future of horseracing in Taunton and would be interested in supporting the development of an equine-related offering at Taunton Garden Village.
- The racecourse works closely with the Injured Jockeys Fund and retired horses. Addressing horse welfare and gambling remain high on its agenda for collective social responsibility.
- As well as the land the racecourse is on, Taunton Racecourse owns a parcel of land to the east of the racecourse and adjacent to Lemon Tree Nursery, known as the polo stables. It is surrounded by Taylor Wimpey's site and leased to King's College.
- The racecourse would never be interested in acquiring nor parting with any land. Any expansion of the business would be done by building on the land it owns. It is, however, keen to use local facilities to deliver services for the community.
- With 75% of its non-race days being taken up by conferencing, the racecourse is keen to develop this side of the business further. Its influence in and strong connections with the local community means its reach is extensive.
- The NHS is one of its biggest customers. The conference centre provided a testing centre during the pandemic.



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What are we doing?

- Exploring a masterplan with a prominent equine focus to reflect Taunton as a racing town and draw on the expertise of Taunton Racecourse.
- Further understanding the uses of the equestrian centre and polo stables to explore how further provision could be incorporated into the masterplan.
- Engaging the Conquest Centre and other local equine charities that support children with SEND to explore opportunities to improve access to therapeutic space for equine-related activities at Taunton Garden Village.



“
**The Oak Partnership Trust
would welcome greater access
to outdoor space to enhance its
education offering outside of
the classroom.**

11 December 2024
Chief Executive

”

The Oak Partnership Trust

Who are they?

The Oak Partnership Trust is a family of primary schools that cater for pupils aged two to 19. It manages six schools across Taunton. Its purpose is to foster an inclusive community of schools across Somerset to inspire courage, confidence and a passion for learning.

What did they say?

- It is vital that the vision for Taunton Garden Village is informed by a comprehensive understanding of school capacity and admissions numbers across Taunton and the wider county.
- The Trust is interested in gaining greater access to outdoor space for its students – space which is fit for purpose and enhances its education offering outside of the classroom. It would be looking for something that is easy to access for its schools around Taunton.
- The Trust suggested that an easily accessible all-weather sports facility, which it sought to introduce on its West Monkton site, would be a good addition to the area in addition to a grass sports pitch.
- Access to swimming pools is a challenge in Taunton. There is a requirement that all children who leave school should be able to swim 200 metres.
- The Oak Partnership Trust suggested that including a place of worship within the school buildings, or a dual-purpose school, would enhance scheme design and inclusivity.

What are we doing?

- Incorporating primary and secondary schools into the scheme, supported by ongoing dialogue with Somerset Council's education services over capacity and admissions numbers to help meet local need.
- Investigating how the masterplan can meet their needs. Particularly the southeastern part of the site closest to Thurlbear, which could include space for educational purposes, such as an outdoor amphitheatre, high rope courses, areas for local food production and biodiversity enhancements.
- Incorporating a wide range of new sports, leisure and recreation facilities to serve both new and existing communities and support public health.
- Exploring new places of worship with different architecture.
- Tapping into the perspectives of local schools managed by the Trust by engaging with its student body to help inform the plans.



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Conclusion and next steps

Initial conversations with stakeholders have been insightful and we look forward to future engagement with the local community and other stakeholders.

We are still at a very early stage of the process and will be engaging many more people and organisations, and continuing conversations with those we have already met. We want the story of Taunton Garden Village to be shaped by local voices, beginning with a series of roundtable discussions and wider public engagement.

The long term vision for Taunton Garden Village embodies a new approach to building communities, providing a community that is inclusive, diverse and one that will thrive.

This is a live document and we will update it regularly to track progress and capture the ongoing discussions. It will act as a brief to our masterplanner, and a basis for communication with local communities and make us accountable for the progress of the site through the promotion, planning, construction, and occupation phases.

**Taunton Garden
Village Project is
a new approach to
building the new
communities we need.**





The Taunton Garden Village Project
A new community shaped by Somerset

September 2025



**Taylor
Wimpey**

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