**Site Briefs**

**Introduction**

Many sites, especially smaller ones, are included in Local Development Plans with only very basic information and requirements about what might be developed. That may be as basic as ‘20 houses’, perhaps with an added comment or two about public open space, road access etc.

Your Place Plan can – in fact probably should – add to what is required with local details for each site about, for example:

* Character and design.
* Water run-off and flooding.
* Vehicular access.
* Pedestrian access and movement.
* Key views in and out.
* Appropriate play provision.
* Ecology.
* Any historical connections.

Some general material on some or all of the above may already be, or you intend it to be, in your Place Plan, so all you would be doing is applying it to specific sites. That is particularly true if you are doing some form of local character assessment\* and design guidance as part of your plan. In fact, having general material about the issues above can help you because it will enable you to apply and then show a good level of consistency between the general material and whatever you choose to say about each specific site.

\* *See the Character Assessment Toolkit*

It is also most likely - and again we would recommend it – that you use the *Site Assessment Toolkit* *(*[*http://www.placeplans.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/TOOLKIT-Site-Assessment.docx*](http://www.placeplans.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/TOOLKIT-Site-Assessment.docx)*)* first to produce an initial appraisal of the site. That will lead directly into the sort of points you would then wish to highlight in your Brief.

**What and how**

What you choose to put in any Site Brief can come in three forms, all of which are valuable. You can use:

* **Text** to list key criteria (e.g. ‘maintain a footpath between X and Y’)
* **Maps** to illustrate key points (e.g. a key view out).
* **Photos** also to illustrate key points (e.g. where water gathers after heavy rain).

Rather obviously, some of all three is often best (e.g. text about an existing footpath, a map showing it and a photo of it).

The text is what you need to be careful with because that is the most important aspect; first to avoid overdoing it and secondly to avoid being too limiting on any designers. Here is a real life (if probably, for you, rather overlong) example with some occasional notes in italics about why the points are drafted as they are:

* Road access to be off Peter Road and any additional traffic impacts on Mary Road and John Road to be addressed. *(Highways will have very specific views on the details of this, especially on exactly what mitigation will be needed on nearby roads.)*
* Provision to be made for mitigating any water run-off and flooding impacts across the site and on land and properties to the south of the site. *(Water/flooding management can only rarely be dealt with on a single site so it is essential that any applicant considers the wider context.)*
* Footpath access from the core of the village to be along the path from High Street, the path to be improved and lighting provided. (*Once again, this is about a key off-site issue.)*
* Any boundary to development to be of walls or hedgerows, not fences. *(This is an example of what would come from local character assessment; in this case because there are no fences anywhere near the site.)*
* The site layout should respect the rural character of the village with clear, bounded front gardens and substantial rear gardens. *(As above, a key point about locally distinctive character.)*
* Buildings to be no higher than 2 storeys, perhaps with roof/attic rooms. *(Another point about locally distinctive character.)*
* The style of buildings (materials, details etc.) to reflect, in a contemporary manner, the styles predominant in this part of the village. *(Another point about locally distinctive character.)*
* The area lacks any public open space, so what is provided on site needs to be considered for use by residents other than those on the site. *(Left alone, a developer might create an almost private area of open space.)*
* Play provision for very young children is needed in this area. *(It is the detail about very young children that makes the difference here.)*

You can probably now imagine how maps and photos would help to illustrate the points above, for example:

* A map to show the footpath from High Street and some photos to show its condition and lack of lighting.
* A map and photos showing recent flooding problems in and around the site.
* Photos to show that wooden fences are not the norm in the area around.
* A map showing current play provision (and for what ages) in the area around.

Finally, be sure to check your first draft of any Site Brief with your local planners. They may have certain aspects covered elsewhere in their Local Development Plan or development criteria (e.g. road access), or they may query certain points (e.g. if you try to say things about eco-building that the Place Plan may not be able to control).