

# Upper Sunnybank, Stromness

## Site Development Brief



# Planning in Orkney

## Status of this Guidance

The main planning document in Orkney is the **Orkney Local Development Plan** (the Plan), which provides the policy framework and land allocations for dealing with planning applications efficiently and with certainty. All decisions on planning applications require that an appropriate balance is struck between the relevant development plan policies and other material considerations.

**Supplementary Guidance** is produced for given policy areas and subjects where a specific requirement is highlighted within the plan. It is the purpose of supplementary guidance to provide further information, policy and advice on complex planning matters and seeks to expand upon the core policies or land allocations in the plan. Supplementary guidance is always subject to full public consultation and is submitted to the Scottish Government prior to adoption. Once adopted, supplementary guidance has statutory weight in the determination of planning applications and forms part of the plan.

**Planning Policy Advice** (PPA) is prepared to provide further information and advice on policies and issues where a specific requirement to produce supplementary guidance has not been set out within the plan. Many Development Briefs for land allocations are set at this level, along with the majority of advice and information that is prepared for members of the public and Development Management. PPA is always subject to full public consultation and council approval prior to adoption and publication. Once adopted, PPA is a material planning consideration although it does not bear the same weight as the plan itself.

**Development Management Guidance** (DMG) is produced to provide advice on technical issues and the interpretation of given policies where a need arises. It is the intention of DMG to ensure a consistency of approach and to highlight the original intention/spirit of a policy where there is any ambiguity. DMG is also produced for less-complex land allocations to ensure a co-ordinated approach to development can be achieved - Conservation Area Appraisals and Conservation Statements are also set at this level within Orkney. Whilst DMG is not subject to public consultation, it is approved by Council prior to adoption and publication. As such, DMG is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications, which is considered to be the standing advice of the Local Planning Authority.

Contacting the Council.

Should you wish to discuss any aspect of this guidance, an Officer from Development Management will be available from 09:00 to 17:00, Monday to Friday to meet at the OIC Customer Services in Kirkwall or via telephone 01865873535.

[www.orkney.gov.uk](http://www.orkney.gov.uk)

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## **1. Introduction**

1.1 This development brief has been prepared to inform the development of an area of land extending to 4.9 ha on the north edge of Stromness which is allocated for housing in the Adopted Orkney Local Development Plan 2017 (OLDP). (see Figure1: Location Plan).

1.2 The site is identified as STR-2 - Upper Sunnybank in the OLDP and has been given an indicative capacity of 40 units. The settlement statement relating to Stromness in the OLDP identifies the site as a 'long term allocation'. However, for reasons outlined within this brief, part of the site is being promoted for development in the short term. The site is predominantly utilised for agricultural use at present although a finger of land extending eastwards to Hillside Road has been developed for a single house plot.

1.3 There are no current planning applications affecting the site although planning permission was granted for 5 plots immediately adjacent to the north and west of the site, to be accessed off Wardhill Road.

1.4 This Development Brief has been drafted jointly between the agents for Orkney Housing Association Limited and the Development and Marine Planning Team at Orkney Islands Council.

## **2. Purpose and Status**

2.1. The purpose of this development brief is to identify the primary development opportunities and constraints relating to the site and to provide a framework within which subsequent applications for planning permission will be assessed.

2.2. As Planning Policy Advice, this Development Brief will be a material consideration in determining planning applications. It is intended to provide prospective developers of the site with a clear indication of the requirements and expectations that the Planning Authority will take into account.



Figure 1 - Site Layout Plan



### 3. Site Description and Context

3.1 The site is located off the Wardhill Road on the northern edge of Stromness. The site area is 4.9 ha. The northern part of the site (2.8ha) is owned by Orkney Housing Association, with the remainder in private ownership.

3.2 The site is currently open pasture land and occupies an elevated position on the northern outskirts of Stromness. As an edge of town location, it is largely rural in character although the site is bounded on two sides by established housing areas at Wardhill Road in the north and Hillside Road to the east. To the north west of the site, OIC has approved a development of 5 individual house plots, fronting onto Wardhill Road. A number of other larger detached properties are prominent further to the south west along Wardhill Road.

Photographs highlighting the site context



3.3 The northern boundary of the site is formed in part by Wardhill Road and a collection of individual houses of varying size and plot. The built form here is low density, with houses being predominantly a storey to a storey and a half in appearance.

3.4 The eastern boundary is defined by a stone dyke which forms the garden boundaries of the more established houses which face onto Hillside Road. Also on the eastern boundary, the site, as defined in the OLDP, includes a small finger of land which leads through onto Hillside Road, where in recent times a house has been built.

3.5 The southern boundary of the site is formed by a post and wire fence with farmland beyond. The western boundary follows a post and wire fence defining a field boundary before joining up with Downie's Lane, which is a single-track road and a small house, Sma'Quoy, which is accessed off of it.

### 4. Policy Context

#### 4.1. National Policy Context

4.1.1 The value and importance of good design to the creation of successful places is outlined within National Policy documents, Creating Places, Designing Places and Designing Streets.

4.1.2 Creating Places – A Policy Statement for Scotland, notes that ‘good design is not merely how a building (or development) looks, it is an innovative and creative process that delivers value’.

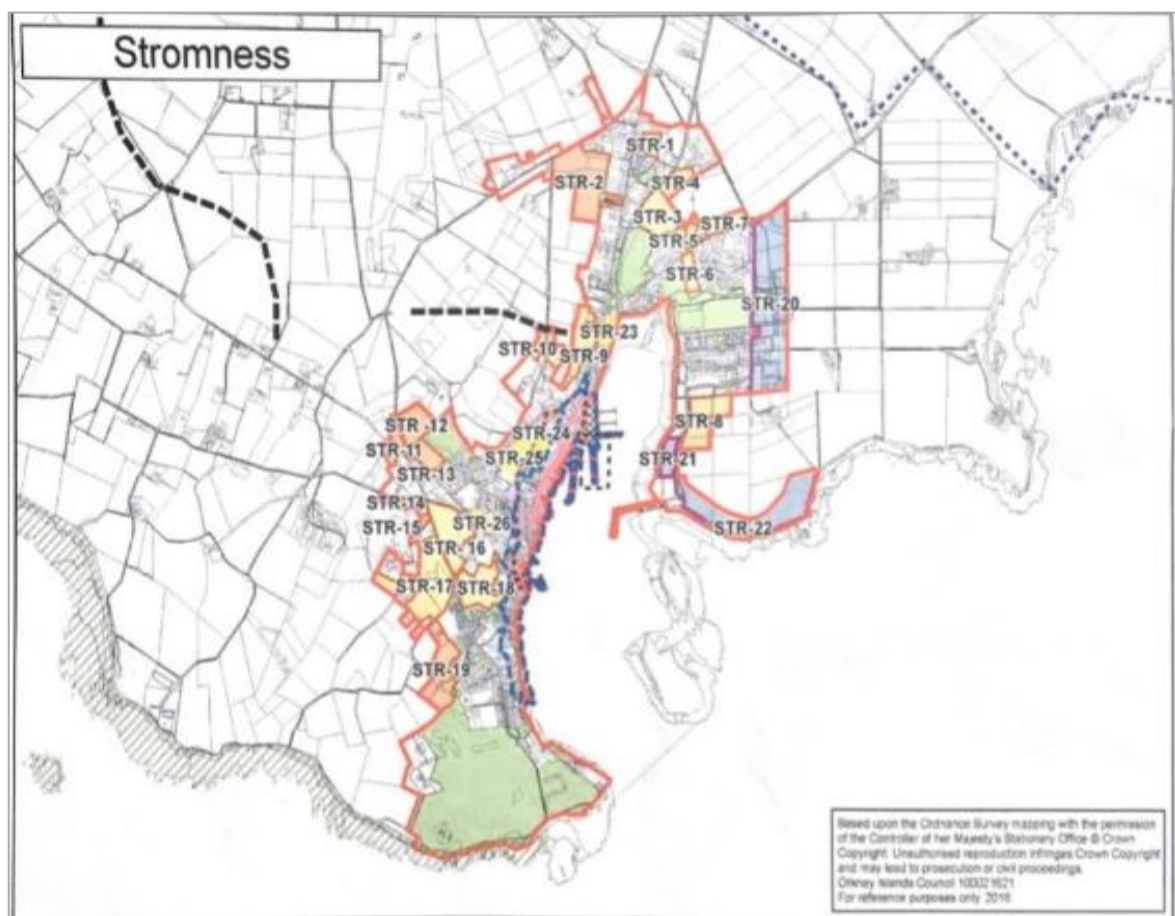
4.1.3 The other policy statements on architecture, place and street design, Designing Places and Designing Streets are both underpinned by the 6 qualities of successful places, these being:

- Distinctive
- Safe and pleasant
- Easy to move around
- Welcoming
- Adaptable
- Resource efficient

4.1.4 These guiding principles underpin successful places, and this development brief has therefore been prepared in order to promote and help developers achieve these outcomes. These documents are also material considerations in the determination of planning applications.

## 4.2. Local Policy Context

4.2.1 The Orkney Local Development Plan (OLDP) is the relevant up to date development plan and was adopted in 2017. The site is noted as STR-2 within the





Plan.

4.2.2 With regard to planning policy, the OLDP contains an overarching policy, Policy 1, which sets out guiding principles against which all planning applications will be assessed and Policy 2, Design, which outlines a number of fundamental principles that new development will be expected to demonstrate compliance with. This development brief has been prepared in compliance with these policies.

4.2.3 The site is identified in the OLDP for residential development as site STR-2 Upper Sunnybank, with a capacity of 40 units (see extract above). The description of the site in the Stromness settlement statement states that the site is regarded as a 'long term allocation' which the OLDP indicates is within the 5-10 year time period (i.e. 2022-2027).



Extract from the Stromness Urban Design Framework

4.2.4 The origins of this development phasing can also be found in the Stromness Urban Design Framework (SUDF) which was adopted by OIC in 2009 and is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

4.2.5 The SUDF identifies a housing land allocation strategy which seeks to consolidate new housing development in a co-ordinated and coherent form by responding to local topography and character in the identification of primary and secondary areas for new housing. The Upper Sunnybank site is identified as a secondary area for new housing in response to its more peripheral location and the existence of other sites closer to the historic centre of Stromness.

4.2.6 In urban design terms, the SUDF identifies the site as being appropriate for higher density development.



## **5. Development Vision and Rationale**

5.1 Although both the OLDP and the SUDF identify the site as a longer-term allocation, it has been identified in the Council's Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) as a site for which funding has been allocated over the next two years. Through the SHIP and with Scottish Government funding it is proposed to develop this allocation over a 10-year period with much needed affordable housing units.

5.2 The rationale behind bringing this allocation forward is due to physical and infrastructure constraints with other allocations in OHAL ownership in Stromness. This allocation allows OHAL to meet their development aspirations for Stromness in an effective manner.

5.3 The site will be developed over a number of years and the infrastructure required to develop the initial phases will also secure the longer term development of the site.

5.4 The site is a natural extension to the historic linear development which has taken place up the hill along Hillside Road and continued round to Wardhill Road. Development of the site, in line with the design guidance outlined in the OLDP and SUDF offers the opportunity for a quality, well designed, contextually sensitive residential development which will bridge the gap between the established housing off Hillside Road and Wardhill Road and the more dispersed houses which have been developed on the edge of Stromness.

## **6. Site Constraints and Opportunities**

The site has a number of features, constraints and opportunities to take into account when considering any development (See Figure 2: Opportunities and Constraints plan).

### **6.1. Physical Conditions**

6.1.1 The site slopes from west to east, with the higher ground located in the west bounded by Downie's Lane and Wardhill Road. The land then follows a gentle gradient to the east, leading down towards the rear garden boundaries of the Hillside Road properties.

6.1.2 The site enjoys extensive open views, in particular to the east and south east where there are distant views to Hamnavoe, the west mainland and Scapa Flow beyond. Views to the south, towards Hoy are also possible from the eastern parts of the site. Due to the local topography, the site is not visible from the historic town centre of Stromness. The site is very visible from the eastern approach to Stromness (Howe Road) and Hamnavoe, with the uppermost part of the site forming a clear ridgeline against the horizon. There are no significant local landmarks visible from the site.

Image below: View from the upper part of the site looking east across to Hamnavoe/Scapa Flow



Image below: View of site from Howe Road with skyline highlighted



6.1.3 Given its elevated position, the site is exposed to the prevailing south westerly wind with no natural shelter. The site is not overshadowed from any direction and can therefore expect direct sunlight all year round. There are, therefore, significant opportunities to maximise solar gain through appropriate orientation of buildings.

## 6.2. Linkages

6.2.1 The existing roads in the area of the development brief are Wardhill Road to the north of the site and Downie's Lane to the west and these provide the main means of vehicular and pedestrian access to the site from Stromness and surrounding area. Downie's Lane is single track with no associated pavement. Wardhill Road is also a single track road with grass verge to the north edge along its length where it bounds the site.

6.2.2 Beyond the site, the grass verge continues although individual house curtilages on the south side are hard onto Wardhill Road. There is a passing place immediately adjacent to the site.

Photograph looking along Wardhill Road highlighting lack of footpaths



6.2.3 In terms of pedestrian/active travel routes, there is no direct footpath link through the site to Hillside Road and pedestrian access to the site is only available via a route along Hillside Road, Cauldhame Road and Wardhill Road. The pavement currently runs out at the corner of Cauldhame Road and Wardhill Road.

6.2.4 Core Path WM27 – Quarrybanks Path is the only Core Path in the vicinity of the site and runs from the junction of Cauldhame Road and Hillside Road to the A967.

### **6.3. Open Space**

6.3.1 The Orkney Open Space Action Plan: Vision and Action Plan identifies the north Stromness area as a location with no access to play space and poor open space provision. The Action Plans objective to improve open space provision and access is outlined as follows:

- Improvements to existing open space within Hillside highlighted as a possible key site to address play area deficiency;
- Utilise green network as linkage to area without access to open space. Potential to make use of grass verges which line the route by providing places of interest to stop along the way including seating, artwork and interpretation panels. Interpretation panel could highlight prominent walking routes in and around Stromness.

6.3.2 The nearest play field/football pitch/open space at Market Green between Cairston Road and the A965. (See fig.2)



Figure 2 - Linkages/Open Space





## **6.4. Flooding and Water**

6.4.1 The SEPA flood maps show no risk of fluvial or surface water flooding either within or in the vicinity of the site.

6.4.2 A minor field drain follows a field boundary running across the site from west to east.

## **6.5. Services**

6.5.1 A public sewer is present on Wardhill Road to the north of the site which will allow a gravity connection for foul drainage to the northern part of the site only. It is likely that SUDS attenuation will be required for surface water within the site.

6.5.2 A water main also runs in the grass verge along the northern edge of Wardhill Road.

6.5.3 An 11kv overhead line cuts across the site following a stone wall field boundary. Scottish and Southern Energy Networks (SSEN) have assumed that this will need to be undergrounded in order to accommodate development. SSEN have advised that the site should be designed so that cables are kept out of gardens and communal areas.

6.5.4 The site is not served by a public bus route; the nearest bus stop is to the south of the Swimming Pool on the A965 providing services to Kirkwall and the remainder of the island.

6.5.5 The site is within walking distance of the swimming pool (0.3 miles), Stromness Primary School (0.6 miles) and Stromness Academy (1.0 mile).

## **6.6. Natural Heritage**

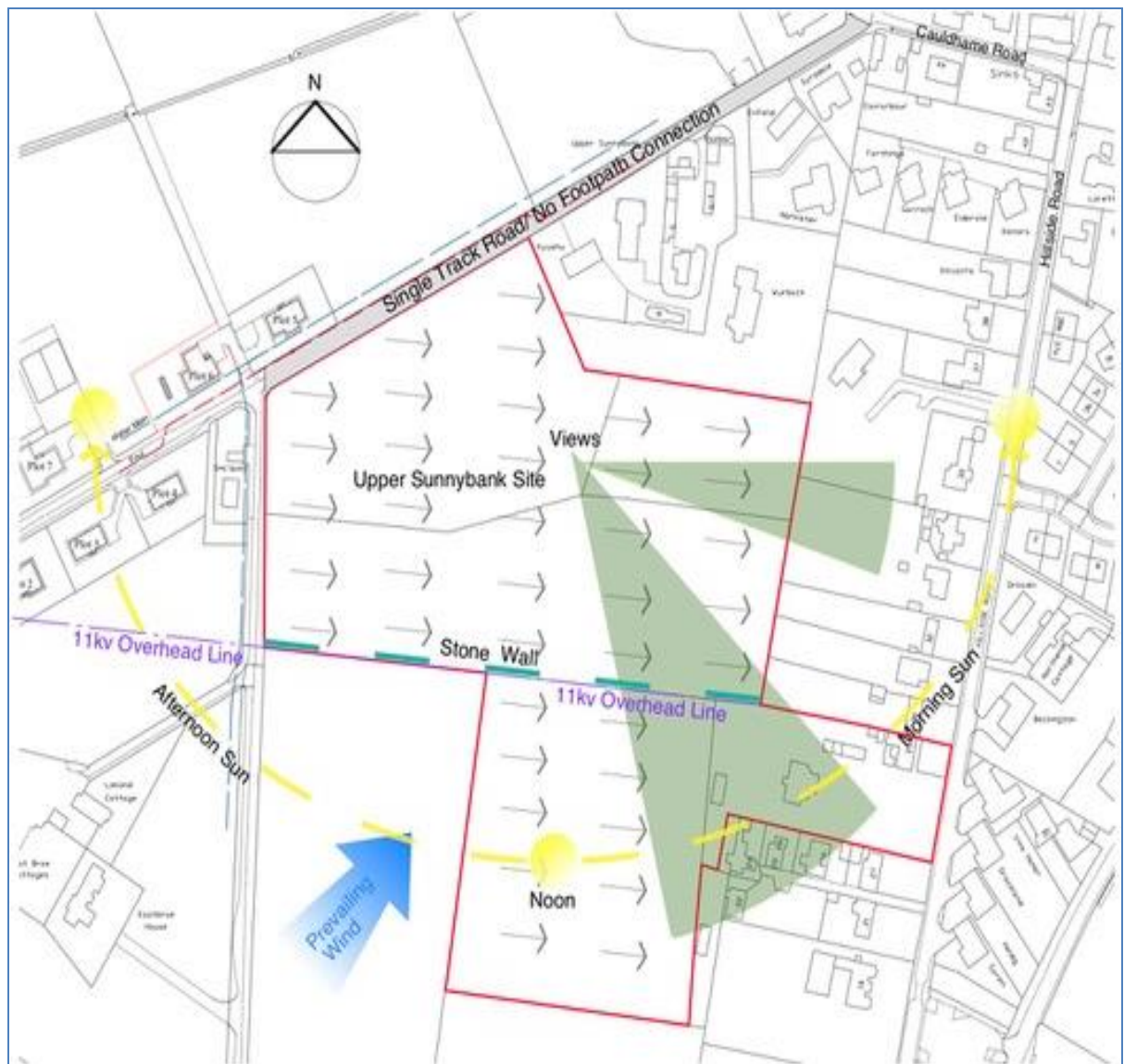
6.6.1 In terms of landscape designations, the site lies within the Hoy and West Mainland National Scenic Area. Given that the site has been allocated for housing in the OLDP, there is an acceptance that well designed and sited housing will be acceptable within this part of the National Scenic Area.

6.6.2 There are no other natural heritage designations on the site or in the vicinity of this allocation.

## **6.7. Historic Environment**

6.7.1 There are no heritage or archaeological assets with a statutory designation within the site. The settlement statement for Stromness, however, identifies Sunnybank (17-18 Hillside Road) as a C Listed Building. The rear curtilage of this property abuts the eastern boundary of the site and its setting must be taken into account by any development on the site.

Figure 3 - Opportunities and Constraints



## **7.The Development Brief Strategy**

7.1 Requirements for development of the site are set out in this section and also illustrated in the strategy plan diagram. These requirements emerge from the planning policy framework outlined in the OLDP and the guidance from the SUDF as well as the constraints and opportunities of the site.

7.2 The aspiration for the site is that it provides a high quality and accessible residential environment which integrates well with the landscape and surrounding built environment and provides a natural extension of the urban area at the northern edge of Stromness.

### **7.1. Site Development Strategy and Phasing**

7.1.1 It is envisaged that the development of site STR-2 will take place in 4-5 phases dependent on the availability of funding and provision of infrastructure which will be required for later phases of the development. Overall, it is considered that the site can accommodate a higher density of development than that envisaged in the OLDP, as follows:

- Phase one – the development of 8 social rented houses (a mix of 2,3 and 4 apt semi-detached units, year 2020/21>)
- Phase two – the development of 8-12 social rented houses (mix to be determined, year 2023/24>)
- Phase three – the development of 12-18 houses, possibly involving a mix of social rented and shared equity housing (year 2026/27>)
- Phase four – capacity for c 20 units as a longer term development, post 2027. Due to the lower lying nature of this part of the site, further investigations will be needed to identify the route for foul/surface water drainage. This could either be pumped to existing connections on Wardhill Road or via a new route to the south or east (as yet undetermined).
- Other Land for Housing Development – this portion of the site is in separate ownership. The onward development will be considered to be long term in nature. Investigations to establish access and drainage routes will have to be completed and considered when the Plan is next reviewed.

7.1.2 This phasing is noted in Figure 5.

### **7.2. Buildings and Placemaking**

7.2.1 The housing layout and design should respond to the prominent location of the site. There is a need to reduce the potential impact of development on the skyline and to provide a sensitive, natural extension of built development in this part of north Stromness.

7.2.2 The phasing anticipated for the site allows an opportunity to create variety and interest in the development by introducing subtle, yet complementary adaptations to the design of buildings and will assist in the creation of 'place' in each distinct phase of the development. Development will be expected to be of a high quality, sustainable design.

7.2.3 Design guidance outlined in the SUDF for the established 'first tier area' of north Stromness stated that new buildings should not exceed two and a half storeys in height.

7.2.4 Additionally, for this allocation the overall building height should respond to site topography, with the higher elements of the allocation having a lower overall roof height with the potential for higher roof heights in the lower elements.

7.2.5 Housing should be aligned with Wardhill Road and the proposed road layout to form a strong street frontages with direct pedestrian access onto Wardhill Road to create a sense of place and improve the accessibility of the development.

7.2.6 In order to tie in with the surrounding development, building colours should be predominantly white, grey or buff render. Traditional design features should be combined with contemporary design and elements of stone and timber detailing will be acceptable. Roofs should be grey in colour. 'Suburban' styles which include brick finishes will not be appropriate for the site.

7.2.7 Throughout the site, building lines and access roads should follow the contours of the site. Buildings should be designed and orientated to maximise solar gain.



Examples of building types in the vicinity of the site

### 7.3. Boundaries and Edges

7.3.1 High, 'palisade' style garden fencing should be avoided along external boundaries fronting roads. Instead, curtilages should be defined by low open boarded fencing, grass verge and appropriate planting. Within the site, garden ground should be delineated by low, open boarded fencing which will assist in slowing wind speeds and providing an element of shelter to the development as a whole.



7.3.2 Along the northern and eastern boundaries where the site abuts the established housing, existing boundary treatments should be consolidated by additional screen planting.

7.3.3 The existing drystone wall which bisects the site from east to west will be retained as an identifiable boundary and important local feature. Minimal dountaking will be allowed to facilitate development.

## **7.4. Open Space and Landscaping**

7.4.1 Although this development brief envisages a higher density of development, it is important that this does not result in the site appearing to be overcrowded and 'suburban' in nature. In this respect, landscaping can play an important role in softening the impact of development, providing space between buildings and assisting in the creation of a sense of place.

7.4.2 Small intimate areas of landscaping/open space should be dispersed through the development in order to provide separation and a sense of space between dwellings. Such areas should be used to define entrances/arrival points and along internal road verges. Proposed planting should be restricted to hardy native species. A management and maintenance plan should be developed for all open space areas at the planning application phase.

7.2.3 Throughout this development the open space provision will be linked to each other and in meaningful locations for the housing proposed to enjoy and access. The surface water management of the site will also form an active element of this open space provision. Tree and shrub planting will be proposed through the allocation to provide shelter, assist with surface water management, provide amenity and support the natural environment. Planting will be appropriate to Orkney in terms of the species selected and when they will be planted.

7.2.4 Part of this provision will be to provide pedestrian and cycle routes to the existing open spaces of Stromness, such as the Market Green, the Academy and the Primary School.

Figure 4 - Open Space and Landscaping



Key:

- Open Space
- Open Space Link
- SUDS
- Potential Future SUDS
- Landscape Buffer
- Primary Access
- Building Zone
- Boundary Line
- Pedestrian Access

## **7.5. Site Access, Roads and Movement**

7.5.1 Wardhill Road is the primary vehicular route and access will be taken off this road. Given the increase in vehicle movements resulting from development of the site, Wardhill Road will require to be widened from its junction with Cauldham Road to the junction with Downie's Lane in order to provide a suitable standard of carriageway.

7.5.2 It is important that pedestrian links to and from the site are improved in order to ensure that the site has active travel links to the local schools, swimming pool, the shops, employment opportunities and the wider community. Widening of the carriageway will incorporate a new footpath along the entire length of Wardhill Road to the junction with Cauldham Road. These improvements will be required as part of the first phase of development and will be detailed in the planning application phase.

7.5.3 Discussions should be undertaken with OIC Roads service on the detailed design of the carriageway improvements. Carriageway improvements and footpath provision should be designed to tie in with those required as part of the Eastbrae housing plots consent.

7.5.4 The road layout will promote walking and cycling before vehicular movement. New roads will be 'people friendly' spaces utilising alternating road surfacing material to differentiate between 'home zone' areas and main accesses.

7.5.6 Where possible pedestrian routes will follow desire lines and the proposed roads. Within phase 1, the proposed houses will have direct pedestrian access onto the existing road network.

7.6.6 Parking should be provided in accordance with the OIC Roads Development Guide which is 2 spaces per dwelling along with 25% visitor parking. A range of solutions to reduce the impact of car parking on the residential environment should be considered and may include the following:

- Designing small scale shared courtyard parking
- Avoiding the creation of large areas given over to parking or regimented lines of parking bays

## **7.6. Services**

7.6.1 All services are available to serve the site with water, foul drainage and electricity all running along Wardhill Road.

7.6.2 In line with the requirements of PAN 61 'Planning and Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems', an appropriately sized SUDS will be required as part of the first phase of the site development. The location shown for the SUDS in the Strategy Plan Diagram (Fig.5) responds to the contours of the site and will allow for a gravity connection to the main sewer on Wardhill Road for the first phases. This must be designed as part of the overall site and should be visually attractive, safe and accessible for maintenance purposes.

7.6.3 Due to the topography of the site, lower lying areas will not be able to connect to drainage on Wardhill Road and will require alternative arrangements to be made before these areas can be developed. Discussions will be necessary with Scottish Water and Scottish Environment Protection Agency to investigate

appropriate solutions to the potential development of these areas and may involve a pumping station or the provisions of a new sewer to the south.

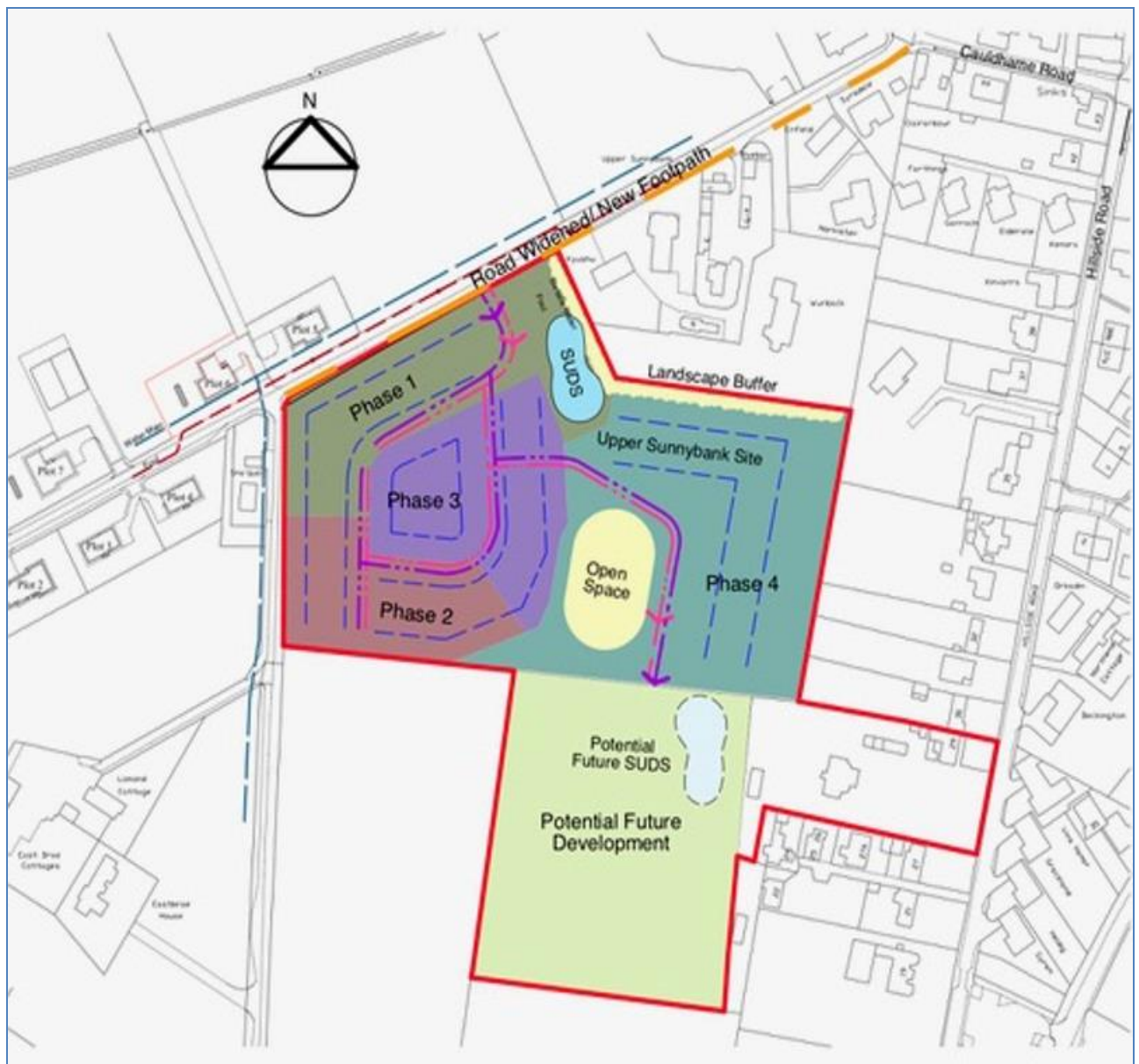
## **7.7. Natural Heritage**

7.7.1 Landscaping should be designed and managed to incorporate benefit for wildlife, for example through the planting of trees where appropriate, as well as areas of wildflower. Where possible, local species should be used and planting schemes should be agreed in advance to avoid the introduction of non-native and/or invasive species. The proposed area of open space within the site offers an opportunity to meet these objectives.

7.7.2 Developers should liaise with OIC Roads and the Environmental Policy Officer in developing proposals to improve biodiversity and amenity values.



Figure 5 - Design Strategy Plan



Key:

- |                                |                    |                                   |
|--------------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------------|
| - Phase 1                      | - Open Space       | - Pedestrian Access               |
| - Phase 2                      | - Landscape Buffer | - Boundary Line                   |
| - Phase 3                      | - Primary Access   | - Road Widened/ New Footpath Line |
| - Phase 4                      | - Building Zone    | - SUDS                            |
| - Potential Future Development |                    | - Potential Future SUDS           |

## 8. Submitting a Planning Application

8.1 In preparing a proposal, developers are advised to hold pre-application discussions with the planning authority. Compliance with this brief should not be interpreted as ensuring automatic approval of a proposal. Any application will be assessed on its merits.

## 9. Further Information

Designing Streets: A Policy Statement for Scotland.

- <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2010/03/22120652/0>

Creating Places: A Policy on Architecture and Place for Scotland.

- <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2013/06/9811>

Designing Streets Toolkit.

- <http://www.creatingplacescotland.org/designing-streets>

Orkney Local Development Plan

- [https://www.orkney.gov.uk/Files/Planning/Development-and-Marine-Planning/Local-Plan/OLDP\\_2017/Orkney\\_Local\\_Development\\_Plan\\_2017\\_2022.pdf](https://www.orkney.gov.uk/Files/Planning/Development-and-Marine-Planning/Local-Plan/OLDP_2017/Orkney_Local_Development_Plan_2017_2022.pdf)

Stromness Urban Design Framework

- [https://www.orkney.gov.uk/Files/Planning/Development-and-Marine-Planning/Related-Planning-to-2014/090703\\_FINAL\\_Stromness\\_UDF\\_as\\_approved\\_CompressedForWeb.pdf](https://www.orkney.gov.uk/Files/Planning/Development-and-Marine-Planning/Related-Planning-to-2014/090703_FINAL_Stromness_UDF_as_approved_CompressedForWeb.pdf)