

Site Assessment Technical Document Appendix C: Site Assessment Criteria

July 2017



Appendix C: Site Assessment Criteria

Site Assessment Framework for HOUSING¹

Site details	
Reference Number	
Site Name	
Site Address	
Settlement	
Size	Submitted Developable Area: Submitted Whole Site Area: Measured GIS Area:
Proposed Use	
Any other information	

STAGE 1 : SUITABILITY AND AVAILABILITY (EXCLUSIONARY STAGE)

This section will exclude any sites which do not pass the exclusionary suitability criteria and they will not be assessed further.

STAGE 1A ASSESSMENT

This stage of the assessment rules out sites that are too small or conflict with national policy designations.

Provisional Site Capacity

1	Is the site likely to accommodate less than 10 dwellings? Work out the number of new homes from site size using density of 30dph and exclude up to 40 % depending on site size of land for infrastructure and services, take into account topography or significant areas of undevelopable land. Site Size Gross to net ratio standards <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Up to 0.4 hectare 100% • 0.4 to 2 hectares 80% • 2 hectares or above 60% <i>Note: for this calculation use the submitted Developable Area, or the area measured in GIS if this is smaller.</i>	Yes / No	Number of proposed dwellings as per proforma:
			Number of proposed dwellings as per CBC methodology:

Flood Risk (All sites which reach Stage 2 will be subject to the Sequential Test)

2	Is more than 50% of the site located in Flood Zone 2 or 3?	Yes / No	All sites to be assessed by SFRA Consultants
3	Is more than 50% of the site at risk from surface water flooding?	Yes / No	All sites to be assessed by SFRA Consultants

Nationally significant designations (All sites which reach Stage 2 be subject to detailed assessment)

4	Is more than 50% of the site covered by nationally significant designations? These are: Sites of Special Scientific Interest, National Nature Reserves, Scheduled Monuments, Registered Parks and Gardens.	Yes / No	Details on designations and coverage
5	Is more than 50% of the site located within the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty?	Yes/ No	Details on coverage
Does the site continue to next stage?			Yes/ No

¹ Employment sites and Gypsy and Traveller sites will be assessed using separate bespoke site assessment criteria.
Site Assessment Criteria for Housing Sites (draft)

STAGE 1B ASSESSMENT

This stage of the assessment rules out sites that are not well related to existing settlements but are of an insufficient size to be self contained. It also rules out sites which would cause coalescence of existing towns or villages. For the purposes of this assessment, a self-contained site is defined as a site which will provide 1,500 homes or more².

Relationship to Settlement

6	For sites that are not of a sufficient scale to be self-contained, is the site a logical extension to the settlement or are there any major physical constraints (for example A roads, rivers or railways) that separate it from the main settlement?	R/A/G (Red, Amber, Green)	Details
7	Does the site cause coalescence between an existing village or town and another existing village or town? If yes, then grade as Amber if the site would be able to provide appropriate buffers or green wedges to mitigate this, or Red if it would not be possible for appropriate buffers to be provided leaving a reasonable developable area based on the individual context of the site.	R/A/G	Details
Does the site continue to next stage?			Yes/ No

STAGE 1C ASSESSMENT

This stage of the assessment rules out sites that are not able to meet their critical infrastructure needs³.

Critical Infrastructure

8	Can the site meet the critical infrastructure requirements that will enable delivery ⁴ ?	R/A/G	Requirements and proposals
Does the site continue to next stage?			Yes/ No

STAGE 1D ASSESSMENT

This stage of the assessment rules out sites that are not available. A site is considered available for development where there are no legal or ownership problems and the landowner has expressed an intention to develop the site.

Availability

9	What is the existing use of the site? Would the existing use limit the development potential?	R/A/G	Details
10	Is the land controlled by a developer or land owner who has expressed an intention to develop the site?	R/A/G	Details
11	Are there any legal or ownership problems that could delay or prevent development? If Yes, then can these be issues be realistically overcome?	R/A/G	Details
12	Does the site already have planning permission for the proposed use? If yes, then score as Red because it's not eligible for allocation.	R/A/G	Details

² The figure of 1,500 homes has been taken from the Government Publication 'Locally-Led Garden Villages, Towns and Cities'. This defines the eligibility criteria for Garden Villages as standalone settlements of between 1,500 and 10,000 homes. (see https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/508205/Locally-led_garden_villages_towns_and_cities.pdf)

³ Critical infrastructure is that which has been identified as infrastructure that must happen to enable physical development. These infrastructure items are often known as 'blockers' or 'showstoppers', and are most common in relation to transport and utilities infrastructure. Failure to provide these pieces of infrastructure could result in significant delays in the delivery of development.

⁴ This is an assessment based on the information known at this stage, a full assessment of infrastructure requirements will be undertaken before any sites are allocated.

Does the site continue to next stage?	Yes/ No
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STAGE 1E ASSESSMENT

This section records the findings of the Strategic Green Belt Review and also provides a preliminary screening of sites to determine whether they may be capable of demonstrating Exceptional Circumstances. Any site in the Green Belt that is determined as suitable based on the high level SHLAA assessment would still have to demonstrate Exceptional Circumstances to be considered for allocation in the Plan.

Greenbelt

13	Is the site located within the Green Belt?	Yes or No	Details on coverage
14	If answer to question 13 is yes, then does the site lie within one of the parcels which have been identified in the Central Bedfordshire and Luton Green Belt Study as making only a relatively weak, weak, or no contribution? If yes, site progresses through to Stage 2.	Yes or No	Details
15a	Does the site have all of the following merits that may outweigh the harm to the Green Belt and which may contribute to identification of exceptional circumstances? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adjoining settlement has at least 3 of the following key local services - convenience shop, lower school, middle school, upper school, village hall, GP surgery, post office, library (use settlement audit) • Site makes a strong contribution to housing need (100 plus homes) within the Luton HMA • Site is in or directly adjacent to a settlement that has a mainline rail station or direct access (junction) to the strategic road network (A road or motorway) Sites in Green Belt other than those covered by 14 and 15b that cannot meet these criteria, will not progress any further in this assessment of suitability.*	Yes or No	Details
15b	Sites which have support from the local community as demonstrated through an allocation in an adopted or draft Neighbourhood Plan (that has been subject to Regulation 14 consultation) that do not meet the criteria in question 15a will automatically progress through this stage to be considered further at Stage 2. ⁵	Yes	Details
Does the site continue to next stage?			Yes/ No

STAGE 2 : SUITABILITY (DETAILED ASSESSMENT)

STAGE 2 ASSESSMENT

This stage further assesses the site's suitability using detailed desktop assessment. A red rating for any question does not mean that the site will be automatically excluded at this stage as the ratings across Stage 2A will be looked at as a whole using planning balance.

Previously Developed Land

16	Is the site Previously Developed Land in accordance with the NPPF definition? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 76% - 100% (G) 	R/A/G	Details
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⁵ Draft Neighbourhood Plan allocations in Green Belt that are proposed after this site assessment phase has concluded, may still be considered for allocation.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 26 - 75% (A) • 25% - 0% (Greenfield) (R) 		
Community			
17	Neighbourhood Planning (only applicable in designated areas) Is the site identified as a housing allocation in an emerging Neighbourhood Plan?	Yes / No	Details if yes
18	Community Consultation Has any community consultation taken place? If yes, provide brief details on the form this consultation took and any overall community response.	Yes / No	Details
19	Sustainability of Settlement Would this proposal impact on the sustainability of the settlement through the loss of services and facilities (for example, employment, retail, public house etc)	Yes / No	Details
Cumulative Impact			
20	Considering housing completions over the past 10 years, what has been the level of housing growth in the parish? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less than 5% growth (G) • 5% to 20% growth (A) • More than 20% growth (R) <i>This is calculated by working out the total number of completions over the last ten years as a percentage of the dwellings in April 2006 (as calculated using census and completions data).</i>	R/A/G	Details
21	What level of housing growth would there be if all the outstanding permissions (as of April 2016) were to be completed? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less than 5% growth (G) • 5% to 20% growth (A) • More than 20% growth (R) <i>This is calculated by working out the total number of outstanding permissions as of April 1st 2016 as percentage of the total number of dwellings in April 2016 (as calculated using census and completions data).</i>	R/A/G	Details
Physical Constraints			
22	Are there any physical constraints or permanent features that affect the site's developability? For example pylons, gas works, sewage treatment works, topography or wind turbines.	R/A/G	Details
Relationship to Settlement			
23	Would development of the site be complementary to the existing settlement pattern, and would it have an adverse impact on any historic, unique or distinctive characteristics of the settlement's built or natural form?	R/A/G	Details
Agricultural Land Quality			
24	Would the development impact on high quality agricultural land? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50% or more in non-agricultural land (G) • 50% of more in Grade 3b, 4 or 5 (A) • 50% or more in Grade 1, 2 or 3a (R) 	R/A/G	Any relevant additional detail

STAGE 2 ASSESSMENT

This stage further assesses the site's suitability using comments from technical specialists. A red rating for any question does not mean that the site will be automatically excluded at this stage as the ratings across Stage 2B will be looked at as a whole using planning balance.

Transport and Access to Services

25	Facilities and services Question 26 considers the suitability and sustainability of the site for housing. It links to the Council's Settlement Hierarchy Audit. Issues relating to capacity are assessed separately		
25a	Does the settlement have a Primary/Lower school? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes, in the settlement (G) • Yes, proposed as part of the development (G) • No, but an adjoining settlement does (A) • Not in the settlement or an adjoining settlement (R) 	R/A/G	Details
25b	Does the settlement have a Middle school (if applicable)? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes, in the settlement (G) • Yes, proposed as part of the development (G) • No, but an adjoining settlement does (A) • Other catchment school available (A) 	R/A/G or N/A	Details
25c	Does the settlement have a Secondary/ Upper school? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes, in the settlement (G) • Yes, proposed as part of the development (G) • No, but an adjoining settlement does (A) • Other catchment school available (A) 	R/A/G	Details
25d	Does the settlement have a GPs surgery or medical centre? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes, in the settlement (G) • Yes, proposed as part of the development (G) • No, but an adjoining settlement does (A) • Not in the settlement or an adjoining settlement (R) 	R/A/G	Details
26	What retail provision does the settlement offer? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town Centre/ Supermarket (G) • Convenience Store / Post Office / Newsagent (A) • None (R) 	R/A/G	Details
27	Distance to bus stops with a frequent service (at least hourly at peak times): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less than 400m (G) • 400m-800m (A) • Over 800m (R) • OR submission form stated that improved public transport facilities could be provided as part of the development (G) 	R/A/G	Details
28	Distance to nearest train station: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less than 800m (G) • 800m-1200m (A) • Over 1200m (R) 	R/A/G	Details

29	Is the site accessible from the existing road network?	R/A/G	Details
School Capacity			
30	Do the local schools have capacity at all tiers?	R/A/G	Liaison with Education
31	If not, has a commitment been made to address this?	R/A/G	Liaison with Education
Water Utilities (Gas, Electricity and Broadband Infrastructure will be assessed at a later stage)			
32	Is there the capacity to provide all required infrastructure for waste water and potable water?	R/A/G	Water Cycle Study.
Drainage and Flooding (All sites subject to Sequential Test)			
33	What is the conclusion of the sequential approach to site allocations, in regards to flood risk? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No assessment required (G) Consider Further Assessment (A) Further Assessment Required (R) 	R/A/G	To be completed by SFRA Consultants
Environmental Health			
34	Contamination Are there any contamination constraints on site and will there be any remediation required?	R/A/G	Liaison with Environmental Health
35	Adjoining uses Would any adjoining uses have the potential to cause conflict with the proposed use? (for example; noise and smell)	R/A/G	Liaison with Environmental Health
Environmental Constraints			
36	Landscape character What would the impacts of development be on the landscape character or setting of the area or any designated landscapes? Would there be any direct or indirect harm to the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or the Nature Improvement Area?	R/A/G	Liaison with Landscape Officer
37	Heritage/ Archaeology What would the impacts of development be on any heritage assets and their setting? Are there any opportunities for enhancement of these assets?	R/A/G	Liaison with Archaeology and Conservation Officer
38	Ecological Assets What would the impacts of development be on any biological, geological or ecological assets and are there any opportunities for their enhancement?	R/A/G	Liaison with Ecology Officer
39	Open space/leisure and GI assets Are there any potential conflicts with open space, leisure designations or Rights of Way? Is there capacity to provide the required levels of open space and green infrastructure?	R/A/G	Liaison with GI Officer and Leisure team, including consideration of Leisure Strategy.
Minerals and Waste			
40	What would the impacts of development be on safeguarded minerals and waste sites, including mineral safeguarding sites?	R/A/G	Liaison with M&W Officer
Planning History			
41	What is the sites planning history? (For example planning applications and submissions to previous Allocations Plans)		Details
Gypsy and Traveller Provision			
Does the site continue to next stage?			Yes/ No

STAGE 2 ASSESSMENT CONCLUSION

Is the site suitable for the proposed development?

STAGE 3 : ACHIEVABILITY

This section assesses whether the site is Achievable in line with NPPG Guidance:

A site is considered achievable for development where there is a reasonable prospect that the particular type of development will be developed on the site at a particular point in time. This is essentially a judgement about the economic viability of the site, and the capacity of the developer to complete and let or sell the development over a certain period.

Viability

43	Referring to the Viability Assessment undertaken by consultants, is the probability of the site being viable high, medium or low? <ul style="list-style-type: none">• High (G) Benchmark land value comfortably exceeded by likely residual value• Low (A) Marginal viability, with likely residual land value close to benchmark land value• Very Low (R) Likely residual value well below benchmark land value	R/A/G	Details
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Achievability

44	Are there any market factors which would affect deliverability?		Details
45	When can the scheme realistically commence delivery? <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 0 to 5 years (deliverable)• 6 to 10 years• 11 to 15 years• 15 to 20 years• Outside Plan Period		Details
46	What is the indicative build out time of the site?		Details
Does the site pass this stage?			Yes/ No

SUMMARY

The sites that pass through this assessment process will not automatically be allocated for development in the Local Plan.

Sites will be selected with reference to a number of other factors including:

- The strategy, vision and objectives proposed in the draft plan
- Technical evidence studies
- The sustainability appraisal process
- The results of public consultation
- Flood Risk Sequential Approach
- Further transport modelling
- Consultation with neighbouring authorities