

Great Easton Sustainable Housing Development Sites - Site Five, Stockerston Lane expansion site SHLAA Ref HSG/05)

1. Introduction

The Great Easton Neighbourhood Plan Group are preparing a Neighbourhood Plan for the Parish of Great Easton in Harborough District, Leicestershire. A key priority of the Neighbourhood Plan is ensuring the Parish remains sustainable in the long term by a balanced residential expansion that meets identified local needs. A plan for up to about 20 units is required to meet the known housing need identified by Harborough District Council in May 2016 as between 17 and 32 units to 2031. Windfall sites will provide about 7 units over the next 15 years based upon past performance. The residual target is therefore to allocate new sites for between 10 and 25 units. This comprehensive analysis sets out the size and relative sustainability of the potential housing sites and ranks those in order of which are the most and which are the least sustainable over the term of the plan (15 years). The ranking of the sites allows comparative priorities to be agreed. Following the analysis the Stockerston Lane expansion site is scored red and ranked **ninth** of the fourteen prospective locations and can now be presented for community consultation as not requiring an allocation in the neighbourhood plan.

2. Site Selection Criteria

The sustainable development criteria for the selection and allocation of sites for new dwellings were identified using best practise methodology, supplemented with evidence from Harborough District Council, other approved Neighbourhood Plans, issues from the consultation on the Neighbourhood Plan and other relevant plans and documents including referencing the National Planning Policy Framework. A scoring system, based on a traffic light (i.e. Red, Amber or Green - RAG) score has been used. This reflects best practice and is a robust methodology to understand and use. After analysing the fourteen sites the one with the most green ratings and the least red and amber scores is the one which is most sustainable. The sites have been professionally ranked and the intention is that only the highest scoring green sites should be developed and that the red sites should not be developed in the next 15 years, subject to community consultation and support to the proposals.

- Red is scored for a negative assessment where significant mitigation is required and/or there is a “deal-breaker” concern;
A red scoring site should not be developed.
- Amber is scored where there are negative elements to the site and costly/disruptive mitigation measures will be required;
An amber scoring site will require significant remediation works to allow development, it may be developed at some future date.
- Green is scored for a positive assessment with no major constraints on future development.

A green scoring site can be developed subject to owner and community support, market demands, planning and a viable cost achievement. Within the green scoring category, the site with the highest green score will be ranked first.

Contact Details	
Name of Assessor	Derek Doran BSc (Hons) MCIH MBA

Site - Details	
Site reference : (SHLAA)	A/HSG/05
Site name and address:	Stockerston Lane Expansion Site

Site – Sustainability criteria relating to Location, Surroundings & Constraints		RAG Rating
Site capacity: 3 bed houses with garden and in-curtilage parking.	Ref HSG/05 40 - 45 dwellings (SHLAA – 46 units). NB - A site of 13 units (site 7) is already proposed reducing the take to approximately 27 - 32 units. Site 2.7 HA in total Developable in 6 -10 years	Red
Current Use:	Agricultural – currently in grazing use.	Green
Adjoining Uses:	Open Countryside to three aspects and houses to part of Stockerston Lane and Broadgate overlook sections of the site. Outside of the current village envelope and the new intended Limit To Development (LTD) boundary being adopted as a part of the new NP settlement development policy. Fails to reflect the existing settlement pattern that is historically significant.	Red
Topography:	Sloping land.	Amber
Greenfield or Previously Developed Land?	Greenfield open countryside, currently farmed.	Red

Site – Sustainability criteria relating to Location, Surroundings & Constraints		RAG Rating
Good Quality Agricultural Land?	<p>The High Leicestershire Landscape Character Area covers this site and ranks it as only having a low to medium capacity to accommodate new development.</p> <p>The site is grade 3 agricultural land of a good to moderate quality, Southern section is Grade 4 poor quality.</p>	Red
Site availability - Single ownership or multiple ownership?	<p>One owner, intentions not clear.</p>	Amber
Landscape Quality - Visual Impact Assessment ?	<p>Overall, site is unmodified and of high quality – currently open countryside aspect to three aspects wide panoramic views over a long distance.</p>	Red
Important Trees, Woodlands & Hedgerows?	<p>Good sized hedgerows to all boundaries of the site would need to be protected, two have openings in them. Significant trees around the boundary of the site would also need to be retained to act as separation from existing high quality housing. Overall of high quality.</p>	Red
Relationship with existing pattern of built development?	<p>Outside of the current LTD and not a part of the settlement development policy in the Neighbourhood Plan. A recent development to the South West of the site is being built out (9 units) and a planning decision on an adjacent site is expected within a short timescale (for a further 13 units). A Northern expansion site is not required and these additional units are not required before 2031. Objections to the 13 unit site have also been received from other site sponsors (owners/agents) in the village.</p>	Red
Local Wildlife considerations?	<p>Nesting birds.</p>	Green

Site – Sustainability criteria relating to Location, Surroundings & Constraints		RAG Rating
Listed Building or important built assets?	Two listed properties are adjacent to this site.	Amber
Impact on the Conservation Area or its setting?	Outside of the current conservation area in Great Easton and a mixture of traditional and modern housing types are found adjacent so would have a detrimental effect upon its historical character and setting.	Red
Safe pedestrian access to and from the site?	A small footpath terminates on Stockerston Lane opposite this site, so fairly straightforward to expand a new pedestrian access in to the site in a safe and financially viable manner.	Amber
Safe vehicular access to and from the site?	None at present but an informal turning circle for farm machinery already exists and this could be adopted with sufficient visibility splays to meet current Highways safety standards. Need to cross the brook. The speed limit on this section of Stockerston Lane would need to be reduced to allow safe vehicular turning.	Amber
Impact on existing vehicular traffic?	Additional vehicle flows from this number of units would have a negative effect upon vehicular movements in this small village.	Amber
Safe access to public transport? Specifically a bus stop.	Bus stop less than a 200m walk.	Green
Distance to community facilities, specifically 2, High Street the	Walking distance to shops and other facilities is unreasonable at between 300 and 500m, depending upon which end of the site the distance is measured from.	Red

Site – Sustainability criteria relating to Location, Surroundings & Constraints		RAG Rating
designated village centre shop, post box ect		
Current existing informal/formal recreational opportunities on site?	Walking and dog walking, with a right of way across the centre of the site.	Amber
Ancient monuments or archaeological remains?	None identified.	Green
Any public rights of ways/bridle paths?	Yes, an adopted right of way crosses the middle of the site and would be expensive to retain in any development scheme.	Amber
Gas, oil, pipelines and networks & electricity transmission network?	Electricity posts transporting electricity cross a section of the site and “may” need to be resited for a safe development to take place.	Amber
Any known noise issues?	None found.	Green
Any known contamination issues?	No issues identified.	Green
Any known flooding issues?	Yes, the local brook has flooded in the past and an adjacent site is being requested to provide a sustainable urban drainage solution.	Amber

Site – Sustainability criteria relating to Location, Surroundings & Constraints		RAG Rating
Any known drainage issues?	Yes, a section of the site is regularly waterlogged and any design solution will be costly and require ongoing maintenance.	Red
Issues related to planning history on the site?	The owners through their agents have formally raised the potential for a residential development in the SHLAA. The scale of the scheme is a problem as this scale of development is not required in the current plan period.	
Summary	<p>A site of this scale is not required in the initial phase of the Neighbourhood Plan, to 2031.</p> <p>This site should be recommended to the community as not requiring a residential allocation in the neighbourhood plan.</p> <p>The risk is that if the adjacent 13 unit site already submitted for a planning approval receives a consent for construction as an incursion in to the open Countryside outside of the existing LTD then the additional 27 units will follow at some time, as they will be economically viable over the medium term. A total of up to 45 (or slightly more) units would then combine as sites 5 and 7.</p> <p>Effectively, this scale of over-development would increase the size of the village by nearly a quarter.</p> <p>Red – 10</p> <p>Amber – 10</p> <p>Green - 6</p>	RED, scoring minus 4.