

Great Easton Sustainable Housing Development Sites - Site Two, Barnsdale Sub Plot B (SHLAA Ref HSG/02) (Part of)

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 25 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 Barnsdale - Sub Plot B is scored red and ranked **thirteenth** 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 consultations on the Neighbourhood Plan and other relevant plans and documents referencing the National Planning Policy Framework. A scoring system, based on a traffic light (i.e. Red, Amber or Green - RAG) scores 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 fourteen sites have been professionally ranked and the intention is that only the highest scoring green sites should be developed and that 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/02 Developable in 6 -10 years
Site name and address:	Barnsdale – Sub plot B

Site – Sustainability criteria relating to Location, Surroundings & Constraints		RAG Rating
Site capacity: 3 bed houses with garden and in-curtilage parking.	Ref HSG/02 (Part site 45 - 50 dwellings) (Whole SHLAA – 169 units). Approximately 3 HA – not measured to scale (whole is 10 HA)	Red
Current Use:	Agricultural – currently in a grazing use. Most of the site is ridge and furrow. It is a very good example of Medieval strip farming and has a historically important context. Leicestershire is one of only 11 Counties in England with concentrations of preserved sites of this type.	Red
Adjoining Uses:	Open Countryside to the South and working fields to either side. The residential properties opposite on Barnsdale overlook part of this location. Totally outside of the current village envelope and the new intended Limit To Development (LTD) boundary, to be adopted in the settlement development policy of the Neighbourhood Plan. Completely fails to reflect the existing settlement pattern that is historically significant.	Red
Topography:	Gently sloping land that falls away to the South.	Green
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 Northern approximately two thirds of the site is grade 3 agricultural land of a good to moderate quality, the Southern section is Grade 4 poor quality.</p>	Red
Site availability - Single ownership or multiple ownership?	<p>One owner Jelson Homes. Very keen to proceed with a development.</p>	Green
Landscape Quality, Visual Impact Assessment (VIA)?	<p>The draft Neighbourhood Plan shows the view in to the village at this location as a historically significant and important one to be protected from new development.</p> <p>The traditional, open countryside aspect of this site separates it totally from the village visually and physically.</p> <p>Overall, site is unmodified and of a very high quality and amenity value – currently open aspects to South, West and East with panoramic vistas over open countryside.</p>	Red
Important Trees, Woodlands & Hedgerows?	<p>Several large established trees of a high quality are spread across the site and along the site boundaries.</p> <p>Very significant ancient hedgerows to all boundaries of the site, one with an opening in it, overall of very high quality and a tranquil rural location.</p>	Red
Relationship with existing pattern of built development?	<p>Not linked to the current built form and would maintain a significant “gap” between the village boundary and the Primary School (unless sub plots A and C were also built out from the village). Totally outside of the current village envelope and an incongruous site to develop. Totally unacceptable to proceed with this scale of significant over - development in the Parish, given the limited housing need and adverse community opinion.</p>	Red
Local Wildlife considerations?	<p>Nesting birds and small mammals.</p>	Green

Site – Sustainability criteria relating to Location, Surroundings & Constraints		RAG Rating
Listed Building or important built assets?	Adjacent to Barnsdale House, a grade 2 listed building.	Amber
Impact on the Conservation Area or its setting?	Outside of the current conservation area in Great Easton, but would severely undermine its historical character and setting, due to the vista in to the village being adversely affected.	Red
Safe pedestrian access to and from the site?	A small path already exists to Great Easton Road, straight forward to extend in to the site in a safe and financially viable manner.	Amber
Safe vehicular access to and from the site?	None at present but abuts the Highway so a new access could be created through the provision of a new turning junction on a straight section of road. This would provide sufficient visibility splays to meet current Highways safety standards.	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, particularly exacerbating the problems at school drop off and collection times and adding to the already problematic congestion in this location, even if additional car parking is provided at the school.	Red
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 designated village centre.	Walking distance to shops and other facilities is marginal at between 250 and 300m.	Amber
Current existing informal/formal recreational opportunities on site?	Used for walking, dog walking and jogging.	Amber
Ancient monuments or archaeological remains?	None within a reasonable distance of the site boundary.	Green

Site – Sustainability criteria relating to Location, Surroundings & Constraints		RAG Rating
Any public rights of ways/bridle paths?	Yes, the Jurassic Way footpath crosses through the very centre of the site, very expensive and difficult to protect the integrity of the right of way.	Red
Gas, oil, pipelines and networks & electricity transmission network?	Yes. A high pressure gas transmission pipeline is buried to the South of the site. The regulations concerning residential development near to these hazards are complex and are covered by the pipeline safety regulations Act 1996 and various Town and Country Planning Act (development control procedures). The Health and Safety Executive have a complex methodology for assessing the risk, based upon risk contours of an inner, middle and outer zone and the “sensitivity level” of people affected. For the purposes of this assessment the bottom “third” of the site is deemed to be sterilised, subject to a full specialist professional evaluation.	Red
Any known noise issues?	None found.	Green
Any known contamination issues?	No major issues identified.	Green
Any known flooding issues?	Yes, the Southern section of this site is known to have flooded in the last twenty five years on more than one occasion.	Red
Any known drainage issues?	Yes, given the weak fall of the land and nearness to water courses on the Eastern boundary a large proportion of the site regularly gets waterlogged so a balancing lake and/or major remediation will be required.	Amber
Issues related to planning history on the site?	The owners (Jelsons) have formally raised the potential for a residential development with the Parish Council showing an intention to build 25 houses.	N.A.

Site – Sustainability criteria relating to Location, Surroundings & Constraints		RAG Rating
<p>Summary</p>	<p>A site of this size and scale is not required in the lifetime 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 substantial risk is that if any one of the Barnsdale sub plots, A, B or C are developed then all three will be economically viable over the medium term, with a major pressure from interested parties to allow development of between 125 and 145 units in total - the SHLAA identified 169 units.</p> <p>Red – 13</p> <p>Amber – 6</p> <p>Green - 7</p>	<p>RED, scoring minus 6.</p>