

Great Easton Sustainable Housing Development Sites - Site Four, Clarkes Dale extension site (SHLAA Ref HSG/04)

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 Clarkes Dale extension site is scored red and ranked **twelfth** 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) 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 sites have been professionally ranked and the intention is that only the highest scoring green sites should be developed and that red scoring 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/04
Site name and address:	Clarkes Dale Extension Site

Site – Sustainability criteria relating to Location, Surroundings & Constraints		RAG Rating
Site capacity: 3 bed houses with garden and in-curtilage parking.	Ref HSG/04 26 dwellings (SHLAA – 27 units). Site 1.2.HA in total Developable in 6 -10 years	Red
Current Use:	Agricultural – currently in grazing use. All of the site is ridge and furrow in an excellent and totally unmodified state. It is an exemplary example of Medieval strip farming and a site of this quality has a historically important weight. Leicestershire is one of only 11 Counties in England with concentrations of preserved sites of this type, few of this untouched quality and this unique field pattern should be preserved.	Red
Adjoining Uses:	Clarkes piece, a children’s playground to the Southern boundary. Outside of the current village envelope and the new intended Limit To Development (LTD) boundary being adopted in the Neighbourhood Plan settlement development policy. Fails to reflect the existing settlement pattern that is historically significant.	Red
Topography:	Gently undulating land.	Green

Site – Sustainability criteria relating to Location, Surroundings & Constraints		RAG Rating
Greenfield or Previously Developed Land?	Greenfield open countryside, currently farmed.	Red
Good Quality Agricultural Land?	The High Leicestershire Landscape Character Area covers this site and ranks it as only having a low to medium capacity to accommodate new development. The site is grade 3 agricultural land of a good to moderate quality.	Red
Site availability - Single ownership or multiple ownership?	Agents state that owners are keen to consider a land sale for a residential scheme.	Green
Landscape Quality - Visual Impact Assessment?	Overall, site is totally unmodified and of a rare and high quality. Open vistas exist to the North.	Red
Important Trees, Woodlands & Hedgerows?	Good sized hedgerows to two boundaries of the site would need to be protected. Overall of a very high quality.	Red
Relationship with existing pattern of built development?	Outside of the current LTD and not a part of the settlement development policy in the Neighbourhood Plan. This number of units are not required in the first 16 years of the NP. Totally outside of the current village envelope and an incongruous site to develop. Unacceptable to proceed with this scale of significant over - development in the Parish, given local need and community opinion.	Red
Local Wildlife considerations?	Nesting birds, small mammals.	Green

Site – Sustainability criteria relating to Location, Surroundings & Constraints		RAG Rating
Listed Building or important built assets?	None identified.	Green
Impact on the Conservation Area or its setting?	Outside of the current conservation area in Great Easton and as a backland site would not be seen to undermine the integrity of its historical character and setting.	Green
Safe pedestrian access to and from the site?	None exists and very difficult to accommodate, requiring access across other owners land.	Red
Safe vehicular access to and from the site?	None exists and very difficult to provide due to the location and sizes of entrances and the need for several owners to agree on a proposal, ransom strips believed to be in place.	Red
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.	Red
Safe access to public transport? Specifically a bus stop.	Bus stop more than a 400m walk.	Red
Distance to community facilities, specifically 2, High Street the designated village centre shop, post box ect	Walking distance to shops and other facilities is unreasonable at between 400 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
Current existing informal/formal recreational opportunities on site?	Large children's play area – Clarkes piece to the South. Owner adjacent has a swimming pool and tennis court, but in private use.	Amber
Ancient monuments or archaeological remains?	None identified.	Green
Any public rights of ways/bridle paths?	Yes, a well-used adopted footpath crosses the whole bottom of the site and would be expensive to retain in any development scheme.	Amber
Gas, oil, pipelines and networks & electricity transmission network?	Telephone/electricity cables will require resiting.	Amber
Any known noise issues?	None found.	Green
Any known contamination issues?	None identified, the pasture looks in pristine condition.	Green
Any known flooding issues?	Yes, the site is partly in flood zone 2 adjacent to the local reservoir which has flooded.	Amber
Any known drainage issues?	Yes, a design solution might be possible but it would be costly and require ongoing maintenance.	Amber

Site – Sustainability criteria relating to Location, Surroundings & Constraints		RAG Rating
Issues related to planning history on the site?	The owners have formally raised the potential for a residential development in the SHLAA. The scale of the scheme is a major problem, this scale of development is not required in the current plan period.	
Summary	<p>A red scoring site of this scale is not required in the initial phase of the Neighbourhood Plan, to 2031.</p> <p>Effectively, an over-development of this scale increases the size of the village by about one tenth.</p> <p>This site should be recommended to the community as not requiring a residential allocation in the neighbourhood plan.</p> <p>The very high, pristine quality of the ridge and furrow means that this site should never be developed.</p> <p>Red – 13</p> <p>Amber – 5</p> <p>Green - 8</p>	RED scoring minus 5.