

Great Easton Sustainable Housing Development Sites - Site Eight, Station cottages, Caldecott border

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 Station Cottages site is scored as green and ranked **fourth** of the fourteen prospective locations and can now be presented for community consultation as an allocated residential site 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 green scoring sites should be developed and that the 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)	Not in SHLAA
Site name and address:	Station Cottages Caldecott border

Site – Sustainability criteria relating to Location, Surroundings & Constraints		RAG Rating
Site capacity: 3 bed houses with garden and in-curtilage parking.	Approximately 0.5 HA – not measured to scale 10 units.	Red
Current Use:	Combination of commercial, brownfield and agricultural land – currently in use. Partly a brownfield site comprising of an old coal depot with access over agricultural land. Some of the agricultural land is ridge and furrow of a poor quality. It is an 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 and this type of field pattern should be preserved.	Amber
Adjoining Uses:	Open Countryside to three sides of the site with a pub nearby, close to Caldecott village but still within the PC boundary.	Red

Site – Sustainability criteria relating to Location, Surroundings & Constraints		RAG Rating
	A significant distance from 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.	
Topography:	Relatively flat land.	Green
Greenfield or Previously Developed Land?	Part a former coal yard so brownfield and greenfield partly in open countryside, currently farmed and for recreational purposes.	Amber
Good Quality Agricultural Land?	The agricultural sections of the site are grade 3 agricultural land of a good to moderate quality.	Amber
Site availability - Single ownership or multiple ownership?	Two or more owners, so a complicated ransom strip situation exists although a land agent is promoting the development going forward.	Red
Landscape Quality?	Overall, brownfield and part unmodified and of a traditional form of a reasonable amenity value.	Amber
Important Trees, Woodlands & Hedgerows?	A significant stand of trees and individual trees across the site, although these could probably be designed in to a scheme. One hedgerow to the South of the site should be retained.	Amber
Relationship with existing pattern of built development?	Not linked to the current built form and has no connection with the village. Is not viable in planning best practise terms and would meet the needs of Caldecott not Great Easton. Totally outside of the current village envelope and an incongruous site to develop.	Red

Site – Sustainability criteria relating to Location, Surroundings & Constraints		RAG Rating
Local Wildlife considerations?	Nesting birds.	Green
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 has no relationship with it.	Green
Safe pedestrian access to and from the site?	None exists but could be designed in a cost effective manner, subject to owners agreeing on value of ransom strips and the developer proceeds financial gain.	Amber
Safe vehicular access to and from the site?	None at present but able to construct substantial highways at a high cost for this small number of probably relatively low value units, therefore probably unviable. Major new Highways solutions are required to open up this site.	Amber
Impact on existing vehicular traffic?	Additional vehicle flows from this location would need to be carefully planned and expensive to provide but would not have a major negative effect upon vehicular movements.	Green
Safe access to public transport? Specifically a bus stop.	None available within a reasonable walking distance.	Red

Site – Sustainability criteria relating to Location, Surroundings & Constraints		RAG Rating
Distance to community facilities, specifically 2, High Street the designated village centre	A few kilometres in to Great Eason therefore unsustainable, over half a km to Caldecott with very limited facilities.	Red
Current existing informal/formal recreational opportunities on site?	None identified.	Green
Ancient monuments or archaeological remains?	None nearby.	Green
Any public rights of ways/bridle paths?	Yes, a footpath crosses through the Southern section of the site but this could be designed in to any scheme.	Amber
Gas, oil, pipelines and networks & electricity transmission network?	None identified.	Green
Any known noise issues?	Traffic noise from the Highway could be ameliorated by planting bunds of sufficient size and species in the right locations.	Amber
Any known contamination issues?	No major issues identified.	Green
Any known flooding issues?	None identified.	Green

Site – Sustainability criteria relating to Location, Surroundings & Constraints		RAG Rating
Any known drainage issues?	None found.	Green
Issues related to planning history on the site?	One of the owners is keen to proceed, promoted by a land agent.	N.A.
Summary	<p>A site in this location is potentially outside of the remit of the neighbourhood plan for meeting need in the village. Caldecott Parish Council have not responded positively to the site being developed to meet their housing need.</p> <p>This scheme is not required in the initial phase of the Neighbourhood Plan, to 2031. The obvious issue is that building in this location will shorten the separation between Caldecott and Great Easton and “alert” developers to more substantial residential schemes in the future.</p> <p>The site should be presented for community consultation as an allocated residential site.</p> <p>Red – 6 Amber – 9 Green - 11</p>	GREEN scoring 5.