

## Site Suitability Assessment Methodology and Results

Issue	Criteria	Assessment		Notes
<b>Policy Issues</b>	Site is outside the built-up area boundary	Yes	-	
		No	+	
	The site is within a designated or protected area	Yes	-	
		No	+	
	The site is used for/safeguarded for employment purposes	Yes	-	
		No	+	
<b>Physical Problems or limitations</b>	Access issues such as land-locked site or ransom strip	Yes	-	
		No	+	
	Ground conditions such as instability or sloping land	Yes	-	
		No	+	
	The site is within a medium or high flood risk zone / climate change zone	Yes	-	
		No	+	
	The site is within the HSE consultation zone	Yes	-	
		No	+	
	Pollution & contamination issues	Yes	-	
		Not known	0	
	Overhead power lines / high pressure gas main / Railway tunnels / Public sewer lines	Yes	-	
		No	+	
	Potential impact on water and sewerage network	No existing sewer capacity	0	
		Water supply: connection required but no perceived major off site implications	0	
		Water supply: connection required and perceived major off-site investment or strategic capacity implications	-	
	Potential impact on the highway network	Existing access and no major network implications	+	
		Connection required but no major perceived network implications	0	
		Connection required and major perceived network implications	-	

<b>Potential Impacts</b>	The site is in or adjacent to an area of ecological significance	No	+	
		Yes	-	
	The site contains trees and/or hedgerows	No	+	
		Yes	-	
	The site is in or adjacent to an area of archaeological significance	No	+	
		Yes	-	
	The site is in or adjacent to conservation area/listed structure	No	+	
		Yes	-	
<b>Environmental</b>	The site is within or adjacent to a potentially incompatible neighbouring use	No	+	
		Yes	-	
	The site currently provides a beneficial community facility or use	No	+	
		Yes	-	

## **Policy Restrictions**

### **The site is outside the Built-up Area Boundary or is within designated or protected area**

Paragraph 21 of the Guidance indicates that certain types of land or areas may be excluded from the Assessment. Where this is the case this needs to be recorded and justified. However the Guidance cautions that apart from clear-cut designations such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest, the scope of the Assessment should not be narrowed down by existing policies designed to constrain development. The following types of land have been ruled out of the assessment:

Hastings Cliff Special Area of Conservation (SAC) is protected under Local Plan Policy NC1 and has been designated as an SAC under the European Union's Habitats Directive. This designation recognises that the site is of international importance and in accordance with PPS9 and NC1 it is highly unlikely that this area can be considered for development.

In accordance with PPS9, existing Local Plan Policy NC2 and SHLAA Practice Guidance, designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) of which there are three in this Borough, have also been ruled out.

Existing planning policy also precludes development within Local Nature Reserves (LNRs). LNRs are protected by Local Plan Policies NC3 and NC5. These areas have been designated because they represent a unique and irreplaceable natural resource and warrant the highest level of protection. In most cases these are owned by the Council, which is committed to maintaining the Borough's LNRs as a means of protecting and managing important sites of nature conservation interest value for the benefit of the community. It is therefore extremely unlikely that areas could be considered for significant development proposals.

Finally Ancient Woodland comprises an irreplaceable asset of great importance to nature conservation, which once destroyed, can never be recreated. PPS9 and Local Plan Policy NC10 state that such areas ought not to be considered for development that is likely to result in the loss or deterioration of ancient woodland. Again, it is therefore unlikely that such areas could be considered for significant development proposals.

Mindful of para. 21, the Assessment has not ruled out sites which are outside of but close to the boundary of the built up area, or fall within or are adjacent to area covered by landscape (L1, L2, L3, L4, L6 & L7), nature conservation (NC6, NC7, NC11 & NC12), or open space (SP1, OS1, OS2, OS3, OS4, OS5) policies contained within the adopted Hastings Local Plan, but records where this is the case. Such sites are given an "-“ rating. Such policies will have a bearing on the developable area and amount of development likely to be achievable on such sites.

### **The site is used or safeguarded for employment purposes**

The loss of an existing employment site or land within an established employment location could undermine the local economy. This includes locations where business and industry are dominant uses, such as industrial estates, factories and major office developments. The Borough also contains areas of undeveloped land which is allocated for employment uses which may provide further opportunities for employment generation; in that regard the continued justification for these allocations has been reviewed through the Hastings and Rother Employment Strategy and Land Review, May 2008.

## **Physical Problems Or Limitations**

### **Access issues**

Such as the presence of a 'ransom strip' – this is land outside of the ownership of the landowner or developer but provides access to the development site. Similarly a 'land-locked' site may require the demolition of a building in order to gain access to the site.

### **Ground conditions such as instability or sloping land**

Ground conditions or the site's topography could have implications for both the developable area of the site and the viability of development.

### **The site is within a high flood risk zone**

The Hastings Borough Council Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) has identified areas which fall within high flood risk areas (Zones 3a and 3b). It may be preferable to avoid development in these areas in accordance with the SFRA and PPS25.

### **The site is in an HSE consultation zone**

HSE Consultation areas restrict the type and scale of development close to hazardous industry and installations and residential development may be discouraged by the HSE in some cases. It is therefore desirable to avoid significant residential development in these areas; other uses may be more appropriate. There is a HSE consultation area around Combe Haven Holiday Park, Harley Shute Road.

### **Pollution and contamination issues**

The presence of contamination within a site can affect the types of use the land it is subsequently suitable for, as well as having an impact on redevelopment costs. Although the redevelopment of previously used 'brownfield' land is strongly supported as a means of bringing derelict land and vacant sites back into use, and reducing the need for development on greenfield land, development proposals must take account of any potential contamination on the site and include any remedial measures to ensure that the development can be carried out without risk to health, safety or the environment. By contrast, new development also has the potential to cause unacceptable pollution of air, water or land, and in particular new development must not create an unacceptable risk of pollution to the quality or potential yield of surface and groundwater resources. The Assessment has identified contamination issues and potential pollution risks where known, indicating the requirement for potential remediation measures.

### **Overhead power line, gas pipelines, railway tunnels and public sewer lines (major fixed infrastructure)**

The presence of major fixed infrastructure within a site will affect the developable area

### **Potential impact on school capacities**

Schools are major trip generators and key community facilities. Locating development in areas where schools have high surplus capacity can help to sustain local schools by increasing potential pupil numbers. Conversely a school may have limited spare capacity and locating new housing development within the catchment of a school which is at or nearing capacity could place pressure on the ability to meet additional demand for places.

### **Potential impact on highway, water, sewerage or energy networks**

Although the provision of supporting infrastructure forms part of the cost of development, some major schemes which have off-site implications for service provision can impose significant costs on the environment and local communities (for example by contributing to traffic congestion). Confirmation of the impacts of potential developments on existing capacity has been sought from the relevant agencies.

### **Proximity to GP and primary health care facilities**

As with school capacities, the location of new housing could generate a requirement for new or improvements to existing facilities.

## **Potential Impacts**

### **The site is in, or adjacent to an area of ecological significance**

For a small urban area the Borough has a very comprehensive range of wildlife and habitat protection designations, including one site of international importance, three sites of national importance (SSSIs), and of local importance - seven Local Nature Reserves and 30 Sites of Nature Conservation Importance. Any site located with the Hastings Cliffs SAC, an SSSI, LNR or an area of Ancient Woodland will be recorded as having zero development potential. Sites will be given an “-“ where they are adjacent or close to such designations.

Sites falling within or adjacent to Sites of Nature Conservation Importance, the Green Network, Preserved Woodland and St Helen’s Wood (Local Plan Policies NC6, NC7, NC11 & NC12) will be given an “-“. Mitigation measures may be necessary before development can be allowed on sites located close to or containing areas of ecological value.

### **The site is in or adjacent to an area of archaeological significance, or is within or adjacent to a Conservation Area of Listed Structure**

The town has a rich historic heritage. The presence of archaeological remains and the need to protect and enhance designated Conservation Areas and Listed structures could have the affect of reducing the developable area and development capacity of a potential housing site affected by these designations.

### **Part or all of the site is included in the additional Landscape Assessment work**

For potential development sites located on the outskirts of Hastings, additional landscape assessment work has been carried out. This information will assist in the selection of development sites on the edge of the built-up area should insufficient sites be found within the existing urban area.

## **Environmental**

### **The site is within or adjacent to a potentially incompatible neighbouring use**

It is desirable to avoid development in locations which are in close proximity to ‘bad neighbour’ uses such as noisy or heavy industry, major fixed infrastructure such as the strategic road network and railway lines.

### **The development of the site would result in the loss of a beneficial community facility or use**

Potentially the loss of community facilities including open space (such as outdoor play space, allotments and footpaths) leisure facilities, and shops is not in keeping with promoting sustainable communities unless those facilities can be adequately replaced or are clearly surplus to community requirements. The loss of such facilities, without supporting justification, could have a negative impact on residential amenity and quality of life, particularly in more intensively developed neighbourhoods.