



Methodology for Assessing Potential Sites

UPDATE



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Contents

1. Introduction.....	2
2. Site assessment process.....	3
3. Site Scoring System	6
4. Assessment of Sites	16
5. Sustainability appraisal process	18
Appendix A: Links between assessment criteria and Sustainability Appraisal Objectives	19
Appendix B: Links between plan making process, sustainability appraisal process and site assessment process.....	24

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Rutland County Council is preparing a Review of its Local Plan. This will update the following “Development Plan Documents” (DPDs) and replace them with a single local plan:
 - Minerals Core Strategy and Development Control Policies DPD (October 2010)
 - Core Strategy DPD (July 2011)
 - Site Allocations and Policies DPD (October 2014)
- 1.2 The Local Plan Review will extend the plan period to 2036 and allocate sites for any new housing or other development that may be required to meet requirements over the plan period.
- 1.3 Allocating sites is integral to the Local Plan as it is these sites which will facilitate the Local Plan’s strategic policies and objectives. The Council is seeking to identify an appropriate range of sites to accommodate the expanding population, creating new places and spaces reflecting the needs and priorities of the community. The assessment will include economic, social and environmental factors responding to the key principles of sustainable development.
- 1.4 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the requirements for producing a Local Plan and states that a fundamental part of the Local Plan is to allocate sites to promote development and flexible use of land, bring forward new land where necessary and provide detail on development where appropriate. In order to do this the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) provides clarity in the production and deliverability of local plans. Planning authorities are required to provide sufficient detail about nature, location, and scale of development when proposing allocations.
- 1.5 The NPPF identifies that local plans should set out the opportunities for development and clear policies of what will or will not be permitted and where, whilst taking into account economic, social and environmental factors. Local Plans should also identify areas to limit change, where development is inappropriate and enhance natural, built and historic environments.
- 1.6 This document sets out the updated methodology for assessing the potential allocation of sites in the Rutland Local Plan.

2. Site assessment process

- 2.1 The aim of the site assessment process is to help determine which sites are the most suitable for allocating for development in the Local Plan Review.

Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA)

- 2.2 All known sites have already been assessed, initially through the SHELAA process. The SHELAA is a survey of both existing and potential development sites. It identifies a list of sites that are considered to be potentially suitable, available and achievable, however it does not determine which sites should be allocated, that is a matter for the Local Plan and hence this site allocation assessment methodology. The inclusion of a site within the SHELAA, and any evidence relating to it, does not imply that planning permission will be granted. Many of the sites assessed are contrary to current development plan policy and might only be considered appropriate for permission if they are allocated in the new Local Plan.
- 2.3 The SHELAA methodology and report can be found on the website at www.rutland.gov.uk. The SHELAA enabled a consistent and thorough initial assessment of all known existing and new sites promoted through the call for sites process. The SHELAA stage 1 assessment screened out all sites that did not meet the size threshold (0.15 hectares for residential development and 0.25 hectares or 500 square metres for economic development). It should be noted that the exclusion of a site from further consideration on this basis does not imply that that the site is not suitable for development, but rather that it is too small to be considered suitable for allocating for development.
- 2.4 The Local Plan Review seeks to locate allocations adjacent to or within the most sustainable settlements in the county. The main towns of Oakham and Uppingham along with Stamford which is within South Kesteven District but abuts the county are the largest settlements which provide the widest range of employment opportunities, services and facilities. The settlement hierarchy then identifies a list of Local Service Centres which provide services and facilities at a more localised level serving the local communities. In addition to looking at existing settlements, the role that a new settlement could potentially play in delivering new homes in a sustainable way has been included as an option. Therefore sites that have been promoted as potentially delivering a new settlement are also considered further.
- 2.5 Sites that were not located adjacent to or within the built up area of Oakham, Uppingham, Stamford or a Local Service Centre, or alternatively were not capable of delivering a new settlement were also screened out. This removed any sites that were not considered to be in line with key locational policies, ensuring that any sites that progressed through the process were in the most sustainable locations across the county.
- 2.6 Sites already with the benefit of planning permission were removed and are monitored through the annual Five Year Land Supply Report instead. Where sites

were subject to nationally designated constraints (within SSSI, SPA, Ramsar, Scheduled Monument designations or more than 50% of the site being within flood risk zone 3) they were also screened out at this stage. Where sites were found to be unavailable or promoted for an alternative use to residential, employment or retail they were not carried through to stage 2. This enabled a focused stage 2 assessment process.

- 2.7 All sites that were not screened out during stage 1 of the SHELAA went on to a more detailed assessment which involved the collation of data about the sites concerning a wide range of constraints along with consultation with technical consultees. The stage 2 assessment process was split into two sections. Stage 2a screened out sites where they were considered to have a very poor relationship with the existing settlement which would result in a harmful impact on the character and form of the settlement. The second element of this stage of the process was the result of consultation with the Highways Officer. Where they considered that a site would create a significant detrimental impact on highway safety due to the access situation they were also screened out at stage 2a of the process. This enabled only the most potentially suitable sites to be carried through to the full assessment at stage 2b.
- 2.8 Stage 2b of the assessment process provided a detailed assessment of the sites, in terms of constraints, consultation responses, when the sites would be available and whether they would be achievable. On gathering this information it was then possible to identify whether sites would be classified as deliverable, developable or not deliverable at the current time (in line with the PPG guidance).
- 2.9 Therefore, as a result of the work carried out in the SHELAA there is a comprehensive list of sites considered to be either deliverable or developable that will be carried through to this site allocation assessment process. Inevitably there are a number of sites found to be deliverable or developable through SHELAA stage 2b assessment that will not be considered to be appropriate for development either in isolation or cumulatively with other sites within a settlement. In addition, some sites may not fulfil national planning policy requirements for sustainable development. This assessment process will refine those sites identified as deliverable or developable through the SHELAA and provide a more in depth assessment resulting in a list of sites that will be appropriate for allocation.

Site Allocation Detailed Assessment

- 2.10 A more detailed assessment will be carried out of those sites identified as either deliverable or developable in stage 2b of the SHELAA. The environmental, social and economic information already identified in the SHELAA will be brought forward into the assessment. In addition further information will be gathered about the accessibility of each of the sites to services and facilities and public transport connections.
- 2.11 A red, amber, green system of scoring is attributed to each factor in line with the system set out below. The scoring is not designed to select sites for allocation on a quantitative assessment only. It is to provide a guide on how sites perform

against one another. Applying a scoring system does not mean that the sites can be fully assessed without planning judgement and a qualitative assessment to go alongside this approach. It may be that a site could score comparatively well against other sites, but there is in fact one criteria that causes significant concerns meaning that the site is not suitable for allocation. Therefore alongside each site, will be a thorough assessment and commentary provided about the site including whether the site is suitable for allocation or not. It is this commentary and planning judgement which will be used to determine the overall suitability of a sites for allocation.

- 2.12 Not all sites which are identified as potentially being appropriate for allocation will be allocated. An assessment of the need and required distribution of development has been carried out and only sufficient sites to meet the need including an appropriate buffer will be allocated. Therefore at the final stage, an assessment of the sites found appropriate will be carried out, using planning judgement, to compare sites against one another in each particular settlement hierarchy category to establish which of those sites would be the best option to carry forward to allocation.

3. Site Scoring System

Previously Developed Land

- 3.1 Encouraging the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed (also known as brownfield land) provided that it is not of high environmental value is a key principle identified within the NPPF. Therefore sites that are brownfield are identified as having a green RAG rating, whilst a mixed use site where it is brownfield only in part attract an amber RAG rating and purely greenfield sites have a red RAG rating. This reflects the need to look to brownfield sites first for development ahead of greenfield sites.

Assessment Factor	Assessment Criteria	
Is the site an efficient use of land?		Brownfield
		Partially Brownfield
		Greenfield

Topography

- 3.2 Topography is a constraint in parts of Rutland. The most viable sites are likely to be the flatter sites, therefore the following scores apply. It should be noted that any site identified as having a red RAG rating through the SHELAA assessment was screened out at stage 2b as it was considered that any sites identified with a red RAG rating could not be mitigated.

Assessment Factor	Assessment Criteria	
Are there any topographical constraints?		Relatively flat
		Gentle slope/ undulations
		Steep slope/ undulations

Agricultural Land

- 3.3 The quality of agricultural land is a key consideration in Rutland due to the nature of the county and the amount of farmland currently in use. The NPPF requires the protection of the best and most versatile agricultural land which is defined as Grade 1, 2 and 3a land when utilising the Agricultural Land Classification system. Unfortunately the majority of Rutland has not been reassessed to subdivide Grade 3 land into either 3a and 3b, therefore the scoring does not distinguish between the two and all Grade 3 is treated as amber.

Assessment Factor	Assessment Criteria	
Is the land identified as being the best and most versatile farmland?		Within grade 4 or 5 and urban
		Within grade 3
		Within grade 1 or 2

Biodiversity

- 3.4 Sites will be assessed against the presence of international, national and locally designated biodiversity or geological sites and based on consultation responses utilising the interactive Natural England tool on the MAGIC GIS layers which identifies whether a type of development would require further consultation with them or not. In addition consultation responses from the team at the Leicestershire & Rutland Environmental Records Centre (LERC) will enable the RAG rating to be established regarding the locally designated sites.

Assessment Factor	Assessment Criteria	
Will the development of the site have an impact on a SSSI, SAC, SPA or Ramsar site?		Not within a Natural England Impact Zone, or within a Natural England Impact Zone but is unlikely to have an adverse impact on any designated site, meaning that Natural England consultation not required.
		Site is within a Natural England Impact Zone – Impact Zone indicates that Natural England required to be consulted on likely risks
		Site is a designated SSSI/SAC/SPA or Ramsar Site

Assessment Factor	Assessment Criteria	
Will the development of the site have an impact on a locally designated site?		Less significant or negligible impacts on Local Wildlife Sites, protected species and Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) priority habitats.
		Significant impacts on Local Wildlife Sites, protected species and BAP priority habitats, but which can be accommodated through mitigation and avoidance of harm and/or further surveys required.
		Site is a locally designated nature site; and/or significant impacts on Local Wildlife Sites, protected species and Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) priority habitats are likely.

		Significant mitigation required; only partial development of the site may be acceptable.
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Trees protected by Preservation Orders

3.5 Trees play an important role in the environment in Rutland and where these trees are protected by Tree Preservation Orders (TPO) it is important that this is assessed as a constraint to a site coming forward. The following scoring is therefore applied based on the TPO GIS records held by the Local Authority along with an assessment made by a Planning Officer.

Assessment Factor	Assessment Criteria	
Will the development of the site have an impact on protected trees?		No Tree Preservation Orders on or adjacent to the site
		Tree Preservation Orders – but impact can be mitigated.
		Significant adverse impact on Tree Preservation Orders (e.g. blanket)

Settlement Planned Limits of Development

3.6 In order to establish which sites are more logical in terms of an extension to an existing settlement it is important to identify which are better associated with the existing built form by looking at the planned limits of development boundaries which are identified around settlements. It should be noted that sites not connected to a settlement planned limit of development (other than those sites promoted as new settlements) were screened out as part of the SHELAA assessment process and were not carried through to this stage of the assessment. Further commentary will be made on this particular factor through the Planning Officer assessment of the site as whilst a site maybe connected to an existing settlement it may still not form a logical extension to a settlement.

Assessment Factor	Assessment Criteria	
Is the site a logical extension to the settlement?		Within settlement or edged on 3 sides
		Edged on 1-2 sides
		No relationship

Heritage Assets

3.7 There is a significant historic environment in parts of Rutland where a range of heritage assets including conservation areas, listed buildings, scheduled monuments, historic parks and gardens and archaeological sites are present. A GIS constraint check is carried out on each site to establish where the nearest

heritage assets are located. Where they are found within 50m of the site (or where they are a known constraint from previous information gathered) consultation with the Conservation Officer takes place to inform the assessment and scoring of the site. Archaeological assessment is carried out through consultation with the Leicestershire County Council Principal Archaeologist.

Assessment Factor	Assessment Criteria	
Impact on Heritage Assets?		No impact on heritage asset or setting.
		Some impact which could be mitigated (e.g. affect a heritage asset and/or the setting of a heritage asset).
		Significant adverse impact would result in the loss of a designated heritage asset.

Assessment Factor	Assessment Criteria	
Impact on Archaeological Sites?		No impact on archaeological site
		Some impact which could be mitigated (e.g. affect an archaeological site and/or the setting)
		Significant adverse impact on an archaeological site

Landscape

- 3.8 Landscape is an important factor to be considered in Rutland and a Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Study has been completed in order to inform the assessment of sites. In addition to utilising this study to inform the assessment of this element, consultation with the Landscape Architect who undertook this LSCS work will also be carried out in order to fully assess the sites.
- 3.9 Sites within or adjacent the main town of Oakham and small town of Uppingham have been brought through to the site allocation assessment process from the SHELAA regardless of the RAG rating for landscape impact. This differed from the approach set out in the Site Appraisals Consultation Draft document published in July 2017 which ruled out sites based on landscape RAG ratings at an earlier stage in these locations. The reasoning behind this shift in approach is due to the fact that there needed to be a more detailed consideration of the sites that are located in the most sustainable location in the county and that through consultation with the Landscape Architect a more balanced and detailed assessment could take place to identify whether there was scope to mitigate impacts or whether sites could be subdivided to provide areas which could be suitable for development subject to specific development principles. This approach is only applied to the two most sustainable settlements in the county, Oakham and Uppingham and not to any of the smaller settlements or sites proposed as new settlements. This is due to there being many more sites within

or adjacent to the smaller settlements which could meet the number of dwellings needed in the Local Service Centre tier of the settlement hierarchy.

Assessment Factor	Assessment Criteria	
Impact on Landscape?		Sensitivity to development low and capacity for development high
		Sensitivity to development and capacity for development both moderate
		Sensitivity to development is high and capacity for development is low

Green Infrastructure

- 3.10 The Rutland Sport and Recreation Facilities Strategy and Open Space, Informal Recreation Assessment published in November 2015 identified public open spaces and recreation facilities which are important assets in the local and wider area. Sites will be scored to establish whether development would impact on these green infrastructure assets.

Assessment Factor	Assessment Criteria	
Impact on Green Infrastructure?		Not a public open space/recreation facility - so no loss/impact
		Site is public open space/recreation facility but any loss can be mitigated against
		Site is public open space /recreation facility which will be lost

Important Open Space

- 3.11 Important Open Spaces are a constraint which is identified on the Council's GIS system to make sure they are recorded and taken into consideration when assessing sites. Sites are assessed against this GIS layer to establish whether the development of a site would have an impact on an Important Open Space or the open aspect provided by that space.

Assessment Factor	Assessment Criteria	
Impact on Important Open Space?		Not designated
		Designated site but with no adverse impact
		Loss or adverse impact on the openness of the important space

Water Conservation and Management: Flood Risk & Surface Water

- 3.12 Flood risk is a significant consideration in assessing sites and therefore the flood risk zone is identified for each site and consultation is carried out with the Local Lead Flood Authority in order to establish which sites are constrained by flood risk as an issue.
- 3.13 Groundwater Source Protection Zones are designated zones around public water supply abstractions and other sensitive receptors that signal there are particular risks to the groundwater source they protect. The zones are based on an estimation of the time it would take for a pollutant which enters the saturated zone of an aquifer to reach the source abstraction or discharge point. The element is therefore taken into account in assessing the sites in order to look at the wider water management impact.
- 3.14 Surface water flooding is also a key consideration and establishing whether a site is within an area where there is a medium or high risk of surface water flooding enables an assessment of the impact of developing a site. There are surface water drainage schemes that can be developed to mitigate in some circumstances and therefore a red RAG rating is not identified as an option for this element of the assessment.

Assessment Factor	Assessment Criteria	
Is the site at risk of flooding?		No flood risk or minimal downstream flood risk
		Moderate flood risk or possible/potential risk to downstream locations
		Significant flood risk or potential to exacerbate flood risk downstream – known issues

Assessment Factor	Assessment Criteria	
Groundwater Source protection zone?		Not within an SPZ
		Within a zone 2 or 3 SPZ
		Within a Zone 1 SPZ

Assessment Factor	Assessment Criteria	
Is the site at risk of surface water flooding?		No areas of surface water flood risk are present in the site
		Areas of high or medium surface water flood risk is present in the site

Environmental Quality, Human Health and Contamination

- 3.15 In order to establish whether the development of a site would result in an impact on those living on the site or nearby it is important to consider noise and vibration, air quality (including dust and pollution), odours, bird strike hazard zones, residual environmental nuisance, contaminated land and the potential for cumulative impacts. The Environmental Health team are focussed on improving

the environment and safeguarding the health, safety and wellbeing of the local community and are therefore able to provide a consultation response on the sites, based on information they hold.

Assessment Factor	Assessment Criteria	
Environmental quality, contaminated land and human health?		No detrimental effect and/ or contamination unlikely
		No significant detrimental effect that cannot be mitigated against and/ or contamination possible
		Significant detrimental effect that cannot be mitigated against and/ or contamination likely – known issues

Access, highway safety, wider road network and rights of way

- 3.16 The provision of additional homes and employment sites will inevitably have an impact on the local highway and sometimes on the wider surrounding road network. The sites have been assessed by the Local Highway Authority to determine the impact of the access of the site and the impact on the wider road network. This assessment is made without technical details of the exact point of access being identified for each site and provides an initial assessment of the possible impact.
- 3.17 In addition a consideration of the impact on existing public rights of way is also identified to establish whether there are constraints to a sites development with the need to re-route or design in a public right of way into a scheme.

Assessment Factor	Assessment Criteria	
Site access?		No access concerns
		Potential access concerns which are resolvable
		No access achievable

Assessment Factor	Assessment Criteria	
Impact on wider road network?		No significant impact on the wider road network
		Impact on the wider road network requiring mitigation
		Significant impact on the wider road network with no possible mitigation

Assessment Factor	Assessment Criteria	
Impact on right of way?		No public rights of way affected

		Permissive footpaths/Public rights of way affected – requiring mitigation.
		Public rights of way affected no mitigation possible

Employment Sites

- 3.18 A key consideration in assessing the impact of the development of a site for new homes is the loss of the land for other existing uses which may also play an important role in the local community in terms of the economy and the provision of jobs. The sites are therefore assessed on whether the redevelopment for housing would see the loss of an allocated employment site. There is no amber rating allocated for this element of the assessment, it is identified as either being a loss or not.

Assessment Factor	Assessment Criteria	
Loss of allocated employment site?		No loss of allocated employment site
		Loss of allocated employment site

Minerals Safeguarding

- 3.19 The purposes of Mineral Safeguarding Areas is to protect known locations of specific minerals resources of local and national importance, ensuring they are not needlessly sterilised by non-mineral development. Designation of Minerals Safeguarding Areas do not carry a presumption that any resources will be worked, nor do they preclude other forms of development taking place. Sites are assessed to identify whether they are within safeguarded area or not as this will need to be taken into account when developing a scheme. There is no red RAG rating category for this element of the assessment as whilst it will form a consideration, it does not rule a site out from other forms of development.

Assessment Factor	Assessment Criteria	
Does the site intersect with a Minerals Safeguarding Area?		Does not intersect with a Minerals Safeguarding Area
		Intersects with a Minerals Safeguarding Area

Accessibility

- 3.20 Accessibility to local services, facilities and public transport are also considered through the assessment process. A key objective of sustainable development is to ensure new homes have access to services, facilities and employment. This element of the assessment can also flag up where access and public transport links could be improved. With regard to distances to town or local centres, schools, doctors or health centre and other key facilities the Department for

Transport guidance¹ is used which identifies that 800m is a walkable distance to these types of facilities.

- 3.21 No distance is provided in this guidance as to a walkable distance to a train station. Through the work carried out in setting assessment parameters, it is identified that in the rural context of Rutland that 2500m is an appropriate walkable distance to a train station. The guidance does however suggest that an acceptable walkable distance to a bus stop is 400m. This is therefore used for assessing the distances to bus stops in this assessment.
- 3.22 The distances to both public rights of way and cycle routes are identified as it is considered that the closer a site is to these, the more opportunity there is to enhance linkages and create more accessible developments.

Assessment Factor	Assessment Criteria	
Proximity to town or local centre		Less than 400m
		400-800m
		Greater than 800m

Assessment Factor	Assessment Criteria	
Proximity to a school		Less than 400m
		400-800m
		Greater than 800m

Assessment Factor	Assessment Criteria	
Proximity to a doctor or health centre		Less than 400m
		400-800m
		Greater than 800m

Assessment Factor	Assessment Criteria	
Proximity to a train station		Less than 2500m
		Greater than 2500m

Assessment Factor	Assessment Criteria	
Proximity to a bus stop		Less than 400m
		Greater than 400m

Assessment Factor	Assessment Criteria	
Proximity to a public right of way		Less than 50m
		Greater than 50m

¹ WebTag (December 2015) Unit A4.2 paragraph 6.4.5, Department for Transport

Assessment Factor	Assessment Criteria	
Proximity to a cycle route		Less than 50m
		Greater than 50m

On site constraints

- 3.23 On site constraints may affect the delivery of site, for example, electricity pylons and pipelines. All those promoting a site are asked to identify if there are such constraints on the site so this source of information along with Ordnance Survey layers and in some cases site visits will be used to identify these potential constraints to development.

Assessment Factor	Assessment Criteria	
On site constraints – are there any present?		No constraint
		On site constraints which will require mitigation. May affect viability
		Significant constraint may prevent development

Availability of Infrastructure

- 3.24 The ability for sites to be developed and connect to existing infrastructure for services such as electricity, gas and water resources can be key in the viability of a site and also the speed at which a site can come forward. All those promoting a site are asked to identify whether these services are available within the vicinity of the site and consultation will also be carried out with service providers including Anglian Water and Severn Trent Water to establish if there are any specific issues regarding the capacity of water resources with regard to specific sites. In addition the capacity of the local schools will be identified and taken into account to provide an idea of accessibility of local education services.

Assessment Factor	Assessment Criteria	
Availability of infrastructure?		No constraint to infrastructure capacity
		Capacity constraints which will require mitigation. May affect viability
		significant constraint may prevent development

- 3.25 The range of environmental, social and economic factors used to assess each site have been devised to link with the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) objectives. The site assessments will be recorded in a tabular format which will show the factors assessed and a RAG (red/amber/green) for each of the factors identified for each site. This will enable a comparison against each of the sites. The purpose of the colour coding or “traffic light system” in c) above is to allow visual

comparison between the sites in terms of the factors assessed and to highlight any significant constraints.

- 3.26 The sites will be arranged in parish order so that sites within the same settlements can be assessed more easily.

4. Assessment of Sites

- 4.1 On the basis of the site assessments outlined above, a comparison matrix will be drawn up showing all the sites in terms of the RAG colour codings identified. This will allow comparison between all the sites on a visual basis.
- 4.2 This will aid the overall assessment of the sites and will inform the qualitative assessment. Once this assessment has been carried out on an individual site basis, the sites will be compared against one another to identify which are the most appropriate to allocate to meet the vision and objectives of the Local Plan.

Sequential Approach

- 4.3 When looking at sites associated with existing settlements, a sequential approach will be applied using the following prioritisation criteria:
- a) Brownfield sites within settlements
 - b) Brownfield sites on the edge of settlements
 - c) Greenfield sites within settlements
 - d) Greenfield sites on the edge of settlements
- 4.4 The sequential approach prioritises the allocation of brownfield sites and sites within the existing planned limits of development. Sites where planning applications have been approved since the SHELAA and site assessment process commenced will also be prioritised where they are identified as being appropriate for allocation. This approach to the site selection process prioritises the use of previously developed land in line with the NPPF requirement. It also prioritises sites that are within the existing built up area of settlements, limiting the impact on the edge of settlements. Sites that have gained planning permission since the SHELAA process began are prioritised because they are further progressed in the process than other sites where no planning applications have been submitted. This therefore gives priority to sites that are closer to delivering new homes. If further sites are required to meet the number of new dwellings required, the remaining greenfield sites on the edge of settlements found suitable for allocation will be assessed against one another to establish which are the most suitable options on a comparative basis.
- 4.5 The scale of the sites and the capacity will be compared with the existing number of dwellings within a settlement in order to assess the overall growth of the settlement as a result of sites. This will also guide the allocation assessment process, prioritising sites which are more in keeping with the size of the existing

settlement.

- 4.6 Consideration will also be given to the variety of sized sites identified for allocation, to ensure that a wide range of sites in different locations are allocated in order to provide choice and flexibility which aids the deliverability of new homes. Paragraph 68a of the NPPF states that, 'through development plans and brownfield registers, land to accommodate at least 10% of their housing requirement on sites no larger than one hectare; unless it can be shown, through the preparation of relevant plan policies, that there are strong reasons why this 10% target cannot be achieved.' Therefore it is important that there is a range of different sized sites allocated in the Local Plan.

Availability, Deliverability and Achievability

- 4.7 Throughout the SHELAA process, information on the availability, deliverability and achievability of sites has been collected from site promoters on all individual sites through the site promotion forms and additional forms sent out on the deliverability of sites.
- 4.8 All promoters of sites identified as the most appropriate for allocation will be contacted to provide an update on the status of the site to ensure that sites are still available and that there are no new barriers to delivery that have not been raised previously. Intended timescales for delivery will be established along with confirmation that there is an agreement (where necessary) that the land will be sold to a developer. Where any issues with availability, deliverability or achievability are identified, sites will be re-assessed to avoid allocating sites where these particular factors become a constraint to the delivery of a site.
- 4.9 The achievability of sites, which is essentially a test of viability is an important part of the site allocation process, ensuring that the sites selected are achievable on an economic basis. The whole plan, including site allocations is subject to viability testing to ensure that the plan is a realistic and viable option. The initial site allocations assessment with regards to achievability has been based on the latest viability assessment update. Where future viability assessments are provided, the sites will be re-assessed against this updated information to ensure that the preferred options remain achievable. If issues arise about specific sites, further consideration will be given to the impact of viability and the site assessment process will be revisited if a site becomes identified as unviable.

Conclusions

- 4.10 Conclusions will be set out, based on professional judgement, as to the most suitable sites to be allocated for development in the Local Plan Review having regards to the factors identified in the site assessments, the need for the particular development and any other factors that may be relevant.

- 4.11 The conclusions will set out:
- a) the sites recommended as being suitable for inclusion as allocations in the Local Plan Review and the main reasons for selection of each site;
 - b) sites that are not recommended as being suitable for allocating in the Local Plan Review setting out the main reasons for the exclusion of each site.
- 4.12 The Site Allocations Assessment document will subsequently be updated to take account of the response to consultation of the Local Plan Review.

5. Sustainability appraisal process

- 5.1 The Sustainability Appraisal (SA) process involves assessing the potential sites in terms of their likely impact on the sustainability objectives that have been identified. The SA considers all the likely impacts, cumulative impacts and the scope for mitigating any possible negative impacts on the environmental, economic and social factors of sustainable development.
- 5.2 The site assessment process will be informed by the SA process outlined above, which examines the suitability of each site in terms of a range of environmental, social and economic issues. The links between the site assessment criteria and SA site criteria are identified in Appendix A. The SA also considers whether the site allocations identified meet the strategic policies of the Local Plan. The links between the plan-making, SA and site assessment processes are illustrated in Appendix B.
- 5.3 The findings of the SA can be found on the website at www.rutland.gov.uk.

Appendix A: Links between assessment criteria and Sustainability Appraisal Objectives

Detailed assessment against environmental, social and economic factors

Environmental

SA Theme	Site assessment criteria	SA Objective
Topography	Whether land flat, sloping etc.	
Agricultural land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greenfield or brown field site Agricultural land quality Impact on agricultural activities 	To protect the natural resources of the region – including water, air and soil.
Biodiversity and Geodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact on biodiversity and geodiversity, in particular on locally, nationally and internationally designated sites Impact on trees and hedgerows 	To increase biodiversity and geodiversity.
Heritage Assets	Impact on designated and locally important heritage assets and their setting including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scheduled Ancient Monuments Registered Parks and Gardens Conservation areas Listed buildings Archaeological sites 	To provide opportunities for people to value and enjoy Rutland’s heritage and participate in cultural and recreational activities, whilst preserving and enhancing the environment. To conserve or enhance the historic environment, heritage assets and their settings.
Landscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact on landscape and townscape character Impact in relation to scale and character of existing community Impact on historic landscape character 	To conserve or enhance the historic environment, heritage assets and their settings. To protect and enhance the character, diversity and local distinctiveness of the natural environment and rural landscape of Rutland.
Loss of recreational or public open space land	Impact on recreational opportunities and open spaces	To provide opportunities for people to value and enjoy Rutland’s heritage and participate in cultural and recreational activities, whilst preserving and enhancing the environment.

Potential for new green infrastructure	<p>Potential for site to provide new green infrastructure including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The wider green infrastructure network • Links between existing green infrastructure 	<p>To provide opportunities for people to value and enjoy Rutland’s heritage and participate in cultural and recreational activities, whilst preserving and enhancing the environment.</p> <p>To increase biodiversity and geodiversity.</p> <p>To protect and enhance the character, diversity and local distinctiveness of the natural environment and rural landscape of Rutland.</p>
Water conservation and management/flood risk	<p>Susceptibility to, and impact on, flood risk.</p> <p>Impact on water resources (including groundwater).</p> <p>Sites will be subject to the sequential test and where necessary the exception test.</p>	<p>To protect the natural resources of the region – including water, air and soil.</p> <p>To reduce the risk and impact of flooding.</p>
Contamination	Whether site contaminated.	To protect the natural resources of the region – including water, air and soil.
Environmental quality and human health*	<p>Impacts in terms of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Air quality (including dust) and pollution • Noise and vibration • Odours • Bio aerosols • Vermin and birds • Litter • Bird strike hazard • Potential for residual environmental nuisance • Potential for cumulative impacts 	<p>To improve access to health and social care provision and maintain good health standards.</p> <p>To protect the natural resources of the region – including water, air and soil.</p>
Restoration and after use*	Potential for beneficial restoration and after use	<p>To protect the natural resources of the region – including water, air and soil.</p> <p>Progressively restore mineral development land, seeking to maximise beneficial opportunities.</p>

Waste management*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enable communities to take more responsibility for their own waste • Contribution towards sustainable waste management and a reduction in reliance on land filling • Co-location of facilities together and with complementary activities 	To minimise waste, increase recycling and promote sustainable waste management.
Minerals related development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mineral type, quality and yield • Provision of a sufficient supply of minerals to support growth 	<p>Facilitate the delivery of a steady and adequate supply of minerals to support sustainable growth and safeguard mineral resources and related development from sterilisation and incompatible forms of development.</p> <p>Progressively restore mineral development land, seeking to maximise beneficial opportunities.</p>
Social		
Liveability	<p>Factors that might affect “liveability”: e.g. proximity to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • noisy industry • busy roads, • electricity pylons 	<p>To help achieve housing stock that meets the housing needs of Rutland.</p> <p>To improve access to health and social care provision and maintain good health standards</p>
Proximity to services and facilities	<p>Proximity to services and facilities including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town centre • School • Doctors and health facilities 	<p>To promote and support the development of community facilities in all areas, particularly rural areas.</p>
Accessibility to public transport.	<p>Proximity to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bus routes • Railway stations 	<p>To encourage sustainable business formation and development in rural areas.</p>
Amenity of existing residents and adjacent land uses	<p>Impact on neighbouring communities and adjacent land uses</p>	

Economic		
Available, viable and deliverable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whether ownership is known • Whether owner wishes to develop the site • Whether any existing operational land use will cease • Whether is an attractive site likely to come forward 	
Infrastructure available	Availability of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electricity • Gas • Water • Drainage • Sewerage • Broadband 	<p>To promote the infrastructure necessary to support economic growth and attract a range of business types.</p> <p>To encourage sustainable business formation and development in rural areas.</p>
Accessibility and transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safe and effective access to and from the site • Opportunities for walking and cycling • Opportunities to incorporate sustainable transport options • Conflicts with non-industrial traffic on access routes used by heavy commercial vehicles • 	<p>To reduce the adverse effects of traffic and improve transport infrastructure.</p> <p>To improve access to health and social care provision and maintain good health standards</p>
Impact on the wider road network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity of transport infrastructure to accommodate type and level of traffic resulting from the proposal • Potential impact on existing road network 	<p>To reduce the adverse effects of traffic and improve transport infrastructure.</p>
Rights of way	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact on public footpaths and bridleways 	<p>To provide opportunities for people to value and enjoy Rutland's heritage and participate in cultural and recreational activities, whilst preserving and enhancing the environment.</p>
Potential for decentralised and renewable energy generation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential to reduce greenhouse gas emissions • Opportunities for renewable energy generation 	<p>To minimise energy usage and promote the use of renewable energy sources.</p> <p>Reduce emissions of greenhouse gases that cause climate change and adapt to its effects.</p>

<p>Development which meets the needs of Rutland</p>	<p>Need for</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High quality employment opportunities • A housing stock which meets the needs of Rutland, including affordable housing 	<p>To create high quality employment opportunities for all.</p> <p>To encourage sustainable business formation and development in urban and rural areas.</p> <p>To help achieve housing stock that meets the housing needs of Rutland.</p> <p>To promote and support the development of community facilities in all areas, particularly rural areas.</p>
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* = Applicable to sites proposed for waste management purposes only.

Appendix B: Links between plan making process, sustainability appraisal process and site assessment process

