

Site Assessment Framework

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Kettering Site Specific Part 2 Local Plan 2011 -2031 was adopted in December 2021. The Local Plan identifies Grafton Underwood as a Category B village, due to its important Conservation Area, its charm and character and association with the Boughton Estate. Policy RS2 states that infill development will be limited to developments of 1 or 2 dwellings within the defined settlement boundary. No Local Plan housing allocations are proposed within Grafton Underwood.
- 1.2 Grafton Underwood is certainly not a place suitable for large-scale housing growth. The village's services and facilities are extremely limited, and the lack of public transport means that residents rely on the private car for the vast majority of their journeys. However, the preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan is an opportunity to consider whether there are potential small scale housing sites that could meet a local housing need, for example, provide for lower cost housing in the village. Early consultation work on the Neighbourhood Plan has also raised this as an issue to be considered.
- 1.3 National planning practice advises that neighbourhood plan groups should carry out an appraisal of options and an assessment of individual sites against clearly identified criteria. This Site Assessment Framework sets out how sites will be assessed for the allocation of land for housing development.

2. Where did the site suggestions come from?

- 2.1 The starting point for the identification of potential housing sites was the North Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (2009). Local Planning Authorities are required to prepare these assessments that provide evidence on the potential supply of housing land. No sites within Grafton Underwood are identified in this document.

- 2.2 However, in February 2012 Kettering Borough produced a 'Rural Masterplanning Report' to support the preparation of their Development Plan for the rural area. This document identifies two potential housing sites within Grafton Underwood (C¹ and D).
- 2.3 Following community and stakeholder consultation in 2022, including consultation with the Broughton Estate, six additional potential housing sites within the village were identified.
- 2.4 All eight sites are shown on Map 1.

3. Site Assessment Criteria

- 3.1 [Kettering Borough Council's 2012 Housing Allocations Background Paper](#) includes a 'Site Assessment Matrix' which was initially developed by Roger Tym and Partners for East Northamptonshire Council. The Site Assessment Matrix links assessment criteria with relevant Sustainability Appraisal objectives and provides a largely objective process for identifying the potential constraints and benefits associated with each site option.
- 3.2 This 'Site Assessment Matrix' has formed the basis of the Site Assessment Criteria to be used in the allocation of housing site(s) for the Grafton Underwood Neighbourhood Plan. Some of the criteria have been deleted or adapted to reflect local circumstances. In particular, Grafton Underwood has poor access to services and facilities, so there is little to differentiate sites in terms of accessibility to education, shops, health services, jobs, public transport, sporting facilities and town centres. In addition, given the location of the sites and distance from nearby settlements, and that all are within Grafton Underwood, there is nothing to differentiate the sites in terms of settlement hierarchy and the coalescence with other settlements. Additional assessment criteria have been added for some topics, allowing for more detailed analysis.
- 3.3 In total there are 22 Site Assessment Criteria to be applied to the 8 housing site options. No weighting is applied to the criteria.

¹ Site C has subsequently been reduced in size to exclude land to the south that has been granted planning permission for the conversion/extension of redundant barns into three dwellings (KET/2014/0268).

| Ref. | Assessment Topic | Assessment Criteria | | | | | Rationale, assumptions and limitations |
|-----------------------|---|---|--------------------------------------|---|--|-----|--|
| A: Community | | | | | | | |
| 1 | What benefits would development of the site have to the local community? e.g. could the site improve walking or cycling connections, contribute to the creation of GI, make use of a derelict site. | Significant benefits to the local community | Some benefits to the local community | Likely to be no benefits to the local community | N/A | N/A | GIS and Site Visit. |
| B: Liveability | | | | | | | |
| 2 | Impact of noise or odour (trunk road, railway) | Development would not be affected by noise or odour | N/A | Development is likely to be affected by noise or odour but this could be mitigated. | Development is likely to be significantly affected by noise and odour and impact could not be mitigated. | N/A | Site Visit. Environmental Health has not been consulted in this instance given the distance from trunk road, railway etc. |

| Ref. | Assessment Topic | Assessment Criteria | | | | | Rationale, assumptions and limitations |
|------------------------|---|--|-----|--|-----------------------------------|--|---|
| 3 | Would development be compatible with neighbouring uses? | Development would be compatible. | N/A | Development would be compatible with mitigation. | Development would be incompatible | N/A | Site visit to ascertain neighbouring uses. |
| C: Biodiversity | | | | | | | |
| 4 | Impact on a nationally, regional or local site of biodiversity or geological value or affect legally protected species. | Site would not impact on a nationally, regional or local site of biodiversity or geological value or affect legally protected species. | N/A | Site would impact on a nationally, regional or local site of biodiversity or geological value or affect legally protected species but could be satisfactorily mitigated. | N/A | Site would impact on a nationally, regional or local site of biodiversity or geological value or affect legally protected species but could not be satisfactorily mitigated. | Consultation not undertaken with Natural England given the distance between the sites and these category of designations. |
| 5 | Other ecological features (including BAP, priority habitats and species, trees, woodland) etc | Development of the site is likely to enable the retention and enhancement of existing features. | N/A | Development of the site would impact on the ecological quality of the site but impact could | | Development of the site would have an unacceptable impact on the ecological quality of the site and impact could not | |

| Ref. | Assessment Topic | Assessment Criteria | | | | | Rationale, assumptions and limitations |
|-----------------------------|--|---|---|---|---|---|--|
| | | | | be mitigated or compensated. | | be mitigated or compensated. | |
| D: Landscape | | | | | | | |
| 6 | Landscape designation and capacity of landscape to accommodate development | Landscape has low sensitivity to development (not visible, existing landscape is poor quality, existing features could be retained) | Landscape has medium sensitivity to development. | Landscape has no impact on landscape character. | Site has medium to high sensitivity to development (Development is likely to detract from landscape, existing features unlikely to be retained) | High sensitivity to development (Development would significantly detract from the landscape and important features unlikely to be retained and mitigation not possible) | Site Visit. |
| E: Cultural Heritage | | | | | | | |
| 7 | Heritage and Archaeology (Listed Buildings, Conservation Area, SAMs, Historic Parks and Gardens) | Development has the potential to enhance the historic or cultural environment | Site unlikely to impact on the historic or cultural environment | Development is likely to have a negative impact on the historic environment or cultural but | N/A | Development is likely to have a significant negative impact on the historic or cultural environment | Site Visit and GIS. National policy seeks the protection of important historic assets. |

| Ref. | Assessment Topic | Assessment Criteria | | | | | Rationale, assumptions and limitations |
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| | | | | this could be mitigated. | | | |
| F: Built Environment | | | | | | | |
| 8 | Would residential development affect the existing built character of the settlement? | Development would result in significant enhancement (e.g. removal of derelict buildings) | N/A | Development likely to have neutral impact. | Development is likely to detract from the existing built character and important features but this impact could be mitigated. | Development likely to detract from the existing built character and important features unlikely to be retained. | Site Visit and GIS. National policy seeks the creation of well-designed quality places and new development should function well and add to the overall quality of the area. |
| 9 | Relationship to existing settlement area | Within existing settlement area | Adjacent to existing settlement area | N/A | Detached from existing settlement area | N/A | National Policy strictly controls development in the open countryside. The defined Village Settlement Boundary has been used to define the 'existing settlement area' |
| G: Water Conservation and Management | | | | | | | |
| 10 | Flood Risk Zone | N/A | 25%-0% of the site is in | 50%-26% of the site is in | 75%-51% of the site is in | 100%-76% of the site is in flood zone 2 or 3 | National guidance requires flood risk to be an important |

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|-------------------------|--|--|---|--|--|---|---|
| | | | Flood Zone 2 or 3 | flood zone 2 or 3 | flood zone 2 or 3 | | consideration in planning terms. Environment Agency GIS layers on Parish Online used to identify locations of Flood Zone 2 and 3. |
| H: Soil and Land | | | | | | | |
| 11 | Agricultural Land | N/A | Development would not result in the loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land | Partial loss of grade 1 or 2 agricultural land or loss of grade 3 agricultural land. | Development would result in the loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land (graded 1 and 2) | N/A | GIS – to identify where site is located within Grade 1, 2 or 3a classification. |
| 12 | Is the site previously developed land? | Wholly previously developed/Mixed >75% pdl | Mixed 50-75%pdl/Mixed 25-49%pdl | Mixed <25% pdl | Wholly greenfield | N/A | Site visit and GIS. National guidance promotes the redevelopment of previously developed land on preference to greenfield sites. |
| 13 | Unstable land/Land contamination (land | Site is not unstable or contaminated land. | N/A | Site is unstable or contaminated | N/A | Site is wholly unstable or contaminated | Given the nature of the sites, consultation has not been undertaken with the Council's |

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| | contamination over and above the naturally occurring contamination found throughout the Borough) | | | land but could be mitigated. | | land which could not be mitigated. | Environmental Health Team. |
| I: Minerals | | | | | | | |
| 14 | Is the site located within an area identified for mineral extraction or mineral safeguarding area | Site is not located in an area identified as an existing/permited minerals/waste site or allocation in the MWDF. | N/A | N/A | N/A | Site is located in an area identified as an existing/permited minerals/waste site or allocation in the MWDF. | GIS – NCC (Minerals & Waste Local Plan) Interactive Mapping. |
| J: Infrastructure | | | | | | | |
| 15 | Access to highway network | Satisfactory access can be gained to the site | N/A | N/A | Potential for satisfactory access if appropriate mitigation can be provided. | Satisfactory access cannot be gained to the site | Consultation undertaken with NCC – Highways Development. |
| 16 | Capacity of the highway network | Sufficient capacity no constraints | N/A | Capacity limited or insufficient capacity but constraints | N/A | Insufficient capacity and constraints cannot be overcome. | Consultation undertaken with NCC – Highways Development. |

| Ref. | Assessment Topic | Assessment Criteria | | | | | Rationale, assumptions and limitations |
|------------------------|--|--|--------------------|--|-----|---|--|
| | | | | can be overcome | | | |
| 17 | Capacity of existing infrastructure and services (water, sewage, electricity, gas). | Sufficient capacity | N/A | Capacity limited or insufficient but constraints can be overcome | N/A | Insufficient capacity and constraints cannot be overcome. | Consultation with Anglian Water |
| 18 | Drainage infrastructure | Extensive new drainage infrastructure would not be required. | N/A | Drainage infrastructure maybe required. | N/A | Extensive new drainage would be required. | Consultation with Anglian Water |
| K: Availability | | | | | | | |
| 19 | Is the site subject to any ownership constraints and is it likely attractive to the market? | Interest in developing the site and willing land owners. | Willing landowners | N/A | N/A | No interest in developing site or ownership constraints. | |
| 20 | Are there any insurmountable physical, environmental or legal constraints that may prejudice | N/A | N/A | No | N/A | Yes | Issues looked at include the presence of overhead lines and land levels. |

| Ref. | Assessment Topic | Assessment Criteria | | | | | Rationale, assumptions and limitations |
|-----------------------------|--|---|---------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|--|--|
| | development of the site? | | | | | | |
| L: Deliverability | | | | | | | |
| 21 | What is the time scale for delivery of the site? | Developable within 5 years. | Developable in 6-10 years | Developable in 11-15 years | Developable beyond 15 years. | | |
| M: Other information | | | | | | | |
| 22 | Planning History | This information, where applicable, is detailed on the individual Site Proformas. | | | | | |