

DUNTON BASSETT NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Site Sustainability Analysis

1. Introduction

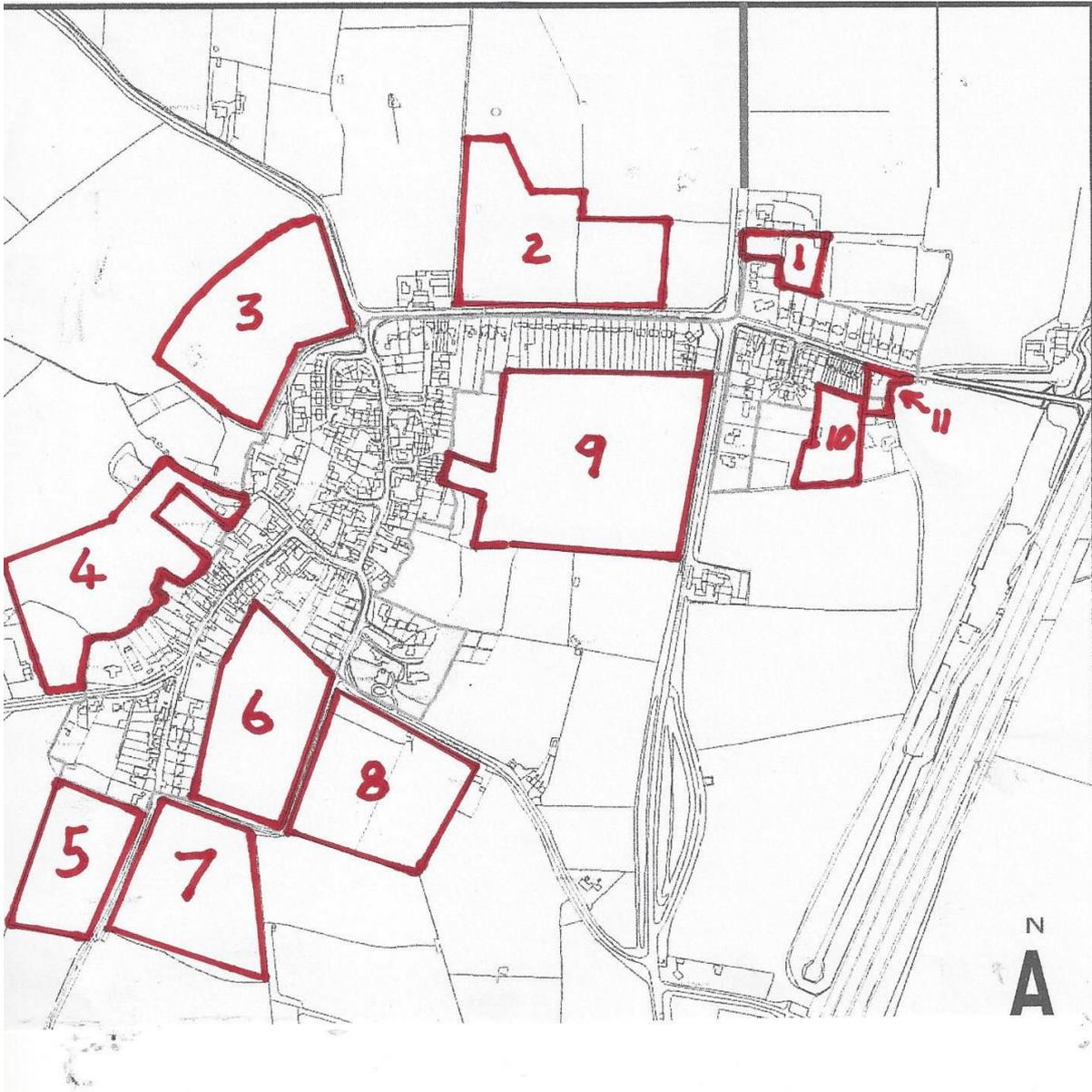
The Neighbourhood Plan for Dunton Bassett has been prepared by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee (NPSC) on behalf of the parish council. One of the central objectives of the plan is to consider the housing need during the plan period and to identify the most sustainable site locations.

A housing need target has been set by Harborough District Council (HDC) based upon a survey of the likely district-wide population increase as set out in the adopted local plan. This set a target of 40 residential units to be built in the parish by 2031. The Housing Theme Group (HTG) considered the housing needs evidence and agreed that 44 new residential units would be required in the period to 2031 to provide a “buffer” of 10%. As four units on a small site in the village are expected to be granted consent by HDC the minimum target for the other sites would be for 40 units.

This site selection framework sets out how sustainable housing sites were identified and selected. The recommendations made by the NPSC were informed by evidence collected and assessed by the HTG members, supported by independent consultants from YourLocale with substantial experience in this work.

2. Where did the site suggestions come from?

The HDC Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) was completed in 2016 and identified two potential residential sites. A further nine sites have been generated by the active dialogue between the parish council and local landowners through a “call for sites”. These sites are shown in the map of the village below:



A scoring matrix based upon the methodology used in the National Planning Policy Frameworks (NPPF) guidance (2018 and 2019) was drafted by HTG members to reflect the unique characteristics and scale of Dunton Bassett parish.

A total of 11 sites of various sizes, ranging from 4 to 192 units were initially offered for residential development by owners and their professional advisers. These sites would have yielded more than 600 units, which would be far in excess of the agreed housing need. All the larger sites were therefore reduced in size down to the target of 40 units in order to provide a 'level playing field'. A total of 11 Site Sustainability Analysis (SSA) reports were completed to arrive at a ranking of sites which would be reviewed and approved by the NPSC and then presented to the community as part of the plan.

3. The Criteria and the RAG Scoring System

The HTG agreed twenty five sustainability indicators as the criteria in the SSA scoring matrix that were relevant to the selection and allocation of sites for new dwellings using evidence

from the NPPF's of 2018 and 2019. The SHLAA methodology used by HDC was also referred to, coupled with the experience of the consultant in undertaking SSA reviews and from previous residential site allocations.

A scoring system, based on a Red, Amber or Green (RAG) score was applied to each criterion and listed for each identified site. Red was scored for a negative assessment; Amber was scored where mitigation would probably be required; Green was scored for a positive assessment. A different methodology for scoring to give varying weights to different criteria was considered by the HTG but rejected as it would have been more complicated, less transparent and it could therefore have been more subjective and difficult to justify to the community.

The following scoring framework was used to compare each site:

Criterion	Green	Amber	Red
1. Site capacity	Small capacity of up to 10 units	Medium capacity of between 11-20 units	Large capacity of more than 21 units
2. Current Use	Vacant	Existing uses need to be relocated	Loss of important local asset
3. Adjoining Uses	Site wholly within village envelope as defined in Policy H3	Site adjoining village envelope or residential location	Only a tenuous link to village envelope or residential location
4. Topography	Flat or gently sloping site	Undulating site or greater slope that can be mitigated	Severe slope that will be difficult to mitigate
5. Greenfield or Previously Developed Land	Previously developed land (brownfield)	Mixture of brownfield & greenfield land	Greenfield land
6. Good Quality Agricultural Land (Natural England classification)	Land classified 4 or 5 (poor and very poor)	Land classified as grade 3a or 3b (good to moderate)	Land classified 1 or 2 (excellent and very good)
7. Site availability - Single ownership or multiple ownership	Single ownership	Multiple ownership	Multiple ownership with one or more unwilling partners
8. Landscape Character Assessment and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA)	No harm to quality of views to/from the village, open spaces or character of the village as defined in Policies ENV 1, 2, and 9	Less than substantial harm	Substantial harm
9. Any harm to trees, woodland or hedgerows?	No harm to woodland, notable trees or hedgerow as defined in Policy ENV 4	Harm to small lengths of hedgerow.	Harm to woodland, notable trees or ancient high quality hedgerow.
10. Relationship with existing pattern of built development	Site visible from only a small number of properties	Site visible from a significant number of properties but mitigated through landscaping or planting	Prominent visibility Difficult to mitigate
11. Local wildlife considerations	No harm to areas of natural environmental significance as defined by Policies ENV 3 and 5	Adjacent to a sensitive area so potential harm which would require mitigation	Includes a sensitive area so would result in substantial harm

12. Listed Building or important built assets and their setting	No harm to listed sites as defined in Policies ENV 6 and 7	Less than substantial harm	Substantial harm
13. Footpath access to and from the site	Easily linked to an existing footpath, as required by Policy T1	No footpath but can be created	No potential for footpath
14. Impact on existing vehicular traffic	Minimal impact on village as defined in Policy T3	Medium impact on village	Major impact on village
15. Safe vehicular access to and from the site.	Appropriate access, as defined in Policy T1, can be easily provided	Appropriate access can only be provided with significant improvement	Appropriate access cannot be provided (or only with a third party support)
16. Distance to public transport (bus stop with existing service)	Walking distance of 250m or less	Walking distance of 251-500m	Walking distance of greater than 501m
17. Distance to village centre (the village hall)	Walking distance of 250m or less	Walking distance of 251-500m	Walking distance of greater than 501m
18. Current existing informal/formal recreational opportunities on site	No recreational uses on site	Informal recreational uses on site	Formal recreational uses on site
19. Ancient monuments, archaeological remains or heritage assets	No harm to any heritage sites defined in Policies ENV 6 and 8	Less than substantial harm to any heritage site	Substantial harm
20. Any existing public rights of ways/bridle paths?	No impact on public right of way as defined in Policy ENV 12	Detriment to a public right of way	Re-routing required or would cause significant harm
21. Gas and/or oil pipelines & electricity transmission network (Not water/sewage)	Site unaffected	Re-siting may be necessary or reduces developable area	Re-siting may not be possible
22. Any nuisance issues, noise, light or odour?	No nuisance issues	Significant issues requiring mitigation	Nuisance issues will be an ongoing concern
23. Any contamination concerns?	No contamination concerns	Minor mitigation required	Major mitigation required
24. Any known flooding issues?	Site in flood zone 1 or 2 or no flooding for more than 25 years	Site in flood zone 3a or flooded once in last 25 years	Site in flood zone 3b (functional flood plain) or flooded more than once in last 25 years
25. Any drainage issues?	No drainage issues identified as defined in Policy ENV 11	Need for mitigation	Need for substantial mitigation

4. The Site Sustainability Analysis

The initial site assessments were undertaken by the Consultant from YourLocale to ensure a professional approach based upon past experience of similar assessments and to ensure a high level of objectivity and consistency in scoring. The assessment included a comprehensive desk top study followed by a visit to each of the sites. These initial results were then considered in detail by the HTG members with the Consultant to ensure that all the local factors had been fully considered and were reflected in the reports.

Shortly after the completion of this process, the second planning appeal for one of the sites (Site 2 Coopers Lane) was dismissed. The Inspector emphasized that extensive developments on conspicuous sites, which were poorly related to the nucleated core of the village, would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the area and a loss of attractive views to and from the settlement. It was further emphasised that the plan should try to promote small scale infill developments or limited extensions, rather than a large single development. This prompted a major rethink, an expansion of the HTG and an extensive search for sites which would more closely meet these criteria. However, this resulted in failure because all the recent development in the village has been on small infill sites and there were absolutely none remaining.

The assessment criteria and site assessments were then revisited so that sites which would result in significant and conspicuous extensions of the build form into open countryside would not be favoured over those which were more infill in nature.

The preferred access to the highest ranked large site (Site 9 – Behind the children's playground) is from the A426 and discussions are being held with LCC to explore how access from this point will be made to conform to current Highways policies.

The site selection criteria and site assessments were further revised to ensure a high level of consistency with the environmental and transport policies developed by the other theme groups.

Detailed discussions were held with the landowner's agent and it was agreed that the size of the favoured sites should be expanded to hold 50 units and not 40. There were three reasons for this. Firstly, it would help mitigate the expense of overcoming what was judged to be difficult vehicular access to the sites. Secondly, there would be significant additional benefits accruing to the village. Thirdly, it was anticipated that, during the life of the plan, there would be a demand from the HDC to increase the housing target.

The changes at each stage were reviewed and approved by the NPSC.

5. The outcome of the process

The table below sets out the results of the Site Sustainability Analysis:

Site Location	RAG Score	Number of units	Ranked
1. Off Leicester Road	Green 12	14	UNDEVELOPABLE
2. Coopers Lane.	Red -1	50	5=
3. North of Old coach Road.	Green 2	50	3
4. Land South of school.	Red -7	50	9
5. Off Little Lunnon West.	Red -1	45	5=
6. The Beat.	Red -8	50	10
7. Off Little Lunnon East.	Red -4	50	8
8. Church Lane.	Red -2	50	7
9. Behind children's playground	Green 4	50	2
10. Rear of Spice 45 restaurant (includes the Site 11 plot)	Green 1	22	4
11. Spice45 restaurant plot.	Green 16	4	1

Site 1 (Off Leicester Road) was confirmed by HDC planners as being “undevelopable” due to severe highways constraints. Therefore, it could not be considered further in the process, despite scoring well.

Site 11 (Spice 45 restaurant plot) is the highest ranked. There is a current planning application for 4 units and it is assumed that this will be approved by the HDC.

Site 9 (Behind children’s playground) is the second ranked site but the highest ranked site able to accommodate the target number of units. It was agreed by the NPSC that this should be the allocated site in the plan, as defined in Policy H1.

Site 3 (North of Old Coach Road) is the third ranked site. It was agreed by the NPSC that this should be the reserve site for development, as defined in Policy H2.

Both Sites 9 and 3 would meet the affordable housing requirement and achieve the target number of units required in the plan period to 2031 with a significant buffer in place.