**Appendix 3 – Housing Site Assessments**

**BLACKFORDBY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

**THE SUSTAINABLE SITE ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK**

## Introduction

1.1 The Neighbourhood Plan (NP) for Blackfordby Parish Council has been prepared by the Blackfordby Neighbourhood Plan Advisory Committee (NPAC) on behalf of the Parish council. One of the key objectives of the NP is to consider housing need during the plan period and set out the most sustainable locations where this need could be delivered through existing planning consents and new residential development.

1.2 A residual housing target for the District has been considered by North West Leicestershire District Council (NWLDC) based upon a District-wide population and economic development increase in numbers and activity. The adopted local development plan including the Parish was made by NWLDC in November 2017, using the Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (HEDNA) report as its evidence base for calculating need.

One of the key aims of the neighbourhood plan is to deliver the necessary housing construction required to meet the housing need in the Parish to 2031. A housing target has been set by NWLDC for Blackfordby up until the end of the current plan period in 2031 and the HTG have accepted and confirmed the figure with the District Council as 147 residential units. However, the HTG are keen to add a 15% Parish buffer to give a target of 169 units to be delivered by 2031.

At present the following three construction sites are physically under construction and will deliver a total of 85 units within about the next twelve months, the following units therefore need to be subtracted from the initial target.

1. East side of Butt Lane. Full planning consent for 71 units, under construction.
2. North Close Blackfordby. Full planning consent for 9 units, under construction.
3. Norris Hill Farm Blackfordby Lane Moira. Full planning consent for 5 units with 1 unit completed.

The revised target to 2031 is therefore reduced to 84 units and in addition to the current activity on site two planning applications have also been granted as follows;

1. North of Butt Lane & East of Hepworth Road. Outline planning consent for 91 units.
2. Sandtop Lane Blackfordby. Outline planning consent for 1 unit.

In “simple terms” the Parish has already exceeded its remaining target of 84 units by 8 units, however, the HTG are keen to influence additional future site development to ensure that local needs will be met.

1.3 This site selection framework sets out how the Blackfordby NPAC identified sustainable sites for the allocation of land for housing development. The recommendations made by the NPAC were informed by evidence collected and assessed by the HTG members, supported by an independent consultant from YourLocale.

* 1. The NP supports the provision of sustainable housing in the Parish and has exceeded the District-wide housing provision target by identifying a potential housing site within the Parish to meet these requirements within locations that are deliverable, developable and are the most acceptable to the local community.

## Where did the site suggestions come from?

2.1 NWLDC had prepared a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) which identified the sites put forward by landowners for residential development. This exercise was completed in 2017 and identified 5 potential residential sites within Blackfordby Parish. A redundant public house within the conservation area was also assessed using a scoring matrix based upon the methodology supported by the National Planning Policy Frameworks (NPPF) guidance (2012 and 2018) and drafted by HTG members to reflect the unique characteristics and scale of Blackfordby Parish.

2.2 A total of 6 sites were available for residential development by owners and their professional advisers, these sites would have yielded over 414 units (against the agreed Parish housing need of 10 to 15 units). A total of 6 Sustainable Site Assessments (SSA’s) were completed to arrive at a ranking of sites to determine which were to be presented to the community as being subject to allocation through the neighbourhood plan.

## Site Selection Criteria

3.1 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 including the Consultant to ensure that all the local factors had been fully considered and were reflected in the reports. This led to some amendments being agreed by members of the HTG and it was then possible to rank each site in order of overall sustainability.

## The Criteria and the RAG Scoring System

4.1 The HTG agreed twenty seven sustainability indicators as the criteria in the SSA scoring matrix that are relevant to the selection and allocation of sites for new dwellings using evidence from the NPPF’s of 2012 and 2018. The SHLAA methodology used by NWLDC was also referred too, coupled with the experience of the consultant in undertaking SSA reviews and from past “made” neighbourhood plan residential site allocations.

4.2 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 might 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.

4.3 The following sustainable site assessment scoring framework was used to compare each site.

## Table 1 – The Sustainable Site Assessment scoring framework for Blackfordby

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Issue** | **G** | **A** | **R** |
| 1. Site capacity. | Small capacity up to 10 dwellings alone or in conjunction with another  site | Medium capacity of between 11-20 dwellings | Large capacity of more than 20 dwellings |
| 2. Current Use. | Vacant | Existing uses need to be relocated | Loss of important local asset |
| 3. Adjoining Uses. | Site wholly within residential area or village envelope | Site adjoining village envelope or  residential location | Extending village envelope outside  boundary |
| 4. Topography. | Flat or gently sloping site | Undulating site or greater slope that can  be mitigated | Severe slope that cannot be mitigated |
| 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 3 (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 | Less than substantial harm to quality | Substantial harm to quality |
| 9. Important Trees, Woodlands & Hedgerows. | None affected | Mitigation measures required | Site would harm or require removal of Ancient tree or hedge (or TPO) |
| 10. Relationship with existing pattern of built development. | Land visible from a small number of properties | Land visible from a range of sources mitigated through landscaping or planting | Prominent visibility  Difficult to improve |
| 11. Local Wildlife considerations. | No impact on wildlife site | Small to medium impact but with  potential to mitigate | Statutorily protected species in place |
| 12. Listed Building or important built assets and their setting. | No harm to existing building | Less than substantial harm | Substantial harm |
| 13. Impact on the Conservation  Area or its setting. | No harm | Less than substantial harm | Substantial harm |
| 14. Safe pedestrian access to and from the site. | Existing footpath | No footpath but can be created | No potential for footpath |
| 1. Safe vehicular traffic to and from the site. | Appropriate access can be easily provided | Appropriate access can only be provided with significant improvement | Appropriate access cannot be provided |
| 1. Impact on existing vehicular traffic. | Impact on village centre minimal | Medium scale impact on village centre | Major impact on village centre |
| 1. Safe access to public transport (specifically a bus stop with current service). | A distance of 200m or less | A distance of 201-400m | A distance of greater than 401m |
| 18. Distance to designated village centre (pub/bus stop). | A distance of 200m or less | A distance of 201 – 400m | A distance of greater than 401m |
| 19. Distance to Primary School. | A distance of 200m or less | A distance of 201-400m | A distance of greater than 401m |
| 20 Current existing informal/formal recreational  opportunities on site. | No recreational uses on site | Informal recreational uses on site | Formal recreational uses on site |
| 21. Ancient monuments or archaeological remains. | No harm to an ancient monument or remains site | Less than substantial harm to an ancient monument or remains site | Substantial harm to an ancient  monument or remains |
| 22. Any existing public rights of ways/bridle paths. | No impact on public right of way | Detriment to public right of way | Re-routing required or would cause significant harm |
| 23. Gas and/or oil pipelines & electricity transmission network  (Not water/sewage). | Site unaffected | Re-siting may be necessary | Re-siting may not be possible |
| 24. Any noise issues. | No noise issues | Mitigation may be necessary | Noise issues will be an ongoing concern |
| 25. Any contamination issues | No contamination or mining issues | Minor mitigation required | Major mitigation required |
| 26. Any known flooding issues. | No flooding for more than 25 years | Flooded once in last 25 years | Flooded more than once in last  25 years |
| 27. Any drainage issues. | No drainage issues identified | Need for mitigation | Drainage concerns. |

1. **The assessment outcome**
   1. The assessments were considered at a number of meetings of the HTG to ensure that adequate local knowledge was central to the process. This led to a reassessment of some sites by the YourLocale Consultant with amendments subsequently agreed with the HTG members to ensure an objective and transparent approach prior to the assessments being circulated more widely. Unfortunately, the owners of the redundant public house did not respond to correspondence and the site, although initially assessed highly was not able to proceed as it was not deliverable.
   2. The five assessments remaining SSA’s were amended to reflect HTG and local peoples input and then circulated as drafts to the relevant site sponsor, usually the land owner or a professional agent working on their behalf. All parties were invited to comment upon the reports, the feedback was considered and the reports were analysed line by line and further amendments made.

* 1. A final HTG meeting was held to ensure that all factors had been fairly considered. Some of the assessments were amended in the light of new information provided and the final SSA scores were then debated and signed off by the NPAC.
  2. The final outcome of the assessment is as recorded below in the following table. The RAG Rating is obtained by deducting the “Red” scores from the “Green” scores, an “Amber” remains neutral.
  3. The final approved site is highlighted in the table below in **bold** type:

## Table 2 – Site assessment outcomes

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Site Location** | **RAG Score** | **Number of units** | **Rank** |
| Expansion site Heath Lane/Boundary | Red minus seven | 200 | Third |
| **Land rear of 31 Main Street** | **Green Ten** | **14** | **First** |
| Expansion site Butt Lane | Red minus seven | 124 | Third |
| Land at Hepworth Road | Red minus seven | 22 | Third |
| Land at Moira border | Red minus three | 24 | Second |

* 1. The NPAC having considered all of the evidence has allocated the highest scoring green site, Land to the rear of 31 Main Street for about 14 residential units.
  2. Allocating this site exceeds the NWLDC target and the site is confirmed to be developable and deliverable.

Blackfordby Neighbourhood Plan Advisory Committee