

BELTON – SITE ASSESSMENT

SETTLEMENT SUMMARY

Settlement Hierarchy

- Belton is a Sustainable Village in the adopted Local Plan.
- It is proposed to remain as a Sustainable Village in the new Local Plan.

Key services and facilities

- There is a primary school in the village (Belton C of E Primary School). There is capacity at the village primary school and it also has the potential to extend.
- The nearest secondary school is at outside the district in Shepshed (Iveshead School, in Charnwood). The school is over capacity but has the potential to extend.
- Belton has a local convenience shop.
- The closest large scale employment areas are in Shepshed.
- Belton is served by the 129 bus service. This provides a connection to Ashby, Shepshed and Loughborough, although there are only five buses in each direction per day (Monday to Saturday).

Other services and facilities

- There is a GP surgery in the village, as well as a village hall, public house, church and formal and informal recreation facilities (including a recreation ground with pitches and a multi-use games area).
- The closest pharmacies are in Shepshed and Whitwick.

Settlement Features

- **Flood Zones 2/3a/3b** – areas at greater risk of flooding are located to the west of the village (including within site Be4).
- **Pasture & Asplin Woods Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)**- This SSSI is located to the west of the village (within the boundary of Be4). The village is in the Impact Risk Zone.
- **Bredon Cloud Wood & Quarry Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)** – This SSSI is located just beyond Pasture & Asplin Woods.
- **Minerals Consultation Area for Sand and Gravel** – land to the west of Belton is located in this MCA.
- **Melbourne Parklands Landscape Character Area** – Belton and the surrounding area is located in this LCA.

STAGE 1 - SITE IDENTIFICATION

The 2021 SHELAA identifies three sites for housing in Belton:

Site Reference	Site Address
Be2	Belton Farm, Church Street
Be3	Land East of Hallamford Rd and South of Ashby Rd
Be4	Land west of Belton and north of B5324

STAGE 2 – SITE SIEVE

No sites were sieved out at this stage.

STAGE 3 - SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL

SA Ref	SA Objective	SA Summary
SA1	Improve the health and wellbeing of the District's population	Be2 scores significant positive Be3 and Be4 score significant negative
SA2	Reduce inequalities and ensure fair and equal access and opportunities for all residents	Be2 scores minor positive Be3 and Be4 score significant negative
SA3	Help create the conditions for communities to thrive	Be2 scores minor positive Be3 and Be4 score minor negative
SA4	Provide good quality homes that meet local needs in terms of number, type and tenure in locations where it can deliver the greatest benefits and sustainable access to jobs	++
SA5	Support economic growth throughout the District	0
SA6	Enhance the vitality and viability of existing town centres and village centres	Be2 scores minor negative Be3 and Be4 score significant negative
SA7	Provision of a diverse range of employment opportunities that match the skills and needs of local residents	0
SA8	Reduce the need to travel and increase numbers of people walking cycling or using the bus for their day-to-day needs	--
SA9	Reduce air, light and noise pollution to avoid damage to natural systems and protect human health	Be2 and Be4 scores minor negative Be3 scores significant negative
SA11	Ensure the District is resilient to climate change	Be2 scores minor negative Be3 and Be4 score significant negative
SA12	Protect and enhance the District's biodiversity and protect areas identified for their nature conservation and geological importance.	Be2 scores minor negative Be3 and Be4 score significant negative
SA13	Conserve and enhance the quality of the District's landscape and townscape character	Be2 scores minor negative Be3 and Be4 score significant negative
SA14	Ensure land is used efficiently and effectively	--
SA15	Conserve and enhance the character, diversity and local distinctiveness of the District's built and historic heritage	Be2 and Be4 score neutral Be3 scores significant negative
SA16	Protect water resources and ensure they are used efficiently	0

SA17	Ensure the efficient use of natural resources, including reducing waste generation	0
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STAGE 4 – DETAILED SITE ASSESSMENT SUMMARY

Be-2 – Belton Farm Church Street (0.4Ha / about 12 dwellings)

Services & Facilities – The site is within walking distance of the primary school, shop, GP surgery and informal and formal recreation. The site is not within reasonable walking distance of public transport (which is an infrequent service) or secondary school (Shepshed).

Summary of SA

SA Objectives															
Health and Wellbeing	Inequalities	Community	Housing	Economy	Town/Village centres	Employment	Sustainable travel	Air, Light & Noise	Flooding	Biodiversity & Geodiversity	Landscape	Land-use efficiency	Historic Environment	Water & Soil	Waste
SA1	SA2	SA3	SA4	SA5	SA6	SA7	SA8	SA9	SA11	SA12	SA13	SA14	SA15	SA16	SA17
++	+	+	++	0	-	0	--	-	-	-	-	--	0	0	0

As with all sites in Belton this site performs very well against SA4 but very poorly against SA8 and SA14. The site scores better against SA1, SA2, SA3, SA6, SA11, SA12 and SA13 than all other sites (reflecting the sites location on the edge of the village). It scores the same against SA9 than one site, but better than the other site.

Key Planning Considerations - Development of this site would increase housing in the settlement by 3.6%.

The site comprises a rectangular parcel of land to the east of Church Street and a long a narrow track which also a Public Right of Way (PROW). The south west part has a number of agricultural buildings and open storage, whilst the north eastern part is a grassed area. These are the subject of planning permission for 4 new dwellings together with the conversion of the existing farmhouse (20/00627/OUTM). As part of the permission, there is a requirement to retain the land to the immediate south-east of this site for agricultural purposes.

In landscape terms the site is included in a parcel which is assessed as being Low- Medium in respect of Landscape Sensitivity visual and Medium-High for Landscape Sensitivity. The landscape is not rare and is typical of a rural landscape but is an open and elevated landscape which gains long distance views.

LCC advises that the site is adjacent to a Local Wildlife Site and within a SSSI risk zone. There is potential for development to impact ecological interests, subject to more detailed survey work.

The Highway Authority advises that the site does not currently have a satisfactory access. Furthermore, as the track is a PROW there is a potential for conflict and so may not be acceptable.

Deliverability/Developability – The site has been submitted by an agent on behalf of somebody with an option to develop the site.

Be3 – Land east of Hallamford Road and south of Ashby Road (91ha / about 1,365 dwellings)

Services & Facilities – This site would form an extension to Shepshed, even though it is located in Belton parish. As such this site would be an extension to land that is proposed to be developed that lies within Charnwood Borough. There are currently no services and facilities within walking distance to the site. It is understood that the proposed site in Charnwood may include a site for a school, as well as contributing towards the provision of enhanced community facilities elsewhere in Shepshed. Public transport does pass along Hallamford Road and there may be scope for either diverting existing services to serve a development or to stop along Hallamford Road.

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Health and Wellbeing	Inequalities	Community	Housing	Economy	Town/Village centres	Employment	Sustainable travel	Air, Light & Noise	Flooding	Biodiversity & Geodiversity	Landscape	Land-use efficiency	Historic Environment	Water & Soil	Waste	
SA1	SA2	SA3	SA4	SA5	SA6	SA7	SA8	SA9	SA11	SA12	SA13	SA14	SA15	SA16	SA17	
--	--	-	++	0	--	0	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	0	0	

As with all sites in Belton this site performs very well against SA4 but very poorly against SA8 and SA14. The site has the greatest number of significant effects (10) and with only positive effect recorded. It scores less well than Be2 against all objectives (other than SA6 where it scores the same). It scores the same against all objectives as Be4 other than SA9 and SA15 where it scores worse

Key Planning Considerations - The site is an extensive parcel of land to the north of Ashby Road and to the west of Hallamford Road. To the north the site abuts Ashby Road, to the east it borders the M1. There is extensive area of woodland along most of the eastern part of the site which is an Ancient Woodland but which is excluded from the site. The southern boundary is defined by the Grace Dieu Brook. Land on the opposite side of the stream is allocated for housing development as part of the Charnwood Local Plan. This site would be an extension to that. The site slopes gently down from the Ashby Road and is flat in that area adjoining the stream.

The land is assessed as being grade 3 agricultural land and is in agricultural use. There are a number of PROWs which cross the site.

That part of the site adjoining the Grace Dieu Brook as identified as being within Flood Zone 3a

In landscape terms the site is included in a parcel which is assessed as being Medium for both Landscape and Visual Sensitivity. This is a rural landscape with a large tract of valuable ancient woodland, which is highly sensitive to change as a result of development. However much of the parcel is formed by medium to large scale arable fields which are less sensitive.

LCC Ecology advises that there is a potential for development to impact upon ecological interests, including existing hedges and the Ancient Woodland area.

LCC Highways advise that there is not currently a satisfactory vehicular access.

Deliverability/Developability –

The site is in single ownership and has been submitted on behalf of the site owner. No house builder is involved at present

Be4 – Land west of Belton and north of B5324 (398ha / about 5,970 dwellings)

Services & Facilities – This site is being promoted as a potential new settlement. There are currently no services and facilities on the site. The nearest services and facilities to this site are in Belton, none of which are within reasonable walking distance of the site.

Summary of SA

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SA1	SA2	SA3	SA4	SA5	SA6	SA7	SA8	SA9	SA11	SA12	SA13	SA14	SA15	SA16	SA17
--	--	-	++	0	--	0	--	-	--	--	--	--	0	0	0

As with all sites in Belton this site performs very well against SA4 but very poorly against SA8 and SA14. The site has second most number of significant effects (8) and with only positive effect recorded. It scores less well than Be2 against all objectives (other than SA6 and SA9 where it scores the same). It scores the same against all objectives as Be4 other than SA9 and SA15 where it scores better.

Key Planning Considerations – This site would be a new settlement rather than an extension to an existing one.

The site covers an extensive area to the west of Belton and to the north of Ashby Road. It comprises many fields and includes existing buildings which are sporadically sited within the countryside environment. Landscaping is largely limited to boundary treatments. However, there is a large area of Ancient Woodland covering about 41ha in the north west corner of the site.

The land is assessed as being grade 3 agricultural land and is in agricultural use. There are a number of PROWs which cross the site.

About half of the site has been assessed in terms of landscape impact (the north west corner). That identified that area as being Medium-High in terms of landscape Sensitivity and Medium in terms of Visual Sensitivity.

In addition to the Ancient Woodland, LCC Ecology advises that there is potential for development to impact upon ecological interests, but that further information would be required at the application stage. The site includes identified ecological elements including great crested newts and a local wildlife site.

LCC Highways advises that that there is not currently a satisfactory vehicular access.

Deliverability/Developability – No details have been provided with respect to site ownership or whether there is any house builder or developer interest. The site is considered to be not available.

STAGE 5 – OVERALL CONCLUSIONS

In terms of SA, site **Be2** performs significantly better than sites **Be3** and **Be4**. This largely reflects the fact that the latter are large scale sites which are not actually part of Belton. All sites score poorly against SA8 and SA15 reflecting the fact that Belton has a limited range of services and facilities and that all sites involve the loss of greenfield, albeit that site **Be3** is significantly smaller. Sites **Be 3** and **Be4** also score very poorly against Sa1, SA2, SA6, SA11, SA12 and SA13. All sites score very positively against SA4.

From an SA perspective site **Be2** clearly scores better than the other two sites. This reflects its location on the edge of Belton and also its scale. However, it lacks a suitable access. Furthermore, the permission on the adjoining land for housing requires that part of the housing site which immediately adjoins the south-east boundary of this site, to be retained for agricultural purposes. As such ,development of this site would represent an unacceptable intrusion in to the open countryside. It is proposed that the site is not allocated.

Site **Be3** performs poorly in SA terms, although the scale of the site is such that it would be likely that it could provide or contribute towards services and facilities and address some of the other potential negative impacts recorded.

The site would form an extension to Shepshed which is located in Charnwood Borough rather than being part of Belton. On its own this site would not represent a logical development. However, it has to be seen in the context of the fact that the adjoining land to the south is proposed for development in the Charnwood Local Plan for 250 dwellings. Both sites are promoted by the same company. The published housing trajectory shows development on that site starting in 2026/27 with completion expected in 2332/33. If this site were to be allocated development would not be appropriate until the end of the plan period.

Development of this site would represent a very significant extension to Shepshed into open countryside and any new development would be somewhat distant from most services and facilities such as shops and health facilities. The Grace Dieu Brook provides something of a logical and defensive boundary. The proximity to an Ancient Woodland is also a concern. It may be possible to mitigate this, for example through buffer zones, but there are PROW which go through or adjoining it which could result in unacceptable pressure.

Charnwood Borough have identified that they would have concerns regarding the potential impact in transport terms, particularly in view of known issues at J23 of the M1. It is proposed that the site is not allocated.

Site **Be4** would be a new settlement which would result in a significant urbanising upon the countryside. The site scores poorly in terms of SA, but the scale of the site is such that it would be likely that it could provide or contribute towards services and facilities and address some of the other potential negative impacts recorded. The site also includes an area of Ancient Woodland, although some form of mitigation might be possible. There is no landowner or developer interest and so the site is not deliverable. It is proposed that the site is not allocated.