

# Site Assessment and Selection Processes

Updated May 2018

The Working Group's 'Call for Sites' in 2016 elicited 24 sites for consideration as appropriate for residential (or other) development. This included one site, owned by Magna Housing Association, to be considered as a rural exception site for affordable housing. With this number of sites to consider, the Group reviewed the formal processes required to undertake the assessment and selection tasks involved.

1. Working Group members prepared a Site Assessment form to be used by those visiting the sites to collect information about them. The assessments covered areas such as existing use, character of site / immediate area visibility / prominence from surrounding areas, site features including wildlife and natural features, possible constraints, accessibility, and gave an overall assessment regarding whether all, part or none of the site was suitable for development and what mitigation measures, if any, may be required. A copy of the Site Assessment form used is included in the Consultation Process document

Visits to the sites to complete the assessments took place on 14th, 21st and 28th March, 13th April, 30th June and 3rd August 2017 and involved different volunteer members of the Working Group and the independent consultant. Completed Site Assessment forms, maps, site submission forms and photos were then shared with all members of the Working Group using a Drop Box folder so that everyone could review all the information on each site. A copy of the Site Assessment attendance and Declaration of Interest format used is included in the Consultation Process document.

2. Group members considered how they would assess each site in order to rate or rank each site. The key areas that the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group focussed on were drawn from public consultation feedback received. This included the following from our Scoping meetings in April 2016 as follows

- Significant feedback in favour of selective infill development - no backfill
- Affordable/starter homes for local and younger families
- Sheltered housing
- Limited proposals for small developments - between 3 and 10 units
- Maintain "village" feel and open countryside
- Query sustainability / lack of amenities / infrastructure

From the Household Questionnaire, issued in September/October 2016 we obtained the following information

- Most people (about three quarters of those responding to the questionnaire) agreed that we should have some housing, but there wasn't a strong consensus on how many homes, though it is safe to say that only a few (less than 20%) wanted more than 10 homes. Small-scale (1 or 2 dwellings) on infill sites within the village would seem to be an option worth exploring further.
- When asked what type of development would be acceptable, the highest % responses were for single dwellings in controlled locations, small groups of 5 or less, and infilling.

The Working Group members with the support of the independent consultant then used this information to develop criteria to use when assessing each site to identify those sites likely to be able to contribute positively towards sustainable development. This led to the development of the Site Assessment Matrix form which was used to measure each site against the 7 objectives below.

## 1. Ensure development is appropriate to the area within which it is placed

(is the site well related to the built-up area of the village and not notably prominent in the wider landscape?)

## 2. Ensure development is complementary to neighbouring properties

(would housing development at this site fit in with neighbouring development?)

**3. Ensure development reinforces the settlement area within which it is placed**

(would housing development at this site enhance the surroundings?)

**4. Retain green spaces and key views**

(would the site avoid the loss of an important view or local landscape feature?)

**5. Minimise the impact of traffic flow**

(would the site avoid causing or adding to existing traffic problems, and could it provide solutions to reduce existing problems?)

**6. Preserve the long term future of community assets (Church, village hall and nursery school)**

(would the development of the site support the improvement or continued use of key community facilities?)

**7. Retain the "village" feel and open nature of Holwell**

(Could the site be developed to contribute positively to the character of the village and avoid overlooking/backfill affecting properties?)

3. Members of the Working Group individually scored each site against the criteria above using the Site Assessment Matrix and Assessment table. A copy of the Site Assessment Matrix used for this work is included in the Consultation Process document. The Group members had agreed that all sites were being assessed for housing based on one house or bungalow per site, with an assumption that hedgerows and trees would be retained where possible. Scores from each sheet were consolidated with average and median scores calculated for each site. These scores were then reviewed by all Working Group members at two meetings of the Working Group held in May 2016, chaired by an independent consultant, and with Declarations of Interest clearly stated. Working Group members reviewed each other's scores, raised any comments or matters of concern before arriving at a single rating of Red, Amber or Green for each site where 'green' sites were those that scored highest against the selection criteria, 'amber' sites were those scoring less well but still broadly positive or neutral, and "red" sites deemed the least suitable with possible adverse impacts – see Table 1. The appropriateness of the final scoring was then agreed by the chair of these meetings with all non-site holders.

															EXCEL RANK calculation, based on "Mean (VOTED)":		
GREEN & AMBER Sites		QUESTION 1													RANK.EQ	RANK.AVG	RANK
		5	4	3	2	1		5	4	3	2	1	Mean (VOTED)	Median (VOTED)	5+4	1+2	
A: Plot between Hillandale & Meadow Cottage (55)		RAND-7	10	21	12	7	4	1	18.5%	38.9%	22.2%	13.0%	7.4%	0.48	1	57.4%	20.4%
B: Land by Plot belonging to Magna (53)		RAND-4	10	14	15	5	5	4	20.4%	28.6%	30.6%	10.2%	10.2%	0.39	0	49.0%	20.4%
C: Plot adj The Rectory, Pulham Road (55)		RAND-2	25	10	11	3	6	0	45.5%	18.2%	20.0%	5.5%	10.9%	0.82	1	63.6%	16.4%
D: Site adj Gunville House (53)		RAND-3	15	10	22	2	4	0	28.3%	18.9%	41.5%	3.8%	7.5%	0.57	0	47.2%	11.3%
E: Site at Random Harvest, Stony Lane (52)		RAND-6	12	11	17	5	7	0	23.1%	21.2%	32.7%	9.6%	13.5%	0.31	0	44.2%	23.1%
F: Site between Naishlea & Trims Grnd, Stony Ln (53)		RAND-5	7	17	19	8	2	0	13.2%	32.1%	35.8%	15.1%	3.8%	0.36	0	45.3%	18.9%
G: Site between Roseacre & Newhaven, Fosters Hill (51)		RAND-12	22	15	11	0	3	0	43.1%	29.4%	21.6%	0.0%	5.9%	1.04	1	72.5%	5.9%
H: Westbourne (37)		RAND-14	10	10	10	6	1	0	27.0%	27.0%	16.2%	2.7%	0.59	1	54.1%	18.9%	
J: Site at Barnes Cross Cottage (55)		RAND-15	0	4	13	19	17	2	0.0%	7.5%	24.5%	35.8%	32.1%	-0.92	-1	7.5%	67.9%
K: Land at Crouch Hill/The Drove (51)		RAND-17	0	5	7	14	24	1	0.0%	10.0%	14.0%	28.0%	48.0%	-1.14	-1	10.0%	76.0%
L: Barn at Holborough, The Borough (53)		RAND-1	3	4	21	6	18	1	5.8%	7.7%	40.4%	11.5%	34.6%	-0.62	0	13.5%	46.2%
M: Site at Crouch Lane, opp School (55)		RAND-8	1	4	14	15	21	0	1.8%	7.3%	25.5%	27.3%	38.2%	-0.93	-1	9.1%	65.5%
N: Site The Smithy,adj Random Harvest, Stony Ln (53)		RAND-11	3	11	12	9	17	1	5.8%	21.2%	23.1%	17.3%	32.7%	-0.50	-1	26.9%	50.0%
P: Barns at Naish Farm (53)		RAND-9	1	8	20	10	13	1	1.9%	15.4%	38.5%	19.2%	25.0%	-0.50	0	17.3%	44.2%
Q: Land with road frontage Vale View Farmhouse (55)		RAND-16	1	7	16	11	16	4	2.0%	13.7%	31.4%	21.6%	31.4%	-0.67	-1	15.7%	52.9%
R: Elm Tree Farm (33)		RAND-10	1	3	11	5	13	0	3.0%	9.1%	33.3%	15.2%	39.4%	-0.79	-1	12.1%	54.5%
S: Adj Coombe House (33)		RAND-13	1	1	1	1	1	1	20.0%	20.0%	20.0%	20.0%	20.0%	0.00	-1	40.0%	40.0%

TABLE 1: Site Assessment Data for "Green" and "Amber" Sites.

Median score ranges for each category were as follows

Green sites	5 to 12
Amber sites	-1 to 3
Red sites	-10 to -1

Five additional sites were put forward after these initial meetings were held so, to ensure consistency of process, a further meeting was held in July 2016, chaired by a member of the Parish Council who sat on the Working Group, to review the additional sites. Notes were kept of all the discussions held and can be viewed.

4. Details of the site options was sent to the officers at West Dorset District Council (WDDC) in August 2017 for their review and feedback. At a meeting in November 2017 the lack of any response was highlighted and WDDC officers indicated that they would ask for landscape and heritage feedback to be provided but this may not be possible due to staff shortages and workload.

5. All of the information on each site was displayed during Open Sessions for residents held on three dates in July, August and September 2017 together with the suggested rating given by the Working Group. Residents were asked to give feedback on a Site Options Consultation Questionnaire dated July 2017. A copy of this questionnaire is included in the Consultation Process document. A total of 55 completed questionnaire forms were received from residents that were on the Electoral Roll and the responses were collated and reviewed by the Working Group members.

6. Technical checks were undertaken in respect of potential environmental and infrastructure constraints. This included contact with the Transport Development Management Team at WDDC regarding any potential highway / access issues, and a desk-top review of each site's proximity to Listed Buildings, flood risk areas (as mapped for river and surface water flooding) and designated wildlife sites – see Table 2. Ecology walkover surveys would be undertaken at a later point in the process for sites proposed for inclusion in the plan (rather than all sites).

7. At the Group's November 2017 meeting, they reviewed and agreed to use a weighted mean (or weighted average) to analyse the figures. This is like a simple average except that, instead of assuming that all of the values being averaged are equally important (and so have equal weight), some of the values are more important (so have more weight) than others and the Group were taken through a set of anonymised data to explain the process. Full details of these discussions can be found in the Group's meeting notes of 2nd November 2017 on the web site.

[http://holwellneighbourhoodplan.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/NP\\_Mtg\\_33\\_Notes\\_02\\_Nov\\_2017\\_Issue\\_1.pdf](http://holwellneighbourhoodplan.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/NP_Mtg_33_Notes_02_Nov_2017_Issue_1.pdf)

8. Questions had been raised by two members of the Working Group about some of the wording used on the Site Options documents and, in response to this, it was agreed that each Working Group member be invited to revisit the information for each site and identify proposed changes to any Site Profile document or any proposed changes to references in the Site Profile document relating to listed buildings or heritage assets. These responses were sent in confidence to the Parish Clerk who consolidated the 8 responses received which were reviewed at a meeting on 4th January 2018. Although some amendments were made to Site Profiles, none of the changes was deemed to be major enough to warrant further consultation on any site. Notes made at this meeting can be viewed.

9. At the Group's meeting on 18th January 2018, after all checks had been finalised, Working Group members reviewed the scores and selected the sites that would form the allocations to be included in the Plan.

10. At a meeting with WDDC officers to get feedback on the draft plan in May 2018, they confirmed that heritage officers were satisfied that there would be no substantial harm to any Listed Buildings. Landscape feedback was not yet available due to limited staff resources.

Description	Biodiversity					Cultural Heritage				Flood Risk		
	On site	Within 50m	Within 200m	Notes	On site	Within 50m	Within 200m	Notes	On site	Notes		
A: Plot between Hillanddale & Meadow Cottage	N	N	N		N	Y	Y	within approx 50m of Strawberry Cottage Grade II, but unlikely to impinge on setting	N			
B: Land by Plot belonging to Magna	N	N	N		N	N	Y	within approx 150m of Church Hill Farmhouse Grade II, unlikely to impinge on setting	N			
C: Plot adj The Rectory, Pulham Road	N	N	N		N	N	Y	within approx 80m of Church Hill Farmhouse Grade II, unlikely to impinge on setting	N			
D: Site adj Gunville House	N	N	N		N	N	Y	within approx 100m of Elm Tree Farm Grade II, unlikely to impinge on setting	N			
E: Site at Random Harvest, Stony Lane	N	N	N		N	N	N		N			
F: Site between Naishlea & Trims Grnd, Stony Ln	N	N	N		N	N	Y	within approx 190m of Naish Farm Grade II*, unlikely to impinge on setting	N			
G: Site between Roseacre & Newhaven, Fosters Hill	N	N	N		N	N	N		N			
H: Westbourne	N	N	N		N	N	N		N			
J: Site at Barnes Cross Cottage	N	Y	Y	Verges of wildlife value	N	Y	Y	Pillar box Listed Grade II*, development potentially impacting on setting	N			
K: Land at Crouch Hill/The Drove	N	N	N		N	Y	Y	Church Hill Farmhouse Grade II on opposite side of Holwell Drove, may impact on setting	N			
L: Barn at Holborough, The Borough	N	Y	Y	Churchyard of wildlife value	N	Y	Y	Old Rectory, Church and Holwell Farm etc all Listed and site likely to form part of setting	Part	part of field adjoining river within FRZ		
M: Site at Crouch Lane, opp School	N	N	Y	Land opposite side of Crouch Lane - local designation	N	N	Y	within approx 150m of Church Hill Farmhouse Grade II, unlikely to impinge on setting	Part	very small areas within site prone to surface water flood risk		
N: Site The Smithy, adj Random Harvest, Stony Ln	N	N	N		N	N	N		N	access may be impacted		
P: Barns at Naish Farm	N	N	N		N	Y	Y	within curtilage of Naish Farm Grade II*, likely to impact on setting	N			
Q: Land with road frontage Vale View Farmhouse	N	N	N		N	N	N		N			
R: Elm Tree Farm	N	N	N		N	Y	Y	adjoins Elm Tree Farm Grade II, likely to impact on setting	N			
S: Adj Coombe House	N	N	N		N	N	Y	within approx 60m of Strawberry Cottage Grade II, but unlikely to impinge on setting	N			
T: Field adj. Barton Farm, Stony Lane	N	N	N		N	Y	Y	site adjoins Naish Farm Grade II*, however depending on location of development may not impact on setting	N			
U: Site adj Nightingale Cottage	N	N	Y	Land opposite side of Crouch Lane - local designation	N	N	N		Part	very small areas within site prone to surface water flood risk		
V: Land, rear of Lotmead	N	N	N		N	N	N		Part	part of field (to SE)		
W: Land on Holwell Rd	N	N	N		N	N	N	rear of site is within 200m of Middle Piccadilly	N			
X: Village Hall site	N	N	N		N	N	Y	approx 80m from Elm Tree Farm Grade II on opposite side of road, may impact on setting	N			
Y: Crouch Lane (behind Stonewater site)	N	N	Y	Field approx 80m to N - local designation	N	N	N		N			
Z: Roselawn, Stony Lane	N	N	N		N	N	N		Y	large area at risk		

TABLE 2: Site Review With Respect To Biodiversity, Cultural Heritage and Flood Risk.