

Finding Development Sites for the Future

A Community Sites Assessment Survey

Why Consider Land for New Development?

It is widely accepted there is a shortage of new homes across the country. The Government requires all councils to allocate land to build new homes and facilities for the future. Some of this land will be within rural communities.

To comply with this, the Council is now producing a site allocations policy document. The Localism Act gives communities the power to take an active part in the allocation of development.

The first stage of this process generates a long list of possible locations for housing development across the district. These have been put forward by owners. They have no status and no permission for development. This list includes sites in the parish.

The next stage is to create a shortlist of sites that might have the potential for development, rejecting those that are not suitable.

To stand up to challenges from those who do not agree with the list, the selection decisions must be based on solid evidence. Many councils use a score sheet method to rate the suitability of a site to sustainably accommodate development.

This is known as a sustainability appraisal.

The input of evidence from people in the community, who know the village and the sites, makes appraisal evidence stronger.

Completing this DIY survey of the suggested sites is your opportunity to help your community safeguard your village or town from harmful development and help guide the right sort of investment and development for the future.

The more people carry out surveys the stronger the evidence.

SITE ASSESSMENT SURVEY – (DRAFT EXAMPLE)

The Site being surveyed is:

The surveying team/person:

Date:

- This survey is designed to help you examine and record key aspects of one of the sites suggested for development in and around your parish.
- No sites have yet been formally allocated for development. The evidence and understanding provided by your work will contribute to identifying land and features to be protected or enhanced and potential land that could accommodate growth in your parish.
- The questions below follow sustainability appraisal topics used by the planners. They will help you provide stronger evidence.
- Remember, development is not all or nothing. Perhaps only part of a site might turn out to be appropriate – that is one thing this process will reveal.

We are giving you:

- This introduction and form.
- A map of the specific site you are looking at.

Getting the survey done:

- You do not necessarily have to get access onto the site to do this survey.
- Even if you (think you) know the site well, walk up and down, look all around.
- Start by taking some photos of the site from outside looking in.
- Only if you can (physically, safely legally) get onto the site, then take a few photos from the site looking out.
- Mark on the map wherever you take any photos from, and in what direction (use a dot and a little arrow).
- For most (not all) of the form just add notes in boxes in response to the questions.
- If easier, more appropriate or in addition, add notes on the map.
- Don't get too hung up on our terms and feel free to add 'not sure' if that helps.

When you have finished:

- Place the form and site map back in the envelope (keep anything else if you wish) and return it to the Parish or Town Council office
- We also need your photos so please either:
 - call in to the Parish or Town Council office with your memory card or CD to download them on the spot, or
 - send them by email to

PART :1 Site Character and Features

In some boxes we offer hints – use, ignore or add to as you wish.

A. What is the landform of the site, eg. flat, sloping, in which direction?

B. What important views of the site are there from outside?

C. What important views of the village or landscape are there from inside?

D. Describe Important Site Features	
The Boundary: Materials Level of Enclosure And	
Any Buildings etc.: Use, Age, Quality, Condition And ...	
The Landscape and Natural Features And	

E. What are the Character, Uses and Features of the surrounding area?

PART 2: Sustainability of the Site

For each sustainability question below, place an X in the box that you think most applies to the site.

A: Views and Setting. How important do you think the site is in views of the built settlement and the landscape?

<p>Low Importance: Likely to be able to accommodate development without harming views and the setting.</p>	
<p>Medium Importance: Some important views but these could be maintained with a well designed development.</p>	
<p>Highly Important and Sensitive: Site is very important in village setting and landscape and unable to accommodate development without major harm.</p>	
Notes?	

B: Green Space and Wildlife. From what you know and have recorded, how well do you think development on this site could conserve or enhance important existing natural features and wildlife?

<p>Very Well: There are few existing important natural features or signs of wildlife. There is potential to create new green environments.</p>	
<p>Potential for Conservation: Any important features could be conserved or replaced within a well designed scheme. (You can note the features in the next section)</p>	
<p>Too Sensitive for Development: There are too many, too valuable features to accommodate development without causing major harm to local character.</p>	
Notes?	

C: Neighbouring Character and Uses - How well do you think development on this site could fit into the neighbouring character?

Development could improve character by removing eyesores or creating improved character.	
Well designed development could fit with neighbouring land uses and the area's character.	
Development of any kind would not fit with, and would harm, character.	
Any Notes?	

D: Walking and Cycling. How well connected is the site to local facilities?

Good. Safe unhindered access to a good range of facilities within about 400 metres.	
Reasonable. Safe, unhindered access to basic facilities within about 800 metres.	
Poor. Distance, connection and safety issues to limited facilities.	
Very Poor. Relatively isolated, poor connection and safety.	
Any Notes?	

E: Public Transport. How well connected is the site?

Good. Good walking distance to public transport (400 metres).	
Fair. Good walking distance but accessibility and/or safety issues.	
Poor. Distance and poor connections discourages use.	
Any Notes?	

PART 3: Your Priority Issues and Suggestions

A: Key Features

From ALL your observations, what do you think are most important issues and features of this site?

EXAMPLE ONLY

B: Key Priorities

If you think this site could be considered for development, how much of it could be? What are the main problems that any development would need to solve?

EXAMPLE ONLY