

## APPENDIX 3: HOUSING SITES SELECTION CRITERIA

### Issues and Options Consultation

In assessing the potential housing locations as part of 2007 Supplementary Issues and Options Consultation, locations were described on the basis of the existing designation and status of the location; indicative housing capacity; planning constraints such as Green Belt, landscape designations and flood zones; access to key local facilities such as schools, GPs, convenience stores and transport services; and issues relating to utilities provision (gas, water, sewerage, electricity).

The majority of respondents agreed with using these criteria, though some additional criteria were also suggested. These were:

- Environmental quality (including noise, air quality, light levels)
- Congestion in area/road capacity/road safety/parking
- Protection of Green Belt
- Capacity of Schools/access to nurseries
- Wildlife habitats, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Local Nature Reserves, Regionally Important Geological and Geomorphological sites, biodiversity value
- Transport provision/capacity/access to footpaths
- Capacity of healthcare services
- Impact on existing residents
- Current land value (in terms of amenity/employment)
- Existing dwelling densities in area
- Potential for minimising environmental impact and creating sustainable communities
- Proximity to employment opportunities
- Proximity to youth and social facilities
- Drainage
- Flood zones
- Landscape quality
- Proximity to leisure facilities/open space
- Quality of life (including social issues and crime)
- Site ownership/availability
- Utility provision
- Archaeological potential of areas
- Contamination and development costs
- Potential of sites to achieve affordable housing
- Visual impact.

### Sustainability Appraisal

The Sustainability Appraisal supports the criteria and methodology used to assess proposed housing locations and the use of Geographic Information Systems to assess them in terms of potential constraints and opportunities. The Sustainability Appraisal

expands on the criteria, and uses 33 criteria within three broad categories: environmental designations; accessibility/key services; and land uses. The criteria used are as follows:

#### Environmental Designations

- Area of Archaeological Importance
- Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- Area subject to local preservation
- Groundwater Protection Zone
- Conservation area
- Flood zone 2
- Flood zone 3
- Regionally Important Geological/Geomorphological site
- Registered parks and gardens
- Scheduled Monuments
- Wildlife sites
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest/Local Nature Reserves
- Listed buildings.

#### Accessibility/key services

- Within 2000m of an employment area
- Within 5000m of a residential area
- Within 2000m of a residential area
- School
- Within 600m of a school
- Within 800m of a local centre
- Within 1000m of a railway station
- Within 500m of a bus service
- Doctor's surgery
- Within 800m of a doctors surgery.

#### Land uses

- Public open space
- Common land
- Agricultural land (Grade 2)
- Reservoirs
- Rivers
- Railway line
- Sand/ gravel belt
- Hazardous substances
- Green Belt.

## **Agreed Criteria for Assessing Housing Locations**

### **Scoring**

For every site/area being considered a score of 1-10 will be allocated where 1 reflects where a site/area scores poorly in relation to the Criteria and 10 where it reflects very highly.

Each site/area will be assessed and scored in turn against each of the Criteria in **Table 2** below and all of the scores derived for each Criterion will be added up to give an overall score for each site/area. Those sites/areas with the highest overall scores will be considered as those with the most potential for future housing development. Those with the lowest scores will be eliminated and not considered further.

The scoring will be carried out as objectively as possible taking into account the location of the site/area in relation to the Criterion/Constraint and potential impact. GIS mapping systems will be used to help with the process to measure distances in this regard. In some cases, for a site/area to score highly it is better to be further away from a Criterion (e.g. an environmental designation such as a Site of Special Scientific Interest) but in others it is better to be located closer to services (e.g. a rail station or health facility). The distances specified will vary according to the Criteria and what is considered 'reasonable' distances in relation to each. They have been derived from standards used in national, regional and local planning policy and/or Sustainability Appraisals.

### **Weighting**

Once scores for each Criterion have been ascertained (this will range from between 1 and 10), they will be multiplied by a factor of between 1 and 5 depending on how important that Criterion is in relation to permitting development in an area. All the Criteria identified are important but it is necessary to distinguish between degrees of importance in this exercise. The five different categories of Weighting are set out in **Table 1** below.

Table 1: Weighting Applicable to Criteria

Weighting	Multiplication Factor	Explanation
<b>Most Important</b>	X 5	Criteria with this weighting are of the highest importance and will relate to environmental or landscape designations of the highest national order (Green belt, AONB, SSSI) and where development could have the greatest impact.
<b>Very Important</b>	X4	Criteria with this weighting are very important and will relate to regionally important environmental designations such as Local Nature Reserves as well as considerations such as flood risk and urban conservation. Whilst very important, it may however be possible to mitigate or reduce the impact of development in relation to these criteria through design/ siting and/or environmental enhancement measures.
<b>Important</b>	X3	Criteria with this weighting are of some importance and will relate to environmental designation of local importance such as Wildlife sites and access to a range of local services. It will often be possible to mitigate or reduce the impact of development in relation to these criteria through design/ siting and/or environmental enhancement measures and by improving accessibility to local services or facilities through on site provision or nearby.
<b>Significant</b>	X 2	Criteria with this weighting are also significant in relation to others and will relate to Criteria where the direct impact of development is likely to be more easily controlled through development. For example where a site affects a site of archaeological importance, it can often be a condition of permitting development that further survey work is carried and remains recorded before development is carried out. Similarly where a site is affected by land contamination it is often possible to deal with it through removal and/or remediation.
<b>Other relevant factors</b>	X1	Criteria with this weighting are also relevant in relation to others and will relate to Criteria which will be affected usually only in an indirect manner and/or where it can be more easily controlled through development.

**Table 2: Site Selection Criteria**

CATEGORY	WEIGHTING	EXPLANATION
Impact on Green Belt	<b>Most Important</b>	Assessment of the impact that development at this location would have on the openness of the Green Belt taking into account coalescence of settlements and degree of encroachment. Sites with the least impact on the Green Belt will score highest.
Contribution to Green Belt Objectives	<b>Most Important</b>	Assessment of the contribution made by the site to Green Belt objectives as defined in Planning Policy Guidance 2. Sites that contribute well to Green Belt objectives will score lower, while sites that do not contribute to Green Belt objectives will score highest.
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty	<b>Most Important</b>	Assessment of whether the site lies within the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) or within 1000m of it. Sites further than 1000m from the AONB will score highest.
Site of Special Scientific Interest	<b>Most Important</b>	Assessment of whether the site lies within a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), or within 1000m of it. Sites further than 1000m from any SSSI will score highest.
Previously Developed Land	<b>Most Important</b>	Assessment of the potential for development on the site to take place on previously developed land (PDL) as opposed to Greenfield land. Sites with potential for development to take place on PDL will score highest.
Floodzone	<b>Very Important</b>	Assessment of whether the site lies within a floodzone as identified in the Council's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) or within 1000m of it. Sites further than 1000m from floodzones will score highest. Type of floodzone by flood risk (eg. 3a or 3b) also taken into account.
Local Nature Reserve	<b>Very Important</b>	Assessment of whether the site lies within a Local Nature Reserve (LNR), or within 1000m of it. Sites further than 1000m from any LNR will score highest.
Listed Building	<b>Very Important</b>	Assessment of whether the site contains any listed buildings or whether there are any within 1000m of it. Sites further than 1000m from any listed buildings will score highest.
Scheduled Ancient Monument	<b>Very Important</b>	Assessment of whether the site contains any Scheduled Ancient Monument, or whether there are any within 1000m of it. Sites further than 1000m from any Scheduled Ancient Monument will score highest.
Rail Station	<b>Very Important</b>	Assessment of whether there is a rail station within 1000m of the site. Sites closer to a rail station will score higher.
Critical Mass	<b>Very Important</b>	Assessment of the potential for any development at the site to form a natural extension of the urban area and to expand nearby existing facilities. Sites with the greatest potential will score highest.

Site availability	<b>Important</b>	Assessment of the availability of the site for development and likelihood of site coming forward during the lifetime of the LDF; sites in largely single ownership and where there is interest shown by the landowner/agent to bring the site forward, as expressed in previous representations/ discussions with the Council, will score highest.
Wildlife Site	<b>Important</b>	Assessment of whether the site lies within a designated wildlife site, or within 1000m of it. Sites further than 1000m from any wildlife site will score highest.
Conservation Area	<b>Important</b>	Assessment of whether the site lies within a conservation area, or within 1000m of it. Sites further than 1000m from any conservation area will score highest.
Registered Park or Garden	<b>Important</b>	Assessment of whether the site is within a registered park or garden, or whether there are any within 1000m of it. Sites further than 1000m from any registered park or garden will score highest.
Common Land/ Village Green	<b>Important</b>	Assessment of whether the site is within registered common land or village green, or whether there is any within 1000m of it. Sites further than 1000m from any registered common land or village green will score highest.
Hospital (A&E)	<b>Important</b>	Assessment of whether there is a hospital with accident and emergency facilities within 3000m of the site. Sites closer to a hospital(s) will score higher.
GP	<b>Important</b>	Assessment of whether there is a GP surgery within 800m of the site. Sites closer to a GP(s) will score higher.
Employment	<b>Important</b>	Assessment of whether there is an employment area (as set out in the Local Plan) within 3000m of the site. Sites closer to an employment area(s) and local job opportunities will score higher.
Primary School	<b>Important</b>	Assessment of whether there is a primary school within 600m of the site. Sites closer to a primary school(s) will score higher.
Secondary School	<b>Important</b>	Assessment of whether there is a secondary school within 2000m of the site. Sites closer to a secondary school(s) will score higher.
Primary Shopping	<b>Important</b>	Assessment of whether there is a primary shopping area (as defined in the Local Plan) within 800m of the site. Sites closer to a primary shopping area(s) will score higher.
Secondary Shopping	<b>Important</b>	Assessment of whether there is a secondary shopping area (as defined in the Local Plan) within 800m of the site. Sites closer to a secondary shopping area(s) will score higher.

Local Centre	<b>Important</b>	Assessment of whether there is a local shopping centre (as defined in the Local Plan) within 800m of the site. Sites closer to a local shopping centre(s) will score higher.
Local Shop	<b>Important</b>	Assessment of whether there is a local shop within 500m of the site. Sites closer to a local shop(s) will score higher.
Open Space	<b>Important</b>	Assessment of whether there is publicly accessible open space (as defined in the Local Plan) within 800m of the site. Sites closer to publicly accessible open space(s) will score higher.
Children's Play	<b>Important</b>	Assessment of whether there is children's play space within 400m of the site. Sites closer to a children's play space facility(s) will score higher.
Bus Service	<b>Important</b>	Assessment of whether there is a bus service within 500m of the site. Sites within 500m of a 15 minute frequency bus service will score higher than a 30 minute frequency service, which will score higher than a 60 minute frequency service.
Regionally Important Geological/ Geomorphological Site	<b>Significant</b>	Assessment of whether the site lies within a regionally important geological/ geomorphological site (RIG), or within 1000m of it. Sites further than 1000m from any RIG will score highest.
Locally Important Building	<b>Significant</b>	Assessment of whether the site contains any locally important buildings, or whether there are any within 1000m of it. Sites further than 1000m from any locally important buildings will score highest.
Archaeological Site	<b>Significant</b>	Assessment of whether the site contains any known archaeological sites, or whether there are any within 1000m of it. Sites further than 1000m from any known archaeological site will score highest.
Contamination	<b>Significant</b>	Assessment of whether the site is affected by any landfill (current or historic) or known contamination issues. Sites with no contamination issues will score highest.
Agricultural (Grade 2) Land	<b>Significant</b>	Assessment of whether the site is on the best agricultural land (Grade 2), or whether there is any within 1000m of it. Sites further than 1000m from any Grade 2 agricultural land will score highest.
Police Station	<b>Significant</b>	Assessment of whether there is a police station within 3000m of the site. Sites closer to a police station(s) will score higher.
Fire Station	<b>Significant</b>	Assessment of whether there is a fire station within 3000m of the site. Sites closer to a fire station(s) will score higher.
Dentist	<b>Significant</b>	Assessment of whether there is a dentist surgery within 800m of the site. Sites closer to a dentist(s) will score higher.

Further Education	<b>Significant</b>	Assessment of whether there is a further education facility within 2000m of the site. Sites closer to a further education facility(s) will score higher.
Library	<b>Significant</b>	Assessment of whether there is a library, or a mobile library stop, within 800m of the site. Sites closer to a library(s) will score higher.
Sports Facility	<b>Significant</b>	Assessment of whether there is a sports facility (leisure centre/swimming pool/sports hall) within 3000m of the site. Sites closer to a sports facility(s) will score higher.
Community Hall	<b>Significant</b>	Assessment of whether there is a community hall within 3000m of the site. Sites closer to community hall(s) will score higher.
Cycle Network	<b>Significant</b>	Assessment of whether there is a cycle route within 500m of the site. Sites closer to a cycle network will score higher.
Traffic Congestion	<b>Significant</b>	Assessment of whether there is a congestion zone (as defined by the Hertfordshire County Council 'Tackling Congestion in Hertfordshire' document) within 1000m of the site. Sites further than 1000m from a congestion zone will score highest.
Road Capacity	<b>Significant</b>	Assessment of the capacity of roads surrounding sites to accommodate extra demand. Sites with no capacity issues on the surrounding road network will score highest.
Tree Preservation Order	<b>Other relevant issues</b>	Assessment of whether tree preservation orders, up to date tree survey information or other data about significant amenity trees exists in relation to the site, and if so the distribution of the trees and whether they could affect development opportunities.
Groundwater Source Protection Zone	<b>Other relevant issues</b>	Assessment of which groundwater source protection zone the site falls in. These zones are defined by the Environment Agency and show the risk of contamination to wells, boreholes and springs used for public drinking water supply by identifying zones- inner, outer, and total catchment. Sites outside zones of risk will score highest.
Air Quality	<b>Other relevant issues</b>	Assessment of whether the site crosses any air quality management areas (AQMA- identified on the basis of higher levels of air pollution in the area), or is within 1000m of any. Sites further than 1000m from any AQMA will score highest.
Historic Landscape Character	<b>Other relevant issues</b>	Assessment of the Historic Landscape Character of the site. Historic Landscape Character has been assessed by Hertfordshire County Council through a number of categories. Sites of 'built up modern' character will score highest as this has the least historic character.
Noise	<b>Other relevant issues</b>	Assessment of whether the site includes any major roads or railways, or whether there are any within 1000m. Sites further than 1000m from noise generating major roads or railways will score highest.