

GRETTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

SUSTAINABLE SITE ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Neighbourhood Plan (NP) for Gretton Parish Council has been prepared by the Gretton Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee (NPSC) on behalf of the parish council. One of the important 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 new residential development.
- 1.2 A rural housing target for the Borough has been considered by Corby Borough Council (CBC) based upon a Borough-wide population and economic development increase in numbers and activity. In accordance with the overall spatial strategy, the Part 2 Local Plan for Corby will not allocate sites in the rural area where there is no requirement to make provisions for additional housing sites to ensure flexibility and contingency in the housing land supply as a result of the planning permissions granted and completions that have already taken place. Where no material harm will result in the character of the village nor the capacity of local infrastructure and services exceeded, Policy 11 of the JCS supports small scale infill developments and exceptions sites. The Housing Theme Group (HTG) considered the housing needs evidence and agreed that twenty seven new residential units were required in the NP period. As twenty two units already had a planning consent in place the HTG agreed to allocate a site for a minimum of five properties. In analysing the future need to 2031 the HTG also agreed to “future proof” the needs based target of five units with an additional parish level buffer of 100%. The buffer is a figure deemed sufficient to meet future housing need should it be required. This meant the NP target to be recommended to the community was for a minimum of ten additional units to be built by 2031.
- 1.3 This site selection framework sets out how the Gretton NPSC identified sustainable sites for the allocation of land for housing development. The recommendations made by the NPSC were informed by evidence collected and assessed by the HTG members, supported by an independent consultant from YourLocale.
- 1.4 The NP supports the provision of sustainable housing in the Parish and has exceeded the Borough-wide housing provision target by identifying potential housing sites within the Parish to meet these requirements within locations that are deliverable, developable and are the most acceptable to the local community.

2. Where did the site suggestions come from?

- 2.1 CBC 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 4 potential residential sites within Gretton parish. The parish council undertook its own “call for sites” in July 2018. A scoring matrix based upon the methodology supported by the National Planning Policy Framework’s (NPPF) guidance (2012 and 2018) was drafted by HTG members to reflect the unique characteristics and scale of Gretton parish.
- 2.2 A total of 11 sites were offered for residential development by owners and their professional advisers; these sites would have yielded over 740 units (against the agreed parish requirement of ten units). A total of 11 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.

3. 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.

4. 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 CBC was also referred to, 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 Gretton

<u>Issue</u>	G	A	R
1. Site capacity.	Small capacity up to 5 dwellings alone or in conjunction with another site	Medium capacity of between 6-9 dwellings	Large capacity of more than 10 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
15. 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
16. Impact on existing vehicular traffic.	Impact on village centre minimal	Medium scale impact on village centre	Major impact on village centre
17. Safe access to public transport (specifically a bus stop with current service).	A distance of 250m or less	A distance of 251-500m	A distance of greater than 500m

18. Distance to designated village centre (village green).	A distance of 250m or less	A distance of 251 – 500m	A distance of greater than 500m
19. Distance to Primary School.	A distance of 250m or less	A distance of 251-500m	A distance of greater than 500m
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 site
22. Any existing public rights of ways/bridle paths.	No impact on public right of way	Some 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 issues	Minor mitigation may be required	Major mitigation may be required
26. Any known flooding issues.	Site in flood zone 1 or 2 or no flooding for more than 25 years	Site in flood zone 3a or flooded once in last 25 years	Site in flood zone 3b (functional flood plain) or flooded more than once in last 25 years
27. Any drainage issues.	No drainage issues identified	May be need for mitigation	Drainage concerns. Mitigation may not be possible.

5. The assessment outcome

- 5.1. 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.
- 5.2. The HTG also agreed to assess a “part” of the two largest sites following representations from the owners’ land agents. The thirteen identified sites (without an indication of the assessment outcome) were shared at an Open Event 3rd March, 2018 in the Village Hall where residents of the village were asked to indicate which sites they believed to be the most sustainable locations.
- 5.3. The assessments were amended to reflect this 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.
- 5.4. 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 NPSC.
- 5.5. The final outcome of the assessment is as recorded below in table 2. The RAG Rating is obtained by deducting the “Red” scores from the “Green” scores, an “Amber” remains neutral.
- 5.6. 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
A. Fullen Lane extension	Green eight.	11	Second.
B. Land off Southfield Road	Red negative three.	82	Tenth.
C. Land at West Hills	Red negative six.	131	Twelfth.
C (2). Part of land at West Hills	Green two.	42	Fourth.
D. Rear of Hunts Field	Red negative nine.	318	Thirteenth.
D (2) Part of land off Hunts Field	Red negative one.	45	Joint Eighth.
E. Corby Road	Green ten.	13	First.

extension			
F. Rear of Manor Farm House	Red negative one.	11	Joint Eighth.
G. Land at bottom of Arnhill Road	Red negative five.	24	Eleventh.
H. Land at Hatton Lane	Green one	8	Fifth.
I. Land next to the pocket park	Amber.	12	Seventh.
J. Land next to the village hall.	Green three.	3	Third.
K. Fullen Lane open countryside	Green one.	17	Fifth.

- 5.7. The NPSC having considered all of the evidence has allocated the highest scoring green site, Corby Road extension for 13 residential units.
- 5.8. Allocating this site exceeds the CBC target and the site is confirmed to be developable and deliverable.