

Appendix A

Assessment Criteria

Draft – Consultation version

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The Assessment Criteria Explained

- The criteria in this Appendix set out the key topics and questions which will form the basis of the assessment of submitted sites in the Land Availability Assessment (LAA). The list of questions under each topic is not exhaustive.
- The assessment criteria in Table A-1 are overarching assessment criteria. These are applicable for assessing housing sites, plus many of these will also be applicable to other land uses.
- Table A-2 sets out additional bespoke considerations for other types of sites considered in the LAA. These are not exhaustive and further considerations may be applicable.

Please note that the criteria and associated questions listed below indicates a range of considerations for a high level assessment of the sites. The identification of a potential constraint does not automatically result in a site being considered unsuitable for development. Further investigation will be required prior to the allocation of this site in the Local Plan Review. The determination of planning applications will require a high level of detail and understanding of any constraints and communities and applicants cannot rely on the findings or conclusions in the LAA in isolation.

Table A-I Overarching Assessment Criteria

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Assessment Stage	Criteria
Exclusion from Assessment (Stage I)	<p>Sites located wholly or largely within any one of the following designations (if a larger site has any of these areas within its boundaries, then consideration to whether any portion of the site is developable):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Ancient Woodland ➤ Sites of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI) ➤ Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs). ➤ Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) ➤ National Nature Reserves (NNR) ➤ Local Nature Reserves (LNR) ➤ Local Geological Sites (also known as Regionally Important Geological/Geomorphological Sites (RIGS)) ➤ Ramsar sites ➤ Scheduled Ancient Monuments ➤ Special Protection Area ➤ Special Area of Conservation ➤ Sites on the English Heritage Register of Historic Parks and Gardens ➤ Sites designates as Local Green Space ➤ Within the 400m buffer zone of the Wealden Heaths Phase II SPA (<i>applicable to sites proposed for new homes. Other uses, including high dependency C2 care homes, will be assessed on a case by case basis</i>) ➤ Existing nutrient or biodiversity net gain offsetting sites.

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	<p>Greenfield or non-Previously Developed Land (as defined in the glossary of the NPPF) that is not within, adjacent or well related to those settlements with an identified settlement boundary either within or outwith the National Park will be excluded from Stage I of the Assessment</p> <p>This exclusion criteria does not apply to offsetting and renewable development sites.</p> <p>For residential sites, the site size threshold for the study is based on an estimated yield of 5 or more net additional dwellings. It may not be possible to determine the estimated yield of sites until later in the assessment process.</p> <p>For employment sites the site size threshold for the study is 0.25 ha or 500sqm net floorspace.</p>
Landscape Assessment (Stage 2)	<p>Historic Landscape Analysis</p> <p>Historic Landscape character (HLC) maps time depth in the existing landscape in terms of land use patterns. Of particular relevance to the National Park designation, HLC is important for identifying old landscapes which have remained unchanged or 'intact'. Typically, older areas of landscape exhibit high sensitivity in landscape, biodiversity and cultural heritage terms and have a landscape quality which is highly valued. Reference will be made to the HLC for the South Downs National Park and the Pan-Sussex HLC where relevant. Historic mapping may also be used.</p> <p>Landscape Character</p>

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	<p>The landscape in which the site is located will be considered in terms of Landscape character with reference to the South Downs Landscape Character Assessment 2020 and local landscape character assessments (where available and relevant).</p> <p>Visual Sensitivity</p> <p>This will be assessed in the following 3 ways:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The probability of change in the landscape being highly visible, based particularly on the nature of the landform and the extent of tree cover, both of which have a major bearing on visibility; 2. The numbers of people likely to perceive any changes and their reason for being in the landscape, for example as residents, staying visitors, as travellers, or as visitors engaged in recreation or work; 3. The likelihood that change could be mitigated without the mitigation measures in themselves having an adverse effect on landscape character or visual quality. <p>Relationship to Settlement Pattern and Settlement Edge Qualities</p> <p>Does the site relate to the settlement pattern of the relevant adjacent/nearby settlement in terms of location and scale?</p>

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	<p>What features comprise the settlement edge? E.g. open space, topography, proximity to historic core.</p> <p>How does the site relate to these features?</p> <p>What are the qualities of these features? Are they weak or strong?</p> <p>Are there opportunities to improve the settlement edge through new development?</p> <p>Landscape Framework and Scale</p> <p>What are the component features of the landscape?</p> <p>What is the scale of the Landscape?</p> <p>How does the site relate to these components?</p> <p>Impact on Key Characteristics and Special Qualities of the National Park</p> <p>This will be considered for each site in relation to the Special Qualities of The National Park and the South Downs Landscape Character Assessment 2020. Any statutory designations will also be referenced in this section. Reference to the National Park designation criteria and the designation process for the South Downs National Park may also be made.</p>

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Suitability (Stage 2)	<p>Noise</p> <p>Is the site affected by significant rail or road noise?</p> <p>Neighbouring Land Uses</p> <p>Is the site affected, or has the potential to be affected, by neighbouring development and current uses?</p> <p>Sustainability</p> <p>Is the site within or in close proximity (800m – average walking distance) to a settlement with a defined settlement policy boundary?</p> <p>If located beyond 800m, is there good access to non-motorised user routes? Or can new non-motorised user routes be created?</p> <p>Previous Use</p> <p>What is the previous use of the land?</p> <p>Affordable Housing</p>

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	<p>If the site is adjacent to a settlement and on Greenfield land, does the site have potential to deliver 100% affordable housing?</p> <p>Density and Character of Surrounding Area</p> <p>Landscape</p> <p>As assessed under the Landscape Assessment above.</p> <p>Biodiversity</p> <p>Is there a reasonable likelihood that protected species could be present?</p> <p>Could development have a potential impact on habitats or species of principal importance?</p> <p>Could development have a potential impact on habitat connectivity?</p> <p>Is there scope to adequately mitigate any potential impacts on protected areas, species or habitats? This will include consideration of the potential impact of new housing on Special Protection Areas and the consideration of opportunities to mitigate potential impacts (e.g.. through provision of Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space (SANG))</p> <p>Is there scope for enhancements to habitats, for species, and for habitat connectivity?</p>

	Table A-I Overarching Assessment Criteria
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	<p>Flood Risk</p> <p>Is the site at risk of flooding, taking into account of climate change? Is the site located with Flood Zone 2 or 3? Is access to the site through areas of flood risk? Is there a history of flooding?</p> <p>Is the site affected by other sources of flooding other than fluvial, such as groundwater or surface water flooding?</p> <p>Ground Conditions/Topography</p> <p>Is the site affected by any ground conditions? (e.g. unstable ground, steep slopes etc.)</p> <p>Land Contamination</p> <p>Is the site affected by any potential land contamination?</p> <p>Will land contamination severely affect deliverability of the site or is there potential for mitigation?</p> <p>Minerals and Waste</p> <p>Is the site within a Minerals Safeguarding Area or Mineral Consultation Area?</p> <p>Is the site located within 250 metres of a historic landfill site?</p>

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	<p>Tree Preservation Orders</p> <p>Are there any Tree Preservations Orders on the site or on the boundary of the site?</p> <p>Agricultural Land</p> <p>If the site is currently in agricultural use, what grade is the land?</p> <p>Archaeology</p> <p>Does the site have any archaeological potential which may require investigation prior to development or during construction?</p> <p>Listed Buildings/Heritage Assets</p> <p>Are there listed buildings or heritage assets within the site?</p> <p>Could development potentially adversely affect listed buildings or heritage assets?</p> <p>Conservation Areas</p> <p>Is the site within a Conservation Area?</p>

Table A-1 Overarching Assessment Criteria	
Assessment Stage	Criteria
	<p>Could development potentially affect a Conservation Area and/or its setting?</p> <p>Open Space and Recreation</p> <p>Is the site wholly or predominately within an open space of public value (e.g. playground, playing fields)?</p> <p>Can equal or better replacement open space provision be made?</p> <p>Public Rights of Way</p> <p>Are there any public rights of way running through the site or around the boundary of the site?</p> <p>Are there any potential views of the site from any public rights of way?</p>
Availability (Stage 2)	<p>Ownership</p> <p>Is the site in a single or multiple ownership?</p> <p>Will multiple ownerships prevent land assembly and subsequent deliverability of the site as a whole or is there evidence of opportunities for a coordinated approach?</p> <p>Planning Status</p>

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	<p>Is there planning history which is relevant to the assessment? (e.g. pre-application enquiries, lapsed permissions)</p> <p>Intention to develop</p> <p>Has the owner/controller of the site expressed a clear intention to make the site available?</p> <p>What timescale has the owner/controller suggested development could come forward?</p> <p>Legal Constraints</p> <p>Are there any legal matters which may prevent the site from being available?</p>
Achievability (Stage 2)	<p>Highways</p> <p>Could development on the site impact on the Strategic Road Network?</p> <p>Are there any potential highways issues associated with the site?</p> <p>Impact on safeguarded routes</p> <p>Could development on the site impact on safeguarded routes as defined in SDLP Policy SD20?</p> <p>Access</p>

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	<p>Is there an existing safe access point to the site?</p> <p>Are there opportunities for alternative access points to the site?</p> <p>If no access currently exists, are there opportunities to create a safe access to the site?</p> <p>Exceptional Costs</p> <p>Are there any exceptional works necessary to enable development?</p> <p>Site Preparation Costs</p> <p>Are site preparation costs expected to affect the site being successfully developed?</p> <p>Third Party Land</p> <p>Is third party land required to deliver sites? (e.g. access land or ransom strips)</p> <p>Economic Viability</p> <p>Does the economic viability of the current use of the site make development less or more attractive?</p>

Table A-1 Overarching Assessment Criteria	
Assessment Stage	Criteria
Ability to overcome constraints	As acknowledged under a number of the criteria listed above, there may be the option to overcome certain constraints to development through mitigation. This will be considered alongside the survey and assessment of the site.

Table A-2 Additional criteria by development type

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Development Type	Additional Criteria <i>(please note that this list may not be exhaustive)</i>
Economic Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suitability for key sector businesses i.e. wood-related activities, food and beverages, recreation and tourism) • Proximity of other businesses i.e. forming a business cluster • Access to the strategic road network • Road access including access by HGVs • Access to public transport • Access to local services/ amenities for employees • Nature of any bad neighbour or adjacency issues

Table A-2 Additional criteria by development type	
Development Type	Additional Criteria <i>(please note that this list may not be exhaustive)</i>
C2 specialist care homes	<p>Same as the overarching criteria with additional emphasis on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to public transport • Proximity to local facilities and walkability • Tranquillity & views for residents • Sufficient space for onsite landscaping / communal gardens with level access • Sufficient space for resident, employee and visitor car parking
Renewable Energy Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site generation potential according to technology – aspect (solar) wind resource, river flow, • Landscape character sensitivity • Visual sensitivity • Proximity to highways for access • Proximity to highways for potential flicker / glint impacts • Proximity to neighbouring uses (several physical constraints to wind development, also possible glare from solar panels?) • Public Rights of Way • Local sustainable fuel supply (biomass / anaerobic digestion) • Ability to connect to grid and substation requirements • Historic assets and archaeology • Agricultural land classification
Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation	<p>Same as the overarching criteria with additional emphasis on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proximity to facilities, including schools • Connection to utilities • Landscape character sensitivity • Visual sensitivity

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proximity for road access appropriate type of vehicle • Capacity of the site for storage of equipment
Biodiversity Net Gain Offsetting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landscape character sensitivity – capacity and nature of landscape change from potential new habitats • Agricultural land classification • Current on site habitat and scope & nature of enhancement and creation opportunities • Current / previous use of the site and how that may impact habitat enhancement and creation opportunities • Neighbouring land uses and potential conflicts with habitat enhancement and creation • Strategic significance – opportunities for habitat connectivity • Flood risk • Historic assets and archaeology • Available and capable of enduring for a minimum of 30 years
Nutrient Offsetting	<p>As per the Natural England guidance, proposals nutrient mitigation / offsetting could be for construction wetlands, taking agricultural land out of use, or retrofitting SuDs. Due to the diverse nature of the options, proposals will need to be assessed on a case by case basis. Some examples of key considerations include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the site located within a nutrient neutrality catchment as defined by Natural England guidance • Landscape character sensitivity – capacity and nature of landscape change from potential new habitats • Agricultural land classification • Available and capable of enduring for a minimum of 125 years and beyond • Can the site deliver other benefits for nature?