

Harpenden Neighbourhood Plan

Site Assessment Summary Paper

For submission Neighbourhood Plan

January 2018

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 This Site Assessment Summary Paper is prepared in support of the Regulation 14 Harpenden Neighbourhood Plan.

Purpose of the document

1.2 The purpose of this document is to:

- a. Detail the site assessment process undertaken in support of the Harpenden Neighbourhood Plan; and,
- b. Outline the proposed site allocations in Regulation 14 draft Neighbourhood Plan.

2.0 Site Identification

2.1 The Harpenden Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group sought to take a comprehensive approach to the identification of potential sites for the Harpenden Neighbourhood Plan. Therefore, potential sites were identified through the following methods:

1. A "Call for Sites", specific to the Harpenden Neighbourhood Plan; and
2. Sites identified in the 2009 and 2016 SADC Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA).

Harpenden Neighbourhood Plan Call for Sites

2.2 The Harpenden Neighbourhood Plan Call for Sites was announced on 20th March 2017 and concluded on 17th April 2017; however, submissions after that date were accepted and assessed.

2.3 The Call for Sites was announced on the Harpenden Town Council website and was promoted by Harpenden Town Council through the media and social media. Any person could suggest a site for consideration, including local residents or landowners (ideally the person submitting the site could confirm its availability, but this could be ascertained at a later date). In order to do so, residents and landowners were asked to complete a nomination form and submit to the Town Council with a supporting site location plan.

2.4 In total, 19 sites were submitted to the Call for Sites. This included sites in the Green Belt and eight of the sites were previous SHLAA sites.

2009 and 2016 SHLAAs

2.5 A SHLAA is a site assessment paper produced by a Local Planning Authority, used to inform the preparation of a Local Plan. The HNP considered all sites assessed in the 2009 and 2016 SHLAAs (the most recent SHLAAs), including those deemed unsuitable for allocation.

2.6 SHLAA assessments are included as submissions at Appendix B.

3.0 Site Assessment Process

3.1 This section sets out the process through which identified sites were assessed.

First Sift

3.2 Prior to any formal assessment, all SHLAA sites were reviewed with the intention of removing any sites that have since been developed or benefit from a current planning permission. Following this sift, a list of sites totalling 45 potential development locations was compiled.

Initial Assessment

3.3 Sites were assessed using a range of tools. Initially these focused on a site assessment template (Appendix B) compiled based on best practice advice made available through Locality. Principally, the site assessment template sought to determine whether sites were available, achievable (i.e. financially viable) and suitable for the proposed type of development. It was supported by a “RAG” (red, amber, green) assessment, which looked at the sustainability of development at each site.

Second Sift

3.4 The Harpenden Neighbourhood Plan originally considered Green Belt Sites due to an ambition to potentially align with the (then draft) St Albans City and District Council Detailed Local Plan (DLP), identifying potential small development sites to release from the Green Belt in that document. However, following the failure of the DLP to proceed to examination¹, it was determined that this approach was no longer viable due to the likely time delay between the Harpenden Neighbourhood Plan being adopted, which would result in a lag between sites being identified and released for allocation, during which circumstances may change. The approach was discussed with St Albans City and District Council and Locality², with both understanding the approach.

3.5 In total, 29 sites were removed from the site assessment process. Assessments were not finalised for these site and there is no further reference to Green Belt sites in this document.

¹ The DLP did not proceed to examination due to SADC being adjudged to have not met the legal Duty to Cooperate with neighbouring local authorities in the preparation of its Strategic Local Plan. Without a Strategic Local Plan, the Detailed Local Plan could not continue to be prepared.

² Locality provides national Neighbourhood Planning support on behalf of the Department for Communities and Local Government.

3.6 In addition, two further sites were removed from the list, Highfield Oval and Elliswick Tennis Club. These were both taken from the SHLAA, but were removed following a request from the landowner of each. These sites are not detailed further in this paper.

3.7 Following the second sift, 14 sites remained. The assessment of each of these sites is summarised in Section 4 of this report. Each also feature in the Scoring Matrix (Appendix A) and the site assessment site assessment template for each site is included at Appendix B.

3.8 The 14 sites were:

1. Former Westfield Allotments
2. Victoria, Alexandra, Littleport and Collingham Houses, Southdown Industrial Estate
3. Pan Autos and adjacent uses, Dark Lane / Grove Road
4. Harpenden Public Halls
5. Batford Mill Industrial Estate
6. Land at rear of Luton Road and Farm Avenue
7. Southwood Court, 28 Milton Road
8. Southdown Industrial Estate
9. Land to the rear of Harpenden Fire Station, Leyton Road, Harpenden
10. Land at 63 High Street, Harpenden
11. Jewsons, Grove Road
12. Harpenden Memorial Hospital
13. Land and Garages at Longfield Road, Harpenden
14. Garages at Noke Shot

Scoring Exercise

- 3.9 All sites listed at Paragraph 3.8 went through a Scoring Exercise. The Scoring Exercise was designed partially to expand on the site assessment template for each site. The Scoring Exercise took the key principles of availability, achievability and suitability and formed ten criteria against which each site were marked out of 12, with a maximum score of 120. Scores were assigned a colour based on brackets of ten marks.
- 3.10 The Scoring Exercise resulted in a Scoring Matrix (Appendix A), which was a live document that was regularly updated at Steering Group meetings. The Matrix was used as a consideration, along with the site assessment template for each site. Sites that attained either a dark or light green score (80-120 points) were favoured for development. A number of current employment sites were considered first with a residential proposal, then again with an employment proposal, particularly where the residential use proposed did not gain a score of over 80/120.

Promoter Interviews

- 3.11 Where possible, the Steering Group met with the promoter of each site to seek further information on each, including the exact detailed proposals for each.
- 3.12 In total, 17 site promoters met with three Steering Group members and support staff in minuted meetings. The main ambition of the meetings was to confirm the availability of the each site, the achievability of different type and quantum of development on each site and the deliverability of each site. In addition, promoters were given a chance to set out proposals (if prepared).
- 3.13 Following these meetings, site assessment template and the Scoring Matrix were updated as appropriate.

Selection process for the Regulation 14 Draft Neighbourhood Plan

- 3.14 Once the site assessment template and Scoring Matrix were complete, the Steering Group met to confirm which sites to include as site allocations in the Regulation 14 Draft of the Harpenden Neighbourhood Plan. This was based on the results of the Scoring Exercise. Sites that gained a higher percentage score (over 66%) were selected provided each site was confirmed to meet the key

requirements of being available, achievable and suitable. Sites/proposals that did not achieve 66% were not selected for inclusion in the draft Neighbourhood Plan. This rigid approach was crucial to ensure an objective site selection process.

- 3.15 Promoters were contacted at this stage where necessary to clarify proposals, particularly in relation to site capacities. In addition, communication was sought with two of the sites, HNP4 and HNP12, as there had been limited opportunities to communicate with these promoters in the initial promoter interviews.

Amendments following Regulation 14 Consultation

- 3.16 At Regulation 14 consultation, feedback on proposed site allocations was received from a number of sources, including many promoters and their agents. This feedback is detailed in the Engagement 3 Report (and appendix to the Engagement Report).
- 3.17 Following feedback received at Regulation 14 Consultation, the Steering Group revised the approach to Policy H10 (Housing Site Allocations) in the draft Neighbourhood Plan. Firstly, the Harpenden Memorial Hospital has been included as an additional allocation following receipt of sufficient information to conduct a site assessment. Secondly, all allocations are changed from target figures to minimum figures based on a density of 40 dwellings per hectare, following comments querying the selection of figures, including from SADC. While this appears to reduce the number of units considered to be suitable on each site, it simply expresses a minimum figure while supporting appropriate developments above each figure subject to a suitable design.

4.0 Results Summary

4.1 Table 1. sets out the results of the site assessment for each of the sites that made it through the sifting process. The summary at Table 1. is taken from the outcome of the Scoring Matrix (Appendix B) and the site assessment template (Appendix C).

No	Name	Reference	Uses Considered	Outcome
1	Former Westfield Allotments	HNP-9	Proposed for residential (100% affordable)	The site assessment found the site was available, achievable and suitable for the proposed use and therefore the Neighbourhood Plan includes the site as a minimum allocation of 23 affordable units, subject to design considerations.
2	Victoria, Alexandra, Littleport and Collingham Houses, Southdown Industrial Estate	HNP-10	Proposed for residential Also considered for mixed-use employment and residential	The site assessment found that the site was available and achievable. In terms of suitability, it concluded that the employment use of the site was valuable given its proximity to the Southdown Industrial Estate. However, it also noted that the site already included a residential unit and there was potential to create a more intensive use of the site. Therefore, the Neighbourhood Plan includes the site as a mixed-use allocation for at least the same amount of employment floorspace plus a minimum of five residential units, subject to design considerations.
3	Pan Autos and adjacent uses, Grove Road, Southdown	HNP-15 (SHLAA-U-H-298)	Proposed for residential	The site assessment process found that the site was available, achievable and suitable for redevelopment in residential use. Therefore, the Neighbourhood Plan includes the site as a residential allocation for a minimum of 14 dwellings. It is anticipated that the site has potential for a higher density development providing more units, possibly in collaboration with Jewsons, subject to design considerations.
4	Harpden Public Halls	HNP-19	Proposed for residential	Insufficient information was received to fully assess the site and therefore it has not been incorporated as a site allocation. However, the Neighbourhood Plan includes a policy supporting future redevelopment of the site subject to certain requirements.
5	Batford Mill	SHLAA-U-H-54	Considered	The site assessment process found the site

	Industrial Estate		for residential and employment	to be a key protected employment location and not suitable for residential redevelopment. Therefore, the Neighbourhood Plan seeks to continue to protect the site as an employment location.
6	Land at rear of Luton Road and Farm Avenue	SHLAA-U-H-65	Considered for residential	The site assessment process could not confirm the availability or achievability of this site and therefore it is not included in the Neighbourhood Plan.
7	Southwood Court, 28 Milton Road	SHLAA-U-H-66	Considered for residential	The site appears to be available, achievable and suitable subject to conversion, but there is only an intention to provide one unit, so it does not warrant allocation in the Neighbourhood Plan.
8	Southdown Industrial Estate	SHLAA-U-H-69	Considered for residential and employment.	The site assessment process found the site to be a key protected employment location and not suitable for residential redevelopment. Therefore, the Neighbourhood Plan seeks to continue to protect the site as an employment location.
9	Land to the rear of Harpenden Fire Station, Leyton Road, Harpenden	SHLAA-U-H-130	Considered for residential	The site assessment process found the site to be unsuitable for development due to the nature of the site, which is heavily wooded.
10	Land at 63 High Street, Harpenden	SHLAA-U-H-165	Considered for residential and employment.	The site assessment process found that the site was available, achievable and suitable for redevelopment in residential use. Therefore, the Neighbourhood Plan includes the site as a residential allocation for a minimum of 5 dwellings, subject to design considerations.
11	Jewsons, Grove Road, Southdown	SHLAA-U-H-299	Considered for residential	The site assessment process found that the site was available, achievable and suitable for redevelopment in residential use. Therefore, the Neighbourhood Plan includes the site as a residential allocation for a minimum of 14 dwellings. It is anticipated that the site has potential for a higher density development providing more units, possibly in collaboration with Pan Autos, subject to design considerations.
12	Harpenden Memorial Hospital	SHLAA-U-H-331	Considered for mixed use healthcare	The site assessment process found the site to be available, suitable and achievable for a minimum of 34 dwellings on the aspect of

			and residential	the site not identified for healthcare use provision. It is allocated in the Neighbourhood Plan.
13	Land and Garages at Longfield Road, Harpenden	SHLAA-U-H-473a / SHLAA-U-H-473b	Considered for residential	The site assessment process found that the site was available, achievable and suitable for redevelopment in residential use. Therefore, the Neighbourhood Plan includes the site as a residential allocation for a minimum of four dwellings, subject to design considerations.
14	Garages at Noke Shot	SHLAA-U-H-475	Considered for residential	The site assessment process found that the site was available, achievable and suitable for redevelopment in residential use. Therefore, the Neighbourhood Plan includes the site as a residential allocation for a minimum of seven dwellings, subject to design considerations.

Table 1: Site Assessment Summary Table

Appendix A: Scoring Matrix

Appendix B: Site assessment templates

1. Former Westfield Allotments

2. Victoria, Alexandra, Littleport and Collingham Houses, Southdown Industrial Estate

3. Pan Autos and adjacent uses, Dark Lane / Grove Road

4. Batford Mill Industrial Estate

5. Land at rear of Luton Road and Farm Avenue

6. Southwood Court, 28 Milton Road

7. Southdown Industrial Estate

8. Land to the rear of Harpenden Fire Station, Leyton Road, Harpenden

9. Land at 63 High Street, Harpenden

10. Jewsons, Dark Lane

11. Harpenden Memorial Hospital

12. Land and Garages at Longfield Road, Harpenden

13. Garages at Noke Shot