

Houghton on the Hill

Neighbourhood Development Plan 2025 – 2041
Pre-Submission Consultation Draft

Assessment of Potential Development Sites for Allocation in the emerging Houghton NDP



Houghton on the Hill Parish Council
Leicestershire

October 2024

Table of Acronyms used in this document.

| Title | Acronym |
|---|----------------|
| AECOM Infrastructure & Environment UK Limited | AECOM |
| Area of Separation | AoS |
| Community Questionnaire | CQ |
| Conservation Area | CA |
| Designated Area | DA |
| Harborough District Council | HDC |
| Harborough Local Plan | HLP |
| Houghton on the Hill Parish Council | HPC |
| Housing Needs Assessment | HNA |
| Leicestershire and Rutland Environmental Records Centre | LREC |
| Leicestershire County Council | LCC |
| Local Planning Authority | LPA |
| National Planning Policy Framework | NPPF |
| Neighbourhood Development Plan | NDP |
| Neighbourhood Development Plan 2018 | NDP (2018) |
| Neighbourhood Plan Working Party | NPWP |
| Settlement Boundary | SB |
| Site Allocation | SA |
| Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment | SHELAA |
| Village Design Guide and Codes | VDG&C |
| Young People’s Questionnaire | YPQ |

Table of links to References

| Document Name | URL |
|--------------------------|---|
| Community Questionnaire | URL to be added |
| Harborough Local Plan | https://www.harborough.gov.uk/downloads/file/5714/harborough_local_plan_2011-2031 - adopted april 2019 |
| Housing Needs Assessment | https://www.houghtononthehillpc.org.uk/uploads/houghton-on-the-hill-hna-report-final.pdf?v=1721301566 |
| Aecom Site Assessment | https://www.houghtononthehillpc.org.uk/uploads/houghton-on-the-hill-np-site-assessment-draft-report.pdf?v=1721301609 |
| SHELAA | https://www.houghtononthehillpc.org.uk/uploads/shelaa-main-report-final-09-22.pdf?v=1721301332 |

Assessment of sites offered by landowners for potential development.

Introduction

The Local Planning Authority (LPA), Harborough District Council (HDC), has advised that Houghton is likely to need to provide about 100 new residential dwellings over the plan period 2025 to 2041. This number of 100 could change as the HDC Local Plan develops (and government reviews its targets) with a potentially larger number being notified by HDC in November/December 2024.

The NPWP, in assessing sites most appropriate for allocation in the emerging Neighbourhood Development Plan, has the benefit of HDC SHELAA assessments, an extensive independent site assessment undertaken by AECOM, and results from a parish-wide community questionnaire. In line with statutory requirements [NPPF Paragraph JS to provide], NPWP also held discussions with landowners, agents and developers, and other stakeholders.

The AECOM site assessment report identifies each site by using a letter, and this is continued below for ease of reference back to the AECOM report (available from the NDP 2024 Evidence Base on the PC website). The letter infers no priority regarding suitability, availability, or preference. AECOM's independent assessment concluded that 1 site (Site D Land north of Uppingham Road west of Houghton) is considered suitable for allocation for residential development, and a further 7 potentially suitable subject to identified constraints being resolved or mitigated. A further 5 sites are considered unsuitable.

The NPWP assessed both the AECOM suitable site (D) and 6 of the 7 potentially suitable sites. The 7th potentially suitable site (AECOM Site K) was withdrawn by the landowner. After consideration, and noting the SHELAA appraisal where available, the NPWP accepted the AECOM rationale for not pursuing the remaining 5 sites. The following considers the sites identified in the AECOM report by the letters B, D, E, F, I, J, L. The numbers of potential dwellings in a site range from 2 to 80.

In the tables below the text attributed to AECOM and SHELAA is a direct copy of that from the sources.

Consolidation of Results

NPWP have followed the AECOM system of colour-coding in the assessment of sites and described by them (AECOM Report paragraph 2.12) as follows:

"A red/amber/green (RAG) 'traffic light' rating of all sites has been given following the assessment, based on whether the site is an appropriate candidate for allocation in the Neighbourhood Plan for a particular use. The traffic light rating indicates 'green' for sites that are relatively free from development constraints and are appropriate in principle as site allocations, 'amber' for sites, which

are potentially suitable in full or in part if identified issues can be resolved and ‘red’ for sites, which are not currently suitable. The judgement on each site is based on the three ‘tests’ of whether a site is appropriate for allocation according to the Planning Practice Guidance – i.e. the site is suitable, available and achievable.”



Figure 1. Plan showing location of the sites considered in this assessment. Capital letters identify each Site.

SITE B

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| Site B | Land south of Uppingham Road (rear of Deane Gate Drive) Potential for 30 dwellings (AECOM estimate) |
| | SHELAA APPRAISAL 21/8047 The site is considered potentially suitable. The site is considered available. Development of the full extent of the site is unlikely to be appropriate in scale. A gas pipeline and associated HSE consultation buffer zone crosses the eastern part of the site affecting 4ha. The capacity of the proposed access via Stacey Avenue is not clear, and its suitability would need to be demonstrated. Delivery of a safe and appropriate access to the A47 and would also need to be demonstrated. The gas pipeline would need to be accommodated, and appropriate mitigation established with the HSE. The site is considered potentially achievable. |
| | AECOM ASSESSMENT The southern portion of the site is potentially suitable for housing and is therefore potentially appropriate for allocation in the Neighbourhood Plan. The area of development could be reduced, from the entirety of the Site B assessed in the SHELAA, in line with the housing requirement. The landowner would need to agree to a smaller portion of the site for allocation. It is important to note that the Highways Authority would be minded to advise refusal on sites where access is from a road where measured speeds are above 40mph. An appropriate area would be the southern part of the site which is adjacent to the settlement to the south and the west. The southern part of the site can potentially be accessed via Stacey Avenue and this would mitigate the need to accommodate the gas pipeline. This part of the site is also adjacent to the built-up area however also has a medium to high risk of surface water flooding. Design proposals should account for the impact of development on the local landscape and visual sensitivity of the site regarding views into the settlement. The southern part of the site could accommodate approximately 30 dwellings. Part of this site is also within the area proposed as an Area of Separation in the Neighbourhood Plan Review therefore an allocation of the whole site as assessed in the SHELAA would not align with this policy. |
| | COMMUNITY QUESTIONNAIRE OUTCOME Ranked 6 of 6 sites. |
| | NPWP APPRAISAL |
| | Potentially would provide a less attractive view / impression of Houghton as drivers look towards the church on the approach to the village from the west. Although the land is relatively flat, it is within the proposed “Area of Separation”. Both SHELAA and AECOM reports conclude that access from the A47 would be problematic. Access other than from the A47 would impact negatively on other parts of the village e.g. Stacey Avenue, Winckley Close, St. Catharines Way. The southern part of the site, although adjacent to the built-up area has a medium to high risk of surface water flooding (AECOM). Location not favoured by residents (6 th of 6 ranked). |

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| | <p>NPWP CONCLUSION</p> <p>The site is in the proposed “Area of Separation”.</p> <p>Concerns exist about the potential negative impact of additional traffic in the Manor Green estate and the access roads to it (Stacey Avenue, Winckley Close, North Way, Linwal Avenue, Deane Gate Drive).</p> <p>Concerns also exist about the potential for surface water flooding.</p> <p>Sites more appropriate than this are available for allocation.</p> |
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SITE D

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| Site D | <p>Land to the north of Uppingham Road, west of Houghton</p> <p>Potential for up to 80 dwellings (AECOM estimate)</p> |
| | <p>SHELAA APPRAISAL 21/8206</p> <p>The site is adjacent to a housing site under construction on the western edge of Houghton on the Hill, a sustainable settlement. A gas pipeline crosses the site north to south and an indicative layout provided shows that a suitable buffer zone can be incorporated.</p> <p>Information provided shows that an access onto the A47 can be achieved but this will need to be verified by the Highway Authority, particularly as it concerns the intensification of turning movements onto the A47. Half of the site is within a mineral consultation area. The site is considered potentially suitable.</p> <p>The site is in single ownership. No ownership or legal issues have been identified to prevent development being delivered. The site is considered available.</p> <p>Whilst an initial transport assessment has been provided, the provision of a suitable access from the A47 would need to satisfy the Highway Authority. The site is considered potentially achievable.</p> |
| | <p>AECOM ASSESSMENT</p> <p>The eastern half of the site is suitable for housing and is therefore appropriate for allocation in the Neighbourhood Plan. It is noted that the western half of the site sits within the area proposed as an Area of Separation in the Neighbourhood Plan Review therefore an allocation would not align with this policy. The landowner would need to agree to a smaller portion of the site for allocation. The eastern part of the site can be accessed via the A47 however it is important to note that the Highways Authority would be minded to advise refusal on sites where access is from a road where measured speeds are above 40mph. The eastern part of the site is away from the high-pressure gas pipeline and is also screened by hedgerows whilst adjoining the existing settlement. Design proposals should account for the impact of development on the local landscape and visual sensitivity of the site upon entering the settlement.</p> |
| | <p>COMMUNITY QUESTIONNAIRE OUTCOME</p> <p>Ranked 2 of 6 sites.</p> |
| | <p>NPWP APPRAISAL</p> |

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| | <p>The eastern part of the site is flat and is not in the proposed “Area of Separation”. The western portion, which lies within the “Area of Separation” would not be developable but could provide attractive and accessible community space.</p> <p>Development for residential housing would contribute to maintaining a tight envelope to the built form of the village.</p> <p>There is easy and convenient access to footpaths heading north, and then west to Scraftoft and east to Billesdon Coplow as well as across the A47 via a pedestrian controlled crossing into the village.</p> <p>Linking by a footpath with the adjacent housing development will enhance community cohesion enabling children from this site to have access to the existing play area.</p> <p>The proposed vehicular access would not conflict with traffic flows to Deane Gate Drive. Traffic towards Leicester would have little or no impact on the busy A47/Main Street/Ingarsby Lane cross-roads.</p> |
| | To enhance safety for vehicles turning at the new entrance the 40mph speed limit should be extended west of the new road junction. |
| | <p>NPWP CONCLUSION</p> <p>The site is appropriate as an allocation site.</p> |

SITE E

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| Site E | <p>Land north of Stretton Lane</p> <p>Planning Application (24/00359/FUL) is for 24 dwellings</p> |
| | <p>SHELAA APPRAISAL 21/8135</p> <p>The site is adjacent to Houghton on the Hill, a sustainable settlement. Access is proposed from Stretton Lane. Although most of the site is within a HSA gas pipeline buffer consultation zone, the planning application (15/01067/OUT) which was refused on the site overcame this satisfactorily by careful siting of dwellings to allow access to the pipeline. Mitigation for potential impacts on the landscape setting of the village and the Conservation Area, which it adjoins, would be required. The site is considered suitable. The site is in single ownership. No legal or ownership issues have been identified to prevent development being delivered. The site is considered available.</p> <p>The submission indicates that satisfactory access to the gas pipeline can be accommodated. With satisfactory mitigation for potential adverse impacts on the setting of the village and Conservation Area, the site is considered achievable.</p> |
| | <p>AECOM ASSESSMENT</p> <p>The site is potentially suitable for housing and is therefore potentially appropriate for allocation in the Neighbourhood Plan. The site can be accessed via Stretton Lane and is adjacent to the southern part of the settlement. Development proposals must demonstrate that the gas pipeline can be accommodated and with satisfactory mitigation for potential adverse impacts on the local character of the settlement and its Conservation Area as well as long views into Houghton on the Hill.</p> |

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| | <p>COMMUNITY QUESTIONNAIRE OUTCOME Ranked 3 of 6 sites.</p> |
| | <p>NPWP APPRAISAL</p> <p>The application fulfils the recommendations of the AECOM Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) and the Community Questionnaire which strongly supports addressing the imbalance in the Houghton housing mix by providing mostly 2 and 3-bedroom, and few 4-bedroom, dwellings.</p> <p>The site is adjacent to existing residential properties of Stretton Lane and Freer Close so maintains a tight envelope to the built form of the village at its southern boundary. Existing rights of way link into the village and towards Bushby.</p> <p>A pavement alongside Stretton Lane to link with the existing right of way towards Stoughton would improve safety of pedestrians.</p> |
| | <p>There are significant traffic issues on Stretton Lane related to school start and finish times. Provision of a car park on this site could provide a community benefit, for School, Church and Village Hall.</p> <p>For safety reasons, the location of the 60 to 20 mph speed limit should be moved beyond the access to the potential development and the sharp bend adjacent to it.</p> |
| | <p>NPWP CONCLUSION The site is appropriate as an allocation site.</p> |

SITE F

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| Site F | <p>Land north of Uppingham Road east of Houghton</p> <p>Note: The NDP(2018) Reserve Site occupies only the flat southern part of the total area assessed by SHELAA and AECOM. Potential for up to 80 dwellings (AECOM estimate). Planning applications 23/01499/OUT and 24/00175/OUT include this site.</p> |
| | <p>SHELAA APPRAISAL 21/8195</p> <p>The site is adjacent to Houghton on the Hill, a sustainable settlement. Development on northern part of the site would impact on wider landscape which falls away to the northeast. The southern part of the site is less sensitive in landscape terms. Whilst the site has access to the A47, the promoter's potential access solution involving the closure of the existing Ingarsby Lane/Main Street junction would need to be considered by Highway Authority. Any access solution involving the intensification of turning movements onto the A47 raises potential concerns. The site is considered potentially suitable.</p> <p>The site is in single ownership. No discussions with developers have taken place and the site has not been marketed. No legal or ownership issues have been identified to prevent development being delivered. The site is considered available.</p> <p>Provision of suitable access arrangements to the existing highway could impact on the viability and achievability of the site. The northern part of the site does not relate well to the village and has the potential to adversely impact on the wider landscape without a reduction in capacity or substantial mitigation. The site is considered potentially achievable.</p> |

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| | <p>AECOM ASSESSMENT</p> <p>The southern portion of the site is potentially suitable for housing and is therefore potentially appropriate for allocation in the Neighbourhood Plan. The landowner would need to agree to a smaller portion of the site for allocation. The top end of the expected housing requirement range of 77 could be accommodated within this southern section of the site and can be accessed via the A47, however, it is important to note that the Highways Authority would be minded to advise refusal on sites where access is from a road where measured speeds are above 40mph.</p> |
| | <p>COMMUNITY QUESTIONNAIRE OUTCOME</p> <p>Ranked 1 of 6 sites.</p> |
| | <p>NPWP APPRAISAL</p> |
| | <p>The southerly part, adjacent to the A47, is flat and potentially suitable for allocation. The site is adjacent to existing residential properties of Ingarsby Lane and those on the south side of Uppingham Road, so maintains a relatively tight envelope to the built form of the village.</p> <p>Safe pedestrian access across the A47 would be enhanced by a light-controlled crossing.</p> |
| | <p>Both SHELAA and AECOM assessments conclude that the northern part of the site is not suitable for housing development.</p> <p>Community comments on the above planning applications demonstrate significant concerns about the potential impact of traffic volumes from this site. Vehicles heading west for morning commuter journeys, will conflict with traffic approaching from Billesdon, and together are likely to back up in both directions as pedestrians cross the A47 using the proposed controlled crossing, impacting on Firs Road and the busy A47/ Main Street/Ingarsby Lane junction. This, added to any additional southbound traffic, would increase congestion along Main Street.</p> |
| | <p>NPWP CONCLUSION</p> <p>The southern part of the site is potentially appropriate for housing development. However, the potentially serious negative impacts on nearby roads from additional traffic movements, raise serious concerns about the suitability and achievability of this site. Sites more appropriate than this are available for allocation.</p> |

SITE I

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| Site I | <p>Land at Weir Lane Potential for 11 to 20 dwellings</p> |
| | <p>SHELAA APPRAISAL This site was not offered in HDC “Call for sites” therefore a SHELAA appraisal was not carried out.</p> |
| | <p>AECOM ASSESSMENT The site is potentially suitable for housing and therefore potentially appropriate for allocation in the Neighbourhood Plan. The site is a small field adjacent to the settlement and community facilities. The site is accessible and is in a relatively sustainable location. Much of the agricultural land adjoining the southeast of the settlement is included in the Conservation Area due to its contribution to the setting of the historic part of the village. Any development proposals should respect the Conservation Area, mitigating any impact to the setting of the Grade II listed The Smithy, through sensitive siting and design. Additionally, any development proposals will have to retain the boundary trees screening the site. The Neighbourhood Plan Working Party has been advised that there is a covenant restricting development to 11 dwellings.</p> |
| | <p>COMMUNITY QUESTIONNAIRE OUTCOME This site was only offered for consideration by the NPWP after the Community Questionnaire process had been completed, so residents were not able to be asked for an opinion.</p> |
| | <p>NPWP APPRAISAL</p> |
| | <p>The land is flat with access from Weir Lane. The site is adjacent to the existing main built form of Houghton with relatively easy access on foot to village facilities (Coop, pharmacy, bus stop, Houghton Field and pavilion). Provision of bungalows on such a site would meet housing needs identified in the HNA and the Community Questionnaire.</p> |
| | <p>It may be difficult to ensure that bungalows are not converted into 2-storey dwellings over time. This is a ridge and furrow field, a non-designated Heritage Asset, and the NPPF requires balancing any potential benefits of developing the site against negative impacts.</p> |
| | <p>This site is in the Conservation Area. Any modification of the Conservation Area to accept housing development would need to have exceptional justification which is not demonstrated for this site.</p> |
| | <p>NPWP CONCLUSION The potential negative impacts as set out above, mitigate against the site being recommended for housing development.</p> |

SITE J

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| Site | Land off Main Street, by Church |
| J | Potential for 2 dwellings |
| | SHELAA APPRAISAL Site was not offered in HDC “Call for sites” therefore a SHELAA appraisal was not carried out. |
| | AECOM ASSESSMENT The site is potentially suitable for housing and therefore potentially appropriate for allocation in the Neighbourhood Plan. The site comprises an agricultural storage building towards the south of the settlement edge. The site is in a relatively sustainable location and consists of previously developed land. Much of the agricultural land adjoining the south east of the settlement is included in the Conservation Area due to its contribution to the setting of the historic part of the village. Therefore, any development proposals should conform with the character of the Conservation Area, mitigating any impact to the setting of the Grade II* listed Church of St Catharine. |
| | COMMUNITY QUESTIONNAIRE OUTCOME This was not included in the site preference ranking question due to the potential for only 1 or 2 dwellings. A separate question identified a 50% support for some form of residential development on this site on the understanding that the proceeds from the sale would be used to fund improvements to the church to make it suitable for a wider range of activities and residents. |
| | NPWP APPRAISAL |
| | The Church of St. Catharine is a listed building, a heritage asset, and a widely valued facility for the community. [CHECK CQ AND NPPF HERITAGE ASSET] Any development on this church land should be conditional on a guarantee that all income generated would be committed to enhancing the facilities of the Church for use by the wider community. Potential for two or more small dwellings could contribute to the housing needs of the community. |
| | Limited potential for residential housing development following demolition of the agricultural barn would require the Settlement Boundary to be moved further into the countryside bringing it close to the existing footpath between the church and Weir Lane. |
| | Development should not extend beyond the rear boundaries of the gardens of Main Street dwellings, and beyond the current Settlement Boundary as this could set a precedent which other landowners/developers may seek to follow. |
| | NPWP CONCLUSION The site is potentially suitable for providing about 2 dwellings. In the absence of a detailed proposal from the church, and the specified guarantee, the site cannot be considered as suitable for development. CHECK POLICY. |

SITE L

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| Site L | Land east of Main Street, by Willowsic Potential for 2 dwellings |
| | SHELAA APPRAISAL Site was not offered in HDC “Call for sites” therefore SHELAA appraisal was not carried out. |
| | AECOM ASSESSMENT The site is potentially suitable for housing and therefore potentially appropriate for allocation in the Neighbourhood Plan. The site is used for agricultural storage purposes and is located towards the south of the settlement. Much of the agricultural land adjoining the southeast of the settlement is included in the Conservation Area due to its contribution to the setting of the historic part of the village. Development proposals should conform with the character of the Conservation Area, demonstrate suitable vehicular access to the site and account for the potential visual and landscape sensitivity of the site |
| | COMMUNITY QUESTIONNAIRE OUTCOME The site was offered by the owner during the Stakeholder Consultation process, after the community questionnaires were returned. |
| | NPWP APPRAISAL |
| | Small flat site, limited potential. Owner has indicated preference for eco house. Existing agricultural building would be replaced. |
| | Development would require the Settlement Boundary to be moved further into the countryside bringing it closer to the existing footpath between the church and Weir Lane. There is no perceived community benefit to be gained from this proposal. |
| | Development would extend significantly into the countryside beyond the rear garden lines of Main Street dwellings and could set a precedent for other development in the Conservation Area. |
| | NPWP CONCLUSION The potential negative impacts as set out above, mitigate against the site being suitable for housing development. |