

Appendix 6 – Large Strategic Sites Assessment (1,500+ homes)

An assessment of the 6 Initial Spatial Options consulted upon during the Issues and Options consultation in January and February 2024 has identified that Large Strategic Sites >1,500 homes can meet identified housing needs in the most sustainable way, however, in order to provide a mix of sites and ensure the council can maintain a 5 year supply of housing land, only 1 new large strategic site should be allocated in the new local plan. The Refined Options were therefore developed on the basis of including 1 new Large Strategic Site and this assessment of large strategic sites informed which of those sites should be taken forward into the Refined Options.

The assessment has taken into account the following:

- The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- Settlement Hierarchy Assessment
- Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment
- Sustainability Appraisal

The NPPF recognises the supply of large numbers of new homes can often be best achieved through planning for larger scale development, such as new settlements or significant extensions to existing villages and towns, provided they are well located and designed, and supported by the necessary infrastructure and facilities (including a genuine choice of transport modes).

Where this can help to meet identified needs in a sustainable way authorities should:

- consider the opportunities presented by existing or planned investment in infrastructure, the area's economic potential and the scope for net environmental gains;
- ensure that their size and location will support a sustainable community, with sufficient access to services and employment opportunities within the development itself (without expecting an unrealistic level of self-containment), or in larger towns to which there is good access;
- set clear expectations for the quality of the places to be created and how this can be maintained.
- make a realistic assessment of likely rates of delivery.

The assessment was informed by the Sustainability Appraisal, Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment and Settlement Hierarchy Assessment, which take into account many different factors, including the points mentioned in the NPPF above. The methodologies and considerations taken into account in these documents is therefore not repeated here.

The scale and location of large strategic development is of particular importance when assessing sites. The assessment has therefore been informed by the following guiding principles:

- The larger the development, the greater the potential to provide sustainable benefits such as infrastructure (including choice of transport modes), services, facilities and employment. For example, a development of 10,000 homes is capable of creating a new settlement (standalone/co-dependent) with a higher degree of self-containment, compared to a development of 1,500 homes that would be far more reliant on existing centres for jobs, services and facilities.
- Developments of less than 5,000 homes would not generally be considered large enough to support the infrastructure, services and facilities required for a standalone/co-dependant new settlement. Sites of less than 5,000 homes would need to be considered as extensions to existing settlements. For extensions to existing settlements, proximity and opportunities to integrate into the existing built form (including via sustainable modes of transport) is an important consideration. An extension to a settlement of 5,000 homes or less should therefore adjoin the built-up area of a sustainable settlement identified in the settlement hierarchy.
- Sites of 5,000 homes or more may have the potential to be a new standalone settlement capable of providing significant services, facilities and employment to meet the needs of a new communities. It may not be necessary for a site of this scale to adjoin a sustainable settlement. Proximity and access to existing centres for jobs, services and facilities is still an important consideration.

Site Reference	Site Name	Number of Homes (SHELAA)	Assessment and Conclusion
21/8229 (SHELAA 2022 reference as the site was subsequently withdrawn from consideration by the site promoters and is not included in the latest SHELAA)	Farmcare Estate, Stoughton	10,000	Site not taken forward for consideration in the refined options. The Sustainability Appraisal (SA) indicates the impacts (positive and negative) against the SA objectives are broadly comparable to other large strategic sites capable of accommodating more than 1,500. The site adjoins the Urban Area of Leicester at Oadby. The Leicester Urban Area is at the top of the settlement hierarchy and the site is therefore in a sustainable location in terms of proximity to an existing sustainable settlement. The site is of a scale to provide a large standalone or codependent new settlement. The site is in single ownership and whilst there can be significant sustainable and infrastructure benefits from a development of this scale, a development of this size would have long lead-in times and span multiple Local Plan Periods. Given the scale and associated complexity of bringing forward a site of this nature, there are likely to be limited sustainable benefits during the plan period of this Local Plan (2020-41). This site was put forward through the 2021 Call for Sites, however, a smaller part of the site was actively promoted with adjoining land (see Land South of Gartree Road ref: 24/10433 below) for a smaller extension to the Leicester Urban Area adjoining Oadby. Taking into account that; part of the site was being actively promoted for different type and scale of development; the scale and complexity of the site, and associated long lead-in times with limited sustainable benefits during the proposed plan period for this local plan, the site for 10,000 homes was not taken forward for consideration in the refined options. (Note: Following the 2024 Call for Sites this site for 10,000 homes was subsequently withdrawn from the Local Plan process by the promoters).
21/8217	Whetstone Pastures Garden	1,036 homes (this site forms part of	This site is not taken forward for consideration in the Refined Options. The Sustainability Appraisal indicates that across sites of all sizes in the District this site is expected to have one of the most significant negative effects across the SA objectives and particular

	Village, Willoughby Waterleys	a larger garden village proposal in neighbouring Blaby District with potential for 4,000 – 5,000 homes).	consideration would therefore be needed for mitigation. The SHELAA indicates the site (comprising two parts) is not currently suitable, is achievable and not currently available. The site does not adjoin a sustainable settlement. The development of a site for 1,036 homes does not have the critical mass to provide the infrastructure required for a standalone settlement in this location and would therefore not be capable of being considered sustainable as an isolated site for 1,036 homes. This site has been promoted as part of a much larger garden village proposal (Whetstone Pastures Garden Village), most of which is located in Blaby District. Development of the site in Harborough District site would therefore be reliant on delivery of the garden village in Blaby District. Developing a large standalone/codependent new settlement in this location would require significant infrastructure with long lead-in times, and the site in neighbouring Blaby District currently has no planning status. Development of this site is therefore unlikely to be capable of being delivered within the proposed plan period (2020-41). Given the long lead-in times associated with bringing forward a new settlement in this location; uncertainty about infrastructure; and the reliance on strategic development in neighbouring Blaby District coming forward, the site was not taken forward for consideration in the refined options.
24/10498	Land east of Broughton Astley and North of Dunton Bassett and Ashby Magna	5,677 homes (Site promoter indicates approximately 5,000 homes)	This site is not taken forward for consideration in the Refined Options. The Sustainability Appraisal (SA) indicates the impacts (positive and negative) against the SA objectives are broadly comparable to other large strategic sites capable of accommodating more than 1,500 homes. The SHELAA indicates the site is not suitable, is potentially available and not currently achievable. The site does not adjoin a sustainable settlement and has been promoted as a large new settlement called (South Whetstone New Settlement). The proposal includes potential for a new motorway junction on the M1, a service station, and is presented as an opportunity with potential to bring forward infrastructure of regional importance in combination with the Whetstone Pastures Garden Village in Blaby District (see site 21/8217 above), or as a standalone site for 5,000 homes. There is currently no prospect of infrastructure of this nature being delivered within the proposed plan period (2020-41). Whether the site was brought forward as a standalone settlement or in combination with Whetstone Pastures, the infrastructure required to bring forward

			development in this location would be substantial given the limited road infrastructure and rural nature of the area. The site is in multiple land ownership and whilst there can be significant sustainable and infrastructure benefits from a development of this scale, the size and uncertainty around strategic infrastructure means there is unlikely to be significant development and sustainable benefits during the plan period of this Local Plan (2020-41) in this location. The site was therefore not taken forward for consideration in the Refined Options.
21/8192	Land east of Broughton Astley and North of Dunton Bassett and Ashby Magna	5,000 homes	This site is not taken forward for consideration in the Refined Options. The Sustainability Appraisal (SA) indicates the impacts (positive and negative) against the SA objectives are broadly comparable to other large strategic sites capable of accommodating more than 1,500 homes. This site was submitted for consideration in 2021 and forms the substantive part of the site above (24/10498) which was more recently promoted in 2024. Given the similarities in scale and location, the conclusions are therefore similar. The SHELAA indicates the site is not currently suitable, potentially available and not achievable. The submission acknowledges development in this location may dependant on a new motorway junction. The site does not adjoin a sustainable settlement and there is currently no prospect of infrastructure of this nature being delivered within the proposed plan period (2020-41). Whether the site was brought forward as a standalone settlement or in combination with Whetstone Pastures, the infrastructure required to bring forward development in this location would be substantial given the limited road infrastructure and rural nature of the area. The site is in multiple land ownership and whilst there can be significant sustainable and infrastructure benefits from a development of this scale, the size and uncertainty around strategic infrastructure means there is unlikely to be significant development and sustainable benefits during the plan period of this Local Plan (2020-41) in this location. The site has also more recently been promoted as part a similar proposal (see site 24/10498 above) with amended site boundaries. The site was therefore not taken forward for consideration in the Refined Options.
21/8178 & 24/10137	Land at Newton	3,174 homes (note this site	The site was not taken forward for consideration in the Refined Options. The Sustainability Appraisal (SA) indicates the impacts (positive and negative) against the SA objectives are

	Harcourt (Newton Croft)	has been promoted for approximately 4,500 which is significantly higher than the standard approach to calculating capacity in the SHELAA)	broadly comparable to other large strategic sites capable of accommodating more than 1,500 homes. The site was submitted for consideration in 2021 and subsequently in 2024 and has two references in the SHELAA, although both sites are substantively the same and have therefore been assessed together. The SHELAA indicates the site is not currently suitable, is available and not currently achievable, and notes the site could accommodate approximately 3,174 homes although the site has been promoted for about 4,500 homes. The site is relatively well related to the Leicester Urban area being in close proximity to the built-up area of neighbouring Oadby and Wigston, but does not adjoin the Leicester Urban Area, or another sustainable settlement in the settlement hierarchy. Whilst development at this scale should be able to provide much of its own infrastructure to support the day-to-day needs of residents reducing the need to travel, it would be reliant on existing centres for jobs, services and facilities to some degree. Development at this scale would therefore need to be an extension of an existing settlement rather than a new settlement. The fact that the site does not adjoin an existing sustainable settlement will make the integration of the site into the existing built form challenging. Vehicular access onto the A6 is also likely to be challenging. Given the site does not adjoin a sustainable settlement; is difficult to integrate with the existing built form and is not large enough to be considered a standalone new settlement with associated infrastructure, it was not taken forward for consideration in the Refined Options.
21/8093	Land at Stretton Hall Farm, Chestnut Drive, Great Glen.	1,707 homes	This site was not taken forward for consideration in the Refined Options. The Sustainability Appraisal (SA) indicates the impacts (positive and negative) against the SA objectives are broadly comparable to other large strategic sites capable of accommodating more than 1,500 homes. The SHELAA indicates the site is potentially suitable, is available and potentially achievable. The site adjoins the Leicester Urban Area at Oadby. The Leicester Urban Area is at the top of the settlement hierarchy and is therefore in a sustainable location in terms of proximity to an existing sustainable settlement. Whilst development at this scale may be able to provide some of its own infrastructure supporting the day-to-day needs of residents reducing the need to travel to some degree, the level of infrastructure is likely to be more limited compared to larger sites, leading to greater reliance on existing

			centres for jobs, services and facilities. The site was promoted through the call for sites 2021. However, as part of the 2024 Call for Sites, the land promoters submitted a joint proposal for a larger development with the promoters of adjoining land (See Land South of Gartree Road and Land at Stretton Hall Farm below). The site has therefore more recently been actively promoted as part of a larger scheme for 4,000 homes rather than the original site for 1,707 homes. The site was not taken forward for consideration in the Refined Options as the scale of infrastructure, services and facilities (and associated sustainable benefits) that a site of this size could support would be relatively limited compared larger sites and it is now being actively promoted as part of a proposal for a different scale of development.
24/8631	Land South of Gartree Road and Land at Stretton Hall Farm	3,000 homes in Harborough District and approximately 1,000 homes in Oadby & Wigston Borough	This site was taken forward for consideration in the Refined Options. The Sustainability Appraisal (SA) indicates the impacts (positive and negative) against the SA objectives are broadly comparable to other large strategic sites capable of accommodating more than 1,500 homes. The SHELAA indicates the site is potentially suitable, available and potentially achievable. The site adjoins the Urban Area of Leicester at Oadby. The Leicester Urban Area is at the top of the settlement hierarchy and the site is therefore in a sustainable location in terms of proximity to an existing sustainable settlement. Development at this scale should be able to provide much of its own infrastructure to support the day-to-day needs of residents reducing the need to travel, and the proximity of the site to the Leicester Urban Area offers potential opportunities for integration to the existing built-up area, including through sustainable travel. Given the scale of the proposal, the potential for significant infrastructure to support day-to-day needs, the proximity of the site to the Leicester Urban Area and the potential opportunities this offers to sustainably integrate with the existing urban area, this site was taken forward for consideration in the Refined Options.
24/10433	Land South of Lutterworth	2,415 homes	This site was taken forward for consideration in the Refined Options. The Sustainability Appraisal (SA) indicates the impacts (positive and negative) against the SA objectives are broadly comparable to other large strategic sites capable of accommodating more than 1,500 homes. The SHELAA indicates the site is considered not suitable, not currently

			<p>available and not currently achievable. The site adjoins the Market Town of Lutterworth which is near the top of the settlement hierarchy. The site is therefore in a sustainable location in terms of proximity to a sustainable settlement. Whilst there is significant road infrastructure to the north of the site (A4303) which may act as a barrier to integration of the site with the existing settlement of Lutterworth, there is an existing road bridge over the A4303 which may provide access to Lutterworth Town Centre as well as along the A426 which would likely form the main point of access. Given the sites proximity to a sustainable settlement with some potential (but fairly limited) opportunities to integrate the site with the existing built form of the settlement, including access to the services and facilities in the town centre, this site was taken forward consideration through the Refined Options.</p>
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