

Appendix 1: Assessment Criteria

Environmental constraints

Criteria 1	Landscape		
Policy background	<p>“Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by... protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils... recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside” (NPPF 2021, para 174)</p> <p>“Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. The scale and extent of development within all these designated areas should be limited, while development within their setting should be sensitively located and designated to avoid or minimise adverse impact on the designated areas” (NPPF 2021, para 176)</p>		
Source	High Weald AONB Unit, Capacity of Mid Sussex District to accommodate development (LUC, 2014), SHLAA: Review of Landscape and Visual Aspects of Site Suitability (LUC, 2015), High Weald AONB Unit Assessments, South Downs National Park Authority Assessments		
Assessment		Sites Within the AONB	Sites Outside the AONB
		High impact on the AONB/ Likely major development in the AONB with no identified exceptional circumstances	
		Moderate impact on the AONB	Low to low/medium potential for change in landscape terms
		Low impact on the AONB	Medium potential for change in landscape terms
			Medium/high potential for change in landscape terms
			High potential for change in landscape terms
Note	<p>Assessment of site will be based on the location within or outside the AONB. Sites located within the AONB will be subject to the High Weald AONB Unit own assessment criteria and knowledge, while conclusions for sites outside the AONB will be drawn for each site dependant on which Landscape Capacity area they are within (as determined by the landscape capacity studies, based on their assessment methodology) or comments received from specialist advisors. Views will be sought from the South Downs National Park Authority and the AONB Unit for sites located within their settings to support the assessment.</p>		

Criteria 2	Flood risk		
Policy background	<p>“Inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding should be avoided by directing development away from areas at highest risk (whether existing or future). Where development is necessary in such areas, the development should be made safe for its lifetime without increasing flood risk elsewhere.” (NPPF 2021, para 159)</p>		
Source	Environment Agency Flood Risk Zones, MSDC Strategic Flood Risk Assessment		
Assessment			
		Site affected by significant areas of flood risk/historic flood events which would affect the site’s developability	
		Site has areas within flood zone 2/3 or has flooded historically	
		Site has small areas within Flood Zone 2/3, no known historic events	

		Sites has flooded historically but is not within Flood Zone 2/3 Site is adjacent to Flood Zone 2/3, potential future flood risk
		Site unaffected by flood risk
Note	Where flood risk would make a site undevelopable (due to the location of the area at risk from flooding, or the amount of site at risk from flooding) it will be assessed as 'Significant'.	

Criteria 3		Trees
Policy background	<p>"development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists." (NPPF 2021, para 180c)</p> <p>"Planning policies and decision should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by... recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside – including...trees and woodland." (NPPF 2021, para 174b)</p> <p>Planning policies and decisions should ensure that new streets are tree-lined, that opportunities are taken to incorporate trees elsewhere in developments (such as parks and community orchards), that appropriate measures are in place to secure the long-term maintenance of newly-planted trees, and that existing trees are retained wherever possible. (NPPF 2021, para 131)</p>	
Source	Mid Sussex Ancient Woodland Inventory (GIS), Woodland Trust Ancient Tree Inventory, Tree Preservation Orders (GIS), consultation response from MSDC Tree Officer	
Assessment		Site is affected by significant amount of ancient woodland and/or Ancient and/or Veteran Trees. Development of the site would result in direct loss or harm which cannot be mitigated.
		Site is partially affected by ancient woodland and/or Ancient and/or Veteran Trees. Development of the site would result in some harm, but mitigation is required. Significant part of the site is covered by trees and/or there is presence of protected trees on/adjacent to the site. Development would result in loss, objection from Tree Officer.
		Site is adjacent to an area of ancient woodland or within a 15m buffer from an area of ancient woodland. Development of the site may result in some harm, but mitigation can be achieved. Presence of protected trees on/adjacent to the site which would constrain development. Tree Officer concludes that potential impacts can be mitigated.
		Presence of trees on site or along the boundaries,
		Site not affected by trees
Note	<p>The assessment will be applied to both ancient woodland and trees. Where the proposed site is likely to impact on more than one, the overall assessment will reflect the highest impact identified, but the comments will refer to specific assets. Where presence of ancient woodland would make a site undevelopable (due to the location or the amount of ancient woodland that cannot be mitigated) it will be assessed as 'Significant'.</p> <p>Impact on trees will be determined by the MSDC Tree Officer based on their own assessment criteria and knowledge.</p>	

Criteria 4		Biodiversity
Policy background	"development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in combination with other developments), should not normally be permitted." (NPPF 2021, para 180b)	

	<p>“Plans should distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites’ (NPPF 2021, para 175)</p> <p>“To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, plans should identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity” (NPPF 2021, para 179a)</p>		
Source	Natural England SSSI dataset and Impact Risk Zones, consultation responses from Natural England/Sussex Wildlife Trust.		
Assessment		Nationally designated sites	Locally designated sites
		Site is adjacent/in proximity to a SSSI, Objection from NE	
		Site is adjacent/in proximity to a SSSI, NE concluded impacts can be mitigated	Site is within or adjacent/in proximity to an LWS, Objection from Sussex Wildlife Trust
			Site is within or adjacent/in proximity to an LWS, Sussex Wildlife Trust conclude impacts can be mitigated
		No objection raised by NE or Sussex Wildlife Trust despite proximity with designated site, or site not within or adjacent to designated site	
Note	Impact on Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), nationally designated sites, will be determined by Natural England (NE) based on their own assessment criteria and knowledge. Impact on locally designated sites (Local Wildlife Sites - LWS/Local Nature Reserves - LNR) will be determined by Sussex Wildlife Trust (SWT).		

Criteria 5	Listed Building		
Policy background	“When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.” (NPPF 2021, para 199)		
Source	Historic England Listed Buildings (GIS), consultation response from MSDC Conservation Officer		
Assessment		Listed buildings are present on/within proximity of the site, Substantial harm – Harmful impact	
		Listed buildings are present on/within proximity of the site, Less than substantial harm – High impact	
		Listed buildings are present on/within proximity of the site, Less than substantial harm – Medium impact	
		Listed buildings are present on/within proximity of the site, Less than substantial harm – Low impact	
		No Listed buildings on/near the site – No impact	
Note	Comments from MSDC Conservation Officer will determine whether there is predicted to be Substantial Harm/Harm/No Impact based on site layout information submitted by site proponent (where provided). Where the proposed site is likely to impact on more than one Listed building, the overall assessment will reflect the highest impact identified, but the comments will refer to specific Listed Buildings.		

Criteria 6	Conservation Area		
Policy background	“When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is		

	irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.” (NPPF 2021, para 199)	
Source	Historic England Listed Buildings (GIS), consultation response from MSDC Conservation Officer	
Assessment		Site is within/close to a conservation area, Substantial harm – Harmful impact
		Site is within/close to a conservation area, Less than substantial harm – High impact
		Site is within/close to a conservation area, Less than substantial harm – Medium impact
		Site is within/close to a conservation area, Less than substantial harm – Low impact
		There are no conservation areas within/close to the site – No impact
Note	Comments from MSDC Conservation Officer will determine whether there is predicted to be Substantial Harm/Harm/No Impact based on site layout information submitted by site proponent (where provided).	

Criteria 7	Archaeology	
Policy background	“When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.” (NPPF 2021, para 199)	
Source	West Sussex County Council Archaeological Notification Areas (GIS), West Sussex County Council Archaeologist	
Assessment		Severe impact on archaeological asset – objection from County Archaeologist
		Archaeological designation on/ adjacent to site. Moderate impact on archaeological asset – County Archaeologist has concluded that impact can be mitigated
		No archaeological designations on/ adjacent to site. No impact on archaeological asset – No objection from County Archaeologist
Note	Impact on archaeological assets will be determined by West Sussex County Council Archaeologist based on their own assessment criteria and knowledge.	

Developability considerations

Criteria 8	Availability	
Policy background	“To be considered deliverable, sites for housing should be available now, offer a suitable location for development now, and be achievable with a realistic prospect that housing will be delivered on the site within five years.” (NPPF 2021, Annex 2) “To be considered developable, sites should be in a suitable location for housing development with a reasonable prospect that they will be available and could be viably developed at the point envisaged.” (NPPF 2021, Annex 2)	
Source	SHELAA Site Submission, Site Promoter (Developer Questionnaire)	
Assessment		The site is not/will not become available for development during the plan period
		Whilst the site has been promoted for development through the call for sites or other source, there has been no further evidence submitted to demonstrate that the site is developable within the Plan period.
		The site will become available for development during the plan period
		The site is available for development within 5 years, supported by an option agreement with a housebuilder in place.
Note	Site promoter submissions, including responses to the questionnaire, will inform the assessment. The District Plan Review will cover a 17-year timeframe. The document	

	will allocate some sites that are capable of delivery in the first 5 years of the Plan and others will come forward later in the Plan period. Therefore, the assessment is considering both deliverable and developable sites.
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Criteria 9		Access											
Policy background	<p>“Development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.” (NPPF 2021, para 111)</p> <p>“In assessing sites that may be allocated for development in plans, or specific applications for development, it should be ensured that... safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users.” (NPPF 2021, para 110c)</p>												
Source	WSCC Highways, MSDC Highways consultant												
Assessment	<table border="1"> <tr> <td style="background-color: red;"></td> <td>No means/prospect of achieving suitable and safe access or approach to the site.</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="background-color: pink;"></td> <td>Access may be achieved through 3rd party land (no agreement in place). Site approach would require improvements to accommodate further development, achievability is uncertain.</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="background-color: yellow;"></td> <td>Access does not exist but can be achieved within landholding to adjacent highway or through 3rd party land (agreement in place). Site approach would require improvements to accommodate further development, which could be achieved</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="background-color: lightgreen;"></td> <td>Site access exists and minor improvements are required to provide a suitable and safe site approach</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="background-color: green;"></td> <td>No known constraints to access and site approach to accommodate development</td> </tr> </table>				No means/prospect of achieving suitable and safe access or approach to the site.		Access may be achieved through 3 rd party land (no agreement in place). Site approach would require improvements to accommodate further development, achievability is uncertain.		Access does not exist but can be achieved within landholding to adjacent highway or through 3 rd party land (agreement in place). Site approach would require improvements to accommodate further development, which could be achieved		Site access exists and minor improvements are required to provide a suitable and safe site approach		No known constraints to access and site approach to accommodate development
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	No known constraints to access and site approach to accommodate development												
Note	Officer assessment of whether there is a likely impact on local road network (based on the findings of the Mid Sussex Transport Study). Officer assessment to determine whether a suitable access can be achieved – any uncertain access arrangements will be assessed in more detail (e.g. in liaison with WSCC Highways and/or a detailed access study) and conclusions used to determine the impact for this criterion.												

Accessibility factors





Criteria 10		Availability of Public Transport																																								
Policy background	<p>“Transport issues should be considered from the earliest stages of plan-making and development proposals, so that... opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport use are identified and pursued” (NPPF 2021, para 104c)</p> <p>“Significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. This can help to reduce congestion and emissions, and improve air quality and public health” (NPPF 2021, para 105)</p>																																									
Source	MSDC Sustainability Mapping (GIS)																																									
Assessment	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2" rowspan="2">Bus Service</th> <th colspan="4">Distance</th> </tr> <tr> <th>400m</th> <th>600m</th> <th>800m</th> <th>800+m</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td rowspan="4">Frequency</td> <td>Excellent (4+/hour)</td> <td>Excellent</td> <td>Good</td> <td>Good</td> <td>Fair</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Good (2+/hour)</td> <td>Good</td> <td>Good</td> <td>Fair</td> <td>Fair</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Fair (<2/hour)</td> <td>Good</td> <td>Fair</td> <td>Fair</td> <td>Poor</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Poor (Infrequent)</td> <td>Fair</td> <td>Fair</td> <td>Poor</td> <td>Poor</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2">Train service</td> <td colspan="4">Distance</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>					Bus Service		Distance				400m	600m	800m	800+m	Frequency	Excellent (4+/hour)	Excellent	Good	Good	Fair	Good (2+/hour)	Good	Good	Fair	Fair	Fair (<2/hour)	Good	Fair	Fair	Poor	Poor (Infrequent)	Fair	Fair	Poor	Poor	Train service		Distance			
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Train service		Distance																																								





		<800m	<1.2km	<1.6km	>1.6km
		Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Overall assessment		Train Service			
		Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Bus Service	Excellent	Excellent	Good	Good	Fair
	Good	Good	Good	Fair	Fair
	Fair	Good	Fair	Fair	Poor
	Poor	Fair	Fair	Poor	Poor
	Access to Public Transport and/or frequency of Public Transport in this location is poor				
	Access to Public Transport and/or frequency of Public Transport in this location is fair				
	Access to Public Transport and/or frequency of Public Transport in this location is good				
	Access to Public Transport and/or frequency of Public Transport in this location is excellent				
Note	Measured using the most practical walking route from the centre of the site to the nearest Public Transport. Based on MSDC Sustainability standards.				

Criteria 11	Access to Main Service Centre				
Policy background	<p>“Planning policies and decisions should support the role that town centres play at the heart of local communities, by taking a positive approach to their growth, management and adaptation.” (NPPF 2021, para 86)</p> <p>“Transport issues should be considered from the earliest stages of plan-making and development proposals, so that... opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport use are identified and pursued” (NPPF 2021, para 104c)</p>				
Source	TravelTime Mapping				
Assessment		Journey likely by car only (greater than 20 minutes walk / 30 minutes public transport)			
		Within 20 minutes walk / 30 minutes public transport			
		Within 15 minutes walk / 20 minutes public transport			
		Within 10 minutes walk			
Note	For the purpose of this assessment, a main service centre is one which contains a main town or village centre where the majority of day-to-day facilities exist (for example, retail, community and leisure). For the purposes of this assessment, the Main Service Centres are defined as the three Town Centres (Burgess Hill, East Grinstead and Haywards Heath), the largest villages (Cuckfield, Lindfield, Hassocks, Hurstpierpoint) as well as services centres outside the district (e.g. Crawley and Brighton).				

Criteria 12	Distance to Primary School				
Policy background	“It is important that a sufficient choice of school places is available to meet the needs of existing and new communities. Local planning authorities should... give great weight to the need to create, expand or alter schools through the preparation of plans and decisions on applications” (NPPF 2021, para 95)				
Source	TravelTime Mapping				
Assessment		Over 20 minutes walk			
		Within 20 minutes walk			
		Within 15 minutes walk			
		Within 10 minutes walk/Expected to be provided on-site			

Note	Mapped using TravelTime software, which calculates distance to this service using the most practical and fastest route. Based on arrival time before 9am.
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Criteria 13	Distance to Health Centre or GP Surgery	
Policy background	“Strategic policies should set out an overall strategy for the pattern, scale and quality of development, and make sufficient provision for...community facilities (such as health...)” (NPPF 2021, para 20c) “Planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which... enable and support healthy lifestyles, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs” (NPPF 2021, para 92c)	
Source	TravelTime Mapping	
Assessment		Over 20 minutes walk
		Within 20 minutes walk
		Within 15 minutes walk
		Within 10 minutes walk/Expected to be provided on-site
Note	Mapped using TravelTime software, which calculates distance to this service using the most practical and fastest route.	

Criteria 14	Distance to Local Convenience Retail	
Policy background	“To promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Planning policies should identify opportunities for villages to grow and thrive, especially where this will support local services.” (NPPF 2021, 79)	
Source	TravelTime Mapping	
Assessment		Over 20 minutes walk
		Within 20 minutes walk
		Within 15 minutes walk
		Within 10 minutes walk/Expected to be provided on-site
Note	Mapped using TravelTime software, which calculates distance to this service using the most practical and fastest route. For the purposes of this assessment, Local Convenience Retail is defined as a convenience store which provides basic day-to-day needs (bread/milk/etc) in either a standalone location or as part of a neighbourhood centre.	