

# The Urban Fringe Sites Assessment Matrix

## Approach

Whilst place shaping is about meeting the specific needs of neighbourhoods and communities, there is a strategic requirement to provide an additional 500 new homes on the urban fringe around Plymouth, which will be located within the South Hams District area. The adopted South Hams Core Strategy has identified 500 new homes but is not location specific.

The South Hams Core Strategy also identifies a need for 4 hectares of employment land on the urban fringe, to the west of Roborough. A specific site was identified to the west of Broadley Park Employment Estate in Roborough within the Preferred Options Plymouth Urban Fringe Site Specific Allocations document, produced by South Hams District Council in 2006.

## Housing allocation – 500 new homes

Sites on the urban fringe that have been promoted for housing development have been assessed to identify the most sustainable location for the allocation of 500 new homes.

South Hams District Council undertook a SHLAA in 2009 and Plymouth City Council undertook a SHLAA in 2009, which together assessed all sites across Plymouth and the urban fringe. All sites which were promoted to the studies and lie within the urban fringe, were assessed again for the allocation of 500 homes. These sites are mapped and shown in Appendix 1.

This urban fringe site assessment has gone further and has assessed the suitability, availability and achievability of each site for providing 500 new homes, existing urban fringe neighbourhoods, and how development in this location can improve both the existing community, as well as how the site relates to the open countryside.

Each site was assessed and a full site assessment matrix completed, which included commentary and traffic light grading. The commentary was provided on specific questions under the main headings below:

- A well connected community
- A community with thriving mixed uses and appropriate and accessible services
- A neighbourhood that respects and capitalises on its environment
- An attractive and safe neighbourhood with well designed buildings and spaces
- A prosperous community with a health and diverse economy
- Availability
- Achievability

At this draft stage there are a few area uncompleted for some of the sites, mainly the availability and achievability criteria, which can be updated on further assessment.

Each proforma question was graded with a traffic light grading. The methodology for using the traffic light grading, relating to the key questions, is provided at the front of full site assessment matrix (Appendix 3).

A summary of all sites is outlined in Appendix 2, which provides a summary of all traffic light answers to the questions asked on each site. This helped, along with the written commentary in site assessment matrix (Appendix 3), to select the preferred location for 500 new homes.

### **Employment allocation (4ha)**

As stated above, the South Hams Core Strategy identifies 4 hectares for employment to the west of Roborough, and a specific site within the Preferred Options Plymouth Urban Fringe Site Specific Allocations document, produced by South Hams District Council. This site has been reassessed for its suitability for employment use. The site is actually a smaller part of a SHLAA site which was promoted for housing, and the wider site was assessed for its potential for 500 homes, as described above.

As part of the Plymouth SHLAA work undertaken in 2009, 4 sites just to the east of Roborough at Broadley Park Employment Estate were promoted to the Council for residential development. These sites were found to be unsuitable for residential development. Therefore these 4 sites have also been assessed for the potential use of employment. The site assessment matrix is set out in Appendix 4.

Each site was assessed and a full site assessment matrix completed, which included commentary and traffic light grading. The same matrix was completed for these sites.

### **Results of site assessments**

The results of each site assessment are set out in the tables below. The full assessments are provided within the site assessment matrix in Appendix 3.

#### **Housing allocation – 500 new homes**

| <b>Urban fringe leaflet map 2 ref.</b> | <b>SHLAA site ref no.</b> | <b>Summary of site assessments</b>  |
|--|---------------------------|---|
| 1                                      | 28_009                    | The site is mainly detached from the existing built up area of Plymouth and associates facilities. Site constrained as it is within the AONB and adjacent the estuary which is a SSSI, SAC and SPA. Areas bordering parts of the site is Ancient Woodland. Warleigh House lies to the north of the site and is a listed building. The valley running down to it is within the site and is part of its approach and contributes to its setting. A small section of land is adjacent the flood zone and the majority of the site is grade 2 agricultural land. Development also not suitable due to access constraints and would need major transport infrastructure for it to come forward. Almost all of the area is protected by a national designation, much of it is elevated and highly prominent in wider views and it forms an important part of the estuary landscape. |
| 2                                      | 28_010                    | The site is close to existing facilities and bus service, although there is no local employment and it is not within walking distance of a local centre. Site constrained by poor access, which could be improved if the site came forward with 28_014, and there are highway capacity issues relating to Tamerton Foliot village. Site is grade 2 agricultural land. Adjacent to the AONB, it is considered unsuitable for development in landscape and visual terms. Development at this site does not really present any opportunities to improve the existing adjacent neighbourhood or   |

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|    |         | the countryside on the urban edge.   |
| 3  | 28_014  | The site is close to existing facilities and bus service, although there is no local employment. Site constrained by bend in road, which would need junction improvements, and there are highway capacity issues relating to Tamerton Foliot village. Site is grade 2 agricultural land and has landscape constraints. Development at this site does not really present any opportunities to improve the existing adjacent neighbourhood or the countryside on the urban edge.   |
| 4  | 28_006  | The site is close to existing facilities and bus service, although there is no local employment. Site constrained by bend in road, which would need junction improvements, and there are highway capacity issues relating to Tamerton Foliot village. A small section of land along the south west border is adjacent the flood zone and the majority of the site is grade 2 agricultural land. Development is considered to be unsuitable from a landscape and visual perspective. Development at this site does not really present any opportunities to improve the existing adjacent neighbourhood or the countryside on the urban edge.  |
| 5  | 29_005  | The site is very detached by a valley from the existing built up area of Plymouth and associated facilities. The site is not within walking distance of the nearest neighbourhood, and the topography restricts connections to the existing neighbourhoods. Site constrained by the AONB to the north. Development to the north of the site would have a negative impact from the AONB. Development also not suitable due to access constraints and would need major transport infrastructure for it to come forward. A small section of land is adjacent the flood zone.  |
| 6  | 30_006  | The site is too detached from the built up area of Plymouth, and from any existing local facilities, services and local centres, although it is within walking distance of a bus stop. Therefore residential development in this location would not link into the existing neighbourhoods, require large amounts of infrastructure and therefore would not be appropriate. The site is close to the AONB.  |
| 7  | 30_009  | There is no direct access onto a local highway, without coming forward with site 30_006. To the north the site is adjacent the AONB, but this would not be an absolute constraint to residential development in this location. The site is too detached from the built up area of Plymouth, and from any existing local facilities, services and local centres, although it is within walking distance of a bus stop. Therefore residential development in this location would not link into the existing neighbourhoods, require large amounts of infrastructure and therefore would not be appropriate.  |
| 8  | 30_007  | The site is too detached from the built up area of Plymouth, and from any existing local facilities, services and local centres, although it is within walking distance of a bus stop.. Therefore residential development in this location would not link into the existing neighbourhoods, require large amounts of infrastructure and therefore would not be appropriate. The site should be retained undeveloped to retain the immediate landscape setting of woodland and trees which surround Roborough House.  |
| 9  | 30_008  | The site is too detached from the built up area of Plymouth, and from any existing local facilities, services and local centres, although it is within walking distance of a bus stop. Therefore residential development in this location would not link into the existing neighbourhoods, require large amounts of infrastructure and therefore would not be appropriate. A watercourse which flows across the site and the eastern border follows the flood zone. There is an area of Ancient Woodland close to the site to the south. There are power lines crossing the corner of the site and there are also topographical constraints. The relationship of development to trees and the watercourse would also be key constraints. |
| 10 | 30_010  | There is no direct access onto a local highway, and the site is too small to deliver 500 new homes.  |
| 11 | 31_005b | The site is within the built up area of Plymouth and between the neighbourhoods of Woolwell and Roborough, and close to associated facilities and public transport services. Therefore providing the opportunity for any new residents to use existing facilities and/or provide new facilities which would be within walking distance for both existing and new residents. The site is also located close to existing local centre, large supermarket and local employment, as well as public transport.  |

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|                 |                  | There is no landscape, flooding or any other major constraints which would restrict or constrain residential development in this location. Initial ecology study of the site identify that hedgerows should be assumed to be 'Important' since the presence of dormice, under the Hedgerows Regulations. Development would help to improve access between Roborough and Woolwell, through improvements to the lane to the east of the site and potentially through the site itself.  |
| 12              | 31_009           | The site is within the built up area of Plymouth, adjacent the neighbourhood of Woolwell and close to Roborough, and close to associated facilities and public transport services. Therefore providing the opportunity for any new residents to use existing facilities and/or provide new facilities which would be within walking distance for both existing and new residents. The site is also located close to existing Woolwell local centre and local public transport. Development would help to improve access between Roborough and Woolwell, through improvements to the lane to the west of the site. However, the site has poor access, but if the site came forward with SHLAA site 31_005b, then access might be able to be achieved. It has a rather urban fringe character and the landscape condition is generally poor. However, there are extensive views towards the site from the countryside to the east extending into the fringes of the National Park and therefore considered unsuitable in terms of landscape. |
| 13              | 31_012           | The site is adjacent the existing neighbourhood of Woolwell, and close to associated facilities and public transport services. Therefore providing the potential for any new residents to use existing facilities and/or provide new facilities which would be within walking distance for both existing and new residents. There is no landscape or flooding constraints. The site is identified as part of the LDF Greenscape and adjacent Ancient Woodland, therefore if developed has the potential to adversely affect biodiversity. A satisfactory access could be achieved at the northern end via existing residential streets. However, the presence of the tramway along the edge of the site and uncertainty over the ownership of access areas, means this site is currently not available, but could come forward in further assessments. The site is also too small to deliver 500 new homes.  |
| 14<br>and<br>15 | 36_006a<br>and b | The site is very detached by a valley and woodland from the existing built up area of Plymouth and associated facilities. The site is not within walking distance of the nearest neighbourhood, and the topography restricts connections to the existing neighbourhoods. Site constrained by topography. There is an existing pipeline safeguarded which crosses the site connecting the Plymouth boundary with Lee Moor quarry. Development is not suitable due to access constraints and would need major transport infrastructure for it to come forward. Parts of the site are designated as Scheduled Ancient Monument and Flood Zone 3. The land is therefore highly prominent and forms a key part of the green hills and ridges that surround parts of the city and are important part of its overall setting and is not appropriate for accommodating development. Development to the north of the site would have a negative impact on woodland and adjacent SSSI.   |
| 16              | 36_005           | Although adjacent to an existing housing estate, the site does not link well with any existing neighbourhoods in Plymouth and associated facilities. Site is not well related to meet the needs of existing residents. The site is not within walking distance of the nearest neighbourhood, although it is adjacent a bus stop. Topography, landscape issues and flood risk at the bottom of the valley constrains development in this location. There is a proposal to develop a road to go through this site, which will provide a lorry route for quarry vehicles travelling out of Lee Moor quarry. This route has not as yet been confirmed.   |
| 17              | 36_007           | Although adjacent to an existing housing estate, the site does not link well with any existing neighbourhoods in Plymouth and associated facilities. Site is not well related to meet the needs of existing residents. The site is not within walking distance of the nearest neighbourhood, although it is close to a bus stop. Topography, landscape issues and flood risk at the bottom of the valley constrains development in this location.  |
|                 | 40_022           | The site is detached from the existing built up area of Plymouth, including the proposed Sherford and associates facilities. Although the site is closer to facilities in the village of Brixton. A small section of land is adjacent the flood zone and parts of the site is grade 2 agricultural land. Site constrained as part of it is viewed  |

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| 19 |        | from the AONB to the south. The site lies south of Sherford Community Park, identified in the Area Action Plan, which identifies the need to 'protection of the ridge NE of Brixton from development' (para 5.2). Development within this site would therefore be completely at odds with the strategy for the area identified through the adopted AAP. It would create a pocket of development that is poorly related in visual terms to the city and which is likely to give rise to substantial adverse landscape and visual effects on the wider. It would also erode the separation of Brixton from the city edge and compromise its identity.                                    |
| 20 | 40_025 | The site is detached from the existing built up area of Plymouth, and although close to some facilities, the site would not link well to the existing neighbourhood. It has poor access and infrastructure costs are likely to preclude development in the current economic climate. A small part of the site is within flood zone 3. Whilst the western end of the rugby pitches, south of Coltness Road, could accommodate a relatively discrete area of development, the rest of the site is considered to be unsuitable for development due to its value as a landscape buffer between the built up edge and the AONB and its wide visual exposure, including views from the AONB. |

## Conclusion

The most sustainable and preferred location for new housing development, on the urban fringe, is SHLAA site 31\_005b in Woolwell (site 11 on the urban fringe leaflet map 2 (February 2011)). It is within the built up area of Plymouth and close to associated facilities and public transport services. There have been initial ecology study of the site which identified that hedgerows should be assumed to be 'Important' since the presence of dormice, under the Hedgerows Regulations. Further investigation would need to be completed in order to provide sufficient mitigation measures. The SHLAA provided site 31\_005b with a yield of 100 dwellings.

The second preferred location for new housing development, on the urban fringe, is SHLAA site 31\_009 (site 12 on the urban fringe leaflet map 2 (February 2011)). It is adjacent, and to the east, of site 31\_005b and is close to local facilities and public transport services. The site is also located close to existing Woolwell local centre and local public transport. The site has poor access, but if the site came forward with SHLAA site 31\_005b, then access might be able to be achieved. It has a rather urban fringe character and the landscape condition is generally poor. However, there are extensive views towards the site from the countryside to the east extending into the fringes of the National Park and therefore further work would need to be undertaken to investigate possible mitigation measures.

If both sites came forward together then development would help to improve access between Roborough and Woolwell, through improvements to the lane to the east of the site and potentially through the sites as well. The sites provide the best opportunity to really link into existing communities/neighbourhoods and enable new residents to use existing facilities and/or provide new facilities which would be within walking distance for both existing and new residents. Both sites are also well served by public transport.

## Employment allocation (4ha)

| Urban fringe leaflet map 2 ref. | SHLAA ref no.  | Results of assessment   |
|---------------------------------|----------------|---|
| 5                               | Part of 29_005 | The site is identified for employment use, within a broad location, in the South Hams Core Strategy. It is also identified in the South Hams preferred options Urban Fringe Site Specific Allocation for employment. It is adjacent an existing employment area and situated off the Tavistock Road, which could be attractive to potential employers for B1c, B2 or B8 uses. The site is not close to any existing residential areas or local services, although there is a bus stop within walking distance of the site. It is identified as being on a large historic landfill site, which may provide adverse environmental health factors. Adjacent to an AONB along the northern border of the site, therefore if employment development took place in this location mitigation measures would need to be undertaken to minimise the impact on the adjacent AONB. |
| 6                               | 30_006         | The site is not suitable for employment development due to it's proximity to the AONB and National Park beyond, and in landscape terms would be more suitable to small scale development, such as residential. However, the site is not close to any existing residential areas, local services or bus stop. In landscape terms, this site would not present the best location for employment development. This site was promoted (and rejected) for housing in the Plymouth SHLAA, and it is currently unknown if the site is available for employment.  |
| 7                               | 30_009         | The site is not suitable for employment development due to it's proximity to the AONB and National Park beyond, and in landscape terms would be more suitable to small scale development, such as residential. However, the site is not close to any existing residential areas, local services or bus stop. It also has no local highway access, and could only come forward with site 30_006. In landscape terms, this site would not present the best location for employment development. This site was promoted (and rejected) for housing in the Plymouth SHLAA, and it is currently unknown if the site is available for employment.   |
| 8                               | 30_007         | The site is not close to any existing residential areas or local services, although there is a bus stop within walking distance of the site. The site is adjacent to an AONB. The site should probably be retained undeveloped to retain the immediate landscape setting of woodland and trees which surround Roborough House. In landscape terms, this site would not present the best location for employment development. This site was promoted (and rejected) for housing in the Plymouth SHLAA, and it is currently unknown if the site is available for employment.  |
| 9                               | 30_008         | The site is not close to any existing residential areas or local services, although there is a bus stop within walking distance of the site. A watercourse flows across the site. The eastern border follows the flood zone. The landform around the site forms a discrete bowl within the landscape, reinforced with woodland, tree belts and trees which provide a strong structure and further enclosure from the wider area such that the site is discrete. The site falls directly within the visual envelope of the existing estate development and a high voltage electricity line crosses the area. The site is not suitable for employment development due to the steep topography of the site. This site was promoted (and rejected) for housing in the Plymouth SHLAA, and it is currently unknown if the site is available for employment.                  |

## Conclusion

The adopted Core Strategy identifies a broad area for 4ha of employment to the west of Roborough. Part of site 29\_005 (eastern edge of site 5 on the urban fringe leaflet map 2 (February 2011)), was identified in the South Hams Preferred Options Urban

Fringe Site Specific Allocations document (2006) for employment, but this document was never adopted.

This study has reassessed this potential employment allocation, along with 4 other sites which were promoted to the Plymouth SHLAA for housing. Each of the additional 4 sites were found unsuitable for residential development as the location is too detached from the main built up area of Plymouth. This study has also assessed these sites for potential employment, to compare to the original potential employment allocation identified in the South Hams Urban Fringe Site Specific Allocation document.

This study can conclude that the preferred location for employment is SHLAA site 29\_005, (eastern edge of site 5 on the urban fringe leaflet map 2 (February 2011)) in line with the work completed in the South Hams Preferred Options Urban Fringe Site Specific Allocation document. There are a number of constraints to overcome, such as impact on landscape, and mitigation measures need to be established. The site would provide the most attractive and prominent site for any new business, as it's close to the road approaching Plymouth. It relates well to the existing employment area at Broadley Park Employment Park.