

Site Assessment Scoring and Preferred Options for the Salehurst & Robertsbridge Neighbourhood Development Plan

January 2016



BACKGROUND

The site selection process has to be carried out in an open and transparent way including consultation with the community. Rother District Council requires the parish of Salehurst and Robertsbridge to allocate housing for a minimum of 155 units throughout the Plan period. The Steering Group started the process with a review of the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA), followed by a local call for sites, and then presentations from all those interested in proposing sites. This presentation exercise was facilitated by an independent consultant (Moles Consultancy) who asked a series of the same questions to each participant. A public exhibition was subsequently held so that the community could view all the sites which came forward, speak to land owners/developers, as well as have the opportunity to make their own comments. This was later followed up by a full questionnaire distributed to every household in the parish, concerning amongst other matters a comprehensive series of questions on housing site choices.

The next step now is for the Steering Group to objectively assess the sites using the criteria listed below in Part 1. The assessment results will then inform the selection of a preferred site or sites options in Part 2.

The results of the site assessment and preferred options will then be shared with the community at a community engagement event in February 2016. The results will be presented as a range of options so that the community are able to express a preference and that they understand why the preferred options are being proposed. The steering group will then review the comments and the site assessment with a view to select the sites to be included in the Plan. **A full site assessment document will also be produced as an evidence base document to support the Plan.**

Part 1: SITE ASSESSMENT SCORING PROCESS

Carrying out a site assessment will provide the evidence that the sites selected for allocation are the most appropriate, that they are in the most sustainable location, they are in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Rother Local Plan and that there is a good prospect that they will be developed.

The following table lists criteria to be considered in the site selection process. The same criteria and scoring method should be used for each site to ensure consistency.

Questions 1-24 provide the information needed to support the site selection and to support the conclusions. These should be scored using the traffic light system: **green**(suitable for development), **amber** (possibly suitable) or **red** (not suitable). These criteria are based on good planning principles and site selection principles.

In concluding, score each potential site against these three key criteria (suitable, available and achievable). The scoring method in the conclusion is a **YES** (green) / **NO**(red)

NOTE: The site maps are not included in this document but can be found on the Salehurst & Robertsbridge Neighbourhood Development Plan web page as used in the exhibition in July 2015.

Part 2: PREFERRED OPTIONS

All the gathered information and assessment results are collated and the preferred sites options are selected. These are presented as a range of options and residents will be consulted (February 2016) and asked to express a preference. Once the preferred sites have been consulted on, the sites for allocation to be included in the Plan will be selected.

Part 1: SITE ASSESSMENT SCORING PROCESS

Site Selection Criteria	Sites identified											
	Mill site	Country Crafts	Heathfield Gardens (West)	North of Northbridge Street	Heathfield Gardens (East)	Grove Farm Phase 1	Slides Farm	South of Pound Platt	Vicarage Land	Bishops Lane	Robertsbridge Club	Grove Farm Phase 2
1. Site Access: location (roads, connecting services and waste removal) - to be considered for feasibility of developing the site (Sustainability: Recycling is considered as part of waste collection).												
a) adjacent to public roads and domestic services i.e. utilities and main drainage system, accessible for waste removal and requiring no additional infrastructure.												
b) access greater than 100m to roads and domestic services and for waste removal, requires additional infrastructure to be provided and access issues to be addressed.												
c) access within 100m to public roads and domestic services and for waste removal, requiring some additional infrastructure to be provided and access issues to be addressed.												
d) access difficult greater than 500m to roads and domestic services and for waste removal, involves property demolition, major excavation and will require major provision of new infrastructure and serious access issues to be addressed.												
2. Site Access: viability - to be considered for feasibility of developing the site.												
a) adequate existing maintained roads												
b) new roads need to be built												
c) existing road needs upgrading or widening												
d) new roads plus extra infrastructure to be built e.g. roundabout, bridge												
3. Designation – Site choice to ensure the most efficient & effective use of land and the use of previously developed land and buildings; also to consider feasibility of developing the site and conserve and where possible enhance the landscape of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.												
a) brownfield uncontaminated												
b) brownfield heavy contamination												
c) brownfield some contamination												
d) greenfield												

4. Topography – site choice to be suitable for building works to ensure the most efficient & effective use of land; to be environmentally sustainable; to avoid the hazard of unstable land slippage.												
a) ground is mostly level												
b) over 15 degree slope												
c) between 5 and 15 degrees of slope												
d) requires a great deal of landscaping or levelling												
5. Rights of Way – to be considered for feasibility of developing the site												
a) No rights of way on or accessing the site that are apparent from a visual inspection												
b) limited rights of way on or accessing the site require investigation and will involve some legal access issues being addressed												
c) potential rights of way on or accessing the site require investigation and may involve legal access issues being addressed												
d) major rights of way on or accessing the site require investigation and will involve some legal access issues being addressed												
6. Features of site that are unlikely to be resited or removed - To be considered for feasibility of developing the site. Pylons and electrical power lines are considered very unlikely to be resited or removed. Telephone lines, telegraph poles, and street lamps are considered to be more feasible to resite. Other features to be judged per site.												
a) there are no features which have to be resited or removed from the site.												
b) there is a feature (or features), which may be feasible to resite or remove from the site after further research.												
c) there is a feature (or features), which it is feasible to resite or remove from the site.												
d) there is a feature (or features), which is unlikely to be resited or removed from the site.												
7. Unneighbourly sites - to be considered for feasibility of developing the site and for promotion of healthy life styles.												
a) there are no un-neighbourly factors affecting this site.												

b) the site is situated less than 100m from an electricity pylon/line, a source of industrial, highways or otherwise pollution (e.g. chemical, air, noise or light, resulting in nuisance or ill effects).												
c) the site is situated within 300m from an electricity pylon/line, a source of industrial, highways or otherwise pollution (e.g. chemical, air, noise or light resulting in nuisance or ill effects).												
d) the site is situated less than 50m from an electricity pylon/line, a source of industrial, highways or otherwise pollution (e.g. chemical, air, noise												
8. Flood Risk: ground water saturation and surface water drainage – avoidance of flood risk on sites, adjoining and other areas in order to protect people and property from the risk of flooding.												
a) well drained soil												
b) poorly drained soil saturated after any rain												
c) mostly drained soil												
d) no drainage of soil												
9. Flood risk: fluvial – avoidance of flood risk on sites, adjoining and other areas in order to protect people and property from the risk of flooding.												
a) no risk												
b) flood zone 2 (medium risk between 1000 to 1 & 100 to 1 fluvial)												
c) flood zone 1 (low risk 1000 to 1 chance per annum)												
d) flood zone 3 (high risk 100 to 1 chance fluvial)												
10. Flood risk: land height – avoidance of flood risk on sites, adjoining and other areas in order to protect people and property from the risk of flooding.												
a) on or above 75m land height (above contour line – minimal flood risk)												
b) below 75m land height (below contour line - higher flood risk)												
11. Impact upon archaeological sites - site choice should seek to protect, maintain and enhance the historic environment and archaeological assets.												
a) no evidence known of archaeological features, groundworks or deposits												

b) some evidence of archaeological features, groundworks or deposits												
c) possibility of archaeological features, groundworks or deposits												
d) strong evidence of archaeological features, groundworks or deposits												
12. Impact on the historic environment and heritage buildings - negative impact to be avoided to preserve historic environment.												
a) enhance a conservation area or an historic/ heritage area, or historic/ heritage building(s) with a positive impact, e.g. improve derelict or run down site												
b) some impact on a conservation area or on an historic/heritage area or historic/heritage building(s)												
c) no impact on a conservation area, nor on an historic/ heritage area, nor on historic/heritage building(s)												
d) major impact on a conservation area or on an historic/heritage area or on historic/heritage building(s)												
13. Urban sprawl – to avoid the loss of the green corridor of land around the town/villages, to protect from urban sprawl.												
a) the site is wholly within a built up area of a village or town												
b) the site is in the region of a built up area, does not adjoin and but is close to a village or town												
c) the site adjoins a built up area of a village or town												
d) the site does not adjoin and is not near a built up area and stands alone apart from a village or town												
14. The natural environment: landscape settings, views and natural features - site choice should ensure protection and enhancement of all biodiversity, geo-diversity and landscape features where possible and avoid irreversible losses and should seek to protect and enhance the quality of the rural and urban landscapes plus maintain and strengthen local distinctiveness and sense of place.												
a) no impact on surrounding natural landscape setting and views of landscape including river and water courses, wooded areas and other natural features												

b) medium impact on surrounding natural landscape setting and views of landscape including river and water courses, wooded areas and other natural features												
c) minor impact on surrounding natural landscape setting and views of landscape including river and water courses, wooded areas and other natural features												
d) major impact on surrounding natural landscape setting and views of landscape including river and water courses, wooded areas and other natural features												
15. Scale of the potential development on the site - site choice should seek to protect and enhance the quality of the rural and urban landscapes plus maintain and strengthen local distinctiveness and sense of place.												
a) in scale and no impact on surrounding housing, built area or locale												
b) medium impact on surrounding housing, built area or locale, due to scale of development												
c) small impact on surrounding housing, built area or locale due to scale of development												
d) major impact on surrounding housing, built area or locale, due to scale of development												
16. Sustainability: public transport, buses - site choices should wherever possible reduce the need to travel and promote more sustainable transport choices, promote healthy life styles and improve air quality (reduce air pollution) by encouraging use of public transport rather than use of private cars.												
a) there is an existing public transport route with easy access on site.												
b) there is an existing public transport within 10 minutes walk.												
c) there is an existing public transport within 5 minutes walk.												
17. Sustainability: cycle paths - site choices should wherever possible reduce the need to travel and promote more sustainable transport choices, promote healthy life styles and improve air quality (reduce air pollution) by encouraging use of public transport rather than use of private cars.												
a) there are cycle paths/ roads for cycling accessing the site.												

b) there are no cycle paths but a new cycle path could be made to meet existing roads.												
c) there are cycle paths/ roads for cycling within 50m of the site.												
d) there are no cycle paths/ safe roads for cycling accessing the site and a new cycle path could not be made to meet existing cycle paths/ roads.												
18. Sustainability: footpaths - site choices should wherever possible reduce the need to travel and promote more sustainable transport choices, site choices should be located close to footpaths, in order to promote sustainability and to reduce car usage and congestion within the town; also to improve air quality (reduce air pollution) by encouraging people to walk rather than use the car.												
a) there are existing footpaths/ pavements or roads edged for pedestrians accessing the site.												
b) no existing footpaths/ pavements or roads edged for pedestrian use but can create a walkway to a road edged for pedestrians use.												
c) there are existing footpaths/ pavements or roads edged for pedestrians within 10m of the site.												
d) no existing footpaths/ pavements or roads edged for pedestrian use and a walkway to a road edged for pedestrians use cannot be created.												
19. Sustainability: access to retail amenities - site choices should wherever possible reduce the need to travel and promote more sustainable transport choices and promote healthy life styles. Site choices should be located within close walking distance (approx 5 mins) to shops and other retail amenities, in order to promote sustainability and to reduce car usage and congestion within the town; also to improve air quality (reduce air pollution) by encouraging people to walk rather than use the car.												
a) the Site is within 5 minutes walking distance of local shops and/ or amenities.												
b) the Site is within 20 minutes walking distance of local shops and/ or amenities.												
c) the Site is within 10 minutes walking distance of local shops and/ or amenities.												

d) the site is more than 20 minutes from local shops and/ or amenities and it is likely that people will travel by car or bus rather than walk to them.												
20. Local infrastructure: schools - site choice should take into account location of Primary and Secondary schools with available places, site choice should not have a detrimental affect on existing provision or facilities; site location should encourage or promote healthy lifestyles through walking or cycling if possible.												
a) there are existing schools with available places on or adjacent to the site												
b) there are existing schools with available places within a 30 minute bus or car journey from the site.												
c) there are existing schools with available places within 5 to 10 minutes walk or cycle from the site.												
d) new schools will have to be												
e) there are existing schools with available places within 10 to 20 minutes walk or cycle from the site.												
21. Local infrastructure: PCCs, health centres and hospitals - site choice should take into account location of PCCs, health centres and hospitals with available places, site choice should not have a detrimental effect on existing provision or facilities that encourage and promote healthy life styles and reduce health inequalities.												
a) there are existing Health Care Facilities with available places within 10 minutes walk.												
b) there are existing Health Care Facilities with available places within a short bus or car journey of not more than 15 minutes.												
c) there are existing Health Care Facilities with available places within 10 to 20 minutes walk.												
d) new Health Care provision will be needed.												
22. Cultural, religious and recreational facilities: libraries, places of worship, cinemas, sports & community centres, evening classes, play parks and open spaces - site choice must take into account access to cultural, religious and recreational facilities in order to promote equality of access and assist with engagement of local community.												
a) there are existing cultural, religious and recreational facilities within 10 minutes walk.												

b) there are existing cultural, religious and recreational facilities within a 15 minute bus or car journey.												
c) there are existing cultural, religious and recreational facilities within 10 to 20 minutes walk.												
d) new cultural, religious and recreational facilities will be needed.												
23. Parking provision: What potential does the site have to deliver on-site parking in excess of the relevant ESCC standard for the particular site.?												
a) The site has a limited ability to deliver on-site parking for the development.												
b) The site has a good ability to deliver on-site parking for the development.												
c) The site has an excellent ability to deliver on-site parking for the development.												
d) The site is unable to deliver on-site parking for the development.												
24. Parking congestion: What potential does the site have to impact on congestion in the High Street, George Hill or Station Road?												
a) Too far from main through ways to impact on congestion.												
b) Could cause minor increase in congestion on one of the main through roads.												
c) Could significantly increase congestion on one of the main through roads.												
d) Congestion would be neutral.												
Site specific information												
SHLAA: Is the site identified in the SHLAA? For how many units	30	10	25	unknown	25	30	unknown	unknown	unknown	unknown	unknown	35
Proposed site capacity: as identified in the developers presentations.	100	7	unknown	unknown	unknown	35	45	unknown	unknown	50	unknown	67

ASSESSMENT CONCLUSIONS

Assessment conclusions	Mill site	Country Crafts	Heathfield Gardens (West)	North of Northbridge Street	Heathfield Gardens (East)	Grove Farm Phase 1	Slides Farm	South of Pound Platt	Vicarage Land	Bishops Lane	Robertsbridge Club	Grove Farm Phase 2
Suitable Is the site suitable for the type of development proposed? A site is considered to be suitable if there are no insurmountable physical or environmental factors which would restrict development. Whether or not a factor is insurmountable is a matter of judgement but often depends if it can be mitigated. Constraints which would rule out development include any potential negative impact on a national environmental designation such as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) or the site falling within the functional floodplain (Flood Zone 3a or 3b)	YES	YES	YES	NO	YES	NO	NO	YES	YES	NO	YES	NO
Available Is the site available for development? A site is available if there is evidence that a landowner or developer is willing to sell or develop the site at a known point in the future, and within the plan period. Any legal or ownership issues should also be taken into account, such as multiple ownership.	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Achievable Is the site economically viable? A site is considered 'achievable' when there is evidence that it is economically viable and there is a reasonable prospect that the particular type of development will be developed on the site at a particular point in time.	YES	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	NO	YES

Part 2: PREFERRED OPTIONS

All the gathered information and assessment results are collated and the preferred sites options are selected below. The preferred options have been selected based on the criteria scoring and previous evidence base documents such as the residents' survey and the SHLAA. These are presented as a range of options and residents will be consulted (February 2016) and asked to express a preference. Once the preferred sites have been consulted on, the sites for allocation to be included in the Plan will be selected.

NOTE: These are not shown in any preference order.

Site ID	Summary of site	Possible capacity	Analysis overview
Mill Site (SHLAA RB9a)	Robertsbridge Mill is a key rural employment site. Business uses (with particular emphasis on small scale workshops and offices to support the local rural economy) would be the Council's preference for main use of the site (central and eastern area). Development would currently be covered by Local Plan policy EM2. However, the area RB9a may be suitable for residential as an enabling development to ensure the viability of the employment components on the eastern section of RB9r. Residential may therefore be considered sustainable at this site in the context of enabling employment.	100	The SHLAA focuses attention towards commercial uses, but allows limited residential development. The landowner is open to a mixed use scheme with residential including affordable housing and self build, employment uses, medical facilities and leisure uses on approximately 9.9 acres of the site.
Country Crafts (SHLAA RB12)	Previously been given a grant by RotherDC to make it viable but never got to the point of being able to develop the scheme. After various delays they repaid the grant plus interest in March 2014.	10	Detailed planning application was sought in 2008 for 9 flats and ground floor office plus 17 parking spaces and 3 shared ownership dwellings.
Heathfield Gardens (west) (SHLAA RB13)	2 acres are promoted for development with additional land for landscaping.	25	SHLAA identified site. The promoted site adjoins a neighbouring SHLAA site, which is not considered as favorably. Access issues were raised by the committee: the Heathfield Gardens access is from a cul-de-sac which is believed to be highways land. The promoter believes that access would be easier from Georges Hill via RB13 east land. However, it is considered that highways would not like this approach. The landowner of RB13 east has indicated willingness to work with this promoter. The promoter would be willing to appoint a highways consultant if the site is seen to be favourable.
Heathfield Gardens (east) (SHLAA RB13)	Land is situated West of John's Cross Road, from the houses to the south of Heathfield Gardens and extends south to Browns Farm and West to the land owned by the Mountfield Court Estate. The SHLAA has referenced 'RB13east' that sits on part of the land.		Possible access issues to be resolved. Landscape impact assessment will be a key issue.
Vicarage Land	The site has not been included in the SHLAA, however it is within the built up area boundary. The site is in the early stages of promotion, however its location within the settlement boundary would allow for a sustainable redevelopment of an underused site, with fantastic access to local services and limited impact on the surrounding area.	6	Vicarage Land is in the centre, and possibly useful for the medical facilities provision, small developments for supported living or local first time buyers, there could possibly be concern about access, and about any new building needing to blend in with the ancient centre of the village.

From North to South:

- 1 Slides Farm
- 2 South of Pound Platt
- 3 Mill Site
- 3a North of Northbridge St (adj. Mill Site)
- 4 Vicarage Land
- 5 Grove Farm Phase 1
- 6 Grove Farm Phase 2
- 7 Robertsbridge Club
- 8 Countrycrafts
- 9 Bishops Lane
- 10 Heathfield Gardens West
- 11 Heathfield Gardens East

