

Cossington 2A – Rear of Derry's garden centre

1. Executive Summary

This SSA report has been completed for the part of the whole site shown in the planning application for 130 units (Ref P/20/2393/2) submitted to Charnwood Borough Council.

A part of this site is already allocated as site HS66 in the submission version of the Charnwood Local Plan 2019-2036 to produce a yield of about 70 residential units, a site allocation does not automatically confer a planning consent to proceed with the development.

A RED SCORING SITE OF NEGATIVE ONE SO NO FURTHER ACTION REQUIRED, as higher scoring sites are available.

2. Overview

This Strategic Sustainability Assessment (SSA) is a comparison of housing supply options to be used for the Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) making purposes. The level of detail provided is appropriate for this purpose and is proportionate to the requirement of meeting the Basic Conditions for a NDP. The SSA is not a substitute for detailed professional assessments of site viability and other legal or regulatory matters that will require approval as a part of testing a residential planning application. The SSA is a community led process and does not contain detailed professional site investigations and the SSA should be read and understood in this context.

Through undertaking the SSA the local community are identifying the least environmentally damaging and the most sustainable locations which are prioritised for potential residential development. The approach uses publicly available data including from the local authority Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA), Natural England, the Environment Agency, Rowmaps and Googlemaps etc. A site visit has been undertaken to determine the locational context but the site itself has not be accessed in detail during the SSA.

Locally important factors have been considered and it is recommended that the wider community comment on the result of the SSA's to help support a ranking of the potential sites. The SSA's are only a part of any potential development site selection process to rank potential sites in a NDP and the methodology is accepted by developers, landowners, Local Authorities and Planning Inspectors as being robust and proportionate for this task. This first stage of the SSA process assesses how developable a location is, the second stage assesses how deliverable the location is. Working in partnership with landowners and Charnwood Borough Council (CBC) enables a positive SSA process that meets or exceeds the housing target and affordable housing requirements in CBC's adopted Local Plan.

3. Site Selection in two stages

The first stage is to use a scoring system for the residential sites based on a traffic light (Red, Amber or Green - RAG) score. For Cossington twenty-six indicators are being evaluated and the sites are numerically scored and ranked. This process provides an overall picture of the comparative developability of the potential sites. A high green score indicates the more sustainable sites in the SSA process and provides an indication of how developable a site is. However, it is important to note that there may be other factors which result in that site not being appropriate so a second stage of analysis considers if a site is deliverable. Accordingly, both stages of the SSA process are used in determining the selection of allocated sites.

- Red is scored for a negative assessment where significant mitigation is required.
- Amber is scored where there are negative elements to the site and costly or difficult mitigation measures will be required.
- Green is scored for a generally positive assessment.

Within the different scoring categories sites will be ranked on their individual score - effectively the total of green scores minus red scores.

The second stage of the SSA process will ideally involve dialogue with the landowners and possibly other agencies, the aim is to agree sites that are both developable and deliverable. If sites are found that pass both tests they may be allocated for residential use in the NDP.

Contact Details	
Name(s) of Assessor(s)	Derek Doran BSc (Hons) MCIH MBA – Your Locale
Site - Details	
SHLAA/ current planning position:	SHELAA reference PSH260 states that “there are no known physical/environmental constraints preventing development, the site is in a suitable location for development and a suitable access can be achieved”. In the submission version of the Charnwood Local Plan 2019-2036 the site has been allocated for the residential development of 70 units, reference HS66.
Site name:	Rear Derry’s garden centre.

Site – Sustainability criteria relating to Location, Surroundings & Constraints		RAG Rating
1. Site area and capacity:	Approximately 7HA in total, to provide about 130 units (three bedroomed houses).	Red
2. Current Use:	The site consists of a part of a very large field to the rear of a working Nursery and log yard (retail) outlet. As agricultural land is a national asset this land use will have to be replaced.	Amber
3. Adjoining Uses:	The site has open countryside to two elevations and is meaningfully attached to the current built form, it is in the main adjacent to the locally recognised village envelope. Most of the location is currently classified as countryside.	Amber
4. Topography/ground condition:	The site is undulating although this can be remediated.	Amber
5. Greenfield or Previously Developed Land?	A greenfield site.	Red

Site – Sustainability criteria relating to Location, Surroundings & Constraints		RAG Rating
6. Site availability - Single ownership or multiple ownership?	Single ownership.	Green
7. Landscape & Visual Impact (LVIA) considerations.	The site is within the Soar Valley Landscape Character Area and is bounded on most elevations by trees and hedgerow, with open vistas to two aspects. The site sits within open countryside of a high quality and the location feels semi-rural in character. Development of this scale would cause a substantial harm to the overall setting and amenity of the village and conservation area.	Red
8. Important Trees, Woodlands & Hedgerows?	The site has mature trees and hedges around all of its boundaries and a substantial number of mature trees are located within the Northern section of the site, some of the hedges may be of an ancient origin. A small number of trees will need to be destroyed to create a vehicular pattern into and within the site and this loss will be mitigated by new planting.	Amber
9. Good Quality Agricultural Land (Natural England classification).	The vast majority of the site is classified by Natural England as grade 2, very good quality land. Many LP's do not permit development on grade 2 or grade 1 land as it is a scarce national resource.	Red
10. Relationship with existing pattern of built development?	<p>Although the site is attached to the existing built form a development of 130 units would increase the size of the village by 70%, the 2011 census showed a total of 186 households within the village itself.</p> <p>Significant over-development of this scale will ruin the character of Cossington and is unsustainable.</p> <p>In addition, the development would significantly reduce the current area of separation between the neighbouring town of Sileby and the village built form.</p>	Red
11. Local wildlife corridors affected	An ecological survey has shown that the smaller site would deliver a net biodiversity gain through mitigation.	Green
12. Listed Building or important heritage assets and their setting?	None directly affected.	Green
13. Impact on the conservation area or its setting?	Although the boundary of the Cossington conservation area is outside of the site area development of this large scale will have a severe negative impact on its setting and amenity, creating irreversible damage.	Red

Site – Sustainability criteria relating to Location, Surroundings & Constraints		RAG Rating
14. A pavement access to and from the site?	An adequate footpath connection is found to the North Eastern corner of the site. For a project of this scale a substantial infrastructure of footpaths will be required requiring significant improvements.	Amber
15. Impact on existing vehicular traffic?	A negative impact on the village due to the location of the site and the sheer scale of development of 130 units. The traffic survey provided as evidence to the planning application shows a “peak” of 84 vehicle movements in the peak hour. Although this figure is disputed by local people the traffic impact has been assessed as a medium negative effect.	Amber
16. Adequate vehicular access to and from the site?	CBC already believe that an adequate vehicular access can be created with significant improvement.	Amber
17. Distance to designated village centre (War memorial)?	A distance of about 350m.	Amber
18. Distance to primary school entrance?	A distance of more than 370m.	Amber
19. Current existing informal/formal recreational opportunities on site?	None identified.	Green
20. Ancient monuments or archaeological remains?	None identified.	Green
21. Any public rights of ways/bridle paths?	A PROW identified along the boundary of the site, development would undermine the quality of this path.	Amber
22. Gas, oil, pipelines and networks & electricity transmission network?	A utility cable will require re-siting, very straightforward.	Amber
23. Any nuisance issues (noise, light, odour)?	The railway line runs alongside a section of the boundary of the site and traffic noise from the A46 is an issue with the wrong atmospheric conditions, so noise attenuation and planting bunds will be required to mitigate these nuisances.	Amber
24. Any known contamination issues?	A couple of waste tips identified within the site, a survey has shown a moderate to low risk to human health, minor mitigation measures will be required to design.	Amber

Site – Sustainability criteria relating to Location, Surroundings & Constraints		RAG Rating
25. Any known flooding or surface water issues?	A section to the Northern edge of the site is within flood zone 3 and development has been conditioned by the Environment Agency. In addition, it is very unlikely that the strategic flood risk assessment for the Soar valley will be changed without a massive increase in infrastructure spending. The balance of the site is within flood zone 1 and has no history of flooding.	Amber
26. Any drainage issues?	Yes, water pooling in several area – for a scheme of this size a sustainable urban drainage system will be required.	Amber
SUMMARY SCORE	Red - 6 Amber - 15 Green - 5	A RED scoring site of negative 1.