

Appendix D

Site Assessment Criteria

Assumptions Regarding Distances

D.1 A number of the appraisal assumptions refer to accessibility from site options to services, facilities, employment etc. There are a number of pieces of research that give a variety of recommended guidance distances for walking. For example, the Institute of Highways and Transportation [\[See reference 334\]](#) A number of the appraisal assumptions refer to accessibility from site options to services, facilities, employment etc. The Institute of Highways and Transportation categorises distances depending upon location and purpose of the trip, and 'desirable', 'acceptable', and 'preferred maximum':

- Town Centres
 - Desirable – 200m
 - Acceptable – 400m
 - Preferred maximum – 800m
- Commuting/School/Sight-seeing
 - Desirable – 500m
 - Acceptable – 1,000m
 - Preferred maximum – 2,000
- Elsewhere
 - Desirable – 400m
 - Acceptable – 800m
 - Preferred maximum – 1,200m

Appendix D Site Assessment Criteria

D.2 For the purposes of the appraisal, distances in the appraisal will be measured as the straight line distance from the edge of the site option to existing services and facilities, and therefore actual walking distances are likely to be greater (depending on the availability of a direct route).

D.3 It is recognised that many journeys to services and facilities will not be made in a straight line. When applying the Institute of Highways and Transportation distances for the appraisal of site options to each of the relevant distances a 10% buffer has therefore been applied to account for the potential difference between the straight line distance and the actual distance involved in a journey to services and facilities. For example, the relevant distance applied for walking distance for town and local centres has been decreased from 800m to 720m, and so on.

D.4 It is considered that this is a reasonable approach, and professional judgement will be used when applying these distances to each site option and the range of services and facilities considered by the appraisal (e.g. where there are significant barriers to straight-line movement, such as railway lines). The distances used in the appraisal will vary depending upon the type of destination being accessed and the mode of transport:

- 450m walking distance for primary schools on the basis that parents with young children are unlikely to walk long distances with young children;
- 900m walking distance for secondary schools;
- 720m walking distance for town and local centres;
- 450m to a bus stop, as many people are unlikely to want to walk much further and then catch a bus to their destination;
- 1,800m walking distance to a train station; and
- In terms of access to a cycle route, a distance of 450m will be used in the appraisal on the assumption that links to cycle routes are likely to use road carriageways.

SA Objective 1: Minimise greenhouse gas emissions and develop a managed response to the effects of climate change

Residential, Mixed use, Retail, Gypsy and Traveller and Employment Site Options

D.5 The location of development will not affect the achievement of this objective as effects will depend largely on the detailed proposals for sites and their design, which would be influenced by policies in the Local Plan and details submitted at the planning application stage. The extent to which the location of development sites would facilitate the use of sustainable modes of transport in place of cars is considered separately under SA objective 15, and the effects of site options on flood risk are considered separately under SA objective 5. The likely effects of all site options on this objective are therefore negligible (0).

Energy Infrastructure Site Options

D.6 Sites for renewable energy infrastructure can help mitigate the effects of climate change and lower greenhouse gas emissions by promoting the generation of renewable energy. However, these effects are largely dependant on what is proposed within the sites. Therefore, potential but uncertain significant positive (++) effects are likely for all sites.

SA Objective 2: Protect, enhance and manage biodiversity and geodiversity

All Development Site Options

D.7 Development sites that are within close proximity of an international, national or local designated conservation site have the potential to affect the biodiversity or geodiversity of those sites/features, e.g. through habitat damage/loss, fragmentation, disturbance to species, air pollution, increased recreation pressure etc. Conversely, there may be opportunities to promote habitat connectivity if new developments include green infrastructure. There are no European sites within Harborough District.

D.8 Therefore:

- Sites that contain a Local Wildlife Site or that are within 250m of an internationally or nationally designated biodiversity or geodiversity site may have a significant negative (--?) effect although this is uncertain.
- Sites that do not contain but are within 250m of a Local Wildlife Site or that are within 250m-1km of a nationally or internationally designated biodiversity or geodiversity site may have a minor negative (-?) effect although this would be uncertain.
- All other sites may have a negligible effect (0?) on this objective.

SA Objective 3: To support efficient use of resources, including soils

All Development Site Options

D.9 Development on brownfield and derelict land represents more efficient use of land in comparison to the development of greenfield sites. Where development takes place on previously developed land, land of agricultural and mineral value is less likely to be lost and there may be opportunities to reuse onsite buildings and materials, thereby reducing waste generation.

- Greenfield sites that contain a significant proportion ($\geq 25\%$) of Grade 1 and/or 2 agricultural land will have a significant negative (--) effect.
- Greenfield sites that contain a significant proportion ($\geq 25\%$) of Grade 3 agricultural land will have a potential but uncertain significant negative (--?) effect. The uncertainty acknowledges that the Grade 3 agricultural land may still represent some of the county's best and most versatile agricultural land (Grade 3a) or it may be the lower quality Grade 3b land.
- Greenfield sites that contain less than a significant proportion ($< 25\%$) of Grade 1, 2 or 3 agricultural land will have a minor negative (-) effect.
- Sites that are located on brownfield or derelict land will have a significant positive (++) effect.

D.10 Furthermore, all new development will result in the increased consumption of minerals for construction but this will not be influenced by the location of the development. The location of development sites can, however, influence the efficient use of minerals as development in Minerals Safeguarding Areas may sterilise mineral resources and restrict the availability of resources in the District. Therefore:

- Sites that fall within a Minerals Safeguarding Area could have a minor negative (-?) effect although this is uncertain.

- Sites that do not fall within a Minerals Safeguarding Area are expected to have a negligible (0) effect.

SA Objective 4: To conserve and enhance the historic environment including the setting of heritage features

All Development Site Options

D.11 The NPPF states that “When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset and locally designated asset, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be)”. However, development could also enhance the significance of the asset (provided that the development preserves those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to or better reveal the significance of the asset). The proximity tests outlined below are intended to provide a basis for screening for the potential for adverse effects on heritage assets but in the absence of a separately commissioned historic environment sensitivity study or similar of all reasonable alternative site options they are subject to a high degree of uncertainty. Distances used are based on professional judgement. Longer screening distances are used for site options outside of existing settlements to reflect typically longer sightlines in rural vs. urban areas. Therefore:

- Sites that are located within 250m of a heritage asset may have a significant negative (--?) effect.
- Sites that are located between 250m-1km of a heritage asset may have a minor negative (-?) effect.
- Sites that are more than 1km from a heritage asset may have a negligible (0?) effect.

SA Objective 5: Protect and improve air quality

Residential, Mixed-use, Retail, Gypsy and Traveller and Employment Site Options

D.12 Development sites that are within, or very close to, the Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) that has been declared at Kibworth, or AQMAs in surrounding Districts, could increase levels of air pollution in those areas as a result of increased vehicle traffic. Therefore:

- Site options that are within 100m of the AQMA are likely to have a significant negative (--) effect.
- Site options that are not within 100m of the AQMA are likely to have a negligible (0) effect on air quality.

Energy Infrastructure Site Options

D.13 Sites for energy infrastructure are expected to have negligible (0) effects on air quality.

SA Objective 6: Safeguard and improve community health, safety and wellbeing

D.14 The effects of new developments on levels of crime and fear of crime will depend on factors such as the incorporation of green space within the development sites which, depending on design and the use of appropriate lighting, could have an effect on perceptions of personal safety, particularly at

night. However, such issues will not be influenced by the location of development sites (rather they will be determined through the detailed proposals for each site) and so no effects are identified in relation to crime and safety.

Residential, Mixed-use and Gypsy and Traveller Site Options

D.15 Housing sites that are within walking distance (720m) of existing health services and facilities will ensure that residents have good access to healthcare, while close proximity to open spaces and footpaths and cycle routes may encourage residents to lead more active lifestyles and to make more journeys on foot or by bicycle, thus promoting healthy lifestyles. Therefore:

- Sites that are within walking distance (720m) of a healthcare facility, an area of open space and at least one footpath/cycle path will have a significant positive (++) effect.
- Sites that are within walking distance (720m) of either a healthcare facility, an area of open space or footpath/cycle path (but not all three) will have a minor positive (+) effect.
- Sites that are more than 720m from either a healthcare facility, an area of open space or footpath/cycle paths will have a minor negative (-) effect.

Employment and Retail Site Options

D.16 Employment or retail sites that are within walking distance (720m) of existing open spaces, footpaths and cycle routes will ensure that employees have good access to walking and cycle links which may encourage them to commute on foot or by bicycle and to be active outdoors in open space during breaks from work, thus promoting healthy lifestyles.

- Sites that are within 720m of an area of open space and at least one footpath/cycle path will have a significant positive (++) effect.

Appendix D Site Assessment Criteria

- Sites that are within 720m of either an area of open space or footpath/cycle path will have a minor positive (+) effect.
- Sites that are more than 720m from either an area of open space or footpath/cycle paths will have a minor negative (-) effect.

Energy Infrastructure Site Options

D.17 Sites for energy infrastructure are expected to have negligible (0) effects on health and wellbeing.

SA Objective 7: Achieve social inclusion and equality for all

All Development Site Options

D.18 The location of new development will affect social inclusion by influencing how easily people are able to access job opportunities, services and facilities etc. However, these factors are assessed under other SA objectives; therefore all sites will have a negligible (0) effect on this SA objective.

SA Objective 8: To provide access to services, facilities and education

Housing, Mixed-use and Gypsy and Traveller Site Options

D.19 The proximity of sites to larger towns and villages will affect the need for residents to travel long distances on a regular basis to access services and facilities. Therefore:

- Sites that are within 720m of the built up area of Market Harborough will have a significant positive (++) effect.
- Sites that are within 720m of the built-up area of Lutterworth or Broughton Astley will have a minor positive (+) effect.
- Sites that are within 720m of the built-up area of Ullesthorpe, Husbands Bosworth, Fleckney, Kibworth, Great Glen, Houghton on the Hill and Billesdon will have a negligible (0) effect.
- Sites that are not located within 720m of the built-up areas of any of the settlement types listed above will have a minor negative (-) effect.

D.20 The effects of housing development on this objective will depend on the availability of school and college places to serve the growing population, which will depend in part on whether new places are provided as part of the new housing development, which is unknown at this stage. Effects will also depend on the proximity of sites to existing schools and colleges, although there are uncertainties as the effects will depend on there being capacity at those schools and colleges to accommodate new pupils.

- Sites that are within 600m of at least two of either a pre-school, a primary school, a secondary school or a college may have a significant positive (++) effect.

Appendix D Site Assessment Criteria

- Sites that are within 600m of one of either a primary or secondary school or a college may have a minor positive effect (+?).
- Sites that are more than 600m from any school or college may have a negative effect (-?).

Employment and Retail Site Options

D.21 While employment sites are not expected to have a significant effect on this objective, where employment sites are within walking distance (720m) of a town, as set out in the settlement hierarchy of the adopted Local Plan, services and facilities will be more easily accessible to employees during breaks and before and after work.

- Sites that are within 720m of the built up area of Market Harborough will have a significant positive (++) effect.
- Sites that are within 720m of the built-up area of Lutterworth or Broughton Astley will have a minor positive (+) effect.
- Sites that are within 720m of the built-up area of Ullesthorpe, Husbands Bosworth, Fleckney, Kibworth, Great Glen, Houghton on the Hill and Billesdon will have an uncertain negligible (0) effect.
- Sites that are not located within 720m of the built-up areas of any of the settlement types listed above will have a minor negative (-) effect.

Energy Infrastructure Site Options

D.22 The location of energy infrastructure sites is not considered likely to affect this objective; therefore the effect of all sites will be negligible (0).

SA Objective 9: Provide affordable, sustainable, good-quality housing for all

Residential and Mixed use Site Options

D.23 All of the residential site options are expected to have positive effects on this objective, due to the nature of the proposed development. The location of site options will not influence the mix of housing that is provided onsite – this will instead be determined by Local Plan policies. However, it is expected that sites of a larger size may be able to offer a wider mix of housing, including affordable housing, as well as making a greater contribution towards local housing needs. A significant positive (++) effect is therefore recorded for residential sites of 500 dwellings or more. A minor positive (+) effect is recorded for site options that would provide fewer than 500 dwellings.

Gypsy and Traveller Site Options

D.24 All of the Gypsy and Traveller site options would have positive effects on this SA objective as all would go some way towards meeting the identified need for Gypsy and Traveller sites in Harborough District. There is no one ideal size of site or number of pitches. It should be noted that smaller sites can be valuable, particularly where designed for one extended family. Therefore, all sites are expected to result in significant positive effects (++).

Employment Site Options

D.25 The location of employment sites is not considered likely to affect this objective; therefore the effect for all employment site options will be negligible (0).

Energy Infrastructure Site Options

D.26 The location of energy infrastructure sites is not considered likely to affect this objective; therefore the effect of all sites will be negligible (0).

SA Objective 10: Support the sustainable growth of the economy and provide good employment opportunities

Housing Site and Gypsy and Traveller Options

D.27 While the location of housing sites will not influence the number of employment opportunities in Harborough District, the proximity of housing to employment opportunities and public transport links can affect people's ability to access jobs.

- Housing sites that are within walking distance (600m) of public transport links as well as one or more Key and General employment area and / or major employment site will have a significant positive (++) effect.
- Housing sites that are within walking distance (600m) of either public transport links or one or more Key and General employment area and / or major employment site will have a minor positive (+) effect.
- Housing sites that are not within walking distance (600m) of either public transport links or one or more Key and General employment area and / or major employment sites will have a minor negative (-) effect.
- Due to uncertainties regarding which sites will be allocated for employment in the Local Plan, the location of employment site options in relation to housing site options is not taken into account in the appraisal.

Employment Site Options

D.28 The provision of new employment sites is likely to have a positive effect on this objective by ensuring that new job opportunities are provided to match the population growth that will result from housing development through other residential site allocations. Furthermore, the provision of new employment sites is likely to have a positive effect on this objective by providing new and modern developments in which businesses can locate.

- Large sites (over 10ha) are likely to have a significant positive (++) effect.
- Small sites (less than 10ha) are likely to have a minor positive (+) effect.

Mixed Use Site Options

D.29 All of the mixed use site options are expected to have positive effects on the element of this objective relating to the growth of the Harbourough's economy, as it is assumed that all mixed use site options will incorporate some element of employment generating uses. Therefore, a minor positive (+?) effect is therefore recorded for mixed use site options. However the positive effect will be uncertain depending on how much of the site is used for residential development as opposed to other uses.

Energy Infrastructure Site Options

D.30 The location of energy infrastructure sites is not considered likely to affect this objective; therefore the effect of all sites will be negligible (0).

SA Objective 11: Reduce waste generation and increase levels of reuse and recycling

All Development Site Options

D.31 The effects of development site options on minimising waste and managing its sustainably will depend on factors such as the incorporation of waste management systems and recycling within development site options. However, such issues will not be influenced by the location of sites (rather they will be determined through the detailed proposals for each site) and so the effects of all of the potential development site options on this SA objective will be negligible (0).

SA Objective 12: To manage and reduce flood risk from all sources and to protect the quality and quantity of water resources

Residential, Mixed use, Retail, Employment and Energy Infrastructure Site Options

D.32 The effects of new development on this SA objective will depend to some extent on its design, for example whether it incorporates sustainable drainage systems (SuDS), which is unknown and cannot be addressed based on the location of the sites. Where site options are located in areas of high flood risk, it

Appendix D Site Assessment Criteria

could increase the risk of flooding in those areas (particularly if the sites are not previously developed) and would increase the number of people and assets at risk from flooding. Therefore:

- Site options that are entirely or significantly (i.e. $\geq 25\%$) within Flood Zone 3 and/or within an area with a 1 in 30 year risk of surface water flooding will have a significant negative (--) effect.
- Site options that are entirely or significantly (i.e. $\geq 25\%$) within Flood Zone 2 and/or contain land with a 1 in 100 year risk of surface water flooding will have a minor negative (-) effect.
- Site options that are entirely or largely ($\geq 75\%$) within Flood Zone 1 will have a negligible (0) effect on the assumption that flood risk could be avoided.

D.33 Levels of water consumption within new development will be determined by its design and onsite practices, rather than the location of the site. However, the location of residential and employment development could affect water quality during construction depending on its proximity to watercourses and water bodies and Source Protection Zones. The extent to which water quality is affected would depend on construction techniques and the use of SuDS within the design, therefore effects are uncertain at this stage. Therefore, which could result in mixed effects overall:

- Development on sites which contain a water body or water course or fall within or partially within a Source Protection Zone 1 could result in significant negative (--?) effects on water quality although this is uncertain at this stage of assessment.
- Development on sites which do not contain a water body or watercourse but fall within or partially within Source Protection Zones 2 and 3 could result in minor negative effects (-?) on water quality although this is uncertain at this stage of assessment.
- Development on sites which do not contain a water body or watercourse or fall within a Source Protection Zone would have a negligible (0) effect.

Gypsy and Traveller Site Options

D.34 The development of Gypsy and Traveller sites on greenfield land would increase the area of impermeable surfaces and could therefore increase overall flood risk, particularly where the sites are within high risk flood zones. In terms of the impact on the Gypsy and Traveller community, National Planning Practice Guidance identifies caravans, mobile homes and park homes intended for permanent residential use as a 'highly vulnerable use', which is suitable in areas of flood zone 1 but would require an exception test in flood zone 2 and is unsuitable in flood zones 3a or 3b.

D.35 While new development in any location may offer good opportunities to incorporate SuDS, and therefore have a positive effect on reducing flood risk, this would depend on the design of the proposed development and not on the location of the site. Therefore:

- Gypsy and Traveller sites that are entirely or significantly (i.e. $\geq 25\%$) within Flood Zone 3 will have a significant negative (--) effect. In addition, Gypsy and Traveller sites in areas of risk of surface water flooding would also have a significant negative (--) effect.
- Gypsy and Traveller sites that are entirely or significantly (i.e. $\geq 25\%$) within Flood Zone 2 and/or contain land with a 1 in 100 year risk of surface water flooding will have a minor negative (-) effect.
- Gypsy and Traveller sites that are entirely or largely ($\geq 75\%$) within Flood Zone 1 will have a negligible (0) effect on the assumption that flood risk could be avoided.

D.36 Construction activities and operation of sites in or near water have the potential to cause pollution, impacting upon the bed and banks of watercourses and impacting upon the quality and quantity of the water.

- Gypsy and Traveller sites which contain a water body or water course or fall within or partially within a Source Protection Zone 1 could result in significant negative (--?) effects on water quality although this is uncertain at this stage of assessment.

- Gypsy and Traveller site which do not contain a water body or watercourse but fall within or partially within Source Protection Zones 2 and 3 could result in minor negative effects (-?) on water quality although this is uncertain at this stage of assessment.
- Gypsy and Traveller sites which do not contain a water body or watercourse or fall within a Source Protection Zone would have a negligible (0) effect.

SA Objective 13: Promote sustainable transport and active travel use

Residential, Mixed-use, Gypsy and Traveller and Employment Site Options

D.37 The proximity of development sites to sustainable transport links will affect the extent to which people are able to make use of non-car based modes of transport to access services, facilities and job opportunities, although the actual use of sustainable transport modes will depend on people's behaviour. It is possible that new transport links such as bus routes or cycle paths may be provided as part of new developments, particularly at larger sites, but this cannot be assumed.

D.38 It is assumed that people would generally be willing to travel further to access a railway station than a bus stop, although the limited rail infrastructure in the plan area is recognised. It is also recognised that many cyclists will travel on roads as well as dedicated cycle routes, and that the extent to which people choose to do so will depend on factors such as the availability of cycle storage facilities at their end destination, which are not determined by the location of sites. How safe or appealing particular roads are for cyclists cannot be determined at this strategic level of assessment. However, the proximity of site

options to existing cycle routes can be taken as an indicator of how likely people are to cycle to or from a development site.

- Sites that are within 1.8km of a railway station, and that are within 450m of at least one of either a bus stop or a cycle path, are likely to have a significant positive (++) effect.
- Sites that are within either 1.8km of a railway station or 450m of a bus stop or cycle path are likely to have a minor positive (+) effect.
- Sites that are more than 1.8km from a railway station and more than 450m from a bus stop and cycle route could have a minor negative (-) effect.

Energy Infrastructure Site Options

D.39 The location of energy infrastructure sites is not considered likely to affect this objective; therefore the effect of all sites will be negligible (0).

SA Objective 14: To conserve and enhance the character and distinctiveness of the landscape

Residential and Mixed Use Site Options

D.40 There are no National Parks or AONBs in Harborough District. Where development is proposed on greenfield sites, it may be more likely to impact on the landscape, particularly where site options are large in size. However, the effects on the landscape are uncertain until the specific design of development is known. Therefore:

Appendix D Site Assessment Criteria

- Large sites (500+ dwellings) in any part of the District or small sites (less than 500 dwellings) within the countryside that are on greenfield land could have a significant negative (--?) effect.
- Small sites (less than 500 dwellings) that are outside of the countryside and are on greenfield land could have a minor negative (-?) effect.
- Site options of any size on brownfield land could have a negligible (0?) effect.

Employment Site Options

D.41 There are no National Parks or AONBs in Harborough District. Where development is proposed on greenfield sites, it may be more likely to impact on the landscape, particularly where site options are large in size. However, the effects on the landscape are uncertain until the specific design of development is known. Therefore:

- Large sites (over 10ha) in any part of the District or small sites (2-10ha) within the countryside that are on greenfield land could have a significant negative (--?) effect.
- Small sites (2-10ha) that are outside of the countryside and are on greenfield land could have a minor negative (-?) effect.
- Site options of any size on brownfield land could have a negligible (0?) effect.

Retail Site Options

D.42 There are no National Parks or National Landscapes in Harborough District. Where development is proposed on greenfield sites, it may be more likely to impact on the landscape. However, the effects on the landscape are uncertain until the specific design of development is known. Therefore:

Appendix D Site Assessment Criteria

- Sites within the countryside that are on greenfield land could have a significant negative (--?) effect.
- Sites that are outside of the countryside and are on greenfield land could have a minor negative (-?) effect.
- Site options on brownfield land could have a negligible (0?) effect.

Gypsy and Traveller Site Options

D.43 There are no National Parks or National Landscapes in Harborough District. Where development is proposed on greenfield sites, it may be more likely to impact on the landscape. However, the effects on the landscape are uncertain until the specific design of development is known. Therefore:

- Sites within the countryside that are on greenfield land could have a significant negative (--?) effect.
- Sites that are outside of the countryside and are on greenfield land could have a minor negative (-?) effect.
- Site options on brownfield land could have a negligible (0?) effect.

Energy Infrastructure Site Options

D.44 Sites for energy infrastructure are likely to have negative effects on the landscape although this will be to some extent uncertain depending on their specific design. Therefore:

- Sites within the countryside that are on greenfield land could have a significant negative (--?) effect.
- Sites that are outside of the countryside and are on greenfield land could have a minor negative (-?) effect.
- Site options of any size on brownfield land could have a minor positive (+?) effect.