

BURGHCLERE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

SITE ASSESSMENT REPORT

SEPTEMBER 2019

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This report supersedes the preliminary site assessment report published in December 2018 and summarises the site assessment process to inform the housing site allocation in the Burghclere Neighbourhood Plan (NP) and has been informed by the Sustainability Appraisal Report and Community Opinion.
2. The NP is obliged by Policy SS5 of the Basingstoke & Deane adopted Local Plan to allocate 'at least 10 houses' in the period 2011-2029. While there is no requirement to allocate housing through a NP, the Project Steering Group (SG) has chosen to take the opportunity afforded to communities to '*shape and direct development to deliver sustainable development*' (NPPF paragraph 29) and which reflects the '*character, needs and opportunities*' of the area (NPPF paragraph 9).
3. The process began with preliminary work by the SG on defining a Vision and Objectives for the NP to provide the basis for a spatial strategy to guide future growth. The Parish Council engaged with the local community to publicise the Plan at a "Have Your Say" event in April 2018 and subsequently to seek the community's views at 'drop in' sessions in December 2018.
4. The SG selected a target of between 10-15 houses that would meet the existing housing requirement with some uplift to provide some flexibility during the life of the plan given the Government's objective of 'significantly boosting the supply of homes'. This number will also ensure the delivery of some affordable housing in the parish which is a clear priority for the community.
5. Alongside this other work, a sustainability appraisal has been carried out in iterations by AECOM for the SG between March and September 2019, using relevant sustainability baseline data and evidence from the NP reports. The appraisal assessed the 9 promoted sites as 'reasonable alternatives'.
6. To achieve the requirement of Policy SS5, an appropriate strategy is to allocate Site A to deliver about 15 homes which includes a modest buffer to accommodate additional housing that may emerge from the Local Plan Review.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report supersedes the preliminary site assessment report published in December 2018 and summarises the site assessment process to inform the housing site allocation in the Burghclere Neighbourhood Plan (NP).
- 1.2 The NP is obliged by Policy SS5 of the Basingstoke & Deane adopted Local Plan to allocate 'at least 10 houses' in the period 2011-2029. While there is no requirement to allocate housing through a NP, the Project Steering Group (SG) has chosen to take the opportunity afforded to communities to '*shape and direct development to deliver sustainable development*' in the Parish.

2. PLANNING CONTEXT

- 2.1 Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council (BDBC) Local Plan 2011-2029 (LP) was adopted in May 2016.
- 2.2 LP Policies SS1 and SS5 provide the strategic context for allocating housing. SS1(e) supports the delivery of new homes through Neighbourhood Planning in line with policy SS5 which requires an additional 150 homes to be delivered within and adjacent to settlements in the Borough with a defined settlement boundary. Burghclere is one of 13 Parishes that are required to deliver at least 10 homes in this way. Paragraph 4.67 of the Local Plan establishes the qualifying criteria; less than 10 dwellings within the defined Settlement Policy Boundary (SPB) will not qualify for the target. Outside the SPB developments of less than 5 dwellings will not qualify.
- 2.3 As insufficient land is available to meet the SS5 housing target within the Settlement Policy Boundary (SPB), only sites adjacent to the SPB have been considered.
- 2.4 BDBC noted in their letter to the Parish Council dated 20 Sep 2018 that, as of 1 Apr 2018, 6 dwellings have been granted planning permission within and adjacent to Burghclere's SPB in the period 2011-2018 that satisfy the policy SS5 requirement. Therefore the policy requirement of Policy SS5 has not yet been met, and the 'at least 10 homes' requirement continues to need to be identified through appropriate means (such as neighbourhood planning).
- 2.5 In addition to SS1 and SS5, policy SS6 (g) supports the on-going sustainability of settlements, such as Burghclere, by enabling the delivery of appropriate housing outside of settlement boundaries through policies in neighbourhood plans.
- 2.6 While there is no requirement to allocate housing through a NP, the Project Steering Group (SG) has chosen to take the opportunity afforded to communities to '*shape and direct development to deliver sustainable development*' (NPPF paragraph 29) and which reflects the '*character, needs and opportunities*' of the area (NPPF paragraph 9).
- 2.7 To reflect paragraph 65 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF Feb 2019) and as part of the Local Plan Review, BDBC will be undertaking a review of the housing requirement figure across the Borough but it is too early to set out new housing requirement figures for designated neighbourhood areas or provide an 'indicative

figure' (NPPF Paragraph 66). Note should also be taken of the update to Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) in Sep 2018 which confirms that in order to benefit from additional protection afforded within the NPPF (Paragraph 14) a neighbourhood plan would need to allocate a site or sites which meet a Local Plan requirement for the relevant area in full.

- 2.8 The SG, conscious that the NP is progressing in the early stages of the Local Plan Review and in the absence of an indicative housing number (NPPF §66), has chosen to extend the plan period to provide flexibility should circumstances change.

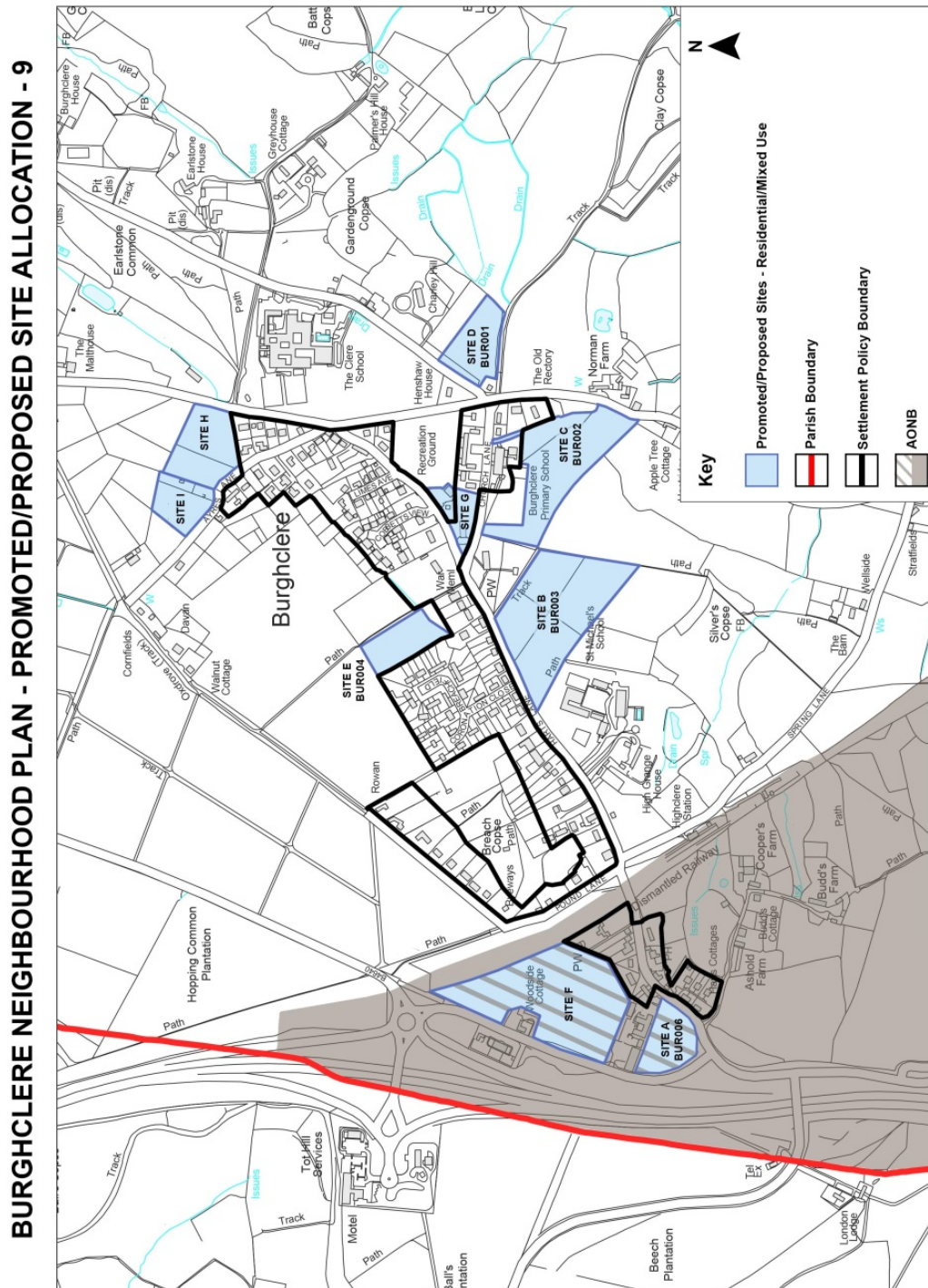
3. METHODOLOGY

- 3.1 The site assessment has been carried out in conjunction with the process of preparing the NP including informal consultation with the local community in April and December 2018 and the preparation of the Sustainability Appraisal Report by AECOM.

4. STAGE ONE

- 4.1 Having taken the decision to use the NP to address the housing requirement in policy SS5, the process began with preliminary work by the SG on defining a Vision and Objectives for the NP to provide the basis for a spatial strategy to guide future growth. The Parish Council engaged with the local community to publicise the Plan at a "Have Your Say" event in April 2018 and to seek opinions across a range of topics including opinions on the 6 housing sites promoted at that time in the BDBC Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA 2017).
- 4.2 The 2018 SHELAA rejected one site (BUR005) as insufficient in size to accommodate 5 dwellings and the SG identified a further 4 sites which had not previously been submitted to the BDBC 'call for sites' but which were adjacent to the settlement boundary. This included Site G adjacent to the Portal Hall (but which was subsequently withdrawn). Hence, this preliminary work culminated in 9 sites that qualified for consideration, the owners/developers of which had been contacted and confirmed their availability at that time. The 9 sites are illustrated on Plan A (overleaf).
- 4.3 The preliminary technical assessment applied a number of spatial criteria to assess the initial merits of each site. These criteria included one condition: being adjacent to the SPB (as required by SS5) and four criteria: protecting the integrity of the rural character of the village, minimising local traffic impact, proximity to local services/facilities, and convenient access to strategic road and rail network. Views on the initial criteria were subsequently sought from the local community.
- 4.4 The SG acknowledged that two sites (Site A and F) were located within the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (NWD AONB). NPPF paragraph 172 confirms that within an AONB the scale and extent of development should be limited. Given the Parish Council's obligations under Section 40 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, the SG took early advice from the NWD AONB and on the basis of the informal advice received retained the sites for further assessment.

4.5 The next step was to invite public consultation at two ‘Drop In’ sessions in Dec 2018. As result of the preliminary assessment the SG felt that 4 of the 9 sites best met the condition and selected criteria. Additional criteria were also considered: sites should not be sited in or impede Key Views, be a reasonable walking distance to schools and the village centre, be economically viable, and that it should not encourage further development for the duration of the current Local Plan.



Plan A – Promoted Sites

5. STAGE TWO

5.1 In addition to the preliminary assessment of sites two further tests have been applied to the site selection process, namely:

- the Sustainability Appraisal of the Neighbourhood Plan. This provides an assessment of the technical attributes of each site. All nine potential sites have been assessed as ‘reasonable alternatives’ through the SA process by applying the seven SA themes established in the SEA Scoping Report; and
- Community Opinion, which summarises the preferences of the local community for each of the proposed housing sites (bearing in mind that the plan can only be ‘made’ in due course following a successful referendum)

5.2 All nine available sites were considered in Stage 2 as, aside from their technical attributes, each site has the capacity to meet the quantum of development required by Policy SS5 over the plan period, and all meet the fundamental test of being adjacent to the settlement boundary.

Sustainability Appraisal

5.3 The sustainability appraisal has been carried out in iterations by AECOM for the SG between March and September 2019, using relevant sustainability baseline data (see separate SEA Scoping Report) and evidence from the NP reports. The Appraisal has assessed the 9 promoted sites as ‘reasonable alternatives’ by applying the 7 themes as shown in Table A below.

Site	Biodiversity	Climate change	Landscape	Historic Environment	Land, soil and water resources	Population and Community	Transport	
Site A	Yellow	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Green	Blue	
Site B	Blue	Red	Red	Red	Blue	Green	Blue	
Site C	Yellow	Blue	Red	Red	Blue	Green	Blue	
Site D	Blue	Blue	Yellow	Blue	Blue	Green	Blue	
Site E	Blue	Blue	Blue	Yellow	Blue	Green	Blue	
Site F	Blue	Blue	Blue	Yellow	Red	Green	Blue	
Site G	Yellow	Blue	Yellow	Red	Green	Green	Blue	
Site H	Yellow	Blue	Yellow	Yellow	Red	Green	Blue	
Site I	Yellow	Blue	Red	Yellow	Red	Green	Blue	
Key								
Likely adverse effect (without mitigation measures)				Red	Likely positive effect			Green
Neutral/no effect				Yellow	Uncertain effects			Blue

Table A: Summary of SA Site Appraisal findings

(Source: Table 4.10, Draft Sustainability Appraisal, AECOM, September 2019)

- 5.4 All sites have the potential to contribute to local housing needs and given the scale of the village and the limited services and facilities available, all are considered to be within reasonable proximity to available services. Sites A, D and E have no adverse effects, Sites F, G, and H have only one adverse effect; sites C and I have two adverse effects and site B three adverse effects, although this could be reduced to two on the basis that mitigation is incorporated into the proposed scheme to manage the evidenced localised flooding issues.
- 5.5 Site A and F are located in the NWD AONB which is a nationally designated landscape. Site A is bounded by Winchester Road and Harts Lane with the Beacon House employment site to the north. The site is also in close proximity to the A34 and due to the roads and employment area surrounding the site, it is not considered to have a high sensitivity within the surrounding landscape. Trees and hedgerows around the border of the site also limit views in and out of the site. Similar reasons apply to Site F which lies to the north of Beacon House. While the remaining sites are outside the AONB, sites B and C are assessed as having a likely adverse effect because of their open nature with the surrounding landscape and their potential impact on important views to the Downs including long distance views towards Ladle Hill and Watership Down. Site I is also assessed as having likely adverse landscape effects.
- 5.7 Sites B, C and G also register likely adverse effects due to their proximity to heritage assets including the Grade II Church of Ascension and the Portal Hall. While much of Site G is previously developed land and hence development could be viewed as an efficient use of land, its proximity to the Grade II Portal Hall is likely to have an adverse effect. In addition sites F, H & I are underlain by Grade 3a (good quality) agricultural land and could result in the loss of best and most versatile land although in the case of Sites A it is unclear whether the land is Grade 3a or 3b.
- 5.8 On the basis of the appraisal findings, if sites with no likely adverse effects are to be chosen then sites A, D and E should be considered for allocation. However, as Site E does not front the highway its deliverability is uncertain.

Community Opinion

- 5.9 At the December 2018 'Drop In' sessions, parishioners were invited to comment on the criteria used to assist the selection of sites and on the wider policies being proposed in the NP. They were also invited to rank sites in order of preference. The outcome was reported in the Parish Magazine, on nextdoor.com and published on the Parish website.
- 5.10 With regard to questions about the amount of housing the plan should allocate, assessment criteria and other policy matters the respective preferences are shown in table B below.

Question	Yes	No	No opinion	No response
1. In today's world is the number of houses being proposed for the Plan realistic?	77%	13%	6%	4%
2. Have we the right mix of criteria when considering sites?	81%	11%	4%	4%
3. Which of the four sites that meet the criteria are more suitable than others?	<i>Site preferences have been recorded separately.</i>			
4. Are one or more excluded sites more suitable for development?	32%	58%	4%	6%
5. Would you like to see the Parish land used for affordable housing for local people?	75%	13%	8%	4%
6. Do you think the proposed mix of design, heritage and key view policies preserve and enhance Burghclere's rural character?	81%	11%	4%	4%
7. Do you think proposals for local green spaces, green infrastructure (i.e. footpaths, byways etc) and community facilities protect those assets that are important and allow us to improve them in future?	70%	15%	4%	11%
8. Are the proposed business policies realistic?	60%	17%	9%	13%
9. Do you support the idea of a rural business hub for those who live and work in the parish?	66%	19%	6%	9%
10. Do you support the proposed policy towards tourism in the Parish and wider area?	62%	15%	15%	8%
11. Mindful the parish does not have control over traffic, are the proposed parking and traffic policies viable?	58%	26%	6%	9%

Table B

Site preferences

5.11 The following table indicates the communities preference for each of the nine sites recorded at the 'Drop In' sessions.

Question - Which of the four sites that meet the criteria are more suitable than others?	Most suitable	2 nd most suitable	3 rd most suitable	4 th most suitable
1. Site A - Land to SW of Beacon House	53%	15%	6%	4%
2. Site B - Land S of Harts Lane and between St Michael's School and Church of the Ascension	4%	2%	2%	2%
3. Site C - Land S of Primary School fronting Church Lane and Well Street	0%	2%	4%	0%
4. Site D - Land E of Reeves Cottage	0%	2%	2%	2%
5. Site E - Land NE of Breachfield	0%	2%	2%	2%
6. Site F - Land E of Woodside Cottage	17%	36%	6%	15%
7. Site G - Pinder Land E of Portal Hall	<i>This site does not form part of the target considerations set by B&DBC due to its small size. Development by the parish is under consideration for affordable housing</i>			
8. Site H - Land between Ayres Lane and Well Street	15%	15%	34%	4%
9. Site I - Land NW of Site H to the N of Ayres Lane	4%	17%	13%	36%

Table C

5.12 While engagement activities have engaged local people effectively with the projects, it is acknowledged that a definitive view of community opinion is hard to come by. Experience suggests those who do engage from the outset remain engaged throughout and are more likely to comment at the Pre-Submission (Regulation 14) and Pre-Examination (Regulation 16) stages, as well as to turn out to vote in the referendum. Community opinion is therefore a valuable snapshot as well as an insight, and the conclusions must be given weight in the final selection of sites.

5.13 Two sites have been actively promoted through the NP process. The land interest associated with Site A has included consideration of a 'Rural Business Hub'; a building that would contain a locally run business with conference and networking facilities, well placed near the BT Central allowing users fast internet speeds. The proposal also offers an area of public open space and a 'Local Equipped Area for Play'.

5.14 The Land Interest for Site B proposed a connection with local Public Rights of Way and local footpaths. An earlier proposal for new allotments, public open space with playground, a Parish owned and locally run village shop and an option for self/custom build housing was removed prior to the land promoter undertaking a public exhibition in the village on 18 July 2019.

6. RECOMMENDATION FOR SITE ALLOCATION

- 6.1 The NP is obliged by Policy SS5 of the Basingstoke & Deane adopted Local Plan to allocate 'at least 10 houses' in the period 2011-2029. To achieve this requirement an appropriate strategy is to allocate Site A to deliver about 15 homes which includes a modest buffer to accommodate additional housing that may emerge from the Local Plan Review.
- 6.2 The sustainability appraisal has indicated how Site A should seek to mitigate or avoid any adverse effects and these requirements will be made in the allocation policy.
- 6.3 Site A is available now and the landowner has confirmed that there are no legal or other encumbrances to prevent the land coming forward for development.
- 6.4 Consultation with NWD AONB throughout 2018 and 2019 had raised no concerns at the proposal to include Site A for consideration within the emerging plan. At the invitation of BDBC, the SG has presented written evidence in respect of development within the AONB in response to NPPF paragraph 172, which confirms that the scale and extent of development in AONB's should be limited.
- 6.5 There is no presumption in the SHELAA that development on this site might be construed as 'major development' and precedent elsewhere in the Borough indicates it falls below any threshold for consideration as 'major development. In addition to which the policy includes development principles to deliver additional social and community benefits to outweigh potential harm to the AONB. BDBC has been presented with evidence to enable it confirm the site falls below consideration as 'major development' and as the 'decision maker' is invited at Pre-Submission stage to formally confirm this position.

ANNEX A – SITE INFORMATION

Note: All areas and boundaries are approximations only and are included to provide an indication of location and size of site.

SITE A

Land to the north of Harts Lane



Site Area	0.89 hectare
Site Description	The site is half circle in shape, adjacent on two sides by public roads, bounded by tall hedges and trees. It is scrub farmland located within the NWD AONB.
Availability	Yes
SHELAA	BUR006
Capacity	Circa 15 dwellings
Sustainability Appraisal	No likely adverse effects
Community Opinion 'Drop in' session	53% first preference

SITE B

Land to the South of Harts Lane between St Michael's School & Church of the Ascension.



Site Area	3.33 hectare
Site Description	The site is lozenge in shape, bounded on the NW side by a tall hedge that runs along Harts Lane. Where the boundary abuts the School and Church there are also hedges however, the remaining sides are fenced. The land is rough pasture and not well drained.
Availability	Yes
SHELAA	BUR003
Capacity	Circa 35 (Application ref: 19/02215/OUT)
Sustainability Appraisal	Likely adverse landscape and heritage effects
Community Opinion 'Drop in' session	4% first preference

SITE C

Land to the South of Primary School, fronting Church Lane & Well Street



Site Area	2.54 hectare
Site Description	The site is irregular in shape and has frontage to Church Lane and Well Street. Adjoining the Primary School and neighbouring properties there is hedging and mature trees. There are two separate parts; the larger faces SW, the smaller abuts properties to its N and E and which has access to Church Lane by a narrow track. The land is well maintained pasture and presently farmed and used on request for overflow parking for village activities. To the West side of the larger field runs a well-used and popular footpath.
Availability	Yes
SHELAA	BUR002
Capacity	Circa 50 dwellings
Sustainability Appraisal	Likely adverse landscape and heritage effects
Community Opinion 'Drop in' session	0% first preference

SITE D

Land to the East of Reeves Cottage



Site Area	1.02 hectare
Site Description	The site is a lozenge in shape and the ground falls away from West to East. Access might be gained to Aldern Bridge Road via a gate on the Western boundary, the remainder of which is a thick belt of trees that screens the site from the road. The land is well maintained pasture.
Availability	Yes
SHELAA	BUR001
Capacity	Circa 6 dwellings
Sustainability Appraisal	No likely adverse effects
Community Opinion 'Drop in' session	0% first preference

SITE E

Land to the North East of Breachfield



Site Area	0.84 hectares
Site Description	This is a rectangular site adjacent to the 1950's residential development of Breachfield. The land is managed pasture with access some distance to the North from the Ox Drove which is for the most part an unmade road. As such highway access remains unclear.
Availability	Yes
SHELAA	BUR004
Capacity	Circa 8 dwellings
Sustainability Appraisal	No likely adverse effects
Community Opinion 'Drop in' session	0% first preference
Spatial strategy	Inconsistent with strategy

SITE F

Land to the East of Woodside Cottage.



Site Area	3.68 hectares
Site Description	This site is a rectangular lozenge with access to the Winchester Road and lying within the NWD AONB. To the East are houses in the village and to the SW is the Beacon House employment site. The land is well maintained pasture. There are hedges with mature trees around most of the site.
Availability	Yes
SHELAA	Not listed
Capacity	Circa 88 dwellings (at this scale likely to be 'major development')
Sustainability Appraisal	Likely adverse land, soil and water resources effect (Grade 3a BMVA land)
Community Opinion 'Drop in' session	17% first preference

SITE G (excluded) Parish-owned land adjacent to the Portal Hall may be considered separately as a Community-Led Housing (CLH) project.

Land to the East of the Portal Hall.



Site Area	0.53 hectare
Site Description	This site lies to the East of the Portal Hall, and includes the allotments and Memorial Garden.
Availability	No
SHELAA	Not submitted
Capacity	withdrawn
Sustainability Appraisal	Likely adverse heritage effect
Community Opinion 'Drop in' session	Withdrawn

SITE H

Land between Ayres Lane and Well Street



Site Area	1.32 hectare
Site Description	This site is a rectangular lozenge with possible access to either Ayres Lane or Well Street. To the South are houses in the village. The land is well maintained pasture. There are hedges with mature trees around the South and West sides and fences to fields to the North.
Availability	Yes
SHELAA	Not submitted
Capacity	Circa 32 dwellings
Sustainability Appraisal	Likely adverse land, soil and water resources effect (Grade 3a BMVA land)
Community Opinion 'Drop in' session	15% first preference

SITE I

Land NW of Site H and N of Ayres Lane.



Site Area	1.11 hectare
Site Description	This site is a rectangular lozenge with possible access to Ayres Lane. To the South are houses on Ayres Lane and in the village. The land is well maintained pasture. There are hedges with mature trees around the South and East sides and fences to fields to the North.
Availability	Yes
SHELAA	Not submitted
Capacity	Circa 25 dwellings
Sustainability Appraisal	Likely adverse landscape and land, soil and water resources effects (Grade 3a BMVA land)
Community Opinion 'Drop in' session	4% first preference