

Appendix 4e: Woolhampton Site Assessments

Spatial Area:	Eastern Area	Settlement:	Woolhampton	Parish:	Midgham
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Site ID:	MID4	Site Address:	Land north of the A4 Bath Road, junction of New Hill Road, Woolhampton
Use(s) proposed by site promoter	Residential	Development Potential:	Up to 20 dwellings but known issues exist which may reduce this number

Recommendation:

The site is recommended for allocation

Justification:

The site is well related to the existing settlement of Woolhampton and is within close proximity to a limited number of services and facilities. A small number of dwellings would be in keeping with the size and function of Woolhampton as a Service Village.

The Sustainability Appraisal (SA) / Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) indicates a predominantly neutral sustainability impact. There are no significant sustainability effects on the site, and in many cases development on this site will not have an impact on the sustainability objectives.

Nevertheless, there are some factors and effects that will require further investigation, planning and mitigation to ensure the most sustainable outcomes in relation to ecology, education, environmental health and minerals, and to ensure utilities are made available in a timely manner.

Discussion:

Site description:

The site is located on the western edge of Woolhampton village, and is greenfield land as the site was in use as a paddock and there are no built structures within the site.

The gradient of the site falls away to the south. It is bounded by New Road Hill to the east, and the A4 Bath Road to the south. There is linear residential development to the north and east of the site, and the properties are detached and set within large plots.

The Bath Road frontage includes allotments, a community hall and linear residential development. There is a block of ancient woodland to the west of the site known as Great Mounts Copse.

The northern, eastern and southern site boundaries adjoin the settlement boundary of Woolhampton.

HELAA conclusions:

Potentially developable in part. Ancient woodland adjoins the western site boundary and a buffer will be required.

Landscape:

The site significantly slopes down in a north to south direction. There is existing residential development to the east and north of the site. The western boundary of the site nearby open countryside is well screened by mature trees.

Flood risk:

None.

Highways / Transport:

No significant impact expected on local highway capacity.

A recent planning application for 16 dwellings on the site proposed a single access from the A4 Bath Road, and the Council's Highways Team did not raise any objection to this.

Heritage:

There are no designated heritage assets within or adjacent to the site. A desk-based assessment to better understand archaeological potential and survival will be required. Fieldwork techniques to better understand the Mesolithic potential may be necessary. Such an assessment would be required to accompany any future planning application.

Education:

The site is within the catchment for Brimpton Church of England Primary School, which is located c.2.6km away from the site. The scale of development would be absorbed into the catchment population.

In terms of secondary provision, the school is within the catchment for the Kennet School which is located c. 4.6km away in Thatcham. It is likely that the impact from development can be accommodated within the existing infrastructure.

Environmental Health:

Site not contaminated. Possible impact (noise / pollution) from nearby A4. However, with appropriate design and layout it is considered that the impacts should be minimised.

Ecology:

The site lies adjacent to a block of ancient woodland which is also designated as a Local Wildlife Site. High risk of adverse nature conservation impact identified by the Thames Valley Environmental Research Centre. Development has the potential to have a high risk of adverse impacts. Further assessment will be required to determine the necessary mitigation and enhancement measures.

Minerals and Waste:

Site within an existing and proposed Mineral Safeguarding Area. Consideration of mineral sterilisation issues is required. Safeguarding policies apply in order to prevent needless sterilisation of mineral resources and consideration of extraction prior to any development would be encouraged. A Minerals Resource Assessment will be required to support any future planning application.

Utility Services:*Water supply:*

Thames Water have commented that on the information available to date they do not envisage infrastructure concerns regarding Water Supply capability in relation to this site.

Wastewater network:

The scale of development/s is likely to require upgrades to the wastewater network. They are recommending an agreed housing infrastructure phasing plan to ensure development does not outpace delivery of essential network upgrades that are required in advance of occupancy.

Electricity network:

Scottish and Southern Electric have commented that there is a network of existing high voltage (HV) overhead lines and underground cable in close proximity of the site. It is likely that HV network reinforcement and secondary substation upgrade will be required.

Gas network:

The site is not underlain by a high pressure gas transmission pipeline.

Other:

None.

Parish / Town Council:

No comments were received from Midgham or Woolhampton Parish Councils.

SA/SEA summary:

The SA/SEA indicates a predominantly neutral sustainability impact. There are no significant sustainability effects on the site, and in many cases development on this site will not have an impact on the sustainability objectives. The proximity of the site to local services and facilities will bring sustainability benefits – the site will encourage active healthy lifestyles and opportunities for walking, cycling and public transport. The site could potentially have a negative impact on environmental sustainability in terms of biodiversity unless appropriate mitigation measures are provided to protect the adjacent designated areas. The proposals for the site have taken this into account, so it is anticipated that this potential negative impact would be neutralised with mitigation. The site's proximity to the A4 gives another potential negative impact on social sustainability in terms of air and noise pollution. With appropriate mitigation it is likely that this impact would be required. The development of the site for housing will have a neutral effect on economic sustainability. Whilst housing development contributes towards economic development in the short term through the construction of the site, it is not seen to promote key business sectors and business development in the longer term.

Availability:

The site is in a single landownership and is available immediately.

Achievability:

There are no legal constraints.

Relationship to / in combination effects of other sites :

Two other sites were promoted in Woolhampton Parish. These were assessed to be 'not developable within the next 15 years' in the HELAA.

The site lies c. 4km from Thatcham where it is proposed to include a strategic site allocation to the north east of the town. This will potentially increase the services and facilities (for example a new secondary school, new primary schools, employment floorspace, and sport/recreational facilities) available to surrounding settlements, like Woolhampton.