

## **Appendix 4h: Great Shefford Site Assessments**

<b>Spatial Area:</b>	North Wessex Downs AONB	<b>Settlement:</b>	Great Shefford	<b>Parish:</b>	Great Shefford
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<b>Site ID:</b>	GS1	<b>Site Address:</b>	Land west of Spring Meadows, Allendale Farm, Great Shefford
<b>Use(s) proposed by site promoter</b>	Residential	<b>Development Potential:</b>	Up to 15 dwellings but known issues exist which may reduce this number

<b>Recommendation:</b>	The site is recommended for allocation
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<b>Justification:</b>	<p>The site is located to the north east of Great Shefford, close to local services and facilities within the village, including the primary school. Great Shefford is identified as a Service Village in the settlement hierarchy meaning that a limited amount of development will be suitable.</p> <p>The existing Local Plan does not include any allocations in Great Shefford. This was because there has been significant flooding in the village when the HSA DPD was being prepared. However, flood alleviation works are proposed for the village.</p> <p>The site itself is not at risk of fluvial flooding but as 25% of the site is at risk of groundwater emergence development would need to be avoided in this area. Water related constraints across the whole site are likely to be a key consideration. A FRA would be required and SUDs provided.</p> <p>Further ecological assessment required to establish current site conditions and the presence of any protected species on the site, in addition to whether development would impact upon the River Lambourn Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC) which is 1km of the site.</p> <p>The Landscape Sensitivity Assessment (2011) indicated that development on the site would not cause significant harm to the landscape character, and subject to a number of mitigation measures development would be acceptable and this view is supported by the AONB and Natural England.</p> <p>Highways have recommended access is obtained from Spring Meadows which would also ensure the development relates well to the existing settlement pattern. The change in levels would need to be taken into consideration.</p> <p>Although the site is good quality agricultural land the loss of 1.04 hectares is not considered significant.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Nevertheless, there are some factors and effects that will require further investigation, planning and mitigation to ensure the most sustainable outcomes in relation to landscape and to ensure utilities are made available in a timely manner.</p>
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<b>Discussion:</b>	<p><b>Site description:</b> The site is located to the north of Great Shefford, and the eastern site boundary adjoins the built up area of Great Shefford. The site comprise of Grade 2 agricultural land, and there is some boundary vegetation. The land rises up to the north west.</p> <p><b>HELAA conclusions:</b> The site was assessed as potentially developable. It was noted that further assessment in conjunction with the AONB and Natural England would be required to see if concerns that development on the site would result in significant harm to the natural beauty and special qualities of the AONB could be overcome.</p> <p><b>Landscape:</b> The site lies within the AONB and within the Lambourn Upper Valley character area.</p>
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A Landscape Sensitivity Assessment (LSA, 2011) indicated that development on the site would not cause significant harm to the landscape character, and subject to a number of mitigation measures development would be acceptable. It is a small site that is well contained by landform and housing, with hedges along the western and northern boundaries. The mitigation and enhancement measures identified in the 2011 LSA would need to be incorporated as part of any development proposals:

- retention of the existing boundary vegetation;
- buildings to be kept off the northern-most corner of the site; and
- new planting to integrate buildings into the landscape and soften the edge.

The North Wessex Downs AONB and Natural England note that the site has potential for development. The site relates well to the settlement pattern and would be well contained by the existing landform and housing. It would have only a localised impact on views from neighbouring properties but would not harm the landscape and scenic beauty of the AONB. Allocating the site for development would also provide an opportunity to soften the existing raw edge of the village.

**Flood risk:**

The site lies within Flood Zone 1 and so there is a low probability of fluvial flooding.

An area of groundwater emergence covers 25% of the total site area, and a minor surface water flood flow path flows across the northeast corner which will need to be managed with swales/ditches at the north east corner of the site

The site is not within a Source Protection Zone.

Development should be avoided over area of groundwater emergence and infiltration may not be possible over remainder of site. At-surface attenuation measures will be required in this area and this could affect the number of units built. A FRA would be required and SUDs provided.

**Highways / Transport:**

No direct access onto the public highway. Access should be obtained from Spring Meadows adjacent number 41. A footway would need to be provided from the development to the existing footway fronting 31. This is possible within the public highway.

No impact on local highway capacity.

**Heritage:**

No impact

**Education:**

The site is within the catchment for Shefford Primary School, which is adjacent to the site. The scale of development on this site would be absorbed into the catchment population.

The catchment secondary school is John O'Gaunt in Hungerford, c.11km away, and it is likely that this impact can also be accommodated within the existing infrastructure.

**Environmental Health:**

The site is greenfield and there are no known contamination issues on the site.

Development unlikely to result in adverse impact/worsening of air quality. No risk of noise and vibration problems to future occupants.

**Ecology:**

There are no statutory designations within or adjacent to the site. Up to date ecological surveys will be needed to establish current site conditions and the presence of any protected species on the site.

The site is within 1km of the River Lambourn which is a SSSI and SAC. Natural England have commented that development may have an adverse impact on the integrity of the SSSI/SAC through discharge, abstraction, construction, and run-off/drainage. Further assessment required.

**Minerals and Waste:**

Part of the site is underlain by construction aggregates. A Minerals Impact Assessment would be required.

**Utility Services**

*Water supply:*

Thames Water have commented that the water network capacity in this area may be unable to support the demand anticipated from this development. Local upgrades to the existing water network infrastructure may be required to ensure sufficient capacity is brought forward ahead of the development.

*Wastewater network:*  
No issues.

*Electricity network:*  
Scottish and Southern Electric have commented that there is a network of existing high voltage (HV) overhead lines (OHLs) in close proximity of the site. It is likely that HV network reinforcement will be required with regards to thermal capacity and voltage drop compliance. In addition, OHLs will require diverting if works planned within immediate vicinity of line.

*Gas network:*  
The site is not underlain by a high pressure gas transmission pipeline.

**Other:**  
The site is good quality agricultural land, however land loss of 1.1 hectares is not considered significant.

**Parish / Town Council:**  
Object to the development of the site. The flood alleviation scheme would need to be complete and secure along with the sewage systems reworked. There is excess ground water as it stands and with further potential development, the drainage system would not be able to cope. The infrastructure would need consideration as access would be an issue. Development in this area would overlook and feel overpowering to the properties of Spring Meadows as the ground proposed for development is much higher.

**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.

There are a limited number of services and facilities within walking and cycling distance of the site, although it is recognised that for higher level services and employment there could be a level of car dependency to access Newbury and other centres. The site is in close proximity of open countryside to help promote a healthy and active lifestyle.

The estimated development potential on the site means that affordable housing will need to be provided, and a mix of mix of housing type and tenure could be provided. This results in a positive effect. There will be several positive impacts upon the environmental sustainability of the site. Biodiversity enhancements and net gain will be sought through LPR policy SP11. Through LPR policies SP5 and SP7, development presents an opportunity to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and create high quality locally distinctive design and places. Development has the potential to have a negative impact by way of harm to the AONB. This harm will be reduced if the recommendations of the 2011 LSA are adhered to. LPR policies SP8 and 7 will further reduce the impact. Development also has the potential to negatively impact upon environmental sustainability due to the site being greenfield and the land being high quality agricultural land. However, the LPR is clear that for the district's housing requirement to be met, development on greenfield sites on the edge of settlements is necessary.

Development may have an impact upon flood risk due to there being groundwater emergence and a surface water flow path on part of the site. Avoidance of development in this area and SuDS will reduce the impact. The West Berkshire SuDS SPD seeks techniques that not only drain the site, but provide other benefits such as improving water quality, resilience to climate change, public amenity, green infrastructure, and biodiversity. 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 owned by a single private landowner. It is available in the next 1-5 years.

**Achievability:**  
There are no known legal constraints at this time

**Relationship to / in combination effects of other sites :**  
A second site in Great Shefford was considered through the HELAA, however it was assessed to be 'not developable within the next 15 years'.