

North Crawley Neighbourhood Plan 2018-2033

**EVIDENCE BASE DOCUMENT:
SITE ASSESSMENT SUMMARY**



Introduction

This document forms part of the evidence base for the North Crawley Neighbourhood Plan. It has been prepared to summarise how sites were selected as preferred options for housing allocations in the draft plan.

Background to process

The process of choosing sites for development in the plan started with identifying landowners around the parish. Where this information was readily available contact was made with owners informing them of the Neighbourhood Plan and inviting them to formally promote their land for development. Letters were sent in May 2017, with the availability of all sites subsequently recorded on a parish-wide map.

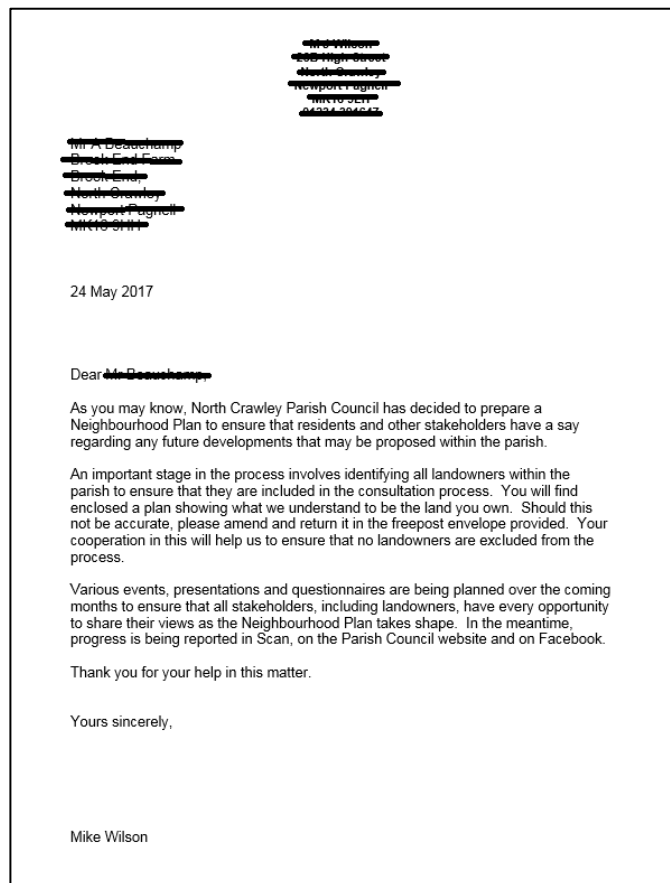


Figure 1: Sample letter sent to landowners

Further selection

A questionnaire for the local community was prepared separately to the process of identifying landowners. This was circulated in June and July 2017. A key finding from the questionnaire was that people felt that the ‘walkability’ and sense of community within North Crawley was important to preserve, and therefore any future development should be on sites that are well-related to the existing village with good connectivity. Specific feedback was also sought on a number of broad directions for future growth within the village.

Based on a combination of known availability and the need to be well-related to the existing village, the steering group subsequently identified 9 available sites around the existing settlement boundary whose suitability for future development they wished to consider in more detail.

The broad boundaries of the 9 sites are shown in Figure 2. Where sites do not comprise existing fields or there are no logical features demarcating their extent, a degree of flexibility was applied as to their boundaries. It is acknowledged that planning applications may ultimately come forward with slightly different land assembly. Therefore the in-principle findings of the site assessment process are not affected by the exact circumstances of each individual site.



Figure 2: Map of assessed sites

Detailed site assessment

A template framework for site assessment was prepared to consider each area against a number of different criteria. In total eight criteria were used: walkability and relationship with existing village; access; landscape; flooding; heritage; ecology; public feedback from the questionnaire; and availability.

The steering group conducted a ‘walkabout’ of all sites in January 2018. Each site was considered against the various criteria with a ‘RAG’ rating of Red, Amber, and Green used to identify issues that are serious (red), could potentially be overcome (amber), or of either no consequence or positive benefit (green).

Following the first round of pre-submission consultation in July 2018, the steering group reviewed the site assessments and amended certain judgements based on feedback that had been given.

The final completed templates for each site are contained in Appendix 1 including accompanying commentary and conclusions. In each instance the sites were assessed on an ‘in principle’ basis without any specific consideration of how many dwellings they might deliver.

Following the site assessment process, those sites with a ‘red’ finding against any criteria were discounted from any further consideration on the basis that they were unlikely to represent sustainable development.

This resulted in four sites remaining that are generally suitable for development. These have subsequently become the plan’s proposed allocations. The four sites are spread over three allocations due to “The Slipe” being partially replaced as a Local Green Space following discussions with the landowner and effectively added in to land south of High Street, following concerns about capacity of this allocation. It is understood that each landowner is prepared to work collaboratively, thus making a single allocation possible.

The policy wording for each proposed allocation has, where possible, included reference to any matters that were identified as ‘amber’ issues in the site assessment process, so as to ensure development comes forward in a sensitive fashion.

The selection of sites on the basis of avoiding negative impacts ensures that each allocation contributes to the environmental and social aspects of sustainable development. In respect of the economic dimension, the accompanying Housing Needs Assessment outlines how the allocation of a defined level of housing will contribute towards this by releasing otherwise appropriate opportunities for growth.


Conclusion


This report has been prepared to support the North Crawley Neighbourhood Plan and summarises the process the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group have undertaken to select sites around the village as proposed housing allocations.


A comprehensive approach to identifying sites was taken with all known landowners written to. Available sites were subsequently shortlisted on the basis of their relationship with the existing village boundary. A final process of assessment involved the consideration of each site against an assessment framework based on 8 different criteria. Using this process five out of nine potential sites were discounted as having significant issues. The remaining four sites were taken forward as draft allocations with appropriate policy wording drafted in the draft plan to reflect any issues that were not serious but still need to be overcome.

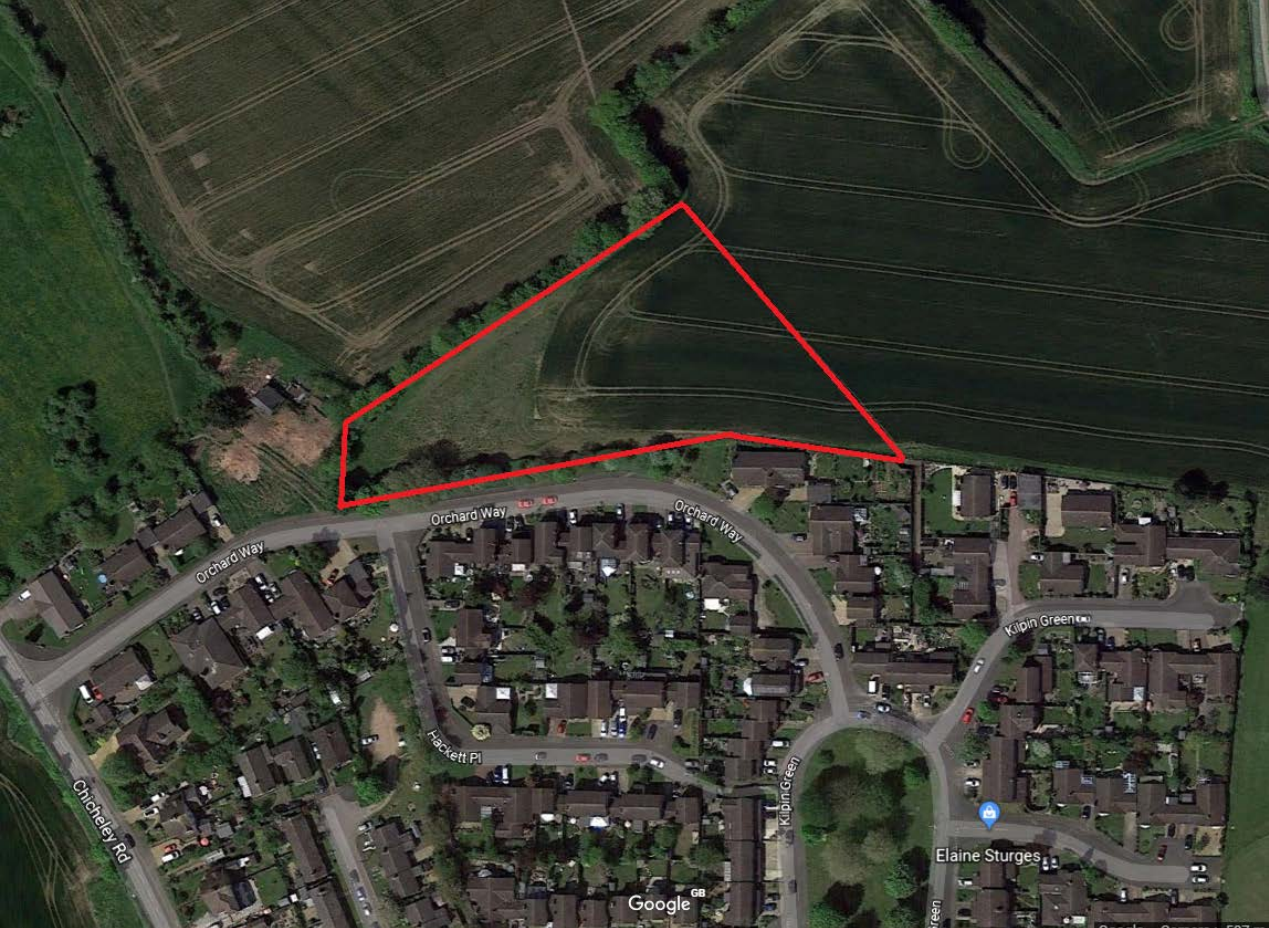
The site assessment process may be reviewed alongside the overall Neighbourhood Plan in due course. There is potential for the circumstances of individual sites to change, which may result in certain constraints being overcome in the future. Similarly, it is possible that additional sites may come forward during the plan's lifetime that have not been assessed due to their unavailability during the plan's preparation.


Appendix 1 – Completed Site Assessment Templates

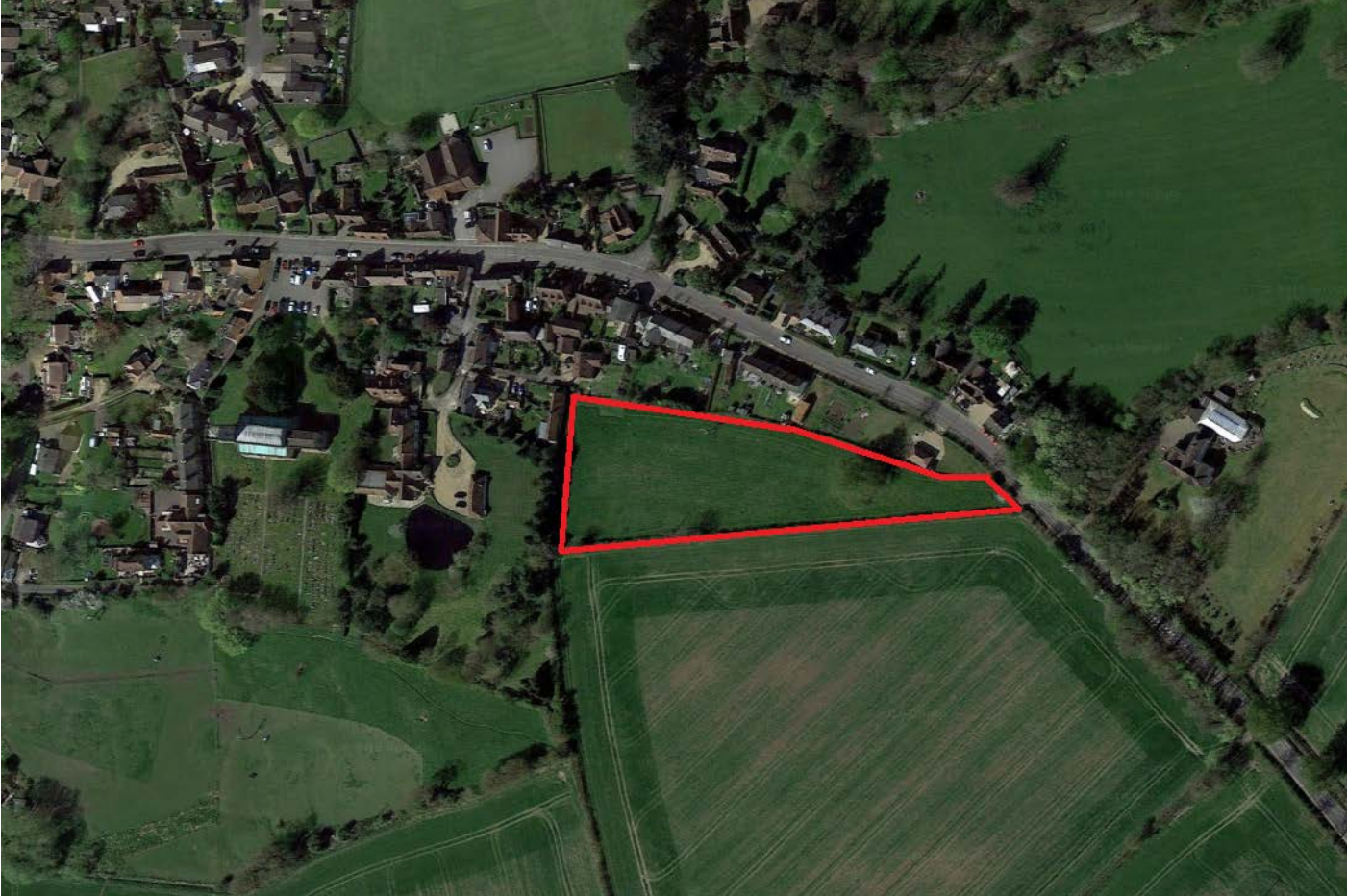
Reference: NC1	Name: Land at Moat Farm	
		
Category	RAG Rating (red = serious issues, amber=issues that could be overcome, green=no issues)	Notes
KEY CRITERIA: Walkability and relationship with existing village.	Red	The south-eastern parts of the site would be within reasonable walking distance of the village centre but the majority of the site would result in a development that is further away from the village centre than any existing part of the village.
Vehicular access	Green	The site benefits from several possible access points on Chicheley Road and potentially Brook End
Landscape	Red	The site is extremely prominent approaching the village from the west. There are significant attractive and long-distance views over the site currently towards Central Milton Keynes, which would be eroded by development.
Flooding	Green	There is no known flood risk affecting the site.
Heritage	Amber	The site lies outside the village conservation area but there is a scheduled ancient monument to the north, which may mean development could sterilise archaeological assets.
Ecology	Green	The site is open farmland and is unlikely to have any habitat value.
Questionnaire	Red	50% of questionnaire respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the site as a location for development. 27% agreed or strongly agreed.
Neighbouring uses	Green	The site not neighboured by any uses that would be incompatible with housing.
Ownership/availability	Green	The site is available for development.
Conclusion	The site will not have a positive relationship with the rest of the village and will have harmful landscape impacts. It therefore should not be allocated for development.	

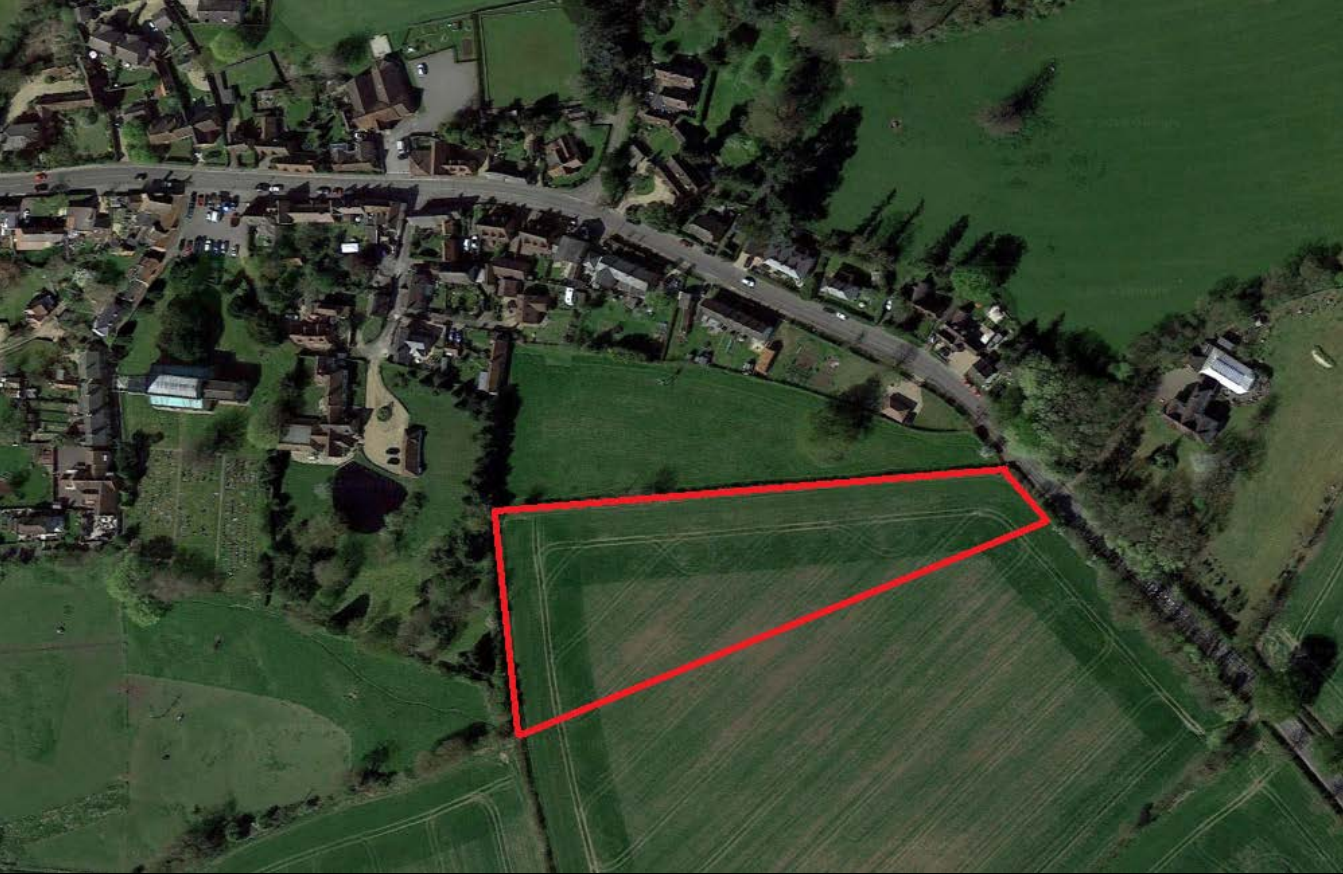
Reference: NC2	Name: Lower Croft Field	
		
Category	RAG Rating (red = serious issues, amber=issues that could be overcome, green=no issues)	Notes
KEY CRITERIA: Walkability and relationship with existing village.	Red	The site would be distant from the village core and would potentially diminish the identity of Little Crawley as a separate hamlet.
Vehicular access	Green	The site could be accessed from Chicheley Road.
Landscape	Red	The site's topography means development would be relatively discretely positioned, although views to and from Little Crawley may be harmed and development could lead to coalescence.
Flooding	Green	There is no known flood risk affecting the site.
Heritage	Amber	The site lies outside the village conservation area. There is a scheduled ancient monument to the west, which may mean archaeological investigations are required.
Ecology	Amber	The site is unimproved grassland that may have some habitat value.
Questionnaire	Amber	34% of questionnaire respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the site as a location for development. 42% agreed or strongly agreed.
Neighbouring uses	Green	The site not neighboured by any uses that would be incompatible with housing.
Ownership/availability	Amber	The site is understood to be available for development although not actively promoted.
Conclusion	The site will potentially harm the separation between North Crawley and Little Crawley. Development, particularly towards the northern end, would also be located too far from the village centre. The site should not be allocated for development.	


Reference: NC3	Name: "Bill Maslin's former property"	
		
Category	RAG Rating (red = serious issues, amber=issues that could be overcome, green=no issues)	Notes
KEY CRITERIA: Walkability and relationship with existing village.		The site is previously developed land that is well-related to Kilpin Green. It is quite far from the village centre although no more so than other dwellings on Orchard Way. There is a right-of-way running through the site, which should be incorporated into any proposed development.
Vehicular access		The site can easily be accessed from Orchard Way
Landscape		The site contains an existing, albeit derelict, dwelling and is well-landscaped already within the surrounding area.
Flooding		There is no known flood risk affecting the site.
Heritage		The site is outside the conservation area and is free of any heritage designations. The derelict dwelling is relatively old but in very poor upkeep. It is not a heritage asset that would be lost through redevelopment.
Ecology		There are a number of mature plants on the site, which is generally scrub-like and overgrown. The derelict building may also be used by roosting bats and other species. Further investigation will be required as part of any application.
Questionnaire		The site was not specifically referred to in the questionnaire.
Neighbouring uses		The site not neighboured by any uses that would be incompatible with housing.
Ownership/availability		It is not clear whether the site is available for development although it is at least partially previously developed already.
Conclusion	The site includes an existing derelict dwelling that would benefit from redevelopment. The remaining land is scrub-like and a logical location for small-scale additional development. It should therefore be allocated.	


Reference: NC4	Name: Land north of Orchard Way	
		
Category	RAG Rating (red = serious issues, amber=issues that could be overcome, green=no issues)	Notes
KEY CRITERIA: Walkability and relationship with existing village.		The site would have a positive relationship with Kilpin Green, particularly if restricted to the area closest to Orchard Way. It is on the edge of the village and therefore not particularly close to the village centre although no less so than existing properties on Orchard Way.
Vehicular access		The site has ready access over the wide verge on Orchard Way.
Landscape		The topography of the site slopes down towards Orchard Way. However, there is a notable change towards more open countryside towards the north-east, which suggests the site should be restricted to the area closest to Orchard Way. There are a small number of dwellings here that overlook the site. This has been considered and it is understood no significant harm to amenity or privacy will result.
Flooding		The site has no known flood risk.
Heritage		The site is not affected by any known heritage issues.
Ecology		The site consists of open farmland. There are trees and shrubs along its perimeter that could have habitat value though.
Questionnaire		If the site is regarded as land between Kilpin Green and Little Crawley then 34% of questionnaire respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the site as a location for development. 42% agreed or strongly agreed.
Neighbouring uses		There are no neighbouring uses that would be incompatible with housing.
Ownership/availability		The site is available for development.
Conclusion	The site is well-related to the existing village and would have no harmful impacts if developed along the section closest to Orchard Way. It should be part-allocated for development.	

Reference: NC5	Name: Land south of High Street	
		
Category	RAG Rating (red = serious issues, amber=issues that could be overcome, green=no issues)	Notes
KEY CRITERIA: Walkability and relationship with existing village.	Green	The site is extremely well-related to the existing village with existing dwellings to both the west and north. It forms a logical extension that would be within close proximity to the village centre.
Vehicular access	Green	Access should be achievable from the High Street.
Landscape	Green	The site would have no appreciable impact on the surrounding landscape.
Flooding	Green	There is no known flood-risk affecting the site.
Heritage	Amber	The site is in the conservation area and as a result any dwellings will be required to be of a sensitive and high-quality design, specifically small terraced units in keeping with the adjoining buildings.
Ecology	Green	There are no known habitats on the site.
Questionnaire	Amber	33% of respondents to the questionnaire disagreed or strongly disagreed with the site as a location for development with 43% agreeing or strongly agreeing.
Neighbouring uses	Amber	There are no neighbouring uses that would be incompatible with residential development although the site is presently used as garden land and garaging, which may require relocation.
Ownership/availability	Amber	The site is understood to be available for development although not actively promoted.
Conclusion	The site would form a logical extension to the village and provides an opportunity for a number of small and/or affordable homes to be delivered. It is close to the village core and only constrained by the conservation area, which will require a sensitive design approach. It should be allocated for development.	

Reference: NC6	Name: The Slipe	
		
Category	RAG Rating (red = serious issues, amber=issues that could be overcome, green=no issues)	Notes
KEY CRITERIA: Walkability and relationship with existing village.		The site has a good relationship with the existing village and is close to the village centre by virtue of the right of way at its north west corner.
Vehicular access		The site can be accessed via an existing gate eastwards onto the High Street. Visibility is potentially constrained by the road geometry although this could be resolved with appropriate design.
Landscape		Development of the site would not result in any wider landscape harm although there would potentially be localised harm through the loss of an open space that forms part of the village character (as demonstrated by the fact the site benefits from its own naming convention).
Flooding		Anecdotally the site can suffer from some surface water flooding due to the clay subsoil. This could be overcome with appropriate drainage design though.
Heritage		Development of the site would sterilise the presence of prominent ridge and furrow features. The site also forms part of the setting of the adjoining conservation area.
Ecology		The site consists of semi-improved grassland that may potentially accommodate habitats. There is a protected tree and also hedgerows that could be negatively impacted by development.
Questionnaire		33% of respondents to the questionnaire disagreed or strongly disagreed with the site as a location for development with 43% agreeing or strongly agreeing.
Ownership/availability		The site is available for development.
Conclusion	The site is well-located for development but has various characteristics that suggest that the area immediately behind existing dwellings should be retained as open space.	

Reference: NC7	Name: Land south of The Slipe	
		
Category	RAG Rating (red = serious issues, amber=issues that could be overcome, green=no issues)	Notes
KEY CRITERIA: Walkability and relationship with existing village.		The site forms part of a wider and larger field that taken as one would not relate well to the existing village. However, the northern part is well-related to existing village to the west, particularly when taken in combination with The Slipe. The existing rights of way along the site's western edge also mean it would be well-connected to the village centre.
Vehicular access		Vehicular access is easily achievable from the eastern end of the site onto the High Street, although the road geometry may require an appropriate junction design.
Landscape		The site becomes more prominent in the surrounding countryside towards the south. The northern part is more closely associated with the existing village, with an established hedge-line to the south-west marking a logical point of separation. However, the hedge-line does not continue into the site itself, which is therefore open and sensitive to landscape harm.
Flooding		There is no known flood risk on the site.
Heritage		The site is not in the conservation area but may be considered part of the setting of the Grade II listed Church Farmhouse to the west.
Ecology		The site is open farmland that is not known to support any habitats or species.
Questionnaire		The site was not specifically referred to in the questionnaire.
Ownership/availability		The site is known to be available for development.
Conclusion	The northern part of the site is well-located to the rest of the village, particularly if considered together with The Slipe. However, the land is open and could result in landscape harm. It should not be allocated for development.	

Reference: NC8	Name: Land east of Folly Lane/behind St Firmans	
		
Category	RAG Rating (red = serious issues, amber=issues that could be overcome, green=no issues)	Notes
KEY CRITERIA: Walkability and relationship with existing village.	Amber	The site would be quite well-located to the existing village and provide links with existing ribbon development on Folly Lane.
Vehicular access	Red	Safe vehicular access would be difficult to achieve on Folly Lane, which is narrow and undulating along the frontage of the site.
Landscape	Red	The site slopes significantly away from the village towards the open countryside, which development would encroach into.
Flooding	Amber	The site is not known to be at risk of flooding although its topography means surface water run-off may be difficult to control appropriately.
Heritage	Amber	The site is located directly to the south of the conservation area and forms part of the setting of it. It is also in close proximity to the Grade I listed St Firmin's Church.
Ecology	Amber	The site is not known to support any species or habitats although benefits from significant vegetation that may serve this purpose.
Questionnaire	Red	51% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the site as a location for development, 22% agreed or strongly agreed.
Ownership/availability	Green	The site is known to be available for development.
Conclusion	The site is relatively well-related to the existing village but due to its topography would have significant landscape concerns. It would also be less preferable in terms of access and drainage. It should not be allocated for development.	

Reference: NC9	Name: Land west of Folly Lane	
		
Category	RAG Rating (red = serious issues, amber=issues that could be overcome, green=no issues)	Notes
KEY CRITERIA: Walkability and relationship with existing village.		The site is well-related to the existing village but has an unorthodox shape and topography that will make an appropriate design difficult to achieve. It is reasonably well located to the village centre.
Vehicular access		The site sits higher than the road and creating vehicular access will require significant engineering works. Folly Lane is also not suitable for additional traffic.
Landscape		The site is well enclosed and development would not have any wider landscape impacts. However, development of the southern portion of the site would lead to coalescence with dwellings further south on Folly Lane and introduce a form of ribbon development in this part of the village.
Flooding		The site does not suffer from any known flood risk.
Heritage		The site adjoins the conservation area and is covered by an archaeological notification area.
Ecology		The site is not known to support any important habitats or species.
Questionnaire		The site was not referred to in the questionnaire.
Ownership/availability		The site is known to be available for development.
Conclusion	The site will not have a positive relationship with the rest of the village and will have harmful landscape impacts. It therefore should not be allocated for development.	