

Appendix 4d: Burghfield Common Site Assessments

Site Assessment

Spatial Area:	Eastern Area	Settlement:	Burghfield Common	Parish:	Sulhamstead
Site ID:	SUL1	Site Address:	Benhams Farm, Hollybush Lane, Burghfield Common		
Use(s) proposed by site promoter	Self-build housing and custom build housing serviced plots	Development Potential:	43 dwellings		

Recommendation:

The site is not recommended for allocation.

Justification:

The site is well related to the existing town of Burghfield Common. Burghfield Common is a Rural Service Centre, and has a range of services and reasonable public transport provision, and is a focus of development in this area. The site itself is in close proximity to a range of services and facilities, with good connections via existing pathways and rights of way to connect to the countryside to the west.

The proposal would bring forward custom and self-build plots which is of benefit. The Landscape Character Assessment noted that the landscape strategy is to positively manage the land to avoid suburbanisation of the fringe of this settlement. High quality design and a sound layout scheme will therefore be important, and will need to factor in the setting of the nearby Grade II listed building Crofters Cottage. The access will need to be upgraded, both on the access road and onto Hollybush Lane.

Overall the site is likely to have a positive effect on sustainability and the SA/SEA does not highlight any significant sustainability effects. Issues which need resolving relate to updating the ecological surveys, undertaking a Heritage Impact Assessment, and undertaking a Minerals Resource Assessment.

The site's location within the Detailed Emergency Planning Zone (DEPZ) of Burghfield Atomic Weapons Establishment, and the impact of development on 'blue light services' and the emergency off site plan would mean that 43 dwellings would not be suitable within this location. An updated emergency off site plan is due in January 2021. Due to the presence within the DEPZ the site is not recommended for allocation at this time, dependent on the conclusions of the off site plan.

Discussion:

Site description:

The site is located to the west of Burghfield Common, adjacent to existing residential development and open space. A band of trees for the northern and eastern boundary that separate the site from the surrounding countryside and existing residential development. Open countryside falls to the west. To the south is Benham's Farm and Barn, and newly built four self-build dwellings. To the south of this is a public bridleway. Crofters Cottage, a Grade II Listed Building, is sited to the south east.

HELAA conclusions:

Potentially developable. Small risk of surface water flood risk on north part of site may affect capacity. Allocation would be dependent on a review of the settlement boundary of Burghfield. Landscape capacity work and ecological surveys needed.

Landscape:

West Berkshire Landscape Character Assessment (2019) notes that the site lies within the Burghfield Woodland and Heathland Mosaic LCA (WH5). It notes that a key detractor in the area is urbanising influence of new buildings and the volume of traffic on local roads. The landscape strategy for this area is therefore to positively manage the land of the fringes of settlements to avoid settlement coalescence and/or suburbanisation of the fringe.

The site is open with hedgerows and trees which run along the northern boundary of the site and which provide a natural boundary. To the southeast there are some detached dwellings along Oakley Drive.

The site is contained within the existing band of trees and this may aid in assimilating development into the locality. Landscaping and buffer zones may be appropriate. Landscape capacity work is required.

Flood risk:

The site lies within Flood Zone 1. There is surface water flood risk on approximately 2% of the site, at the north of the site (small low risk pool). The groundwater water of the site sits between 0.5m and 5m below the surface. There is the possibility of groundwater emerging at the surface locally. This will limit the use of infiltration Sustainable Drainage Systems in this area.

Highways / Transport:

Access would be from Hollybush Lane. The landowner has ownership over the access road. The site has already been the subject of planning applications (16/00658/OUTMAJ for the site only, plus small scale development to the south), and amendments to the site access at Hollybush Lane as well as improvements to the lane are required. There would be no impact on the local highway network.

The nearest bus stop, on Clayhill Road/Omer's Rise, is approximately 620m from the site, providing regular services between Tadley and Reading, including Mortimer.

There is no train station in Burghfield, with residents needing to travel to Mortimer, approximately 4.8km from the site. Services are between Basingstoke and Reading.

Heritage:

Crofters Cottage, located to the south-east of the site is Grade II Listed. A Heritage Impact Assessment will be required to understand the setting and ascertain the impact of development.

Archaeological fieldwork will be necessary to understand the archaeological potential. This can include a geophysical survey and targeted evaluation trenches.

Education:

The site is within the catchment for Mrs Blands and Garland primary schools. Mrs Blands is approximately 490m from the site. Garland is approximately 1km from the site. The scale of the development would be absorbed into the catchment population.

In terms of secondary provision, the school is within the catchment for The Willink School which is located approximately 550m away. This development could be incorporated into the existing catchment population.

Environmental Health:

Possible risk of Particulate Matter and Nitrogen Dioxide from construction and operational impacts.

Contamination is unlikely. There is a low risk of noise and vibration problems to future occupants.

Ecology:

The site lies within a Biodiversity Opportunity Area, has priority habitats, European protected species, priority species, a SSSI impact zone, and Local Wildlife Sites within 500m of the site. Extended Phase 1 Habitat Surveys required.

Medium risk of adverse nature conservation impact identified by the Thames Valley Environmental Research Centre. Further assessment will be required to determine the necessary mitigation and enhancement measures.

Minerals and Waste:

The majority of the site lies within the existing Mineral Safeguarding Area, and the entire site is within the proposed Mineral Safeguarding Area. Safeguarding policies will apply in order to prevent needless sterilisation of mineral resources and consideration of extraction prior to any development would be encouraged.

The site is approximately 270m from the Preferred Option for mineral extraction at Firlands.

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 is likely to require upgrades to the wastewater network. Thames Water have advised that the Developer and the Local Planning Authority should liaise with Thames Water at the earliest opportunity to agree a housing and infrastructure phasing plan.

Electricity distribution:

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:

The site falls within the Detailed Emergency Planning Zone (DEPZ) of Burghfield Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE). Proposals for residential development are likely to add pressure to 'blue light services' and the emergency off site plan. A revised emergency off site plan is expected in January, and this will consider whether there may be potential for some residential development.

Parish / Town Council:

No comments have been received from Sulhamstead Parish Council and Burghfield Parish Council.

SA/SEA summary:

The Sustainability Appraisal (SA)/Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) indicates that a predominately positive sustainability impact. There are positive effects in delivering affordable and custom and self-build housing; supporting healthy and active lifestyles, enhancing Green Infrastructure, conserves the character of the landscape subject to design and layout; makes efficient use of land; and has the opportunity to embed the principles of climate change into the development. Outstanding issues relate to the impact on heritage assets, ecology, and the minerals safeguarding area and proximity to Firlands, a preferred option for minerals extraction.

Availability:

The site is the ownership of three landowners and is available immediately. A developer has an option on the land.

Achievability:

There are no legal constraints.

Relationship to / in combination effects of other sites:

Other promoted sites in Sulhamstead or Burghfield Common near to the site have not progressed, having been identified as 'not deliverable' in the HELAA. There are therefore no 'in combination' effects.