



Weymouth Neighbourhood Plan – Site Assessment Process

Background

Weymouth Neighbourhood Plan (WNP) group was set up by Weymouth Town Council (WTC), the qualifying body, to develop the Neighbourhood Plan. A Steering Group (SG) has been formed comprising residents and councillors and subsidiary groups have been established to progress themes within the WNP. Technical Support has been provided through support from Dorset Council, consultancy from ECA and Paul Weston to WTC, and Locality Technical Support (who have contracted AECOM).

Site Assessment is being undertaken because it is recognised that there is a shortfall of Affordable Homes³ and good employment opportunities in Weymouth. The aim is to identify and enable more provision of Affordable Homes and improved employment opportunities in Weymouth, through supporting policies and potentially Site Allocations.

The process for assessment is in accordance with the process set out in the NPPF and the guidance provided by Locality for Neighbourhood Plan Groups.

A call for sites was issued in Dec 2020. All the submissions plus the SHLAA sites within the neighbourhood area were independently assessed by AECOM and reported in Ref 1.

This has been assessed by the Homes Theme Group and Jobs Theme Group and a shortlist of sites for further consideration has been produced. This has been approved by the Steering Group and endorsed by WTC Planning & Licensing Committee Meeting.

The Homes Theme Group, comprises SG members, a representative from Dorset Council, Community Land Trust, Homeless Charities, Housing Associations and Housing Developers, councillors and residents.

The Jobs Theme Group, comprises SG members, a representative from Dorset Council, Weymouth College, Chamber of Commerce, Weymouth BID and Weymouth Area Development Trust.

This paper reports the position in January 2023 where a shortlist of sites has been produced and the reports are being shared with the public as part of a public engagement on land use during the Site Selection phase.

The report will be updated subsequently to reflect the engagement process with the public and landowners.

Process

The site assessment process follows that outlined in the Locality Guidance¹. The principal steps are identified in Figure 1.

Site Identification

Candidate Sites were identified from walkabouts, local knowledge, the SHLAA and a Call for Sites which was initiated in Dec 2021. 16 Sites were identified through the Call for Sites process. 3 arose as a result of walkabouts involving the Steering Group and the public. Landowners were notified that their sites were being included in the NP Site Assessment Process.

Site Assessment

The Site Assessment was undertaken by AECOM across a total of 61 sites. Sites were assessed as Suitable for Development for Residential use and for employment/mixed use and reported in the Site Options and Assessment Report². Sites are assessed as Suitable for Development, Potentially Suitable for Development or Unsuitable for Development. The details of each site, the process and reasoning are explained in the report. The Site Assessment and Options report was published in January 2023.

Site Assessment process

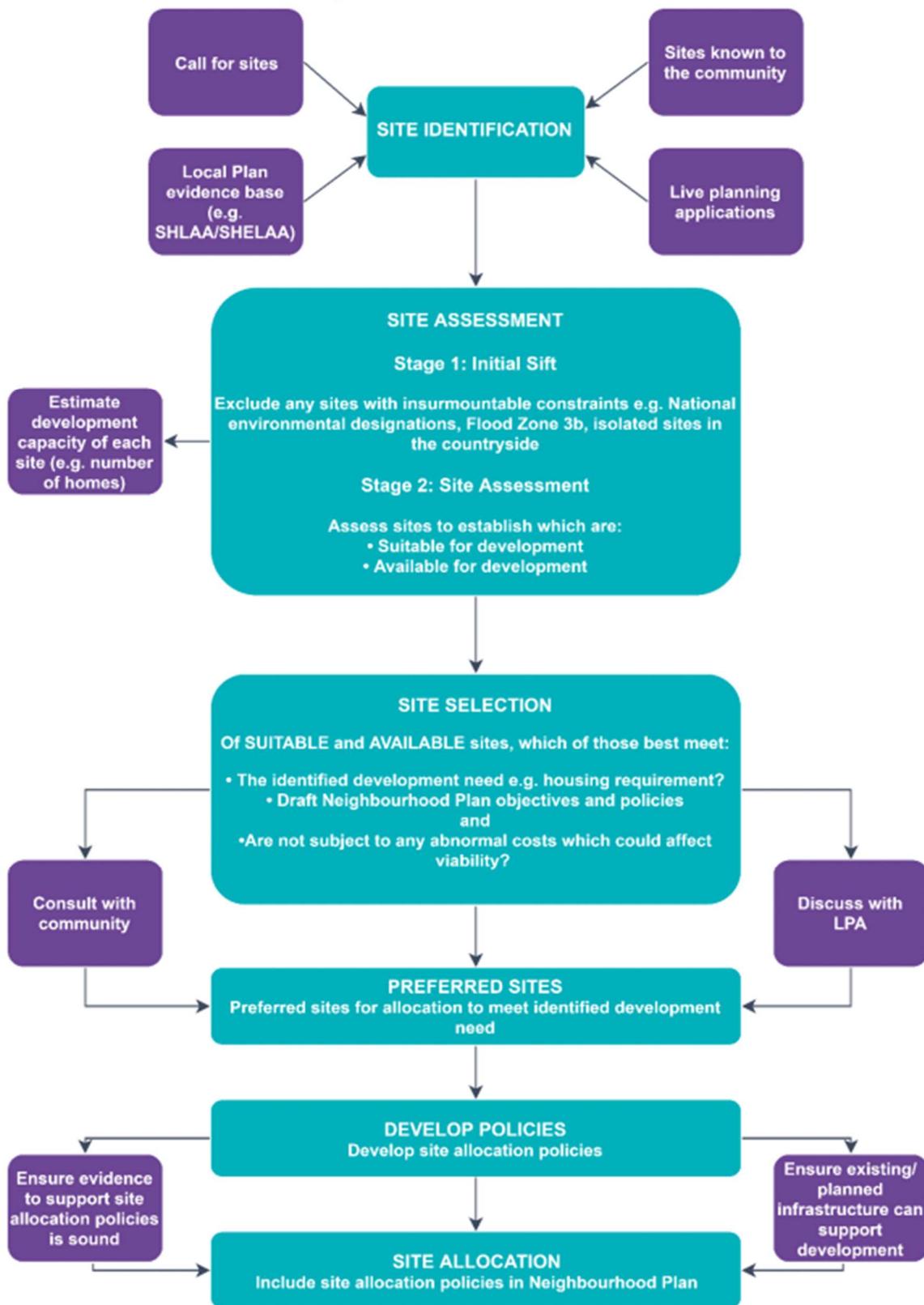


Figure 1: Site Assessment Process¹

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The Site Assessment and Options report summary follows:

Residential development - 3 sites suitable, 30 sites are potentially suitable, subject to the mitigation of identified constraints or to confirmation of availability, 28 sites are unsuitable.

Employment/Mixed-use development - 4 sites suitable, 30 sites are potentially suitable. The remaining 27 sites are considered unsuitable for employment development.

It had been assumed that sites, within the SHLAA, were available. Dorset Council advised that ahead of publishing the report confirmation of availability should be sought. This concluded in December 2022. No owners withdrew sites at this stage.

AECOM determined that Strategic Sites already within the West Dorset Weymouth & Portland Local Plan of 2015 are already allocated in that Plan and were therefore outside the scope of the Weymouth NP Site Selection process.

WTC informed AECOM of the potential for the Mount Pleasant Old Tip site to form a Transport Hub with some employment use. Also, the Lodmoor Tip was divided into 3 areas for analysis; north, mid and south. These two changes formed part of the update to the report² produced in January 2023.

Site Selection

Homes Shortlisting criteria were agreed by the Homes Theme group on 7th July 2022 and ratified by the Steering Group. This was used by the Homes Theme Group to select sites for further consideration. The criteria were determined from the needs identified in the published surveys and analysis of evidence.

- The housing needs analysis shows a clear need for significant numbers (1,775 min to 2,649) of Affordable Homes in Weymouth.
- The amount of land for B2 employment has diminished as sites have been developed with retail and housing. Weymouth has a clear need for more and better employment opportunities.
- Better to allocate a small number of larger sites than many small sites to avoid infilling valuable open spaces.

The following rationale and criteria were set:

Criteria 1: Do not consider sites assessed as Unsuitable in the Site Assessment and Options Report.

The assessment by AECOM has determined the availability, suitability. As a result, a number of sites have been assessed as Unsuitable – noting that some sites have been assessed as unsuitable for allocation by the Weymouth Neighbourhood Plan because they are already allocated in the Local Plan.

Criteria 2: Consider Sites inside the development boundary with potential for more than 20 homes.

Sites inside the development boundary for more than 10 homes should under the Local Plan Policy HOUS2 provide 35% Affordable Homes.

Criteria 3: Consider Sites Outside the Development Boundary with potential for more than 10 homes.

Sites which are outside the development boundary can be brought forward as Exception Sites where there is a clear need for Affordable Homes and can be up to 100% Affordable Homes.

Criteria 4: Consider Sites Outside the Development Boundary with potential for less than 10 homes where they are supporting very local housing needs

Smaller sites outside the development boundary should be considered where they provide homes otherwise not available to the local community. .

Criteria 5: Consider Sites near to urban areas which are suitable for B2 employment.

To reduce commuting and carbon output employment sites should be near to urban areas.

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Criteria 6: In-use sites will not be considered unless there is, or can be, adequate or alternative provision nearby.

A number of sites are already in use either as Car Parks, Community Spaces, Leisure/Recreation areas.

Criteria 7: Sites providing employment will not be considered for residential unless Affordable Housing Provision of 35% is enabled and some employment use is retained.

A number of sites are already in use as Offices or Retail and the owner wishes to change the use to Residential.

The resulting shortlist of sites under further consideration were approved by the Steering Group on 18th July 2022 and were shared with the Planning & Licensing Committee on 16th August 2022 and were endorsed by Full Council on 7th September 2022.

Following on from this, the same criteria were discussed at a Jobs Theme Group meeting. A sub-group of the Jobs Theme Group met in September 29th 2022 and produced a shortlisting recommendation for the Jobs Theme group.

This combined shortlisting resulted in the following sites not being taken forward for further consideration

- LA/WEYM/038 Weymouth Bowling Club – in community use.
- LA/WEYM/043 Ferrybridge Inn – planning permission already granted.
- LA/WEYM/046 Land at Elm Close – in community use.
- LA/WEYM/049 Land at rear of Marsh Road – too small.
- LA/WEYM/051 Land at Chickerell Road – too small/in community use.
- LA/WEYM/052 Land at Westhaven - too small/in community use.

The following suitable and potentially suitable sites, outside the defined development boundary, have been identified for further consideration, as Exception Sites as helping to meet the affordable housing need:

- | | |
|-------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| WNP02 | Budmouth Avenue, Preston (Wyke Oliver Farm (South)) |
| WNP06b | Lodmoor Old Tip Mid |
| WNP06c | Lodmoor Old Tip South |
| WNP12 | Redlands Farm |
| WNP14 | Wyke Oliver Farm – north |
| LA/WEYM/050 | Land South of Wessex Roundabout |

The following suitable and potentially suitable sites, inside the defined development boundary, have been identified for further consideration and Allocation within the Neighbourhood Plan as helping to meet the affordable housing need:

- | | |
|-------------|-----------------------------------------|
| WNP01 | Beverley Road. Littlemoor |
| WNP05 | Jubilee Sidings Extension |
| LA/WEYM/006 | Westhaven Hospital |
| LA/WEYM/007 | Land fronting Littlemoor Rd |
| LA/WEYM/027 | Land adjoining Southill shopping centre |
| LA/WEYM/031 | Harbourside Car Park, Commercial Road |
| LA/WEYM/033 | Lakeside Superbowl, St Nicholas Street |
| LA/WEYM/034 | Land at Commercial Road (car park) |
| LA/WEYM/035 | Land at Governors Lane (car park) |
| LA/WEYM/037 | The Loop Car Park, Commercial Road |
| LA/WEYM/040 | Land at Park Street (Car Park) |
| LA/WEYM/041 | Council Offices, North Quay |
| LA/WEYM/047 | Tides Centre |

Please note that releasing Car Parks for development could only be done if there were demonstrably sufficient provision. Such as greater use of the Park & Ride for the peak summer period and/or higher density parking in the town centre.



The following suitable and potentially suitable sites have been identified for further consideration as helping to meet the employment site need, the more significant sites are highlighted in bold:

WNP05	Jubilee Sidings Extension
WNP06a	Lodmoor Old Tip North
WNP06c	Lodmoor Old Tip South
WNP07	Mount Pleasant Old Tip
LA/WEYM/006	Westhaven Hospital
LA/WEYM/007	Land fronting Littlemoor Rd
LA/WEYM/025	Dorset Vehicle Rentals, Dorchester Road
LA/WEYM/031	Harbourside Car Park, Commercial Road
LA/WEYM/034	Land at Commercial Road (car park)
LA/WEYM/035	Land at Governors Lane (car park)
LA/WEYM/037	The Loop Car Park, Commercial Road
LA/WEYM/042	Former Oyster Farm, Ferrymans Way
LA/WEYM/047	Tides Centre

The following suitable and potentially suitable sites have been identified for further consideration for redevelopment (Change of Use) to meet the affordable housing need whilst retaining some employment use.:

WNP08	New Bond Street Shopping Centre, Town Centre
WNP13	Westwey House (Westwey Road (South))
LA/WEYM/030	Bus Depot, King Street
LA/WEYM/036	Post Office Sorting Office

Landowners, or their agents, have been notified that their site is under consideration and will be made public in the 3rd public engagement in January. This includes Dorset Council, Assets Team, who have significant land/property holdings in Weymouth including the public car parks.

Further discussions are also to take place with landowners/agents on whether the usage, capacity and buildability of the sites.

Preferred Sites for Allocation

Following the consultation with the public, Local Authority and Landowners/Agents, a list of preferred sites will be approved by the Steering Group and be subject to endorsement by Weymouth Town Council. These sites will then be subject to further discussions with their owners/agents and be assessed by environmental consultants (Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitat Regulation Assessment). Certain sites may be removed from, or added to, the Preferred List. The changes will be approved by the Steering Group and be subject to endorsement by Weymouth Town Council. The remainder will be included in the Pre-Submission Neighbourhood Plan which will be subject to formal public consultation.

Develop Policies

Policies are already being drafted for Allocating sites for specific use purposes.

The sites which are outside the Defined Development Boundary (Settlement Boundary) will be covered by an Exception Site Policy and will be listed as potential suitable Affordable Homes development.

Site Allocation

Following the pre-submission public consultation certain sites may be removed from or added to the Preferred List. This will be approved by the Steering Group and be subject to endorsement by Weymouth Town Council and will be included in the Submitted Neighbourhood Plan to the Local Authority. This will then be formally consulted on by residents and statutory consultees. The results of this consultation will then be independently Examined and the recommendations taken forward into the Final Neighbourhood Plan. This will then be subject to approval by a Referendum of Weymouth residents.

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References

1. How to assess and allocate sites for development, Locality Neighbourhood Planning, 2020.
2. Site Options and Assessment Report, AECOM, January 2023.
3. Housing Needs Analysis, AECOM, April 2021.