

Mineral and Waste Site Assessment Methodology

January 2024



Rutland
County Council

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Rutland County Council is preparing a new Local Plan. This will update the following “Development Plan Documents” (DPDs) and replace them with a single local plan:
 - Minerals Core Strategy and Development Control Policies DPD (October 2010)
 - Core Strategy DPD (July 2011)
 - Site Allocations and Policies DPD (October 2014)
- 1.2 The Local Plan will cover the plan period to 2041 and allocate sites for any new housing, employment or other development, including minerals and waste-related development that may be required to meet requirements over the plan period.
- 1.3 This paper sets out the methodology used to assess sites for mineral and waste-related development in the new Local plan. The assessment will include economic, social and environmental factors responding to the key principles of sustainable development.
- 1.4 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the requirements for producing a Local Plan and states that a fundamental part of the Local Plan is to allocate sites to promote development and flexible use of land, bring forward new land where necessary and provide detail on development where appropriate. In order to do this the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) provides clarity in the production and deliverability of local plans. Planning authorities are required to provide sufficient detail about nature, location, and scale of development when proposing allocations.
- 1.5 The NPPF identifies that local plans should set out the opportunities for development and clear policies of what will or will not be permitted and where, whilst taking into account economic, social and environmental factors. Local Plans should also identify areas to limit change, where development is inappropriate and enhance natural, built and historic environments.
- 1.6 This document sets out the methodology which has been used for assessing the potential allocation of sites for mineral and waste-related development in the Rutland Local Plan. Appendices A and B to this document set out the details of the site assessment of all sites submitted through the Call for Sites for mineral and waste-related development. The Call for Sites was undertaken between 2021-2022.

2. Site assessment process

- 2.1 The aim of the site assessment process is to help determine which sites are the most suitable for allocating for development in the Local Plan. The process has been undertaken in the following stages.
- 2.2 Stage 1 is an initial assessment of sites to screen out those with a “show - stopper” constraint or which are not located in accordance with the emerging spatial strategy. Sites may be contrary to current development plan policy and might only be considered appropriate for permission if they are allocated in the new Local Plan.
- 2.3 Stage 2 comprises a detailed assessment of remaining sites not screened out by stage 1 above.

Stage 1

- 2.4 The Local Plan seeks to locate allocations in the most sustainable locations. Minerals can however only be worked where the mineral reserve is found and some sites for waste uses can have specific locational requirements. An initial assessment will be undertaken of how a proposed site meets the overall spatial strategies for mineral and waste-related development.
- 2.5 For mineral sites, the spatial strategy focuses on extraction of mineral resources within two Areas of Search (AoS) - the Limestone for aggregates and building stone AoS; and the Cement primary and secondary materials AoS. The strategy also allows for small-scale extraction of non-aggregate minerals for building/roofing stone and clay for historic conservation outcomes within rural areas and settlements.
- 2.6 The spatial strategy for waste is to meet the indicative waste management capacity requirements with facilities located in Oakham and Uppingham and/or the Larger Villages. Within these areas, sites should be located within industrial areas or integrated with new residential and commercial development. The co-location of facilities for advanced treatment with industrial operations where the output(s) are used as an alternative fuel or energy generation will also be supported. Development on the edge of Stamford, large redevelopments and other similar proposals would be considered where consistent with their role and relevant Local Plan policies.
- 2.7 In other areas, including the countryside, the development of preliminary treatment facilities should be linked to the management of agricultural wastes, or where a rural location is more appropriate due to the nature of operations or the relationship with rural activities. Further, the deposit of

inert waste to land should be directed towards permitted mineral extraction sites to facilitate restoration (as inert recovery).

- 2.8 Sites already with the benefit of planning permission were screened out from further assessment at Stage 1. These sites are expected to be developed during the course of the plan period and do not therefore need to be allocated in the new Local Plan.
- 2.9 Sites which are subject to nationally designated constraints have also been screened out at this stage. This includes sites:
- within a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Special Protection Area (SPA), or Ramsar site,
 - within Scheduled Monument designations, and
 - where more than 50% of the site is within flood risk zone 3¹

Screening sites out through Stage 1 means that only the most potentially suitable sites are carried through to the full assessment at Stage 2.

Stage 2 Detailed Site Assessment

- 2.10 Stage 2 of the process provides a much more detailed assessment of sites, in terms of on and off-site constraints, designations, the impact of development on a range of factors and, where appropriate, specialist consultation responses have been requested, town and parish council comments where available, and a Planning Officer assessment. The environmental, social and economic information already identified through the GIS assessment undertaken as part of the Sustainability Appraisal Technical Annex has been brought forward into the assessment. In addition, further information about the accessibility of each of the sites to services and facilities and public transport connections has been gathered.
- 2.11 The detailed assessment includes a Red, Amber and Green (RAG) rating for each factor in line with the methodology set out in section 3 below. The rating is not designed to select sites for allocation on a quantitative assessment only. It is to provide a guide on how sites perform against one another. Applying a RAG rating system in parallel to the overall commentary and planning judgement allows each site to be assessed as a potential allocation. It may be that a site could rate comparatively well against other sites, but there is in fact one criteria that causes significant concerns meaning that the site is not suitable for allocation. Therefore, alongside each site assessment a commentary is provided about the site,

¹ This constraint does not apply to sites for sand and gravel extraction. National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) sets out flood risk vulnerability classifications and sand and gravel working are classified as water-compatible development. These deposits, by their nature, are often located in flood risk areas.

concluding whether the site is considered suitable for allocation or not.

- 2.12 Not all sites which are identified as potentially being appropriate for allocation will be allocated in the new Local Plan. Only sufficient sites to meet the need will be allocated.

3. Site Assessment Methodology

Previously Developed Land

- 3.1 Encouraging the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed (also known as brownfield land) provided that it is not of high quality for biodiversity or environmental value is a key principle identified within the NPPF. Therefore, sites that are previously developed are identified as being preferable for development (unless they have been identified through the Phase 1 habitat study as being of high biodiversity value see criteria on biodiversity value below) and have a green RAG rating, whilst a mixed-use site where it is brownfield only in part attract an amber RAG rating and purely greenfield sites have a red RAG rating. This reflects the need to look to brownfield sites first for development ahead of greenfield sites.²

Assessment Factor	RAG Criteria	
Is the site an efficient use of land?		Brownfield
		Partially Brownfield
		Greenfield

Topography

- 3.2 Topography is a constraint in parts of Rutland. The most viable sites are likely to be the flatter sites, therefore the following scores apply. It should be noted that any site identified as having a red RAG rating through the SHLAA assessment was screened out at Stage 2 as it was considered that any sites identified with a red RAG rating could not be mitigated.³

Assessment Factor	RAG Criteria	
Are there any topographical constraints?		Relatively flat
		Gentle slope/ undulations
		Steep slope/ undulations

Agricultural Land

- 3.3 The quality of agricultural land is a key consideration in Rutland due to the nature of the County and the amount of farmland currently in use. The NPPF requires the protection of the best and most versatile (BMV)

² This assessment factor does not apply to mineral sites which can only be worked where the reserve is found.

³ This assessment factor does not apply to mineral sites which can only be worked where the reserve is found or for waste management sites where inert waste (inert recovery) is used to infill extraction voids as part of quarry restoration.

agricultural land, which is defined as Grade 1, 2 and 3a land when utilising the Agricultural Land Classification system. Unfortunately, the majority of Rutland has not been reassessed to subdivide Grade 3 land into either 3a and 3b, therefore the scoring does not distinguish between the two and all Grade 3 is treated as amber. Large parts of the County are classed as BMV being either grade 2 or 3 (with some smaller areas of Grade 1).

Assessment Factor	RAG Criteria	
Is the land identified as being the best and most versatile farmland?		Within grade 4 or 5 and urban
		Within grade 3
		Within grade 1 or 2

Biodiversity

- 3.4 Sites will be assessed against the presence of international, national and locally designated biodiversity or geological sites and based on consultation responses utilising the interactive Natural England tool on the MAGIC GIS layers which identifies whether a type of development would require further consultation with them or not and evidence contained within the new Phase 1 Habitat Survey (2023). In addition, consultation responses from the team at the Leicestershire & Rutland Environmental Records Centre (LERC) will enable the RAG rating to be established regarding the locally designated sites.

Assessment Factor	RAG Criteria	
Will the development of the site have an impact on a SSSI, SAC, SPA or Ramsar site?		Not within a Natural England Impact Zone, or within a Natural England Impact Zone but is unlikely to have an adverse impact on any designated site, meaning that Natural England consultation not required.
		Site is within a Natural England Impact Zone – Impact Zone indicates that Natural England required to be consulted on likely risks
		Site is a designated SSSI/SAC/SPA or Ramsar Site

Assessment Factor	RAG Criteria	
Will the development of the site have an impact on a locally designated site?		Site not designated as Local Wildlife Site, protected species and BAP priority habitats, and will not impact on a designated site
		Site adjoins or may impact on a Local Wildlife Site, protected species and BAP priority habitats, but which can be accommodated through mitigation and avoidance of harm and/or further surveys required. only partial development of the site may be acceptable
		Site is a designated Local Wildlife Site, protected species and Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) priority habitats are likely. Mitigation is unacceptable; only partial development of the site may be acceptable.

Trees protected by Preservation Orders

- 3.5 Trees play an important role in the environment in Rutland and where these trees are protected by Tree Preservation Orders (TPO) it is important that this is assessed as a constraint to a site coming forward. The following scoring is therefore applied based on the TPO GIS records held by the Local Authority. Where GIS reveals development may impact on a protected tree the Council's Tree Officer will be consulted.

Assessment Factor	RAG Criteria	
Will the development of the site have an impact on protected trees?		No Tree Preservation Orders on or adjacent to the site.
		Tree Preservation Orders – but impact can be mitigated.
		Significant adverse impact on Tree Preservation Orders (e.g., blanket).

Relationship to settlement

- 3.6 In order to establish which sites are more logical in terms of an extension to an existing settlement it is important to identify which are better associated with the existing built form by looking at the planned limits of development boundaries which are identified around settlements and how the site relates to existing built form. It should be noted that sites not connected to a planned limit of development were screened out as part of the SHLAA assessment process and were not carried through to this stage of the assessment. Further commentary will be made on this particular factor through the Planning Officer assessment of the site as whilst a site maybe connected to an existing settlement it may still not form a logical extension to a settlement.⁴

Assessment Factor	RAG Criteria	
Is the site a logical extension to the settlement?		Within settlement or edged on 3 sides
		Edged on 1-2 sides
		No relationship

Landscape and townscape character

- 3.7 An assessment of the impact of minerals and waste-related development on the landscape and townscape character of the area; including assessment of impact in relation to scale and character of existing community and impact on historic landscape character.

Assessment Factor	RAG Criteria	
Impact on landscape and townscape character		Low impact where development is generally acceptable.
		Moderate impact where the implementation of avoidance and/or mitigation measures is likely to reduce impacts to an acceptable level.
		High impact where new development could not be accommodated without adversely effecting character. The implementation of avoidance and/or mitigation measures is unlikely to

⁴ See footnote 3.

		reduce impacts to an acceptable level.
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Heritage Assets

- 3.8 There is a significant historic environment in parts of Rutland where a range of heritage assets including conservation areas, listed buildings, scheduled monuments, historic parks and gardens and archaeological sites are present. A GIS constraint check is carried out on each site to establish where the nearest heritage assets are located. Where they are found within 50m of the site (or where they are a known constraint from previous information gathered) consultation with the Conservation Officer takes place to inform the assessment and scoring of the site. Archaeological assessment is carried out through consultation with the Leicestershire County Council Principal Archaeologist. Leicestershire Historic Environment Records Centre (LHERC).

Assessment Factor	RAG Criteria	
Impact on Heritage Assets?		No impact on heritage asset or setting.
		Some impact which could be mitigated (e.g., affect a heritage asset and/or the setting of a heritage asset).
		Significant adverse impact cannot be mitigated / or would result in the loss of a designated heritage asset .

Assessment Factor	RAG Criteria Scoring	
Impact on Archaeological Sites?		No impact on archaeological site.
		Some impact which could be mitigated (e.g., affect an archaeological site and/or the setting).
		Significant adverse impact on an archaeological site cannot be mitigated.

Green and Blue Infrastructure

- 3.9 The Council now has a suite of evidence reports covering Green and Blue infrastructure. This includes the following:

- 3.10 The Rutland Green and Blue Infrastructure (GBI) Strategy (2023) assesses the network of green spaces and water environments that sustains the ecosystems needed for a good quality of life in the County. Using mapping and spatial analysis it identifies Rutland’s highest priorities for GBI as restoring biodiversity and improving networks, protecting and enhancing tree cover; enhancing water and soil quality, incorporating GBI into new development and enabling active lifestyles and access to GBI and then provides a strategy for addressing each objective.
- 3.11 An Open Space Assessment which comprises an assessment of the quantity, accessibility, quality and value of open spaces within Rutland County and for each of the 15 sub-areas and provides standards for open space to inform on and off-site requirements for development. This identifies public open spaces and recreation facilities which are important assets in the local and wider area.
- 3.12 A Playing Pitch Strategy is also being prepared which assesses the quality and quantity and future need for playing pitches and outdoor sports facilities.
- 3.13 Sites will be scored to establish whether development would impact on these green and blue infrastructure assets.

Assessment Factor	RAG Criteria	
Impact on Green Infrastructure?		Not a public open space/recreation facility - so no loss/impact.
		Site is public open space/recreation facility but any loss can be mitigated against.
		Site is public open space /recreation facility which will be lost.

Important Open Space

- 3.14 Important Open Spaces are a constraint which is identified on the Council’s GIS system to make sure they are recorded and taken into consideration when assessing sites. Sites are assessed against this GIS layer to establish whether the development of a site would have an impact on an Important Open Space, or the open aspect provided by that space.

Assessment Factor	RAG Criteria	
		Not designated.

Impact on Important Open Space?		Designated site but any loss can be mitigated against.
		Loss or adverse impact on the openness of the important space.

Water Conservation and Management: Flood Risk & Surface Water

- 3.15 Flood risk is a significant consideration in assessing sites and therefore the flood risk zone is identified for each site and consultation is carried out with the Local Lead Flood Authority in order to establish which sites are constrained by risk of flooding.⁵
- 3.16 Groundwater Source Protection Zones are designated zones around public water supply abstractions and other sensitive receptors that signal there are particular risks to the groundwater source they protect. The zones are based on an estimation of the time it would take for a pollutant which enters the saturated zone of an aquifer to reach the source abstraction or discharge point. The element is therefore taken into account in assessing the sites in order to look at the wider water management impact.
- 3.17 Surface water flooding is also a key consideration and establishing whether a site is within an area where there is a medium or high risk of surface water flooding enables an assessment of the impact of developing a site. There are surface water drainage schemes that can be developed to mitigate in some circumstances and therefore amber includes where mitigation may address the constraint.

Assessment Factor	RAG Criteria	
Is the site at risk of fluvial flooding?		No flood risk or minimal downstream flood risk.
		Moderate flood risk or possible/potential risk to downstream locations.
		Significant flood risk and/or potential to exacerbate flood risk downstream – known issues.

Assessment Factor	RAG Criteria	
Groundwater Source protection zone?		Not within an SPZ
		Within a zone 2 or 3 SPZ
		Within a zone 1 SPZ

⁵ See footnote 1.

Assessment Factor	RAG Criteria	
Is the site at risk of surface water flooding?		No areas of surface water flood risk are present in the site.
		Areas of surface water flood risk is present in the site; mitigation techniques may be required.
		Areas of high surface water flood risk is present in the site. Development should be avoided.

Environmental Quality, Human Health and Contamination

3.18 In order to establish whether the development of a site would result in an impact on those living on the site or nearby it is important to consider noise and vibration, air quality (including dust and pollution), odours, bio aerosols, vermin and birds, litter, bird strike hazard zones, residual environmental nuisance, contaminated land and the potential for cumulative impacts.⁶ The environmental health and contamination assessment is carried out through consultation with the Councils Environmental Health team who are focussed on improving the environment and safeguarding the health, safety and wellbeing of the local community.

Assessment Factor	Scoring	
Environmental quality, contaminated land and human health?		No detrimental effect and/ or contamination unlikely.
		No significant detrimental effect that cannot be mitigated against and/ or contamination possible.
		Significant detrimental effect that cannot be mitigated against and/ or contamination likely – known issues.

Access, highway safety, wider road network and rights of way

3.19 The provision of waste management and mineral extraction sites will inevitably have an impact on the local highway and sometimes on the wider surrounding road network. The sites have been assessed by the Local Highway Authority to determine the impact of the access of the site and the impact on the wider road network. This assessment is made without technical details of the exact point of access being identified for

⁶ Note impacts concerning odours, bio-aerosols, litter, vermin, birds and land contamination only apply to the assessment of waste-related development.

each site and provides an initial assessment of the possible impact.

- 3.20 In addition, a consideration of the impact on existing public rights of way is also identified to establish whether there are constraints to a sites development with the need to re-route or design in a public right of way into a scheme.

Assessment Factor	RAG Criteria	
Site access?		No access concerns.
		Potential access concerns which are resolvable.
		No access achievable – sever impact on highway.

Assessment Factor	RAG Criteria	
Impact on wider road network?		No significant impact on the wider road network.
		Impact on the wider road network requiring mitigation.
		Significant impact on the wider road network with no possible mitigation.

Assessment Factor	RAG Criteria	
Impact on right of way?		No public rights of way affected.
		Permissive footpaths/Public rights of way affected – requiring mitigation.
		Public rights of way affected no mitigation possible.

Minerals Safeguarding

- 3.21 The purposes of Mineral Safeguarding Areas (MSAs) are to protect known locations of specific minerals resources of local and national importance, ensuring they are not needlessly sterilised by non-mineral development. Designation of MSAs do not carry a presumption that any resources will be worked, nor do they preclude other forms of development taking place. Sites are assessed to identify whether they are within a safeguarded area or not as this will need to be taken into account when developing a scheme. There is no red RAG rating category for this element of the assessment as whilst it will form a consideration, it does not rule a site out

from other forms of development.

Assessment Factor	RAG Criteria	
Does the site intersect with a Minerals Safeguarding Area (MSA)?		Intersects with a MSA (and is minerals-related development)/ does not intersect with a MSA (all other development).
		Intersects with a MSA.

On site constraints

- 3.22 On site constraints may affect the delivery of site, for example, electricity pylons and pipelines. All those promoting a site are asked to identify if there are such constraints on the site so this source of information along with Ordnance Survey layers and in some cases site visits will be used to identify these potential constraints to development.

Assessment Factor	RAG Criteria	
On site constraints – are there any present?		No constraint
		On site constraints which will require mitigation. May affect viability.
		Significant constraint may prevent development.

- 3.23 The range of environmental, social and economic factors used to assess each site have been devised to link with the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) objectives. The site assessments will be recorded in a tabular format which will show the factors assessed and a RAG (red/amber/green) for each of the factors identified for each site. This will enable a comparison against each of the sites. The purpose of the colour coding or “traffic light system” is to allow visual comparison between the sites in terms of the factors assessed and to highlight any significant constraints.

- 3.24 The sites will be arranged in parish order so that sites within the same settlements can be assessed more easily.

Parish Council Responses

- 3.19 In March 2023 Parish Councils were asked to provide local information about sites to support the site assessment process. Where a response was made by parish councils this has been included in the assessment proforma.

4. Assessment of Sites

- 4.1 A proforma has been prepared for each site, setting out the details of the site location, size and proposed use along with the RAG ratings for each of the above criterion and, where appropriate, a commentary on how the site has been scored.
- 4.2 The following assessments have been undertaken using GIS mapping and show where a site is wholly within a designation, or a significant part of the site intercepts it. No commentary is provided for these, although they may be referenced in the Planning Officer comments box at the end of each proforma.
- Brownfield/Greenfield land
 - SSSI Impact Risk Zone
 - Local Wildlife Site
 - BAP priority Habitat
 - Landscape Sensitivity
 - Conservation Area
 - Registered Park and Garden
 - Scheduled monument
 - Listed building
 - Agricultural land quality
 - Fluvial Flood Risk
 - Surface Water Flood Risk
 - Groundwater source protection zone
 - Loss of open space
 - Mineral Safeguarding Area
 - Tree Preservation order
 - Logical extension to settlement
- 4.3 The following criterion are set out with a commentary and RAG rating:
- Initial Highway Officer comments
 - Relationship to Settlement comments
 - Topography
 - Green Infrastructure
 - Important Open Space
 - Rights of Way
 - National Ecology designations
 - Local Ecology designations
 - Tree Preservation Orders
 - Agricultural Land Classification
 - Heritage
 - Archaeology
 - Landscape

- Lead Flood Authority Flood Risk
- Environmental Health & Contamination
- Highways Authority: Access
- Highways Authority: Wider Road Network
- Parish /Town Council comments

4.4 The site proformas are included in Appendix B.

4.5 Once this assessment has been carried out on an individual site basis, the sites have been compared against one another to identify which are the most appropriate to allocate to meet the vision and objectives of the Local Plan.

Conclusions

4.6 An overall site conclusion is set out for each site, based on professional judgement, as to the most suitable sites to be allocated for development in the Local Plan having regards to the factors identified in the site assessments, the need for the particular development and any other factors that may be relevant. See Appendix B.

4.7 The conclusions will set out:

- the sites recommended as being suitable for inclusion as mineral and waste allocations in the Local Plan and the main reasons for selection of each site;
- sites that are not recommended as being suitable for allocating in the Local Plan setting out the main reasons for the exclusion of each site.

4.8 The Mineral and Waste Site Allocations Assessment Methodology will subsequently be updated to take account of the response to consultation of the Local Plan.

5. Sustainability appraisal process

- 5.1 The Sustainability Appraisal (SA) process involves assessing the potential sites in terms of their likely impact on the sustainability objectives that have been identified in a Technical Annex to the SA report. The SA considers all the likely impacts, cumulative impacts and the scope for mitigating any possible negative impacts on the environmental, economic and social factors of sustainable development. Links between the plan making, SA and Site Assessment processes are illustrated in Appendix D.

Appendix A: Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) Site details

Site ID Code	New SHLAA site code	Previous SHLAA reference (if relevant)	Site Name	Parish	Proposed Use	Conclusion	Area (hectares)
26	KET21		Ketton Cement Works Area of Search	Ketton	Mineral extraction Area of Search	Not assessed - as proposed as Area of Search	783
48	STR03	STR/03	Hooby Lane North	Thistleton	Mineral extraction	A potentially suitable site in the longer term.	9.5
52	CLI01	CLI/01	Woolfox Garden Community	Clipsham	Mineral extraction (small part of site prior to development)	Not assessed - mineral reserves to be used for on-site construction purposes only.	492
53	KET23		Northern extension to Ketton Cement (including Ketco Avenue)	Ketton	Mineral extraction / waste	Site is suitable for inert disposal linked to the restoration of mineral extraction operations.	110
66	THI04		Land off New Road, Hooby Lane	Thistleton	Mineral extraction	Site suitable for allocation	47
151	COT07	COT/07	Land at Railway Sidings, Burley Road, Cottesmore	Cottesmore	Mineral / waste and/or employment	Not suitable for allocation therefore full assessment at Stage 2 is not required.	4
3630	LAN16		Westmoor Farm, Cold Overton Road, Langham	Langham	Green waste storage and processing	Not suitable for allocation therefore full	2

						assessment at Stage 2 is not required.	
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Appendix B: Site Assessment proforma – Mineral and Waste sites

Appendix C: Links between plan making process, sustainability appraisal process and site assessment process

