

Amended “Appendix 8. Re-assessment of Newbury Options” in Sustainability Appraisal (SA)

(impact of re-appraisal of scores and re-interpretation of site characteristics)

Introduction.

The Purpose of this document is to discredit the process used in the published Core Strategy for selecting a second strategic site, not to argue for North Newbury to be that site. The case for there not being a second strategic site at all is set out separately, [in our document “If not Sandeiford, then where?”](#).

The West Berks Council planners dropped the weighting of Sustainability Sub-Objectives for Strategic Sites after the initial stage (Summer 2009) of scoring the 11 sites submitted by landowners & developers. This was done without consultation, although the original scoring system had been consulted on and approved by Councillors. The same councillors were only told about the change after the Core Strategy was approved by Full Council in Jan 2010.

The original scoring system is described under “Site Selection Framework” in the SA. There are many more sustainability sub-objectives but most do not affect scoring at Core Strategy stage and the remainder scored both sites the same throughout and the officer interpretation is sound. The table below only includes those sub-objectives where either (a) the scoring was different for the two sites or (b) there is clear reason to question the officer opinion and score for one or both sites.

Approved ‘sub objectives’ original scoring system			Sandeiford (& Racecourse)					North Newbury (& Racecourse)				
No	Description	range	Orig score	Council Revised SA		Re-assessed SA		Orig score	Council Revised SA		Re-assessed SA	
		(H/M/L)		SA	Comment	TV Comment	score		SA	Comment	TV Comment	score
3a	To improve access to education, employment and services	-6 – 6 (H)	-1 (-)	(+)	Despite “capacity issues ... particularly for secondary [schools] as both sites are in its [Park House] catchment”, “opportunity to extend” and “create new” [primary school] is seen as positive. Newbury retail park, Tesco superstore, car showrooms cited as “employment opportunities” nearby.	Employment opportunities said to be “easy walking distance” are all (except schools) across busy A339. Access to town centre and main employment areas all only via highly congested roads and steep hill (for cyclists): no off-road routes for pedestrians.	-2	-3 (-)	(-)	Although site promoter “indicated that enhanced education facilities could be provided”, Council said “hard to see how primary site could be extended”. Proximity of Vodafone acknowledged, also “easy reach of facilities and employment opportunities”. “Significant issues regarding connectivity and permeability of site as divided by A339. This would be an obstacle to creation of an integrated	Significantly closer, by road or foot/cycle-path to all facilities except medium sized supermarket. Especially well located w.r.t main employment areas: all within 2 miles and <u>without</u> (by non-motorised means) using busy roads or gradients. Clearly scope for extending all nearby schools. Winchcombe has further ½- yr entry site capacity. Shaw & Trinity have available land adjacent. Ignores existence of	+3

Approved 'sub objectives' original scoring system			Sandford (& Racecourse)					North Newbury (& Racecourse)				
No	Description	range	Orig score	Council Revised SA		Re-assessed SA		Orig score	Council Revised SA		Re-assessed SA	
		(H/M/L)		SA	Comment	TV Comment	score		SA	Comment	TV Comment	score
										community".	underpass north of Vodafone roundabouts. Head of Housing told Planning Task Group that site naturally divides into phases and that one large site is <u>less</u> favourable to creation of integrated community.	
3b	To improve access to the countryside, parks and open space	-4 – 4 (M)	-4 (0)	(+)	"Development ...could improve access to adjacent countryside. Open space ..could be provided on site. Attractive open landscape to south. Close to Greenham Common and The Chase."	No prospect of access (without car) to <u>any</u> of named "adjacent countryside" without crossing and/or using very busy dangerous A339. Ramblers rate this aspect poor.	+1	-3 (0)	(0)	Development "could improve access to adjacent countryside. Open space .. could be provided on site [but] does not have opportunity for significant area of open space on site. Relatively close to Snelsmore Common and could provide links to adjacent Brickkiln Wood"	Access to named adjacent countryside would not involve crossing <u>any</u> road (Brickkiln Wood) or only a B-road (Snelsmore). Also within 400m of Lambourn Valley Way and well connected to rights of way network to NW & SE. Applicants own Brickkiln Wood, so could make it public access.	+3
4a	To reduce the need to travel, especially by car	-6 – 7 (H)	-6 (0)	(0)	"The northern part of the site is within easy walking and cycling distance of town centre and close to local retail and other facilities"	To reach town centre from <u>every</u> part of site requires going via Monks Lane ridge – 35m above river – and routes are all along roads. To reach anywhere else (except local shops & schools) involves at-grade crossing of busy A339. Hence hard to "encourage alternative means of transport".	0	0	(0)	"North Newbury is likely to have slightly less impact on the strategic [road] network". Highways Agency particularly concerned about easy access to its roads – mitigation essential between N Newbury A339/A34/M4 (J13-J12).	Less impact on A339 south of Newbury – where combination of the two sites will add greatly to traffic flows especially within Newbury itself. A339 north of Newbury would appear to have plenty of capacity – and provides for good separation of modes, thereby encouraging walking, cycling and use of buses. No part of site is >25m above river, most is <15m, not noticeable for cycling.	+3

Approved 'sub objectives' original scoring system			Sandleford (& Racecourse)					North Newbury (& Racecourse)				
No	Description	range	Orig score	Council Revised SA		Re-assessed SA		Orig score	Council Revised SA		Re-assessed SA	
		(H/M/L)		SA	Comment	TV Comment	score		SA	Comment	TV Comment	score
4c	To increase opportunities for walking, cycling and use of public transport and ensure the necessary infrastructure is available.	-6 – 8 (H)	4	0	"There is an existing cycle link alongside Monks Lane. There are already established bus routes..."	See above. Walking and cycling <u>within</u> the site OK but unlikely to be used for access to external facilities, esp. town centre. New road access (x2) onto Monks Lane will have negative impact on cycling E-W here for Wash Common residents and Park House pupils. Walking routes are all along roads: unpleasant. Also further to all town centre facilities (exc. station) than for North Newbury. Public transport <u>use</u> unlikely to rise significantly unless frequency is >10mins and/or price is much lower. Without bus lanes, the congestion will slow the buses.	-2	0	0	Recognised by Council as being closer to town centre than Sandleford (exc. for station).	No recognition by Council of Vodafone buses potentially being available to residents, or of quicker route along A339 for buses, also along Oxford Rd – where existing service could be enhanced. No recognition of significance of <u>whole</u> site being much closer in <u>height</u> than Sandleford (mainly 3x less) and the off-road cycling & walking routes, with underpasses, that already exist to link it to town centre. <u>Very pleasant</u> cycle route. Much lower spend on infrastructure needed to ensure greater use of non-motorised transport – hence that "necessary infrastructure is available". Modal separation already available.	+6
6b	To conserve and enhance character of landscape	-8 – 7 (H)	-2	-	"most of the development is not in conflict..." but "landscape impacts will be paramount in drawing up more	Still <u>part</u> of the development that <u>will</u> be in conflict. Also views <u>into</u> site from Newtown area will be spoiled,	-2	-2	0	"CPRE see this as a more acceptable site than Sandleford on landscape grounds. Other comments have stressed the impact on the gateway to Newbury	Development will be set well down into valley and only visible looking out from Love Lane, Oxford Rd north of Donnington or A339 as it approaches	+1

Approved 'sub objectives' original scoring system			Sandford (& Racecourse)					North Newbury (& Racecourse)				
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		(H/M/L)		SA	Comment	TV Comment	score		SA	Comment	TV Comment	score
					detailed proposals"	as Newbury 'spills over' onto south-facing slope.				from the north and the impact on Donnington village – loss of gap between Newbury & Donnington."	Vodafone. Otherwise no landscape impact for that part of site below Shaw Farm Lane, which is sufficient land for Plan Period. Could be argued as enhancing the setting of Vodafone.	
6c	To protect, conserve and enhance the built, cultural and historic environment	-6 – 3 (H)	-6	0	Development to north of site would not impact on Donnington Priory	Accepted	0	0	-	"Potential impact on Donnington Castle, the setting of Donnington Village and site of Second Newbury Battlefield."	This statement shows no direct knowledge of the site. There is <u>certainly no impact on Donnington Castle or Village</u> . It can be seen from neither. As for Battlefield, the Trust merely express "concern at <u>potential</u> impacts". Vodafone development is not known to have uncovered remains: nobody knows!	0
7c	To maintain and improve soil quality	-4 – 2 (M)	0	-	Grade 3 agricultural	No comment	-2	0	--	Grade 2 & 3a	No comment	-4
10b	To sustainably manage flood risk to people, property and the environment	-6 – 0 (H)	0	0	Flood Zone 1 – no inherent risk	No comment	0	0	-	Flood Zone 1 but potentially a ground water emergence area, evidenced by Vodafone flood in July 2007. Would need "robust mitigation measures".	Major development woul make mitigation measures viable and could reduce the risk of future ground water related flood incidence.	-3
Comparative overall Scores			-15	0			-7	-8	--- --			+9