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1.0 Introduction

Desborough Town Council (DTC) is currently in the process of preparing a Neighbourhood Plan which will cover the whole of the town’s administrative area. For the plan to be capable of adoption by the local authority (Kettering Borough Council) it must be based upon sound and impartial evidence. This evidence must then be assessed using a methodology which is also sound and impartial. The Desborough Neighbourhood Plan must however seek to reconcile the national and local authority priorities for sustainable settlement growth with the legitimate aspirations and concern of the local community within the town.

Kettering Borough Council (KBC) has already undertaken an evaluation of the potential residential development sites located within Desborough as part of the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) process and these sites have been evaluated and categorised in terms of potential deliverability. As DTC is responsible for reconciling the legitimate need to provide housing sites within the town with the need to ensure that the views of the local community are properly represented within the plan making process it has sought to review both the methodology employed by KBC and the site selections which resulted from it.

1.1 Brief

The Project Brief as prepared by DTC and the Neighbourhood Plan Project Steering Group identifies that the sites which the Technical Evaluation Study should review must include the following:

- All sites identified within Desborough shown within the KBC site allocation document (date and status)
- All category 1 to 3 sites in the SHLAA as updated in 2011. The Brief notes that the 2009 SHLAA was used as the main source of housing sites in the Site Specific Proposals LDD Options Paper.
- Any other sites identified as a result of the work of the NP Steering Group (which may include discounted SHLAA which may require undertaking a call for sites by the qualifying body)

This study reviews the sites identified within the KBC site allocation documents and the SHLAA. No additional sites have been identified for assessment by the NP Steering Group.
1.3 Desborough

Desborough is a town with a population around 11,000 located in Northamptonshire between Kettering to the south and Market Harborough to the north. The town grew in the 19th century as a result of the spinning and weaving industries. Growth was accelerated by the arrival of the railways and the town had a passenger railway station until the 1960s. Desborough retains a diverse industrial base and together with farming and retail, Desborough has a better employment profile than many towns of a similar size within the region. The population of Desborough is expanding with planning permissions in place for over 900 new homes. Some of the schemes which will deliver these new properties are currently on site. This planned and actual residential development will lead to a significant increase in the population of the town.

The town has its own fire station with retained fire fighters, a library, a dental practice, Desborough and Rothwell Health Care Group surgery, veterinary practice, public houses and clubs both sporting and social, and four churches. The town has a council with councillors representing it at borough level. Kettering is the borough town (KBC) with Desborough being the borough’s second largest town. It has one primary and one infant/junior school Loatlands Primary School, Havelock Infants and Havelock Junior. Both Havelock schools have been extensively modernised and expanded in recent years and there is development currently underway at Loatland School which will double it in size. Secondary education is provided at Montsaye Community College in Rothwell, 2 miles away.

The River Ise runs between Desborough and neighbouring Rothwell and the Ise Valley is an area of green infrastructure in the borough. There is also an area known as the Plens which along with the nearby Wildlife Trust reserve is being purchased by KBC to be kept as a greenspace. The Wildlife Trust also maintains Tailby Meadow which is situated behind the Hawthorns Leisure Centre on the south eastern outskirts of the town.

The town has very good traffic links, with the A14 a mile and a half to the south, the A6 half a mile to the west and the M1 and M6 motorways within half an hour’s drive. It has a frequent bus service to Kettering and Market Harborough (a busy market town in Leicestershire) with one bus per day on Wednesdays and Saturdays to Northampton. There is also a service which connects the town to Corby. Kettering and Market Harborough (both around 6 miles distant from Desborough have railway stations on the Midland Mainline route into London St. Pancras to the south, and Leicester, Derby and Nottingham to the north.

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2.0 Project Methodology

The assessment methodology employed by this study is based upon the second stage of the KBC assessment process. This reviews all identified sites against a range of predetermined evaluation criteria. All sites have been visited in order to better appreciate physical, environmental, visibility and access issues. In addition Envirocheck utilities information has been used to supplement to technical assessment of a limited number of sites.

2.1 Kettering Methodology

The Site Specific Proposals LDD – Housing Allocation Background Paper (February 2012) sets out the methodology employed by the local authority to identify and evaluate potential housing sites.

All identified sites were assessed against Core Strategy Strategic Principles and Policy along with sustainability objectives and SHLAA evidence.

The assessment took the form of a two stage process. The initial stage of the assessment was used to exclude sites which don’t comply with policy objectives. The second stage of the KBC assessment process reviewed all retained sites against a long list of detailed technical and locational criteria. Sites were scored against the evaluation criteria and those which appeared unviable and/or undeliverable were discounted.

KBC has consulted on the findings of the initial assessment and has reclassified some sites where the original assessment was found to be unsound.
3.0 Policy

Desborough is located within the Kettering Borough Council (KBC) local authority area. KBC is responsible for the policy framework however a cross boundary organisation, the North Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit (NNJPU), has been established to produce shared strategic policies for North Northamptonshire.

3.1 NNJPU

The North Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit (JPU) was formally established in October 2004 by Corby, Kettering, Wellingborough and East Northamptonshire Councils, together with Northamptonshire County Council. The JPU is funded through contributions from the local planning authorities, and co-ordinates the preparation of the North Northamptonshire Local Plan.

The Joint Core Spatial Strategy (JCSS) was adopted in June 2008 and shapes the framework for long term change and development in North Northamptonshire, including housing, jobs, shopping and the environment. It also has policies to guide how change will be managed, such as; where development should be located, guidelines about its design and controls over the impacts of development sites on their surroundings and infrastructure that needs to be provided. The JCSS is currently in the process of being reviewed.

Based on the framework provided by the JCSS, the individual Councils have and are working to prepare more detailed plans for parts of their areas, including site specific proposals, policies to control the form of development and area action plans for the town centres.

3.2 Joint Core Spatial Strategy

The forthcoming consultation on the Pre-Submission North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (JCSS) will take place over a six-week period from 26th January to 9th March 2015.

The JCSS provides policies and proposals on strategic planning issues such as housing, employment and infrastructure requirements for the Boroughs and Districts of Corby, East Northamptonshire, Kettering and Wellingborough. It is prepared by the North Northamptonshire Joint Committee and will form ‘Part 1’ of the Local Plan for each of the four local authorities. This will provide the strategic context for ‘Part 2’ Local Plans and for Neighbourhood Plans. Separate consultation will be carried out on these more detailed site-specific plans in due course.

3.3 NNJPU Strategy 2011-2031 Pre-Submission Stage Background Paper on Strategic Housing and Employment Sites (December 2014)

This document seeks to identify and allocate strategic employment and housing sites and identifies the methodology employed to assess site for possible inclusion within the JCSS. Strategic sites are those which are capable of accommodating at least 500 residential units. The Background Paper defines the housing requirement within Desborough for the 2011 to 2031 period as being 1,590 additional units (now revised down to 1,360). The Background Paper has been informed by the findings of a number of previous studies and sources including the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA).

A single site is identified within Desborough (Site 33) which is located to the west of the settlement. This site covers an area of 65Ha and is assessed by the NNJPU as having the potential to accommodate 700 units. It is concluded that current committed schemes and smaller identified housing sites make this potential allocation unnecessary.
4.0 Overview

The sites evaluated within this assessment are, with a few exceptions, located around the periphery of the developed area of Desborough on land which is currently undeveloped. The undeveloped sites consist of land which is largely agricultural however some sites contain areas of waste and recreational/amenity land. Inevitably the larger capacity sites are located on the edge of the settlement with smaller infill site located within the built up parts of the town. The large edge of centre sites are generally free from existing structures making them ‘softer’ in development terms, whereas the more urban sites contain existing structures which will impact of viability and deliverability.

Although the scale and the relative ease of development suggested by the peripheral sites will be attractive to House Builders, the location of these sites makes them relatively remote from social infrastructure and retail provision. These sites also help to redefine the approaches to the settlement and will contribute to changing its character as well as impacting upon landscape. These possible negative consequences of major development on the edge of Desborough have led to a number of sites being discounted.

Of the limited number of urban sites identified for evaluation several have been discounted as existing non-residential uses remain in place and provide education or employments uses which are important elements of a sustainable community. Site DE/075, which is located in the heart of the town centre in a very visible location, presents viability and deliverability challenge however this must be seen as a regeneration priority.
4.1 Policy

The Kettering Borough Council Adopted Local Plan (1995) set out policies for the local authority area including site specific policies for Desborough. Some of the policies contained within the Local Plan have been saved and have been retained within the Local Development Framework. The Core Spatial Strategy which is being prepared by the NNJPU will replace the Local Plan once adopted.

The Local Plan proposals map for Desborough is shown opposite. Site specific policy D12 and D13 from the plan have been saved. Site D13 is now partially built out and site D12 now has planning permission.
4.2 NNJPU – Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) (2009)

The initial SHLAA for North Northamptonshire was produced in 2009 and provides a technical assessment of potential housing sites throughout the area. The SHLAA forms part of the evidence base for the Local Development Framework (which includes the JCSS). The SHLAA breaks identified sites into three categories. No Category 1 sites were identified within Desborough. (Category 1 sites are those assessed as being more deliverable)

The SHLAA was updated in 2011 with the potential number of Category 2 sites being reduced.

This document was produced by KBC to identify and assess the quantity and location of potential future housing sites within the Borough. The document is informed by the findings of the SHLAA (2011) but also considers sites put forward during the consultation process associated with the Local Plan review. The sites included within the document were all subject to a two stage appraisal process. Sites not capable of accommodating at least 10 dwellings were discounted. The assessment work identified 24 potential sites of which 15 were identified as Category 2 and 1 was identified as Category 3. Other sites were identified as not being suitable for development due to technical constraints.

Key

- Site Not Suitable For Development (Period)
- Parish Boundary
- Identified Urban Extension AAP
- Site With more Significant Constraints
- Site With Potential For Allocation
4.4 Kettering Borough Council – Site Specific LDD – Options Paper (March 2012)

This document provides supplementary information detailing the nature of potential residential development options within Desborough.
4.5 Kettering Borough Council – Site Specific LDD – Option Paper Update (October 2013)

This document provides an assessment of additional potential housing sites submitted subsequent to the publication of the Site Specific Proposals LDD – Option Paper (March 2012). This document also updates the Housing Allocations: Background Paper (February 2012). The sites identified for Desborough within the 2013 Options Paper are similar to those identified within the 2012 Options Paper however updates shown include sites which have subsequently received Planning Permission as well as some together with some additions and omissions.

This document was issued for consultation in October 2013 and the final Site Specific LDD is awaited.

Key

- Parish Boundary
- Site with potential for allocation
- Discounted housing option
- Site with Planning Permission (subject to S106)
- Strategic site Discounted
4.6 Rothwell and Desborough Urban Extension Area Action Plan (AAP)

This AAP was being prepared to provide policies and guidance for Sustainable Urban Extensions (SUEs) for Rothwell and Desborough. Land uses covered by the AAP included employment, recreation as well as housing. The AAP is currently on hold partially as a result of planning applications being submitted for the preferred sites identified within the AAP.
4.7 Topography

Desborough is located on a ridge which rises to the north from the valley of the River Ise. The topography of the town combined with the highways approaches to it result in certain aspects of the town being very exposed and therefore sensitive to new interventions. There are few areas of the town where topography would prove an insurmountable technical/constructional barrier to efficient development.
4.8 Social Infrastructure

The social infrastructure of Desborough is concentrated within the heart of the settlement. Health Care facilities including Doctors Surgery, Dentist, Pharmacy and Optician are all located either in the commercial town centre or within 250m of the town centre. The concentration of facilities contributes to the diversity and sustainability of the town centre however most of the development sites suggested for allocation are located around 1Km from the centre around the periphery.

Havelock Infant and Junior Schools are located just to the south of the town centre and Loatlands Primary School is located approximately 500m to the west of the town centre.

Retail provision is concentrated within the town centre with a Co-op foodstore located to the North end of Station Road. There are a number of smaller convenience shops located within the town centre and also within residential areas.
4.9 Public Transport

Desborough is located on a number bus routes which connect the town to adjacent settlements. Most of the existing residential areas of the town are located within 500m of a bus route.

Desborough railway station was located on the site occupied by the Co-op foodstore and was closed to passenger traffic in 1968.
4.10 Highways And Public Right of Way

Most of the sites considered by this evaluation are located adjacent to existing public highways. Where highways access is seen to be a significant barrier to efficient future development affected sites have been discounted. The three southern sites (DE/073, DE/189 and DE/072) all have constrained access through existing residential areas.

Public footpaths link the town to the adjacent countryside and views from these receptor points must be considered when undertaking future LVA (landscape and visual impact assessment) work associated with affected sites.
4.11 Recreational Open Space

Many of the sites evaluated will impact directly on open space however much of this is not public open space. The Hawthorns site (DE/072) has been used as a formal recreation site and the loss of this would leave the south of the town with limited provision. Various recreation grounds (some of which are protected by Trusts) are located within the developed area of the town. The town also has a Pocket Park and a Millennium Green.
4.12 Ecology & Biodiversity

Any development of DE/072 (and/or the adjacent site DE/189) must consider potential impacts upon the Nature Reserve and provide appropriate mitigation (i.e. location of development, density and landscape treatment). DE/072 and the adjacent site to the west are all located within the Nene Valley Nature Improvement area.
4.13 Landscape

Desborough is located at the junction of a number of Landscape Character Areas.

Rockingham Forest Character Area is located to the north of the railway line. This is characterised by cropping and rough pasture. Northamptonshire Vales Character Area is located to the south and includes much of the town.

Much of the open rolling countryside which surrounds the town is characterised by hedges and trees within field boundaries visible within distant views where topography allows. Development which impacts upon sensitive locations which may detrimentally impact upon landscape character should be resisted unless adequate mitigation can be provided.
4.14 Cultural Heritage & Archaeology

Designated heritage assets are concentrated within the town centre. These include the town centre conservation area and eight listed buildings/structures. Only one of the sites evaluated impacts upon the fabric of a listed structure or impacts upon setting of a heritage asset – site DE/075.

The Northamptonshire HER (historic environment record) records indicate that a number of sites may contain archaeological remains which would influence the approach to possible future development. Site DE/189 has Ironstone workings located beneath it and sites DE/073 and DE/188 contain evidence of ridge and furrow fields.
4.15 Flood Risk

Due to the topography of Desborough only the site located close to the Ise valley are affected by flood risk. Of those sites close to the Ise valley that have not been discounted for possible allocation the three contiguous southern sites (DE/073, DE/189 and DE/072) are the most vulnerable to possible flooding. Future site layouts of any possible development within these site must demonstrate an appropriate response to flood risk.

Key

- Site Boundary
- Parish Boundary
- Flood Risk Zone (1-3 inc.)
4.16 Infrastructure

Information of the distribution of utilities infrastructure has been obtained for a number of sites where DTC considered that re-evaluation was appropriate. Utilities information has been obtained for the three adjacent sites which flank the southern edge of the town (DE/073, DE/189 and DE/072) and also for site DE/064 which is located to the north of the railway line. The information indicates that although there are some services located within the southern sites these may influence design and development rather than prevent it. Site DE/064 is crossed by a number of overhead electricity lines which would have to be relocated by any future development.

Key

- Site Boundary
- Parish Boundary
- Detailed Utilities Information Reviewed
5.0 Site Review

The process of housing site identification and evaluation undertaken in order to inform allocations within the KBC Development Plan, has been ongoing for since 2012. Various options for site allocation within Desborough have been considered and these have been consulted on by KBC. The most recent Housing Allocations - Assessment of Additional Site and Update document (October 2013) has been reviewed by Desborough Town Council and is used as the basis of the assessment contained within this document. No additional sites have been identified as a result of this study.

The following site review takes the Housing Allocations (October 2013) report as the starting point for re-evaluation. The review of individual sites is broken down into two categories; those which have been discounted but may warrant re-consideration and those which have been identified as having potential for future residential development.

5.1 Selected Sites

The sites described below are those which have been identified and evaluated previously by KBC in accordance with their detailed site assessment criteria. These sites are re-assessed below and were appropriate additional information has been used to supplement previous evaluation. Where re-evaluation has led to a site being re-categorised and explanation has been provided.
5.2 DE/063

Site Name: Desborough Site 3

Site Area: 2.8 Hectares

KBC Assessment
Site Specific Proposals LDD, Housing Allocations (Feb 2012)

The access constraints were noted by the assessment and the site was not considered suitable for allocation.

Housing Allocations - Assessment of Additional Sites and Update (Oct 2013)

A reassessment of the site with the support of additional technical information has led to this site being recommended for allocation. It is recognised that the railway bridge would need improvements to allow development to take place. It is recognised that all other technical constraints affecting the site can be overcome.

DTC Comments on Housing Allocations (Nov 2013)

DTC agree to this allocation.

Summary Assessment

The site is located close to the commercial heart of the town adjacent to new residential development to the north and south. The proximity of the site to the Midland Mainline railway may lead to air quality and noise impacts which will need to inform the future development. Highways and pedestrian movement improvements will be needed to allow the development to safely integrate with the settlement to the south.

Supplementary Technical Assessment

No information

Recommendation

This site and the adjacent site (DE/064) were both discounted in the initial assessment for similar reasons with vehicular and pedestrian access to the town centre being a prime concern. The recommendation for allocation site DE/063 should also apply to site DE/064 in order to allow a comprehensive and integrated scheme to be brought forward which might better support the required infrastructure improvements without compromising viability.
5.3 DE/067

**Site Name:** Land adjoining the Orchards, Harrington Road

**Site Area:** 2.5 Hectares

**KBC Assessment**

**Site Specific Proposals LDD, Housing Allocations (Feb 2012)**

The assessment recognises that the site is located in open countryside and that it may be archaeologically significant. The existing public right of way which run adjacent to the site should be retained but not opened up to vehicular traffic. It is recognised that development could lead to some landscape impacts but the site is recommended for allocation. The site is assessed as being capable of yielding 60 units.

**Housing Allocations - Assessment of Additional Sites and Update (Oct 2013)**

No change to assessment.

**DTC Comments on Housing Allocations (Nov 2013)**

DTC recommend that the site is discounted and should not be allocated for housing due to fears of local over development.

**Summary Assessment**

Highways access to the site is challenging as vehicles will have to enter the site using low capacity estate roads with poor legibility. The proximity to major highways infrastructure makes the edge of settlement location less sensitive to visual and landscape impacts.

**Supplementary Technical Assessment**

No information

**Recommendation**

Subject to the concerns raised by KBC concerning possible landscape and archaeological impacts and subject to careful integration with the adjacent residential area this site should be allocated for housing.
5.4 DE/072

Site Name: Former Hawthorns Leisure Centre
Site Area: 3.5 Hectares

KBC Assessment
Site Specific Proposals, LDD, Housing Allocations (Feb 2012)

This assessment identified the site as being a SHLAA category 3 site with the potential to yield 128 units. The detailed assessment states:

Development of this site would result in loss of a leisure facility and open space in this location. Leisure provision and open space will be accommodated in a new Leisure Centre on the Grange, to the north of Desborough. Site is located adjacent to a flood zone so mitigation will be required. Site is also located adjacent to a wildlife site where biodiversity should be enhanced. Development of this site would provide an opportunity to enhance links between Desborough and the Ise Valley. The landscape here is sensitive therefore, careful design would be required. A public footpath runs through the site and should be protected and enhanced. Potential mitigation measures are required for archaeology. A Transport Assessment would be required to assess the capacity of the existing access. Development of this site would contribute to the requirement for a new primary school in Desborough, which could affect the viability of this site.

The detailed technical assessment undertaken by KBC identified that drainage could be a constraint on development.

Housing Allocations - Assessment of Additional Sites and Update (Oct 2013)

This assessment was unchanged however it was recognised within the associated commentary that there was considerable local opposition to the development of this site. It is noted that the three adjacent sites located on the southern edge of the settlement may be more efficiently developed in a co-ordinated manner.

DTC Comments on Housing Allocations (Nov 2013)

DTC strongly objects to the development of this site for housing alone and would like to see any future development include green space and amenity space. DTC believe the appropriate site yield would be no greater than 102 units.

Summary Assessment

The technical assessment of the site undertaken by KBC is fair and reasonable. The site is well located in terms of integration with the existing settlement. It is noted that the development of the site could result in landscape impacts however there are a few receptor locations to the south. It is also noted that highways access to the site is constrained and that highways capacity at the access points and within the adjacent road network appears limited.

Supplementary Technical Assessment

An Envirocheck search of the site reveals that there are no utilities constraints on the site.

Recommendation

The site could be considered for future housing development. The KBC technical assessment is reasonable however local concerns regarding the sensitivity of this site raised through a formal Neighbourhood Plan process must be considered prior to any formal allocation.

The integration of the site with those located immediately to the west offers the opportunity to develop a co-ordinated scheme which could provide a stronger and better defined urban edge to the settlement and which could integrate leisure and amenity spaces in the most visually sensitive locations.

The sensitivities of the site are recognised by KBC and the need for visual, amenity and ecological mitigation are understood. A development brief for the site should be prepared jointly by KBC and DTC which ensures development principles including access, open space and visual impact are established in order to guide any future design work.
5.5 DE/173

Site Name: Lower Steeping
Site Area: 4.2 Hectares

KBC Assessment
Site Specific Proposals LDD, Housing Allocations (Feb 2012)

It is recognised by this assessment that highways access will be a significant constraint impacting upon the future deliverability of the site. The landscape impact, heritage and ecological concerns expressed by Desborough Town Council are not reflected within this assessment.

Housing Allocations – Assessment of Additional Sites and Update (Oct 2013)

The revised assessment acknowledges the highways constraints which will affect the deliverability of the site but suggests that consideration should be given to any proposals being integrated with those for the adjacent sites (DE/189 and DE/072). The assessment table does not reflect concerns expressed elsewhere in the assessment concerning access.

DTC Comments on Housing Allocations (Nov 2013)

DTC believe that this site should be permanently discounted. The value landscape, heritage and ecological features within the site boundary should be considered when assessing possible allocation. It is unlikely that development could be accommodated without causing significant harm.

Summary Assessment

There appears to be some confusion concerning highways access as a possible constraint to development. It is unlikely that any safe access will be available from Rothwell Road and integration with the adjacent sites to the east will have to address the presence of an existing private property (along with its associated access road). A limited access is available from Little Steeping however the capacity of the constrained route may prove difficult to overcome.

Supplementary Technical Assessment

The utilities search of the site reveals that there is a water main located within the eastern corner and another water pipe bisects the site. This infrastructure will either impact upon possible layout or require relocation. Either way site capacity and/or development costs will be impacted upon.

Recommendation

The site could be considered for future housing development subject to the resolution of safe and efficient highways access. Although an integrated masterplanning approach to the three adjacent southern sites would be sensible there is no guarantee that this would unlock access to this site.

The KBC assessment of the site is not wholly convincing regarding highways issues and is at odds with the concerns identified by DTC.
5.6 DE/188

Site Name: Buxton Drive

Site Area: 1.8 Hectares

KBC Assessment
Site Specific Proposals LDD, Housing Allocations (Feb 2012)

Not included within this assessment

Housing Allocations - Assessment of Additional Sites and Update (Oct 2013)

This site is assessed as being capable for yielding 46 units and few constraints to development are identified.

DTC Comments on Housing Allocations (Nov 2013)

DTC agree to this allocation.

Summary Assessment

The site is located adjacent to an existing residential area however it is on the edge of the settlement and distant from the commercial centre. Despite being on the edge of the settlement proximity to highways infrastructure and the extent of tree cover surrounding the site suggest that landscape impacts will be limited.

Supplementary Technical Assessment

No information

Recommendation

Subject to careful integration with the adjacent residential area and design mitigation being required to limit landscape impact this site should be taken forward for development. The site should be allocated.
5.7 DE/189

Site Name: Land Adjacent to the Hawthorns

Site Area: 2.5 Hectares

KBC Assessment
Site Specific Proposals LDD, Housing Allocations (Feb 2012)

Not identified or assessed.

Housing Allocations- Assessment of Additional Sites
and Update (Oct 2013)

It is recognised by this assessment that improved vehicular access would be required and that any development would be best taken forward and part of an integrated scheme including adjacent sites. The assessment also indicates that the site would have negative landscape impacts and may prove problematic in terms of settlement coalescence. The site is assessed as being able to yield 74 units.

DTC Comments on Housing Allocations (Nov 2013)

DTC strongly objects to the development of this site for housing alone and would like to see any future development include green space and amenity space.

Summary Assessment

The technical assessment of the site undertaken by KBC is fair and reasonable. The site is well located in terms of integration with the existing settlement. It is noted that the development of the site could result in landscape impacts however there a limited receptor locations to the south. It is also noted that highways access to the site is constrained and that highways capacity at the access points and within the adjacent road network appears limited.

Supplementary Technical Assessment

An Envirocheck search of the site reveals that a MP gas main crosses the site from north to south. Any future development would have to take this into account and allow a way-leave/easement either side of the main. BT lines also cross part of the site.

Recommendation

The site could be considered for future housing development. The KBC technical assessment is reasonable however local concerns regarding the sensitivity of this site raised through a formal Neighbourhood Plan process must be considered prior to any formal allocation.

The integration of the site with the Hawthorns site offers the opportunity to develop a co-ordinated scheme which could provide a stronger and better defined urban edge to the settlement and which could integrate leisure and amenity spaces in the most visually sensitive locations.

There is a need for visual, landscape and ecological mitigation to be understood. A development brief for the site should be prepared jointly by KBC and DTC which ensures development principles including access, open space and visual impact are established in order to guide any future design work.
5.8 Discounted Sites

The sites described below were discounted by the previous KBC Housing Allocation process. These sites are described briefly were re-evaluation endorses the exclusion of these site from future allocation. Where sites are seen to have potential for allocation for future residential development this site and its potential is described in more detail.

Key

- Parish Boundary
- Previously Discounted Site Recommended for Allocation (housing)
- Previously Discounted Site Recommended for Allocation (Mixed Use including housing)
5.9 DE/064

Site Name: Desborough Site 2

Site Area: 7.2 Hectares

KBC Assessment
Site Specific Proposals LDD, Housing Allocations (Feb 2012)

The site was recognised as being well located adjacent to the existing settlement however highway capacity issues and may result in the need for a new primary school. Potential yield of 222 units.

Housing Allocations- Assessment of Additional Sites and Update (Oct 2013)

Consultation resulted in the discounting of the site remaining in place.

DTC Comments on Housing Allocations (Nov 2013)

DTC agreed with KBC that this site should be discounted for housing.

Summary Assessment

The site is well located, less than 1Km from the commercial heart of the town and in an area where recent housing development activity has taken place. The site if developed would also offer the opportunity to rebalance the town which has grown predominantly to the south.

Although there would be some limited landscape and visual impact which would result from the development of the site these could be adequately mitigated. There are no distant views of the site. Highways improvement, including to pedestrian routes, would be required should the site be developed.

Supplementary Technical Assessment

The Envirocheck survey of the site revealed no utilities constraints to future development.

Recommendation

Consideration should be given to the allocation of this site for housing. If allocated any proposals should be integrated with proposals for the adjacent site to the south-west (DE/063)
5.10 DE/065

Site Name:

Site Area: 33.7 Hectares

KBC Assessment
Site Specific Proposals LDD, Housing Allocations (Feb 2012)

The assessment found that accessibility to the site is poor and would be subject to noise from the A6 and at partial risk of flooding. The site was assessed as being visually sensitive and development could lead to negative visual impacts which would be difficult to mitigate due to topography. The southern extension of Desborough on this site could contribute to coalescence with Rothwell.

Housing Allocations- Assessment of Additional Sites and Update (Oct 2013)

Consultation resulted in the discounting of the site remaining in place.

DTC Comments on Housing Allocations (Nov 2013)

DTC agree that the site should be discounted.

Summary Assessment

The site is poorly located and topography, visibility and access concerns would be difficult to address within a viable scheme.

Supplementary Technical Assessment

No information

Recommendation

Do not allocate for housing.
5.11 DE/066

Site Name: Land east of Watermill Close

Site Area: 3.9 Hectares

KBC Assessment
Site Specific Proposals LDD, Housing Allocations (Feb 2012)

The site is identified as being outside the town boundary with poor accessibility. The site is detached from the town by a TPO wooded area.

Housing Allocations- Assessment of Additional Sites and Update (Oct 2013)

Consultation resulted in the discounting of the site remaining in place.

DTC Comments on Housing Allocations (Nov 2013)

DTC agree that the site should be discounted

Summary Assessment

The site is outside the town boundary and has access, environmental and visibility constraints. The topography of the site may impact upon viability and would certainly affect the approach to landscape and visual impact mitigation.

Supplementary Technical Assessment

No information

Recommendation

Do not allocate for housing.
5.12 DE/068

Site Name: Cedar Far, land off Copelands Road

Site Area: 3.1 Hectares

KBC Assessment
Site Specific Proposals LDD, Housing Allocations (Feb 2012)

The assessment identifies the site as being adjacent to the railway line and TPOs.

Housing Allocations - Assessment of Additional Sites and Update (Oct 2013)

Consultation resulted in the discounting of the site remaining in place.

DTC Comments on Housing Allocations (Nov 2013)

DTC agree that the site should be discounted

Summary Assessment

The principal constraint affecting the future development of the site is access. This is currently poor and there is no possibility of improving access within the constraints of the current site boundary. Development would be unsafe and unviable unless extensive off site highways works can be delivered.

Supplementary Technical Assessment

No information

Recommendation

Do not allocate for housing.
5.13 DE/069

Site Name: Loatlands School
Site Area: 1.4 Hectares

KBC Assessment
Site Specific Proposals LDD, Housing Allocations (Feb 2012)

The initial assessment identified this as being a well located site however development for housing would require the existing school to be relocated elsewhere within the town.

Housing Allocations- Assessment of Additional Sites and Update (Oct 2013)
Consultation resulted in the discounting of the site remaining in place.

DTC Comments on Housing Allocations (Nov 2013)
DTC agree that the site should be discounted

Summary Assessment
The school is currently being expanded. The site is not appropriate for housing development.

Supplementary Technical Assessment
No information

Recommendation
Do not allocate for housing
5.14 DE/070

**Site Name:** Eveden Factory 1  
**Site Area:** 0.35 Hectares

**KBC Assessment**  
**Site Specific Proposals LDD, Housing Allocations (Feb 2012)**

The assessment found that the site was well located with easy access to the town centre however loss of employment use on the site should be avoided. It was also noted that the historic building on the site should be retained.

**Housing Allocations - Assessment of Additional Sites and Update (Oct 2013)**

Consultation resulted in the discounting of the site remaining in place. Site remains in employment use.

**DTC Comments on Housing Allocations (Nov 2013)**

DTC agree that the site should be discounted.

**Summary Assessment**

The site is currently occupied by employment uses which contribute to the vibrancy and sustainability of the town. These uses should be protected.

**Supplementary Technical Assessment**

No information

**Recommendation**

Do not allocate for housing.
5.15 DE/071

Site Name: Eveden Factory 2

Site Area: 0.54 Hectares

KBC Assessment
Site Specific Proposals LDD, Housing Allocations (Feb 2012)

The assessment found that the site was well located with easy access to the town centre however loss of employment use on the site should be avoided.

Housing Allocations- Assessment of Additional Sites and Update (Oct 2013)

Consultation resulted in the discounting of the site remaining in place. Site remains in employment use.

DTC Comments on Housing Allocations (Nov 2013)
DTC agree that the site should be discounted.

Summary Assessment
The site is currently occupied by employment uses which contribute to the vibrancy and sustainability of the town. These uses should be protected.

Supplementary Technical Assessment
No information

Recommendation
Do not allocate for housing.
5.16 DE/073

Site Name: Land at Harrington Road
Site Area: 2.4 Hectares
KBC Assessment
Planning Permission granted.
5.17 DE/075

Site Name: Lawrence’s
Site Area: 1.2 Hectares

KBC Assessment
Site Specific Proposals LDD, Housing Allocations (Feb 2012)

The site is not covered by the initial assessment.

Housing Allocations- Assessment of Additional Sites and Update (Oct 2013)

The site is discounted as a housing allocation. It is noted that Planning Permission is in place for a food store.

DTC Comments on Housing Allocations (Nov 2013)

DTC note that Planning Permission has been granted for a food store development on the site subject to the resolution of the Section 106 agreement.

Summary Assessment

This is a complex town centre site which contains a number of existing buildings most of which have townscape value and which contribute to the character of the town centre. The former Kings Head public house is Grade II listed and the site is located within the town centre conservation area. Other buildings within the site boundary should be considered non-designated heritage assets.

Supplementary Technical Assessment

No information

Recommendation

Although Planning Permission for retail use has been granted it is recognised that the food retail sector is currently experiencing a challenging period and this might impact upon deliverability of the approved scheme. Rather than allocate the site for housing, which would not be appropriate given the permission, the site could be allocated as mixed use. The future development of the site will be required to protect the designated and non-designated heritage assets and will also need to contribute to strengthening the viability of the town centre.

A mixed use development on the site should be able to accommodate retail of a scale that would complement and enhance the historic environment, re-use existing buildings and which could function alongside elements of residential and other uses within an integrated scheme.
5.18 DE/079

Site Name: land to the south west of Pioneer Avenue

Site Area: 2.3 Hectares

KBC Assessment
Site Specific Proposals LDD, Housing Allocations (Feb 2012)

The initial assessment found that many of the technical constraints affecting the site could be addressed however access remained a concern.

DTC Comments on Housing Allocations (Nov 2013)

DTC agree that the site should be discounted.

Summary Assessment

The access to the site would be difficult to resolve within an efficient or viable scheme. The topography of the site would require civil engineering to allow safe vehicular access and this would require a land take which would reduce developable area. The site appears to contain allotments and although unused these may need to be formally closed. The site is not suited to residential development and should not be allocated.

Supplementary Technical Assessment

No information

Recommendation

Do not allocate for housing.
5.19 DE/141

Site Name: Land to the north of Harborough Road

Site Area: 15.1 Hectares

KBC Assessment
Site Specific Proposals LDD, Housing Allocations (Feb 2012)

The site was assessed as being poorly located with its isolation resulting in the need for a new primary school which would in turn compromise viability.

Housing Allocations- Assessment of Additional Sites and Update (Oct 2013)
Discounted for housing

DTC Comments on Housing Allocations (Nov 2013)
DTC agree with the KBC assessment that the site should be discounted for housing.

Summary Assessment

This is a very prominent and visible site which is located at the north western gateway to the settlement and which helps to define the arrival to Desborough. Existing mature trees along field boundaries help to reduce the visual impact of the industrial site to the east. The detachment of the site from other residential area would lead to an isolated residential area. The site is unsuitable for residential development.

Supplementary Technical Assessment

No information

Recommendation

Do not allocate for housing.
5.20 DE/142

**Site Name:** Land off Arthingworth Road and Braybrooke Road

**Site Area:** 14.6 Hectares

**KBC Assessment**

Site Specific Proposals LDD, Housing Allocations (Feb 2012)

The initial assessment identified that the site was poorly located and if developed would not integrate well with the existing settlement.

**Housing Allocations- Assessment of Additional Sites and Update (Oct 2013)**

Additional assessment work identified further constraints including archaeology and landscape. Consultation resulted in the discounting of the site remaining in place.

**DTC Comments on Housing Allocations (Nov 2013)**

DTC agree that the site should be discounted

**Summary Assessment**

The site is poorly located and if developed would have negative visual impacts due to its scale and location on high ground.

**Supplementary Technical Assessment**

No information

**Recommendation**

Do not allocate for housing
6.0 Evaluation

The following evaluation matrices show the original KBC site assessment findings which are presented within the Site Specific Proposals LDD – Housing Allocation Background Paper (February 2012). The KBC assessment is based upon the methodology described within section 2 above.

The review is based upon the KBC October 2013 assessment finding which includes some changes in terms of recommendations for allocation. This is further modified by the findings of this report where further change to allocation is recommended.

In the majority of cases the suggested designation of sites remains unchanged. Where there are changes these have been highlighted.

6.1 Key

- KBC Change
- DTC Change
- DTC Qualified Change
- Barrier to Development
- Possible Constraint
- No Barrier to Development
## Site Evaluations

### 6.2 KBC Evaluation (February 2012)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Criteria</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Site Reference</th>
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</thead>
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*DE/140: 6.2 KBC Evaluation (February 2012)*

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### 6.3 KBC Evaluation Reviewed (KBC October 2013 Re-evaluated & DTC Re-evaluated from 2015)

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| Conclusion | Yes Yes No No Yes No No No No No No No No No No | For more information about us visit: lathamarchitects.co.uk
7.0 Conclusions & Recommendations

The assessment of sites undertaken by KBC has been undertaken using a clear and comprehensive methodology which has been robustly applied. The assessment undertaken within this report has employed a similar methodology and has relied on similar evidence.

Envirocheck utilities information has been acquired to allow a more technical assessment of sites DE/072, DE/173 and DE/064.

We have departed from the assessment conclusions of KBC in only a few cases. We believe that site DE/072, DE/173 and DE/189 can be developed but that the detail of development proposal is critical on this visually sensitive site. The established recreational and amenity value within the site must be retained in some form and residential development should seek to enhance this provision rather than eliminate it.

Site DE/064 should be considered for allocation and should be taken forward as part of an integrated scheme including DE/063. Together the two sites might better afford necessary infrastructure improvements.

Site DE/075 should be allocated as a mixed use site capable of accommodating residential, retail and other town centre uses. The use mix should be capable of protecting and enhancing the historic environment as well as helping to deliver improved town centre vitality.

This assessment generally endorses the work of KBC in terms of identifying sites which area suitable for housing development. However a major concern which is identified by OTC, and which is beyond the scope of the allocations exercise, is the format in which development is brought forward. There are legitimate concerns regarding housing densities, housing quality, the relationship of development with open space and impacts upon landscape character and views. Whilst these concerns can be addressed to some extent through the planning process it would be useful for the most sensitive and contentious sites to be provided with development briefs which set out clearly design requirements. These sites must include DE/072, DE/189 And DE/173.