

# Settlement Development Assessment

## Introduction

Settlement Development Assessment is a process to look at how local conditions may affect future development in your town or village. We need to do this to help update local planning policies and determine any development proposals.

Settlement Development Assessment requires local knowledge to check and add to the profile of your town or village we have prepared. This is similar to normal neighbour consultations for planning applications, but it is about the whole of a settlement and is open to all local people to take part and comment on the areas they are most familiar with.

The results will put together into a full tour of your settlement. This will help to assess the capacity of current development limits, identify the most likely places for future development and areas of local green space. This detailed assessment will then be published for further statutory consultation.

## Land for development

Richmondshire District Council is the local planning authority for the District outside of the Yorkshire Dales National Park. It needs to set out where development should and should not go over the next 15 years. The Council's Local Plan 2012 – 2028 Core Strategy sets the general scale for development for local towns and villages. It also contains policies to assess the suitability of development proposals. We now need to update settlement development limits and identify suitable locations for development.

The government's National Planning Policy Framework requires that sufficient land is available to support local growth. The need for growth in Richmondshire comes from its ageing population. If nothing is done, the local workforce will decrease substantially over the next 15 years and households will shrink in size. It also comes from a local housing market that, over several years, has become too expensive for many people employed in the District. These factors are evident now and are affecting local services and businesses.

The Localism Act gives Parish and Town Councils the power to produce Neighbourhood Plans. These should supplement the Local Plan with detailed local policies designed to ensure that proposed growth is well related to its context not resist development. Settlement Development Assessment can also provide the initial information for Neighbourhood Planning.

Since the Introduction of this power, nearly 30 plans have been made, that is independently examined, subject to a referendum and adopted by the Local Planning Authority. Neighbourhood Plans and their main purpose include:

- Thame, South Oxfordshire – land use allocations
- Eden Valley – small scale affordable housing in remote rural areas
- Exeter St James – control of student accommodation

Town and Parish Council's with a Neighbourhood Plan can claim 25% of any revenues arising from the Community Infrastructure Levy under current regulations.

## **Settlement Development Assessment**

Settlement Development Assessment is a detailed review of local conditions in and around a town or village. It supports the preparation of revised development limits and land use allocations in the Council's proposed Delivering Development Plan. It starts with a profile and a map summarising important information about a settlement and its setting. The profile covers history, landscape, heritage, the changing population, development and local services. We have used available evidence to put it together, but this needs to be checked against local knowledge.

All areas inside and around the settlement need to be looked at. To make this easier, local roads have been used to define a set of areas, including the current development limit as the village centre. These areas are well in excess of the amount of land expected by the Local Plan. For 30 to 40 new homes this could be a single site with sides of about 100 to 150 metres.

Constraints and opportunities in each of these areas should be assessed to identify where development could be sited and areas to be avoided. Such issues are described as material and are defined in policy, guidance and law. Evidence can be used to identify these material conditions and include, amongst other things:

- Heritage designations
- Landscape designations
- Access to these areas
- Landform
- Flooding and drainage
- Local Infrastructure

Material constraints do not by themselves exclude development, unless they cannot be managed or avoided. National bodies, such as English Heritage, Natural England and the Environment Agency, have technical roles in the designation, assessment and management of specific constraints.

In general, the courts consider that the protection of private interests, such as the impact of a development on the value of a neighbouring property or loss of private rights to light, could not be material considerations. These types of issues will not be included in this assessment.

The assessment can also be used to identify areas where development should not happen. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) calls these Local Green Spaces. These should be close to the local community and “demonstrably special”. Local Green Space can be historic, recreational or be rich in wildlife, but should not include large tracts of land.

### **Questions for Settlement Development Assessment**

Rather than setting out a detailed questionnaire we would prefer anyone responding to this exercise to identify important features in the areas they are most familiar with and explain how these might affect their suitability for future development. But, there are some key questions that we are interested in for each area. These include:

1. How does this area sit in relation to the rest of the village and the wider landscape?
2. Do any of the following issues affect potential development in this area:
  - Natural habitats
  - Historic buildings or remains
  - Highways and access
  - Utilities
  - Flooding
  - Other

If yes, how?

3. Is this area a suitable place to look for development sites? Please explain your reasons?
4. Is this area a suitable place to look for areas of Local Green Space? Please explain your reasons

Please identify the areas you are commenting on in your response. In Barton these areas are:

- A Village within current development limit
- B Land north of Silver Street and west of Church Lane
- C Land west of Church Lane and North of Silver Street
- D Land south of Silver Street
- E Land south of Marygate

Responses should be sent by letter or email to the contacts below by **26<sup>th</sup> June 2015**

## **Contact**

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