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1

Introduction

This Site Assessment Methodology document sets out the approach that Allerdale Borough Council will follow in order to:

1. Assess and compare the suitability of sites proposed for allocation and designation within the Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD).
2. Review the settlement boundaries for those settlements which the Allerdale Local Plan (Part 1) indicates will have a settlement boundary
3. Review existing employment allocations and determine whether sites should be de-allocated from employment use.

The methodology will enable the assessment of potential sites and land to ensure they contribute to sustainability objectives, offer the most benefit to the community and minimise any adverse impacts on the environment.

The site assessment process considers physical constraints as well as economic, social and environmental impacts. However, many of these issues are also covered in the Sustainability Appraisal process. The Council has produced a Sustainability Appraisal

Scoping Report, which identifies the sustainability objectives and criteria against which potential site allocations should be assessed against. Therefore, rather than run two separate and potentially overlapping assessment processes, the criteria identified in the Scoping Report have been integrated and included within this methodology (see chapter 5).

It is essential that site allocation decisions can be justified and that they are supported by a clear audit trail. To this end, the process has been designed to:

- Take account of national planning principles
- Be transparent so that anyone can see how a particular outcome has been arrived at
- Ensure that development takes place in sustainable locations
- Contribute to making existing settlements more sustainable.
- Enable very unsuitable sites to be filtered out early on in the appraisal process.
- Provide a basis for comparison between sites.

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Setting the context of the Site Allocations DPD

The Site Allocations DPD constitutes Part 2 of the replacement Allerdale Local Plan. It follows on from the Strategic and Development Management Policies DPD, which forms Part 1.

The Strategic and Development Management Policies DPD sets out the framework for Site Allocations DPD by:

- Identifying the settlement hierarchy for the Borough comprising of five tiers:
 - Principal Service Centre
 - Key Service Centres
 - Local Service Centres
 - Limited Growth Villages
 - Infill/Rounding Off Villages
- Setting out the future role, function and spatial objectives of each of the five tiers of the settlement hierarchy
- Indicating the level of housing and employment development for each of the five tiers of the settlement hierarchy

As the strategic policy framework is set by Policy S3 of the Strategic and Development Management Policies DPD, the Site Allocations DPD will be restricted to three

principal roles:

1. Identifying sites for allocation and/or designation within the
 - Principal Service Centre
 - Key Service Centres
 - Local Service Centres

This will be done in accordance with the role function, spatial objectives and level of development set out for each tier as indicated in policy S3. A broad range of uses such as housing, employment, open space and nature conservation will be considered. The approach to allocations is set out in chapters 3, 4, 5 and 6.

2. Defining revised development boundaries for the Principal and Key Service Centres, Local Service Centres and Limited Growth Villages. The approach to the review of settlement boundaries is set out in chapter 7
3. Reviewing existing employment allocations and considering potential de-allocation. The approach to employment land review is set out in chapter 8.

3

Site allocations: assessment stages

The Council propose to adopt a three stage approach to the assessment of sites submitted for consideration for allocation or designation in the Site Allocations DPD.

Stage 1: This initial filter involves testing the sites against the eight key criteria outlined in chapter 4.

The objective of this stage is to filter out those sites subject to serious constraints that render them wholly unsuitable for allocation or designation.

Stage 2: This second filter involves an assessment of the sustainability of sites using the assessment set out in chapter 5.

The objective of this stage is to filter out the worst performing sites whose allocation would be contrary to the identified sustainability objectives set out for the Site Allocations DPD in the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report.

Stage 3: This final filter involves a more detailed and specialist assessment of the sites in relation to their suitability, viability and deliverability (see chapter 6). Input from statutory consultees and specialist

departments within the Council will be sought at this stage.

The objective of this stage is to identify the preferred sites for allocation by:

- (a) Filtering out the sites whose allocation or designation would be contrary to the policy framework set out in the Strategic and Development Management Policies DPD (Local Plan Part 1)
- (b) Filtering out those sites that have technical and/or environmental constraints that cannot be overcome by mitigation and/or remediation.
- (c) Filtering out those sites that have serious viability and developability issues

Consultation stages

There will be two consultation stages in the preparation of the Site Allocations DPD.

1. Issues and Options - this stage will entail the Council:
 - a) Consulting on the sites submitted for consideration. No formal assessment will have been

undertaken at this stage.

- b) Consulting on the options for amendments to settlement boundaries

2. Preferred Options - this stage will entail the Council:

- a) Identifying the preferred sites for allocations and designation.
- b) Identifying the preferred areas for amendments to settlement boundaries
- c) Identifying any employment sites that are proposed for de-allocation

Stages 1, 2 and 3 will be undertaken during the development of the Preferred Options to filter out those sites that perform poorly in terms of sustainability, suitability and deliverability.

The Council's preferred sites for allocation and areas for amendments to settlement boundaries will be identified in the 'Preferred Options' document. Justification for selection will be set out within this document.

Those sites that fail to satisfy the criteria set

out for stages 1, 2 or 3 will be discounted at Preferred Options stage. A 'Discarded Sites' document be published alongside the Preferred Options document that will list the sites that have been discounted and the reasons for doing so.

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Site allocations: Stage 1 site assessment

Sites submitted for all forms of development will be discounted at Stage 1 if they are:

1. Located in the open countryside

Sites which are located a significant distance from the Principal Service Centre, Key Service Centres, Local Service Centres and Limited Growth Villages identified in the settlement hierarchy outlined in Policy S3 of the emerging Allerdale Local Plan (Part 1) will not be considered for allocation for development.

2. Located within or adjacent to infill/rounding off villages

Sites which are located within or adjacent those settlements identified as Infill/Rounding Off villages in Policy S3 of the Allerdale Local Plan (Part 1) that will not have a defined settlement limit will not be considered for allocation for development.

3. Located within areas of high flood risk

The National Planning Policy Framework and Policy S29 of the emerging Allerdale Local Plan (Part 1) set out a sequential approach to

the allocation of land for development, in order to steer new development to areas with the lowest probability of flooding. Therefore sites for future development will only be allocated within areas of lowest flood risk.

Sites for residential development that lie within Flood Zone 3(a) will not normally be considered unless:

- Less than 25% of the total area of the site lies within Flood Zone 3
- The sole means of access to the site lies within Flood Zone 3
- The net developable area of the site is less than 0.3 ha in the case of Principal Service Centre and Key Service Centres
- The net developable area of the site is less than 0.15 ha in the case of Local Service Centres and Limited Growth Villages

However if there are no other suitable and available sites in areas of lower probability of flooding, sites for residential development may be considered in Flood Zone 3(a), providing they can fulfil the Exception Test set out in Paragraph 102 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Land within Flood Zone 3(b) will not be considered for development but may be considered for designation for open space/amenity or nature conservation purposes.

4. Located within sites of international and national biodiversity and geological value

Policy S35 of the emerging Allerdale Local Plan (Part 1) and the National Planning Policy Framework (Paragraphs 110, 113) state that nationally and internationally designated sites should be afforded the highest level of protection.

Sites of international or national biodiversity or geological importance include:

- Special areas of Conservation
- Special Protection Areas
- RAMSAR sites
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest
- National Nature Reserves
- Ancient Woodland

Any site that would cause a significant adverse effect on an international or national designation will be discounted at this stage.

5. Located within and deemed to have an potential adverse impact on important archaeological or historical sites

Policies S27 and S28 of the emerging Allerdale Local Plan (Part 1) and the National Planning Policy Framework (Paragraph 132) state that heritage assets of the highest significance should be afforded the highest level of protection. Therefore sites upon which development would be likely to have substantial adverse effect on a significant heritage asset that cannot be mitigated, will not be considered for allocation for development.

Significant heritage assets include:

- World Heritage Sites
- Heritage Assets that are demonstrably of equivalent significant to Scheduled Ancient Monuments
- Scheduled Ancient Monuments
- Grade 1 and 2* Listed Buildings and their curtilages
- Registered Parks and Gardens

Any site that would cause a significant adverse effect on an important archaeological or historical site will be discounted at this stage.

In addition to these 5 core criteria, sites submitted for residential development will be also discounted at Stage 1 if they are:

6. Located within Principal and Key Services Centres and less than 0.3ha in area

Policy S3 of the emerging Allerdale Local Plan (Part 1) identifies those settlements constituting Principal and Key Services Centres. Policy S8 states that only sites over 0.3 ha in these settlements will be required to deliver affordable housing.

Therefore sites below this size threshold would not contribute to the delivery of affordable housing and therefore, will not be considered for allocation for residential development. However they will be considered in the review of settlement boundaries (see chapter 7).

7. Located outside Principal and Key Services Centres and less than 0.15ha in area

Policy S3 of the emerging Allerdale Local Plan (Part 1) identifies those settlements constituting Local Services Centres and Rural

Villages. Policy S8 states that only sites over 0.15 ha in these settlements will be required to deliver affordable housing.

Therefore sites below this size threshold would not contribute to the delivery of affordable housing and therefore, will not be considered for allocation for residential development. However they will be considered in the review of settlement boundaries (see chapter 7).

8. Located within the HSE inner zone of a hazardous installation.

Policy S32 of the emerging Allerdale Local Plan (Part 1), National Planning Policy Framework (Paragraph 120) state that new development should be appropriate for its location and should be resisted where there is a safety risk and/or potential to incur statutory nuisance or poor standards of amenity.

Following the guidance issued by the Health and Safety Executive, sites which lie within the HSE inner consultation zone of a hazardous installation will not be considered for allocation for residential development.

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Site allocations: Stage 2 site assessment

Stage 2 site assessment will comprise of a desk-based assessment using the criteria developed as part of the Site Allocations DPD Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report.

The criteria, as indicated in Table 1, set out a range of distance parameters that will be used to assess the performance of the site in relation to identified sustainability objectives. These distances will be measured ‘as the crow flies’ using GIS mapping.

The distance parameters have been categorised, in terms of sustainability, by using a traffic light system:

- **Red = Significant adverse effect: The site performs poorly against the relevant sustainability indicator**
- **Amber = Moderate adverse effect: The site performs moderately against the relevant sustainability indicator**
- **Green = Non-adverse effect: The site performs well against the relevant sustainability indicator.**

The purpose of the traffic light system above is to allow visual comparison between the sites in

terms of the factors assessed.

The site assessment will be recorded in a tabular format which shows for each site:

- The indicators assessed
- A colour coding (red/amber/green) for each of the factors identified according to the impact or suitability of the site.

The objective of the Stage 2 assessment is to identify those sites that perform poorly against the majority of the indicators and therefore do not meet the sustainability objectives set out for the Site Allocations DPD.

Table 1: Site sustainability assessment criteria

Indicator	Suggested Criteria	Relevant to Development Type
Distance to village hall civic building	Site >3km Site between 2km and 3km Site <2km from village hall / civic building	Housing
Distance to shop selling day to day goods	Site >3km Site between 2km and 3km Site <2km from shop selling day to day goods	Housing
Distance to social facility (pub, café, restaurant)	Site >3km Site between 2km and 3km Site <2km from social facility	Housing Employment
Distance to health service (GP, Community Hospital)	Site >5km Site between 2km and 5km Site <2km from GP	Housing
Distance to primary school	Site >3km Site between 2km and 3km Site <2km from primary school	Housing
Distance to secondary school	Site >5km Site between 2km and 5km Site <2km from secondary school	Housing
Distance to bus stop (in the case of rural settlements a daily service to nearest PSC/KSC)	Site >2km away from bus stop Site between 400m and 2km Site <400m away from bus stop	Housing Employment Open Space
Distance to rail station	Site >5km away from railway station Site between 2km and 5km Site <2km away from railway station	Housing Employment Open Space
Distance to cycle path (GIS)	Site >3km away from cycle path; Site 2-3km away from cycle path; Site <2km away from cycle path	Housing Employment Open Space
Distance to PROW (GIS)	Site >2km away from public footpath; Site 1-2km away from cycle path; Site <1km away from public footpath	Housing Employment Open Space
Distance to publicly accessible amenity green space	Site >1200m away from POS Site 800m-1200m away from POS Site <800m away from POS	Housing Employment Open Space
Will it result in loss of public open space?	Yes No	Housing Employment
Distance to publicly accessible sports facility / pitch	Site >5km away from sports facility/pitch Site between 2km and 5km Site <2km away from sports facility/pitch	Housing Employment Open Space

Indicator	Suggested Criteria	Relevant to Development Type
Distance to further / higher education	<p>Site >5km away from FE/HE facility</p> <p>Site between 2km and 5km</p> <p>Site <2km away from FE/HE facility</p>	Housing Employment
Distance to training / skills provider	<p>Site >5km away from training facility</p> <p>Site between 2km and 5km</p> <p>Site <2km away from training facility</p>	Housing Employment
Distance to cultural facility (theatre, gallery, museum, concert hall)	<p>Site >5km away from cultural facility</p> <p>Site between 2km and 5km</p> <p>Site <2km away from cultural facility</p>	Housing
Impact on internationally protected sites (SAC, SPA)	<p>Adjacent to (<400m) to SAC/SPA</p> <p>Site lies within 400-800m of SAC/SPA</p> <p>Site lies >800m from SAC/SPA</p>	Housing Employment Open Space
Impact on nationally protected sites (SSSI)	<p>Adjacent to (<400m) to SSSI</p> <p>Site lies within 400-800m of SSSI</p> <p>Site >800m from SSSI</p>	Housing Employment Open Space
Impact on regionally/locally protected sites (Local Nature Reserve, Local Wildlife Site, or area of Biodiversity Action Plan priority Habitat, RIGGS)	<p>Contains locally protected site or is adjacent to (<400m) of locally protected site</p> <p>Site lies with 400-800m of locally protected site</p> <p>Site >800m from locally protected site</p>	Housing Employment Open Space
Is the site outside of Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) areas, 1, 2 or 3	<p>Lies within Grades 1 and 2</p> <p>Lies within Grade 3</p> <p>Lies within Grade 4 and 5</p>	Housing Employment Open Space
Effect on the AONB	<p>Within or is adjacent to (<1km) AONB and there is the potential for negative impacts.</p> <p>Within or is adjacent to (<1km) AONB but there is no potential for negative impacts.</p> <p>Not within or adjacent to (>1km) AONB, or site is proposed for open space</p>	Housing Employment
Effect on setting of LDNP	<p>Within or is adjacent to (<1km) NP and there is the potential for negative impacts.</p> <p>Within or is adjacent to (<1km) NP but there is no potential for negative impacts.</p> <p>Not within or adjacent to (>1km) NP, or site is proposed for open space</p>	Housing Employment
Effect on Hadrians Wall WHS	<p>Within or is adjacent to (<1km) WHS and there is the potential for negative impacts.</p> <p>Within or is adjacent to (<1km) WHS but there is no potential for negative impacts.</p> <p>Not within or adjacent to (>1km) WHS, or site is proposed for open space</p>	Housing Employment
Effect on landscape character	<p>Within a landscape identified as having moderate-high sensitivity</p> <p>Within a landscape identified as having moderate sensitivity</p> <p>Within a landscape identified as having low-moderate sensitivity</p>	Housing Employment

Indicator	Suggested Criteria	Relevant to Development Type
Effect on Listed Building	<p>Contains or is adjacent to (<400m) a listed building and there is the potential for negative impacts.</p> <p>Contains or is adjacent to (<400m) a listed building but there is no potential for negative impacts.</p> <p>Not on or adjacent to (>400m) a listed building, or site is proposed for open space</p>	Housing Employment
Effect on SA/Heritage Assets that are demonstrably of equivalent significant to Scheduled Ancient Monuments	<p>On a SAM/heritage asset or is adjacent to (<400m) a SAM/heritage asset with the potential for negative impacts</p> <p>Adjacent to (<400m) a SAM/heritage asset but there is no potential for negative impacts</p> <p>Not on adjacent to (>400m) to a SAM/heritage asset or site is proposed for open space</p>	Housing Employment
Effect on conservation area	<p>Within or is adjacent to (<400m) a Conservation Area and there is the potential for negative impacts.</p> <p>Within or is adjacent to (<400m) a Conservation Area but there is no potential for negative impacts.</p> <p>Not within or adjacent to (>400m) a Conservation Area, or site is proposed for open space</p>	Housing Employment
Flood Risk	<p>Site is within Flood Risk Zone 3b</p> <p>Site is within Flood Risk Zone 2 or 3a</p> <p>Site is within Flood Risk Zone 1, or site is proposed for open space</p>	Housing Employment
Surface Water Flood Risk	<p>Site has historic flooding record as well as shown within 1 in 30 year flood zone</p> <p>Site has historic flooding record or within 1 in 30 year flood zone</p> <p>No SW flooding information available</p>	Housing Employment
Efficient use of land	<p>Greenfield site</p> <p>Partial Brownfield site</p> <p>Brownfield site</p>	Housing Employment Open Space
Distance to recycling facilities	<p>Site >5km away from recycling facilities;</p> <p>Site within 1-5km of recycling facilities;</p> <p>Site within 1km of recycling facilities</p>	Housing
Access to key employment sites	<p>Site >5km away from key employment area;</p> <p>Site between 2km and 6km from key employment area;</p> <p>Site <2km away from key employment area</p>	Housing
Located within HSE PADHI Inner Zone	<p>Yes</p> <p>No</p>	Housing Employment
Located within HSE PADHI Middle Zone	<p>Yes</p> <p>No</p>	Housing
Potential noise problems with the site – either for future occupiers or for adjacent/nearby occupiers arising from allocation of the site?	<p>Significant adverse effect</p> <p>Adverse effect / effect that can be mitigated</p> <p>No adverse effect</p>	Housing Employment
Located with Coal Mining Development High Risk Area	<p>Yes</p> <p>No</p>	Housing Employment
Within Coal Surface Resource Plan Area	<p>Yes</p> <p>No</p>	Housing Employment

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Site allocations: Stage 3 site assessment

Stage 3 site assessment will consist of two phases:

Stage 3(a)

The purpose of the Stage 3(a) assessment is to refine the list of sites carried forward from the Stages 1 and 2 to a list of 'reasonable alternatives'. The assessment will be based on the following five criteria:

- (1) A site visit and detailed appraisal of the site by officers
- (2) The number of completions and commitments in the settlement since April 1 2011
- (3) As assessment of the performance of the site against the sustainability appraisal undertaken in Stage 2
- (4) A review of the planning history of the site
- (5) The policy framework set out in the Allerdale Local Plan (Part 1)

The sites that the Council select as reasonable alternatives will be carried forward to Stage 3(b)

Stage 3(b)

The purpose of the Stage 3(b) assessment is to refine the list of 'reasonable alternatives' to a set of 'Preferred Options'. The assessment will be based on the following two criteria:

- (1) Responses received from statutory consultees, stakeholders and local communities
- (2) Results of the Habitats Regulations Assessment

The sites that the Council select as Preferred Options will be nominated for allocation and designation.

During Stage 3(b) any issues raised that may affect the likelihood of a site being allocated or designated will be raised with the landowner, agent or interested party.

Where there is deemed the potential to address or mitigate the issue, there will be an opportunity for the landowner or interested party to identify the necessary works and provide indicative costings.

The objective of the Stage 3 assessment is to identify those sites that are:

Preferred Options.

- (a) The most sustainable
- (b) Are in accordance with and will deliver the policy framework that is set out in the Strategic and Development Management Policies DPD (Local Plan Part 1)
- (c) Have the least ecological, landscape and visual impact
- (d) In the case of housing and employment sites, would best relate to the existing built up area of the settlement and important services
- (e) In the case of housing and employment sites, would be compatible with surrounding land uses
- (f) Can be accommodated within existing infrastructure capacity or where additional required capacity can be delivered by the developer or through committed investment
- (g) In the case of housing and employment sites, are economically viable and deliverable and/or developable.

Those sites that perform the most strongly against criterion (a) - (g) will be selected as

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Settlement boundary review methodology

In addition to allocating sites for development a further role of the Site Allocations DPD is to review settlement boundaries.

In accordance with the Strategic and Development Management Policies DPD (Allerdale Local Plan Part 1), the boundaries for settlements within the following tiers of the hierarchy will be reviewed:

- Principal service centre
- Key service centres
- Local Service Centres
- Limited Growth Villages

The purpose and function of the settlement boundaries is to identify (and delineate on a plan) a the division between the built-up area of the settlement and the surrounding countryside in order to:

- (a) Prevent the encroachment of development into the countryside
- (b) Define areas of land where new development will, in principle, be acceptable.

In the case of (a), by default the area outside of the boundary is recognised for the purposes of planning policy as countryside, where new

development will be limited and strictly controlled.

In the case of (b) the inclusion of an area within a settlement boundary does not automatically mean that development will be accepted. Any proposal within a settlement boundary would be subject to all the relevant development plan policies and other material considerations.

The settlement boundary review will consider sites/parcels of land from two sources:

- (1) Those submitted to the Council as part of the 'Call for Sites', (including those below the size thresholds identified in Chapter 4)
- (2) Those identified by the Council themselves through desk top studies and field work surveys

Guiding principles underpinning the review

To ensure the approach is consistent, a set of four guiding principles have been developed that will be used in considering revisions:

Principle 1:

- (a) The settlement boundaries identified within the 1999 Allerdale Local Plan will

be used as the starting point for the review.

- (b) Revised boundaries will continue to be defined around the existing built fabric of the settlement and where possible will follow defined features such as curtilages, walls, hedgerows and watercourses.

Principle 2:

- (a) Settlement boundaries do not need to be continuous. It may be appropriate given the nature and form of a settlement to define two or more separate elements.

Principle 3:

Boundaries will include:

- (a) The curtilages of dwellings which are contained and visually separated from the open countryside.
- (b) Existing commitments for built development (i.e. unimplemented planning permissions).
- (c) Buildings on the edge of villages which relate closely to the economic or social function of the village (e.g. churches, community halls).
- (d) Recreational or amenity open space, which is physically surrounded by the

settlement or adjoined on three sides by the settlement.

- (e) Individual plots or small scale development sites in areas physically and visually related to the settlement.

Principle 4:

Boundaries will exclude:

- (a) Existing employment uses, caravan sites or leisure uses which are clearly detached from, or peripheral to, the main built up area of the settlement and which relate more to the countryside.
- (b) The curtilages of dwellings which are functionally separate to the dwelling and/or where the land has the capacity to significantly extend the built form of the settlement.
- (c) Individual or groups of less than 10 dwellings, nearby farm buildings or other structures that are considered to be detached physically or visually from the main built up area of the settlement and which relate more to the countryside.
- (d) Recreational or amenity open space that extends into the countryside or primarily relates to the countryside in form or nature.

Proposed methodology

The Council propose a three stage approach to the review of settlement boundaries.

Stage 1:

This initial stage will involve a desktop review of the existing settlement boundaries using GIS maps, aerial photography and planning records to identify:

- The presence of any physical and environmental constraints that would render development difficult and/or inappropriate in any particular location
- Unimplemented planning permissions within the settlement
- Locations where recent growth has occurred
- Any factual anomalies that require correction

The primary objective of Stage 1 is to identify potential options for amendments to the boundaries in each of the settlements, which will be used as a starting point for the Stage 2 review.

Stage 2:

This stage will involve site visits to the settlements to examine their settlement boundaries on the ground to consider:

- The areas identified in Stage 1 where revisions to the boundary may be appropriate.
- Land put forward in the 'call for sites' (which is not of a size suitable for allocation or in a settlement where the use of allocations will be limited).

The objective of Stage 2 is to confirm those areas of land and sites that are suitable be included within the settlement boundaries and those that are wholly unsuitable and should therefore be discounted .

The guiding principles will underpin this assessment and those parcels of land and sites that are considered to constitute criterion (a), (b), (c) and (d) under Principle 4 will be discarded at this stage.

Any decisions made during Stages 1 and 2 will be recorded and where appropriate, photos will be taken to illustrate reasoning

about particular assessments.

Stage 3:

This final stage will involve the assessment and filtering of those sites carried forward from the Stage 2. From this the preferred options for the amendments to the existing boundary of each individual settlement will be identified.

The amount of land included within the revised boundary will be determined by the level of development that the settlement is deemed to be able to accommodate physically, functionally and visually and taking into account any environmental or transport constraints.

The following criteria will be used to assess the suitability of candidate boundary modifications:

- (a) Relationship to the form of the settlement
- (b) Impact on visual amenity or character of natural landscape
- (c) Identified infrastructure capacity issues
- (d) Level of flood risk
- (e) Impact on sites of biodiversity or geological value

- (f) Impact on legally protected species
- (g) Impact on heritage assets
- (h) Impact on trees subject to a Preservation Order, Ancient Woodland and Ancient Hedgerows

The candidate boundary modifications that are considered to perform the most strongly with regards to criteria (a)-(h) will be selected as the Preferred Options.

Any decisions made during Stage 3 will be recorded and where appropriate, photos will be taken to illustrate reasoning about particular assessments.

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Review and de-allocation of employment sites methodology

The West Cumbria Employment Land & Premises Study (2008) and the Employment Land Review Update (2012) both identified that there is an oversupply of land in quantitative terms. The Site Allocations DPD has a key role to play in addressing the issue of oversupply by undertaking a review of employment land in the Borough.

It will de-allocate sites that:

- Could not be reasonably upgraded to meet the current or long term needs of modern business
- Would not significantly impact on the supply of employment land in terms of both quality and spatial distribution
- Do not support the strategic objectives of the Strategic and Development Management DPD

The Council propose to adopt a two stage approach to this process:

Stage 1

Stage 1 assessment will comprise of a desk-based assessment to establish market attractiveness and site performance using the indicators developed in the West Cumbria

Employment Land & Premises Study (2008). The performance of sites against the indicators has been coded using a traffic light system (see table 2):

Red: The site is performs poorly against the relevant indicator

Amber: The site performs adequately against the relevant indicator

Green: The site performs well against the relevant indicator

The Stage 1 assessment will be recorded in a tabular format which shows for each site:

- The indicators assessed
- A colour coding (red/amber/green) for each of the factors identified according to the impact or suitability of the site.

The purpose of the traffic light system above is to allow visual comparison between the sites in terms of the factors assessed. The objective of the Stage 1 assessment is to identify those sites that perform poorly against the majority of the indicators. These will then be carried over to the Stage 2 assessment.

Table 2: Employment land de-allocations assessment criteria

Indicator	Criteria
Availability	Available immediately/short term (0-5 Yrs) Available medium term (6-10 Yrs) Available long term (11-15 Yrs)
Market Activity/Developer Interest	High Interest Moderate Interest Low Interest
Suitability for Growth Sectors	High Suitability Moderate Suitability Limited Suitability
Development Constraints	No Constraints Minor Constraints Major Constraints
Need for Investment	No investment Required Some Investment Required Major Investment Required
Accessibility	Good Moderate Poor
Site Premises/Condition	Good Moderate Poor
Quality of Surrounding Environment	Good Moderate Poor
Previously Developed/Greenfield Land	Entirely previously developed Partly previously developed Entirely Greenfield
Public Transport Accessibility	High Accessibility Moderately Accessibility Limited Accessibility
Accessibility by Walking/Cycling	High Accessibility Moderately Accessibility Limited Accessibility
Impact on Environment/Biodiversity	Low impact Moderate impact High Impact
Suitability for Employment Development	High Suitability Moderate Suitability Low Suitability
Suitability for Other Uses	High Suitability/Significant Potential Benefits Moderate Suitability/Some Benefits Low Suitability/No Benefits

Stage 2:

This involves a more detailed and specialist assessment of the sites in relation to their suitability, viability and strategic role. The Stage 2 assessment will be based on two sources of evidence and information:

- A site visit and detailed appraisal of the site by officers
- The comments received from statutory consultees, stakeholders and local communities in relation to each site

The information obtained from (2) will be used to inform that obtained from (1). Together, these two sources will be used by the Council to filter those sites carried forward from the Stage 1 assessment.

The completed Site Assessment Proformas and comments received from statutory consultees, stakeholders and local communities will be included as part of the Preferred Options consultation so that they are available to view and be commented on by landowners, agents and interested parties.

The objective of the overall Site Allocations:

Stage 2 assessment of is to identify those sites that:

- (a) Are in accordance with and will deliver the policy framework that is set out in the Strategic and Development Management Policies DPD (Local Plan Part 1)
- (b) Have the least ecological, landscape and visual impact
- (c) In the case of housing and employment sites, would best relate to the existing built up area of the settlement and would be compatible with surrounding land uses
- (d) In the case of housing and employment sites, are economically viable and deliverable and/or developable.

Those sites that perform the most poorly against criterion (a), (b), (c) and (d) will be selected as Preferred Options for de-allocation.

Those sites selected for de-allocation will be re-assessed, giving due regard to market signals to determine whether alternative appropriate and suitable uses can be found.

The suitability and sustainability of alternative

uses will be assessed using the three stage assessment process for allocations set out in Chapters 3, 4, 5 and 6 of this document.