

## **ARMTHORPE PARISH COUNCIL**

### **SECOND DRAFT ARMTHORPE NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

#### **SITE ASSESSMENT AND SELECTION METHODOLOGY**

The overall context for the future development of Armthorpe in the period 2011-2028 is set out in the adopted Doncaster MBC Core Strategy. In the Core Strategy, Armthorpe is defined as a Principal Town and as such is expected to grow considerably in the period 2011 to 2028. Indeed, the Core Strategy identifies a need to provide between 700 and 900 new homes and 2 hectares of employment land within Armthorpe. The necessary sites for this development are to be found through the Neighbourhood Plan process; clearly the choice of the housing and employment sites for development during the Neighbourhood Plan period was always going to be a key issue in the Plan.

From the beginning, Armthorpe Parish Council decided to follow the basic approach used by Doncaster MBC in its first round consultation on the Doncaster MBC Sites and Policies DPD. This had involved Doncaster MBC in defining on an Ordnance Survey basis 11 potential housing sites in the Armthorpe area. All the sites had come forward through the SHLAA process. Positive and negative attributes were identified in each of the 11 cases and basic information was captured such as site area; potential capacity in terms of numbers of dwellings; availability of public utilities; and the South Yorkshire Public Transport Executive's preliminary view on public transport access for each site.

Consultation on the Draft Neighbourhood Plan (including the Site Selection Methodology) took place from 3<sup>rd</sup> February to 17<sup>th</sup> March 2014 although the scoring methodology was not available until towards the end of the consultation period. Criticism of the site selection methodology came from some developers. Also, it transpired that the Flood Zone Map produced by the Environment Agency was to be amended. In view of these matters, the Parish Council determined to undertake a new site assessment. Consideration was given to using another alternative methodology devised by URS Consultants and one used by South Kesteven DC in preparing its LDF. This was done with a view to re-assessment of the alternative housing sites and re-running the consultation thereon.

The URS Site Selection Methodology was preferred of the two for several reasons: it had looked at a wider range of attributes of the alternative sites; the pro forma was intended to be filled out by third parties (Neighbourhood groups, Parish Councils or other parties working on their behalf); and the pro forma information requirements had also been designed to allow data to be collected for a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) for a Neighbourhood Plan should it be decided to undertake one. A copy of the URS selection pro-forma and methodology is attached to this note. The pro forma is in four parts: general information on site location and context; suitability; availability; and development potential including acceptability for development.

On the 30<sup>th</sup> July 2014 at an Extraordinary Meeting of the Parish Council, Members of the Council reviewed the option sites for providing the necessary dwellings using the URS methodology. The traffic light system of colour coding based where appropriate on distance and used by URS, was enhanced by simple arithmetic scores for each of the criteria in the suitability and availability sections of the pro forma. It should be noted, however, that the underlining of the coloured distances shown on each pro forma completed by Members of the Parish Council, has no significance or relevance to the scores that Members gave in respect of the distances for each site. The scores for each of the option sites are set out below: Sites 422 and 474 East and West of Hatfield Lane returned the highest scores of all the sites, followed by Sites 302 Barton Lane, 431 Grange Farm, and 514 East of Nutwell Lane.

**SITE SELECTION SCORING SUMMARY- Appendix 1** attached

Appendix 1 attached shows a scoring summary of the site selection methodology undertaken by the Parish Council. The totals for each site are as follows:-

<b>Site Number</b>	<b>Site Description</b>	<b>Total Score</b>
170	Rear of Park Way, Tranmoor	64
302	Barton Lane	66
422	East of Hatfield Lane	67
431	Grange Farm (part)	66
474	West of Hatfield Lane	70
513	West of Nutwell Lane	61
514	East of Nutwell Lane	66

525	Off Barton Lane and Horsehills Lane	62
528	Adjacent Oak Wood and off Barton Lane	65
596	South west of Armthorpe	62

Looking at all the sites, the range of scores between the highest and lowest was 9 points, really quite a small margin on which to select preferred sites. At this point, the Parish Council considered in further detail Section 3 Availability and Section 4 Summary in order to affirm or otherwise site selection based only on the Site Selection Scoring Summary.

### **Assessment of Potential Site Options**

#### Site Reference 170 – Rear of Park Way, Tranmoor

This greenfield site is now located in a low risk flood area but at the time of the scoring by Members of the Parish Council, 25% of it was in Flood Zones 2 and 3. It provides a significant opportunity to enhance the attractiveness of the settlement edge but would extend Armthorpe into the open countryside. However, development in this location would have potential negative impacts on the integrity of a local wildlife site and the character of the townscape/surrounding landscape.

The site has good access to public transport but limited accessibility to cycle routes and other facilities in the village. **Overall, the site is predicted to have more negative than positive impacts and was therefore discounted at this stage.**

Due to its location within a mineral safeguarding area, any development proposals will be required to provide borehole data from a qualified geologist confirming that the extraction of sand and gravel would not be economically feasible or environmentally acceptable in line with Core Strategy policy CS20.

#### Site Reference 302 – Barton Lane

A brownfield site in the existing urban area, with good links to open spaces and facilities/services in the village. New development would result in the loss of existing employment land, but it would provide an opportunity to enhance the character and appearance of the landscape/townscape. There are no known physical constraints, although the adjacent local wildlife site (South Moor Wood) will limit/inhibit the future housing capacity of the site. The position with regard to any Tree Preservation Orders on the site had not been confirmed at the time of scoring by Members of the Parish Council, so a score of 2 was given as a cautionary measure. It was

considered that there are contamination issues on the site and a soil survey would need to be carried out on the same.

The quality and quantity of open space within the area is particularly good and a dense network of public rights of way provides important links between the site and shops and services within the village and the open countryside. There are several parks and recreation areas within walking distance of the site, such as school playing fields, private sport grounds and allotments.

**Overall, the site generally scores well against the sustainability objectives, especially in terms of health and well being, green infrastructure, accessibility and landscape, with some adverse impacts relating to employment and business objectives. The site is therefore accepted although the multiplicity of owners is not conducive to early development.**

Due to its location within a mineral safeguarding area, any development proposals will be required to provide borehole data from a qualified geologist confirming that the extraction of sand and gravel would not be economically feasible or environmentally acceptable in line with policy CS20.

#### Site Reference 422 – The Lings, East of Hatfield Lane

The site could potentially form part of a large mixed-use scheme with employment provision on land adjacent to West Moor Park at a key gateway location into Armthorpe and the main urban area, benefiting from excellent access to the M18 motorway (via the A630) and employment opportunities in the nearby business park. The landscape is less sensitive than other parts of the green wedge as it does have a functional or physical relationship with the main urban area. Development provides an opportunity to enhance trees/hedgerows but it would extend Armthorpe into the open countryside and impact on some views into and out of the site. Development would also deliver affordable/key worker housing close to employment.

Mitigation is needed to ensure that the visual continuity and integrity of the green wedge is maintained. Existing mature trees and hedgerows should be retained and enhanced, wherever possible. **The majority of the adverse impacts can be mitigated through high quality design and landscaping (e.g. a generous planting scheme along the northern and western edges of the site) and this site is therefore accepted together with Site 474 West of Hatfield Lane.** Overhead power lines run through the middle of the site but will not affect the

## **viability of the site.**

Due to its location within a mineral safeguarding area, any development proposals will be required to provide borehole data from a qualified geologist confirming that the extraction of sand and gravel would not be economically feasible or environmentally acceptable in line with Core Strategy CS20.

### Site Reference 431 – Grange Farm

The site comprises predominately agricultural farmland and forms part of a sensitive open gap between Armthorpe and Edenthorpe but benefits from good access to strategic highway network (via the A630). Development in this location would significantly reduce the physical separation between Armthorpe and Edenthorpe and the openness of the countryside, leading to potential coalescence and loss of settlement identity/townscape character contrary to Core Strategy policies CS2 and CS17. Shaw Wood (a local wildlife site) lies immediately south of the site. The site is some distance from Armthorpe district centre but Members of the Parish Council gave it a score of 2, as there is a shop in Mere Lane. Access to public transport is limited.

Shaw Wood, a semi-natural ancient woodland, bounds the southern edge of the site. Screen planting will be required along the northern and southern edges of the site to reduce the visual impact of the development, offering glimpsed views of the site from the A630 and school playing fields. The site does not relate well to existing development in the village and fulfills several green wedge functions.

Some positive elements have been identified (e.g. the site would promote access to open spaces, which will encourage healthier lifestyles). **However, it is envisaged that new housing will have a significant adverse impact on the setting and character of Armthorpe due to its location within a sensitive part of the green wedge as explained in the landscape character assessment. This site was therefore discounted**

### Site Reference 513 – West of Nutwell Lane, Armthorpe

This site lies adjacent to site 514 (East of Nutwell Lane). Development within this location would significantly extend Armthorpe into the open countryside, resulting in the loss of high quality agricultural land and natural habitat (e.g. water voles). New housing would not be well related to the existing built form and undermine the

nucleated settlement pattern. Suitable mitigation will be required to reduce the impact of the development on the setting of the landscape (including the openness of the green wedge) and minimise the loss of wildlife.

The site has no known physical constraints, with low probability of flooding. Despite there being no historical evidence of flooding, part of the site is in Flood Zone 3. Nutwell Water Treatment Works lies within close proximity to the site and may give rise to issues concerning residential amenity and odour nuisance.

The Doncaster Landscape Character Assessment and Capacity Study confirms that the landscape has limited capacity to absorb large-scale housing extensions in this location. **Some positive impacts have been identified (e.g. proximity to woodland and parkland). However, development is likely to give rise to significant adverse impacts on the character of the townscape and landscape, some of which cannot be mitigated and this site is therefore discounted.**

Due to its location within a mineral safeguarding area, any development proposals will be required to provide borehole data from a qualified geologist confirming that the extraction of sand and gravel would not be economically feasible or environmentally acceptable in line with policy CS20.

#### Site Reference – 514 – East of Nutwell Lane, Armthorpe

This site lies adjacent to site 513 (West of Nutwell Lane). Development within this location would significantly extend Armthorpe into the open countryside, resulting in the loss of high quality agricultural land and natural habitat. The landscape character and capacity study confirms that the landscape has limited capacity to absorb large-scale housing extensions in this location. The site is not well related to the existing built form and development would undermine the nucleated settlement pattern. The site has no known physical constraints, although an overhead electricity line bisects the site and access to public transport and community provision (e.g. schools) is good.

Nutwell Water Treatment Works lies to the immediate south of the site, which may give rise to residential amenity and odour nuisance problems.

Some positive impacts have been identified (e.g. good access to open spaces) but development is likely to give rise to significant adverse impacts on the character of the townscape/landscape, some of which cannot be mitigated. **This site was**

**therefore discounted.**

Due to its location within a mineral safeguarding area, any development proposals will be required to provide borehole data from a qualified geologist confirming that the extraction of sand and gravel would not be economically feasible or environmentally acceptable in line with policy CS20.

Site Reference 525 – Land off Barton Lane and Rear of Horsehills Lane, Armthorpe

The site lies adjacent to Site 302 (Barton Lane) and lies within walking distance of an existing employment site. However, it scores poorly because parts of the site are not in use for employment and the nearest Key Employment Site is more than 800 metres away. It has good access to open space and wildlife habitats.

There are no known flood risk issues. However, poor access to the highway and public transport network poses a significant constraint to development. Barton Lane does not have sufficient capacity to accommodate development on this site and alternative means of access are not currently available. The nearest bus stop is a 400 - 800 metres walk from the site and there are limited opportunities to extend services to the site.

The proximity of the local wildlife site and overhead power line will also restrict/inhibit the housing capacity of the site. **Cumulatively, these adverse impacts are potentially significant as mitigation may not be feasible. Development of this site represents an extension into the open countryside but it relates well to the existing urban form as the site wraps itself around the western edge of the settlement. New housing would be less visually intrusive than most of the other urban sites. This site was therefore discounted on its own merits. However, it may be possible at some stage to incorporate this site with Site 302 Barton Lane windfall site.**

Due to its location within a mineral safeguarding area, any development proposals will be required to provide borehole data from a qualified geologist confirming that the extraction of sand and gravel would not be economically feasible or environmentally acceptable in line with Core Strategy policy CS20.

Site Reference 602 – Land adjacent A630 Armthorpe

The site lies adjacent to site 422 (The Lings) and an existing business park. The site is designated in the current Unitary Development Plan as an existing open space policy area but benefits from good access to public transport (subject to the provision

of a new access route) and existing employment uses (West Moor Park). Development would also deliver affordable / key worker housing close to employment.

The A630 lies to the immediate north of the site and provides direct road access to the M18 motorway and town centre. There are no known flooding issues.

Development of the site would extend the village into the countryside, leading to the loss of high grade agricultural land. However, the A630 provides a strong physical buffer between the site and the countryside beyond. Mitigation will be required to protect and maintain the integrity and visual continuity of the green wedge between Edenthorpe and Armthorpe and soften the edge of development, such as habitat creation, landscape treatment and public open space, to help reduce noise from the A630/business park.

The site lies within groundwater source protection zones 1 and 2. Development on the site would need to ensure there is no increased risk of pollution to ground water quality within the aquifer in line with best practice. **This site was designated as a Major Employment Site and has recently been granted planning permission for employment uses, significant mitigation having been successfully negotiated to offset these impacts.**

#### Site Reference 474 – West of Hatfield Lane, Armthorpe

The site lies to the east of site 431 (Grange Farm) and to the west of site 422 (The Lings). It benefits from good access to public transport, greenspace and existing employment uses (e.g. West Moor Park) and the motorway network (via the A630).

Development would reduce the open gap between Edenthorpe and Armthorpe but the landscape is less sensitive than other parts of the green wedge because the site does have a functional relationship with the main urban area and the A630 provides a strong physical buffer between the site and the countryside. As such, it is not considered that development would have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the area.

Although the site is in Flood Zone 1, local knowledge suggests that part of it does occasionally flood and a detailed flood risk assessment would be required to determine the necessary measures to offset or mitigate the risk of any flooding. Mitigation will also be required to ensure that the continuity of the green wedge is

not affected. Existing mature trees and hedgerows should be retained and enhanced, wherever possible.

Some positive elements have been identified (e.g. the site would promote access to open spaces/wildlife and reduce the risk of pluvial flooding). **The majority of negative impacts could be mitigated through high quality design and landscaping (e.g. a generous planting scheme along the northern boundary of the site) and this site was therefore accepted together with Site 422 East of Hatfield Lane.**

Due to its location within a mineral safeguarding area, any development proposals will be required to provide borehole data from a qualified geologist confirming that the extraction of sand and gravel would not be economically feasible or environmentally acceptable in line with Core Strategy CS20.

Site Reference – 528 - Land Adjacent to Oak Wood off Barton Lane, Armthorpe

The site lies adjacent to site 170 (rear of Parkway, Tranmoor) and has good access to open space and wildlife habitats. There are no known flood risk issues. However, limited access to the highway and public transport network poses a significant constraint to development. Barton Lane does not have sufficient capacity to accommodate development on this site and alternative means of access are not currently available. The site is also subject to a ransom strip

The proximity of a local wildlife site, which almost completely surrounds the site and believed overhead power line will also restrict/inhibit the capacity of the site. The existence of an overhead power line (possibly 16kv) had not been confirmed at the time of scoring, so Members of the Parish Council scored 2 as a cautionary measure. Suitable mitigation will be required to reduce the impact of the development on the countryside and nearby woodland although the potential disturbance to wildlife will require further investigation.

**Due to the access and other issues raised above, the site was not considered to be deliverable during the plan period and was therefore discounted.**

Owing to its location within a mineral safeguarding area, any development proposals will be required to provide borehole data from a qualified geologist confirming that the extraction of sand and gravel would not be economically feasible or environmentally acceptable in line with policy CS20.

### Site Reference 596 – South West of Armthorpe

This large greenfield site extends over a wide area from Low Farm/Tranmoor Wood in the north to the water treatment works to the south west of the settlement. There are bus stops and public transport routes within walking distance of the site but these are not close, as they are between 400 – 800 metres away. The site adjoins other potential development sites (170, 513 and 514).

Development will have a significant adverse impact on the integrity or setting of a local wildlife site. No development should take place within the boundary of the local wildlife site and a suitable biodiversity offsetting scheme will be required to mitigate the loss of wildlife. Water drains criss-cross the site and would need to be diverted. The existence of an overhead power line (possibly 16kv) had not been confirmed at the time of scoring, so Members of the Parish Council scored 2 as a cautionary measure. In addition, development would reduce the openness of the gap between Armthorpe and Bessacarr (main urban area of Doncaster) and affect the integrity of the green wedge, exacerbating the threat of settlement coalescence. The site adjoins the open countryside on three sides and there are no natural or defensible boundaries, giving rise to potential adverse impacts on landscape/townscape, biodiversity and land use patterns. The site is not deliverable within the plan period according to the Doncaster Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment.

**Overall, development in this location would have significantly adverse impacts on the sustainability objectives, especially those relating to landscape and townscape character, biodiversity and efficient use of land and resources. This site has therefore been discounted.**

Due to its location within a mineral safeguarding area, any development proposals will be required to provide borehole data from a qualified geologist confirming that the extraction of sand and gravel would not be economically feasible or environmentally acceptable in line with policy CS20.

### **Conclusion**

On comparing the results of the Neighbourhood Plan's original site selection methodology with those of the URS one, they were found to be very much alike. In other words, the numeric scoring used by both methodologies produced very similar ranking of the sites; furthermore that analysis of the availability and Summary Sections of the two approaches produced the same preferred option sites and the

same discounted ones! This serves to confirm that the original methodology was sound and it has therefore stood up to scrutiny despite the criticism of developers/landowners and agents to the First Draft of the Armthorpe Neighbourhood Development Plan.