NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNCIL

Draft Site Assessment Methodology

October 2026

Introduction

This methodology has been prepared in order to inform the Local Plan Site Allocations. A Call for Sites has been undertaken by the Council, with site submissions received for a range of uses. The following methodology is used to assess the suitability and deliverability of sites.

The assessment is a three-stage process, whereby sites will face an initial sift check that must be passed, a detailed assessment of sustainability and constraints and an overview of deliverability, having factored in the outcome of the previous two stages.

New Settlements

This methodology also relates to new settlements. New settlements are a potential strategic option for the local plan under consideration, although no decision as yet has been made as to whether additional new settlements (aside from the already new settlement at Maltkiln) will form part of the local plan strategy. This methodology will help establish whether reasonable options for sites for new settlements exist and therefore whether they can undergo more detailed consideration as to whether they can realistically conform part of the local plan.

Basic Site Information

All sites are researched for basic information before beginning the assessment. This includes the site's reference, its location, its size and the use or uses proposed for development.

Stage 1

This stage is an initial stage 1 compliance check. This is to ensure that sites are not affected by critical constraints, that cannot be feasibly mitigated. These assessments are automated through GIS, where possible, and have no officer judgements applied. Where a site scores red in (conflicts with) one or more of the Stage 1 criteria, it will be considered not suitable for allocation and will be rejected from the site assessment process and will not be allocated in the Local Plan. Sites may be reduced at this stage if one of the criteria affects part of the site and the remaining section is still capable of achieving the minimum site size threshold.

1. Flood Risk

Does the site lie within an area considered to be unsuitable due to high risk of flooding?

The functional floodplain is land where water from rivers or the sea has to flow or be stored in times of flood. Any sites fully within a flood storage area or the functional floodplain will not pass stage one. Any sites partly within a flood storage area or the functional floodplain will have those areas removed from the site boundary under consideration.

To assess this criterion data has been taken from the Environment Agency's Flood Storage area layer and the Strategic Flood Risk Assessments completed by the former districts, where land was identified as being within flood zone 3b – this is land which is estimated to have a greater than 1 in 30 year return risk of flooding.

No	Yes	Part

2. Internationally and Nationally Designated Sites

Is the site within, or immediately adjacent to, any national or international site of biodiversity or geological value; e.g. RAMSAR, Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Areas (SPA), Marine Conservation Zones (MCZ), and National Nature Reserves (including candidate sites such as possible SACs and potential SPAs)?

No	Yes	Part

3. Coastal Change

Does the site lie within an area considered to be at significant risk of coastal erosion?

No	Yes	Part

4. Designated Historic Assets

Would the development be within the boundaries of a Scheduled Monument or Registered Battlefield? If a site falls within the boundaries of a Scheduled Monument or Registered Battlefield and there is no scope to avoid, minimise or mitigate impact, it does not pass stage one.

No	Yes	Part

5. Health Safety Executive Zones

Does the site lie within the defined Health Safety Executive Zones and fails to accord with the following requirements:

- Is the development proposed a Level 4 sensitivity (Large examples of hospitals, nursing homes, old people's sheltered housing, boarding schools, nurseries, primary and secondary schools, theme parks, large sports stadia) and lies within any buffer zone? If so, reject the site.
- Is the development a Level 3 sensitivity (houses (more than 30 units) hospitals, nursing homes, old people's sheltered housing, boarding schools, nurseries, primary and secondary schools, prisons) within the inner and middle buffer zone? If so, reject the site.
- Is the development a Level 2 activity (houses (up to and including 30 units), caravans, mobile homes, hotels, hostels, holiday accommodation) and in the inner zone? If so, reject the site.

More details regarding the HSE's Land Use Planning Methodology can be found online.

No	Yes	Part

6. Site Size

Is the site capable of accommodating five dwellings on site? / Is the site capable of generating 500 sqm of employment floorspace?

Housing sites must be a minimum of 0.17ha (less than 5 dwellings at 30 dwellings per hectare) and employment sites must be a minimum of 0.25ha to pass stage one of the assessment.

This question should factor in any adjustments to site sizes as a result of any constraints relating to previous Stage 1 criteria.

Yes	No

7a. Relationship to a Defined Settlement in the Hierarchy

Is the site well-related to a settlement identified in the settlement hierarchy?

In order to be considered for development, a housing site must be either within or adjacent to the built form of a settlement designated in tiers 1 – 5 of the Settlement Hierarchy, as a place that will receive additional planned development.

This applies to sites that lie immediately next to the built form of the settlement, as well as sites that lie so close to the built form that it is reasonable to consider them as a possible extension to the urban boundary. The latter may include sites that are detached from the built form by a small field boundary or an area of open space (e.g. playing field).

Sites beyond the built form with permission that have not yet started are not considered to be part of the urban boundary and are classed as being in the countryside. Sites that are separated from the main built form by a site that has been assessed to be suitable for development, will be considered to be adjacent to the main built form of the settlement.

In addition, sites that are on the edge of the Local Planning Authority boundary must lie adjacent to the built form of an urban area in a neighbouring authority, in order to be considered for development. Where this is the case, the Council will proactively engage with the relevant neighbouring authority in considering the suitability of the site.

This criterion does not apply to employment or leisure uses and gypsy and traveller sites. Sites which propose mixed uses that fail this assessment for the residential element of the scheme development can still be considered for other uses.

Yes	Site proposed for housing that is well related to a defined settlement in the hierarchy. Site proposed for a non-housing use.
No	Site proposed for housing that is not well related to a defined settlement in the hierarchy.

7b. New Settlement sites

This question only applies to new settlements that have scored red under question 7a.

Has the site been put forward as a new settlement, and is there sufficient land available for a minimum of 2,500 homes?

Standalone new settlement sites within North Yorkshire will usually not be within or adjacent to the built form of an existing settlement.

National research (Barton et al. (2021), Shaping Neighbourhoods: For Local Health and Global Sustainability) shows that 2,500 homes would be sufficient to provide for a primary school, local centre, facilities including pub, post office, community centre etc. This is therefore the minimum threshold of dwellings that a standalone new settlement should be expected to achieve in North Yorkshire.

Applying general presumption of a density of 35 dwellings per hectare to the net developable area and 50% of the site being used for accompanying non-residential uses such as employment, education, open space etc. this results in a gross land area of 143 hectares.

Consideration will be given later where there are proposed new settlements smaller than 143 hectares, but the site under assessment in combination with other adjacent suitable sites put forward under Call for Sites could form a new settlement of more than 2,500 homes. This will need detailed consideration as to whether landowners would be willing to work together.

The site has been put forward as a new settlement site. The gross land area is over 143 hectares.
The site has been put forward as a new settlement site, but the gross land area is below 143 hectares, or the site promotion material indicates there will be less than 2,500 homes proposed within the boundary of the site.

8. Planning Status

Does the entire site have full planning permission with a commencement on site?

Sites with permissions that have commenced cannot be developed for other uses and so are not assessed in stage 2 of the assessment.

No	**Yes**

9. Initial Sift Outcome

Does the site pass the initial sift?

If a site has all green answers, then it passes the initial sift and goes on to be assessed in stage 2.
If the site has a red answer to any of the questions above, then it does not pass the initial sift.
If a site is partly within a major constraint criteria then the area of the site outside of the major constraint/s passes and goes on to be assessed in stage 2.

Yes	**No**

Stage 2

Stage 2 forms a detailed assessment of the suitability of sites based on sustainability and site constraints. Sites are assessed using the criteria as follows.

10a. Accessibility to Services – Residential Sites

The NPPF (August 2026) states in TR1(1)(b) “Locating proposed development where it can support sustainable patterns of movement and make effective use of existing or proposed transport

infrastructure, reflecting the principles in policy TR3. The Connectivity Tool (Connectivity Tool - GOV.UK) should be used to inform the assessment and selection of sites for development alongside other relevant quantitative or qualitative evidence."

To input score	

10b. Accessibility to Services – Employment Sites

How accessible is the site to the services that would provide for the work force, and to residential areas that could accommodate a local labour supply, by public transport, walking and cycling? Identifying sites that are located to be more accessible to the services needed by future employees should reduce the need to travel by private car.

These services being:

- Convenience Shops (including: supermarkets, corner shops, any shop which can be considered to be providing essential day-to-day products).
- Train Stations.
- Bus stops/an established bus route (specify frequency of service?)
- Residential areas where there is no potential issue with incompatible land uses (i.e. if an employment site is surrounded by residential properties, the employment use may have a negative effect on the quality of life of people who live next to the site).

This question does not apply to new settlement sites, where it is expected that new employment land will be created on site as part of a mixed-use new community.

+ +	Site is within a 15-minute walk (1km) of all listed services and residential areas.
+	Site is within a 15-minute walk of public transport facilities
-	Site is not accessible to services except by private car.

11. Accessibility to Existing Public Open Space (Residential Sites)

Is the site within reasonable walking distance of one or more publicly accessible area of green space, outdoor sports and/or equipped play facility?

Compliance with this requirement will ultimately be assessed in alignment with the councils Open Space Needs Assessment and audit and Playing Pitch Strategy.

This question does not apply to new settlement sites as it is expected that new open space both large and small-scale will be created as part of a new community.

+ +	Access to both large- and small-scale accessible greenspace within a 15-minute walk of the site with at least one of these within a 5-minute walk of the site.
+	Access to either a large scale or small-scale accessible greenspace within a 15-minute walk of the site or the opportunity for the site to address this deficiency through the provision of new greenspace on site.
+/-	Access to an accessible greenspace of any size within a 15-minute walk of the site

-	No publicly accessible area of open space, outdoor sports and/or equipped play facility within a 15-minute walk of the site and no opportunity for the site to address this deficiency.

12. Loss of Employment Land (Residential Sites)

Would development of the site result in the loss of suitable employment land?

Through the development plan the Council wants to maintain and enhance employment opportunities in the district and one of the ways of doing this is to prevent the loss of employment land to development from other uses.

A positive score will be given for proposals that add or regenerate employment land.

A neutral score will be given;

- Where it can be proven by the promoter that the lost employment use can be locally relocated (within a distance that most workers can still commute to).
- Where it can be proven by the promoter that the site is unfit for purpose, or the site has been identified for release in the HEDNA.
- Where development does not affect any employment land, the score is neutral, and;

A negative score will be given where the development of the site results in the loss of suitable land currently used for employment purposes.

+	Adds or regenerates employment land
+/-	No impact on employment land, or; Development would result in the loss of land that has been identified as unfit for purpose.
- -	Development would result in the loss of suitable employment land.

13. Proposed Retail Sites – Impact on Town Centre (Retail Sites Only)

What would be the impact on the town centre as a result of allocating this site for retail uses?

This question applies the sequential test to proposals for retail, as per Section 7 of the NPPF. The extent of town centres have been defined in previous Local Plans for the North Yorkshire Districts, and these will be reviewed in the emerging North Yorkshire Local Plan. An edge of centre location, for retail purposes, is a location that is well connected to, and up to, 300 metres from the primary shopping area. For all other main town centre uses, a location within 300 metres of a town centre boundary. In determining whether a site falls within the definition of edge of centre, account should be taken of local circumstances.

The list of settlements with primary designated shopping areas and/or town centres, based on previous North Yorkshire district plans, is:

Selby, Sherburn in Elmet, Tadcaster, Harrogate, Knaresborough, Ripon, Boroughbridge, Masham and Pateley Bridge, Scarborough, Whitby and Filey, Malton, Norton, Pickering, Kirkbymoorside and Helmsley. Northallerton, Bedale, Thirsk, Easingwold, Stokesley, Great Ayton, Skipton, Settle, High Bentham, Cross Hills, Ingleton.

This question does not apply to new settlement sites. New settlement sites will be expected to provide for some level of retail to support the needs of a new community and thereby in a location outside of an existing primary designated shopping areas and/or town centres. However, the

amount relevant will depend on the scale of new settlement (if any) allocated in the local plan. Determining this will require additional evidence identified later in the plan process.

++	Site is located within a town centre
+/-	Site is not in a town centre, or an edge-of-centre location, but is well connected to the town centre and it has been demonstrated there are no town centre sites that are available, suitable and viable for the proposed use.
-	Site is in an edge-of-centre location that has limited connectivity to the town centre
- -	Site is not in a centre, or edge-of-centre location.

14a. Access – Road Connection

Is there a physical point of access into the site?

++	Access that exists already, or will exist (for example as part of a wider scheme that is being brought forward in phases,) and that could be used for the scale and type of development proposed
+/-	No existing access but adjacent to suitable roads where a suitable access point could be taken from (or through third party land and an agreement is in place)
-	No existing access but adjacent to suitable roads where a suitable access point could be taken from, but require a purchase of third-party land (a ransom strip) and an agreement is not in place, this could potentially hinder the deliverability of the site
- -	No apparent means of creating an access, either because there are no suitable access points to suitable roads, or because the third party landowner has no intention of reaching an agreement, not considered deliverable

14b. Strategic Highway Network

What is the current status of any Strategic Road Network junction that development of the site may have an impact on?

++	There is current capacity
+/-	There is insufficient capacity, however, there is the ability to mitigate the impact of development
- -	There is insufficient capacity with no mitigation possible

14c. Proposed Employment Sites – Connection to the Highway Network (Employment Sites Only)

Does the site have direct access to an A road?

++	Yes, the site has an existing access onto an A road, or access to an A road will be created (for example as part of a wider scheme that is being brought forward in phases)
+/-	No existing access to an A road, but the site has access to a high-quality B or C road (2 lanes of traffic) which connects to an A road without passing through residential areas/difficult junctions.
- -	No existing access to an A road and the current connectivity to the A road network is via a poor-quality B or C road which passes through residential areas or difficult junctions.

14d. Proposed Employment Sites – Connection to the Rail Freight Network (Employment Sites Only)

Does the site have access to, or potential for access to, the rail freight network?

+ +	Development can make use of the rail freight network to reduce the transportation of freight or goods by road.
+/-	Development cannot make use of the rail freight network.

15. Agricultural Land

Would development lead to the loss of best and most versatile agricultural land?

This classification puts grades 1, 2 and 3a as being the best and most versatile and grades 3b, 4 and 5 as moderate to very poor. Grade 3 land is not subdivided into 3a and 3b by Natural England in the regional maps, detailed site surveys are needed to determine which type of land a site is in. The methodology has erred on the side of caution and has classed all sites on grade 3 land as being in the best and most versatile land. However, if site promoters (of those sites over 20 hectares) submit information which proves their site is in a 3b classification then the Council will score the site accordingly.

Where a site has a mix of land that falls in multiple agricultural land classification grades, the agricultural land classification grade of the largest proportion of the area will be used to score the site. Where a site is developed or has previously been developed, the site has been scored as 'No loss of agricultural land'. Where a site is not currently used for agricultural purposes but is undeveloped and has the potential to be used for agriculture, (such as allotments, football pitches or other unused greenspace and scrubland, but excluding private residential gardens), these will be scored against the Natural England classifications.

+ +	No loss of Grade 1, 2 or 3 agricultural land
+/-	Up to 20ha Grade 3 agricultural land lost
-	Up to 20ha of Grade 1 or 2 agricultural land lost
- -	More than 20ha of Grade 3 agricultural land lost
- - -	More than 20ha of Grade 1 or 2 agricultural land lost

16. Brownfield or Greenfield?

Is the site classed as Brownfield or Greenfield?

The assessment criteria is based on the NPPF guidance to focus development on brownfield sites. Land has been identified as either greenfield or previously developed land according to the definition in the glossary to the NPPF.

Sites will only be considered to have "a mixture of PDL and greenfield land" if the land type with the greatest portion is less than 75% of the total site area. This is done to attribute scores to genuinely mixed sites and prevent occurrences such as where agricultural fields incorporating farmer's dwellings are counted as mixed sites.

+ +	Site is more than 75% Previously Developed Land
+ / -	Site is between 25% and 75% Previously Developed Land

- -	Site is less than 25% Previously Developed Land

17a. Flood Risk – Level 1 SFRA

This question will be updated upon the completion of the level 1 SFRA, assessments for this question cannot be completed until that time.

Is the site considered to be at low, medium or high risk of flooding having taken account of an allowance for climate change uplift?

The NPPF and associated Planning Practice Guidance for Flood Risk and Coastal Change (PPG) emphasise the active role Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) should take to ensure that flood risk is understood and managed effectively and sustainably throughout all stages of the planning process. The assessment is based on the level of flood risk identified in the Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA). The purpose of the Level 1 SFRA is to collate and analyse the most up to date readily available flood risk information for all sources of flooding and it provides an overview of flood risk issues across the study area. The study also assesses the impact of climate change on flood risk, through detailed studies and modelling based on discussions with the EA and developer parties.

Where a site falls in multiple flood zones, then the site will be scored on the zone covering the largest proportion of the site. If the site is split equally between two zones, the area will be assessed on the area of the worst flood zone. This is to maintain consistency with the assessment of sites.

	Low Flood Risk
	Medium Flood Risk
	High Flood Risk

17b. Flood Risk - Level 2 SFRA

This question will be updated if a level 2 SFRA is required, assessments for this question cannot be completed until that time.

What is the flood risk based on the SFRA Level 2 results?

The flood risk sequential test, informed by the Level 1 SFRA, identified that in XYZ areas, not all development could be accommodated in low flood risk areas. A level 2 SFRA was therefore required in order to apply the sequential test for sites in medium and high flood risk areas. This question therefore applies only applies to sites in *XYZ* areas, within this area the question identifies:

- the severity and variation in the nature of risk within high and medium risk areas
- how this risk will vary over time with the impacts of climate change

The outcome of this question determines how potential sites are treated in the flood risk sequential and exception tests for *XYZ* areas, which has a big impact on the selection of sites for development in the town and how these sites are developed.

18. Infrastructure Constraints

Is development of the site possible without being constrained by existing infrastructure and if not, can these issues be overcome?

Examples include small scale power or phone lines, electricity pylons and water and sewage pipelines. Definite answers to these questions will be sought from the relevant infrastructure service providers.

+ +	There are no known constraints
+ / -	There are constraints but these can be satisfactorily overcome – the impact of any mitigation should be considered in relation to deliverability
- -	There are constraints and mitigation is not possible

19. Contaminated Land

Is the site contaminated or potentially contaminated?

National planning policy recognises the importance of enhancing the environment through the prevention of pollution. The presence of contaminated land results from the nature of previous on-site activities and can affect or restrict the beneficial use of land. The Council is required to identify contaminated sites within the District and bring certain sites back into beneficial use via appropriate remediation. The Council has mapped all the potential areas of contamination in the District. Further discussions with site promoters will provide more detailed contamination assessments of sites.

The development process is often the most effective way of achieving action to remove unacceptable risks arising from the contaminated state of land. These sites would provide the opportunity to address an existing problem, such as a former industrial site that has left a legacy of contamination, for the benefit of the wider community and bring contaminated land back into productive use where practicable.

Where potential contamination has been identified through the site assessments, site promoters are able to submit further information on how all contamination on the site will be removed, and in doing so will receive a positive assessment score (++). A double negative (--) assessment score will be given where there is a highly likely source of contamination, and no further evidence is given that proves a site can be realistically remediated to the extent that all unacceptable risks are removed.

+ +	Development located on land that is highly likely to be contaminated and the developer will remove the contamination through remediation
+ / -	Development is not located on land that is highly likely to be contaminated.
-	Development is located on land that is highly likely to be contaminated.
--	Development is located on land that is highly likely to be contaminated and cannot be remediated.

20. Ecological Assessment

A. Impact on Internationally Protected Sites

Would development impact upon any Special Protection Areas, Special Areas of Conservation, and Ramsar sites (including candidate sites such as possible SACs and potential SPAs)?

In the first stage of assessment a 10km buffer has been used to score the sites, this is due to impact pathways of development on European Sites, however, this does not automatically mean that likely significant effects will occur. This approach has been taken in order to simplify the initial assessment phase. All SACs and SPAs in North Yorkshire are underpinned by SSSIs and, in the majority of cases, 10km is a greater distance than that associated with the SSSI IRZ for those sites. In addition, a

Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) will be undertaken to assess the potential impacts of the Local Plan on the internationally protected sites.

The Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) informs the need for appropriate assessment and a subsequent test for the impact on the internationally protected site. The categories identified below represent a condensed form of the process which will be followed in full by a HRA screening process.

+ +	The site is more than 10km from an internationally protected site, and it is unlikely that the development will have an impact on the qualifying features of a designated site.
-	The site is within 10km of an internationally protected site and/or the effects of the development are either significant on their own or there are likely to be significant effects in combination. Appropriate assessment is required.

B. Nutrient Neutrality

Is the site within the River Tees catchment for Nutrient Neutrality?

+/-	Site not within River Tees catchment for Nutrient Neutrality, so has no impact.
-	Site within River Tees catchment for Nutrient Neutrality

C. Impact on Nationally Protected Sites

Would development impact upon any Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) or National Nature Reserves?

For National Nature Reserves this assessment is based on the distance from the development.

For SSSIs the initial assessment will be made using Natural England's Impact Risk Zones for SSSIs (SSSI IRZs). These are a Geographical Information System (GIS) tool developed to make a rapid initial assessment of the potential risks to terrestrial SSSIs posed by development proposals. They define zones around each SSSI which reflect the sensitivities of the features for which the site is notified and indicate the types of development proposal which could potentially have adverse impacts and need further consideration. In certain locations they also include Natural England's statutory advice for certain development types. The SSSI IRZs also cover the interest features and sensitivities of those European Sites (habitats sites) that are underpinned by a terrestrial SSSI designation and include a number of "Compensation Sites", which have been secured as compensation for impacts on European Sites (habitats sites).
When consultation with Natural England is required based on the score (scored orange or red) the possible level of impact should be fed back into the scoring as a narrative. Ecologist support and recommendations may be required to understand impact and whether mitigation is adequate. Data has been taken from the SSSI Impact Zone dataset, downloaded from Natural England.

+ +	Site does not fall within a SSSI impact risk zone and is more than 1km from a National Nature Reserve
+ / -	Impact Risk Zones data confirms that there is no requirement to consult Natural England as the proposed development site is unlikely to pose a risk to SSSIs, or site is between 1km and 500m from a National Nature Reserve.
-	Impact Risk Zones data confirms that there is likely to be a requirement to consult Natural England (depending on the scale of development). Appropriate mitigation must be provided. The site is within 500m of a National Nature Reserve.

D. Impact on Locally Designated nature conservation sites

Would development impact upon any Local Wildlife Sites (termed Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation, or SINCs, in North Yorkshire) or Local Nature Reserves?

This assessment criterion will establish the impact on any important Local nature conservation sites. These designations are currently mapped on GIS and used for planning purposes. These include Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs), Local Wildlife Sites (LWSs) and Local Nature Reserves (LNRs).

+ +	Site more than 500 metres from a locally designated nature conservation site.
+ / -	Site within 500m of a locally designated nature conservation site but impact insignificant
-	Site immediately adjacent to a locally designated nature conservation site or is within 500m and the impact is likely to be significant. Mitigation needed to avoid significant impact.
- -	Site overlaps a locally designated nature conservation site. Extensive mitigation and compensation needed due to significant impact.

E. Impact on Irreplaceable Habitats and Habitats of Principal Importance for Nature Conservation

Would the development of the proposed site have an impact on an irreplaceable habitat or a habitat of principal importance for nature conservation?

Irreplaceable habitat includes some of England's most ecologically valuable terrestrial and intertidal habitat. This includes ancient woodland, ancient and veteran trees, blanket bog, limestone pavements, coastal sand dunes, spartina saltmarsh swards, Mediterranean saltmarsh scrub, and lowland fens. Habitats of Principal Importance for Conservation (also called Priority Habitats) are those listed in the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006. These have been identified as being the most threatened and requiring conservation action.

The locations of these have been mapped using the Habitat data available via NEYEDC, MAGIC, OS mapping & aerial photography.

++	Site does not include irreplaceable habitat or a habitat of principal importance to conservation.
-	Site includes irreplaceable habitat or a habitat of principal importance to conservation, but it is likely that appropriate mitigation and compensation is possible
- -	Development will likely result in the loss or deterioration of an irreplaceable habitat or a habitat of principal importance to conservation

F. Would the development be within areas identified as of importance by the Local Nature Recovery Strategy?

This assessment question considers the potential impact of a development on areas identified within the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS). These are defined as either Areas of Particular Importance (APIB) or Areas that Could become of Particular Importance to Biodiversity (ACBs).

++	Site not within an area identified as a priority by the LNRS
-	Site within an Area that Could Become of Particular Importance to Biodiversity (ACB)
- -	Site within an Area of Particular Importance for Biodiversity (APIB)

Overall Ecological Assessment

A brief summary of the main constraints identified in questions A-G above, plus a professional judgement by an ecology officer which may include reference to additional information including species records from the North and East Yorkshire Ecological data Centre.

N/A	Site visit / more information required to make assessment.
++	Limited potential impacts anticipated based on the information available.
+/-	Potential for significant impacts anticipated based on the information available. The level of compensation, mitigation and enhancement required is likely to be achievable.
-	Significant impacts very difficult to avoid based on the information available. The level of compensation, mitigation and enhancement required is likely to be challenging to deliver.
--	Significant impacts cannot be avoided. The level of compensation, mitigation and enhancement required is likely to be very challenging to deliver.

21. Heritage Assets

Where a relationship between heritage assets and proposed development has been identified, a Heritage Impact Appraisal will be carried out by the council's heritage team to assess any potential harm or necessary mitigation. The results and recommendations of these assessments form the grading of such sites as set out below:

++	Elements which contribute to the significance of assets, including their setting, are enhanced or better revealed.
+/-	No change to assets or their settings.
-	Change affecting the special interest and character of assets, where elements which contribute to their significance and their setting are harmed.
- -	Considerable change affecting the special interest and character of assets including their setting, where the significance of those elements is substantially harmed or lost.

22. Archaeological Impact

Will development affect archaeological remains?

This assessment question considers buried archaeological heritage and considers if the proposed development may directly affect any known archaeological remains, it then recommends the proportionate level of mitigation required by site promoters. Any above ground remains will be considered as Historic assets through question 27.

Each site is assessed using data from the North Yorkshire Historic Environment Record which has been compiled into a geodatabase where this is within or close to a proposed development site to conduct a rapid desk-based assessment of the risk posed by development to buried heritage assets.

The assessments are completed by the archaeology team at North Yorkshire Council and archaeological potential has been applied to each site, taking into account the nature, extent and

location of the sites and the archaeological evidence. The archaeologist has taken no further documentary search, and no site visits were made as part of this archaeological appraisal, therefore the allotted risk should be considered as provisional pending further information.

++	There are no known archaeological remains within the site or its immediate environs
+/-	The site is close to, or contains some identified archaeological remains which present an unknown level of risk
-	The site contains, or is close to known archaeological remains and presents a high level of risk
- -	The site contains, or is close to known archaeological remains of national or regional significance

Archaeological expertise and recommendations will be consulted through the application process, should the site be allocated, to fully evaluate the mitigation required and ensure archaeological remains are treated in a manner proportionate to their significance.

23. Character of the Built Area

Would the development affect the built character of the town or village?

The criteria, listed below, are linked to the location of the site. The design of development is often unknown at site promotion stage, and should be ignored in any case, as this is a matter which is decided in the latter phases of a planning application.

Does the site?

- Compliment or break the existing built character?
  What is the character of the settlement, or of this part of the settlement? Is it;
  - Linear? (A group of buildings in a line, usually based along roads)
  - Nucleated? (Buildings that are situated close together, usually clustering around a central area such as a river crossing or road junction)
  - Dispersed? (Scattered development, usually more common to rural areas and smaller settlements)

  Would the development reinforce this character, or would it be out of place? Developments that reinforce the character are scored positively, with developments that break the character scored negatively.

- Constitute infill development?
  What is its relationship in terms of positioning, connectivity and integration to existing buildings?
  Developments that can be classed as infill are scored positively.

- Would the site break an established building line and protrude into the open countryside?
  How much does the site protrude into the open countryside?
  Developments that break a building line and protrude into the open countryside will be scored negatively.

This question does not apply to new settlement sites as they are standalone from existing settlements.

+	Development of the site will likely contribute positively to the built character and sense of place.
+/-	Development of the site likely to have a neutral effect on the built character and sense of place.
-	Development of the site will likely be detrimental to the built character and sense of place.

24. Landscape and Visual Impact

Potential Impacts on the character and appearance of the Landscape from proposed development will be assessed through a Landscape Assessment carried out by the council's landscape architects to assess any potential harm or necessary mitigation. The results and recommendations of these assessments form the grading of such sites.

New settlement sites will have detailed landscape evidence procured at later stages of plan making to identify mitigation and opportunities.

++	Development of the site is likely to enhance the character and appearance of the local landscape
+/-	Development of the site is likely to have a neutral effect on character and appearance of the local landscape
-	Some negative impacts on the character and appearance of the local landscape that cannot be entirely mitigated against
- -	Development of the site is likely to result in significant harm to the character and appearance of the local landscape and it is unlikely that any amount of mitigation could sufficiently reduce impact

25. Groundwater

Would the development adversely affect a water supply or Source Protection Zone?

Groundwater Source Protection Zones (GSPZ) ensure that the public drinking water supply is protected. GSPZs protect essential elements of the water supply including aquifers, groundwater flows, wells, boreholes and springs. The GSPZs are split into three main zones, these zones show the risk of contamination from any activities that might cause pollution in the area. The closer the activity to the centre of the source of groundwater, the greater the risk. The three main zones are:

Zone 1 (inner protection zone) - Defined as the 50-day travel time for water from any point below the water table to the source. This zone has a minimum radius of 50 meters.
Zone 2 (outer protection zone) - Defined by a 400-day travel time for water from a point below the water table. The zone has a minimum radius of 250 or 500 meters around the source, depending on the size of the abstraction.
Zone 3 (total catchment) - Defined as the area around a source within which all groundwater recharge is presumed to be discharged at the source.

+/-	Site is outside a Source Protection Zone or within Zone 3 (Total Catchment)
-	Site is within Zone 2 (Outer Protection Zone)
- -	Site is within Zone 1 (Inner Protection Zone)

26. Land Use Conflicts

Would the development of the site be compatible with adjoining land uses (now or in the future) or are there conflict / amenity issues?

This question has been included to ensure that any proposed development does not have a negative effect on the quality of life of people who live and work around the proposed development site. This question also assesses the potential negative effects from existing surrounding uses on the proposed use.

Therefore, site assessments will consider if a proposed development site is located close to any existing use(s) that would create a nuisance or amenity impact or conversely, if the proposed development would create a nuisance or amenity impact to the existing use(s) surrounding the site. The types of uses that may create a nuisance or amenity impact include (but are not limited to):

- Major Traffic corridors (including within 150m of Motorways and Trunk Roads and 100m of A roads and rail)
- Waste facilities (including transfer and recycling facilities)
- Quarrying.
- Waste Water Treatment Works (WWTW). Note that Yorkshire Water/Northumbrian Water (as applicable) will be specifically consulted on proposed developments located within 400m of WWTWs Certain industrial uses
- Intensive Livestock Units/Farms which deal with large numbers of animals i.e. pig farms.
- Topography.
- Commercial/industrial/trade premises

All of the above uses have the potential to create pollution including noise, air, light and odour. Industrial uses can also result in vibration, and specific forms of air pollution including dust, grit, fumes, smoke soot and ash.

+ +	Development compatible
+	With mitigation, development would be compatible
- -	Incompatible with adjoining uses and mitigation unlikely to be possible.

<u>27. Impact on Public Open Space</u>

a. Would development of the site result in the loss of, or compromise the reasons for designation of, any designated local green space (LGS)?

Designated LGS sites from existing local plans and made (adopted) neighbourhood plans.

b. How would development impact the provision of publicly accessible open space, outdoor sports and/or equipped play facilities (“open space assets”) within and/or adjacent to the site?

The provision of a publicly accessible open space asset, including open space, green infrastructure, allotments, recreational facilities and public rights of way (PROW), can be beneficial for both new and existing residents, including improved health, social inclusion and the potential to reduce carbon emissions. An Indoor and Outdoor Sports Facilities Assessment will assess the quality of existing sports and leisure facilities and whether there is a need for new facilities.

A Greenspace Audit will identify the location of greenspace throughout the area, it undertakes a quantitative and qualitative assessment of this provision; and determines local standards for the

provision of different types of greenspace in order to identify those areas which have a surplus or deficiency of such space.

+	No adverse impact on existing open space assets and development would lead to the creation of new and/or improved assets within and/or adjacent to the site.
+/-	Existing open space asset would be retained, conserved and public access is retained
-	Existing open space asset would be adversely affected, either through a reduction in its size, quality or public accessibility. Mitigation is possible.
- -	Existing public open space asset or public accessibility to that asset would be lost. Mitigation is not possible.

28. Impact on Public Rights of Way

Would the site impact upon the established Public Rights of Way Network (PROW)?

When assessing sites in relation to the PROW network, a positive weighting was identified where the proposed development site would improve the existing network. This could be through the creation of a new PROW, improving access to or the setting of an existing PROW, or other recognised improvements such as, upgrading a bridleway, accessing connectivity (including diversions of PROWs, improving visual amenity (i.e. new signage, lighting etc.), and removal of noise sources along the route.

A negative weighting will result where the proposed development site would adversely affect the network, for example, by diverting, severing or removing an existing PROW, which could result in increased walking distances, or increased use of PROW by vehicles and conflict between vehicular movement and pedestrian usage.

++	No PROW within the site and development provides an opportunity to connect to nearby / adjacent PROW routes.
+/-	No PROW within or adjacent to the site or existing PROW within the site that can be effectively diverted/re-routed within the boundary of the site
-	Existing PROW within the site that cannot be effectively diverted/re-routed within the boundary of the site and would require third party land
- -	Existing PROW would be severed with no acceptable diversion options available

29. Mineral Resource

Would development lead to the sterilisation of viable mineral resources?

This assessment question recognises that new developments could affect the supply of important minerals. The National Planning Policy Framework requires planning authorities to define Minerals Safeguarding Areas, to protect resources from sterilisation by other forms of development.
There are a wide variety of valuable mineral reserves within the Plan area, including sand, gravel, chalk, coal, clay and limestone, which can only be worked where they naturally occur. The Council

has mapped Safeguarded Mineral Areas and active mineral sites in the submission version of the minerals and waste local plan, and these have been used to inform the assessment of sites in this question.

Buffer zones have been created around mineral resources, based on the agreed impact distances set out in the minerals and waste local plan. These are detailed below.

Surface mineral resources

- All crushed rock and silica sand resources within a 500m buffer
- All sand and gravel, clay and shallow coal resources within a 250m buffer
- Building stone resources and active and former building stone quarries within a 250m buffer.

Deep mineral resources

- Underground coal resources within the Kellingley Colliery licensed area within a 700m buffer;
- Vein mineral reserves within extant planning permissions within a 250m buffer.

As set out in the Minerals and Waste Plan there are 3 categories of sites that have been considered for mineral safeguarding;

- Allocations – Sites where the granting of planning permission may reasonably be expected subject to the submission of an acceptable detailed planning application.
- Preferred Areas – Broader areas within a defined boundary in which it is considered that there is likely to be potential to develop a suitable site, for example, in order to meet longer term requirements for a particular mineral.
- Areas of Search – Areas where evidence suggests suitable (concreting sand and gravel) resources are likely to be present.

+/-	Site is not within a Mineral Safeguarding Area
-	Site within a location where potentially viable mineral deposits could exist
- -	Site falls within an allocated site, a preferred area or is within a buffer zone, for mineral extraction, where potentially viable mineral deposits could be worked

<u>30. Green Belt</u>

This assessment question states whether a site is within the Green Belt, partially inside it or outside of it. The North Yorkshire Local Plan area includes four parcels of Green Belt land that form part of the outer edges of two Green Belts- the South and West Yorkshire Green Belt and the York Green Belt. In total Green Belts cover around 360 square kilometres or 7% of the plan area.

The fundamental aim of the Green Belt is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. Therefore, any proposed development sites that compromises the open nature of the Green Belt counts as having a significant policy constraint in this assessment question. These uses include housing, employment, commercial and most types of leisure uses. Exceptions to this are listed under para 150 of the NPPF and these are explained on a case-by-case basis in the assessment.

Where an authority cannot meet its identified need for homes, commercial or other development through other means, national policy requires it to review Green Belt boundaries and propose

alterations to meet these needs in full, unless the review provides clear evidence that doing so would fundamentally undermine the purposes of the remaining Green Belt. A Green Belt review will, therefore, take place if evidence indicates insufficient suitable sites on land outside the Green Belt.

+ +	Site is not located within the green belt
-	Site is partially located in the green belt
- -	Site is located within the green belt

31. Addressing the Climate Change Agenda

To what extent does the proposed site seek to deliver the aspirations of the Council in addressing the Climate Change Agenda?

+ +	The site submission has clearly demonstrated how the site can contribute in a positive and proactive manner
+ / -	No supporting information has been provided, however, the site can meet its mandatory requirements
- -	No supporting information has been provided and it is unclear how the site can contribute towards addressing the Climate Change Agenda

32. Gaps Between Settlements

Does development of the site impact upon important gaps between settlements?

This question assesses the impact a site has on any potential Strategic Open Gap policy designation, as seen on the Local Plan draft policies map. Land within the Gaps functions to maintain key areas of openness and the individual identity of settlements, or parts of settlements. The emphasis is for development proposals to have no physical intrusion into and no impact on the open character of this land.

+/-	Development does not impact on an important gap between settlements
-	Development occurs in an important gap between settlements, but would retain a clear separation
- -	Development occurs in an important gap between settlements and would result in the full or partial coalescence of the settlements

33. Ground Conditions

Are there potential issues around ground conditions relating to Gypsum or Coal Mining?

Yes	No	Part

In some areas of the Council, there have been former coal mining operations that could lead to potential ground issues. These areas are mapped by the coal board, they are noted here for further investigation by officers, in conjunction with the coal board.

Gypsum occurs at a relatively shallow depth in the rocks beneath the Ripon area. In some areas it is susceptible to dissolution by percolating groundwater leading to the localised development of natural, underground cavities. These cavities can become unstable and collapse, leading to their

upward migration and ultimately to subsidence of the ground surface. The frequency of subsidence events in the Ripon area is low (about one event per year). Most incidents take place in the open countryside without causing damage to buildings.

Whilst the probability of subsidence occurring at a particular location is generally very low, the effects can be significant and the consequences could be serious if an occupied building were to be affected. It is therefore essential that this issue is noted here for further investigation.

A detailed investigation was carried out in 1996. The study identified a gravel-filled buried valley beneath the River Ure as a key factor influencing groundwater flows through the layers of gypsum beneath the city, enabling an understanding to be gained of the associated patterns of dissolution and subsidence. That in turn led to the preparation of a development guidance map, a simplified version of which is presented below.

The map identifies three different zones in which gypsum is thought to be:

- absent (zone A);
- present at depth (zone B) or
- present at relatively shallow depth and potentially susceptible to dissolution by flowing groundwater (zone C). Natural underground cavities relating to gypsum dissolution are also likely to be present within zone C.

Sites in zones B or C will be noted for further investigation by officers and the relevant experts in these fields.

Stage 3

Stage 3 provides an overview of the deliverability of the sites. Much of the information that has gone into Stages 1 and 2 of the assessment will inform this stage, for example, where constraints have been identified, does this prohibit the site coming forward either immediately or within the Plan period; and will mitigation of those constraints have an impact on the viability of the site when considering its requirements.

Work is still underway to establish suitable questions in respect of availability and achievability for new settlement sites which necessitate a more in-depth level of assessment given scale and complexity. At this stage an early assessment for new settlements will be made against questions 39 and 40 but this will be updated as more detailed evidence is made available. Question 41 does not apply to new settlements as only early completions may be achieved during the plan period.

34. Land Availability

Has the landowner(s) of the site confirmed the site is available for development in the Plan period?

++	The site is in single ownership and the site has been made available immediately with no issues that require resolution
+	The site is in multiple ownerships and all parties have confirmed the site is available and are willing to work together to bring the site forward in a consistent manner
+/-	The site is in multiple ownership and is only partially available or likely to be available at some point during the Local Plan period
- -	There are significant ownership issues which restrict the delivery of the site

35. Viability

Is delivery of the site economically viable having taken account of usual or expected contributions?

++	Detailed evidence has been submitted that indicates delivery of the site is viable
+	There do not appear to be any specific reasons to suggest delivery of the site would not be viable although no detailed evidence has been submitted
-	There are specific issues that would suggest the delivery of the site may be viable but may not be able to fully contribute towards its required contributions
- -	Delivery of the site is not viable.

36. Estimated Timescale for Delivery

When is the site expected to be completed or partially completed? (Not new settlements)

Possible Scores:	0-5 Years	6-10 Years	11-15 Years	Post Plan

37. Yield

Estimated Yield	

Assessment Outcome

Each assessment is completed with a summary paragraph outlining any headline issues including any issue that may impact on the deliverability of the site or any specific viability issues that may be applicable.

Where sites are considered suitable, a range of development principles are provided in order to provide clarity for landowners about how we would envisage the site coming forward.