

CROWMARSH PARISH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

SITE ASSESSMENT CROWMARSH GIFFORD



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INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The site assessment process provides the evidence that enables sites to be allocated for housing or industrial development in a Neighbourhood Plan. The process ensures that the sites selected for allocation are the most appropriate – that they are in the most sustainable location, they are in conformity with the strategic policies of the Emerging Local Plan and that there is a good prospect that the sites can be developed. The process allows a thorough and objective assessment of all sites that have been considered in the SHLAA (Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment), the SHELAA (Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment) and any other evaluations that have been submitted. The process provides the reasoning behind how and why the sites that are chosen for allocation have been selected, and why others have not, and the basis on which the decisions were reached.

The SHLAA and subsequent SHELAA set out all land with potential for housing. It does not follow that all deliverable sites need to be allocated but only those sites that enable the number of houses identified in the Housing Needs Assessment to be delivered, 110 new dwellings in the case of Crowmarsh Gifford. Neighbourhood plans cover smaller areas than SHLAA or SHELAA and neighbourhood plans are able to consider a variety of spatial options for place making that is not possible for every Parish at the District scale. This allows for more emphasis to be placed on defining and comparing spatial options before considering the role that an individual site may play in delivering one or more of those options. It also enables small parcels of land, and parts of existing sites, to be assessed rather than the whole site.

The site assessment process to determine the housing allocation policy is carried out from a preferred spatial option evaluation. This is the broad allocation of preferred and not preferred locations by the community, i.e. where the community would like to see development and where it would not. The options available are:

1. Within the village envelope
2. Adjacent to the south of the village, west of the A4074, west of Old Reading Road
3. Adjacent to the south of the village, west of the A4074, east of Old Reading Road
4. Adjacent to the south and east of the village, east of the A4074
5. To the north of the village jutting into open countryside

Two further sites are available within an industrial area and these are identified for industrial or employment use rather than domestic housing. A survey of parishioners (Report on the LNP Surveys, September 2017) showed a clear majority in favour of development option 3 *Adjacent to the south of the village, west of the A4074, east of Old Reading Road*, and the least favoured was option 5 *To the north of the village jutting into open countryside*. Option 3 is favoured by most villagers as it includes brown field land and because it infills between the village and the Lister Wilder industrial site to the south of the village envelope. Its attraction is that it maintains the east west longitudinal layout of the village which originated along The Street many centuries ago. All the other options have restrictions applied to them, including option 5, such as flooding, access, intrusion into valued landscape, and/or AONB. The favoured Option 3 is within the Chilterns AONB but the land is at best degraded AONB and development provides an element of land reclamation and upgrading.

The site assessment process considers each site in terms of its suitability, availability and its achievability or economic viability. In theory, all the sites are available as all have been included in the SHLAA and SHELAA exercises; site 4 is currently gainfully employed and is thus not readily available and sites CRO 8 and CRO 9 may only be available in the medium- to longer-term because the owner is not currently willing to sell. A site is considered 'achievable' when there is evidence that it is economically viable in terms of its benefit to the community and there is a reasonable prospect that the particular type of development will be created on the site at a particular point in time. All of the sites offer some degree of achievability. It is the first criteria, that of suitability, that best provides the means of ranking the sites. Factors which should be considered in the assessment of suitability include:

- Consistency with the policies in the adopted or emerging local plan. If the Local Plan rules out development, it is considered to be not suitable.
- Physical factors such as access to the site, infrastructure, flood risk or contamination.
- Accessibility to services and facilities such as public transport, shops, education and health services. If the site is not close to facilities and residents could only travel by car to access services, this location may not be suitable.
- Impacts on national and local environmental features. If development of the site for the proposed land use caused harm to an environmental asset, the site would not be suitable.
- Environmental impacts experienced by residents and neighbouring areas.

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Each site (Figure 1) is assessed against these criteria and ranked as suitable (green), moderately suitable (Yellow) or not suitable (red). The criteria are laid out in tabular form for each site, sites CRO1 and CRO2 being considered together as a single planning unit and sites CRO5 and CRO10 are also considered together as one unit. The environmental assessment derived from the landscape survey (Landscape survey and impact assessment) is carried forward into this assessment as also are the villager's preferred options derived from the September 2017 surveys.

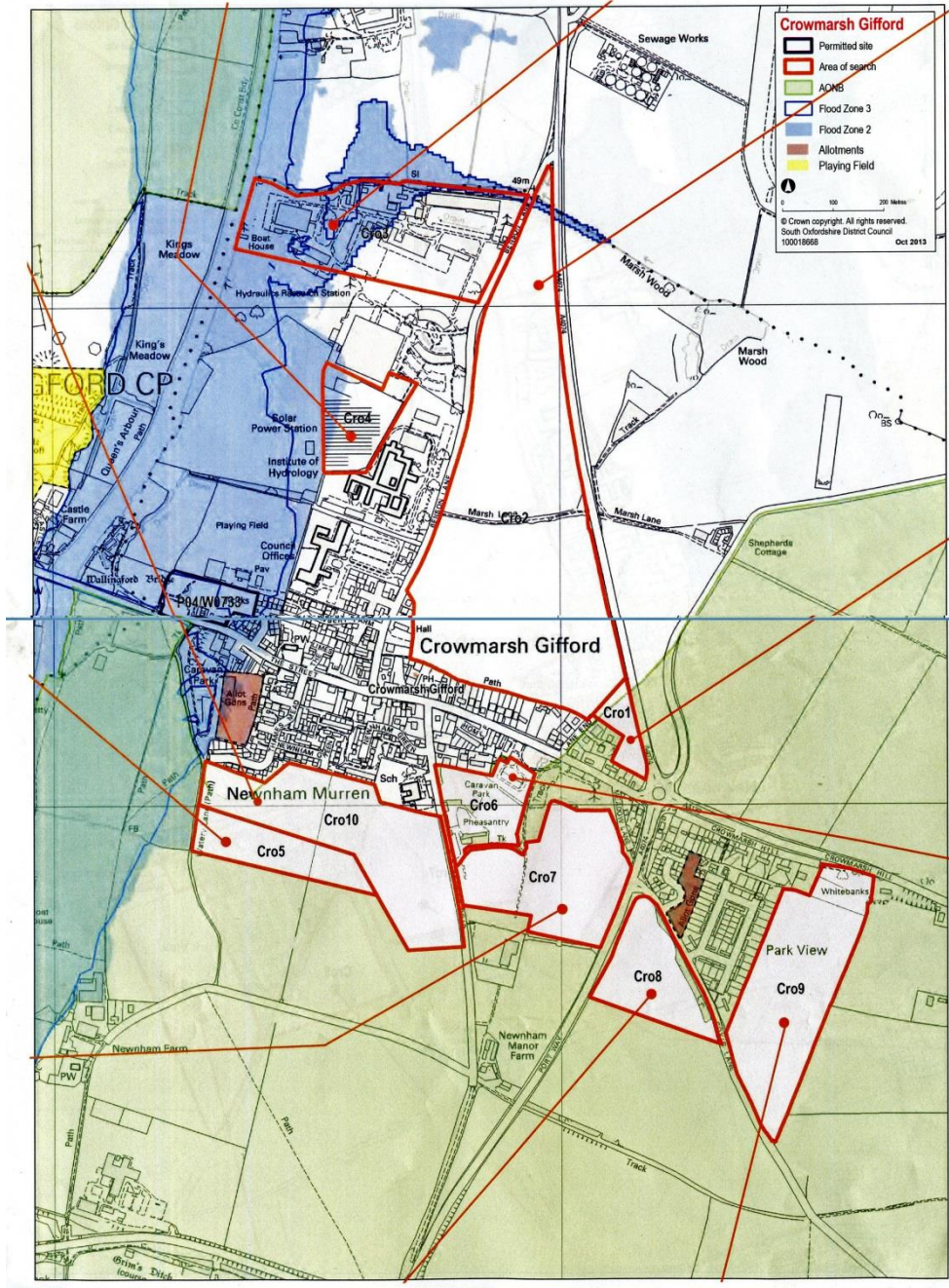


Figure 1 The location of the ten sites identified in the SHLAA and SHELAA exercises

CR01 and CR02 – Land east of Benson Lane



Relevant planning history:

P08/W1029/O – Withdrawn before determination (09/12/2008). Outline application for the erection of 200 dwellings (including affordable housing) associated landscaping and arboricultural works, parking and public open space provision together with a new vehicular and pedestrian access from Benson Lane and link road to the A4074.

P08/W1028/O – Refused (19/12/2008) – Appeal Withdrawn (13/07/2009). Outline application for the erection of 420 dwellings (including affordable housing provision), associated landscaping and arboricultural works, parking, public open space provision and sports pavilion, together with a new vehicular and pedestrian access from Benson Lane and link road to the A4074.

P09/W0201/0 – Refused (24/06/2009) - Refused on appeal (02/12/2009). Outline application for the erection of 210 dwellings (including affordable housing provision), associated landscaping and arboricultural works, parking, public open space provision, together with a vehicular and pedestrian access from Benson Lane and Lane End. The key reason for the dismissal of the appeal was the conflict with the Local Plan housing policies and housing land supply at the time of the proposal. The inspector also commented that the addition of 210 further dwellings would increase the size of the village in an ad hoc manner, ahead of the imminent Core Strategy, and use a disproportionately large area of land.

P16/S3608/0 – Refused (29/03/2017), decision currently subject to Appeal Hearing. Outline planning application for up to 150 dwellings together with associated access, public open space, landscaping and amenity areas, Crowmarsh Gifford. Permission refused as harmful to the local character and distinctiveness of the local area and adjacent AONB; absence of educational capacity; loss of Grade 2 Agricultural land; and absence of Section 106 agreement.

CRO1 and CRO2 – Land east of Benson Lane		
Site access	Onto Benson Lane which is at capacity morning and evening and will be exacerbated when SODC and Vale return to their site. Traffic would pass onto The Street providing a potential for dangerous conditions at peak time and school drop off and collection times.	Red
Scale of development	450 houses represents a density of 17.4 dwellings per ha. Any smaller development on this site would inevitably be a first phase towards the development of the whole site. The potential of this size is out of scale with the existing village and even initial development here would be unsustainable.	Red
Access to village shop, school and pubs	Within walking distance but likely a car journey in adverse weather.	Yellow
Access to public transport	Bus stops to Wallingford, Oxford, Reading and Henley within walking distance	Green
Constraints	Partly in AONB. Flood Zones 2 and 3 in northern part of site. Implementation of SUDS could generate localised groundwater flooding during prolonged wet periods. Major gas transmission line sterilizes western sector of the site.	Red
Community benefits	None identified.	Red
Villagers' preferences	Least preferred site for development.	Red
Environmental issues	Good quality Grade 2 Agricultural Land. Host to four protected species. The site is described by SODC* as a 'valued landscape' and development would 'have a significant and demonstrable adverse effect upon the setting of the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty'.	Red
Heritage	Likely Bronze Age features contained within the site area.	Red
Overall score	This is not a priority site for housing development	Red

*SODC Planning Department rejection letter dated 4 April 2017 to proposed developers

CR03 – Howbery Park

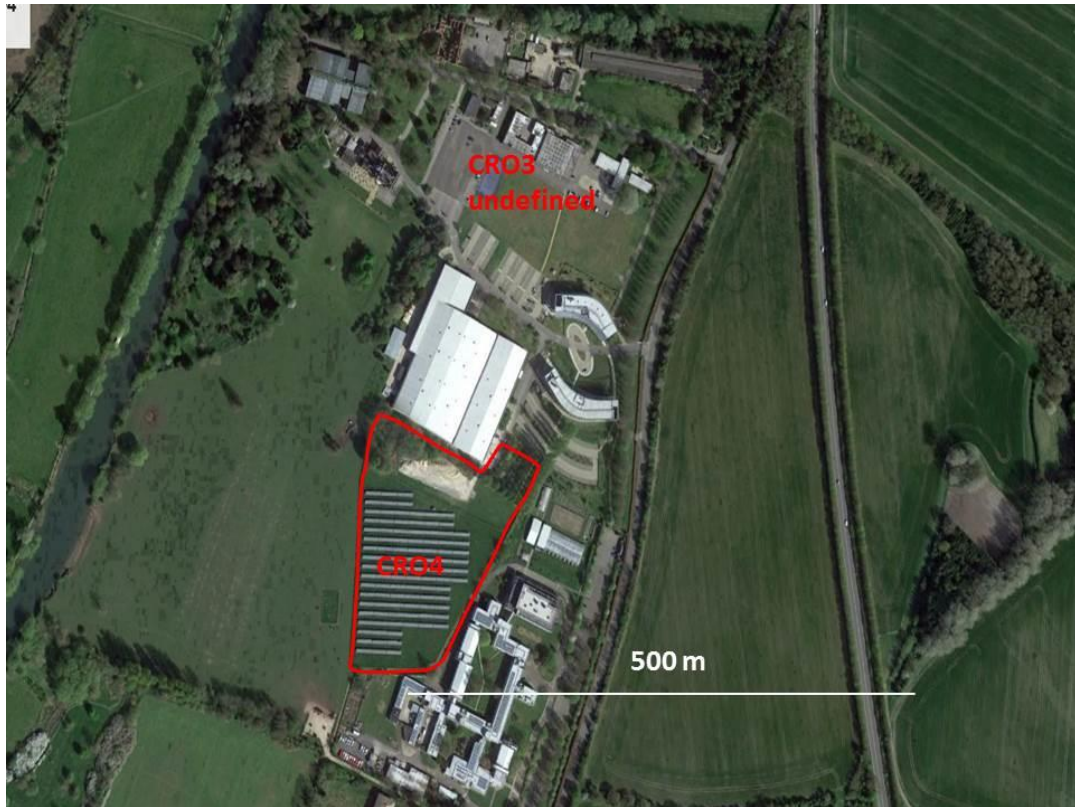
Site not defined but includes land north of Red Kite House, west of Benson Lane and east of Howbery Manor that is currently laid to grass with margins used as car parking areas.

Relevant planning history:

P08/W1266/0 – Withdrawn before determination (24/02/2009). Outline residential development for up to 60 dwellings with accompanying statements on employment and issues and analysis of community consultation and noise assessment. SODC officers had previously made it clear that they were unlikely to support any residential development on this site which had been identified for employment use. This advice followed advancement by Howbery Park of an earlier scheme to develop 0.5 ha at the eastern end of the northern avenue with indicative capacity of around 40 dwellings.

CRO3 – Howbery Park (employment use)		
Site access	Onto Benson Lane which is at capacity morning and evening and will be exacerbated when SODC and Vale return to their site.	
Scale of development	Site identified by SODC Officers for employment use rather than for residential dwellings.	
Access to village shop, school and pubs	n/a	
Access to public transport	Bus stops to Wallingford, Oxford, Reading and Henley within walking distance	
Constraints	None	
Community benefits	Job opportunities. Economic benefit.	
Villagers' preferences	Preferred site for employment use – no strong opinion.	
Environmental issues	Development in keeping with character of the Park and respecting the wildlife area within the Park.	
Heritage	None identified.	
Overall score	This is a preferred site for employment use.	

CR04 – Solar panel farm



Relevant planning history:

None

CRO3 – Solar panel farm (employment use)		
Site access	Via Howbery Park onto Benson Lane which is at capacity morning and evening and will be exacerbated when SODC and Vale return to their site.	
Scale of development	Site suitable for employment use rather than for residential dwellings – not currently available.	
Access to village shop, school and pubs	n/a	
Access to public transport	Bus stops to Wallingford, Oxford, Reading and Henley within walking distance	
Constraints	Part flood zone 2.	
Community benefits	Job opportunities. Economic benefit.	
Villagers' preferences	Preferred site for employment use – no strong opinion.	
Environmental issues	None.	
Heritage	None identified.	
Overall score	This is a preferred site for employment use although not currently available and partly liable to flooding.	

CR05 and CR010 – Newnham Green, land to the west of Old Reading Road



Relevant planning history:

P72/H0882 – Permission refused (02/05/1973). Application for outline planning permission for residential development of site: land at northern end of OS parcels 129a and 129, Newnham Farm, Crowmarsh. Refusal based on poor access to then main Reading to Oxford highway, and high landscape value and productivity of farmland.

P16/S3665/0 – Permission refused (09/11/2016). Erection of up to 80 dwellings including affordable housing (40%), along with the provision of open space, community hall, enhanced facilities including sports pitch and car parking for Crowmarsh Gifford Primary School. New vehicular access from Old Reading Road. The application was refused because the site lies beyond the edge of the settlement of Crowmarsh Gifford and is not a site allocated for housing. The proposal would constitute a major development within the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and there are no exceptional circumstances that are in the public interest that would justify this major development within the AONB. The South Oxfordshire District Council – Delegated Report 17 proposal would result in the loss of countryside that is characteristic of the Thames Floodplain fringes of the AONB, which helps to define the rural setting of the village. It would cause material harm to the character and intrinsic quality of this part of the AONB and the harm would outweigh the benefits of the development.

CRO5 and CRO10 – Newnham Green, land to the west of Old Reading Road		
Site access	Onto Old Reading Road which is congested morning and afternoon during school drop off and pick up times. Traffic would pass onto The Street providing a potential for dangerous conditions at peak times.	Red
Scale of development	80 houses represents a density of only 7.6 dwellings per ha.	Yellow
Access to village shop, school and pubs	Within walking distance.	Green
Access to public transport	Bus stops to Wallingford, Oxford, Reading and Henley within reasonable walking distance	Yellow
Constraints	See rejection notices to development applications: outside settlement boundary; 'It would cause material harm to the character and intrinsic quality of this part of the AONB and the harm would outweigh the benefits of the development'.	Red
Community benefits	None identified.	Red
Villagers' preferences	Not a preferred site for development.	Red
Environmental issues	Good quality pasture land liable to groundwater flooding. Part of Chilterns AONB.	Red
Heritage	None of significance.	Green
Overall score	This is not a priority site for development	Red

CR06 and CR07 – Newnham Manor, land to the south of Newnham Manor



Relevant planning history:

P16/S3852/FUL – Approved (16/01/18), no EIA required as no objection raised by AONB Board. Land to the south of Newnham Manor Crowmarsh Gifford Proposal: Hybrid planning application for the erection of 100 new residential dwellings including new access road off the A4074, public open space (full application) and the provision of school land (outline application) at Newnham Manor, Crowmarsh Gifford.

CRO6 and CRO7 – Newnham Manor, land to the south of Newnham Manor		
Site access	Onto A4074 opposite Cox's Lane, opportunity to improve access onto Cox's Lane. No traffic added onto existing village streets other than for access.	
Scale of development	100 houses represents a density of 6.4 dwellings per ha. This scale of development is within the Local Plan allocation of 110 new dwellings and could be assimilated within the existing village fabric without too much stress on the sustainability of the village.	
Access to village shop, school and pubs	Within walking distance but likely a car journey in adverse weather.	
Access to public transport	Bus stops to Wallingford, Oxford, Reading and Henley within walking distance	
Constraints	Within AONB but is partly brownfield in need of reclamation and lies between the village boundary and a new employment site offering an infill opportunity.	
Community benefits	Site development would largely fulfil allocation of houses in emerging Local Plan for Crowmarsh Gifford. Develops unsightly area including brownfield with waste dumps and disused gravel pit as well as caravan site area. Improves junction between Cox's Lane and A4074.	
Villagers' preferences	Preferred site by the majority of villages (2 to 1) for development.	
Environmental issues	Grade 2 agricultural land. Site is largely screened from the AONB land rising to the east, and cannot easily be seen from the west and Thames-side pathways.	
Heritage	None identified.	
Overall score	This is a preferred site for housing development	

CRO8 – Southern portion of field south of Cox’s Lane and east of A4074



Relevant planning history:

None

CRO8 – Southern portion of field south of Cox’s Lane and east of A4074		
Site access	Onto Cox’s Lane and then to A4074. Existing village streets would be used for access only.	
Scale of development	80 houses represents a density of 24.1 dwellings per ha. Site not currently available.	
Access to village shop, school and pubs	A car journey in adverse weather.	
Access to public transport	Bus stops to Wallingford, Reading and Henley within walking distance	
Constraints	In AONB. Greenfield site used for arable production.	
Community benefits	None identified.	
Villagers’ preferences	Not considered.	
Environmental issues	Considerable see also SODC report on the site.	
Heritage	None identified.	
Overall score	This is not a likely site for development	

CR09 – Field north of Cox’s Lane, east of Park View



Relevant planning history:

None

CRO9 – Field north of Cox’s Lane, east of Park View – whole site		
Site access	Onto upper end of Crowmarsh hill. Existing village streets used for access only.	
Scale of development	140 houses represents a density of 18.2 dwellings per ha. Abandoned quarry in northern portion of the site could be reclaimed and offer sites for 10 dwellings at a density of 10 per ha. Whole site not currently available.	
Access to village shop, school and pubs	Within walking distance but likely a car journey in adverse weather.	
Access to public transport	Bus stops to Wallingford, Reading and Henley within walking distance	
Constraints	In AONB.	
Community benefits	Reclamation of abandoned quarry area along northern perimeter of the site at the top of Crowmarsh Hill and west of Whitebanks.	
Villagers’ preferences	Not considered.	
Environmental issues	Protected species little owls nesting in adjacent Cox’s Lane.	
Heritage	None identified.	
Overall score	The whole site is not a likely site for development although the quarry area in the northern portion of the site (CRO9a) is considered separately.	

CRO9a – Field north of Cox’s Lane, east of Park View – quarry site at northern margin		
Site access	Onto upper end of Crowmarsh hill. Existing village streets used for access only.	
Scale of development	10 dwellings at a density of 10 per ha.	
Access to village shop, school and pubs	Within walking distance but likely a car journey in adverse weather.	
Access to public transport	Bus stops to Wallingford, Reading and Henley within walking distance	
Constraints	In AONB but brownfield in need of reclamation.	
Community benefits	Reclamation of abandoned quarry area along northern part of the site and at the top of Crowmarsh Hill, to the west of Whitebanks.	
Villagers’ preferences	Not considered.	
Environmental issues	None.	
Heritage	None identified.	
Overall score	The quarry area in the northern portion of the site lends itself for development with good access and recovery of abandoned brownfield site	

CONCLUSIONS

Two clear sites for housing development, CRO6 and CRO7 combined, land south of Newnham Manor, and CRO9, an abandoned quarry site, north of Cox's Lane, and one for employment use, CRO3 Howbery Park, emerge from the analysis. The two housing development sites satisfy the housing needs assessment for 110 new dwellings.

HOUSING ALLOCATION	CRO1/2	CRO3	CRO4	CRO5/10	CRO6/7	CRO8	CRO9	CRO9a
Site access	Red			Red	Green	Red	Green	Green
Scale of development	Red			Yellow	Green	Red	Red	Green
Access to village shop, school, pubs	Yellow			Green	Yellow	Red	Yellow	Yellow
Access to public transport	Green			Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green
Constraints	Red			Red	Green	Red	Red	Yellow
Community benefits	Red			Red	Green	Red	Red	Green
Villagers' preferences	Red			Red	Green		Red	
Environmental issues	Red			Red	Green	Red	Red	Green
Heritage	Red			Green	Green	Green	Red	Green
Overall score	Red			Red	Green	Red	Red	Green

CROWMARSH PARISH LOCAL NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

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EMPLOYMENT USE ALLOCATION	CRO1/2	CRO3	CRO4	CRO5/10	CRO6/7	CRO8	CRO9	CRO9a
Site access								
Scale of development								
Access to village shop, school and pubs								
Access to public transport								
Constraints								
Community benefits								
Villagers' preferences								
Environmental issues								
Heritage								
Overall score								