

Edlesborough Parish Neighbourhood Plan Site Assessments Report

Draft 1.1 November 2016



Introduction

The purpose of this report is to provide a summary of the housing site assessment work that has informed the selection of sites in the Edlesborough Parish Neighbourhood Plan.

Edlesborough Parish comprises three individual villages, Edlesborough, Dagnall and Northall. The July 2016 Draft Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan (VALP) has classified Edlesborough Village as a larger village and as such requires a 22% increase in the housing stock between April 2013 and March 2033. The other two villages have been classified as smaller villages and as such are expected to provide a 5% increase in housing stock during the 2013 to 2033 period.

Although the Neighbourhood Plan is very likely to be examined and made before the adoption of the new Local Plan, and it will therefore be tested against the strategic provisions of the existing Aylesbury Vale Development Local Plan (AVDLP), it can still refer to the evidence of reasoning of emerging strategic policy. In this case, the indication is that Edlesborough Village will be required to provide a total of 164 new homes. The villages of Dagnall and Northall will be required to provide a total of 11 and 9 new homes each respectively.

The Methodology

It is important to explain the how the site assessment work fits with the process of preparing the Neighbourhood Plan and with the separate but closely related Sustainability Appraisal (SA/SEA) exercise.

The visioning and objective work that formed the basis of early community engagement activity on the Plan provided a clear preference for the spatial strategy that the Plan must adopt to growing the villages in the future. In essence, the outcome was that the spatial strategy must plan for growth in such a way that distributed housing sites around each of the villages as appropriate and would ensure that the impact of growth would not be too great at any one location and that incursions of development would be minimised.

The site assessment work was used to identify those sites that were consistent with the proposed spatial strategy and to inform the development principles contained in the allocation policies EP2, EP3, EP4, EP5 and EP10. The assessments simply comprise a view of the physical characteristics of each site and their context as matters of observable fact rather than opinion. In this regard, the approach shares some similarities with the methodology for housing and economic land availability assessment (HELAA) documents outlined in the good practice document published by DCLG..

However, it gives greater primacy to the role of spatial planning, which is more possible and of greater value when operating at the smaller geographic scale of a neighbourhood plan. It also acknowledges the need for the Neighbourhood Plan to pass a referendum in order to be made (as and provided for by Planning Policy Guidance ID 3-005), the methodology makes provision for an assessment of the acceptability of a site to win majority support from the local community at referendum.

The Sites

The starting point for identifying possible housing sites was the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) carried out by AVDC. This identified a number of possible housing sites within the electoral wards of Edlesborough and Northall, but none in the ward of Dagnall. All the HELAA sites were initially assessed although in some cases that assessment was confined to just partial development of the site rather than development of the entire HELAA site. All the sites are referred to by their HELAA designation.

Summary Assessment

The table below lists all the HELAA sites in numerical order and summarises the HELAA suitability assessment and whether or not the Steering Group concurred with that assessment.

The HELAA map showing the Edlesborough sites is contained in Annex A and the one showing the Northall sites is contained in Annex B.

A more detailed assessment of each of the sites considered by the Steering Group to have at least some potential for housing development is contained in Annex C.

Site Identification	Site Location	HEELA Suitability Assessment	Steering Group Suitability Assessment
EDL001	Land on the north side of Ford Lane, Edlesborough	Unsuitable – Important site in the landscape & village character. Poor highway infrastructure.	Partial development may be possible but only provided that a large part of the site is set aside as open space to retain most of the current landscape value.
EDL002	Land adjacent to Dove House Close,	Suitable for up to 10 houses providing that a buffer strip to the stream is retained.	Agree with the HELAA assessment. The buffer strip could provide an additional community facility in the form of a riverside

	Edlesborough		walk.
EDL003	Land north of Cow Lane, opposite the Surgery, Edlesborough	Suitable for up to 45 houses in total. The southern part of the site already has planning approval for 30 dwellings.	Agree with the HELAA assessment. The northern part of the site should be developed as an extension of the southern part and not an extension of Good Intent.
EDL004	Land at the end of Summerleys, Edlesborough	Unsuitable – Part of site fronting Summerleys has planning approval for a single dwelling. Remainder of site is not well related to the rest of the settlement and has poor highway access.	Agree with the HELAA assessment. Remainder of site has no highway access. Development would result in an unacceptable extension of built development into open countryside.
EDL005	Land between Leighton Road and Tring Road, Edlesborough	Unsuitable – Site is detached and has no relationship to the built up area of the settlement.	Agree with the HELAA assessment. Site excessively large. Totally disconnected from existing built settlement. Entirely within the AAL.
EDL006	Land at the bottom of Cow Lane, Edlesborough	Unsuitable – Site detached from the built form of the settlement and in a rural location.	Agree with the HELAA assessment. Site too large and totally disconnected from existing built settlement. Highway access would be problematical.
EDL007	Land north east of Leighton Road opposite Sparrow Hall Farm, Edlesborough	Unsuitable – Site detached from the built form of the village and exposed to the north.	Agree with the HELAA assessment. Site too large and totally disconnected from existing built settlement.
EDL008	Land to south of Cow Lane, adjacent to Surgery, Edlesborough	Unsuitable – Developing the site would have a harmful effect on biodiversity. North west part detached from rest of settlement. Long distance views to and from site.	Agree with the HELAA assessment. The only part of the site that might be suitable for small scale development needs to be reserved for possible future expansion of the Surgery.
EDL009	Land off the High Street opposite the School, Edlesborough	Unsuitable – Development would have an adverse effect on Scheduled Ancient Monuments and listed buildings nearby. Site forms an important green gap with views to the	The site already has planning permission for 57 new dwellings. Open space in the middle of the site that forms an integral part of the approved scheme must be preserved.

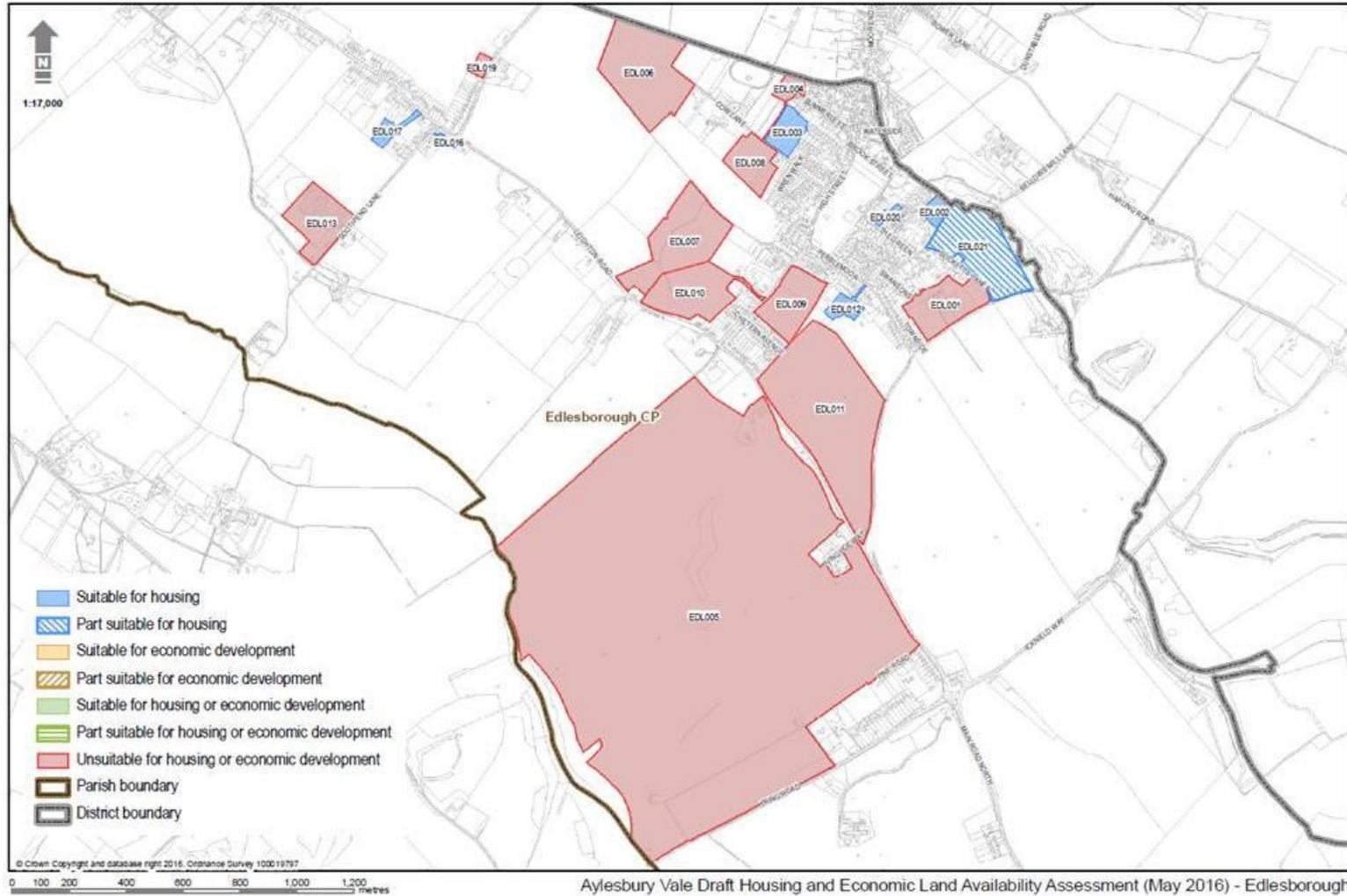
		Chilterns AONB.	
EDL010	Land off Leighton Road backing onto Church Croft, Edlesborough	Unsuitable – Site lies close to Scheduled Ancient Monument and is poorly related to the rest of the settlement. Developing the site would have a medium to high ecology impact.	Agree with the HELAA assessment. Development of this site would result in an unacceptable extension of the built development into open countryside. The site is totally within the AAL.
EDL011	Land to the east of Leighton Road, backing onto Chiltern Avenue, Edlesborough	Unsuitable – Site is poorly related to the rest of the settlement and in the AAL. Development would be likely to have a harmful landscape and visual impact.	Agree with the HELAA assessment. Site would result in an unacceptable extension of the built development into open countryside. Site is excessively large and would overwhelm the southern approaches to the village. Site is totally within the AAL.
EDL012	Farmyard at Manor Farm, Edlesborough	Suitable – Site already has permission for 6 dwellings.	The site has already been developed.
EDL013	Deans Farm, South End Lane, Northall	Unsuitable – Adjacent land is open fields and housing opposite is sporadic and dispersed. A development of 5 or more homes would be out of character with the area.	Although not conjoined to the existing built development of the settlement, the site is currently an eyesore. Partial development to provide a mix of down-sizer, starter and affordable homes, with the remainder landscaped to provide a public open space, considered appropriate.
EDL014	Land at Whistle Brook Farm, Slapton Lane, Northall	Unsuitable – Site is distant from the village (2km) with no adjacent development. Development would be out of character with the settlement.	Agree with the HELAA assessment. Site would be an extremely large isolated development in open countryside.
EDL016	Threeways, Leighton Road, Northall	Suitable – Site already has planning approval for 5 dwellings.	Site is already being developed and nearing completion.
EDL017	Land adjacent to and behind The Cottage, Leighton Road, Northall	Suitable for up to 16 dwellings subject to suitable access being achieved.	Agree with the HELAA assessment that some development of the site might be appropriate, but a 16 homes development considered to be too large and out of keeping with the character of the village.
EDL019	Land off Eaton	Unsuitable – Site is beyond the established built	Agree with the HELAA assessment. Site would result in an

	Bray Road, Northall	up area and development would harm the character of the settlement and surrounding countryside.	unacceptable extension of the built development into open countryside.
EDL020	29 The Green, Edlesborough	Suitable for up to 6 dwellings subject to suitable access being achieved. Development would constitute infill within the existing built up area.	Agree with the HELAA assessment. Suitable for up to 6 new dwellings providing the majority of them are relatively small units.
EDL021	Land off Slicketts Lane, Edlesborough	Part suitable for housing. Northern half best relates to existing built development and considered suitable for up to 80 houses subject to appropriate access being achieved. Southern part of site unsuitable for development. More exposed and rural in nature.	Agree with the HELAA assessment except that an 80 house development considered too large - Would be out of character with that part of the village. Any development would need to be low density and low rise, in keeping with nearby built development.

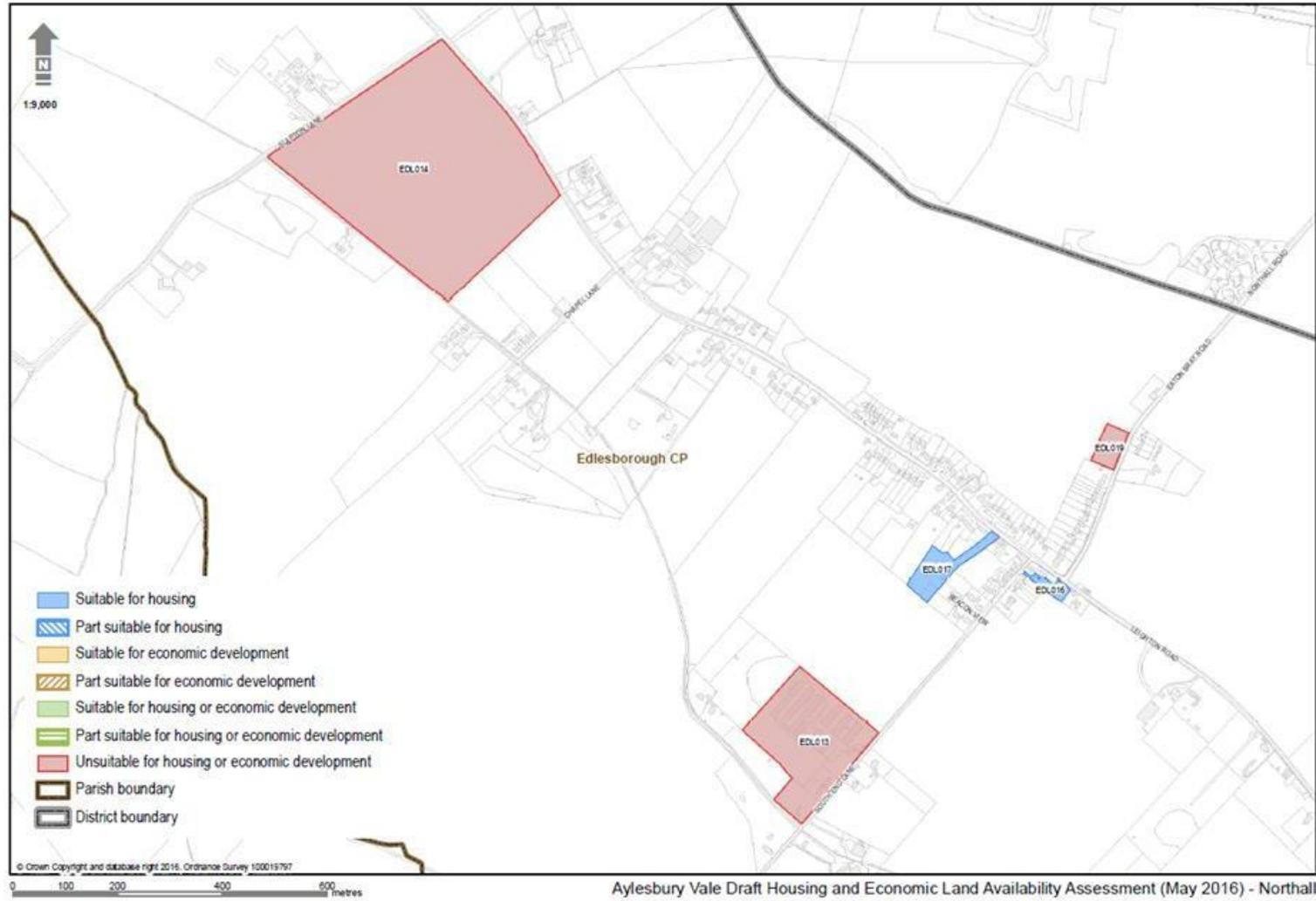
The HELAA map showing the Edlesborough sites is contained in Annex A and the one showing the Northall sites is contained in Annex B.

A more detailed assessment of each of the sites considered by the Steering Group to have at least some potential for housing development but not already approved, is contained in Annex C.

ANNEX A



ANNEX B



Annex C

DETAILED SITE ASSESSMENTS

Note: All areas are approximations only and are there to give an indication of the size of the site.

EDL001 Land to the north side of Ford Lane, Edlesborough

Site Area: 3.8 hectares

Current use: Pasture

Factor		Notes
1	Rural Character	The site is bounded on 2½ sides by existing development but is outside the current settlement boundary. Development in its entirety would adversely impact on the character of the village.
2	Landscape Setting	The land is immediately adjacent to the AAL and contributes to the open views on that edge of the village. Partial development around the built fringe of the site might be acceptable but most of the land along Ford Lane would need to be kept as open space to preserve the landscape setting.
3	Land Use	The land is greenfield so development would not regenerate brownfield land.
4	Heritage	The land does not affect any listed buildings.
5	Core facilities	The land is remote from most of the village facilities.
6	Community Profile	Poor pedestrian links to the centre of the village and the distance from the available facilities makes it less suitable for young families and elderly people.

Planning History

There is no recorded planning history.

Steering Group Assessment

The site would extend the village beyond the existing settlement boundary and its size and location close to the AAL would have an adverse effect on the rural character as well as views to and from the AAL.

It is therefore not consistent with the preferred spatial strategy for growing the village and should not be allocated.

EDL002 Land adjacent to Dove House Close, Edlesborough

Site Area: 0.7 hectares

Current use: Orchard and market garden

Factor		Notes
1	Rural Character	The site is bounded on 2 sides by existing development with a third side bounded by a stream which constitutes the parish boundary. Although outside the current settlement boundary, development would not significantly impact on the character of the village.
2	Landscape Setting	The land is visible from Slicketts Lane and Dove House Close. Development may result in some loss of wild habitat.
3	Land Use	Most of the land is greenfield so development would not regenerate brownfield land.
4	Heritage	The land lies within sight of two listed buildings located in Slicketts Lane and so the vehicular access would need to preserve the setting those buildings.
5	Core facilities	The land is relatively remote from most of the village facilities, but improved pedestrian access could be created via Taskers Row.
6	Community Profile	The site offers the opportunity to create a new community riverside walk along the buffer strip to the stream.

Planning History

An outline planning application for 10 houses is currently awaiting determination.

Steering Group Assessment

The site would extend the village beyond the existing settlement boundary but would not have significant effect on the rural character, provided that the development was low density and low rise in keeping with neighbouring development. It could provide an additional local amenity in the form of a riverside walk, but care would need to be taken to preserve the setting of the two nearby listed buildings. It could provide up to 10 new homes.

It is therefore consistent with the preferred spatial strategy for growing the village and should be allocated.

EDL003B Land at the bottom of Good Intent, Edlesborough

Site Area: 0.6 hectares

Current use: Disused orchard

Factor		Notes
1	Rural Character	The site is bounded on 2 sides by existing development and when the planning approval for southern part of the site (EDL003A) is implemented, the third side will also be bounded by development. Although outside the current settlement boundary, development would not significantly impact on the character of the village.
2	Landscape Setting	The land is visible from the public footpath that runs along the north western boundary. Development may result in some loss of wild habitat.
3	Land Use	The land is greenfield so development would not regenerate brownfield land.
4	Heritage	The land does not affect any listed buildings.
5	Core facilities	The land is relatively close to many of the village facilities, and although vehicular access should only be via Cow Lane and site EDL003A, pedestrian access could be created via Good Intent providing good access to the village shops.
6	Community Profile	Good access to many of the village facilities would make the site suitable for people of all ages including young children and the elderly.

Planning History

There is a long history of planning applications for housing which were all refused because the site was considered to be outside existing built development and would constitute an extension into open countryside.

Steering Group Assessment

The site would extend the village beyond the existing settlement boundary, but once site EDL003A is developed, it will be bounded on three sides by built development. Consequently it would not have significant effect on the rural character of the village. Vehicular access should not however be provided via Good Intent, as the width and layout of that road is not adequate to accommodate all the additional traffic that would be generated. It could provide up to 15 new dwellings in addition to the 30 houses already approved for site EDL003A.

It is therefore consistent with the preferred spatial strategy for growing the village and should be allocated.

EDL013 Deans Farm, South End Lane, Northall

Site Area: 3.7 hectares

Current use: Derelict chicken farm

Factor		Notes
1	Rural Character	The land is in open fields and is entirely separate from the built development of the settlement.
2	Landscape Setting	The land is visible from South End Lane and comprises derelict chicken sheds that are generally regarded as an eyesore.
3	Land Use	The land is not currently in agricultural use and regeneration of at least part of the site to provide a mix of new homes with the remainder of the site landscaped could be beneficial.
4	Heritage	The land does not affect any listed buildings.
5	Core facilities	The village has very few facilities but the site is closer to those that do exist than most other houses in the settlement.
6	Community Profile	The site offers an opportunity to provide a much needed range of down-sizer, starter and affordable homes and at the same time eliminate an existing eyesore in the countryside.

Planning History

A planning application in 2005 to build 5 houses on the site was refused, principally due to the fact that the site is not contiguous with the existing built development of the settlement and is therefore considered to be in open countryside.

Steering Group Assessment

Whilst the local population are generally in favour of the site being cleared and would be prepared to see some new housing on the site as a trade-off, it is recognised that planning consent is unlikely to be granted in the foreseeable future due to its location in open countryside. The site cannot therefore be included in the Neighbourhood Plan allocation, but the feasibility of a Community Right to Build scheme should be investigated separately. Such a scheme could provide much needed down-sizer, starter and affordable homes for local people.

It cannot be allocated in the Plan but may be pursued separately under a Community Right to Build Order.

EDL017 Land next to and behind The Cottage, Leighton Road, Northall

Site Area: 0.76 hectares

Current use: Orchard back land

Factor		Notes
1	Rural Character	The site is orchard back land that is an extension of the rear curtilage of the property and would be an extension of the existing built settlement. It would however have built development on two sides.
2	Landscape Setting	The site is not visible from public view points so there should not be any landscape ramifications.
3	Land Use	The land is orchard back land attached to the rear curtilage of the property.
4	Heritage	The land does not affect any listed buildings.
5	Core facilities	The village has very few facilities but the site is closer to those that do exist than most other houses in the settlement.
6	Community Profile	As a small village with very limited facilities, it is questionable whether it is appropriate to have developments as large as the one proposed. This is especially pertinent in this particular location, because there is a considerable amount of similar neighbouring orchard back land that would be difficult to refuse for similar development once a precedent had been set.

Planning History

An application in 1987 to build two detached houses was refused.

Steering Group Assessment

When viewed in isolation, the building of 16 houses on the site as suggested by the HELAA may seem reasonable, but for a small village like Northall with a total housing allocation of 9 and a residual requirement of 4, a site of this size is disproportionately large. It must also be appreciated that if a precedent was set by allowing development of this site, it would inevitably lead to several adjacent back land orchards being put forward for similar developments which would be difficult to refuse.

It is therefore not consistent with the preferred spatial strategy for growing the village and should not be allocated.

EDL020 The Hawthorns, 29 The Green, Edlesborough

Site Area: 0.6 hectares

Current use: Domestic curtilage

Factor		Notes
1	Rural Character	The site is within the existing settlement limits and is bounded on three sides by exiting built development.
2	Landscape Setting	The site would constitute infilling and as such there would not be any landscape ramifications.
3	Land Use	The land is currently domestic curtilage.
4	Heritage	Development of the site would involve the demolition of the existing bungalow, but it is not considered to have any particular heritage value. The land does not affect any listed buildings.
5	Core facilities	Being relatively central, the land is relatively close to many of the village facilities.
6	Community Profile	Good access to the village facilities would make the site suitable for people of all ages including young children and the elderly.

Planning History

A planning application for 6 houses was submitted recently but was subsequently withdrawn.

Steering Group Assessment

As a relatively central infill site with good access to village facilities, it would be particularly suitable for small units such as 1 or 2 bedroomed maisonettes which the village currently lacks. It could provide up to 6 new dwellings.

It is therefore consistent with the preferred spatial strategy for growing the village and should be allocated.

EDL021A Land off Slicketts Lane, Edlesborough

Site Area: 1.8 hectares

Current use: Agricultural arable

Factor		Notes
1	Rural Character	The site constitutes the northern 25% of a large agricultural field. It is flanked on its south western side by Slicketts Lane which has built development along one side. The north western side is bounded by Dove House Close and site EDL002. The north eastern side is bounded by a stream which constitutes the parish boundary. It is entirely outside the current settlement boundary.
2	Landscape Setting	The land is visible from Slicketts Lane and Dove House Close. Development may result in some loss of wild habitat.
3	Land Use	The land is currently in agricultural use.
4	Heritage	The land lies within sight of two listed buildings and so the access would need to preserve the setting those buildings.
5	Core facilities	The land is relatively remote from most of the village facilities.
6	Community Profile	The site offers the opportunity to create a new community riverside walk along the buffer strip to the stream, which would be a continuation of that proposed as part of site EDL002.

Planning History

There is no recorded planning history.

Steering Group Assessment

The site would extend the village beyond the existing settlement boundary and its size and location could have an adverse effect on the rural character of that edge of the village. Nevertheless, in order to accommodate the required growth it will be necessary to allocate the site as it is preferable to the only identified alternative, site EDL001. The development of the site would need to be low density and low rise in keeping with nearby development, and could accommodate up to 40 new houses.

It is therefore not entirely consistent with the preferred spatial strategy for growing the village but nevertheless should be allocated.

EDL021B Land off Slicketts Lane, Edlesborough

Site Area: 1.8 hectares

Current use: Agricultural arable

Factor		Notes
1	Rural Character	The site would expand site EDL021A so that the combined site would occupy the northern 50% of the agricultural field. It is flanked on its south western side by Slicketts Lane which has built development along one side. The north western side would be bounded by site EDL021A. The north eastern side is bounded by a stream which constitutes the parish boundary. It is entirely outside the current settlement boundary.
2	Landscape Setting	The land is visible from Slicketts Lane and Dove House Close. Development may result in some loss of wild habitat.
3	Land Use	The land is currently in agricultural use.
4	Heritage	The site would need to share its vehicular access with site EDL021A and so the same comments apply.
5	Core facilities	The land is relatively remote from most of the village facilities.
6	Community Profile	The site offers the opportunity to create a new community riverside walk along the buffer strip to the stream, which would be a continuation of that proposed as part of sites EDL002 and EDL021A.

Planning History

There is no recorded planning history

Steering Group Assessment

The site would extend the village beyond the existing settlement boundary and its size and location could have an adverse effect on the rural character of that edge of the village. Nevertheless, in order to accommodate the required growth it may be necessary to allocate part or all of the site, if it transpires that the Local Plan allocates more than the 164 new homes in Edlesborough Village currently envisaged. Otherwise the site should not be developed before the end of the Plan period in 2033. Any development of the site would need to be low density and low rise, in keeping with nearby development. It could accommodate up to 40 new houses if required.

It is therefore not entirely consistent with the preferred spatial strategy for growing the village and should only be allocated if absolutely necessary to meet the requirements of the emerging Local Plan.