



Suitability and Accessibility

Assessment of Sites - Methodology

This explanatory note provides an overview of the methodology for assessing the development suitability and accessibility of sites within Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council (TMBC), using Urban Intelligence's PlaceMaker software.

Refinements since previous explanatory note (October 2021)

Following additional testing of the assessment algorithm, there have been a few refinements to the methodology:

- *'Balance' layers have now been split into different rows depending on the amount of overlap that they have with sites. This was employed to make scoring more proportionate to the extent of the overlap to more accurately reflect the potential impact.*
- *Additional flood risk layers have been added to the list of constraints*
- *The treatment of some of the constraints in the assessment has been modified, to better ensure a more reasonable balanced assessment at this stage of evidence gathering.*
- *A more detailed scoring methodology for accessibility has been developed, please see 'Scoring Accessibility'*

Assessment of Site Suitability

Initially, all Land Registry parcels and Call-for-Sites (CfS) submissions will be assessed for suitability with a standardised approach for individual constraints. These constraints include environmental layers, infrastructure, and others. An approach for how each constraint is treated in the assessment has been drafted by Urban Intelligence in collaboration with TMBC officers, who advised on the judgements that needed to be made. These approaches are defined here.

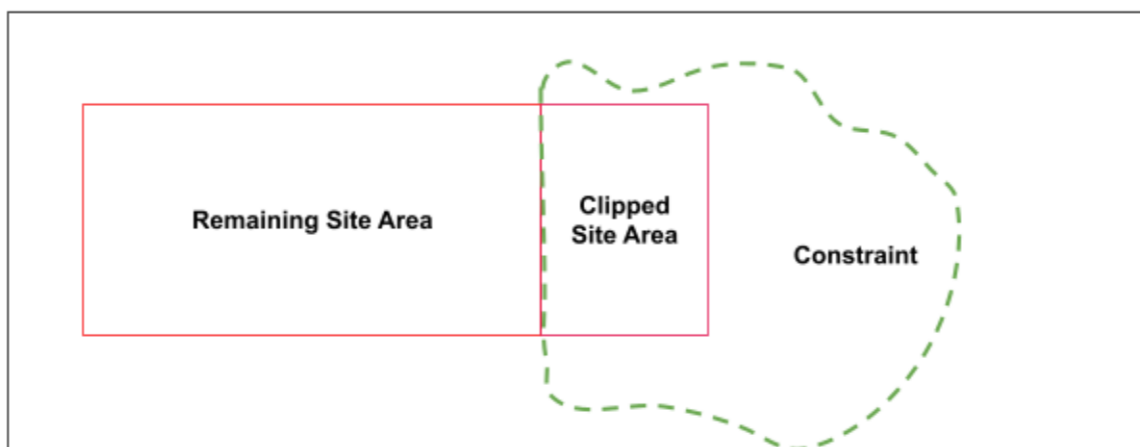
Clip Exclusions

No policies or designations were considered so sensitive that any partial overlap on identified sites would make that entire site unsuitable for development. Instead, the potential developable area of the identified sites will be clipped by the extent of policies and designations overlapping the site that would make land unsuitable for development. This leaves the remaining area of the site that is retained within the assessment.

Any site fully covered by 'Clip' constraints will be assessed as unsuitable. This process is shown in figure 1.



Figure 1: Clip Exclusions



Balance Scoring

These layers may be compatible with development individually, however a cumulation of these layers on a site may make the site unsuitable. These have been categorised into levels of impact, with constraints that have a 'High' impact on suitability, for example a national designation such as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, being the most severe. This is reflected in the balance score.

The balance score reflects the suitability penalty level and corresponds to the amount (%) of the overlap of the constraint on the site, i.e. a higher % overlap results in a greater balance score (see Table 1).

Any scores that are assigned to a site are deducted from a base score of 100. Any site that achieves a final score below 0 will be assessed as unsuitable.

Table 1: Penalty Scores Breakdown			
Constraint Type	Suitability Penalty Level (Negative)	Balance Overlap (%)	Balance Points
Balance	High	>50	75
Balance	High	>25 and <=50	37.5
Balance	High	>5 and <=25	18.75
Balance	Medium	>50	50
Balance	Medium	>25 and <=50	25
Balance	Medium	>5 and <=25	12.5
Balance	Low	>50	25
Balance	Low	>25 and <=50	12.5
Balance	Low	>5 and <=25	6.25



For Information

Layers designated as 'For Information' will not have an automatic impact on site suitability. They are flags for matters that may need to be taken account of at a more detailed stage of plan-making.

Table 2: Site Suitability Layers				
Layer Name	Constraint Type	Suitability Penalty Level (Negative)	Balance Overlap (%)	Balance Points
Administrative Layers				
Wards	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Constituencies	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Local Policy Layers				
Air Quality	Clip	N/A	N/A	N/A
Asset Of Community Value (AOCV) Accepted (Majority Overlap)	Balance	Low	>50	25
AOCV Accepted (Significant Overlap)	Balance	Low	>25 and <=50	12.5
AOCV Accepted (Minor Overlap)	Balance	Low	>5 and <=25	6.25
AOCV Accepted (Negligible Overlap)	For Information	Low	<=5	
AOCV Under Consideration (Majority Overlap)	Balance	Low	>50	25
AOCV Under Consideration (Significant Overlap)	Balance	Low	>25 and <=50	12.5
AOCV Under Consideration (Minor Overlap)	Balance	Low	>5 and <=25	6.25
AOCV Under Consideration (Negligible Overlap)	For Information	Low	<=5	
LDF, E1 - Safeguarded Employment Land	For Information	N/A	N/A	N/A
LDF, E2 - Other Employment Land	For Information	N/A	N/A	N/A
LDF, E3 - Employment Allocations	For Information	N/A	N/A	N/A
LDF, H1 - Firm Housing Allocations	For Information	N/A	N/A	N/A
CP4 - Safeguarded Land	For Information	N/A	N/A	N/A
LDF, CP16 - Bushey Wood Area of Opportunity	For Information	N/A	N/A	N/A
Local Development Orders - Rochester Airport Innovations Park	For Information	N/A	N/A	N/A
Section 106 and Section 52 Agreements	For Information	N/A	N/A	N/A
Environmental Layers				
Agricultural Land - Grade 1	Clip	N/A	N/A	N/A
Agricultural Land - Grade 2 (Majority Overlap)	Balance	Medium	>50	50
Agricultural Land - Grade 2 (Significant Overlap)	Balance	Medium	>25 and <=50	25
Agricultural Land - Grade 2 (Minor Overlap)	Balance	Medium	>5 and <=25	12.5
Agricultural Land - Grade 2 (Negligible Overlap)	For Information	N/A	<=5	N/A



Table 2: Site Suitability Layers				
Layer Name	Constraint Type	Suitability Penalty Level (Negative)	Balance Overlap (%)	Balance Points
Agricultural Land - Grade 3	For Information	N/A	N/A	N/A
Allotments	For Information	N/A	N/A	N/A
Ancient Woodland	Clip	N/A	N/A	N/A
Ancient Woodland 50m Buffer (Majority Overlap)	Balance	Low	>50	25
Ancient Woodland 50m Buffer (Significant Overlap)	Balance	Low	>25 and <=50	12.5
Ancient Woodland 50m Buffer (Minor Overlap)	Balance	Low	>5 and <=25	6.25
Ancient Woodland 50m Buffer (Negligible Overlap)	For Information	Low	<=5	
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) (Majority Overlap)	Balance	High	>50	75
AONB (Significant Overlap)	Balance	High	>25 and <=50	37.5
AONB (Minor Overlap)	Balance	High	>5 and <=25	18.75
AONB (Negligible Overlap)	For Information	High	<=5	
AONB 100m Buffer (Majority Overlap)	Balance	Low	>50	25
AONB 100m Buffer (Significant Overlap)	Balance	Low	>25 and <=50	12.5
AONB 100m Buffer (Minor Overlap)	Balance	Low	>5 and <=25	6.25
AONB 100m Buffer (Negligible Overlap)	For Information	Low	<=5	
AONB 500m Buffer	For Information	N/A	N/A	N/A
Common Land	Clip	N/A	N/A	N/A
School Grounds (Majority Overlap)	Balance	High	>50	75
School Grounds (Significant Overlap)	Balance	High	>25 and <=50	37.5
School Grounds (Minor Overlap)	Balance	High	>5 and <=25	18.75
School Grounds (Negligible Overlap)	For Information	High	<=5	
Golf Courses (Majority Overlap)	Balance	Medium	>50	50
Golf Courses (Significant Overlap)	Balance	Medium	>25 and <=50	25
Golf Courses (Minor Overlap)	Balance	Medium	>5 and <=25	12.5
Golf Courses (Negligible Overlap)	For Information	Medium	<=5	
Green Belt	For Information	N/A	N/A	N/A
Historic Landfill Sites (Majority Overlap)	Balance	Low	>50	25
Historic Landfill Sites (Significant Overlap)	Balance	Low	>25 and <=50	12.5
Historic Landfill Sites (Minor Overlap)	Balance	Low	>5 and <=25	6.25
Historic Landfill Sites (Negligible Overlap)	For Information	Low	<=5	N/A
Active Landfill Area (Majority Overlap)	Balance	High	>50	75
Active Landfill Area (Significant Overlap)	Balance	High	>25 and <=50	37.5



Table 2: Site Suitability Layers				
Layer Name	Constraint Type	Suitability Penalty Level (Negative)	Balance Overlap (%)	Balance Points
Active Landfill Area (Minor Overlap)	Balance	High	>5 and <=25	18.75
Active Landfill Area (Negligible Overlap)	For Information	N/A	<=5	N/A
Local Nature Reserves (LNR) Policy NE1 (Majority Overlap)	Balance	High	>50	75
LNR Policy NE1 (Significant Overlap)	Balance	High	>25 and <=50	37.5
LNR Policy NE1 (Minor Overlap)	Balance	High	>5 and <=25	18.75
LNR Policy NE1 (Negligible Overlap)	For Information	N/A	<=5	N/A
Adjacent to LNR Policy NE1	For Information	N/A	N/A	N/A
Local Wildlife Site (LWS) (Majority Overlap)	Balance	High	>50	75
LWS Policy NE1 (Significant Overlap)	Balance	High	>25 and <=50	37.5
LWS Policy NE1 (Minor Overlap)	Balance	High	>5 and <=25	18.75
LWS Policy NE1 (Negligible Overlap)	For Information	N/A	<=5	N/A
Adjacent to LWS Policy NE1 15m Buffer	For Information	N/A	N/A	N/A
Mineral Safeguarding	For Information	N/A	N/A	N/A
Minerals, Waste Safeguarded Facilities (Majority Overlap)	Balance	Low	>50	25
Minerals, Waste Safeguarded Facilities (Significant Overlap)	Balance	Low	>25 and <=50	12.5
Minerals, Waste Safeguarded Facilities (Minor Overlap)	Balance	Low	>5 and <=25	6.25
Minerals, Waste Safeguarded Facilities (Negligible Overlap)	For Information	Low	<=5	N/A
Strategic Site for Minerals ¹	Balance	Medium	>50	50
Strategic Site for Minerals	Balance	Medium	>25 and <=50	25
Strategic Site for Minerals	Balance	Medium	>5 and <=25	12.5
Strategic Site for Minerals	For Information	N/A	<=5	N/A
Public Park or Gardens	Clip	N/A	N/A	N/A
Sporting Facilities	For Information	N/A	N/A	N/A
Playing Fields and Play Spaces	For Information	N/A	N/A	N/A
Religious Grounds	Clip	N/A	N/A	N/A
Cemeteries	Clip	N/A	N/A	N/A
Regionally Important Geological Site (RIGS) Policy NE1	For Information	N/A	N/A	N/A
Roadside Nature Reserves (RNR) (Majority Overlap)	Balance	High	>50	75

¹ Policy CSM3 in the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan: Medway Cement Works, Holborough



Table 2: Site Suitability Layers				
Layer Name	Constraint Type	Suitability Penalty Level (Negative)	Balance Overlap (%)	Balance Points
RNR (Significant Overlap)	Balance	High	>25 and <=50	37.5
RNR (Minor Overlap)	Balance	High	>5 and <=25	18.75
RNR (Negligible Overlap)	For Information	N/A	<=5	N/A
Special Area of Conservation (SAC)	Clip	N/A	N/A	N/A
SAC 200m Buffer (Majority Overlap)	Balance	Medium	>50	50
SAC 200m Buffer (Significant Overlap)	Balance	Medium	>25 and <=50	25
SAC 200m Buffer (Minor Overlap)	Balance	Medium	>5 and <=25	12.5
SAC 200m Buffer (Negligible Overlap)	For Information	N/A	<=5	N/A
Site Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	Clip	N/A	N/A	N/A
SSSI 200m Buffer (Majority Overlap)	Balance	Low	>50	25
SSSI 200m Buffer (Significant Overlap)	Balance	Low	>25 and <=50	12.5
SSSI 200m Buffer (Minor Overlap)	Balance	Low	>5 and <=25	6.25
SSSI 200m Buffer (Negligible Overlap)	For Information	Low	<=5	N/A
Tree Preservation Order (TPO) (Majority Overlap)	Balance	Medium	>50	50
TPO (Significant Overlap)	Balance	Medium	>25 and <=50	25
TPO (Minor Overlap)	Balance	Medium	>5 and <=25	12.5
TPO (Negligible Overlap)	For Information	N/A	<=5	N/A
Village Green	Clip	N/A	N/A	N/A
Ecological Layers				
Priority Habitats (Majority Overlap)	Balance	Medium	>50	50
Priority Habitats (Significant Overlap)	Balance	Medium	>25 and <=50	25
Priority Habitats (Minor Overlap)	Balance	Medium	>5 and <=25	12.5
Priority Habitats (Negligible Overlap)	For Information	N/A	<=5	N/A
Kent Habitat Survey	For Information	N/A	N/A	N/A
Rivers & Flooding Layers				
Flood Zone 2 (Majority Overlap)	Balance	Medium	>50	50
Flood Zone 2 (Significant Overlap)	Balance	Medium	>25 and <=50	25
Flood Zone 2 (Minor Overlap)	Balance	Medium	>5 and <=25	12.5
Flood Zone 2 (Negligible Overlap)	For Information	N/A	<=5	N/A
Flood Zone 3a (Majority Overlap)	Balance	High	>50	75
Flood Zone 3a (Significant Overlap)	Balance	High	>25 and <=50	37.5
Flood Zone 3a (Minor Overlap)	Balance	High	>5 and <=25	18.75
Flood Zone 3a (Negligible Overlap)	For Information	N/A	<=5	N/A
3a v4	For Information	N/A	N/A	N/A



Table 2: Site Suitability Layers				
Layer Name	Constraint Type	Suitability Penalty Level (Negative)	Balance Overlap (%)	Balance Points
3a Plus35	For Information	N/A	N/A	N/A
3a Plus70	For Information	N/A	N/A	N/A
Flood Zone 3b (Functional Floodplain 1 in 20yr Event)	Clip	N/A	N/A	N/A
Risk of Flooding from Surface Water Depth (0.1% annual)	For Information	N/A	N/A	N/A
Risk of Flooding from Surface Water Depth: 1 percent annual chance	For Information	N/A	N/A	N/A
Risk of Flooding from Surface Water Depth: 3.3 percent annual chance	For Information	N/A	N/A	N/A
Risk of Flooding from Surface Water Speed: 0.1 percent annual chance	For Information	N/A	N/A	N/A
Risk of Flooding from Surface Water Hazard: 0.1 percent annual chance	For Information	N/A	N/A	N/A
Groundwater Source Protection Zone	For Information	N/A	N/A	N/A
Water Bodies (Ordnance Survey MasterMap Topographical layer)	Clip	N/A	N/A	N/A
Heritage Layers				
Scheduled Monuments	Clip	N/A	N/A	N/A
Adjacent to Scheduled Monuments	For Information	N/A	N/A	N/A
Area of Archaeological Potential	For Information	N/A	N/A	N/A
Conservation Area (Majority Overlap)	Balance	High	>50	75
Conservation Area (Significant Overlap)	Balance	High	>25 and <=50	37.5
Conservation Area (Minor Overlap)	Balance	High	>5 and <=25	18.75
Conservation Area (Negligible Overlap)	For Information	N/A	<=5	N/A
Historic Park and Garden Non-Designated (Majority Overlap)	Balance	Low	>50	25
Historic Park and Garden Non-Designated (Significant Overlap)	Balance	Low	>25 and <=50	12.5
Historic Park and Garden Non-Designated (Minor Overlap)	Balance	Low	>5 and <=25	6.25
Historic Park and Garden Non-Designated (Negligible Overlap)	For Information	N/A	<=5	N/A
Historic Park/Garden	Clip	N/A	N/A	N/A
Grade I Listed Buildings	Clip	N/A	N/A	N/A
Grade II* Listed Buildings	Clip	N/A	N/A	N/A
Grade II Listed Buildings	Balance	High	1	75
Economic Layers				
Local/District/Village Centres	For Information	N/A	N/A	N/A
Primary Shopping Area	For Information	N/A	N/A	N/A
Other Constraints				
Govt oil pipeline	For Information	N/A	N/A	N/A
Major gas pipeline	For Information	N/A	N/A	N/A



Table 2: Site Suitability Layers				
Layer Name	Constraint Type	Suitability Penalty Level (Negative)	Balance Overlap (%)	Balance Points
Ministry of Defence (Mereworth Woods)	Clip	N/A	N/A	N/A
Site Specific Layers				
SHLAA	For Information	N/A	N/A	N/A
TMBC Planning Applications				
PD General	Planning History Info	N/A	N/A	N/A
PD Residential Conversion	Planning History Info	N/A	N/A	N/A
Extant Housing Permissions (Approved, as at 31 March 2021)	Override any other criteria to make site suitable.	N/A	>50%	
Extant Commercial Permissions (Approved, as at 31 March 2021)	Override any other criteria to make site suitable.	N/A	>50%	



Assessment of Accessibility

Sites are individually assessed for accessibility to local services, including:

- Transport infrastructure;
- Education facilities;
- Health care facilities; and
- Essential services.

Defining 'Accessibility' - Access to Services

To define accessibility, accessible walking distances to facilities were initially defined with TMBC (Table 3). These distances were informed by work done for the Council's Strategic Land Availability Assessment (2018) and guidance such as [Planning for Walking](#).

Table 3: Accessible Distances	
Transport	Accessible Distance
Bus Stops	<400m
Train Stations	<800m
Education	Accessible Distance
Preschool/Nursery	<800m
Primary School	<800m
Secondary Schools	<800m
Health	Accessible Distance
GP	<800m
Dentists	<800m
Pharmacy	<800m
Essentials	Accessible Distance
Convenience Retail	<800m
Supermarket	<800m
Post Office	<800m
Pub	<800m

Defining 'Accessibility' - Site Location

Sites will also be assessed on their location, with sites within settlements placing higher in the settlement hierarchy being considered more accessible. This is detailed within Table 4.



Settlement Classification	Accessibility
CP11 (Urban Areas)	High
CP12 (Rural Service Centres)	Medium
CP13 (Other Rural Settlements)	Low

Scoring Accessibility

To determine the overall accessibility of a site, a scoring matrix was applied to each of the elements of accessibility, illustrated in Table 5.

Each element of accessibility within a site will be scored. The accessible scores total 12, which corresponds to the number of facilities listed.

The size of the score for each facility reflects the importance of accessibility to that facility. For example, an accessible score of 4 is attributed to train stations because these are important public transport nodes and the capacity to introduce new stations is limited.

The total score of a site will be converted to a score out of 100, with a 50:50 weighting applied between access to services and site location.

Distances to Facilities			
Transport	Accessible Distance	Accessible Score	Inaccessible Score
Bus Stops	<400m	2	0
Train Stations	<800m	4	0
Education	Accessible Distance	Accessible Score	Inaccessible Score
Preschool/Nursery	<800m	0.5	0
Primary School	<800m	0.5	0
Secondary Schools	<800m	1	0
Health	Accessible Distance	Accessible Score	Inaccessible Score
GP	<800m	1	0
Dentists	<800m	0.5	0
Pharmacy	<800m	0.5	0
Essentials	Accessible Distance	Accessible Score	Inaccessible Score
Convenience Retail	<800m	0.5	0
Supermarket	<800m	0.5	0
Post Office	<800m	0.5	0
Pub	<800m	0.5	0
Settlement Classifications			
Settlement Classification	Accessibility	Accessible Score	Inaccessible Score
CP11 (Urban Areas)	High	5	0
CP12 (Rural Service Centres)	Medium	4	0
CP13 (Other Rural Settlements)	Low	3	0

To standardise the scoring of accessibility, the specific score of a site will then be placed in to one of the following bands to aid further assessment.



Table 6: Accessibility bandings	
Accessibility Score	Accessibility Band
0-20	Poor
21-40	Fair
41-60	Good
61-80	Very Good
81-100	Excellent