



Liskeard Town Framework

Urban Extension Assessment

December 2011 (DRAFT)

Planning Delivery Team (East)

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Work is currently underway on the preparation of the Core Strategy for the whole of Cornwall as part of the Local Development Framework. This document will set out the long-term spatial vision for the County and long term strategic policies and proposals that will deliver that vision. The Core Strategy will provide an indication of the broad locations for new development in Cornwall up to 2031.
- 1.2 It is anticipated that to promote sustainable development a large proportion of the growth that will be identified within the Core Strategy will be directed towards the existing main towns of the County. Therefore a Town Framework Plan is being produced for most of Cornwall's main towns, which will identify the most sustainable options to accommodate this projected growth. The Plan identifies the town's ability to accommodate growth within the urban area and on brownfield sites. It then goes on to assess the most suitable options to extend the existing urban areas to accommodate remaining growth requirements, and the impact of developing these sites.
- 1.3 This paper has been produced to summarise the work that has been undertaken to assess these predominantly greenfield sites, which adjoin the urban area of Liskeard. This has been done in order to support the strategic vision for the county's main towns as set out within the Core Strategy.
- 1.4 The process uses a 'twelve step assessment' ensuring that a consistent approach is applied to the urban extensions assessments across the majority of Cornwall's main towns.
- 1.5 Steps 1-5 seek to identify land that is either appropriate for further detailed assessment, or land which should be discounted at an early stage on the grounds of significant environmental and/or accessibility constraints. Steps 6 to 9 involve a more detailed landscape character assessment, an urban design assessment and an assessment of the potential for renewable or low carbon energy to supply any potential development. Inappropriate cells are discounted at step 9 following a review.
- 1.6 All remaining cells are then assessed at steps 10-12 as potential options for urban extension locations. These options are informally discussed with key stakeholders, including the Environment Agency, Highways Agency, Natural England, for views on the technical and infrastructure challenges of developing these areas. This stage also includes an informal Sustainability Appraisal of all cells and the final options.
- 1.7 Once this has been completed the 'preferred' sites will be consulted on through the Core Strategy process as options for future growth.

- 1.8 The assessments that are set out in these twelve steps have been discussed through out the process at workshop sessions and with the steering groups made up of local representatives to provide local input, context and endorsement.
- 1.9 The Steering Group is comprised of Cornwall Council Members, representatives of the relevant Town Councils and neighbouring Parish Councils.
- 1.10 The steering group has met regularly since September 2010. During this time the group has been working towards an agreed approach to the future distribution and level of preferred growth for the town. Part of this work involved the analysis of the shape of the cells and which cells/sites would progress to more detailed assessment (detailed below i.e. from step 6 onwards).
- 1.11 The following flow chart illustrates the twelve step process undertaken to assess the suitability of land for urban extensions in order to accommodate growth as part of the Town Framework process.

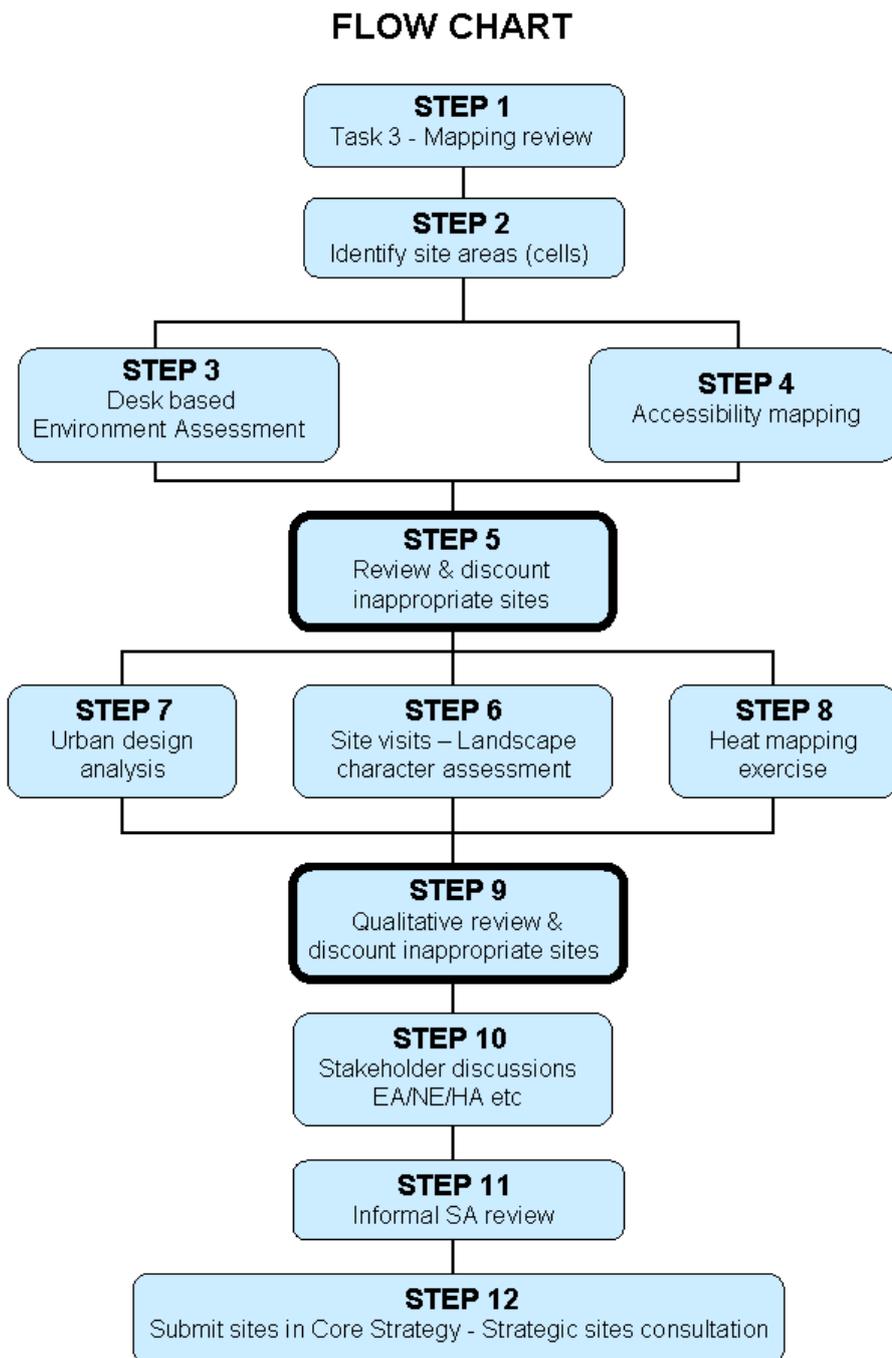


Figure 1: Urban Sites Assessment – twelve step process.

2. Methodology

2.1 Step 1 - Mapping Review

2.1.0 This involved a desk based assessment to help understand the structure of Liskeard and how the town currently functions, including what services and facilities are available for the communities within the town. The results of this exercise help to inform and guide the subsequent assessments throughout the process, but primarily the

initial desk based urban extension assessment exercises of steps 2, 3, 4 and 5.

- 2.1.1 This mapping exercise sought to identify the main movement corridors: A, B and local distributor roads, railway line and station, and key services such as schools, health facilities, community buildings, and formal and informal open spaces - as well as identifying the neighbourhood centres.
- 2.1.3 A resultant 'Structures and Neighbourhoods' map also helps to identify Green Infrastructure (GI) information such as public open space, existing green corridors and networks (e.g. waterways, cycle routes and footpaths), and water elements (e.g. lakes, significant pond systems, wetlands etc) which will inform Step 7 in particular.

2.2 Step 2 – Cell Identification

- 2.2.0 This exercise reviewed all of the land surrounding the town to identify appropriate and workable areas (cells) for further assessment. In determining the extent of the individual cells, consideration was given to features that would potentially create barriers between cells (e.g. significant transport corridors and landform features such as topography and watercourses). Once these features had been identified, it provided definition to the boundaries for the cells surrounding the town. The landscape cells identified for Liskeard are indicated below at **Figure 2**. It should be noted that these cell boundaries have been amended and refined as the assessment and consultation progressed.

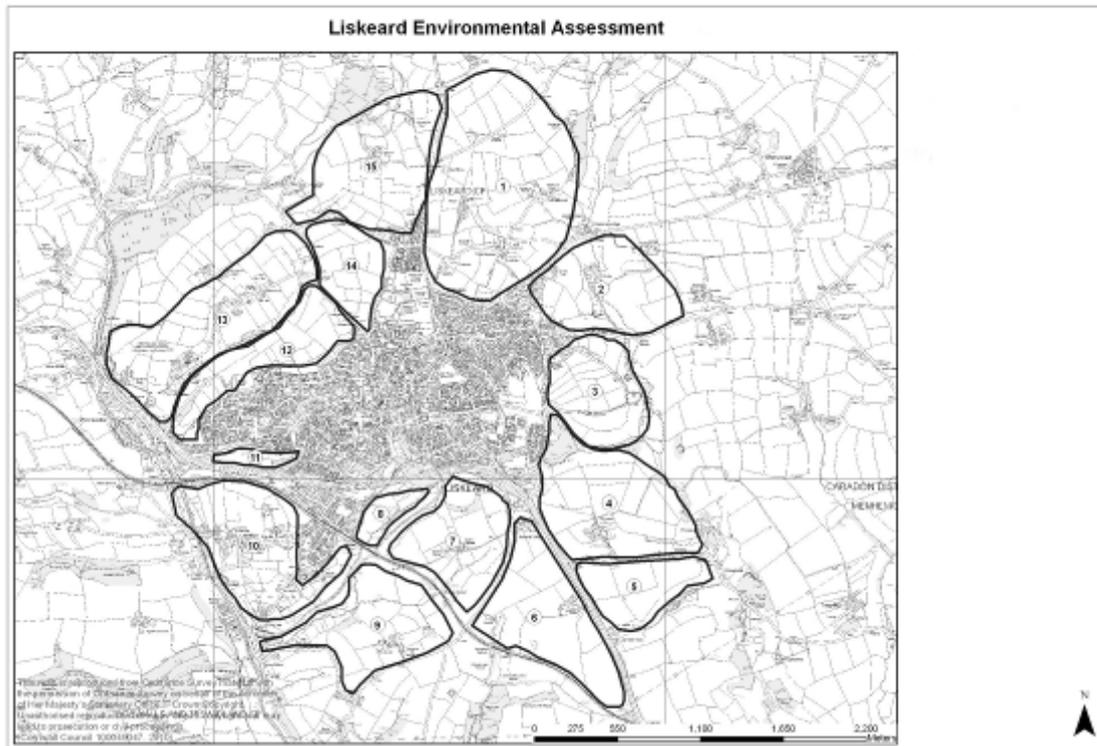


Figure 2: Liskeard Original Cell Boundaries

2.3 Step 3 – Environmental Constraints

2.3.0 This involved an assessment to record the relationship of the different cells with various environmental features. The main intention of this step was to identify any land where significant environmental features (predominantly national designations e.g. Sites of Special Scientific Interest ; flood zone 3b; ancient woodland etc) would potentially rule out future development.

2.3.1 In the same way the step identifies the areas where any potential growth would not be constrained by such significant environmental constraints. Each cell was assessed in this way based upon the assessment criteria and a 'traffic light system' detailed in **Appendix A**.

2.3.2 An example of an environmental assessment for an individual cell is illustrated at **Figure 4**. This step identified those cells which contained significant environmental features or assets. Consideration was made as to whether nationally/internationally significant sites should be discounted from any further study in the urban extension assessment process. Liskeard does not contain such designations.

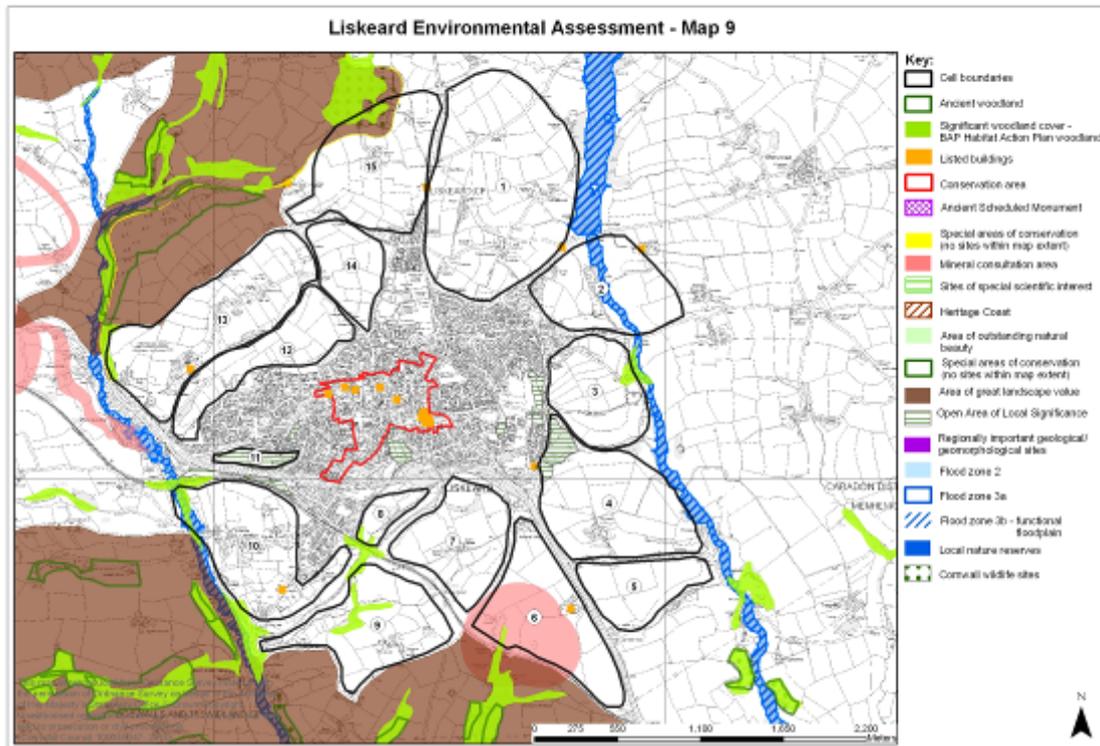


Figure 3: Liskeard Constraints Map

Cell Number: 1	Commentary	Impact of Development
Significant assets / constraints		
Ancient woodland, significant woodland cover, Dune systems		
SSSI, SAC, Heritage Coast, AONB		
Other assets / constraints		
OALS, AGLV, RIGS		
Historic & cultural value e.g. WHS, Conservation Area, Listed buildings, Ancient Scheduled Monuments	1 listed build adjacent to cell	
Ecological assets – CWS, LNR, BAP habitat		
Mineral Consultation Area		
Agricultural grade of land		
Flood Zones 2 and/or 3		
Topography	Gentle sloping site rising to 150m in NW corner	
Physical constraints / other factors which will have impact on feasibility of site for development (contamination/mine remains etc, main sewers, gas mains, pylons etc)	Rounbury camp; ancient monument (not scheduled) on western edge of cell	
Other information – not scored		
Cornwall LCA / LDU	http://mapping.cornwall.gov.uk/website/cmmap/default.asp?layerName=Landscape%20Character%20Areas Cells covered by CA22, CA23, CA24	
Historic Landscape Character Assessment 1994 Reference LCA & LCZ	Mostly medieval farmland, with some C20 farmland	
Aspect (solar gain)	Predominantly NE and SE facing	
Current land cover	Mostly greenfield agricultural land. Scattered private housing and farm area	
Overall Comment / Recommendation	Part of cell ALT11 housing allocation (475 homes). Scores well on environmental grounds.	

Figure 4: Example of Desk Based Environmental Assessment

2.4 Step 4 – Accessibility

2.4.0 An initial desk based accessibility assessment was undertaken at the same time as Step 3. This process established which cells were best located in terms of their proximity to essential local facilities e.g. schools, health facilities, town centres etc. Accessibility was assessed for both pedestrians (step 4a) and vehicular access (step 4b). Distances of 400m, 800m and 1200m representing 5, 10 and 15 minute walks respectively were used in the assessment (based on national planning and urban design good practice guidance).

2.4.1 Each cell was assessed using a traffic light rating system, with the aim of differentiating between those cells that performed well or poorly in terms of their accessibility to local services and facilities. Potential shortfalls in the availability of local services and facilities were also highlighted through this assessment.

2.4.2 With regard to vehicular accessibility (step 4b), consideration was given to whether the existing highway infrastructure had the potential to provide existing or new vehicular access points / routes to the cells.

2.4.3 Two key issues were considered:

- Whether there was a deliverable vehicular access to serve the cell; and
- Whether there was a possible vehicular connection from the cell to the nearest Town or Neighbourhood Centre.

The results of this assessment were considered along with step 4a, to determine an overall performance rating for each cell in terms of accessibility.

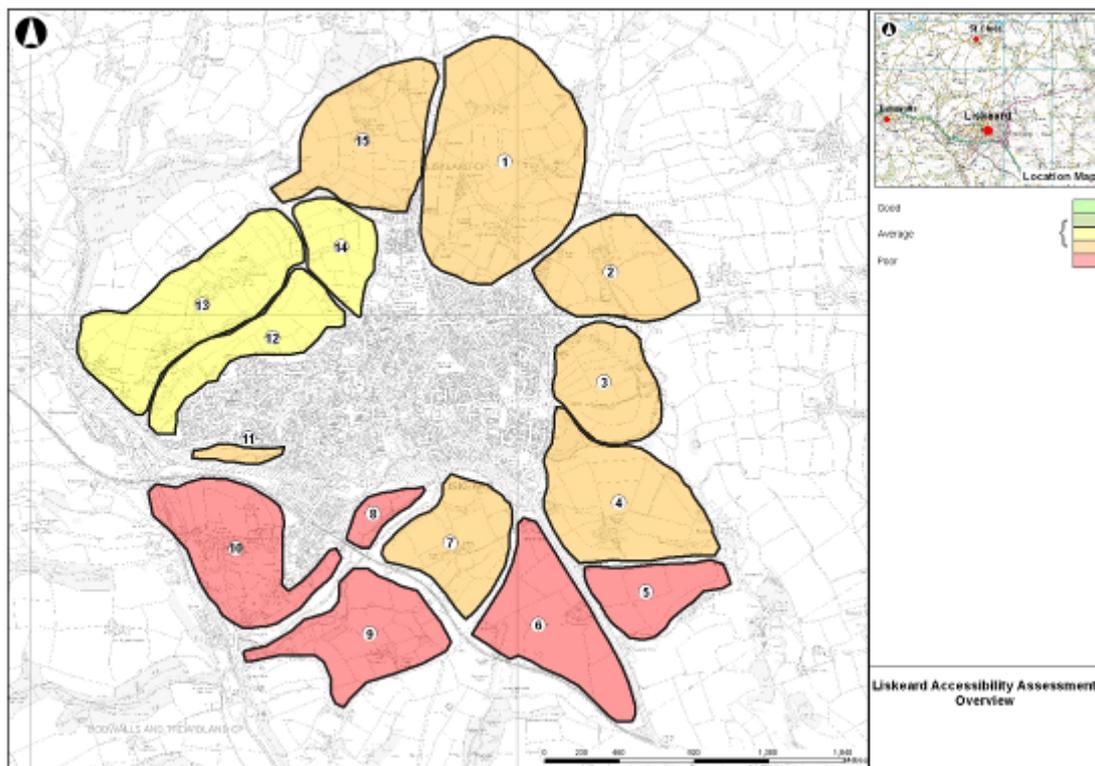


Figure 5: Map of Accessibility Assessment

2.4.4 The results of the Accessibility Assessment are shown above whilst the detailed assessments are in **Appendix B**. The accessibility assessment demonstrated that the cells to the north west of Liskeard performed best in terms of proximity to services, though the delivery of these sites may be dependant on a wider link road to the north of the town, which would be very costly. The 'average' scoring of the cells to the east of the town was mainly down to the distances large proportions of the cells were in relation to the town centre. Cells to the south scored poorly due to road and rail severance from the town.

2.4.5 At this stage of the urban extension assessment, the decision was made not to discount any of the cells based on the results of the accessibility assessment.

2.5 Step 5 – Initial review and discount of cells

2.5.0 Following Steps 3 and 4, **Step 5** was a key step where a review was carried out to highlight and potentially discount inappropriate cells based on their environmental and/or accessibility results. To ensure consistency of assessment methodology across Cornwall's Towns, step 5 was also reviewed at a Town Framework Project manager workshop. The recommendations of step 5 were subsequently discussed and agreed at the Framework Members Steering Group.

2.5.1 The result of step 5 for Liskeard was that all original cells should be retained for further consideration. This paper goes on to look at all original cells around the town in greater depth before discounting and/or refining a number of these sites from the final recommendation of preferred sites. It is felt that this approach for Liskeard was the most appropriate and will form a robust assessment of all the options.

2.6 Step 6 - Landscape character assessments (detailed assessment of cells)

2.6.1 Landscape character assessments were undertaken by Landscape Architects from the Councils Environment Service. A methodology was drafted and agreed by relevant officers (this can be viewed on the web: www.cornwall.gov.uk/ldf) which recorded important landscape features of the cells, and assessed the landscape according to its character and sensitivity. Using a traffic light system, highest landscape value was shown in red and lowest in green. Each cell was assessed by a detailed site visit and by also using the environmental information recorded at previous step 3. Below is the overall result following the assessment:

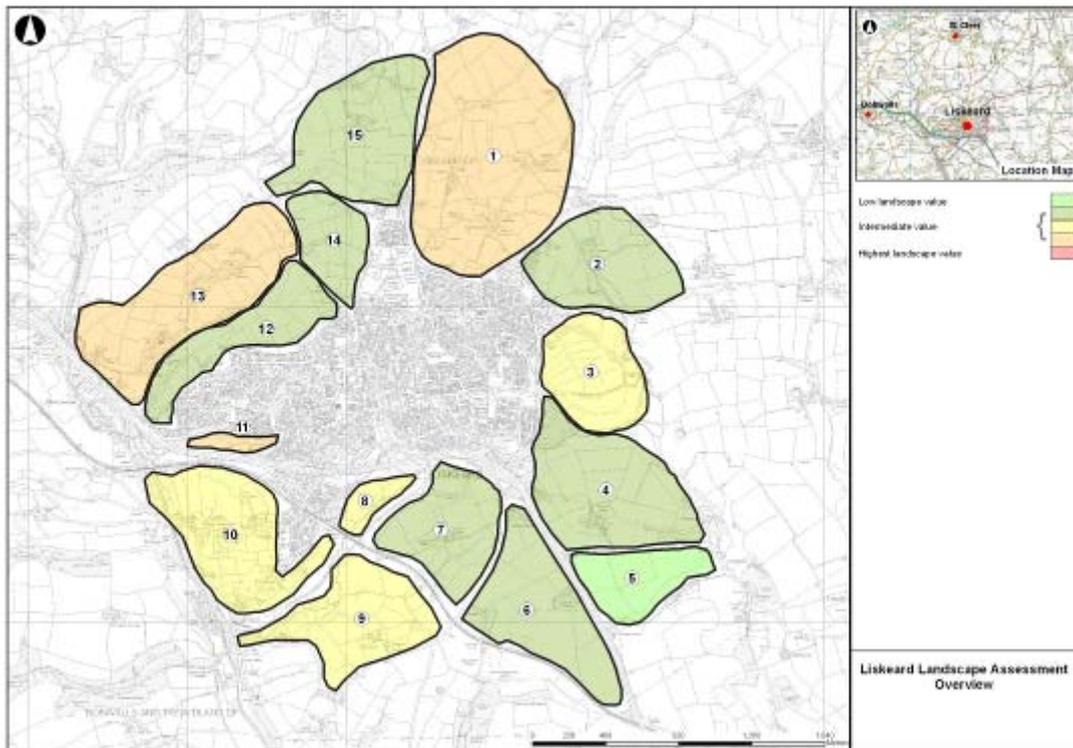


Fig 5: landscape overview map check

2.6.2 As Fig 5 illustrates all cells scored within an intermediate range. Cells 1 and 13 received higher landscape value scores due to exposed sweeping valleys or their far reaching views.

- 2.6.3 In determining the suitability of an area for development, landscape quality is an important consideration; however it should be assessed along side accessibility, sustainability and how well the area is able to integrate with the existing urban form. Consequently no cells were discounted at this stage but the landscape information was used to inform the Step 9 process to follow.
- 2.6.4 The final 9 cells formed from the various steps in this process have also been landscape assessed in the same way. The landscape tables for these 9 cells along side the original 15 cells are in **Appendix C**.

2.7 Step 7 Urban design analysis

- 2.7.0 The purpose of this step was to carry out an analysis of the cells with the aim of further clarifying how well would they integrate and function with the existing town and its communities. It also investigated whether or not and why they would be sustainable locations to accommodate the future growth envisaged by the Core Strategy. This took the desk top work done under accessibility a step further. The methodology used can be viewed in **(Appendix D)**.
- 2.7.1 The exercise involved sketching existing and potential connections or routes to enable ease of movement and accessibility. A table was then used to record the results of each cell which were assessed against a series of criteria. (set out in **Appendix E**)
- 2.7.2 Cells were altered and /or merged where connectivity, landform and sustainability was shown to be improved. A final comment was given noting the conclusions from the assessment indicating the suitability of the cell or merged cells as either: -
- a potential expansion of an existing neighbourhood;
 - an opportunity to create a new neighbourhood through an urban extension; or that
 - neither of the above could be achieved sustainably.
- 2.7.3 Rather than discount cells at this stage, the information was used at the following **Step 9** 'Qualitative review and discount sites' to inform decisions, along with the landscape character assessment and wider growth option implications as broadly indicated in the Core Strategy (i.e. scale of long term growth required/achievable).
- 2.7.4 The best scoring cells in urban design terms were cells 1, 11, 14 and 15. These areas are well related in terms of access and connectivity to the rest of the town and its services and facilities.
- 2.7.5 Original cells were scored individually, which was also the case for the merged cells e.g. parts of cells 14 and 15 make up merged Cell L8 (see figure 9).

2.7.6 Cells such as 5, 6, 8, and 9 are not well related to the existing built area and scored poorly in the urban design assessment. The assessment demonstrated that they are not situated in close proximity to services and facilities and there are significant physical barriers, hindering movement and connectivity. This was largely due to the severance the A38 causes.

2.7.7 Each cell was given an overall colour using the traffic light system. The full results with information on each cell / merged cell can be seen in **(Appendix E)**.

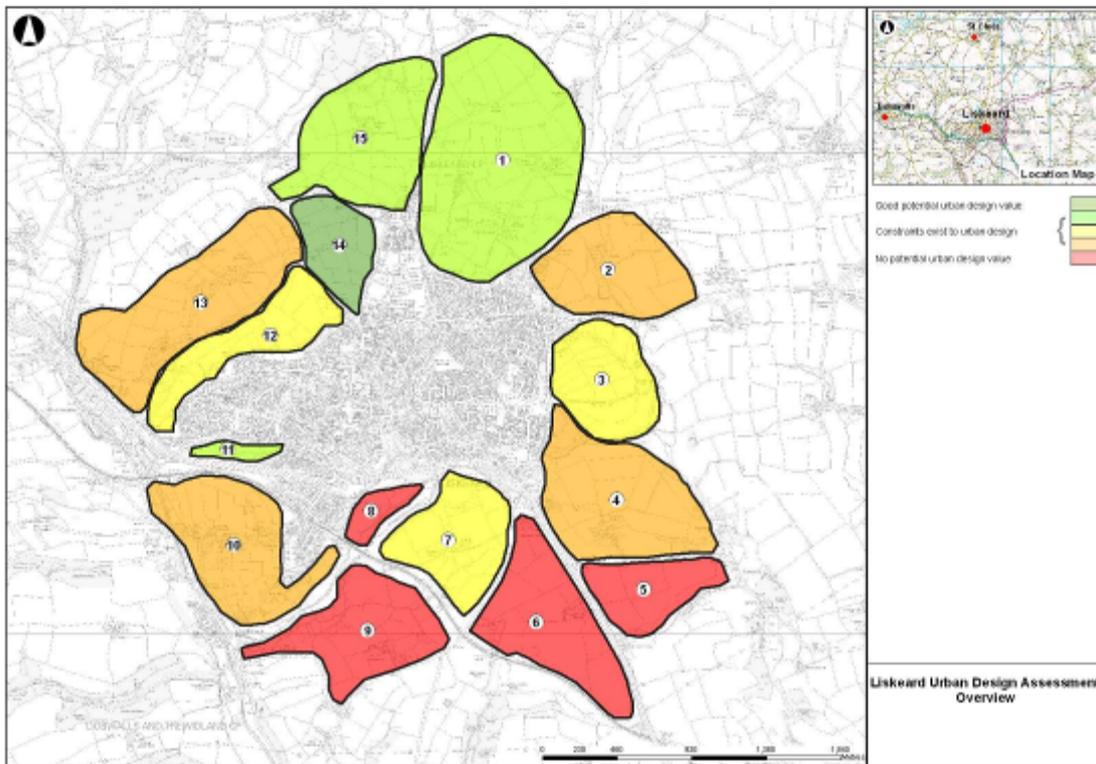


Fig 6: Urban Design overview map of original cells

2.8 Step 8 Heat Mapping Assessment

2.8.0 Step 8 was an assessment of renewable or low carbon energy opportunities in relation to each of the cells. It explored the potential or otherwise for each cell to link into or support a decentralised energy or district heating network, providing renewable or low carbon energy.

2.8.1 Initial assumptions were made in relation to the location of each of the potential urban extension cell areas i.e. the cell's proximity to existing high heat demand areas and so called 'anchor load' buildings within the built area of the town. This determined whether a cell area had the following: -

- Good opportunity to link into a potential district heat network

- Limited opportunity to link into a potential district heat network - unlikely but requires further assessment
- Poor or little opportunity to link into a potential district heat network - highly unlikely to be a viable area to support district heating, due to low heat demand and/or large distances between the new development and existing heat loads

2.8.2 The intention of the assessment was not to discount any cells, but rather inform the preferred site selection process for consultation. The full results can be seen in **Appendix F**. The results of the assessment are illustrated below in Fig 7:

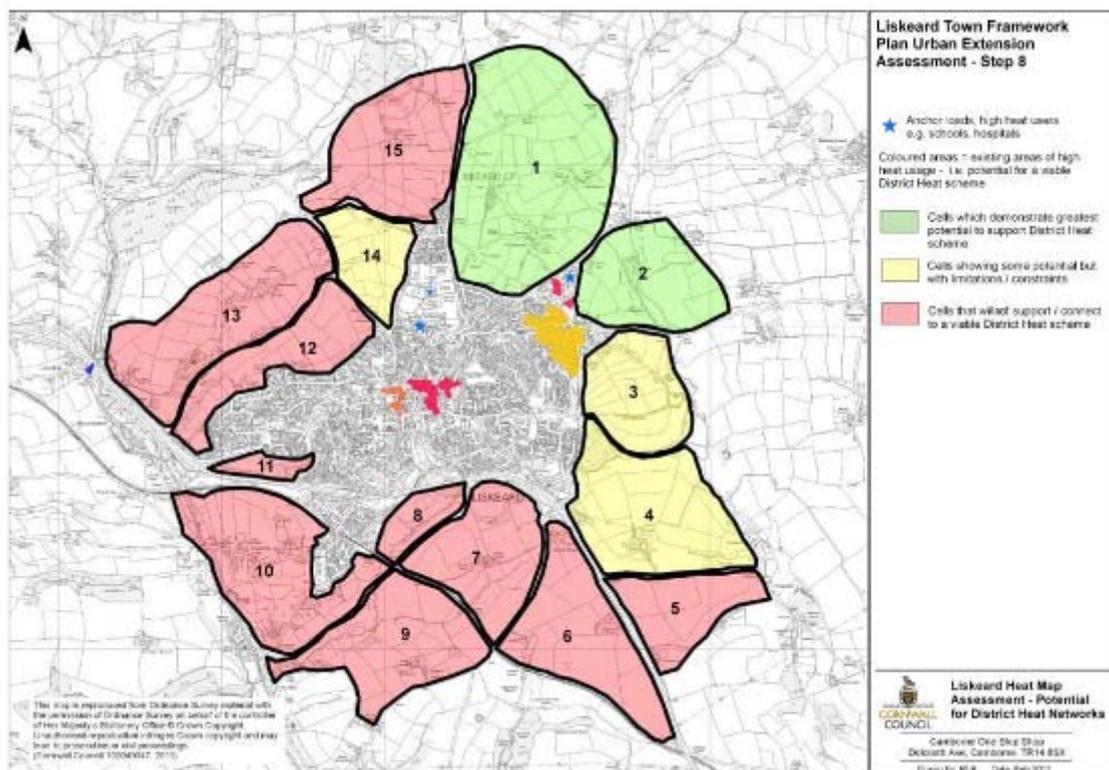


Fig 7: results of heat mapping exercise

2.9 Step 9 Qualitative review and Discount Inappropriate Sites

2.9.0 Step 9's purpose was to assess all previous work done to date, undertaking evidence based and qualitative review.

2.9.1 This step involved a meeting with all parties involved in undertaking the urban extension assessments from landscape, urban design and spatial planning to discuss, explore and agree on the cells to remain as options and those that should be removed. A map showing the various cell proposals for Step 9 is shown below in Fig.8

2.9.2 **Cell A** – This cell was essentially halved in size as a result of the urban design and landscape assessments. Both assessments highlighted the impact development of the scale shown in the original

cell 1 would have had. Cell A was included as a preferred growth option based on decent connectivity options, proximity to the town centre and a greatly reduced landscape impact, due to its revised size.

2.9.3 **Cell B** – The cell was reduced in size as its eastern extent spanned a valley bottom (including flood plain) and field patterns that were physically divorced from the town. The cell did not score as highly as cell A due to its distance from the town centre, connectivity issues and limited size.

2.9.4 **Cell C** – This cell was formed through the merging and reduction of original cells 3 and 4. By linking the two cells together, the large site was seen to provide opportunities for a new small neighbourhood of adequate scale to support its own local facilities and local employment alongside a range of facilities in the wider locality. Direct links from the primary road network and the north east of the town were seen as potentially achievable.

2.9.5 **Cell D** – A number of original cells were discounted at this stage (5,6,8 & 9) based on long distances from the town and significant transport constraints. Cell D was included as a potential option due to its reduced size and landscape impact, and relative proximity to the town.

2.9.6 **Cells E1 & E2** – Aspects of E1 closest to the town provide close links to the railway station. The cells have been historically promoted by the Town Council and latterly the Steering Group. As part of this proposal, it is the desire locally to deliver a full-flow junction from the A38, to help improve traffic flow throughout the town.

2.9.7 **Cell G** – To aid connectivity to the town centre and through to the wider road network, the cell has been formed by reducing and merging original cells 14 & 15.

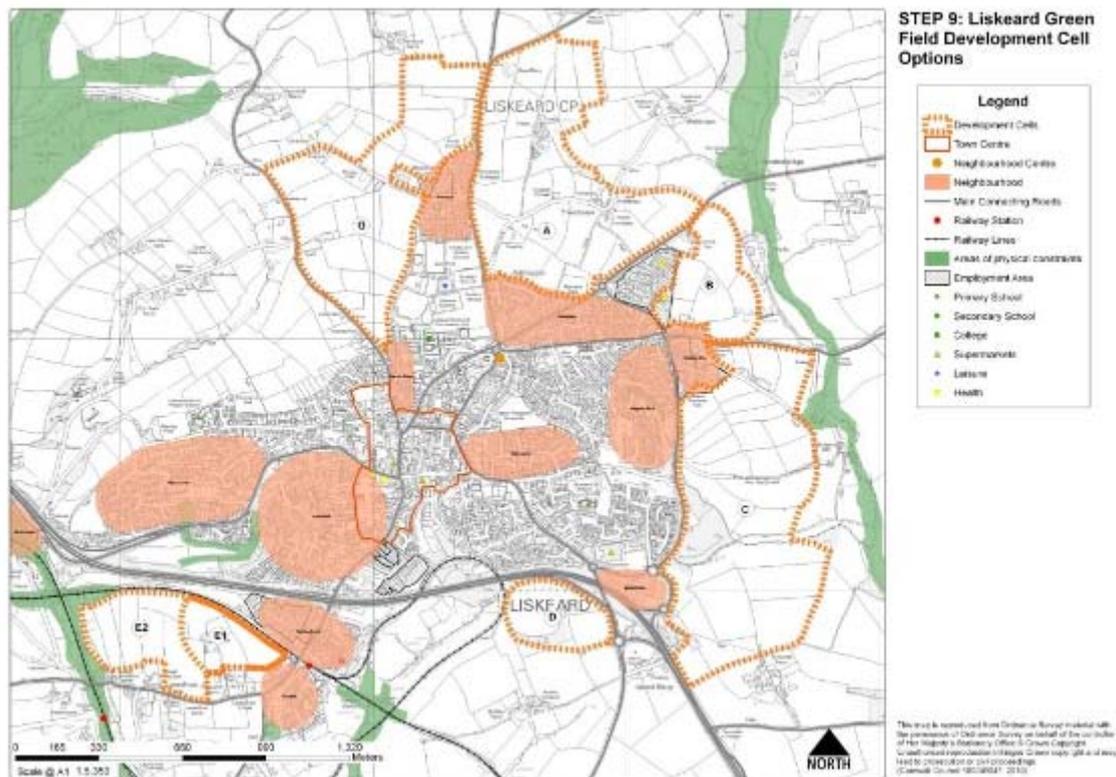


Figure 8: Review, merge and discount of inappropriate sites

2.9.8 **The Liskeard TFP Steering Group** - The member steering group met several times to review steps 6 – 9, which identified the options around the town to go forward for further consultation. After detailed discussion on the subject, the Steering Group resolved to endorse the cell options presented with the inclusion of two existing allocated sites. Those being L3 and L9 (see figure 9).

2.9.9 L3 is located within the larger L4 area and comprises approximately 11.5 hectares of land the Steering Group wish to continue to promote for employment purposes only (Caradon Local Plan First Alteration Policy ALT9).

2.9.10 L9 lies mainly within the larger L1 cell and is promoted for 8.8 hectares of open recreation as set out in Policy ALT15 of the Caradon Local Plan First Alteration.

2.10 Step 10 Stakeholder Discussions

2.10.0 A workshop was arranged in order to discuss the options identified through step 9 with key statutory stakeholders including: the Environment Agency, the Highways Agency, Natural England, Cornwall Council's Strategic Transport officers, Cornwall Council Heritage and Archaeological officers.

- 2.10.1 Stakeholders were able to review each of the cell options presented in the knowledge that a number of desk based and field assessments had been carried out in consultation with the various Steering Groups.
- 2.10.2 A key outcome of the workshop was to establish if there were any important issues that had not previously been picked up. As a result of the workshop, transport colleagues raised concerns over Cell D's severance from the town. They felt that residential development in this area would encourage unsustainable traffic movements. The proposed use was subsequently altered to an employment only option, which would generate less intensive traffic movements (Figure 9 – L5).
- 2.10.3 Highways colleagues noted that a strategic case would be required for any junction off the A38 in cell E2 (L7 in figure 9), and that viability would be an issue.

2.11 Step 11 Cell Sustainability Appraisal Summary

- 2.11.0 A Sustainability Appraisal (SA) review was carried out on the original cells and the consultation cell options (see Step 12, Figure 9). An SA assesses the environmental, social and economic impacts of proposed plans and policies and is required by legislation. It provides a quality check and aims to ensure that the options within the Town Framework are moving towards achieving sustainable development.
- 2.12.0 The methodology and full results of this process comprise a separate document entitled 'Liskeard Framework Plan: Interim Sustainability Appraisal' which is available on the Council's website.
- 2.13.0 **Appendix G** shows the summary SA results for the original cells and the consultation cell options respectively. The key for both of these tables is set out below.

Extremely Negative Effect	Significantly Negative Effect	Negative Effect	More Negative than Positive	Positive and Negative Effects
---	--	-	--+	+-
More positive than Negative	Uncertain Effects	Positive Effect	Significantly Positive Effect	Extremely Positive Effect
++-	?	+	++	+++

2.12 Step 12 Sites Submitted for Core Strategy Consultation

2.12.0 As a result of the steps carried out and detailed within this document, the following map is shows potential development options for Liskeard.

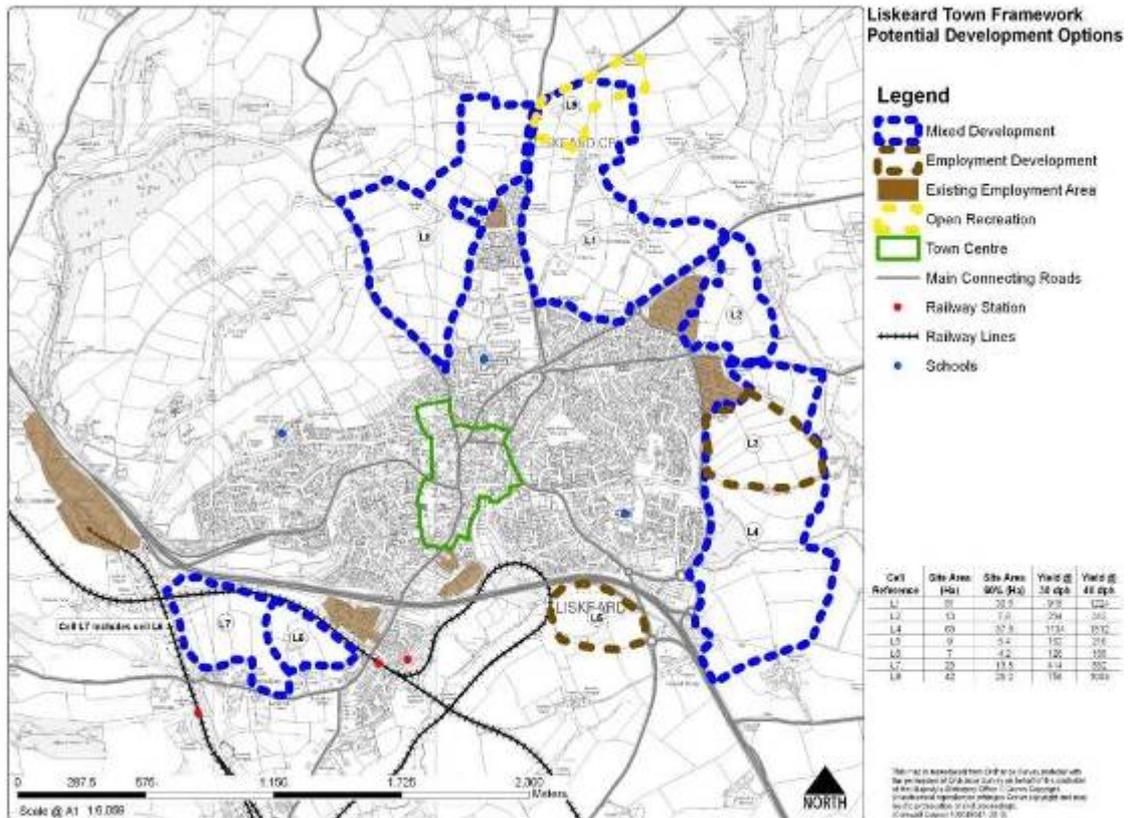


Fig 9: Step 12 Sites submitted for Core Strategy Consultation

3. Appendices

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21 December 2011

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