

# **STRATEGIC HOUSING LAND AVAILABILITY ASSESSMENT 2015**

## **Draft Methodology for Consultation**

**July 2015**

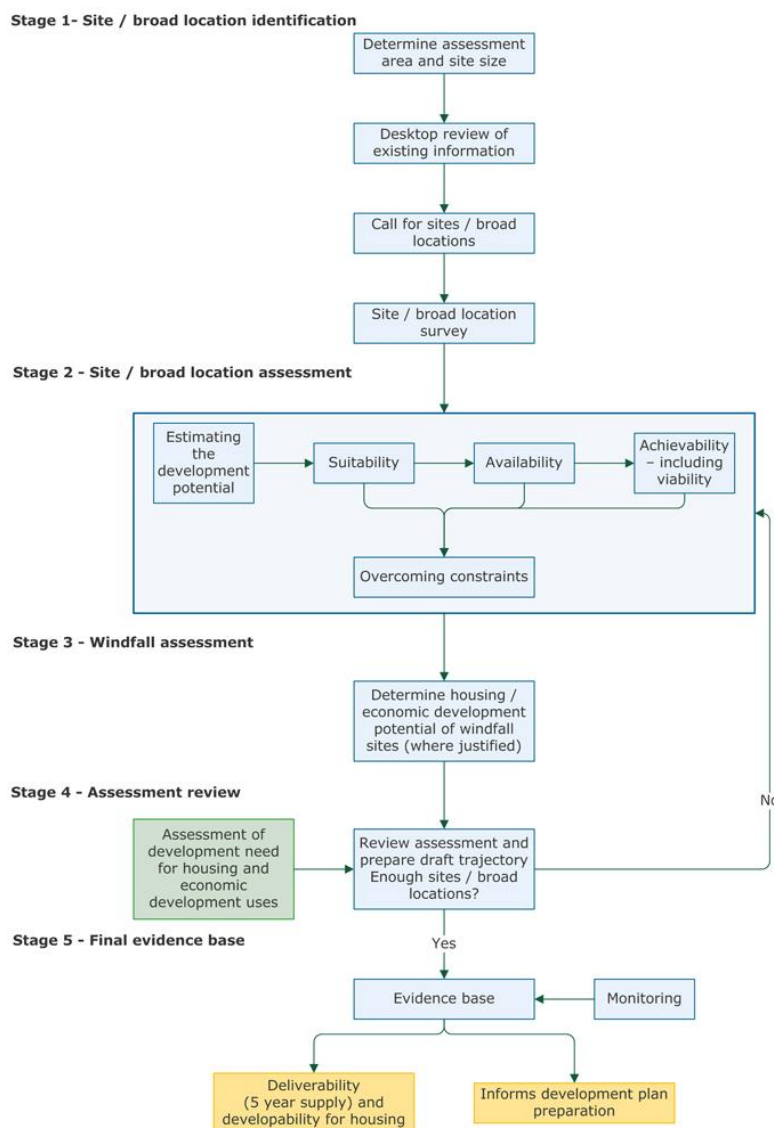
## Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment 2015 Draft Methodology

### Introduction

The Council first prepared a SHLAA in 2008 and the methodology was based on the Practice Guidance produced by the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) in July 2007. The methodology was subject to consultation with house builders/agents and property agents, Essex County Council and neighbouring local authorities, social landlords, town and parish councils and national agencies.

National guidance on SHLAA has since been amended and is now set out in the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) on 'Housing and economic land availability assessment'.<sup>1</sup> The methodology is very similar to that set out in 2007.

The methodology set out in the Planning Practice Guidance is as follows.



<sup>1</sup> <http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/housing-and-economic-land-availability-assessment/>

## Stage 1 – Site / broad locations identification Determine assessment area and site size

### 1.1 Assessment Area

Although Planning Practice Guidance is that the assessment should cover the housing market area, the area selected for this assessment is the district area. Uttlesford lies within a housing market area made up of Epping Forest, Harlow, East Herts District Councils and ourselves. The other authorities in the housing market area all have published SHLAA<sup>2</sup> and the methodology used is based on the DCLG Practice Guidance July 2007, as is our current SHLAA, so together there is an assessment which covers the housing market area.

### 1.2 Involvement of Key Stakeholders

The Council will consult with the following bodies on the methodology of preparing SHLAA as required by the PPG at paragraph 008.

Developers	Housing Associations
Land promoters	Essex County Council
Local property agents	Environment Agency
Town and Parish Councils	Highways England
Chambers of Commerce	Historic England
Other authorities in the Housing Market Area	Natural England
Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group	

The assessment of the sites will be undertaken by officers.

The SHLAA is a technical study rather than a decision-making document and therefore no public consultation on SHLAA sites will be held. However, it is proposed that the draft SHLAA assessments will be sent to the relevant Parish or Town Council and Neighbourhood Plan Steering Groups for comment as part of the fact-checking and quality control exercise.

### 1.3 Sites to be assessed

The assessment will consider all sites and broad locations capable of delivering five or more dwellings.

The SHLAA will cover the sources of sites set out below and the databases and documents used to identify the sites. .

No types of existing land use will be specifically excluded from the SHLAA

Sites in planning process	
Source of Sites	Source of Information
Existing housing development	Annual residential land availability

<sup>2</sup> Epping Forest District Council published a SHLAA in 2012. <http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/index.php/home/file-store/category/107-methodology>

Harlow Council published a SHLAA in 2014

<http://www.harlow.gov.uk/sites/harlow.gov.uk/files/Strategic%20Housing%20Land%20Availability%20Assessment%202014.pdf>

East Herts District council published an initial report on the SHLAA in 2012

<http://www.eastherts.gov.uk/index.jsp?articleid=26553>

allocations and site development briefs not yet with planning permission	survey
Planning permissions for housing development that are unimplemented or under construction	Annual residential land availability survey
Planning applications which have been refused or withdrawn	Planning application records
Sites not currently in planning process	
Land in the local authority's ownership	Review of UDC garage sites Land Terrier (record of our land and property holding)
Surplus and likely to become surplus public sector land	Register of Surplus Public Sector Land.
Vacant and derelict land and buildings	National Land Use Database Valuation Office database LPA vacant property registers
Additional opportunities in established uses (eg making productive use of under-utilised facilities such as garage blocks).	Review of UDC garage sites
Sites in rural locations	Call for Sites Constraints/Sieve mapping
Additional housing opportunities adjacent established residential areas.	Previous representations on Local Plan. Core Strategy representations
Large scale redevelopment and redesign of existing residential or economic areas	Development Opportunity Sites Neighbourhood Plans
Sites in and adjoining villages or rural settlements and rural exception sites	Call for Sites Constraints/Sieve mapping Parish Councils Housing Associations Parish Plans
Potential Urban Extensions and new freestanding settlements	Call for Sites Constraints/Sieve mapping

The Council undertook a Call for Sites between April – June 2015, however the process is ongoing and submissions can be made throughout the plan preparation process. The 'Call for Sites' is an opportunity for developers, landowners, individuals and other interested parties to suggest sites within Uttlesford District for development. Details on the Call for Sites can be found at [www.uttlesford.gov.uk/callforsites](http://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/callforsites)

Having identified the sites to be assessed a desktop review will be undertaken reviewing information on current policy restrictions; environmental conditions such as flooding and air noise; impact on biodiversity, landscape, historic environment and

resources; access to services, physical problems or limitations and existing uses on the site which would be lost. These are listed in more detail in the next stage.

## **Stage 2 – Site/broad location assessment**

### **Estimating the development potential of each site/broad location**

#### 2.1 Site Capacity

When the Council undertook the Urban Capacity Study in 2002 it looked at the density of various generic housing types, the character of the area of the settlement and applied the relevant density assumption. The range of densities applied in the Urban Capacity Study are shown in the table below.

Housing Type	Lowest Density	Highest Density
Low density detached, linked and semi detached	30	32
Terraced housing	35	67
Flats	60	122
Mixed flats and houses	50	66

Although the study was undertaken some time ago it is considered that the above table presents a tried and tested methodology which can be applied to the SHLAA. The density standards set out in the following table have therefore been applied. Although there is no minimum density, the density standards reflect existing local densities and it is considered appropriate that they are applied for the purposes of the SHLAA as a guide only and to ensure that the capacity of sites is assessed equally.

Location	Density Dwlg/ha (net)	Justification
Within Saffron Walden or Great Dunmow	35-67	Allows for a mix of housing types of houses, terraces and flats
Within a village	30-50	Respects the rural character of Uttlesford
Adjacent to any settlement	30-50	Respects the rural character of Uttlesford
New settlement	30-67	Allows for a mix of housing types of houses, terraces and flats

The estimation of housing potential will be based on the net developable area of each identified site. Smaller sites will typically make use of existing roads and facilities, potentially enabling up to 100% of the site area to be developed for housing.

However, the area for housing development on larger sites may be reduced through the provision of internal access roads and strategic open space or landscaping.

It is proposed to apply the following gross to net ratios in calculating the net developable area for sites identified in the SHLAA. These ratios were used for Regional Annual Monitoring Report, which although no longer produced are considered a sound approach.

<b>Site size</b>	<b>Gross to net ratio standards</b>
Up to 0.4 hectare	100%
0.4 to 2 hectares	90%
2 hectares and above	75%

## 2.2 Assessment of suitability; availability and achievability

In assessing the development potential of a site, the Council needs to assess the “suitability”, “availability” and “achievability” of a site. This will provide the information on which a judgment can be made whether a site can be considered “deliverable”, “developable” or not currently developable. To be considered

- “deliverable” – a site is available now, offers a suitable location for housing development now and there is reasonable prospect that housing will be delivered on site within 5 years from the date of adoption of the plan, and
- “developable” – a site should be in a suitable location for housing development, and there should be a reasonable prospect that it will be available for and could be developed at a specific point in time i.e. it is achievable.<sup>3</sup>

### 2.2.1 Suitability

The council will prepare a pro-forma to assess the suitability of each site by considering its location against the following factors. This is a factual assessment.

#### *Policy constraint*

Brownfield or Greenfield site

Within, adjacent or separate from village or town development limit

Beyond Metropolitan Greenbelt

Beyond Countryside Protection Zone

#### *Flood risk*

Within flood risk zone 2

Within flood risk zone 3

#### *Noise*

Beyond 54 dB(A)leq

Between 54 -57 dB(A) leq

Within 57dB(A) leq

Within public safety zone

#### *Pollution*

Within Poor Air Quality Zone

Within Air Quality Management Area (AQMA)

---

▪ <sup>3</sup> Source: NPPF Footnotes 11 and 12 and paragraph 47.

Within ground water protection zone  
Within Waste Consultation Zone  
Within Minerals Safeguarding Area

*Natural environment*

Within 100m of  
SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest)  
NNR (National Nature Reserve)  
Local Wildlife Site  
Ancient Woodland  
Accessed via a Protected Lane  
Located in areas noted for their high sensitivity to change (from Landscape Character Assessment evaluations)  
Will any Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) be affected as a result of development?  
Within Grade 2, 3 or 4/non-agricultural use agricultural land classification

*Historic environment*

Within 100metres of a (including its setting):  
Scheduled Ancient Monument  
Listed Building  
Conservation Area  
Historic Park or Garden

*Accessibility*

Within 800 metres of an existing public transport node  
Within walking and cycling distance (800m) of:  
A primary school  
Convenience shopping  
Primary health care facilities  
Within 4.8km of a secondary school

*Loss of land use*

Currently recreation land which will be lost through development  
Currently employment land which will be lost through development

2.2.2 Availability

A site is considered available if, on the best information available (confirmed by the call for sites and information from land owners and legal searches where appropriate), there is confidence that there are no legal or ownership problems, such as unresolved multiple ownerships, ransom strips, tenancies or operational requirements of landowners.

The call for sites form requested information on the ownership of the site and evidence to demonstrate that the land is available such as a signed statement from all the landowners. Any information on legal or ownership issues was also requested.

2.2.3 Achievability

A site is considered to be achievable if there is a reasonable prospect that the particular type of development will be developed on the site at a particular point in time. This is essentially a judgement about the economic viability of a site and the capacity of the developer to deliver the site.

The call for sites form requested information on whether there were any constraints which need to be overcome which may prejudice availability. Information on the following were also requested – a flood risk assessment; contaminated land assessment, transport information or assessment and viability assessment. The level of detail of the assessment needed to be proportionate to the size of site and scale of development. For proposals of 500 or more dwellings an assessment against Garden Development principles was requested.

Using the SHLAA to assess whether settlement scale developments are developable is more difficult and possibly not the most appropriate method. The Development Strategy will consider what role if any new settlements will play in the Local Plan. The sites will be subject to a Sustainability Appraisal. Members and Officers will need to carefully consider the documents accompanying the call for sites submission. The technical nature of the documents may require the commissioning of specialists (for example in ecology, transport, flood risk, and financial viability) to provide an assessment.

### 2.3 Overcoming Constraints

The SHLAA is a 'live' document and the Local Authority will look at any identified constraints to development on suitable sites i.e. those found to be not currently developable, and consider whether there are ways to overcome them. The Local Authority will work with the landowners or their agents, consultees and any other relevant partners to determine the potential to overcome these constraints. The SHLAA will be updated annually with any information obtained during the year as part of the Monitoring Report.

## **Stage 3: Windfall Sites**

### **Determining the housing potential of windfall sites where justified**

The Council applies a windfall allowance of 50 dwellings per year. The evidence on its windfall allowance is set out in 'Consideration of a windfall allowance for Uttlesford June 2014' which can be found at [www.uttlesford.gov.uk/backgroundstudies](http://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/backgroundstudies)

The council has taken evidence from historic windfall delivery rates over the last 13 years which demonstrates that windfall sites have consistently become available, and more importantly, have been developed, over a considerable time period. The average number of windfall dwellings completed annually is 46.

The council's policies on housing and the presumption in favour of sustainable development set by the National Planning Policy Framework positively encourage windfall development indicating that they will continue to provide a reliable source of supply. In addition, there have been the recent changes to the General Development Permitted Order allowing conversion to residential of agricultural buildings, retail uses (A1 and A2) and offices with only the need for prior notification.



Paragraph 7 of the Windfall Allowance paper lists those sites which historically are not included as windfall sites. This definition used by Essex County Council is more stringent than the definition used in the NPPF. These criteria apply a strict definition of sites not to be considered as windfall, for instance by excluding appeal decisions; and superseded applications even where the original application would have been considered a windfall site. There will therefore be a number of homes built which are not classed under this definition as windfall but are not identified in the local plan either. Paragraph 15 of the Windfall allowance paper shows that an average of 80 dwellings per annum has been built on sites of 5 or less dwellings. An average of 46 of these would have been windfall sites as shown by paragraph 8, the remaining 34 would be other sites which although not technically windfall under the criteria used were neither specifically identified as available in the Local Plan process.

With an annual average completion rate of 46 dwellings on windfall sites and 80 dwellings on all small sites, a windfall allowance of 50 dwellings based on rounding the windfall completion rate is considered conservative but realistic.

The windfall allowance will be reviewed annually.

## **Stage 4: Assessment Review**

### 4.1 Assessment Review

Once all the sites and broad locations have been assessed, the development potential of all the sites can be collected and an assessment made as to whether there are sufficient or insufficient sites/broad locations to meet objectively assessed needs.

If there are insufficient sites the council will need to reconsider its assessment of sites, for example changing the assumptions on the development potential on particular sites (including physical and policy constraints) including sites for possible new settlements. If, following this review there are still insufficient sites, then it will be necessary to investigate how this shortfall should best be planned for. If there is clear evidence that the needs cannot be met locally, it will be necessary to consider how needs might be met in adjoining areas in accordance with the duty to cooperate.

### 4.2 Keeping the assessment up-to-date

The SHLAA will be annually updated with information on whether sites are now being developed and what progress has been made, whether applications have been submitted or approved on sites, progress on removing constraints and whether a site is now considered deliverable or developable; or whether unforeseen constraints which have since emerged. Any information provided on overcoming constraints will be considered and the deliverability of sites amended accordingly.

## **Stage 5: Final Evidence Base**

### 5.1 Core Outputs

The Council will create a page on the website for the SHLAA [www.uttlesford.gov.uk/shlaa](http://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/shlaa) which will contain the following information:-

### 5.2 District Map

The Council will prepare a list of all the sites and a district wide map showing their location.

### 5.3 Site Appraisal Information

For each site the Council will produce a form setting out the following information.

- Site location plan
- Current land use and character
- Land use and character of the surrounding area
- Total site area and developable area
- Potential uses
- An assessment of the site in terms of its suitability for development, availability and achievability as described in Stage 2 above.
- An overall conclusion as to whether the site can be considered deliverable (i.e. available now with a realistic prospect that housing will be built within 5 years) or developable (i.e. that there is a reasonable prospect that the site could be viably developed at the point envisaged) or not currently developable for housing.
- An indicative trajectory of the site's development indicating the amount of housing deliverable in the first five years, years 5-10 and years 10-15.