

Committee: Local Plan Leadership Group

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Title: Written Methodologies for Site Availability Assessment (SLAA) and Site Selection Processes

Report Author: Jessica Dewar, Interim Principal Local Plans and New Communities Officer

JDewar@uttlesford.gov.uk

Summary

1. This Report introduces and presents two key documents which are intended to provide robust methods for two key Local Plan preparation stages - successive but very different in purpose – in identifying and considering sites for potential development.

Recommendations

2. That the Leadership Group notes the two Written Methodologies, and the greater clarity and robustness these will provide to the treatment of potential sites in the development of the Local Plan options and proposals.

Financial Implications

3. None.

Background Papers

4. The following papers were referred to by the author in the preparation of this report and are available for inspection from the author of the report.
 - a. SLAA Report presented to LPLG 29 April 2021
 - b. Development Options Process presented to LPLG November 2021

Impact

- 5.

Communication/Consultation	n/a
Community Safety	n/a
Equalities	n/a
Health and Safety	n/a
Human Rights/Legal	n/a

Implications	
Sustainability	The Written Methodologies reflect the Strategic Environmental Assessment and Sustainability Appraisal which are an integral and obligatory part of the plan-making process.
Ward-specific impacts	n/a
Workforce/Workplace	n/a

Situation

Site Assessment Process

6. The revised Local Plan preparation timetable has been amended (and reflected in a revised Local Development Scheme to be published shortly) in order to undertake further work on the Draft Local Plan and focus on the supporting evidence and justification of potential allocations within the Local Plan. In this the Local Plans team is responding to concerns from members, officers, parish councils and others about the robustness of the process to date, and a need, and some specific requests, for greater clarity about where we are now in the process and how it will proceed henceforth in moving towards potential allocations within the Local Plan.
7. In order to ensure this is a robust and transparent process, and that the different officers working on it are following the same procedures, Written Methodologies have been prepared for two key and distinct stages of considering sites for potential inclusion in the emerging plan.
8. There had been Reports to LPLG on these two stages previously (see Background Papers, above) previously, but with the benefit of hindsight the first on these (on the SLAA, see below) was rather confusing and didn't address all elements of national guidance on the matter, and it may also have been the case that with the rapid changeover in Local Plans team staff practice deviated somewhat from this; and the second (on the Site Selection process, see below) didn't provide any explanation of the process to be undertaken.

Strategic Land Availability Assessment Methodology

9. The Strategic Land Availability Assessment (SLAA) is, in short, a land 'bank' or supply of sites which are available within the district to inform an assessment of land supply or choices of sites which are deliverable for potential allocation. National Planning Guidance states that this land supply can be sourced from the Call for Sites, existing planning permissions, brownfield land registers, Council owned sites, neighbourhood plan allocations or from actively looking for sites by the Council.

10. The previous SLAA was consulted on in November 2021 as part of the SLAA Technical Consultation, a summary of the comments received is in Appendix D of the report and these comments have resulted in an updated SLAA Methodology to robustly assess the sites consistently and in line with National Planning Guidance.
11. It is important to note that the SLAA does not have any planning weight and just because a site is included within a SLAA it does not mean the site will be allocated in the Local Plan. The SLAA does not consider emerging Local Plan aspirations, policies or planning constraints such as Greenbelt or the Countryside Protection Zone, that later, separate assessment is part of the Site Selection Methodology assessment of sites set out immediately following.
12. A new Written Strategic Land Availability Assessment (SLAA) Methodology has been completed and is already in use by the Local Plans team. This forms Appendix 2 to this Report.

Draft Site Selection Methodology

13. Clarity has been sought as to how sites have been assessed from being within a supply of sites to the potential allocations. The Local Plan work going forward will benefit from in a clear, staged process of the assessment of sites.
14. Previously, Local Plan Leadership Group have been presented with the 'Development Options Process', however how the chosen sites have been through a filter process of what sites are chosen from the supply of sites (SLAA) to the potential allocations stage is not explicit nor has this been justified through a clear process.
15. The Draft Site Selection Methodology (see Appendix 2 to this Report) shows how it is intended to assess the sites against Local Plan aspirations, policies, planning constraints and Sustainability Appraisal objectives. Thus, each site will have an individual site assessment setting out the justification for proposing to allocate or not resulting in a final list of recommended potential allocations to be considered by members in May 2023 and consulted on as part of the Draft Local Plan (Regulation 18) consultation in Summer 2023.

Risk Analysis

16.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
1	1	1	1

1 = Little or no risk or impact

2 = Some risk or impact – action may be necessary.

3 = Significant risk or impact – action required

4 = Near certainty of risk occurring, catastrophic effect or failure of project.