



Leicester & Leicestershire Housing Market Area

Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments (SHLAAs)

Methodology Paper





Introduction

What are Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments (SHLAAs)?

In accordance with Planning Policy Statement 3 (Annex C, 2006), Local Authorities are now required to carry out a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA), in order to identify future sources of land for housing.

The Government view SHLAAs as;

“a key component of the evidence base to support the delivery of sufficient land for housing to meet the community’s need for more homes”.

(SHLAA Practice Guidance, DCLG 2007, para1)

Completion of a SHLAA should enable local planning authorities to:

identify specific, deliverable sites for the first five years of a plan that are ready for development;

identify specific, developable sites for years 6-10, and ideally years 11-15, in plans to enable the five year supply to be topped up;

where it is not possible to identify specific sites for years 11-15 of the plan, **indicate broad locations for future growth;** and

not include an allowance for windfalls in the first 10 years of the plan.

How will SHLAAs differ from Urban Capacity Studies (UCSs)?

The SHLAA exercise constitutes a more comprehensive approach towards assessing housing land availability.

SHLAAs are now required to identify additional sites not previously required within UCSs. Consequently, even where there is a recent UCS in place, Local Authorities are now required to carry out a SHLAA.

What are the core requirements of the Assessment?

As a minimum the assessment should provide the following core outputs:

a list of sites, cross-referenced to maps showing locations and boundaries;

assessment of the deliverability of each identified site to determine when an identified site is realistically expected to be developed;

potential quantity of housing that could be delivered on each identified site;

constraints on the delivery of identified sites; and

recommendations on how these constraints could be overcome and when.

(SHLAA Practice Guidance, DCLG 2007, Figure 1)

How will the SHLAA inform future plans?

The assessment will form a critical part of the evidence base for future Development Plan Documents.

Once completed the assessment should be regularly kept up to date as part of the Annual Monitoring Report.

Please note that SHLAAs DO NOT represent policy and do not determine whether a site should be allocated or granted permission for development. SHLAAs should provide a comprehensive evidence base for future allocations documents.



Methodology

How will the SHLAA be carried out?

The flowchart to the *right* has been set out by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), in order to produce the core outputs for the assessment.

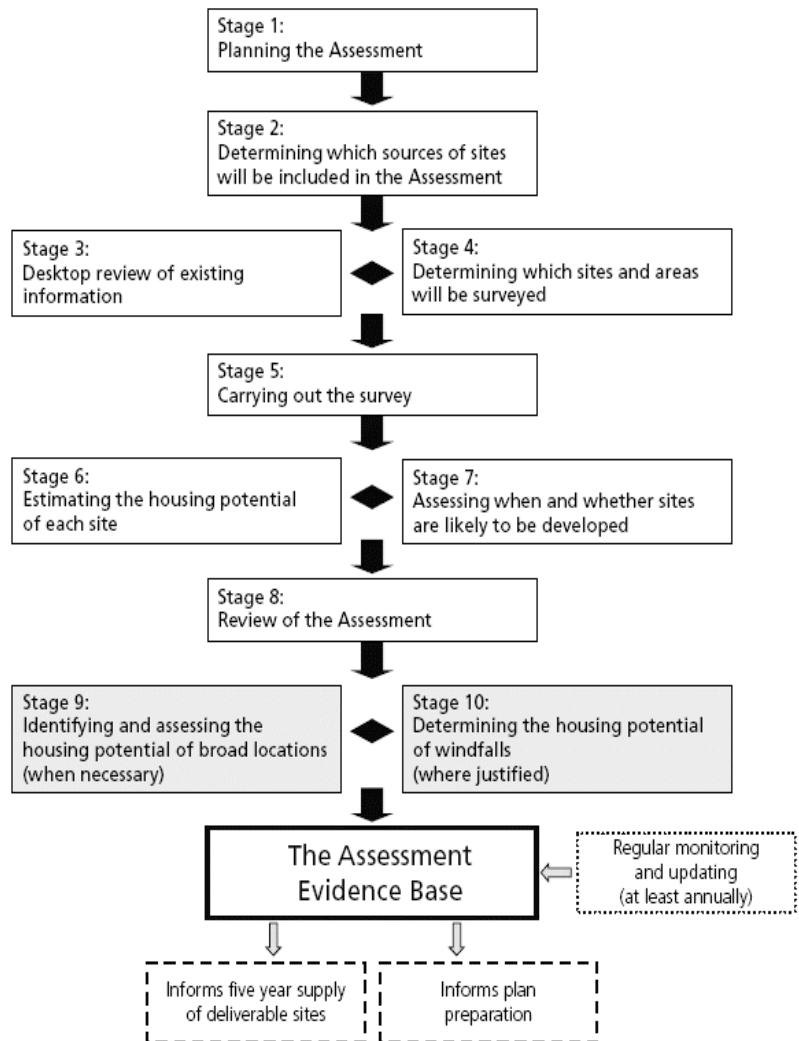
According to the DCLG's *SHLAA Practice Guidance*, the use of this standard methodology is recommended as:

"it will ensure that the Assessment findings are robust and transparently prepared".

(SHLAA Practice Guidance, DCLG 2007, para15)

In addition, the guidance goes on to state that, when followed a Local Planning Authority should not need to justify the methodology used in preparing it's assessment (including at independent examination).

The Leicester and Leicestershire Local Planning Authorities, will therefore conform closely with the standard methodology.



(SHLAA Practice Guidance, DCLG 2007, Figure 3)

Who will be involved in the SHLAA exercise?

A key aspect of the assessment is the inclusion of key external stakeholders. Hence the Leicester and Leicestershire Local Planning Authorities will be working closely with:

- the House Builders Federation;
- national, regional and local house builders and developers;
- regional and local land owners and agents;
- registered social landlords; and
- local housing and planning officers.

Input from the above will be critical as it will ensure that a robust and credible evidence base is developed.

Methodology for the Leicester and Leicestershire Authorities



SHLAA Framework

Leicester and Leicestershire Planning Authorities will be carrying out individual assessments. Each of which will closely follow the following standardised methodology*:

Stage 1: Planning the Assessment.

Leicester and Leicestershire Planning Authorities are keen to develop and carry out a vast majority of the assessment in house.

The SHLAA will be undertaken through a Officer Project Group within each council incorporating planning and housing officers.

Planning Authorities within the Leicester and Leicestershire Housing Market Area, have agreed a joint approach to the SHLAA and agreed common working arrangements.

This approach also incorporates the views of house builders, land agents, land owners; gathered from the 4 week consultation period on the draft methodology carried out during November/December 2007.

Building on the responses to the above consultation, it is now proposed that the SHLAA will be carried out between October 2007 and June 2008.

The work programme outlined within the Draft Consultation Paper set April 2008 as a completion date for the assessment.

This date has now been revised, as a number of aspects surrounding the assessment have been expanded. A draft publication is now scheduled for June 2008, with an opportunity for stakeholders to comment on the assessments findings immediately afterwards.

A proposed work programme is outlined in Appendix A.

Stage 2: Determining which sources of sites will be included in the Assessment.

Figure 4 of the guidance states that, the assessment should cover the following types of sites:

- land allocated (or with permission) for employment or other land uses which are no longer required;
- existing housing allocations;
- unimplemented/outstanding planning permissions for housing;
- planning permissions for housing that are under construction;
- vacant and derelict land and buildings;
- surplus public sector land;
- land in non-residential use which may be suitable for re-development for housing;
- rural settlements and rural exception sites.

The guidance goes on to state that;

“particular types of land or areas may be excluded from the Assessment, as long as the reasons for doing so are justified and agreed by the members of the partnership”.

(SHLAA Practice Guidance, DCLG 2007, para21)

Each individual planning authority has developed their own list of land/areas which will be excluded from the assessment, based on local characteristics.

A full of list of land/areas excluded from the assessment is outlined in Appendix B.

***Please note that North West Leicestershire District Council have already completed a SHLAA (before the new guidance). However the authority has agreed to use the standardised methodology for any future reviews/updates.**



Stage 3: Desktop review of existing information.

Figure 5 of the guidance, sets out the following list of data sources that could be used to identify sites with potential for housing.

Sites within the planning process:

- site allocations not yet the subject of planning permission;
- planning permissions/sites under construction;
- site specific development briefs;
- planning application refusals; and
- dwelling starts and completion records.

Other potential sources of information:

- local planning authority Urban Capacity Studies;
- local planning authority Empty Property Register;
- English House Condition Survey;
- National Land Use Database;
- Register of Surplus Public Sector Land;
- Local planning authority Employment Land Review;
- Valuation Office database;
- Local planning authority vacant property registers;
- Commercial property databases;
- Ordnance Survey maps; and
- Aerial photography.

As the above list provides a range of potential sources, each Authority will use it at their discretion, based on local conditions.

Stage 4: Determining which sites and areas will be surveyed.

Sites: As a basis for the assessment, a threshold for sites, able to accommodate 10 dwellings and above will be used.

Exceptions will be made for Harborough District where a threshold of 5 dwellings and above will be used.

In addition, both Oadby & Wigston and Hinckley & Bosworth Borough's will apply no minimum threshold.

A more detailed explanation for the threshold used by each District is set out in Appendix C.

Areas: The SHLAAs will be controlled by the need to bring forward sufficient sites, to ensure that Leicester and Leicestershire Planning Authorities can meet rates of housing provision set out in the emerging Regional Spatial Strategy for the East Midlands (RSS8).

To conform with the Draft RSS's objectives to promote urban regeneration and concentration, it is expected that the majority of housing is directed to the principal urban area of Leicester and the sub-regional centres of Loughborough, Coalville, Hinckley, Melton and Market Harborough.

Consideration will also be given to development within or adjoining other settlements, in accordance with each District's emerging Core Strategy.

A list of settlements subject to assessment is set out in Appendix D.

If the initial list of settlements fails to provide a sufficient number of sites, then the geographical limits to the assessment will be broadened where necessary. This would take place within Stage 8 of the assessment.



Stage 5: Carrying out the Survey.

In accordance with the SHLAA guidance, the following characteristics will be recorded when carrying out the site survey, or will be checked if they were previously identified by the desk-top review:

- site size;
- site boundaries;
- current use(s);
- surrounding land use(s);
- character of surrounding area;
- physical constraints;
- development progress; and
- an initial assessment of whether the site is suitable for housing or housing as part of a mixed use development.

(SHLAA Practice Guidance, DCLG 2007, para.29)

The above will then be combined with further information obtained from a desktop review of each site.

The reviews will assess a number of key factors for each site, in order to identify any potential constraints on development, and how/if they could be overcome.

Key factors include:

- planning policy;
- previous planning history;
- access/highways;
- landscape/conservation;
- flood risk;
- contaminated land; and
- access to local services.

The vast majority of this research will be conducted by planning officers, however more technical issues such as highways and conservation will be discussed with the relevant agency/department.

Stages 6: Estimating the housing potential of each site.

Planning Policy Statement 3 makes clear that;

“a minimum of 30 dwellings per hectare (dph) should be used as a national indicative minimum to guide policy development and decision-making, until local density policies are in place”.

(Planning Policy Statement 3, DCLG 2006 para.53)

For the purpose of this assessment, the density targets set out within **Housing Policy 5** of the Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland Structure Plan (1996 to 2016), will be used as a means of estimating housing potential for each site.

Housing Policy 5 states that housing developments on sites of 0.3 hectares or more should attain the following net densities:

Within and adjoining the centre of Leicester and Loughborough	A minimum of 50 dwellings per hectare
Within other main town centres, local centres and other locations well served by public transport and accessible to services and facilities	A minimum of 40 dwellings per hectare
Other Locations	A minimum of 30 dwellings per hectare

(Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland Structure Plan 1996 to 2016 Housing Policy 5, p89)

For sites which fall below 0.3 hectares, the national minimum of 30 dwellings per hectare will be applied (as set out in PPS3).



Stage 7: Assessing when and whether sites are likely to be developed.

The SHLAA guidance states that;

“assessing the suitability, availability and achievability of a site will provide the information on which the judgement can be made in the plan making context as to whether a site can be considered deliverable, developable or not currently developable for housing development”.

(SHLAA Practice Guidance, DCLG 2007, para.29)

To be considered as:

deliverable – a site is available now, offers a suitable location for housing development now and there is a reasonable prospect that housing will be delivered on the site within five 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.

Where it is unknown when a site could be developed, then it should be regarded as **not currently developable**. This may be, for example, because one of the constraints to development is serve, and it is not known when it might be overcome.

(SHLAA Practice Guidance, DCLG 2007, para.34)

To assess a site’s deliverability and developability, Stage 7 of the assessment will incorporate information gathered by the site assessments, a desktop review, and the views gained from discussions with key consultees. A final conclusion will then be drawn together, from the investigations as outlined within Stages 7a to 7d.

Stage 7a: Assessing suitability for housing.

According to the guidance;

“a site is suitable for housing development if it offers a suitable location for development and would contribute to the creation of sustainable, mixed communities”.

(SHLAA Practice Guidance, DCLG 2007, para.37)

To assess a site’s suitability for housing development, the guidance states that the following factors should be considered:

policy restrictions - such as designations (e.g. public open space), protected areas, existing planning policy and corporate, or community strategy policy;

physical problems or limitations - such as access, infrastructure, ground conditions, flood risk, hazardous risks, pollution of contamination;

potential impacts - including effect upon landscape features and conservation; and

the environmental conditions - which would be experienced by prospective residents.

Stage 7b: Assessing availability for housing.

The SHLAA guidance considers a site to be available for development;

“when on the best information available, there is confidence that there are no legal or ownership problems, tenancies or operational requirements of landowners”.

(SHLAA Practice Guidance, DCLG 2007, para.39)

When assessing availability for housing, further information will be obtained from the stakeholders, who have submitted site suggestions as part of the assessment.

Land ownership details for other sites, will be obtained via desktop reviews, and discussions with external sources where necessary.



Stage 7c: Assessing achievability for housing.

According to the guidance, this stage will essentially make a judgement about the economic viability of a site, and the capacity of the developer to complete and sell the housing over a certain period.

(SHLAA Practice Guidance, DCLG 2007, para.40)

The guidance goes on to state that, the above will be affected by:

market factors – such as adjacent uses, economic viability of existing, proposed and alternative uses in terms of land values, attractiveness of the locality, level of potential market demand and projected rate of sales (particularly important for larger sites);

cost factors – including site preparation costs relating to any physical constraints, any exceptional works necessary, relevant planning standards or obligations, prospect of funding or investment to address identified constraints or assist development; and

delivery factors – including the developer's own phasing, the realistic build-out rates on larger sites (including likely earliest and latest start and completion dates), whether there is a single developer or several developers offering different housing products, and the size capacity of the developer.

In accordance with the guidance, Leicester and Leicestershire Planning Authorities will use developer panels, in order to gain expert, commercial advice on each site's potential.

Each panel will be made up of 4-5 representatives from the Home Builders Federation, local developers and land agents. The panels will then assess the market, cost and delivery factors of each site as stated previously.

The views of such panels are a key element of the assessment, as it will ensure that the assessments findings are as robust and accurate as possible.

Stage 7d: Overcoming constraints.

Where constraints have been identified, the assessment will also consider what action would be needed to remove them. Depending on the nature of the constraint, further discussions/advice will be sort from the relevant party.

Examples of further action include; the need for investment in new infrastructure, dealing with fragmented land ownership, environmental improvement, or a need to amend planning policy which is currently constraining housing development.

(SHLAA Practice Guidance, DCLG 2007, para.42)

Stage 8: Review of the Assessment.

Once the initial survey of sites and the assessment of their deliverability and developability has been made, the housing potential of all sites can be collected to produce an indicative housing trajectory that sets out how much housing can be provided, and at what point in the future.

(SHLAA Practice Guidance, DCLG 2007, para.43)

If any shortfalls within the final projections are indentified, then various elements of the scope of the assessment will be revisited.

An insufficient number of sites may require previously rejected sites and areas of investigation to be brought forward and include within the assessment. Any additional sites brought forward at this stage would be assessed by the same procedure as the sites originally included.



Appendices



Appendix B: Constraints Lists

Authority:	Constraints:
Blaby District Council	Flood Zones 2 and 3 Non inert landfill sites Active mineral extraction sites Hazardous installations Grade 1 agricultural land Oil and high pressure gas pipelines and 400kv (National Grid) overhead electricity lines SSSI's and Scheduled Monuments
Charnwood Borough Council	Flood Zones 2 and 3 Non-inert landfill sites Active mineral extraction sites Hazardous installations Grade 1 agricultural land Oil and high pressure gas pipelines and 400kv (National grid) overhead electricity lines SSSIs and scheduled ancient monuments
Harborough District Council	Flood Zones 2 and 3 Non-inert landfill sites Active mineral extraction sites Hazardous installations Grade 1 and 2 agricultural land Oil and high pressure gas pipelines and 400kv (National grid) overhead electricity lines SSSIs and scheduled ancient monuments
Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council	Flood Zones 2 and 3 Non inert landfill sites Active mineral extractions sites Hazardous installations Agricultural land of grade 1 & 2 Oil and high pressure gas pipelines and 400kv (National grid) overhead electricity lines SSSI's and Scheduled Monuments
Leicester City Council	None



Authority:	Constraints:
Melton Borough Council	Flood Zones 2 and 3 Non –inert Landfill sites Active Mineral extraction sites Hazardous Installations Oil and High Pressure gas pipelines and 400kv (National grid) overhead electricity lines SSSI's and Scheduled Monuments
Oadby and Wigston Borough Council	Flood Zones 2 and 3 Non inert landfill sites Active mineral extraction sites Hazardous installations Grade 1 agricultural land Oil and high pressure gas pipelines and 400kv (National grid) overhead electricity lines SSSI's and Scheduled Monuments



Appendix C: Threshold explanations

Blaby District Council have decided to apply a threshold of 10 units in the identification of SHLAA sites. A threshold of 10 is consistent with the Council's Urban Capacity study and will enable identification of the majority of SHLAA sites. In addition, identification and analysis of sites with a threshold of 10 units is realistically achievable given staff resources available.

Charnwood Borough Council will be concentrating resources on identifying sites large enough to accommodate 10 dwellings or more. This reflects the relative urban nature of the Borough and the recent land supply which has been predominately made up of large sites.

Harborough District Council will consider sites which have the potential to deliver a minimum of 5 dwellings. Using a density multiplier of 40 dwellings per hectare, this equates to approximately 0.125 hectares. This correlates with adopted Council policy in relation to affordable housing provision and represents the minimum size of housing development from which the Council will seek affordable housing. The minimum size threshold also reflects the nature of the settlements to be appraised, where previous evidence demonstrates that small sites do contribute to housing supply, whilst recognising that housing requirements for the District, together with resource restrictions do not necessitate assessment of sites below 0.125 hectares.

Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council have decided to apply no minimum threshold in the identification of sites. This reflects the Borough's largely rural nature and a desire to ensure what were previously 'windfall sites' are captured in the SHLAA.

Leicester City will use a site threshold of 10 dwellings. It is considered that this is a reasonable threshold for an urban authority in terms of site coverage and resources.

Melton Borough Council will identify sites capable of delivering 10 or more dwellings. Over 90% of permitted applications we receive to build new homes are for small sites of less than 10 dwellings. 73% of permitted applications we receive to build new homes are for just a single dwelling. 35% of all dwellings permitted are as a result of these types of smaller applications. Furthermore, our Core Strategy specifically provides for the construction of small infill sites within villages. However, we recognise that resources do not permit us to identify every small site within the Borough and previous attempts to do this have proved to be unreliable and controversial. We therefore intend to identify sites capable of delivering 10 or more dwellings, supplemented by a small-site assessment based on sites with planning permission, historic windfall delivery rates and expected future trends.

Oadby and Wigston Borough Council have decided to apply no minimum threshold in the identification of sites. The Borough of Oadby and Wigston is predominantly urban and as a result a significant number of housing sites which come forward are situated on small sites. The consideration of small sites for residential development reflects past completions and current commitments within the Borough and its local nature.



Appendix D: Settlement Lists

Authority Name	Principal Urban Area Settlements	Sub Regional Centre Settlements	Additional Settlements where market housing will be considered (i.e. Service Centres/Rural Centres)	Settlements where affordable housing only will be considered (i.e. rural exception sites).
Blaby District Council	Glenfield Kirby Muxloe Leicester Forest East Braunstone Town Glen Parva	-	Blaby Enderby Narborough & Littlethorpe Countesthorpe Whetstone Elmesthorpe (inside the line of the Earl Shilton by pass). Stoney Stanton (potential rural centre)	Sapcote Croft Huncote Cosby



Authority Name	Principal Urban Area Settlements	Sub Regional Centre Settlements	Additional Settlements where market housing will be considered (i.e. Service Centres/Rural Centres)	Settlements where affordable housing only will be considered (i.e. rural exception sites).
Charnwood Borough Council	Birstall Thurmaston	Loughborough and Shepshed	Anstey East Goscote Rothley Syston Barrow upon Soar Hathern Mountsorrel Quorn Sileby	Barky Thorpe Beeby Cossington Cropston Queniborough Rearsby Thurcaston Wanlip Burton on the Wolds Cotes Hoton Newtown Linford Prestwold Ratcliffe on the Wreake Seagrave South Croxton Swithland Thrussington Ulverscroft Walton on the Wolds Woodhouse Woodhouse Eaves Woodthorpe Wymeswold



Authority Name	Principal Urban Area Settlements	Sub Regional Centre Settlements	Additional Settlements where market housing will be considered (i.e. Service Centres/Rural Centres)	Settlements where affordable housing only will be considered (i.e. rural exception sites).
Harborough Borough Council	Scraptoft Thurnby Bushby Land adjacent to Oadby	Market Harborough	Lutterworth Broughton - Astley Kibworth Great Glen Fleckney	Foxton Medbourne Hallaton Swinford Theddingworth, Lawton and Mowsley Leire Husbands - Bosworth Church Langton Billesdon Ullesthorpe
Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council	-	Hinckley Burbage Barwell Earl Shilton	Desford Groby Ratby Markfield Bagworth Thornton Barlestone Market Bosworth Newbold Verdon Stoke Golding Higham on the Hill Stanton Under Bardon Sheepy Magna Nailstone Twycross Witherley Congerstone	Barton-in-the-Beans Botcheston Bradgate Hill Cadeby Carlton Dadlington Fenny Drayton Kirkby Mallory Norton-Juxta-Twycross Orton-on-the-Hill Peckleton Ratcliffe Culey Shackerstone Sibson Stapleton Sutton Cheney



Authority Name	Principal Urban Area Settlements	Sub Regional Centre Settlements	Additional Settlements where market housing will be considered (i.e. Service Centres/Rural Centres)	Settlements where affordable housing only will be considered (i.e. rural exception sites).
Leicester City Council	Leicester	-	-	-
Melton Borough Council	-	Melton Mowbray	Asfordby AB Kettleby Asfordby Hill Bottesford Buckminster Croxton Kerrial Edmonthrope Frisby on the Wreake Gaddesby Great Dalby Harby Hose Kington Long Clawson Nether Broughton Old Dalby Queensway Redmile Scalford Sewstern Somerby Stathern Thrope Satchville Twford Waltham on the Wolds Wymondham	-
Oadby and Wigston Borough Council	Oadby Wigston South Wigston	-	Kilby Bridge (Hamlet)	-