

# Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA)

Blaby District Council

March 2011



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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 This document is an update of the previous published SHLAA (March 2010). It builds on the information in the previous SHLAA and has updated site information where circumstances have changed.
- 1.1.2 Government guidance requires all Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) to produce a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) as indicated in the SHLAA Practice Guidance published by the DCLG (2007), “These assessments are required by national planning policy set out in Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing (PPS3).”
- 1.1.3 Planning Policy Statement 12 (PPS12): Local Spatial Planning (2008) reiterates the importance of producing a SHLAA in the LDF process as part of the evidence base by stating that Core Strategies, “must be founded on a robust and credible evidence base” And that “various studies (on for example . . . housing land availability . . . ) are necessary for the proper preparation of Core Strategies.”
- 1.1.3 The Blaby District Council SHLAA forms part of a joint assessment with the other Local Authorities that comprise the Leicester and Leicestershire Housing Market Area. These authorities are Blaby District Council, Charnwood Borough Council, Harborough District Council, Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council, Leicester City Council, Melton Borough Council, North West Leicestershire District Council and Oadby and Wigston Borough Council.
- 1.1.4 The SHLAA contributes towards the ‘research / fact finding’ and evidence that will inform the Local Development Framework (LDF). PPS12 requires LPAs to provide “evidence that the choices made by the plan are backed up by the background facts.” This will be

particularly important in providing evidence to support the Allocations and Designations DPD.

1.1.5 The SHLAA report provides evidence on the potential supply of housing land in the District of Blaby. It particularly seeks to demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing land in the District (as well as a supply of housing land in the next 6-10 years, and 11-15 years).

1.1.6 This document will form part of the evidence base for the Local Development Framework. It is **NOT** a decision making document and **DOES NOT** allocate land for housing. This report will serve to provide evidence in the preparation of the Allocations, Designations and Development Management Development Plan Document (DPD).

1.1.7 In accordance with the SHLAA Practice Guidance, there is a requirement to assign a timeframe to every site. Due to the strategic and broad nature of this assessment, the inclusion of a site within any of the timeframes does not guarantee the grant of planning permission. Developers wishing to pursue planning permission will need to do so through the normal development control procedures.

## **1.2 Purpose of Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment**

1.2.1 The SHLAA Practice Guidance (DCLG, 2007) states that the SHLAA 'should aim to identify as many sites with housing potential in and around as many settlements as possible in the study area.'

1.2.2 This SHLAA focuses solely on the District of Blaby, but has been produced in accordance with an agreed Leicester and Leicestershire SHLAA Methodology Paper. This was produced collaboratively with all participating authorities, and was agreed by stakeholders in November – December 2007.

1.2.3 The SHLAA Practice Guidance (DCLG, July 2007) assigns the SHLAA with the primary role of:

- Identifying sites with potential for housing
- Assessing their housing potential, and
- Assessing when they are likely to be developed.

1.2.4 Moreover, the SHLAA should:

- Identify specific sites that are suitable, available and achievable and that can be delivered within 0-5 years (deliverable sites)
- Identify specific sites that are developable within 6-10 years, and ideally up to 11-15 years to allow the five year housing land supply to be continuously topped up, and
- Where it is not possible to identify specific sites for years 11-15, to indicate broad locations for future growth.

## **2 Policy Context**

### **2.1 National Policy Context**

2.1.1 PPS3: Housing (June 2010) requires Local Authorities to prepare Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments in consultation with key stakeholders as part of the 'evidence based' approach to the preparation of Local Development Documents. PPS3 (para 11) states that "Local Development Documents and Regional Spatial Strategies policies should be informed by a robust, shared evidence base, in particular, of housing need and demand, through a Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) and land availability , through a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment." This sentiment is reiterated in PPS12: Local Spatial Planning (2008) which reinforces the need for a sound evidence base.

2.1.2 PPS3 (June 2010) states the need for local planning authorities to use the SHLAA as a mechanism for demonstrating a five year supply of housing; 'Drawing on information from the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment and or other relevant evidence, Local Planning Authorities should identify sufficient specific deliverable sites to deliver housing in the first five years.'

### **2.2 Practice Guidance**

2.2.1 The Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment: Practice Guidance (DCLG, July 2007) provides practical advice on how to carry out the assessment including how to identify housing land and assess the deliverability and developability of sites.

### **2.3 Regional Policy Context**



- 2.3.1 The East Midlands Regional Plan (RSS) (March 2009) provides the housing requirements for the Leicestershire Housing Market Area up until 2026, as well as for the individual Local Planning Authorities.
- 2.3.2 The housing provision target for the District of Blaby between 2006 and 2026 is 7,600 dwellings.
- 2.3.3 The annual housing target provision for the District is 380 dwellings per annum.

## **2.4 Local Policy Context**

2.4.1 The Blaby District Local Plan was adopted in September 1999. The saved policies of this plan along with the East Midlands Regional Plan provide the policy context for decision-making with regards to the use of land and buildings within the District. A number of saved policies have been used to identify planning policy constraints in the SHLAA. **Planning policy constraints alone have not determined whether a site is developable.**

2.4.2 The saved Local Plan policies that have been taken into account in the SHLAA are as follows:

- E1 Employment Development within Primarily Employment Areas
- E5 Calor Site, Potters Marston
- E6 High Pressure Gas Pipeline
- E7 Employment Development Proposals
- T11 Road Improvement Lines
- T13 Land Safeguarded for the Provision of New Railway Stations
- T15 High Load / Abnormal Load Route
- T17 Road Schemes and Improvements

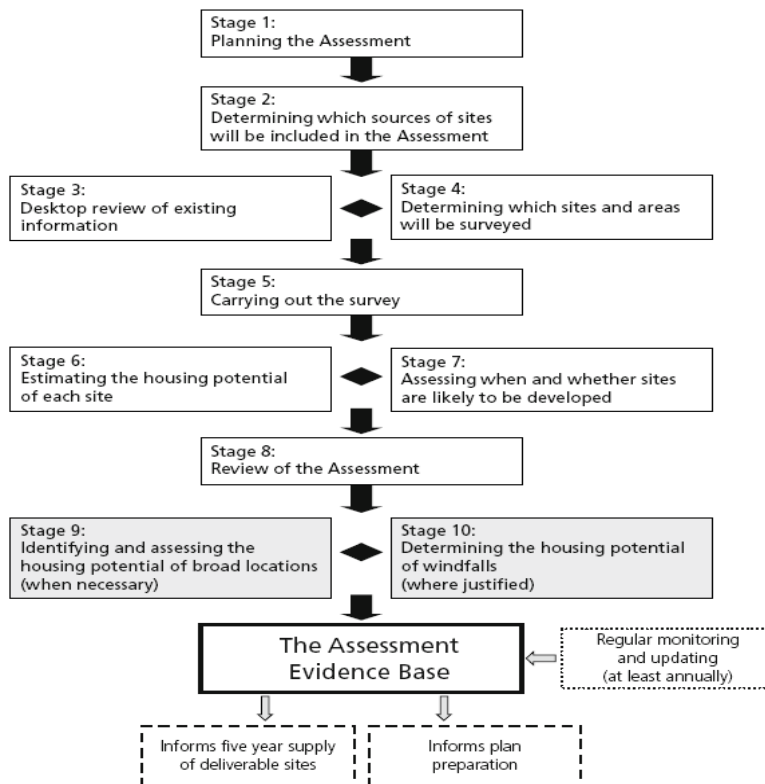
- S9 Blaby Central Area
- S14 Village Centres and Neighbourhood Centres
- C2 Other Development in the Countryside
- C3 Green Wedges
- C4 Separation of Settlements
- C10 Open Areas of Importance to the Form and Character of the Built Environment
- L7 Recreation Routes
- L10 Tourism Development
- CE1 Scheduled Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites
- CE6 Listed Buildings; Settings
- CE10 Conservation Areas; Character and Appearance
- CE15 Kirby Fields Conservation Area
- CE19 Other Nature Conservation Site Protection
- M2 Unstable Land
- M3 Contaminated Land
- M4 Mineral Reserves
- CF5 Floodplain Protection
- CF7 Sewage Treatment Works – Cordon Sanitaire

### 3 Methodology

#### 3.1 Background

3.1.1 The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) produced a standard methodology within the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment Practice Guidance (2007), with eight main stages, which can be seen in Figure 1.

**Figure 1: The Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment process and outputs**



Source: Department for Communities and Local Government (2007) Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment Practice Guidance

3.1.2 The SHLAA Practice Guidance states ‘the use of this standard methodology is strongly recommended because it will ensure that the Assessment findings are robust and transparently prepared.’ It also states ‘when followed, a Local Planning Authority should not need to

justify the methodology used in preparing its assessment, including at Independent Examination.'

3.1.3 The methodology used for the Blaby District Council SHLAA is contained within the Joint Leicester and Leicestershire Housing Market Methodology paper which conforms to the standard methodology produced by the DCLG. This was produced in partnership with all participating authorities and agreed by stakeholders. There are some minor deviations between Local Planning Authorities with regard to the methodology to take local circumstances into account.

3.1.4 An officer project group formed of Planning Policy Officers and a number of Housing Officers from the Local Authority partners has driven the SHLAA forward.

## **3.2 Site Sources**

3.2.1 Sites for inclusion in the SHLAA have come forward in a variety of different ways:

- Formal SHLAA submissions
- Urban Capacity Study sites
- Employment Land and Premises Study
- Expressions of Interest (for Local Development Framework)
- Sites with outstanding planning permissions (outline and detail)
- Sites currently under construction

3.2.2 Sites with planning permission (outline and detailed), and those sites that are currently under construction are included within the SHLAA. However, sites that were completed by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011 are not included.

3.2.3 Sites identified through the Employment Land and Premises Study were considered suitable for inclusion in the SHLAA where they had an

occupancy rate of 60% or less, and poor quality of buildings or buildings which were unfit for purpose indicating that that they were not performing very well as employment sites.

- 3.2.4 The 'expression of interest' sites have been submitted by landowners, developers and agents over a number of years (since the Local Plan was adopted in 1999). They are mostly inquiring about the possibility of pursuing residential development on specific sites.
- 3.2.5 Only sites which could accommodate 10 dwellings or more (prior to any deductions due to on site constraints) are included within the SHLAA. This is consistent with the Urban Capacity Study (undertaken in 2006), and with the classification of 'large sites' for monitoring purposes.
- 3.2.6 It is important to note that the complete site that was submitted is what has been appraised to its full size and extent. No smaller parts of larger individual sites have been appraised separately.
- 3.2.7 After a sieving process, duplicates were removed as were those sites in locations that were unrelated to existing settlements. In addition, sites that did not meet the minimum threshold of 10 dwellings were not considered. **A final number of 131 sites have been taken forward for inclusion in the SHLAA.**

### **3.3 Carrying out the Survey**

- 3.3.1 The assessment of sites was a three step process which involved: A desktop review; a site visit; and, a final assessment of the site based on consultation comments.
- 3.3.2 Each submitted site was mapped on to the Council's GIS (Geographical Information System) software. This allowed the desktop review which recorded general site characteristics (later checked

during site visits); recording of distances from sites to key services; and, an examination of the constraints affecting each site.

3.3.3 In the 'Character of Surroundings' section of the site appraisal proformas, where relevant, the Character Area of the site, which has been assigned by the Blaby District Council Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment (May 2008), has been provided. For further information, the document can be found online at [www.blaby.gov.uk](http://www.blaby.gov.uk).

3.3.4 The desktop review highlighted those sites in which the majority of the land was affected by 'red' constraints (ie. Land use issues that would make development of sites difficult to achieve) as defined in the Joint Leicester and Leicestershire Methodology Paper. This subsequently excluded some sites from further consideration. These red constraints are:

- Flood zones 2, 3a and 3b
- Active landfill sites (and adjacent contaminated areas)
- Active mineral extraction sites
- Hazardous installations
- Grade 1 agricultural land
- Oil and high pressure gas pipelines and 400kv (National Grid) overhead electricity lines, and
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAMs)

3.3.5 In addition to the 'red' constraints listed above, a site will be considered inappropriate for residential development if 60% or more of it is within a hazard consultation zone.

3.3.6 If 60% or more of a site is affected by one of the red constraints above, it has been deemed 'non-developable.' If a site has been deemed non-developable, this assessment will be reviewed when the SHLAA is

updated (if evidence indicates that the red constraint can be overcome.)

3.3.7 The assessment of sites not excluded because of red constraints, has been looked at with regard to the following possible constraints:

- Contaminated land constraints
- Environmental constraints
- Topographical constraints
- Planning Policy constraints
- Accessibility constraints, and
- Ownership constraints

3.3.8 In addition to the above constraints, every site will be looked at in terms of its distance to key services.

3.3.9 When 'none known' has been written against any of the above constraints, this indicates that the existence of constraints on site were explored, and none were identified. However, over time the situation could change or further evidence could be provided to prove there is a constraint, and this will be looked at and amended where necessary when the SHLAA is reviewed.

3.3.10 For information, PPS3: Housing (June 2010) updated the definition of previously developed land to exclude private residential gardens. Therefore, sites on residential gardens are now considered greenfield sites and the site assessment proformas have been updated to reflect this.

## **3.4 Accessibility**

3.4.1 The accessibility section in the appraisal provides distances from each site to the following services and amenities:

- Bus stop

- Primary School
- Local centre
- Post Office
- Health Centre
- Secondary School
- Open Space (includes parks and recreation grounds, outdoor sports space, children and young people's play space, informal open space, natural green space, allotments, sports halls, swimming pools and small halls / community venues)

3.4.2 The distances to these services and amenities has been measured 'as the crow flies' from both the centre of the sites and the likely vehicular access point. If the site is an unconventional shape, an approximate centre has been taken to provide the distance. The measurement from the access point will be taken from an existing access point, when there is one, or if there is more than one existing access point, then the one nearest the settlement boundary will be used. However, if no access point exists, then this distance will be measured from the centre of the site boundary closest to the settlement.

3.4.3 In this section, a measurement has been provided to all services and amenities as well as the classification of each into one of the following distances:

- Within 400m
- Within 800m, and
- Over 800m

3.4.4 These distance categories have been taken from the Accessibility Standards in Barton et al. (2003) 'Shaping Neighbourhoods: A guide for health, sustainability and vitality.' This publication defines walking distance benchmarks as follows:

- Within 400m – within a 5 minute walking distance
- Within 800m – within a 10 minute walking distance, and



- Over 800m – private car or public transport possibly required

3.4.5 This publication also identified a reasonable distance to health centres as being 1000m, and a reasonable distance to secondary schools as 1500m.

3.4.6 Secondary schools for the purpose of this SHLAA include all those schools / colleges that teach students of any secondary school age (between 11 and 16).

3.4.7 In addition to measuring the distances between SHLAA sites and the nearest bus stops, it has been checked with Leicestershire County Council that all the settlements within the District with sites included for consideration in the SHLAA have a minimum hourly bus service connecting them to Leicester, or Hinckley. This forms part of Leicestershire County Council's aim to improve access to facilities by providing an hourly bus service to within 800m of 95% of the population (which can be found in the Leicestershire Local Transport Plan), and indicates that the settlements under consideration do at least have a minimum level of accessibility by public transport. For further information on the bus routes serving the settlements in the District of Blaby, please see the Village Services Fact-file (available at [www.blaby.gov.uk](http://www.blaby.gov.uk)).

3.4.8 The accessibility section will not determine the suitability, availability or achievability of a site. It is designed as an indication only of the distances of sites from key services.

### **3.5 Contaminated Land Constraints**

3.5.1 The SHLAA seeks to identify any sites affected, in whole or in part, by contamination or issues of unstable land caused by previous land uses.

3.5.2 For all contaminated or unstable land, an area radiating out up to 250m from the source has been identified as potentially at risk. This information has been supplied by the Environmental Health Department of Blaby District Council. Should any sites, or parts of them, fall within this 250m of contaminated or unstable land, further investigation on the site should be undertaken in consultation with the Council's Environmental Health department.

3.5.3 The SHLAA considers the implications of any sites located within the 'cordon sanitaire' of sewage treatment works (both active and closed). If a site is located within the cordon sanitaire, further investigation will be needed.

3.5.4 Sites have been checked to see if they are situated within hazard consultation zones. These are identified on the Blaby District Local Plan Proposals Map.

### **3.6 Environmental Constraints**

3.6.1 Environmental constraints were identified through the desktop review and site visits.

#### **3.6.2 Flooding**

Each site was checked against the Joint Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (November 2007) to establish if a site was at risk of flooding or within an area of floodplain protection. The percentage of the total site area at risk was recorded. To reflect the importance of flooding as a constraint, when necessary, the estimated number of dwellings has been reduced to reflect the area of the site at flood risk.

#### **3.6.3 Ancient Woodland**

Sites were checked to establish the presence of mature or ancient woodlands and Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs). These were identified through aerial photography, on site observations and Blaby

District Council records. The existence of these features on a site is a consideration, but this constraint alone has not caused any site to be deemed 'non-developable' for the purposes of the SHLAA.

#### 3.6.4 SSSIs / RIGs

All SHLAA sites have been checked to establish if they would affect sites designated because of their Special Scientific or Geological Importance.

#### 3.6.5 Ecological

All sites have been assessed by Leicestershire County Council to establish if they have ecological value. Designated sites will normally be of ecological value (this means that they either have protected species present on site or the potential for protected species) or the site is of ecological interest because it has past or present biological or geological interest.

#### 3.6.6 Landscape

The Blaby District Council Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment has primarily been used in the assessment of larger scale sites in sensitive areas.

#### 3.6.7 Ponds, Streams and Water Features

Any significant water features within sites, such as large ponds or streams, have been recorded as environmental constraints.

#### 3.6.8 Agricultural Land Classification

All sites have been assessed in terms of their quality of soil. The Blaby District Council Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment (May 2008) looked at the soil quality in the District via the Agricultural Land Classification (ALC), and stated there is no Grade 1 agricultural land in the District (the highest quality soil), and there are only a couple of pockets of Grade 2 (which doesn't affect any of the current SHLAA sites). Most of the soil in the District is Grade 3 and Grade 4.

### 3.6.9 Heritage

The heritage potential of each SHLAA site has been assessed by Leicestershire County Council, and has been placed into one of four heritage potential classifications.

3.6.10 **Grade 1: High** – This refers to sites with high heritage potential. A site has been placed in this category if it is in or within 100m of a statutorily designated heritage asset such as:

- Conservation Area
- Listed Building
- Scheduled Monument
- Known Archaeological Remains

3.6.11 There is a possibility that these sites will prove ‘non-developable’ due to the significance of the heritage asset.

3.6.12 Sites which directly affect a designated asset or lie within 100m of its boundaries (and therefore may impact on its setting and curtilage) are material considerations. This should be considered as early as possible in the preparation of any development proposal, and early consultation with English Heritage and the Local Authority (and when appropriate, their heritage advisors) would be advisable.

3.6.13 For the appraisal, a 100m zone has been used to determine whether the site will impact on the setting or curtilage of sites with heritage potential. This is best judged on a ‘case by case’ basis where there is a specific understanding of the heritage asset and the development proposal in question.

3.6.14 Developments that affect a Scheduled Ancient Monument or its setting require Scheduled Monument Consent from the Secretary of State as advised by English Heritage.

3.6.15 **Grade 2: Significant** – This refers to SHLAA sites which are expected to have significant potential for archaeological remains based on the site being equal to or greater than one hectare in size.

3.6.16 Development should only be considered for sites following a completed archaeological assessment. For these sites, it is expected that with appropriate consideration and pre-application investigation, they could prove developable, subject to no finds of significant importance being discovered.

3.6.17 **Grade 3: Uncertain** – This refers to SHLAA sites with uncertain, but potentially significant archaeological potential based on the site being less than one hectare in size.

3.6.18 For these sites, development should only be considered following a completed archaeological assessment, which should at least comprise a detailed site specific desk-based assessment, and where appropriate include both non-intrusive and intrusive field evaluation. It is expected that these sites will prove developable given appropriate consideration.

3.6.19 **Grade 4: Low** – This refers to SHLAA sites that have limited archaeological potential due to their small size, or the absence or limited significance of known archaeological remains within their immediate proximity.

3.6.20 It is expected that these sites are 'developable' in the context of their heritage and / or archaeological significance.

3.6.21 This appraisal of the heritage of SHLAA sites does not represent a definitive statement of their heritage and archaeological implications, and has not examined the details of any development proposal. Therefore, early consultation with the local authority, their heritage

advisors and English Heritage where appropriate, is strongly advised when a specific development proposal is being considered.

### **3.7 Topographical Constraints**

3.7.1 When looking at topographical constraints, the landform and gradient of sites has been assessed to establish if they are suitable for development. This has been recorded through site visits.

### **3.8 Accessibility Constraints**

3.8.1 The accessibility constraints are concerned with problems or limitations relating to access on to the site, the potential infringement of public rights of way and the impacts on adjacent highways.

3.8.2 These constraints have been identified through the desktop review, the site visits and comments made by the Leicestershire County Council Highways Department.

3.8.3 Leicestershire County Council Highways have indicated that in some cases 'no apparent fundamental reason for this site to be excluded' can be identified. This is shown in the appraisal proforma next to accessibility constraints as 'none known.' This is not an indication that access could necessarily be provided. Further detailed Highways work would be required for specific proposals.

3.8.4 Sites described as being in a 'rural location' indicate that the speed limit is greater than 40mph, and access from a road of this type would generally be contrary to the County Councils 'Highway, Transportation Development Guide' and particularly 'Access to the Road Network' policies contained in the Design Guide.

3.8.5 When the LCC Highways Department refer to sites as "not appropriate for consideration," these sites have not been excluded from the

assessment on this basis, however, the comments from the Highways Department have been included within the site appraisals. Highway Department comments, along with on site observations, information from the desktop review and consultation responses from the site promoters have helped inform the decisions on suitability, availability and developability

- 3.8.6 Details on accessibility constraints can be amended when the SHLAA is updated based on the submission of further evidence such as a Transport Assessment or the identification of a valid access, which was not previously evident.

### **3.9 Planning Policy Constraints**

- 3.9.1 Planning policy constraints refer to the saved policies of the Blaby District Local Plan which can be found online at [www.blaby.gov.uk](http://www.blaby.gov.uk).
- 3.9.2 A number of planning policies have been used to establish the suitability and development timeframes of sites, and these can be found in paragraph 2.4.2
- 3.9.3 In accordance with the SHLAA Practice Guidance, ‘the scope of the assessment should not be narrowed down by existing policies designed to constrain development.’ Local Plan policies have been included as part of the site appraisal to guide developers and other interested parties in terms of the current constraints to development should a site go forward.
- 3.9.4 In accordance with the adopted East Midlands Regional Plan (March 2009) Policy 3 (part D), new development in rural areas “should contribute to maintaining the distinctive character and vitality of rural communities.” Policy 1 (part F) of this document encourages “patterns of new development that reduce the need to travel especially by car.” These policies indicate that the scale of new development is an

important issue, and should be in keeping with the existing settlement, and the services / amenities that are on offer.

3.9.5 Planning policy constraints have been used as a measure to determine the suitability of sites, as well as determining development timeframes. However, it is important to note that planning policy is subject to change, and so sites that are currently found unsuitable or with longer timeframes could be subject to review in the future.

### **3.10 Ownership Constraints**

3.10.1 Ownership constraints have been looked at to determine the availability of sites through the desktop review, site visits, the site submission and consultations.

3.10.2 This form of constraint refers to any legal / ownership issues, including:

- Multiple ownerships
- Tenancies
- Ransom strips, and
- Operational requirements

### **3.11 Overcoming Constraints**

3.11.1 The SHLAA will be reviewed and updated annually as part of the Annual Monitoring process. If evidence can be provided demonstrating that a constraint can be overcome, this will be taken into account at the review stage. This may mean changes in how a site is viewed in terms of suitability, availability and achievability and its overall assessment, as well as moving a site into a different development timeframe.

### **3.12 Estimating Housing Potential**



3.12.1 Estimating the potential housing numbers for each site is a key part of the SHLAA appraisal process as it allows the Council to estimate the overall potential housing land supply in the District against the housing targets set in the Regional Plan.

3.12.2 PPS3: Housing (June 2010) no longer sets a national indicative minimum of 30 dwellings per hectare (net), and Blaby District Council has not at this time developed policies setting out the housing density across the District. Planning applications are currently dealt with on a site specific basis.

3.12.3 The density targets in Housing Policy 5 of the former Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland Structure Plan (as shown in Table 1 below) have been utilised as a guideline to allow an estimation of the housing numbers that could potentially be provided on each site:

Table 1: Housing densities to be used in the SHLAA

Location	Density
Within and adjoining the centres of Leicester and Loughborough	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	Minimum of 40 dwellings per hectare
Other locations	Minimum of 30 dwellings per hectare

Source: Leicestershire County Council, Leicester City Council and Rutland County Council (2005) Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland Structure Plan 1996 to 2016

3.12.4 As defined in the Regional Plan, the following five settlements within the District of Blaby are located within the Principal Urban Area (PUA) of Leicester:

- Kirby Muxloe
- Leicester Forest East

- Glenfield
- Braunstone Town, and
- Glen Parva

3.12.5 SHLAA sites located within or adjacent to these five settlements within the PUA have been assigned a minimum density of 40 dwellings per hectare.

3.12.6 All remaining settlements in the District have been assigned a minimum density of 30 dwellings per hectare.

3.12.7 To produce an estimated net number of dwellings for each site, a formula (which discounts a proportion of the site to allow for support facilities, open space provision and infrastructure) has been used, along with the former Structure Plan densities.

3.12.8 This discounting formula comes from the Blaby District Urban Capacity Study, and was agreed by the developer panel, and is as follows:

- Sites up to 0.4ha – 100% of site size to be used to generate housing numbers
- Sites of 0.4 – 2ha – 82.5% of site size to be calculated with relevant density to generate housing numbers
- Sites over 2ha – 62.5% of site size to be calculated with relevant density to generate housing numbers

3.12.9 In addition, a further site size bracket was created for the larger scale sites (primarily Sustainable Urban Extensions):

- Sites over 35ha – 50% of site size to be calculated with relevant density to generate housing numbers

3.12.10 The estimated dwelling numbers are designed as a guide to how many dwellings a site could yield if it was found to be 'developable'. It is understood that dwelling numbers are subject to change depending

on site specific circumstances. To keep the appraisals consistent, the dwelling numbers have been estimated using the same formula throughout. Where part of a site is subject to flood risk, the estimated dwelling number has been reduced to reflect this. This will be indicated in the comments box at the bottom of the appraisal. The only exceptions to the use of this standard formula are those sites that have already been granted planning permission or are currently under construction. In these cases, the number of units that planning permission has been granted for is the number that is given.

### **3.13 The Assessment of Suitability, Availability and Achievability**

3.13.1 Determining the suitability, availability and achievability of a site allows a decision to be made on the sites deliverability (ability to be delivered within 5 years) or developability. To allow this to be done fairly and consistently, a list of assumptions has been drawn up based on the SHLAA Practice Guidance and then agreed by the Developer Panel.

#### **3.13.2 Suitability**

The SHLAA Practice Guidance (2007) explains that if a site offers a suitable location for development and would contribute towards creating sustainable communities, then it can be deemed 'suitable.' Following on from this, it identifies that the following considerations need to be assessed for each site, before a judgement on suitability can be reached:

- Policy restrictions (for example, designations and existing planning policy)
- Physical problems or limitations (for example, access, flood risk and contamination)
- Potential impacts (for example, effects upon landscape features and conservation areas)
- Environmental Conditions (which would be experienced by prospective residents)

3.13.3 A site is 'suitable' if:

- **It has planning permission, is under construction or is a Local Plan / LDF allocation**
- It is within or adjacent to the settlement boundary or adjacent to a site, which has also been submitted to the SHLAA and when combined , would be adjacent to the settlement boundary
- There are no physical problems or constraints separating it from the settlement boundary
- There is adequate access to the site
- Access can be provided without demolishing one or more houses (where less than 15 dwellings are proposed), unless the dwelling to be demolished is included within the site.
- There are no policy constraints currently restricting development (for example, Green Wedge, good employment land etc)
- It would not have an adverse affect upon important biodiversity, landscape features, historic features or buildings and Conservation Areas.
- The scale of the proposal is in keeping with the existing settlement and the services it can offer.

#### 3.13.4 **Availability**

The SHLAA Practice Guidance states that, "a site is considered available for development, when, on the best information available, there is confidence that there are no legal or ownership problems, such as multiple ownerships, ransom strips, tenancies or operational requirements of landowners."

3.13.5 A site is 'available' if:

- It is under construction
- It has outline / detail planning permission
- It is a Local Plan / LDF Allocation

- It is owned by a developer or other interested promoter, there is known interest, or
- It is advertised for sale
- There is adequate direct or indirect access to the site
- There is confidence that there are no legal or ownership problems, for example, multiple ownerships or ransom strips etc.

### 3.13.6 **Achievability**

The SHLAA Practice Guidance states that a site is ‘achievable’ when “there is a reasonable prospect that housing will be developed on the site at a particular point in time.”

3.13.7 A site is ‘achievable’ if:

- **It is under construction**
- It has no ownership constraints
- It has no access constraints
- It has no conditions / S106 Obligations which inhibit development
- There are no **market factors** making the site economically unviable (for example, adjacent uses, attractiveness of the locality, level of potential market demand, projected rate of sales and the economic viability of existing, proposed and alternative uses in terms of land values)
- There are no **cost factors** making development economically unviable (for example, site preparation costs relating to any physical constraints, the prospect of funding or investment to address identified constraints or assist development)
- There are no **delivery factors** making the site economically unviable (for example, the size and capacity of the developer)

### 3.14 **Market Interest**

3.14.1 Market Interest was looked at on a settlement by settlement basis by the Developer Panel, and this was then incorporated into the individual site appraisals.

3.14.2 The Developer Panel decided that all settlements in the District (with sites in the SHLAA) were of a high market interest. No settlements were found to be of medium or low market interest.

### **3.15 Timeframe for Development**

3.15.1 The timeframe for development reflects the most likely time period of development for each site. Following the SHLAA Practice Guidance, the timeframes have been split into five year periods:

- 0-5 years: 2011-2016
- 6-10 years: 2017-2021
- 11-15 years: 2022-2026
- Over 15 years: 2026 onwards

3.15.2 Every site has been assigned one of the four timeframes for development illustrated above. This has been based on a set of assumptions which have been applied consistently to all sites. These assumptions are:

- If a site already has planning permission or is under construction, it will be given a development timeframe of 0-5 years.
- Sites outside (although perhaps still adjoining) settlement boundaries will be placed in the 6-10 year timeframe (or later timeframes) as they would be unlikely to gain planning permission before this time, because they would be contrary to existing planning policy restrictions, such as 'Countryside' and 'Green Wedge' designations.

- No sites which lie within Green Wedge have been given a timeframe of 0-5 years. Some Green Wedge sites have been placed in the 6-10 year timeframe, whilst others have gone into the 11-15 years and 15 years onwards timeframes. Whilst there has been a Strategic Green Wedge Review undertaken, the actual boundaries of the Green Wedges will not be considered for review until the Allocations and Designations Development Plan Document stage. Following this, the timeframes for development of sites within the Green Wedges may be subject to change.
- Sites within settlement boundaries which are not subject to planning policy restrictions, are currently unoccupied and have no or very few easily mitigated constraints are included within the 0-5 year development timeframe.
- Sites which are currently occupied, but for which there is a clear development interest will be put into the 6-10 year timeframe or the 11-15 year timeframe, depending on the ease of relocation for current occupants and any other constraints the site might be subject to.

3.15.3 It is important to note that development timeframes are subject to change as site specific circumstances change. Timeframes will be reviewed as part of the annual SHLAA review.

### **3.16 Estimated Build Rates**

3.16.1 It was agreed at the Developer Panel that annual build rates are hard to estimate. However, the following build rates were decided on:

- Smaller sites (less than 100 units) – 10-20 per annum
- Larger sites (more than 100 units) – 50-80 per annum
- SUE sites – 300-400 per annum

3.16.2 The build rates on site depend on the size and capacity of the developers involved and the number of developers involved. These figures are therefore provided as a guideline only, and are subject to change.

3.16.3 It is also acknowledged that build rates at the current time may be lower than those indicated above to reflect the current market conditions. The build rates above are indicative and should be used as a guideline.

### **3.17 Deliverable, Developable, Non-developable**

3.17.1 To determine whether a site is either deliverable, developable or non-developable in the overall assessment, the decisions on the suitability, availability and achievability of a site will be used.

3.17.2 A site is only deemed **deliverable** when there is a realistic prospect that **housing will be delivered within the five year timeframe** in a suitable location. A deliverable site is suitable, available and achievable and will have a development timeframe of 2011-2016. It is also automatically developable.

3.17.3 A site is deemed **developable** if **there is a prospect of housing being delivered in a suitable location within the indicated timeframe on the site appraisal proforma, either 6-10 years, 11-15 years or over 15 years.**

3.17.4 A site is deemed non-developable if there is no prospect of housing development within any of the given timeframes. This depends on the type and severity of constraints on site, normally the presence of a red constraint affecting 60% or more of the site.



## **4. Stakeholder Consultation**

### **4.1 Background**

4.1.1 There is no statutory requirement for consultation as part of the SHLAA process. However, the Practice Guidance does advocate a partnership approach to this work. It encourages collaborative working between Local Planning Authorities, preferably at the Housing Market Area level. It also advocates working with key stakeholders 'to ensure a joined-up and robust approach.'

### **4.2 Leicester and Leicestershire SHLAA Steering Group**

4.2.1 This SHLAA is specific to the District of Blaby, but has been prepared in accordance with the joint Leicester and Leicestershire SHLAA methodology. Further to this, the SHLAA process has been guided by the Leicester and Leicestershire SHLAA Steering Group, consisting of:

- Local Authority (and County) Planning Officers
- Local Authority Housing Officers
- A representative from the Home Builders Federation
- A representative from English Partnerships
- A representative from the Housing Corporation, and
- A Registered Social Landlord

4.2.2 The Leicester and Leicestershire SHLAA Steering Group met regularly to provide progress updates as well as to discuss SHLAA related issues.

### **4.3 Further Consultation**

4.3.1 The Leicester and Leicestershire SHLAA Methodology Paper sets out the methodological approach to be used by the Leicester and

Leicestershire Local Planning Authorities. This document underwent a four week consultation in November 2007.

4.3.2 A Developer Panel convened on 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2009 to assess market, cost and delivery factors, to discuss expected build rates and to look at the assumptions on which decisions regarding the determination of suitability, availability and achievability were made. This panel was formed of development professionals, and sought their expertise and input into the process. The panel comprised:

- Local Authority Planning Officers
- A representative from a regional housing association
- A Leicestershire estate agent
- A national planning consultant
- A national house builder

This participant selection was based upon the need to achieve a breadth of experience and skills across the Panel.

## 5. Summary of Findings

- 131 sites were considered for assessment within the SHLAA
- 11 sites were classed as non-developable
- 23 sites were found deliverable (within the 0-5 year timeframe)
- 27 sites were found developable within the 6-10 year timeframe
- 22 sites were found developable within the 11-15 year timeframe
- 44 sites were found developable within the 15 years onwards timeframe
- 1 site falls into 3 of the timeframes (0-5 years, 6-10 years and 11-15 years) as it is the site being promoted as the Sustainable Urban Extension (SUE) for 4,500 dwellings in the Core Strategy Submission Version (July 2009). Due to the nature and extent of this development, it is expected that, if granted planning permission, the first completions will come through in 2013/2014 and will continue up to 2026. Therefore development will occur in 3 of the SHLAA timeframes.
- 1 site (STO001) falls into two timeframes to reflect the fact that part of this site has been granted planning permission, whilst another part of this site has been refused planning permission.
- 1 site (HUN011) falls into two timeframes to reflect the fact that part of this site has been granted planning permission, and the other part of this site was not the subject of a planning application.
- 8 of the sites did not have their dwellings yields included as they formed part of larger sites that were already counted in the dwelling numbers. This avoids the issue of double counting submissions.

### 5.1 Settlement Summary

5.1.1 Table 2 shows the estimated net housing numbers for the deliverable and developable sites identified through the SHLAA (excluding those

sites with planning permission and under construction) on a settlement  
by settlement basis:

Table 2: Estimated net housing numbers by settlement

<b>Settlement</b>	<b>Deliverable (0-5 years) 2011-2016</b>	<b>Developable (6-10 years) 2017-2021</b>	<b>Developable (11-15 years) 2022-2026</b>	<b>Developable (15 years onwards) 2026 onwards</b>
Blaby	0	137	0	1181
Braunstone Town	0	74	0	0
Cosby	0	84	279	0
Countesthorpe	0	416	397	195
Elmesthorpe	0	102	0	64
Enderby	0	40	157	1860
Glenfield	0	0	47	616
Glen Parva	18	144	28	67
Huncote	0	64	24	149
Kilby	0	0	0	84
Kirby Muxloe	0	0	26	1457
Leicester Forest East	0	0	0	2760
Littlethorpe	15	44	0	265
Lubbesthorpe	800	2000	1700	0
Narborough	0	9	110	0
Sapcote	0	388	19	120
Sharnford	0	0	0	151
Stoney Stanton	0	318	24	304
Thurlaston	0	0	0	97
Whetstone	0	237	88	99
<b>Total</b>	<b>833</b>	<b>4057</b>	<b>2899</b>	<b>9469</b>

**Total deliverable housing – 833 dwellings**

**Total developable housing – 16,425** (5-10 years, 10-15 years and 15 years onwards timeframes)

**Total deliverable and developable –17,258 dwellings**

5.1.2 Table 2 has not included those sites that have already gained planning permission or are under construction from the Residential Land Availability (1<sup>st</sup> April 2010 - 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011) document, or those sites that have gained planning permission since 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011. When these sites are included in the estimated net dwelling count, the numbers are:

- Total deliverable dwellings – 1,998
- Total developable dwellings – 16,425 (6-10 years, 11-15 years and 15 years onwards timeframe)
- Total deliverable and developable – 18,423 dwellings

5.1.3 Appendix 1 provides a completed appraisal proforma for every site included within the SHLAA with accompanying map to show site location and photographs taken of the site when this was possible.

