



New local plan for Cheshire East

Housing and economic land availability
assessment methodology

November 2025

Open

Fair

Green

Front cover images

- Crewe Market Hall and Municipal Buildings (top left)
- Arclid north site plant and lake (image supplied by Bathgate Silica Sand Ltd) (top right)
- Jodrell Bank Observatory (centre)
- Lamberts Lane Bridge, Congleton (bottom right)
- Tabley Park , Northwich Road, Knutsford (bottom left)

Contents

1	Introduction.....	3
2	Planning Policy Context	4
	National Planning Policy Framework	4
	Planning Practice Guidance	4
3	Methodology	5
	Stage 1: Identification of sites and broad locations.....	6
	Size thresholds	7
	Desktop identification of sites and broad locations	7
	Call for sites and broad locations.....	9
	Sites and broad locations with overlapping boundaries	10
	Initial site and broad location survey	10
	Initial sifting of sites and broad locations.....	17
	Stage 2: Site and broad location assessment.....	21
	Suitability	21
	Availability	22
	Achievability	22
	Estimating development potential	22
	Timescales.....	23
	Stage 3 Housing windfall assessment	24
	Stage 4: Assessment review	24
	Stage 5: Final evidence base	24

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (“NPPF”) and National Planning Practice Guidance (“PPG”) require local planning authorities to assess the amount of land that is available for housing and economic development in their areas. This is known as a Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (‘HELAA’).
- 1.2 Cheshire East Council (“the Council”) last published its Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment¹ and its Employment Land Review² in 2012 and these evidence base documents informed the preparation of the Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy.
- 1.3 The council has now embarked on the preparation of a new Local Plan and the HELAA will enable the council to consider the availability of land for future development and provide an understanding of the constraints that affect it.
- 1.4 The HELAA is an important evidence source to inform plan-making but does not represent policy, nor does it determine whether a site should be allocated for future development or whether planning permission should be granted. Land allocations can only be made through local plans or neighbourhood plans.

IMPORTANT: The inclusion of a site in the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment does NOT confer any planning status on the site; it does not imply that it will be allocated, nor that planning permission would be granted should an application be submitted for consideration.

The Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment will be used to inform future stages of work in producing the new Local Plan in relation to land availability and site selection. Where relevant, sites may also be considered for potential inclusion on the Brownfield

¹ https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/planning/spatial-planning/research_and_evidence/strategic_housing_land_assmnt/shlaa.aspx

² https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/planning/spatial-planning/research_and_evidence/employment-needs.aspx

2 Planning Policy Context

- 2.1 The HELAA will be prepared in accordance with national planning policy including the National Planning Policy Framework (“NPPF”) and National Planning Practice Guidance (“PPG”)

National Planning Policy Framework

- 2.2 ¶32 of the NPPF sets out that the preparation and review of all policies should be underpinned by relevant and up-to-date evidence. This should be adequate and proportionate, focused tightly on supporting and justifying the policies concerned, and take into account relevant market signals.
- 2.3 The NPPF ¶72 requires strategic policy-making authorities to have a clear understanding of the land available in their area through the preparation of a strategic housing land availability assessment. From this, planning policies should identify a sufficient supply and mix of sites, taking into account their availability, suitability and likely economic viability.
- 2.4 In terms of economic development, NPPF ¶86 requires planning policies to set criteria, or identify strategic sites, for local and inward investment and to meet anticipated needs over the plan period. NPPF ¶127 states that policies should also reflect changes in the demand for land and be informed by regular reviews of both the land allocated for development in plans, and of land availability.

Planning Practice Guidance

- 2.5 PPG expands upon and provides practical guidance to support the NPPF. The PPG is regularly updated, with the latest guidance relevant to Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessments being published in July 2019.
- 2.6 The guidance states that the purpose of the assessment is to identify a future supply of land which is suitable, available and achievable for housing and economic development uses over the plan period. The assessment also helps with the identification of a five-year supply of housing land and help to inform as well as make use of sites in brownfield registers.³
- 2.7 The PPG also clarifies that the HELAA assessment does not in itself determine whether a site should be allocated for development. It is the role of the assessment to provide information on the range of sites which are available to meet the local authority’s requirements, but it is for the

³ Planning Practice Guidance: Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment Paragraph: 001
Reference ID: 3-001-20190722

development plan itself to determine which of those sites are the most suitable to meet those requirements.

2.8 Plan-making authorities may carry out land availability assessments for housing and economic development as part of the same exercise, in order that sites may be identified for the use(s) which is most appropriate.

2.9 Assessments should:

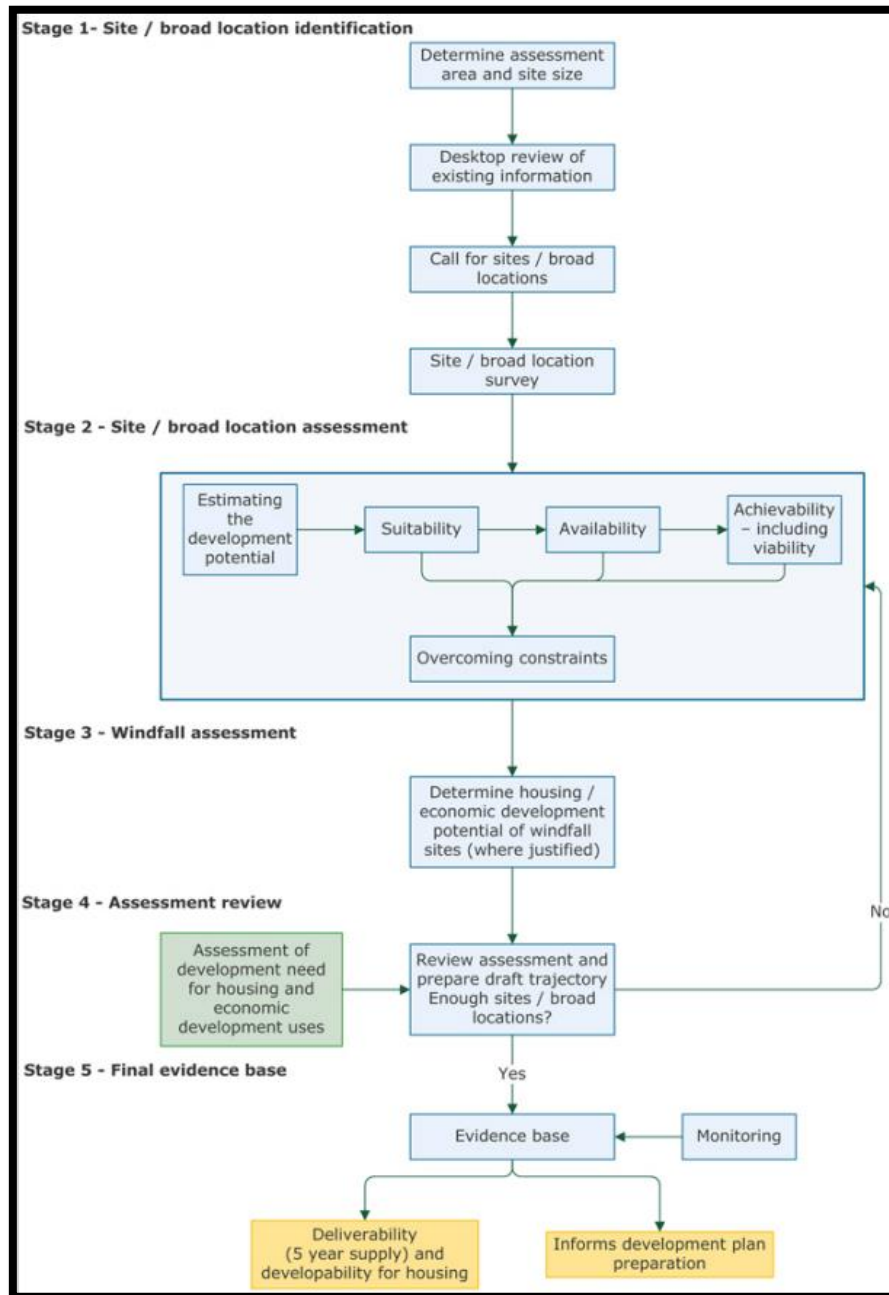
- Identify sites and broad locations with potential for development;
- Assess their development potential
- Assess their suitability for development and the likelihood of development coming forward (the availability and achievability).

2.10 Constraints should be considered when assessing the suitability, achievability and availability of sites and broad locations.

3 Methodology

3.1 The HELAA will comprise of five stages based on the guidance set out in PPG and the flow chart at Figure 3.1 below summarises the methodology set out in national guidance:

Figure 3.1: National Planning Practice Guidance Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment Methodology Flow Chart⁴



Stage 1: Identification of sites and broad locations

3.2 The geographical area for the HELAA will cover the whole of Cheshire East⁵ and will primarily focus on housing and economic land uses, in line with the PPG. Housing will be defined as development falling within Use Class C3

⁴ Planning Practice Guidance: Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment Paragraph: 005 Reference ID: 3-005-20190722

⁵ Excluding the part of the borough which falls into the Peak District National Park as this is covered by its own planning authority

(residential dwellings) which may include self and custom build, first homes and other forms of specialist housing for example, housing for older people (which may include C2 uses). Economic development uses are defined in the PPG as retail, leisure, cultural, office, warehousing, etc.

- 3.3 On 1 September 2020, the Use Classes Order 1987 was amended, and new Classes were introduced including a new Class E (commercial, business and service); Class F.1 (learning and non-residential institutions); and Class F.2 (local community). The previous Class B1 use now falls within Class E however Classes B2 and B8 remain unchanged.
- 3.4 The HELAA will consider economic development uses that fall within Classes B2, B8 and E. Additional forms of development will also be considered for example, land for renewable energy development, community uses and sites for Gypsies & Travellers.

Size thresholds

- 3.5 The PPG sets out that a HELAA should consider all sites capable of delivering 5 or more dwellings or economic development on sites of 0.25 hectares (or 500 square metres of floor space) and above⁶. The Cheshire East HELAA will use these thresholds for housing and economic development.
- 3.6 For housing sites, sites that are capable of delivering less than 5 dwellings will be considered to be windfall supply. NPPF ¶75 advises that allowances for windfall sites (sites not specifically allocated in a development plan) can be used when assessing anticipated housing land supply. If an allowance is applied for windfall, this should be realistic having regard to the strategic housing land availability assessment, historic windfall delivery rates and expected future trends.

Desktop identification of sites and broad locations

- 3.7 The PPG states that when carrying out desktop review, plan-makers need to be proactive in identifying as wide a range of sites and broad locations for development as possible. It is important that plan-makers do not simply rely on sites that they have been informed about, but actively identify sites through the desktop review process that may assist in meeting the development needs of an area⁷.
- 3.8 The PPG includes a table of the types of sites and potential data sources that should be reviewed as part of the desktop assessment and an extract is

⁶ Planning Practice Guidance: Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment, Paragraph: 009 Reference ID: 3-009-20190722

⁷ Planning Practice Guidance: Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment, Paragraph: 010 Reference ID: 3-010-20190722

provided below⁸ and where practicable, information will be gathered from these sources.

Table 3.1: Type of site and potential data source (Extract from PPG)

Type of site	Potential data source
Existing housing and economic development allocations and site development briefs without planning permission	Local and neighbourhood plans Planning applications records Development Briefs
Planning Permissions for housing and economic development that are unimplemented or under construction	Planning application records Development starts and completions records
Planning applications that have been refused or withdrawn	Planning application records
Brownfield land in the local authority's ownership	Local authority records
Surplus and likely to become surplus public sector land	National register of public sector land. Engagement with strategic plans of other public sector bodies such as county councils, central government, National Health Service, police, fire services, utilities services, statutory undertakers
Sites with permission in principle, and identified brownfield land	Brownfield land registers (parts 1 and 2). National Land Use Database. Valuation Office database. Active engagement with sector
Vacant and derelict land and buildings (including empty homes, redundant and disused agricultural buildings, potential permitted development changes, e.g., offices to residential)	Local authority empty property register. English Housing Survey. National Land Use Database. Commercial property databases (e.g., estate agents and property agents). Valuation Office database.

⁸ Planning Practice Guidance: Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment, Paragraph: 011
Reference ID: 3-011-20190722

Type of site	Potential data source
	Active engagement with sector Brownfield land registers.
Additional opportunities for un-established uses (e.g., making productive use of under-utilised facilities such as garage blocks)	Ordnance Survey maps. Aerial photography. Planning applications. Site surveys
Business requirements and aspirations	Enquiries received by local planning authority. Active engagement with sector
Brownfield sites in rural locations	Local and neighbourhood plans Planning applications. Ordnance Survey maps. Aerial photography. Site surveys.
Large scale redevelopment and redesign of existing residential or economic areas	Local and neighbourhood plans. Planning applications. Ordnance Survey maps. Aerial photography. Site surveys.
Sites in adjoining villages and rural exceptions sites.	Local and neighbourhood plans. Planning applications. Ordnance Survey maps. Aerial photography. Site surveys
Potential urban extensions and new free-standing settlements	Local and neighbourhood plans. Planning applications. Ordnance Survey maps. Aerial photography. Site surveys

Call for sites and broad locations

- 3.9 In addition to a desktop review, a call for sites and broad locations exercise can also enable sites to be promoted for development for consideration and assessment. This may be undertaken for a fixed period of time or on an ongoing basis. In accordance with the PPG, a call for sites and broad locations will be aimed at as wide an audience as is practicable so that those

not normally involved in property development have the opportunity to contribute⁹.

- 3.10 The call for sites and broad locations may identify land that was not identified through the desktop review. It may also provide more up-to-date or detailed information about land identified through the desktop review.

Sites and broad locations with overlapping boundaries

- 3.11 There is potential for duplication and overlapping boundaries when identifying sites and broad locations from the varying types of data sources. Where there is duplication of a site or broad location with identical boundaries, the site or broad location will only be assessed once within the Land Availability Assessment to avoid double-counting of sites and their potential capacity.
- 3.12 Where site or broad location boundaries overlap, the first action will be to explore the reason for this overlap. This can be done by considering the source(s) of the sites/broad locations and their proposed uses. In the situation that a more recent submission or data source clearly supersedes an earlier submission or data source, the more recent boundary will be used. In the situation that two or more distinct sites or broad locations overlap, a judgement will be taken as to whether they should remain as separate sites, or assessed together as a whole, with commentary provided on the suitability, availability and achievability of individual sub-parcels.

Initial site and broad location survey

- 3.13 The sites and broad locations identified through the desktop review and any call for sites will be added to an internal GIS mapping system and an initial assessment will be undertaken.
- 3.14 The purpose of the initial assessment is to establish up-to-date, high-level information on each site and broad location in relation to its characteristics and key constraints. This will help to understand the type and scale of development that may be possible if it was ever allocated and to gain a greater understanding of deliverability, including any barriers and how they could be overcome¹⁰.
- 3.15 Information on the sites and broad locations will be collected as part of the initial assessment stage. Table 3.2 sets out the minimum information to be collected and if there are any other known site-specific issues or constraints these will also be noted. Published site assessments will provide a high-level summary of any significant constraints that have been identified through the initial assessment stage.

⁹ Planning Practice Guidance: Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment, Paragraph: 012 Reference ID: 3-012-20190722

¹⁰ Planning Practice Guidance: Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment, Paragraph: 013 Reference ID: 3-013-20190722

Table 3.2 Initial survey information

Type of information	Explanation
Site reference	Unique site reference for the site/ broad location.
Site name	Site/broad location name.
Site address	Address of site/ broad location.
Parish	Name of parish that the site/broad location falls within.
Ward	Name of the ward that the site/ broad location falls within.
Source of site	Note how the site/broad location was identified for inclusion in the HELAA (e.g. desktop/call for sites).
Gross site size (ha)	Area size in hectares.
Developable area (ha)	Estimated area of site that is considered to be developable. This will be a judgement based on information provided by site promoters, planning application records and evidence of developable areas achieved on similar sized sites since the start of the plan period.
Current land use	Note current land use.
Last use (if vacant)	Note last use if the site has been in previous use and is now a vacant site.
Greenfield/Brownfield/Mixed	Note if the site is greenfield, brownfield or a mix.
Could this site be joined to another to form a larger site?	If the site abuts another site promoted via a call for sites or a site revealed by desktop research, this will be noted in the assessment.

Type of information	Explanation
If yes, give details of adjoining site including site reference if applicable	Quote reference of abutting/overlapping site.
Planning history & status	
Planning history	Note any relevant planning history and current status (i.e. extant/expired).
Allocated site	Note if the site is allocated for development in the Cheshire East Local Plan or is safeguarded for possible future development. Note if the site is allocated in a made Neighbourhood Development Plan.
Proposed development type(s)	
Proposed development types	Note submitted/proposed use as per call for sites/ desktop research including planning application records.
Potential physical constraints	
Site access	This will be a high level assessment about the location of the site and its relationship to surrounding roads. It will not be the role of the HELAA to undertake a full appraisal of the safety and suitability of any possible route of access into the site. Note if there are any known issues such as covenants restricting access if this information is available.
Access to services and facilities including public transport	High level description of access to services and facilities including public transport services. Sites will be assessed against Table 9.1 of the Cheshire East Local Plan which sets out the minimum distances to services and facilities that sites are expected to achieve.

Type of information	Explanation
Surrounding land uses and character	High level description of surrounding land uses and character (e.g. urban/rural character). This information will be based on information provided by site promoters, planning application history and desktop analysis.
Ground conditions	Note whether there are any known ground conditions that could impact upon the suitability of the site for development, including any known land contamination constraints.
Topography	High level description of any known constraints relating to levels. This information will be based on information provided by site promoters, planning application history and desktop analysis.
Air Quality Management Area ("AQMA")	Note if the site/ broad location is within an AQMA.
Potential Minerals Constraints	Note if the site/ broad location could be affected by potential minerals constraints.
Potential Waste Constraints	Note if the site/ broad location could be affected by potential waste constraints.
Peaty soils	Note if the site/broad location could be affected by peaty soils.
Flood risk/ drainage issues	High level description based on the majority of the site/broad location and reference to Flood Risk Zones and any known drainage issues.
Groundwater Source Protection Zones	Note if the site/ broad location is within or adjacent to a Groundwater Source Protection Zone.

Type of information	Explanation
Infrastructure/utilities	High level description of any known physical constraints such as pylons, overhead power lines, substations, transmission pipelines and their safeguarded area based on desktop assessment.
Hazardous Site Consultation Zone	Note if the site/ broad location is within a Hazardous Site Consultation Zone.
Aircraft Noise (Manchester Airport)	Note if the site/ broad location is within an area subject to aircraft noise levels above the Significant Observed Adverse Effect Level (SOAEL) and if noise levels are between the Lowest Observed Adverse Effect Level (LOAEL) and SOAEL.
Other noise issues	Note if there are any other noise related issues within the vicinity of the site.
Aerodrome Safeguarding Zone	Note if the site is within an Aerodrome safeguarding consultation zone.
Public Rights of Way	Note if there are any Public Rights of Way within the site/broad location or adjacent to it.
Jodrell Bank World Heritage Site, Buffer Zone or Consultation Zone	Note if the site is within the Jodrell Bank World Heritage Site, its Buffer Zone or Consultation zone.
Infrastructure safeguarding	Note if the site is within or adjacent to the HS2 Phase 2b safeguarding area(s) or any other infrastructure safeguarding areas.
Potential environmental constraints	

Type of information	Explanation
Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)	Note if there is a SAC within or adjacent to the site/broad location.
Special Protection Area (SPA)	Note if there is a SPA within or adjacent to the site/broad location.
Ramsar site	Note if there is a Ramsar site within or adjacent to the site/broad location.
Potential international site	Note if there are any potential international sites (SPA, SAC or Ramsar site) within or adjacent to the site/broad location.
Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	Note if there is a SSSI within or adjacent to the site/broad location.
SSSI Impact Risk Zone	Note if the site/ broad location falls within an SSSI Impact Risk Zone.
Nutrient Neutrality Catchment	Note if the site/broad location falls within a Nutrient Neutrality Catchment.
National Nature Reserves	Note if the site/ broad location falls within or is adjacent to a National Nature Reserve.
Local Nature Reserves	Note if the site/ broad location falls within or is adjacent to a Local Nature Reserve.
Local Wildlife Site/ Site of Biological Importance	Note if the site/ broad location falls within or is adjacent to a Local Wildlife Site/Site of Biological Importance.
Local Geological Sites	Note if the site/ broad location falls within or is adjacent to a local geological site.

Type of information	Explanation
Ancient Woodlands	Note if there is an Ancient Woodland within or adjacent to the site/broad location.
Ecological Network area	Note if the site/ broad location is within an Ecological Network Area.
Priority habitat	Note if the site/broad locations contains any Priority habitat.
Offset Biodiversity Net Gain Sites	Note if the site/ broad location is within or adjacent to an area that is identified for Biodiversity Net Gain.
Tree Preservation Order(s) ("TPO's")	Note if there are any TPO's within or adjacent to the site/broad location.
Agricultural Land Classification	If all or part of the site/ broad location is agricultural land, note the classification (i.e. 1,2,3).
Heritage assets	Note if there are any Heritage Assets within the site or within or adjacent to the site. Designated heritage assets include Listed Buildings, Scheduled Monuments, Conservation Areas, Registered Battlefields, Registered Parks and Gardens. Note if there are any known non-designated assets (including locally listed buildings). Note if the site/broad location lies within an area of archaeological importance/area of potential.
Landscape/ other designations	
Local Landscape Designation	Note if the site is within a designated Local Landscape Area.
Local Green Space	Note if there is a designated Local Green Space within or adjacent to the site/broad location

Type of information	Explanation
Protected Open Space	Note if there is a protected open space within or adjacent to the site/broad location.
Green Belt	Note if the site/broad location is within the Green Belt.
Green Gap	Note if the site is within a Strategic Green Gap or a local green gap designated in a Neighbourhood Plan.
Open countryside	Note if the site is within the open countryside.
AONB	Note if the site is within a candidate AONB.
Any other constraints	
Any other constraints	Note if there are any other constraints not identified above.

Initial sifting of sites and broad locations

- 3.16 The PPG states that there may be some sites and broad locations which, when taking into account national policy and designations, will not be appropriate to carry out more detailed assessments as it is clear that they will not be suitable for development¹¹.
- 3.17 Table 3.3 below identifies those constraints that will be considered to be 'showstoppers' and these will be used to automatically sift sites out from further assessment at Stage 2. Any sites sifted out will be published in a separate long list of sites with reasons given for their exclusion.

¹¹ Planning Practice Guidance: Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment, Paragraph: 014
Reference ID: 3-014-20190722

Table 3.3: Initial site sift.

Constraints/Criteria	Explanation
Sites and broad locations that have a cannot accommodate 5 or more dwellings. Sites that have a developable area of less than 0.25 ha (or 500 square metres of floor space) for economic development	Sites to be excluded as they do not meet the capacity thresholds. Sites for housing that do not meet the size/capacity thresholds will be included as part of the windfall assessment for housing.
Flood risk	Sites to be excluded for residential development if the site falls within Flood Zone 3b (the functional floodplain). If the area of flood risk covers only part of the site, those parts will be excluded from the developable area and the site area and capacity re-evaluated based on the remaining area.
Site of Special Scientific Interest (“SSSI”)	Sites to be excluded if a SSSI covers the entire area. If the designation only covers part of the site, the designated part of the site will be excluded from the developable area and the site area and capacity re-evaluated based on the remaining area.
Special Areas of Conservation (“SAC”)	Sites to be excluded if a SAC covers the entire area. If the designation only covers part of the site, the designated part of the site will be excluded from the developable area and the site area and capacity re-evaluated based on the remaining area.
Special Protection Area (“SPA”)	Sites to be excluded if a SPA covers the entire area. If the designation only covers part of the site, the designated part of the site will be excluded from the developable area and the site area and capacity re-

Constraints/Criteria	Explanation
	evaluated based on the remaining area.
Ramsar Site	Sites to be excluded if a Ramsar site covers the entire area. If the designation only covers part of the site, the designated part of the site will be excluded from the developable area and the site area and capacity re-evaluated based on the remaining area.
Scheduled Monuments ("SM")	Sites to be excluded if a SM covers the entire area. If the designation only covers part of the site, the designated part of the site will be excluded from the developable area and the site area and capacity re-evaluated based on the remaining area.
Ancient Woodlands	Sites to be excluded if an Ancient Woodland covers the entire area. If the designation only covers part of the site, the designated part of the site will be excluded from the developable area and the site area and capacity re-evaluated based on the remaining area.
Registered Battlefield	Sites to be excluded if a Registered Battlefield designation covers the entire area. If the designation only covers part of the site, the designated part of the site will be excluded from the developable area and the site area and capacity re-evaluated based on the remaining area.
Registered Parks & Gardens	Sites to be excluded if a Registered Parks & Gardens designation covers the entire area. If the designation only covers part of the site, the designated part of the site will be

Constraints/Criteria	Explanation
	excluded from the developable area and the site area and capacity re-evaluated based on the remaining area.

Stage 2: Site and broad location assessment

- 3.18 All sites that are not sifted out at Stage 1 will be subject to further assessment including consideration of their suitability, availability, achievability, possible timescales for delivery and development potential. The assessment needs to identify all sites and broad locations (regardless of the amount of land that might be needed) in order to provide a complete audit of land. The HELAA will include a red, amber, green rating (“RAG”) for conclusions reached about site suitability, availability and achievability.

Suitability

- 3.19 The PPG¹² states that a site or broad location can be considered suitable if it would provide an appropriate location for development when considered against relevant constraints and their potential to be mitigated. When considering constraints plan-makers may wish to consider the information collected as part of the initial site survey, as well as other relevant information such as:
- national policy.
 - appropriateness and likely market attractiveness for the type of development proposed.
 - contribution to regeneration priority areas.
 - potential impacts including effect upon landscapes including landscape features, nature and heritage conservation.
- 3.20 Site suitability will be assessed against existing development plan policies, the identification of constraints and whether these can be overcome. Sites that are already allocated in the development plan or with planning permission will normally be considered suitable for development (unless there has been a change in circumstance) and given a green RAG rating.
- 3.21 For sites that are currently in open countryside locations and/or within the Green Belt, it is likely that policy change would be needed to allocate these sites for development. This will be recorded in the assessment of the site’s suitability as issues to be overcome, and sites will then be given an amber rating. Further consideration of site suitability will be given as the new local plan progresses when further information is available about future development requirements and their proposed spatial distribution of development and the sites that are needed to meet this.

¹² Planning Practice Guidance: Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment, Paragraph: 018
Reference ID: 3-018-20190722

Availability

- 3.22 The PPG states that a site or broad location can be considered available for development, when, on the best information available (confirmed by the call for sites and information from landowners and legal searches where appropriate), there is confidence that there are no legal or ownership impediments to development¹³. Extant or expired planning permissions can also inform availability and will establish five-year timeframes, or beyond, of developability. Sites will be given a green rating if the site appears to be available, an amber rating if issues have been identified that would need to be overcome or red if there are significant constraints to the delivery of the site and would be difficult to overcome.

Achievability

- 3.23 The PPG states that a site or broad location is considered achievable for development where 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 complete and let or sell the development over a certain period¹⁴.
- 3.24 If issues are identified with the suitability or availability of a site, consideration will be given as to whether these issues could affect the achievability of the site.

Estimating development potential

- 3.25 The HELAA will estimate the development potential of each site/broad location. This stage considers the number of homes or land that can be delivered for employment uses on a site.
- 3.26 The PPG states that the estimation of the development potential of a site or broad location can be guided by existing or emerging plan policy including locally determined policies on density. Plan makers should seek to make the most efficient use of land in line with policies set out in the NPPF¹⁵. This should also take into consideration of viability, given the quantum may affect viability and therefore, achievability and so inform developability within five years or beyond.
- 3.27 The net developable area of each site/broad location will be assessed on a case-by-case basis and will take into account available supporting information such as information provided by site promoters, relevant planning

¹³ Planning Practice Guidance: Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment, Paragraph: 019
Reference ID: 3-019-20190722

¹⁴ Planning Practice Guidance: Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment, Paragraph: 020
Reference ID: 3-020-20190722

¹⁵ Planning Practice Guidance: Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment, Paragraph: 016
Reference ID: 3-016-20190722

history and the identification of any significant constraints (for example areas at high/medium risk of flooding) which could affect the developable area. Evidence from sites completed since the start of the plan period may also be used as a benchmark for gross to net developable areas.

- 3.28 The potential capacity of the identified net developable areas will also be assessed on a case-by-case basis and will take into account any supporting information available such as relevant planning permission evidence or information received from site promoters. For housing, if no information is available about site capacity, a density multiplier of 30 dwellings per hectare of developable land will normally be applied reflecting the requirements of SADPD Policy HOU 14 'Housing Density'. For economic uses, the land available in hectares will be recorded.
- 3.29 Assessment of development potential at this stage remains indicative for the purposes of the HELAA. It will be for the Local Plan process to identify how relevant constraints could be addressed through appropriate mitigation, including the assessment of sites through the Sustainability Appraisal and allocation of sites in the Local Plan and other associated Development Plan Documents. It could also be tested thoroughly through the development management process. The allocation of sites in the council's new Local Plan would only be proposed following more detailed site assessment work. For the purposes of the Local Plan Strategy and Site Allocations and Development Policies Document, the findings of this more detailed assessment work were set out in settlement reports, published as part of the evidence base for these plans.
- 3.30 For Gypsy and Traveller sites, the size and layout of existing traveller sites will be considered, as well as the Government's Good Practice Guide: Designing Gypsy and Traveller Sites (May 2008). Although the Good Practice Guide is dated and has been withdrawn, it does include useful design principles which are still relevant.
- 3.31 Sites and broad locations that are identified as not being suitable and available for development will not be considered achievable. Sites and broad locations that are identified as being suitable for development but not available may not be deliverable within the first five years but may be identified as being achievable later in the plan period.

Timescales

- 3.32 The timescale for the development potential and rate of development will be identified considering the size, scale and quantum of development. This will take into consideration evidence of lead-in times and build-out rates. Information from the site submissions, developers and other third parties will help inform timescales and development rates.

Stage 3 Housing windfall assessment

- 3.33 The term ‘windfall sites’ is defined in the NPPF as “sites not specifically identified in the development plan¹⁶ .
- 3.34 The PPG outlines that a windfall allowance may be justified in the anticipated supply if a local planning authority has compelling evidence as set out in Paragraph 75 of the NPPF:
- “Where an allowance is to be made for windfall sites as part of anticipated supply, there should be compelling evidence that they will provide a reliable source of supply. Any allowance should be realistic having regard to the strategic housing land availability assessment, historic windfall delivery rates and expected future trends. Plans should consider the case for setting out policies to resist inappropriate development of residential gardens, for example where development would cause harm to the local area”¹⁷.*
- 3.35 Evidence of historic windfall delivery rates and expected future trends will be used to determine whether the application of a windfall allowance is justified in anticipated supply.
- 3.36 The HELAA does not include sites which have a capacity of less than 5 dwellings therefore a windfall allowance will be included for smaller developments falling below the defined HELAA threshold of 5 dwellings. The annual windfall allowance will be determined by applying a trend-based approach based on an analysis of completions over a period of 10 years.

Stage 4: Assessment review

- 3.37 Once sites and broad locations have been assessed, an indicative trajectory will be produced setting out how much housing and economic development can be provided across the plan area and at what point in the future it could be delivered. It may be the case that much of this development would only be capable of coming forward subject to significant policy changes. The indicative trajectory should therefore be treated with significant caution.
- 3.38 The indicative trajectory will outline the forecasted delivery of development in three timeframes as set out in the PPG¹⁸ .

Stage 5: Final evidence base

- 3.39 The HELAA will, as a minimum, include the following information in accordance with the PPG¹⁹ :

¹⁶ National Planning Policy Framework (Dec 2024) Glossary

¹⁷ National Planning Policy Framework (Dec 2024) Paragraph 75

¹⁸ 0-5 years, 6-10 years and 11 years and beyond.

¹⁹ Practice Guidance: Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment, Paragraph: 026
Reference ID: 3-026-20190722

-
- A list of all sites or broad locations considered, cross-referenced to their locations on maps.
 - An assessment of each site or broad location including:
 - An assessment of the suitability, deliverability/ developability of each site. Where sites have been discounted, reasons will be given.
 - Where sites are considered suitable, available and achievable, the potential type and quantity of development, including a reasonable estimate of build out rates, setting out how any barriers to delivery could be overcome and when.
 - An indicative trajectory of anticipated development based on the evidence available.
- 3.40 The assessments will be made publicly available in an accessible form.
- 3.41 The HELAA will be used alongside a suite of relevant technical reports and analysis, to inform the development strategy for the plan area and subsequently, to inform the site selection process and formation of policy criteria. It may also be used to identify available land for inclusion in the Part 1 Brownfield Land Register.