



Local Plan 2031 Part 1

Strategic Sites and Policies

Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA)

Appendix

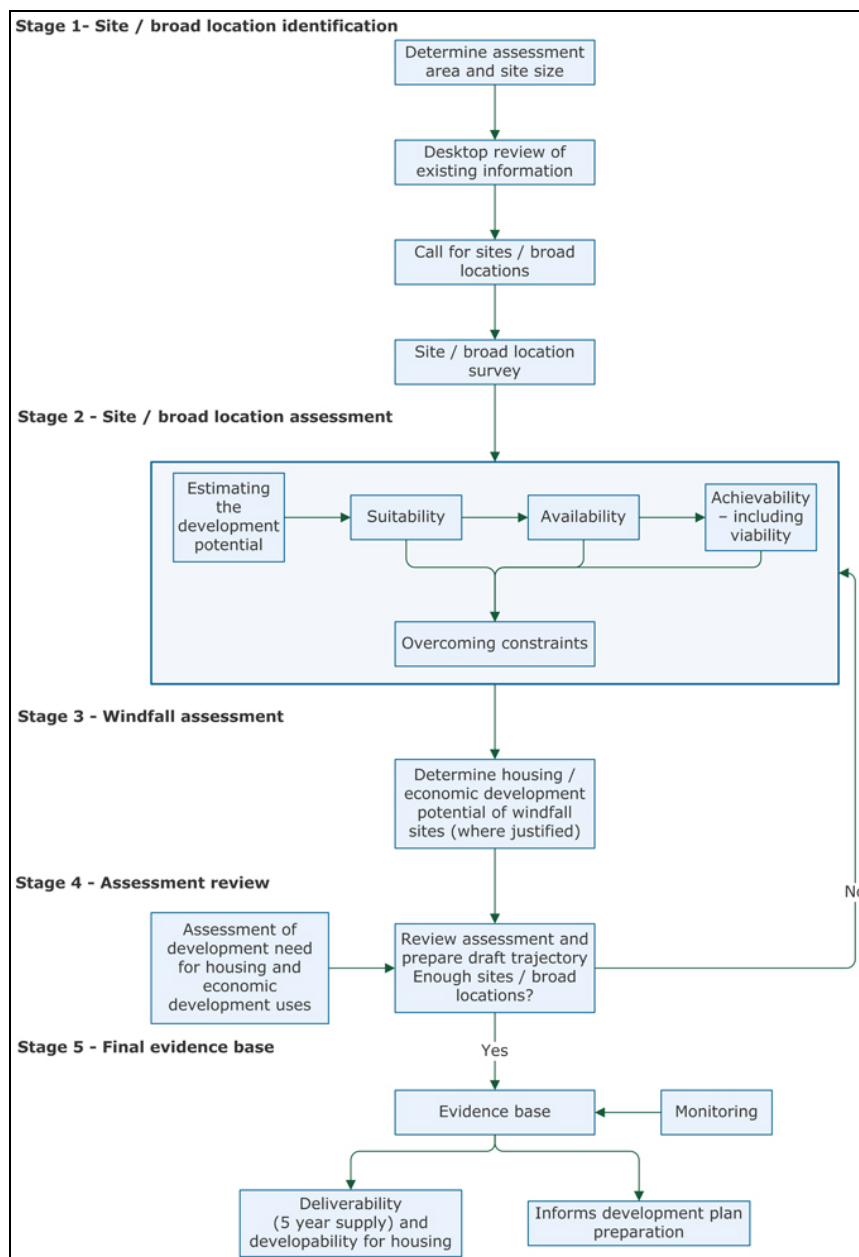
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Methodology

Methodology

1.1. The methodology is based on the draft Practice Guidance published in August 2013 for assessments of land availability¹. We previously consulted on a methodology which was based on government guidance published in 2007. We have now updated our methodology to take account of the consultation responses we received and the draft guidance. Figure 1 is an extract from the draft guidance and our methodology follows the different stages.

Figure 1: SHLAA Process Summary



¹ [http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/#Assessment of land availability](http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/#Assessment%20of%20land%20availability)

Working with stakeholders/Duty-to-cooperate

- 1.2. We consulted on the methodology in January 2013 alongside our public ‘call-for-sites’. We notified the following as part of this consultation -
- Town and Parish Councils
 - Planning agents and site promoters
 - Statutory consultees
 - General public/landowners (through a press notice/council website)

Stage 1 Site / broad location identification

Geographical area

- 1.3. The assessment covers the administrative area of the Vale of White Horse District Council. We considered that it was not appropriate to conduct the assessment jointly with other authorities in our market area due to the need for timely delivery of the assessment to inform the Vale of White Horse Local Plan Part 1: Strategic Sites and Policies.

Site/broad location size

- 1.4. The draft guidance states that the minimum size should deliver five or more dwellings². Our methodology originally set a minimum threshold of 10 dwellings, which at a density of 25 dwellings per hectare, provided a minimum size threshold of 0.4ha. We have revised our methodology to reflect the draft guidance, but only assessed sites capable of providing 5-9 dwellings where they have been submitted to us and are situated within or on the edge of settlements which we surveyed as set out in paragraph 1.6.

Identifying sites/broad locations

- 1.5. The Planning Advisory Service guidance on SHLAAs³ recognises that in many rural areas there will be large numbers of theoretically-possible sites, but that there is no expectation that every possible greenfield site should be assessed. It points to the importance of assessing sites which are reasonable candidates for housing. This is the approach we have followed by focusing our resources on assessing settlements which are sustainable locations capable of accommodating some form of development. If in the future this approach changes, we will re-visit the SHLAA to look at other locations.
- 1.6. We therefore concentrated the assessment on land in and immediately adjoining settlements identified in our hierarchy as follows:

² <http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/assessment-of-land-availability/methodologystage-1-identification-of-sites-and-broad-locations-determine-assessment-area-and-site-size/>

³ PAS, Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment and Development Plan Document Preparation, January 2008

**Market towns/
Local Service Centres** Abingdon, Botley, Faringdon, Grove and Wantage.
Land in Harwell Parish immediately west of Didcot

Larger Villages Blewbury, Cumnor, Drayton, East Challow, East Hanney, East Hendred, Harwell, Kennington, Kingston Bagpuize & Southmoor, Marcham, Milton, Radley, Shrivenham, Stanford in the Vale, Steventon, Sutton Courtenay, Uffington, Watchfield, Wootton.

Other Harwell Oxford Campus,

1.7. Didcot is not identified in our settlement hierarchy as it is predominantly situated in South Oxfordshire. The town has expanded westward into Vale of White Horse through Great Western Park, and would do so further at the proposed housing allocation at Valley Park. In order for the assessment to be robust, it was appropriate to assess sites to the west and north of Didcot town where they lie within our administrative boundary.

1.8. The SHLAA also assessed the potential for development on sites at Harwell Oxford Campus. This has been included as the level of services available on, or in the immediate vicinity of the campus, is similar to that of a larger village. It is also a key employment area within the district.

1.9. Smaller settlements, such as “smaller villages” were not included in this assessment. Should our updated objectively assessed housing need require us to look at sites in locations outside of the market towns, local service centres and larger villages to identify new strategic site allocation proposals, this will be informed by a separate piece of work⁴.

Data Sources

1.10. Table 1 reflects the sources set out in the Draft Practice Guidance and identifies our approach to each category.

TABLE 1: SOURCES OF SITES WITH POTENTIAL FOR HOUSING

Type of site	VOWHDC Approach
Existing housing and economic development allocations and site development briefs not yet with planning permission	Existing allocations and site development briefs have previously been assessed in more detail than is required for this assessment.
Planning permission for housing and economic development that are unimplemented or under construction.	These are all tracked on the council’s monitoring system. We collated information for sites providing 10 or more dwellings and checked the anticipated date of completion. Any sites which had unimplemented permissions or where construction had ceased indefinitely were included in our assessment.

⁴ Housing Delivery Update – Supporting Paper. Available at <http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/localplanpartone>

Planning applications that have been refused or withdrawn	Sites with refused or withdrawn planning applications were assessed where they meet the criteria set out in paragraphs 1.4-1.6.
Land in the local authority's ownership	We assessed land in the local authority's ownership and no sites were deemed eligible to be brought forward for assessment.
Surplus and likely to become surplus public sector land	We collected information from the national register of public sector land. No suitable land was identified.
Vacant and derelict land and buildings (including redundant and disused agricultural buildings, potential permitted development changes)	These were tracked using the National Land Use Database. The database did not identify any vacant and derelict land or buildings to be included in this assessment.
Additional opportunities in established uses (e.g. making productive use of under-utilised facilities such as garage blocks)	Information on this was gathered through sites submitted to us as part of the call for sites. Additional sites could have also been identified through site surveys. No sites were submitted to us and none were suitably identified as being under-utilised during site visits.
Business requirements and aspirations	Information on this was gathered separately from the SHLAA, through the Employment Land Review 2012 (Update 2013). It was not considered appropriate for the purpose of this SHLAA update to assess sites for business requirements and aspirations.
Sites in isolated rural locations	Sites in isolated rural locations were not considered appropriate for the purpose of this assessment which is to identify sites in sustainable locations. Sites in isolated rural locations may be submitted to us as part of the call for sites and considered through the neighbourhood development plan process.
Large scale redevelopment and redesign of existing residential or economic areas	Included if submitted by developers/landowners as part of our call for sites.
Sites in and adjoining villages or rural settlements and rural exception sites	We assessed land within and/or immediately adjoining the selected more sustainable settlements within the study area. Potential sites not already submitted to us were identified using Ordnance Survey Maps and aerial photography.
Potential urban extensions	We assessed land immediately adjoining market towns and local service centres, including land to the west of Didcot.

	Sites were identified using Ordinance Survey Maps, aerial photography, planning applications and site surveys
New free standing settlements.	New free standing settlements would be assessed if our analysis of the selected settlements did not identify sufficient land available for housing.

Call for Sites

- 1.11. We issued a call for potential sites and broad locations for development in January 2013. As part of this consultation, we requested those submitting sites to complete a proforma showing the current use of the site; the surrounding uses; how many housing units they would seek to develop; when they would expect to deliver the site should it come forward; details on ownership; and other relevant information. A map showing the outline of the site was also requested.
- 1.12. Submitted sites were included in our assessment where they were located within or on the edge of the settlements identified in paragraph 1.6 above and where they exceeded the site size threshold of 0.2ha (i.e. a minimum of 5 dwellings). This was done to ensure a consistent approach to our methodology which focuses on the more sustainable locations in the district.

Site/broad location survey

- 1.13. In addition to the sites submitted to us and sites identified from other data sources, we conducted a desktop study to identify as many sites as possible within or on the edge of settlements with potential for development. This ensured that the survey would be comprehensive and proportionate in relation to the district as a whole. In total, over 300 sites were identified for assessment.
- 1.14. The assessment covered a wide range of data collection. Information gathered from the survey included
- site size, boundaries and location;
 - current land use and character;
 - land use and character of surrounding area;
 - physical constraints
 - potential environmental constraints
 - development progress (where relevant)
 - initial assessment of whether the site is suitable in principle for development.

Stage 2 Site/broad location assessment

Estimating the development potential

- 1.15. Our emerging Local Plan Part 1 (Core Policy 20) sets a minimum density of 30 dwellings per hectare (net). It also states that in some locations, a lower

density will be more appropriate, such as in more rural locations. In more urban locations, the density may be higher. This assessment covers a diverse range of settlements including market towns, local service centres and larger villages. As a result, it was deemed appropriate to use a density of 25 dwellings per hectare to allow for open space and to mitigate against possible constraints that may exist on sites. This density also respects the more sensitive or rural nature of the larger villages.

- 1.16. If sites arising from the SHLAA are taken forward for consideration to be allocated in our plan, then the appropriate density of development can be reviewed in line with more detailed evidence.

Assessing the suitability of sites/broad locations for development

- 1.17. The draft guidance states that the suitability of sites or broad locations should be guided by the development plan, emerging local planning policy and national policy⁵. It is also guided by market and industry requirements in the housing market area.
- 1.18. Our emerging Local Plan Part 1 sets out strategic priorities for the district to deliver sustainable development in light of a new housing target arising from the Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA). For the purposes of this assessment, we have assessed the suitability of sites at a high level. Site suitability has been considered in line with the draft guidance, which includes the following criteria:
- Physical limitations or problems such as access, infrastructure, ground conditions, flood risk, hazardous risks, pollution or contamination;
 - Potential impacts including the effect upon landscape features, nature and heritage conservation;
 - Appropriateness and likely market attractiveness for the type of development proposed;
 - Contribution to regeneration priority areas;
 - Environmental/amenity impacts experienced by would be occupiers and neighbours.
- 1.19. The draft guidance states that sites which have particular policy constraints should be included in the assessment for the sake of comprehensiveness but these constraints must be set out clearly, including where they severely restrict development⁶.
- 1.20. In light of this and comments received during our consultation on our methodology in January 2013, we assessed sites in the green belt and AONB in exactly the same manner as sites not subject to these designations/constraints. This ensures that all sites were assessed in a fair and balanced manner. We have ensured that our survey clearly makes note

⁵ <http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/assessment-of-land-availability/stage-2-sitebroad-location-assessment-identifying-the-development-potential-of-each-sitebroad-location/>

⁶ <http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/assessment-of-land-availability/methodologystage-1-identification-of-sites-and-broad-locations-determine-assessment-area-and-site-size/>

of these constraints but that they are not an intrinsic reason at this stage for sites to be deemed unsuitable.

- 1.21. These designations will be considered in more detail should suitable sites be taken forward for more detailed assessment to inform potential future allocations in our local plans. Additional studies such as a green belt review and a landscape character assessment would be required to justify such allocations. Such processes would take place separately to this assessment.

Assessing the availability of sites/broad locations for development

- 1.22. The availability of sites has been determined by those which were submitted to us as part of the call for sites process. For sites assessed which were not submitted to us, their availability was classified as 'unknown'. This means that there is a possibility that they may be available now or at some stage over the course of the plan period.
- 1.23. Sites which are suitable in principle but where their availability is unknown may also be considered for potential allocation in our local plan⁷. Future updates to the assessment and any subsequent call for sites will help to better inform the availability of new sites as well as those previously assessed.

Assessing the achievability of sites/broad locations including whether the development of the site is viable

- 1.24. A high level viability appraisal has been undertaken for suitable sites in the district. The results of this appraisal have been used to determine the viability/achievability of these sites. Any suitable, available and achievable sites would require a more detailed viability before they could be considered for allocation.

Addressing constraints which impact on suitability, availability and achievability

- 1.25. The proformas for each site will contain, where appropriate, any actions that could be undertaken to improve the suitability, availability and achievability of sites. It should be noted that the ability to address these actions is not a precursor for development. The actions are identified in order to better inform the plan making process.

Stage 3 Determining the housing potential of windfall sites where justified

- 1.26. Paragraph 48 of the Framework states that local planning authorities may make an allowance for windfall sites in the five-year supply if they have compelling evidence that such sites have consistently become available in the local area and will continue to provide a reliable source of supply. Any

⁷ If land was being considered for allocation, landowners of such sites would be contacted to establish if it is available for development. The process of allocating sites is separate from the SHLAA.

allowance should be realistic having regard to the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment, historic windfall delivery rates and expected future trends, and should not include residential gardens. In line with this guidance we will consider whether a windfall allowance will be appropriate based on the findings of the SHLAA. In addition, we will look at whether windfall sites form a reliable source of supply. This will be done by looking at historic rates and coming to an informed view as to

- whether the annual rate is likely to increase or decrease
- whether the pattern of redevelopment is likely to remain the same, grow or decline; and
- whether current market conditions are likely to stay the same, worsen or improve in the future.

Stage 4 Assessment review

How will the assessment be reviewed?

1.27. The findings of our assessment are presented in the main report. We will review the findings in line with changing trends:

- In line with a review of our development plan documents
- Where our housing target/objectively assessed need has changed
- Where our delivery of the housing need is not being achieved

1.28. The findings will assist with the potential future allocation of sites as part of our local plan. The work done at that stage will include consideration as to how any proposed allocations will contribute to our housing trajectory in a manner that will address our objectively assessed need. More detailed work will need to be undertaken before any site can be considered for allocation. The results of that work will be separate from this assessment.

What will happen if we are not able to address our objectively assessed need?

1.29. If we find that we do not have enough sites to address our objectively assessed need, then we will revisit the findings of this assessment. Other potential sites may then be identified which can be taken forward for more detailed assessment before being considered for allocation.

Stage 5 Final evidence base

What are the core outputs?

1.30. The core outputs of the assessment include the following:

- A list of all sites or broad locations considered, cross-referenced to their locations on maps:

- A high level assessment of each site or broad location, in terms of whether it is suitable in principle for development, is available and is achievable including whether the site/broad location is viable.
 - For sites which are suitable in principle, the assessment will provide a recommended number of houses for the site. It will also state if the site has potential to be delivered in the first five years or if it can be developed over the course of the plan period. These recommendations are broad in their nature and only intend to inform more detailed studies of sites being considered for allocation in our local plan. This study does not assist planning applications for sites which are unallocated.
- 1.31. As previously discussed in Stage 4 above, more detailed work will be undertaken for sites which are considered to be realistic candidates for allocation in our local plan should our objectively assessed need require it. That work will be informed by this assessment and will set out how the district will address housing supply over the course of the plan period.