



Harborough District Council Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment

31st March 2009

Note

The Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment is an evidence study that is designed to estimate the ability of sites in the District to deliver new housing development over the duration of the adopted Regional Spatial Strategy for the East Midlands (RSS 8, 2009). The Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment does not form planning policy for the District. Instead the results will be used to inform policy making as part of the Local Development Framework process.

Inclusion of any named site in this study does not bind the Council to the allocation of that site for development in future Development Plan Documents. Nor does it predispose the Council towards the favourable consideration of any future planning applications for the development of that site.

Any comments made in relation to particular sites do not constitute a planning brief or formal planning advice.

All proposals for housing development arising during the plan period will be considered on their individual merits in relation to adopted and emerging development plan policies and other material considerations relevant at the time of determination.

This Assessment is presented as a 'snapshot' of land supply at 31st March 2009 and is based upon the best information available at the time. Further sites may be brought to the attention of the authority as it progresses its Local Development Framework. Failure to be identified in this document will not preclude such sites from being considered for housing allocation or development outside of the plan process.

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Executive Summary

The Government's Planning Policy Statement 3 (PPS3): Housing (November 2006) requires all local authorities to undertake a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA). SHLAA Practice Guidance issued by Government in July 2007 sets out a methodology for undertaking an assessment.

The assessment of housing land availability covers the period from 2008 to 2023, in order to establish whether additional land needs to be identified to meet the regional housing targets. The required housing provision for the District in the adopted Regional Spatial Strategy for the East Midlands (RSS8, 2009) for the period 2006-2026 is 7,000 dwellings, or 350 dwellings per annum.

The purpose of the SHLAA is to inform the process of planning for housing growth in the District and inform the preparation of the new Local Development Framework (LDF) for the authority. This evidence document will inform the LDF by identifying all potential sources of land available for housing development. It is a more comprehensive assessment of all sources of land for housing than previous Urban Capacity Studies, which only considered previously developed sites in the larger settlements. The document will be used in combination with other evidence based studies to ensure housing provision is met in the district.

The primary role of the SHLAA is to:-

- Identify sites with a potential for housing development
- Assess their housing potential (i.e. the capacity of the sites); and
- Assess when they are likely to be developed, to identify sufficient specific sites for a 5 year, 10 year and if possible a 15 year period (and beyond 2024)

This work will, in particular, form part of the evidence base for the Site Allocations Development Plan Document as part of the LDF; which will identify any additional sites that are needed for housing in order to meet the number of dwellings required by the adopted Regional Spatial Strategy for the East Midlands (RSS8)

The SHLAA has been produced with the aid of the jointly approved Leicester and Leicestershire Housing Market Area SHLAA Methodology Paper, the Home Builders Federation and in consultation with the development industry. This has allowed the methodology to be checked to ensure that it conforms to the DCLG standard methodology. This process has also provided a means to help identify many SHLAA sites throughout the course of the Assessment. The joint methodology does not deviate from the DCLG guidance on the preparation of the report. Rather, it adds county-specific detail where the DCLG guidance offers only general guidance (for example, densities for residential development are detailed in the joint methodology). As such it ensures that these specifics are uniformly adhered to across the county.

The SHLAA is not a 'final' document as it will be reviewed on a regular basis in conjunction with the LDF annual monitoring process, and subsequently updated in order to ensure a continuous five year supply of land for housing within the District.

It should be noted that the inclusion of a site in this assessment does not mean that planning permission for housing will necessarily be granted. The suitability of all sites will need to be assessed by submitting planning applications for consideration on their individual merits.

The role of SHLAA is to identify land and potential issues but not to make detailed judgments about the feasibility of sites or whether they should be allocated for development. Therefore inclusion of a site in the SHLAA should not be seen as an alternative to making representations for the Site Allocations DPD as part of Harborough District Council's emerging LDF.

The SHLAA has identified a supply of land within the District to provide an estimated 20,959 dwellings within the regional plan period (up to 2026). Of this total, 5,895 dwellings could be accommodated in the Market Harborough area, 1,495 in the Lutterworth area, 4,163 in the Broughton Astley area and 9,371 in the Urban Fringe and Rural Centres areas.

The Regional Spatial Strategy for the East Midlands (RSS8, 2009) has identified a housing requirement of 7,000 for the District between 2006-2026. At 1 April 2008 a total of 1036 dwellings had already been completed, leaving a remaining requirement of 5,964 for the period 2008-2026. The SHLAA process has identified potential land sources that could supply dwellings in excess of the RSS requirement.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

1.1.1 This Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) has been prepared according to a joint methodology agreed with local authorities comprising the Leicester and Leicestershire Housing Market Area. These are Harborough District Council, Blaby District Council, Charnwood Borough Council, Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council, Leicester City Council, Melton Borough Council, North West Leicestershire Council and Oadby & Wigston Borough Council. The methodology paper was agreed upon by stakeholders during consultation in November- December 2007. A copy of the methodology can be found on the Council website (www.harborough.gov.uk/shlaa).

1.1.2 The SHLAA report provides background evidence on the potential supply of housing land in the District. This is an evidence-based document not a decision-making document and so does not represent policy or allocate land for housing. The report has the potential to influence the strategic distribution of housing growth within the District's Core Strategy but more specifically will inform the policies within the Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD).

1.1.3 In accordance with national policy, the Site Allocations DPD will allocate sites for development. The allocation of this land must be built upon a strong and sound evidence base. In particular, sites allocated for housing must be suitable, available and achievable for housing development. The SHLAA will provide this evidence base by identifying as many sites as possible, with housing potential within the District, which meet the minimum criteria set by the Council. The Site Allocations DPD will then determine which of these sites should be allocated.

1.2 Purpose of Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment

1.2.1 Paragraph 7 of the Government's Guidance on Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments (DCLG, July 2007) states that the aim should be to "identify as many sites with housing potential in and around as many settlements as possible in the study area". Further guidance has since been published on behalf of the Government by the Planning Advisory Service (July 2008).

1.2.2 The primary role of the SHLAA is to:

- Identify sites with potential for housing
- Assess their housing potential
- Assess when they are likely to be developed.

1.2.3 Specifically the SHLAA should:

- Identify specific, deliverable sites for the first 5 years of a development plan, that are ready for development
- Identify specific developable sites for 6-10 years, and ideally 11-15 years in plans, to allow the 5 year housing land supply to be topped up
- Where it is not possible to identify specific sites for years 11-15 of the plan, to indicate broad locations for future growth and/or determining the potential of windfall sites, but not within the first 10 years of the plan.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Background

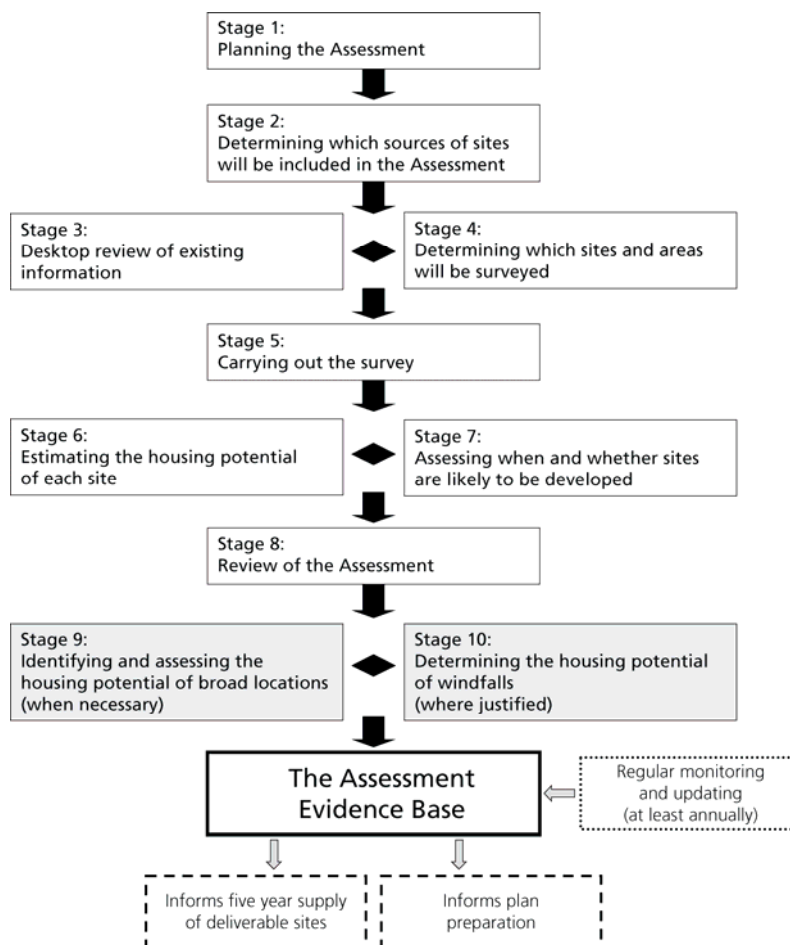
2.1.1 The methodology utilised for the SHLAA is the Joint Leicester and Leicestershire Housing Market Area SHLAA Methodology paper which has been produced collaboratively with all participating Planning Authorities and agreed upon by stakeholders. This approach incorporates the views of house builders, land agents and land owners gathered from a four week consultation period on the draft methodology carried out during November and December 2007. A key aspect of the assessment is the inclusion of external stakeholders and the Local Planning Authorities worked closely with:

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

This process was felt to be essential to ensure that a robust and credible evidence base is developed.

2.1.2 Figure 1 has been set out by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), in order to produce the core outputs for the assessment. The use of this standard methodology is recommended by the DCLG's SHLAA Practice Guidance as 'it will ensure that the assessment findings are robust and transparently prepared.' The Leicester and Leicestershire Local Planning authorities have therefore conformed closely with the standard methodology.

Figure 1: The Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment Process and Outputs



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

2.1.3 The SHLAA has been undertaken by Harborough District Council 'in house' with the support of an officer Project Group comprising planning and housing officers from each council in the Leicestershire area.

2.2 Desktop review of existing information

2.2.1 Sites which were considered for assessment were identified through the following sources:

- Sites in the planning process which had been allocated for housing development, for example in the 2001 adopted Local Plan, or with planning consent
- Submission of sites following a 'call for sites' in late 2007 and early 2008 (letter and submission form in Appendix 9)

- Sites which had previously been suggested to the Council by developers/landowners
- 'Greenfield' sites surrounding relevant towns and villages which had not been previously submitted
- Sites previously identified through the 2003 Urban Capacity Study
- Sites identified by Harborough District Council officers during site surveys
- Council owned property with development potential

2.2.2 A database (hereafter referred to as the 'sites database') was created with fields to record all of the site specific data that would be collected throughout the assessment. A record was created for each site and the database was updated as the assessment proceeded

2.3 Determining which sites and areas will be surveyed

2.3.1 Sites which had the potential to deliver a minimum of 5 dwellings were considered. Using a density multiplier of 40 dwellings per hectare this equates to approximately 0.125 hectares. This correlates with adopted Council policy in relation to affordable housing provision and represents the minimum size of housing development from which the Council will seek affordable housing. While small sites do contribute to housing supply this assessment recognises that housing requirements for the District, together with resource restrictions, do not necessitate the assessment of sites below 0.125 hectares.

2.3.2 In addition the Council only considered sites which fall into the following settlements:

- Principal Urban Area – Scraftoft, Thurnby, Bushby and land adjacent to Oadby (the Urban Fringe)
- Sub Regional Centres – Market Harborough
- Lutterworth, Broughton Astley, and the Rural Centres of Kibworth Beauchamp/Harcourt, Great Glen, and Fleckney

These settlements represent the District's priorities for the distribution of housing based on the requirements set out in the adopted Regional Spatial Strategy for the East Midlands. These settlements are considered sustainable for future housing development as they have access to a broad range of services and employment opportunities. They were approved by the stakeholder panel which agreed the Joint Leicester and Leicestershire Housing Market SHLAA Methodology paper and are detailed in Appendix D of the methodology.

2.3.3 Following the stakeholder panel's recommendations to include Rural Centres in the assessment, the Harborough District Council LDF Member Task Panel gave approval to include sites in the Rural Centres provided they were within the existing limits to development.

2.3.4 Sites that did not meet the above criteria were not included in the SHLAA. All included sites were given a unique reference number (e.g. M001),

relating to the area in which they were located and mapped onto a GIS system. It should be noted that excluded sites may be reconsidered when the SHLAA is reviewed.

Leicester PUA

2.3.5 Under the adopted Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS8, 2009) housing requirement there is a need for at least 40 dwellings per year in the Leicester Principal Urban Area in Harborough District.

2.3.6 Individual sites submitted to Harborough District Council which lie adjacent to Oadby have been considered alongside all sites within and adjacent to the PUA, for example in Thurnby, Bushby and Scraptoft.

2.3.7 Of the sites adjacent to Oadby, Site Ref UF10 (The Co-Operative Land Holding” – site area 249 hectares), an extensive area of agricultural land/airfield submitted by the landowner as either a SUE to the Leicester PUA or, alternatively, as an Eco Town, has been discounted under the SHLAA assessment along with Site Ref UF 43 (The Co-operative SUE NE” – 10.08 hectares). These two sites have been discounted as the sites are unlikely to come forward independently and will depend on development of adjoining land and major access improvements obtained from this land.

2.3.8 A further site, initially registered as Site Ref UF44 has been removed from the SHLAA assessment because it falls entirely outside Harborough District and is therefore not within the remit of this study. The owners have been notified.

2.3.9 The RSS partial review may provide further guidance on the issue of Eco Towns or new settlements when it is published. Any new changes in national or regional policy, allocations or requirements will be taken into account when the SHLAA is reviewed as part of the Annual Monitoring Process.

Constraints Analysis

2.3.10 Constraints Analysis was undertaken on each site being taken forward. Red Constraints are those constraints which would prevent development from taking place. The list of constraints, as agreed in the Joint Leicester and Leicestershire Housing Market SHLAA Methodology paper in Appendix B, is:

- Flood Zones 2 and 3
- Non-inert landfill sites
- Active mineral extraction sites
- Hazardous installations
- Grade 1 and 2 agricultural land
- Oil and high pressure gas pipelines and 400kv (National Grid) overhead electricity lines
- SSSI's and Scheduled Monuments

2.3.11 Subsequent to agreeing this list, advice was received from Harborough District Council Environmental Services Department that non-inert landfill sites and hazardous installations were not Red Constraints as a site containing these elements could be developed providing it complied with Planning Policy Statement 23: Planning and Pollution Control - Annex 2: *Development on Land Affected by Contamination*. Consequently these constraints were not investigated further. There are no known active mineral extraction sites within the SHLAA settlements specified in paragraph 2.3.2.

2.3.12 Each site was assessed using a GIS system. Mapping layers containing the above Red Constraints were applied over the individual site maps, to indicate which sites were affected. Sites with Red Constraints covering their entire area were excluded from further consideration. Where a Red Constraint affected only part of a site the site boundaries were redrawn to exclude the compromised section. The site area was recalculated and, assuming the new site size was in excess of 0.125Ha, the site was included in the assessment.

2.3.13 Where a Red Constraint cut through a site, the site was split and the boundaries redrawn creating two sites either side of the constraint. The larger of the two sites retained the original reference number while the smaller site was given a new reference number and treated as a separate site for the remainder of the assessment.

2.3.14 These constraints are not exhaustive and it should be noted that other evidence based studies, such as the district's Landscape Character Assessment, will need to be taken into account alongside the SHLAA when developing policies within the LDF.

Planning Histories

2.3.15 The planning histories of the remaining sites were examined for any applications relating to housing or residential development and the details of those applications were noted in the sites database. Where a site had a non-residential application refused, and the reasons for refusal could be relevant to a future residential development, this was also noted in the sites database. No sites were excluded from further assessment following this process.

2.4 Carrying out the survey

2.4.1 All remaining sites were surveyed and details recorded on a site visit pro forma (see Appendix 9). Photographs of the site were taken and details of key features including land use, adjoining land uses, amenities, topography, environmental factors, accessibility issues and potential ownership difficulties were recorded. Any items noted which could be a constraint to development were then recorded on the site database for further consideration and suggested mitigation where appropriate.

2.4.2 Sites were surveyed from the public highway and all accessible public land. Some sites, or parts of sites, were not surveyed as they were inaccessible. No sites were excluded on this basis.

2.4.3 Whilst inspecting sites which had passed the initial assessments (detailed at stages 2.2 and 2.3) a number of additional sites were identified. These sites were recorded, entered onto the database and mapped onto the GIS system. Red Constraint analysis and planning history examinations were then undertaken for these additional sites.

2.5 Recording the results of the survey

2.5.1 Any constraints to development identified from the site inspections were recorded on the database under the following headings:

- Contaminated land – any obvious ground pollution, previous/current uses of the site, which would require remediation prior to development
- Topographical constraints – site slope, possible localised flooding, uneven/undulating site, pipelines and power lines crossing the site
- Environmental constraints – any woodland, open space, recreation facilities, or adverse environmental conditions which may be experienced by prospective residents
- Accessibility constraints – access to the site from existing roads, access to and availability of local amenities
- Planning policy constraints – any potential policy issues, for example existing local plan designations
- Ownership constraints – multiple ownership, tenancies, “ransom strips” which would affect future development

2.6 Estimating the housing potential of each site

2.6.1 The housing potential for each site is a significant factor affecting economic viability. Housing potential has been determined for each site using densities agreed through the Joint Leicester and Leicestershire Housing Market SHLAA Methodology paper which are based on density targets set out in former Housing Policy 5 of the Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland Structure Plan (1996 to 2016). At the time of agreeing the methodology this policy provided the best source of data for densities and its use was agreed by all Local Authorities in the Leicestershire Housing Market Area as well as the Home Builders Federation and industry representative and stakeholders. Former Housing Policy 5 states that housing developments on sites of 0.3 hectares or more should attain the following net densities:

Table 1: Densities for Residential Development

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

Source: Leicester & Leicestershire Housing Market Area SHLAA Methodology Paper

Table 2: Densities for Residential Development for Specific Settlements

No sites	50 dwellings per hectare
Market Harborough Lutterworth Broughton Astley Scraptoft (Urban fringe) Thurnby & Bushby (Urban fringe)	40 dwellings per hectare
Kibworth Fleckney Great Glen Land adjacent to Oadby (Urban fringe)	30 dwellings per hectare

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

2.6.2 There are no sites in the SHLAA that can be classified as within or adjoining the centre of Leicester and therefore a density of 50 dwellings per hectare has not been applied to any sites.

2.6.3 The housing potential of each site was referred to the Developer Panel (as detailed in section 2.7.5) for comment and discussion in order to obtain an industry perspective on the viability of the proposals, particularly in the current economic climate (see Appendix 10).

2.7 Assessing when and whether sites are likely to be developed

2.7.1 The SHLAA Practice Guidance, (DCLG, 2007), paragraphs 33 and 34, states that, “assessing the suitability, availability and achievability of a site will provide the information on which the judgement can be made in the plan making context as to whether a site can be considered deliverable, developable or not currently developable for housing development. To be considered as:

deliverable – a site is available now, offers a suitable location for housing development now and there is a reasonable prospect that housing will be delivered on the site within five years from the date of adoption of the plan; and

developable – a site should be in a suitable location for housing development, and there should be a reasonable prospect that it will be available for and could be developed at a specific point in time.

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

Assessing suitability for housing

2.7.2 The guidance from the DCLG July 2007, paragraphs 37 and 38, states “a site is suitable for housing development if it offers a suitable location for development and would contribute to the creation of sustainable, mixed communities. Sites allocated in existing plans for housing or with planning permission for housing will generally be suitable, although it may be necessary to assess whether circumstances have changed which would alter their suitability. For other sites, the following factors should be considered to assess a site’s suitability for housing, now or in the future:

- Policy Restrictions – such as designations, existing planning, corporate or community strategy policy.
- Physical Problems or Limitations
- Potential Impacts – including effects upon landscape features and conservation.
- Environmental Conditions – which would be experienced by prospective residents”

Existing policy restrictions

2.7.3 Following the introduction of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, Local Planning Authorities were allowed to ‘save’ their Local Plan policies. These policies will be reviewed during the LDF process and replaced as Development Plan Documents are adopted. As a result, the following ‘saved’ policies from the adopted Local Plan (April 2001) preclude

development on some of the sites identified by the SHLAA. The policies concerned are:

- EM/2 The control of new development on existing and proposed employment sites
- EV/2 Green Wedges
- EV/3 Separation of settlements
- EV/4 Countryside character
- EV/11 Conservation Areas
- HS/9 Important open land

2.7.4 As a result the SHLAA findings are presented in two formats:

- (i) A list of sites assuming that existing 'saved' policies will not prevent development on any site (hereafter referred to as a 'policy off' scenario), and;
- (ii) A list of sites which discounts these sites where development would conflict with one or more of the above 'saved' policies (hereafter referred to as a 'policy on' scenario).

2.7.5 A list of affected sites, including details of which policy relates to which site, and a full description of each policy can be found in Appendix 7. Where appropriate the sites database was updated to include these potential policy constraints.

2.7.6 It should be noted that saved Local Plan policy EV/5 Development in the Countryside has not been applied as the DCLG Guidance clearly states in paragraph 21

".....the scope of the Assessment should not be narrowed down by existing policies designed to constrain development, so that the Local Planning Authority is in the best possible position when it comes to decide its strategy for delivering its housing objections".

Physical Problems or Limitations

2.7.7 Physical factors were assessed at the site survey stage. Those which could prevent or inhibit development, such as topography or Red Constraints were entered onto the sites database.

Potential Impacts

2.7.8 Consultations with Leicestershire County Council were undertaken to identify potential constraints to development. Consultations with the County Council Highways Department, Archaeology Department and the Environmental Resources Centre were all completed.

2.7.9 Where a potential constraint to development was identified advice was sought from the County Council to find ways to mitigate that constraint. The mitigation process is described in section 2.8 below. If an issue was not capable of being mitigated the site concerned was excluded from further consideration in the SHLAA. A list of the potential constraints to development (and how they can be overcome) can be found in Appendix 8.

Environmental Conditions

2.7.10 Environmental issues were assessed at the site survey stage. Any adverse factors likely to be experienced by prospective residents were recorded and entered onto the sites database. Sites which had no constraints, or constraints which could be mitigated, were considered suitable for housing.

Assessing Availability for Housing

2.7.11 The guidance from the DCLG, July 2007, paragraph 39 states, “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”.

2.7.12 For sites not submitted by the land owner, or a developer with an interest/option on the site, enquiries were made via the Land Registry to determine the ownership and any land issues. Where ownership could not be established the site was excluded from consideration. Following the Developer Panels, and enquiries to known land owners, the ownership details of some of these excluded sites were obtained and the sites re-instated.

2.7.13 For some sites the Land Registry search identified a complicated ownership profile. Land ownership complications can take extended periods of time to resolve and therefore sites with such complications are unlikely to become available. Sites which fall into the following categories cannot reasonably be expected to come forward for development:

- If a site has 10 or more registered titles, or
- If a site has five or more titles and part of the site is unregistered.

Sites which fell into these categories were excluded from further consideration.

2.7.14 If ownership of the whole or part of a site could be established (within the parameters set out at section 2.3), the owners were contacted to enquire whether their land was available for development. A copy of the letter sent and the reply form can be found in Appendix 9. Where sites had been submitted but it was not clear that the owner was aware of the submission, the person submitting the site was contacted to clarify whether the land was available.

2.7.15 In cases where there was no response from the registered land owner sites were excluded from further consideration.

2.7.16 In instances of multiple ownership where one or more of the owners failed to confirm that the site was available the following action was taken:

- Where a map (showing the boundaries of the different titles) was available the SHLAA site was redrawn to omit the area of unknown availability

- Where no map was available the whole site was excluded from consideration.

Assessing Timeframe for development – Owner Assessment

2.7.17 In order to determine the likely timeframe for development owners were asked when their land would become available for development. They were asked to place their property into one of four categories:

- 0-5 years
- 6-10 years
- 11+ years
- The land will not become available for development

Those sites which owners indicated would not become available for development were discounted from further consideration in the SHLAA. All remaining sites were considered to be available for housing development.

2.7.18 For those sites submitted by the owners themselves, this information had already been provided on the Site Suggestion Form (Appendix 9). These timeframes were noted and a comprehensive list of owner assessed timeframe for delivery was collated (Appendix 5).

Assessing Timeframe for Development – Harborough District Council

2.7.19 In addition to the Land Owner assessment of timeframe for delivery a separate assessment was undertaken by Harborough District Council to determine the most likely timeframe in which a site will be completed for residential development. This took into account:

- Whether the site was inside, outside or adjoining the settlement boundary
- Whether the site was occupied and
- Whether the site has policy restrictions/other constraints

A full list of the assessment criteria, and how they relate to specific timeframes, can be found in Appendix 5. Each site was assessed against these criteria and the appropriate timeframe for delivery was assigned.

2.7.20 Where the consultation with LCC Highways Authority had identified an access issue the site was moved into the next timeframe category to allow time for the constraint to be overcome. Also, where a site was particularly large, and it would be unfeasible to expect the site to be completed in the timeframe proposed (based on an expected build rate of 60 dwellings per annum), the site was moved into the next category. Finally, if access to a site was only available via another site the timeframe must be either equal to or greater than the site providing access.

2.7.21 The Harborough District Council assessment and the owner assessment were then compared against one another. The greater timeframe was taken to be the final timeframe for development; i.e. the period within which the site is expected to be developed. A table detailing the timeframe at each stage of the assessment for each site can be found in Appendix 5.

Assessing achievability for housing

2.7.22 “A site is considered achievable for development where there is a reasonable prospect that housing 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 sell the housing over a certain period” (DCLG, July 2007 para. 40). It will be affected by:

- Market factors
- Cost factors
- Delivery factors

2.7.23 In accordance with the Joint Leicester and Leicestershire Housing Market SHLAA Methodology paper, the achievability of sites was assessed via a series of Developer Panels, to cover each of the main settlements identified earlier. The composition of the Developer Panels and minutes of the meetings can be found in Appendix 10. All attendees were given the details of each site, including site name, site area, housing potential, initial estimated timeframe for delivery and details of current highways access. They were asked to comment in general terms on the information provided and to make site specific comments where necessary and it was felt to be appropriate.

2.7.24 The comments arising from the Developer Panels were recorded in the sites database. The Developer Panels confirmed that the assumed timeframe for development (which can be found in Appendix 5) was appropriate.

2.7.25 The Developer Panel suggested the need for a reduction in housing potential on each site to take into account the need for infrastructure, open space and community facilities. The amount of land required for infrastructure and amenities varies and will be greater on larger sites. As such a sliding scale was suggested and developed.

2.7.26 The formulae used to calculate housing potential are as follows:

Total area of the site x Density = Gross potential

$$\frac{\text{Total area of site x density}}{100} \times \text{Gross to Net Multiplier (\% of site)}$$

2.7.27 This is an approach that has been taken by other councils in the Leicester and Leicestershire Housing Market Area. The original formula was produced in Housing Land Availability Assessments: *Identifying appropriate land for housing development, (Draft practice guidance)* ODPM, December 2005. For this assessment an additional category, for sites over 35 hectares, was added. This approach, as well as the multipliers, were agreed by the SHLAA Developer Panel. The multipliers are as follows:

Table 3: Gross to Net multipliers for housing potential

Site Size	Gross to Net Multipliers (% of site)
Up to 0.4 ha	100
0.4 ha – 2 ha	82.5
2ha – 35 ha	62.5
Over 35 ha	50.0

2.7.28 As a result of this process each site has two housing potential figures; the potential if the entire site were developed (gross potential) and the potential if the need for infrastructure is accounted for (net potential). All figures referred to in this report are net potential. For a list of all sites with their gross and net potentials see Appendix 4.

2.7.29 With regard to the suggested housing densities for development, the Developer Panels suggested a density of 30 dwellings per hectare. However, former Housing Policy 5 in the Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland Structure Plan 1996-2016 sets minimum densities as described earlier in section 2.6. This methodology was agreed by all Local Authorities in the Leicestershire Housing Market Area as well as the Home Builders Federation, industry representatives and stakeholders.

2.7.30 The Developer Panel felt that recent economic climate has resulted in all sites having the same level of market interest. On the basis of this expert advice Harborough District Council has set the market interest at medium for all sites.

2.8 Overcoming Constraints

2.8.1 With all relevant constraints recorded on the database, each site was examined to determine what mitigation, if any, was required. A range of mitigation strategies were developed and their impact on the viability and the likely timeframe for delivery of the sites were taken into account. A list of the constraints that were overcome, and the mitigation used to overcome them, can be found in Appendix 8.

2.8.2 Sites with constraints that could not be mitigated were excluded from further consideration. This is known as a discounted site. If evidence is provided to overcome such a constraint, this will be taken into account when the SHLAA is reviewed.

2.9 Review of the Assessment

2.9.1 The remaining sites are considered suitable, deliverable and achievable. The total housing potential of all sites was calculated and an indicative trajectory of future growth produced. This shows the levels of housing that could be provided at various stages in the future and establishes that the District has sufficient five-year supply of specific deliverable sites. A summary of these figures can be found in Tables 4 and 5 and a site by site analysis can be found in Appendices 4 and 5.

Risk to delivery

2.9.2 Under the current housing market and economic circumstances it is possible that some sites will not come forward as anticipated. In preparing the SHLAA a worst case scenario has always been assumed regarding site delivery. In particular we have:

- Contacted all site owners to confirm that their sites are available and excluded those which are not
- Where there is multiple ownership of a site and all owners have not confirmed the site is available the site has been excluded
- Opted for the longer timeframe for development where conflicting assessments of delivery have been proposed
- Increased the likely timeframe for delivery to account for the extra time that may be required to mitigate any access issues
- Removed the parts of sites which are affected by Red Constraints to leave only developable land
- Consulted industry experts to ensure that sites are achievable
- Excluded those areas of sites that have planning permission for non-residential development.

2.9.3 These measures, already undertaken during the assessment, offer sufficient contingency to allow for the risk to delivery and ensure that no further reduction in site numbers is needed. In addition, it is likely that some sites which have been excluded from the assessment will become available for development. These additional sites will act to offset any risk to delivery of included sites. The SHLAA results will be reviewed as part of the LDF annual monitoring process to ensure that there is a continuing five-year supply of specific deliverable sites.

2.9.4 As the level of housing provided, even in a “policy on” scenario, exceeds the housing requirements specified in the adopted RSS, it is not necessary to proceed to the remaining two stages of SHLAA preparation as specified in the DCLG SHLAA Practice Guidance 2007, namely:

- Stage 9: Identifying and assessing the housing potential of broad locations, or
- Stage 10: Determining the housing potential of windfall sites.

3. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

3.1 Summary of findings

3.1.1

- 258 sites were assessed within the SHLAA.
- 149 sites were excluded from consideration due to Red Constraints, site size, ownership issues, fully developed sites, public open space and accessibility issues and were therefore not currently developable.
- 50 sites would be excluded in a “policy on” situation.
- 35 sites were found to be deliverable within 5 years.
- 74 sites were found to be developable in 6 or more years.

3.1.2 Table 4 provides a settlement-by-settlement breakdown of deliverable and developable housing potential. The table shows whether the potential is likely to be realised in the next 5 years, in 6 to 10 years or after 11 years. These figures represent a ‘policy on’ assessment of housing potential, i.e. sites whose development would be incompatible with any ‘saved policies’ from the Local Plan are not included.

Table 4: Net dwellings by settlement (policy on)

	Deliverable	Developable	Developable	TOTAL
	0-5 years	6-10 years	11+ years	
Market Harborough	351	3,920	266	4,537
Urban Fringe	2,830	1,024	740	4,594
Lutterworth	54	72	322	448
Broughton Astley	2,035	1,270	858	4,163
Rural Centres	18	215	0	233
TOTALS	5,288	6,501	2,186	13,975

3.1.3 Table 5 provides a ‘policy off’ assessment of housing potential in the district over the three time periods. No policy constraints have been taken into account and no sites have been excluded on the grounds that they contravene current local policy.

Table 5: Net dwellings by settlement (policy off)

	Deliverable	Developable	Developable	TOTAL
	0-5 years	6-10 years	11+ years	
Market Harborough	510	4,767	618	5,895
Urban Fringe	3,705	3,904	1,564	9,173
Lutterworth	401	772	322	1,495
Broughton Astley	2,035	1,270	858	4,163
Rural Centres	18	215	0	233
TOTALS	6,669	10,928	3,362	20,959

3.1.4 A full list of all 'included sites' is contained within Appendix 1. A site by site assessment of housing potential is provided in Appendix 4. A site by site assessment of the likely timeframe for development is provided in Appendix 5.

3.1.5 Table 6 summarises housing potential according to site size. This data is 'policy off' and so doesn't account for current local policy.

Table 6: Housing potential by site size (policy off)

Site Size	Number of Sites	Total Area (ha)	Total Dwellings
0-2 Hectares	43	35.07	1,101
2-35 Hectares	61	530.87	13,061
Over 35 Hectares	5	370.1	6,797

3.1.6 A full list of which sites fall into each category is contained within Appendix 6.

3.2 Conclusions

The District has an adequate source of sites to identify specific, deliverable sites that are ready for development for the next five years and beyond.

The Regional Spatial Strategy for the East Midlands (RSS8) has a requirement for the District of 5,964 dwellings from 2008 – 2026. The report indicates a potential over supply of 7976 dwellings over this period even in a 'policy on' scenario.

The SHLAA will be regularly reviewed through the LDF Annual Monitoring Report to ensure that the District is capable of sustaining a continuing five year supply and that the potential exists to meet longer term requirements.

GLOSSARY

Agricultural land of grade 1 & 2

Field surveys conducted by Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) that identifies the best and most versatile agricultural land.

Conservation area

An area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.

Core Strategy

Sets out the long-term spatial vision for the local planning authority's area, the spatial objectives and strategic policies to deliver that vision. The Core Strategy will have the status of a Development Plan Document.

Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG/CLG)

The national government department with responsibility for Local Government, Housing and Planning amongst other areas. This department sets guidance and policy for these areas, including Planning Policy Statements and Circulars giving national guidance on specific planning issues.

Development Plan

The series of documents that set out the policies and proposals for the development and use of land in an area. Comprising the Regional Spatial Strategy, and District's individual Local Plans/Local Development Frameworks.

Development Plan Document (DPD) These documents are statutory Local Development Documents that the local Planning Authority must prepare. They are the key development goals of the local development framework. Development Plan Documents include the core strategy and, where needed, area action plans. There will also be an adopted proposals map which illustrates the spatial extent of policies that must be prepared and maintained to accompany all DPDs.

Discounted Site: Sites with constraints that could not be mitigated and have been excluded from further consideration. If evidence is provided to overcome such a constraint, this will be taken into account when the SHLAA is reviewed.

Draft East Midlands Regional Plan

The term Regional Plan is short hand for Regional Spatial Strategy. Following legislation passed by Government in 2004, Regional Spatial Strategies replace the old Regional Planning Guidance. The Regional Planning Body in this case the East Midlands Regional Assembly formulates the regional plan to provide a spatial framework to inform the preparation of the LDF and will form part of the Statutory Development Plan.

Flood Zones 2 and 3

Flood zones are areas defined by the Environment Agency that relate to past levels of river or coastal flooding and are related to future potential risk of flooding. Flood zones 2 and 3 relate to areas of land that are most often flooded, such as existing flood plains.

GIS System

An information system that integrates, stores, edits, analyses, shares, and displays geographic information. GIS applications are tools that allow users to create interactive queries, analyse spatial information and edit data and maps.

Greenfield

Greenfield land or sites are areas of land that have not been previously developed. Such land would include public open space, playing fields, allotments and agricultural land.

Green Wedge

Green wedges comprise the open areas around and between parts of settlements, which maintain the distinction between the countryside and built up areas, prevent the coalescence (merging) of adjacent places and can also provide recreational opportunities.

Housing Market Area (HMA)

The geographical area in which the majority of the employed population both live and work, and where most of those changing home without changing employment choose to stay.

Home Builders Federation (HBF)

The Home Builders Federation is the principal trade organisation for private sector house builders and voice of the home building industry in England.

Leicestershire and Rutland Historic Environment Record (HER)

The Historic Environment Record (abbreviated HER) was produced by Leicestershire County Council and is primarily used as part of the development control process. Planning applications are routinely assessed using the HER to determine whether they are likely to affect archaeological remains.

Limits to Development

Limits to development identify the area within which development proposals would be acceptable, subject to complying with other policies contained in the Development Plan. They seek to prevent development from gradually extending into the surrounding countryside.

Listed Building

A building of special architectural or historic interest. Listed buildings are graded I, II* or II with grade I being the highest. Listing includes the interior as well as the exterior of the building, and any buildings or permanent structures (e.g. wells within its curtilage).

Local Development Framework (LDF)

The portfolio of documents that make up the District level element of the development Plan. Together these documents will provide the framework for delivering the spatial planning strategy for a local authority area and may also include Local Development Orders and Simplified Planning Zones.

Local Plan

The existing adopted statutory plan for the District which sets out the detailed policies for development and its control and proposals for particular areas/sites. As DPDs are adopted they will replace the relevant sections of the Local Plan.

Open space

All space of public value, including public landscaped areas, playing fields, parks and play areas, and also including not just land, but also areas of water such as rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs, which can offer opportunities for sport and recreation or can also act as a visual amenity and a haven for wildlife.

Planning Advisory Service

The Planning Advisory Service (PAS) is a Government funded service that aims to help Local Planning Authorities understand the new planning system and provide a more efficient planning service. It also provides background information on planning legislation for others, such as the public, developers etc.

Planning Policy Statement (PPS)

Issued by central government these statements replace the existing Planning Policy Guidance notes. They aim to provide greater clarity and remove from national policy advice on practical implementation, which is better expressed as guidance rather than policy.

Registered Social Landlord (RSL)

Technical name for a body registered with the Housing Corporation. Most Housing Associations are RSLs. They own or manage some 1.4 million affordable homes, both social rented and intermediate.

Site Allocations Development Plan Document

This is a Development Plan Document that identifies land for specific purposes, for example, identifying land for housing and employment.

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI's)

A site identified under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000) as an area of special interest by reason of any of its flora, fauna, geological or physiographical features.

Structure Plan

An old-style development plan, which sets out strategic planning policies and forms the basis for detailed policies in local plans. These plans will continue to operate for a time after the commencement of the new development plan

system, due to transitional provisions under planning reform. The plan is produced by the County Council and sets out key strategic policies, e.g. the number of houses that need to be built in the District, as a framework for the Local Plan.

Urban Capacity Study (UCS)

Studies undertaken to establish how much additional housing can be accommodated within urban areas.

Windfall sites

Windfall sites are those that have not been identified in advance in development plans.

List of Sources

Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing, DCLG (November 2006)

Regional Spatial Strategy for the East Midlands (RSS8), Government Office for the East Midlands (March 2005)

Leicester and Leicestershire Housing Market Area SHLAA Methodology Paper (January 2008)

Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments: Practice Guidance, DCLG (July 2007)

Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment and Development Plan Document Preparation, Planning Advisory Service (July 2008)

Urban Capacity Study, Harborough District Council (2003)

Harborough District Local Plan, Harborough District Council April 2001

Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland Structure Plan 1996 to 2016, Leicestershire County Council (March 2005)

Housing Land Availability Assessments: Identifying appropriate land for housing development, (Draft practice guidance), ODPM (December 2005)