

# Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment - Methodology



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## What is a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment? 1

### 1 What is a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment?

**1.1** A Strategic Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) identifies potential housing sites in a specific area that may be available and capable of development within a set timeframe. 'As a minimum, it should aim to identify sufficient specific sites for at least the first 10 years of plan, from the anticipated date of its adoption, and ideally for longer than the whole 15 year plan period' (Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments Practice Guidance, CLG, 2007). The timeframe of the SHLAA will be set out towards the end of this consultation document on the methodology.

**1.2** The Assessment should be led by the relevant local authority, but undertaken in partnership with other interested parties including developers and land owners.

**1.3** The purpose of this study is to inform policy decisions on development locations to meet housing targets for Stafford Borough Council set out through the Regional Spatial Strategy.

**1.4** Stafford Borough Council has begun production of the Core Strategy document, as part of the new Development Plan, which will identify the spatial strategy for future development of the Borough. The SHLAA will be used as part of the evidence base for guiding the spatial strategy.

**1.5** Once completed the SHLAA will be kept up-to-date as part of the Annual Monitoring Report, in order to update the housing trajectory and the five-year housing supply of specific deliverable sites.

**1.6** Practice Guidance on SHLAA titled Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments: Practice Guidance (known hereafter as the Practice Guidance) was published by Communities and Local Government in July 2007.

**1.7** The approach set out in this consultation document describes the methodology advocated in the Practice Guidance which has been applied to the Stafford Borough area. Where work has been carried out before publication of the Practice Guidance, this has been highlighted, along with how it will fit into the future work programme.

## 2 Core Requirements of a SHLAA

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**2.1** The Practice Guidance sets out the requirements for producing a robust SHLAA. An Assessment should, as a minimum, follow the core outputs in Table 2.1 and the process in Table 2.2.

**Table 2.1 SHLAA Process Core Outputs**

1	A list of sites, cross-referenced to maps showing locations and boundaries of specific sites (and showing broad locations, where necessary)
2	Assessment of the deliverability / developability of each site (i.e. in terms of its suitability, availability and achievability) to determine when an identified site is realistically expected to be developed)
3	Potential quantity of housing that could be delivered on each identified site or within each identified broad location (where necessary) or on windfall sites (where justified)
4	Constraints on the delivery of identified sites
5	Recommendations on how these constraints could be overcome and when

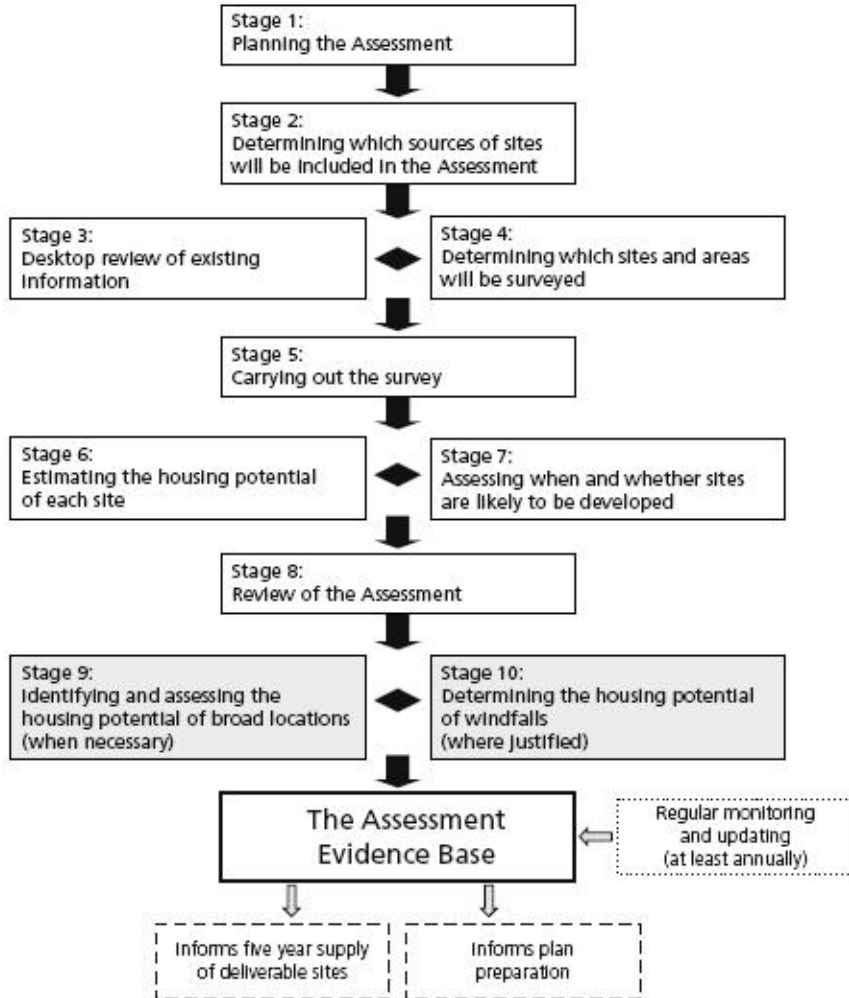
**Table 2.2 SHLAA Process Checklist**

1	The survey and Assessment should involve key stakeholders including house builders, social landlords, local property agents and local communities. Other relevant agencies may include the Housing Corporation and English Partnerships (a requirement in areas where they are particularly active)
2	The methods, assumptions, judgments and findings should be discussed and agreed upon throughout the process in an open and transparent way, explained in the Assessment report. The report should include an explanation as to why particular sites or areas have been excluded from the Assessment

The methodology given in the Practice Guidance is separated into 10 stages.

## Core Requirements of a SHLAA 2

Figure 2.1 SHLAA Methodology



## 3 SHLAA Methodology

### 3 SHLAA Methodology

#### Stage 1: Planning the Assessment

**3.1** The Practice Guidance outlines the following matters that should be addressed at this first stage:

- Whether it is possible to carry out the Assessment with other local planning authorities in the housing market area
- Whether there is an existing housing market partnership that could be used as the forum to take forward the assessment and, if not, whether it could now be initiated
- The resources for the project - within the local planning authority and the partnership
- The composition and skills by any project team, who will be responsible for what and who makes decisions
- The management and scrutiny arrangements, including who is responsible for what and who makes the decisions
- How will the quality of the project work be ensured
- The work programme and project milestones, taking into account resources, timings of the relevant plans or assessments of five years supply of specific deliverable sites, of other evidence gathering exercises, such as the employment land review

**3.2** The Assessment is being led by the Forward Planning team at Stafford Borough Council to accord with the timing of its LDF evidence base, rather than with other local planning authorities in the Housing Market Area. While there is no existing housing market partnership, Stafford Borough will engage with local developers and agents to progress the Assessment.

**3.3** Stafford Borough have carried out some work in advance of the publication of the Practice Guidance, carrying out an assessment of the housing land availability of each settlement with a Residential Development Boundary (RDB), as identified in the Stafford Borough Local Plan 2001. The settlements are listed below. with a \* indicates areas effected by Green Belt designations.

Adbaston	Aston by Stone	Barlaston*	Barlaston Park*
Blythe Bridge*	Bradley	Brocton*	Brocton A34*
Church Eaton	Clayton*	Cotes Heath*	Creswell
Croxton	Derrington	Eccleshall	Fulford*
Gnosall	Great Bridgeford	Great Haywood	Haughton
Hilderstone*	Hixon	Hopton	Hyde Lea
Little Haywood & Colwich	Meir Heath & Rough Close*	Milford*	Milwich
Norbury	Oulton*	Ranton	Salt
Seighford	Stafford	Stone	Swynnerton*
Tittensor*	Trentham / Dairyfields*	Weston	Woodseaves

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Yarnfield*		
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**3.4** Stafford Borough Council is currently consulting on the methodology in advance of publishing the initial findings, in April / May 2008, to establish the implementation and delivery of housing sites. The SHLAA is scheduled to be completed by Autumn 2008.

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

#### Sites in the Planning Process

- Land allocated (or with permission) for employment or other land uses which are no longer required for those uses
- Existing housing allocations and site development briefs
- Unimplemented / outstanding planning permissions for housing
- Planning permissions for housing that are under construction

#### Sites not Currently in the Planning Process

Examples:

- Vacant and derelict land and buildings
- Surplus public sector land
- Land in non-residential use which may be suitable for re-development for housing, such as commercial buildings or car parks, including as part of mixed-use development
- Additional housing opportunities in established residential areas, such as under-used garage blocks
- Large scale redevelopment and re-design of existing residential areas
- Sites in rural settlements and rural exception sites
- Urban extensions
- New free standing settlements

**3.5** Stafford Borough Councils annual Housing Monitor: Land for New Homes will provide information regarding sites in the planning process. The SHLAA will assess the sites not currently in the planning process.

#### Question 1

Do you have any comments on the sources of sites to be included in the Assessment?

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### Stage 3: Desktop review of existing information

**3.6** Stafford Borough Council's annual Housing Monitor: Land for New Homes will provide information regarding sites in the planning process. The SHLAA will assess the sites not currently in the planning process.

**3.7** During the process of identifying housing potential, the council will consider physical and environmental constraints such as areas of flood risk, the Green Belt areas, Tree Preservation Orders, the utilities network, the historic environment and contaminated land where known.

**3.8** In order to consider housing potential in Stafford and Stone town centres, an assessment will be carried out concerning 'Living Over the Shop'.

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

**3.9** Prior to the Practice Guidance being published in July 2007 the Council began carrying out a survey to consider all sites within the Borough with a Residential Development Boundary (RDB), as well as sites on the edge of these boundaries. However sites beyond RDB's in the Green Belt have not been surveyed or assessed, due to PPG2 National policy.

See table 3.1 for the sources of housing supply considered as part of the Assessment.

**3.10** The Council, at the initial stage of carrying out the survey identified sites down to single plots within the RDB's.

#### Question 2

Do you agree with the areas / settlements which have already been surveyed?

#### Question 3

Do you think any additional areas should be surveyed?

### Stage 5: Carrying out the survey

**3.11** Initial site surveys, within and on the edge of RDB's were carried out between April and August 2007.

#### Question 4

Do you think sites identified by representees outside RDB's should be assessed?



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**3.12** Further investigation into site delivery, as outlined in the Practice Guidance is ongoing and in particular will be considered during the consultation in April / May 2008.

### Stage 6: Estimating the housing potential of each site

**3.13** The Practice Guidance recommends using existing or emerging local plan policies to guide the approach to determining housing densities. Policies in the Stafford Borough Local Plan 2001 do not refer directly to a particular density but refer to Government Policy. Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing (2006) states that whilst Local Planning Authorities may set a range of densities in local planning documents, 30 dwellings per hectare (net) should be used as a national indicative minimum to guide local development and decision making, until evidenced base local density policies are in place through the LDF process.

**3.14** Table 3.1 sets out how detailed housing yields for each type of location will be derived.

Source of Housing Supply	Survey Approach	Assessing Yield
1. Sub-division of existing dwellings	Use past rates as a guide due to difficulty in determining likely yield from survey	Analysis of past yield from housing supply database from 2001 - 2007
2. Flats over shops	Use past rates as guide due to potential sources being relatively small and it is difficult to determine likely yield from survey	Analysis of past yield from housing supply database from 2001 - 2007
3. Empty homes	Use past rates as a guide using Council Tax data	Analysis of past yield from 2006 - 2007
4. Previously developed vacant and derelict land & buildings	Survey based search for land and buildings not used.	Possible redevelopment sites will be assessed using density assumptions.
5. Intensification of existing areas	Survey based. Analysis of areas with potential, such as large gardens	Capacity estimates based on surrounding character and any nearby intensification development
6. Redevelopment of existing housing	Consider programmes of Housing Associations such as Stafford and Rural Homes	If such areas are found to be a potential source, method for assessing yield as above for intensification.
7. Redevelopment of car parks	Survey based analysis, applicable to all survey areas	Each site to be assessed individually based on surrounding character.
8. Conversion of commercial buildings	Source including if knowledge of current proposals or know that the premises are under used	Each site to be assessment individually based on surrounding character.

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Source of Housing Supply	Survey Approach	Assessing Yield
9. Review of existing housing allocations in Plans	Consider all sites without detailed planning permissions.	Reassess previous figures in Local Plan
10. Review of other existing allocations in Plans	Consider all allocations without a start detailed planning permissions.	Each site to be assessed individually based on surrounding character, taking into account housing development on similar sites
11. Vacant land not previously used	Consider all vacant land not previously used within RDB's	Each site to be assessed individually based on surrounding character, taking into account housing development on similar sites
12. Redevelopment of existing employment and other uses	Consider in light of Employment Land Review	Each site to be assessed individually based on surrounding character and size of site. Further research into use / future plans may be required
13. Unimplemented / outstanding planning permissions	Calculate level of unimplemented planning permission. Assess likelihood of sites being developed through consultation with landowner / agent	Use 'Land for New Homes 2007' to calculate level of unimplemented planning permissions in different locations across the Borough
14. Sites outside existing settlements	Invite further submissions from landowners, agents, developers	Further survey of submitted sites may be required as part of the draft SHLAA

#### Question 5

Do you have any comments on how to assess the potential housing capacity of locations?

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

3.15 This is divided into 4 stages:

- Stage A: Assessing suitability for housing;
- Stage B: Assessing availability for housing;
- Stage C: Assessing achievability for housing; and
- Stage D: Overcoming constraints

#### Stage A: Assessing Suitability for Housing

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**3.16** For a location to be considered suitable for housing, it must offer a suitable location for development that would 'contribute to the creation of sustainable, mixed communities' (Practice Guidance, p16). It is for this reason that the initial stage of surveys only assessed locations within and on the edge of Residential Development Boundaries.

**3.17** In order to decide whether a location contributes towards sustainable, mixed communities, various factors will be taken into account, including:

- Current policy restrictions
- Physical problems and limitations, such as flooding, drainage
- Potential impacts
- Environmental conditions

### Question 6

Do you have any comments on the factors that will be taken into account when assessing potential contribution of proposed sites towards achieving sustainable, mixed communities?

## Stage B: Assessing Availability for Housing

**3.18** A site will be considered available if there is an extant unimplemented planning permission on the site or if the land owner has expressed an interest in developing the site through the LDF process.

### Question 7

Do you consider this definition of availability to be appropriate?

## Stage C: Assessing Achievability for Housing

**3.19** This stage will require views from local house builders and property agents in order to assess the economic viability of the site. A more detailed valuation will be required on particular sites.

### Question 8

Do you have any comments on assessing the availability and achievability of sites for housing?

## Stage D: Overcoming Constraints

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**3.20** This stage will involve discussions with infrastructure agencies and stakeholders to evaluate whether any identified site constraints can be overcome through investment or appropriate policies in the LDF.

#### Question 9

Are you aware of any constraints adversely affecting the development potential?

#### Stage 8: Review of the Assessment

**3.21** Consultation on the SHLAA methodology will be used to provide further information to support the consultation process in April / May 2008 on initial survey findings, which will be used to identify which sites are deliverable and should be considered in the LDF process. The final SHLAA will be produced, drawing upon all of the information regarding site details and overall figures.

**3.22** The Practice Guidance recommends that a risk assessment is made as to whether sites will come forward, as anticipated. If, having undertaken such a risk assessment it is apparent that insufficient sites have been identified then further sites may be sought or assumptions altered.

**3.23** Following the draft SHLAA, if there is evidence to suggest that there are insufficient sites available it may be required to identify broad locations for future housing growth (step 9), even though specific sites are yet to be identified, or application of a windfall allowance (step 10). Further information on these final steps can be found below.

#### Stage 9: Identifying and assessing the housing potential of broad locations (where necessary)

**3.24** The Practice Guidance states that broad locations are areas where housing development is considered feasible and will be encouraged, but where sites cannot yet be identified subject to the LDF process.

**3.25** This stage will only be required should insufficient sites be identified through the draft SHLAA. Should this stage be progressed, options will be considered through broad locations identified as part of the Core Strategy production and evidence base.

#### Stage 10: Determining the housing potential of windfalls (where justified)

**3.26** PPS3 requires the supply of land for housing to be based upon specific sites and, where necessary, broad locations, unless there are local circumstances to justify a windfall allowance. Consideration of whether a windfall allowance will be justified will be made later in the SHLAA process, if required.

#### Question 10

Do you agree that consideration of justifying a windfall allowance (if required) should be made later in the process?

## 4 Next Steps

**4.1** This document on the SHLAA methodology is being consulted in advance of the initial findings, which will be published alongside The Plan for Stafford Borough - Delivering the Development Strategy in April / May 2008. Please respond to this SHLAA methodology no later than make your comments by 14th March 2008.