



## West Oxfordshire SHELAA methodology 2016

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## **I. Introduction**

- 1.1 This report sets out the methodology for the West Oxfordshire Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) 2016 and takes account of the Government's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Planning Practice Guidance 'Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment'<sup>1</sup>.
- 1.2 The purpose of the SHELAA is to establish realistic assumptions about the availability, suitability and the likely economic viability of land to meet the identified needs for residential and economic development over the plan period.
- 1.3 Assessments should:
- Identify sites and broad locations with potential for development;
  - Assess their development potential; and
  - Assess their suitability for development and the likelihood of development coming forward (the availability and achievability) including when they are likely to be developed.
- 1.4 The SHELAA is a key part of the evidence base for the Local Plan and is identified as a specific requirement in the NPPF.
- 1.5 The SHELAA will identify the choices available to meet the objectively assessed housing needs for the District up to 2031, including land for travelling communities, as well as sufficient land to meet the needs for economic development.
- 1.6 Whilst the SHELAA will identify land, it will not allocate land for development. This is the role of the development plan which is currently the West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 and which will be replaced by the Local Plan 2031. The SHELAA will inform proposed main modifications to the Local Plan 2031 which are due to be published in autumn 2016.
- 1.7 The following sections of this report set out the proposed approach of the Council in undertaking the SHELAA taking into account government guidance.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://planningguidance.communities.gov.uk/blog/guidance/housing-and-economic-land-availability-assessment/>

## 2. The Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment process

2.1 The Council's proposed approach is consistent with the overall approach set out in the Planning Practice Guidance 'Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment'. This is summarised in Figure 2.1 below.

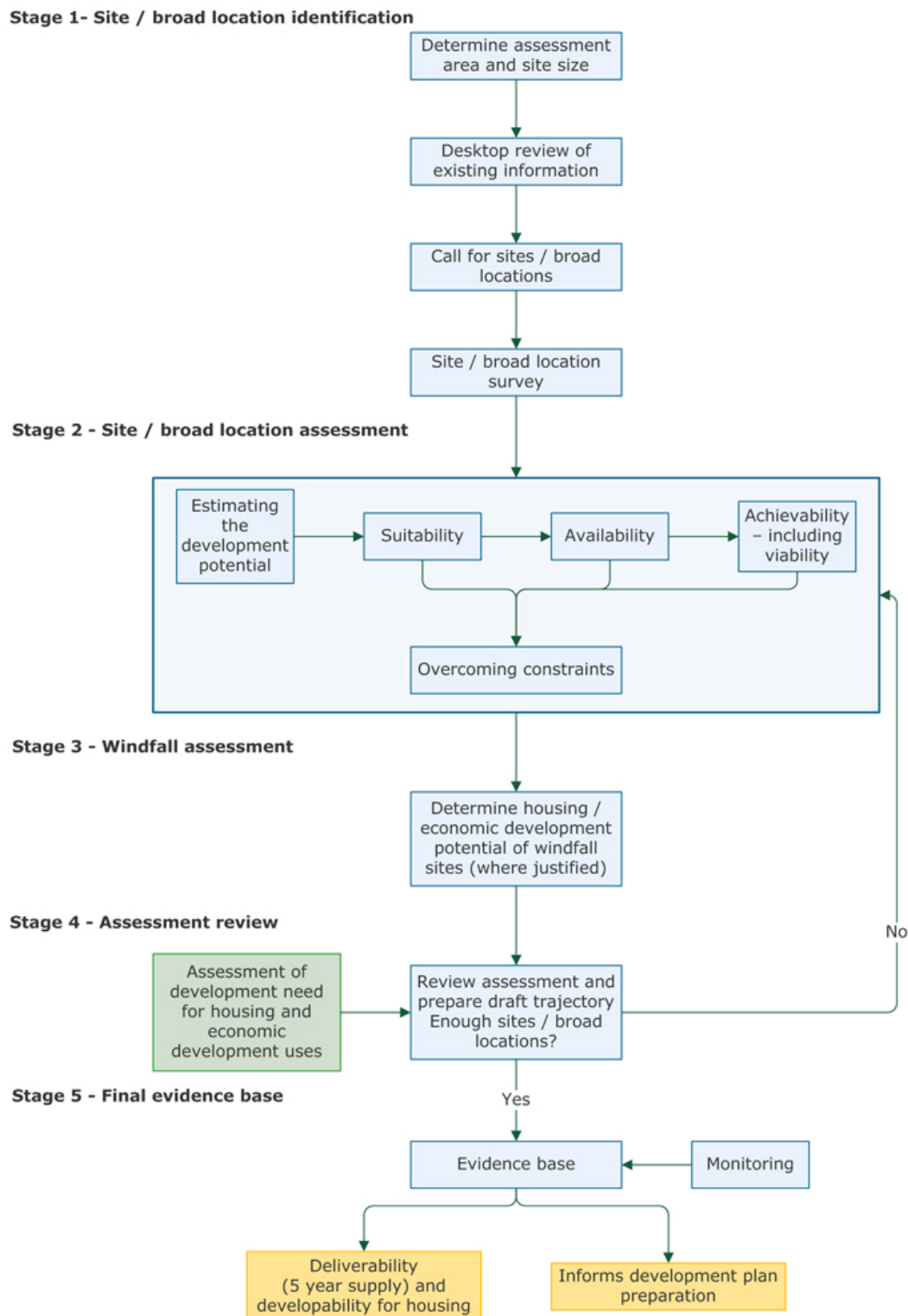


Figure 2.1 – Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment flowchart

### 3. Stage I- Site / broad location identification

- 3.1 The first step is to identify the sites/broad locations to be assessed. To do this it is necessary to decide on the size of the study area, the size of site that will be assessed and to then identify sites through various potential sources of information including a desktop review and 'call for sites' exercise. The final element is to undertake an initial site survey.

#### *The Study Area*

- 3.2 The planning practice guidance suggests that this should be the housing market area and functional economic market area. However, West Oxfordshire falls within a wider housing market area that covers the whole of Oxfordshire and also within an economic area that extends beyond the District boundaries.
- 3.3 For reasons of practicality the SHELAA will therefore cover West Oxfordshire District only. This is consistent with the approach taken by the other Oxfordshire local authorities.

#### *Size of Site to be Assessed*

- 3.4 The 2016 SHELAA will assess the following:
- **For housing, sites/broad locations capable of accommodating five or more dwellings;**
  - **For economic development uses, sites/broad locations of 0.25 ha or above (or capable of accommodating 500m<sup>2</sup> or more floorspace)**

- 3.5 The Council's previous housing land availability assessments<sup>2</sup> have disregarded some sites on the basis of their relatively isolated rural locations and not subjected them to detailed assessment. The 2016 SHELAA will assess in detail all sites that are submitted to the Council to ensure a comprehensive assessment.

#### *Identifying Sites/Broad Locations*

- 3.6 In preparing the SHELAA (2016) the Council will draw on a range of information sources including previous land availability assessments, a review of desktop information (e.g. maps, aerial photographs, planning records/representations) as well as a 'call for sites' exercise.
- 3.7 In terms of the desktop review, there are many sources of potential development sites. Some of these sources are identified already within the planning process, including sites with planning permission.
- 3.8 There are also sites which are not yet identified within the planning process but monitoring data has indicated that they have been a source of additional housing in the past.

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<sup>2</sup> [Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment 2014](#)

3.9 Table 3.1 identifies the different types of potential site to be included in the SHELAA and also potential data sources to identify these sites and assist in the assessment.

Type of site	Potential data source
Existing housing and economic development allocations and site development briefs not yet with 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
Land in the local authority's ownership	Local authority records
Surplus and likely to become surplus public sector land	<a href="#">National register of public sector land</a> Engagement with strategic plans of other public sector bodies such as County Councils, Central Government, National Health Service, Police, Fire Services, utilities providers, statutory undertakers
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 House Condition Survey National Land Use Database Commercial property databases (e.g. estate agents and property agents)  Valuation Office database  Active engagement with sector
Additional opportunities in 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

Type of site	Potential data source
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	
Sites in and adjoining villages or rural settlements and rural exception sites	
Potential urban extensions and new free standing settlements	

**Table 3.1 – Sources of potential development sites**

- 3.10 Existing sites already assessed by the Council will be re-considered including where applicable an assessment of whether any specific constraints previously identified are capable of being overcome.
- 3.11 The Council has also undertaken a ‘call for sites’ with landowners, developers and other interested parties including town and parish councils invited to put forward land they consider might be suitable for housing and/or economic development.
- 3.12 All new sites submitted to or identified by the Council will be subject to a full assessment to determine their potential suitability for housing or economic development.

*Initial Site Survey*

- 3.13 All sites/broad locations that have been identified will be subjected to an initial site survey which will consider factors such as land use, adjoining uses, topography, potential environmental constraints etc. A copy of the site survey form is included at Appendix 2.

*Stakeholder Engagement*

- 3.14 The Council proposes to involve stakeholders during the SHELAA process in accordance with the partnership approach suggested in the guidance. The Council invites landowners, developers, neighbourhood planning forums, Parish Councils and other interested parties to submit site bids which are fed into the SHELAA process on a regular basis.
- 3.15 The study will be conducted by officers of West Oxfordshire District Council, primarily the Planning Policy team. Other resources may be drawn upon to inform the detailed assessment of sites, such as consulting in house conservation and design officers or the County Highways Authority.

## 4. Stage 2 – Site / Broad location assessment

- 4.1 The second stage is to assess the development potential of each of the sites/broad locations identified during Stage 1. This involves consideration of a number of factors including density, suitability, availability and achievability (including whether a site is likely to be economically viable). Further explanation is provided below.

### **Density**

- 4.2 In terms of density, regard will be had to the West Oxfordshire Design Guide as well as existing schemes within the locality.
- 4.3 Regard will also be had to existing development schemes within the locality as a potential steer for the type of development that may be considered acceptable. Adjustments will be made to take account of any site-specific considerations.
- 4.4 The development potential / site capacity is an important factor affecting the economic viability and suitability of sites for development and will be considered alongside the assessment of achievability and suitability.

### **Suitability**

- 4.5 Sites are considered suitable where they offer a suitable location for development and would contribute to the creation of sustainable, mixed communities.
- 4.6 Through the desktop exercise and site surveys a range of information will be collected with regard to the suitability of identified sites for housing and economic development. Factors to be considered include:
- Physical site constraints
  - Potential site impacts e.g. heritage, landscape
  - Appropriateness and likely market attractiveness
  - Policy considerations e.g. Green Belt, AONB
  - Environmental/amenity impacts/conditions which would be experienced by prospective residents and neighbouring areas

### **Availability**

- 4.7 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. Where there is a potential issue regarding availability, consideration will be given to how this might reasonably be overcome. Regard will also be had to any previous planning history e.g. unimplemented planning permissions to help determine the likelihood of development coming forward.
- 4.8 In assessing identified sites the Council will seek to identify landowners where this is not already identified.

## **Achievability**

- 4.9 A site is considered achievable where there is a reasonable prospect that housing will be developed on the site at a particular point in time.
- 4.10 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 period.

## **Overcoming constraints**

- 4.11 There are many constraints to development in West Oxfordshire by virtue of the high quality natural and historic built environment, as well as limited transport, community and utilities infrastructure. Where constraints have been identified, the assessment will consider what action would be needed to potentially overcome them. Actions might include investment in new infrastructure or environmental improvements.

## **Timescale and rate of development**

- 4.12 The information collated on suitability, availability, achievability and potential constraints will be used to assess the likely timescale within which suitable sites could be brought forward for development.

### **Deliverable Sites (Years 1-5)**

To be considered deliverable, sites should be available now, offer a suitable location for development now, and be achievable with a realistic prospect that housing will be delivered on the site within five years and in particular that development of the site is viable.

Sites with planning permission should be considered deliverable until permission expires, unless there is clear evidence that schemes will not be implemented within five years, for example they will not be viable, there is no longer a demand for the type of units or sites have long term phasing plans.

Deliverable sites for housing could include those that are allocated for housing in the development plan and sites with planning permission (outline or full that have not been implemented) unless there is clear evidence that schemes will not be implemented within 5 years.

Planning permission or allocation within a development plan is not a prerequisite for a site being deliverable in terms of the 5 year supply. If there are no significant constraints to overcome, such as infrastructure, sites not allocated within the plan or without planning permission can be capable of being delivered within a five year timeframe.

### **Developable (Years 6 – 11 & 12- 15)**

To be considered developable, sites should be in a suitable location for housing development and there should be a reasonable prospect that the site is available and could be viably developed at the point envisaged.



It is important to consider when in the plan period such sites or broad locations will come forward so that they can be identified on the development trajectory. These sites or broad locations may include large development opportunities such as urban extensions or new settlements.

## **5. Stage 3 – Windfall assessment**

- 5.1 Windfall developments are essentially speculative developments on sites that are not known to the Council and have not been allocated within the Local Plan. Such sites can be previously developed (brownfield) sites where the existing use is perhaps no longer viable or the site has become vacant or undeveloped Greenfield sites that the owner wishes to bring forward for development.
- 5.2 The supply of land for housing should be based on specific sites (and broad locations) and allowances for windfalls in the first 5 years of housing land supply should only be included where there is compelling evidence for their inclusion<sup>3</sup>.
- 5.3 The Council's Housing Land Supply Position Statement (February 2015) includes a modest windfall allowance of 130 dwellings in the 5-year period 2015 – 2020. In his preliminary findings published in December 2015, the Local Plan Inspector accepted this level of provision plus a further 125 dwellings per annum from windfall developments in the remaining plan period 2020 – 2031 (i.e. 1,505 dwellings from windfall in total).

## **6. Stage 4 - Assessment Review**

- 6.1 The land availability assessment will feed into an indicative trajectory for the delivery of residential and economic development to show how much development is anticipated and at what time it is likely to be delivered.

## **7. Stage 5 – Final evidence base**

- 7.1 The Planning Practice Guidance sets out a standard set of outputs which should be produced as a result of the land availability assessment.
- 7.2 These will be presented on the Council's website and incorporated into relevant documents where applicable and include:
  - A list of all sites or broad locations considered, cross referenced to their locations on maps
  - An assessment of each site or broad location, in terms of its suitability for development, availability and achievability including whether the site / broad location is viable, to determine whether a site is realistically expected to be developed and when.

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<sup>3</sup> Para 48 of NPPF

- Detail on those sites which are considered to be realistic candidates for development and clearly evidenced and justified reasons why others have been discounted.
- The potential type and quantity of development that could be delivered on each site / broad location, including a reasonable estimate of build out rates, setting out how any barriers to delivery could be overcome and when.
- An indicative trajectory for anticipated development and consideration of associated risks.

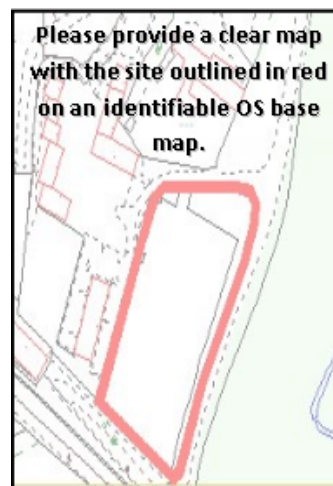
7.3 All information relating to past and on-going land availability assessments will be made available on the [Council's website](#) and through annual monitoring reports where applicable.

## Appendix I- Call for Sites Form

## West Oxfordshire District Council SHLAA Site Submission Form 2016

Your Details	Agent Details (if applicable)	
Name:	.....	.....
Address:	.....	.....
	.....	.....
Postcode	.....	.....
Organisation:	.....	.....
	.....	.....
Tel (Home):	.....	.....
Tel (Business):	.....	.....
Email:	.....	.....

Site Details	
Site Address:	.....
	.....
Postcode	.....
OS Grid Ref	.....
Site Area (ha)	.....
Current use	.....
	.....
Proposed Use	.....



### Supporting Statement

Please provide further detail as appropriate in a supporting statement which identifies:

- Further site details such as on site ownership, relevant planning history, current or proposed access points etc.
- How many residential dwellings or how much commercial floorspace (m<sup>2</sup>) could be accommodated on site
- Any environmental or other constraints to development
- When the site will be available for development
- How the site would deliver sustainable development.

**Please note that each individual site must be submitted on a separate form.**

**Further forms are available online at [www.westoxon.gov.uk/shlaa](http://www.westoxon.gov.uk/shlaa)**

**If you require a Word version of this form please [email us](mailto:planning.policy@westoxon.gov.uk).**

**Please send completed forms to:**

Planning Policy Team, West Oxfordshire District Council, Elmfield, New Yatt Road, Witney OX28 1PB

Or Email [planning.policy@westoxon.gov.uk](mailto:planning.policy@westoxon.gov.uk)

Telephone No. 01993 861667

## Appendix 2 – Site Assessment Form

<b>Site Ref</b>		<b>Location</b>	
<b>Area (Ha)</b>		<b>Ownership</b>	
<b>Settlement</b>		<b>Source</b>	
<b>Parish</b>		<b>No. Dwellings</b>	

**Site Description**

<b>Previously Developed?</b>	
<b>Current Use</b>	
<b>Surrounding land use and character</b>	
<b>Site Access and Highways</b>	
<b>Accessibility by foot and cycle</b>	
<b>Accessibility by Public Transport</b>	

<b>Infrastructure Constraints</b>	
<b>Ground Conditions (Stability / contamination / pollution)</b>	
<b>Landscape Impact</b>	
<b>Ecological impact</b>	
<b>Trees (TPOs)</b>	
<b>Physical Constraints (eg. Prow)</b>	
<b>Heritage assets</b>	
<b>Residential Amenity</b>	
<b>Other Policy Considerations</b>	
<b>Suitability</b>	