



Newark & Sherwood Local Development Framework

Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment

Draft Methodology

April 2025

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1 Introduction

Scope of the Methodology Report

- 1.1 Newark & Sherwood District Council are working towards the preparation of a new Local Plan. Once adopted, the Local Plan will guide future growth and development in the district and supersede the current Local Development Framework.
- 1.2 This report sets out Newark & Sherwood District Council's ('NSDC') methodology for undertaking the Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment ('SHELAA'). This methodology is proposed to update and replace the previous Nottingham Outer Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment Methodology which was originally produced in 2008.
- 1.3 The methodology has also been updated to reflect changes to national planning policy.

What is a Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment?

- 1.4 The National Planning Policy Framework ('NPPF') requires strategic policy-making authorities to have a clear understanding of the land available in their area for housing and economic development uses through the preparation of a Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment ('SHELAA').
- 1.5 The overall purpose of the availability assessment is to identify a future supply of land that is:
 - Suitable for housing or economic development uses;
 - Available for development now or at a point during the plan period; and
 - Achievable (i.e. likely to be a viable development during the plan period and at the point envisaged).
- 1.6 The process of undertaking the SHELAA is intended to act effectively as a baseline and ensure that all land is consistently assessed as part of the Local Plan preparation process. It will identify which sites are the most suitable and deliverable for a particular use and the Council will also end up with a list of sites considered as the 'reasonable alternatives' for development.
- 1.7 The SHELAA does not in itself determine whether a site should be allocated for development in the Local Plan nor does it guarantee planning permission would be granted or give any weight as part of a planning application. It is just one of the key evidence base documents utilised in addressing anticipated future growth and Plan preparation.
- 1.8 The SHELAA is a 'live' document and any information is correct at the time of publication. Any subsequent changes, such as the results of Local Nature Recovery Strategy, will be integrated as appropriate.

2 National Planning Policy Context

Introduction

- 2.1 This section provides an overview of the national planning policy context informing the approach to the SHELAA. This is as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (2024) ('NPPF') and the National Planning Practice Guidance ('PPG').
- 2.2 The NPPF requires local authorities to have a clear understanding of the land available in their area through the preparation of a strategic housing land availability assessment. In the Newark & Sherwood District, this also includes an assessment of employment land availability.
- 2.3 The SHELAA provides an audit of land that is suitable, available and achievable for housing and economic development/employment uses over the Local Plan period. From this, the NPPF requires Local Plans to identify a sufficient supply and mix of sites, taking into account their availability, suitability and likely economic viability. Planning policies should identify a supply of:
- a) Specific, deliverable sites for five years following the intended date of adoption, and
 - b) Specific, developable sites or broad locations for growth, for the subsequent years 6-10 and, where possible, for years 11-15 of the remaining plan period.
- 2.4 The PPG sets out how land availability assessments should be undertaken and states that they 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 (availability and achievability).
- 2.5 The PPG also confirms that the assessment does not itself determine whether a site should be allocated for development and that it is the role of the assessment to provide information on the range of sites which are available to meet the local requirements, but it is for the development plan itself to determine which of those sites are the most suitable to meet those requirements.

3 Methodology

Introduction

- 3.1 The PPG states that an assessment of land availability identifies a future supply of land, which is suitable, available and achievable for housing and economic development uses over the Plan period.
- 3.2 The Council will follow the standard methodology for assessing housing and economic land availability, as set out in the PPG and shown on the flowchart at Appendix 1. The PPG states that an assessment should:
- Identify sites and broad locations;
 - Assess their development potential; and
 - Assess their suitability for development and the likelihood of development coming forward (availability and achievability).
- 3.3 The PPG requires Local Authorities to identify all sites and broad locations (regardless of the amount of development needed) in order to provide a complete audit of available land.
- 3.4 The PPG methodology includes the following stages:
- Stage 1: Identification of sites and broad locations;
 - Stage 2: Site / broad location assessment;
 - Stage 3: Windfall assessment (where justified);
 - Stage 4: Assessment review; and
 - Stage 5: Final Evidence base.
- 3.5 The focus of the SHELAA methodology is on Stages 1 and 2 of the PPG methodology. The assessment and findings relating to Stages 3, 4 and 5 will be presented in separate evidence base documents which include the Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment Main Report (Stage 3 and 5) and a Windfall Assessment contained in the Five Year Housing Land Supply Report (Stage 4).

4 Stage 1: Site Identification

Geographical Area

- 4.1 The PPG states that the area selected for the SHELAA assessment should be the plan-making area; this could be the local planning authority area, two or more local authority areas, areas covered by a spatial development strategy, or areas covered by the Local Enterprise Partnership.
- 4.2 Previously, the SHELAA methodology was undertaken at ‘Outer Nottingham Housing Market Area’ level comprising Ashfield District Council, Mansfield District Council and Newark & Sherwood District Council. The area covered by the SHELAA is now based on the administrative boundary of Newark & Sherwood District Council instead of the wider Housing Market Area.

Site Identification

- 4.3 The sites identified in the SHELAA have come from a number of sources. Potential sources that may have been used to collate the SHELAA sites are listed in the table below.

Table 1: SHELAA Site Sources

Type of Site	Potential Data Source(s)
Existing housing and employment allocations	Adopted Development Plan
Planning permissions for housing and employment development that are unimplemented or under construction	Contained in separate NSDC Housing Land Supply Database and Employment Land Monitoring Reports
Planning applications that have been refused (including those subject to appeal) or withdrawn.	Desktop review
Undetermined planning applications, including those subject to pending legal agreements.	Desktop review
Pre-application enquiries that haven’t progressed	Contact landowner / applicant
Land in local authority ownership	Engagement with NSDC and general day-to-day liaison
Surplus public land / land likely to become surplus	Engagement with public bodies via informal ‘call for sites’ exercise.
Rural Sites	Desktop review
Redevelopment / redesign of established employment areas	Existing SHELAA sites Local knowledge
Sites in and adjoining settlements	Local Plan Evidence Base
Potential urban extensions and new settlements	‘Call for Sites’ exercise

Call for Sites

- 4.4 The District Council will carry out a ‘Call for Sites’ exercise in 2025 to provide landowners and developers an opportunity to submit their sites.
- 4.5 This exercise will seek the following type of information:
- Site ownership details
 - Legal issues/constraints

- Current and potential land use
- Any viability information
- Estimated timescales for delivery
- Environmental information
- Any known constraints
- Access to utilities, road network and any neighbour issues.

4.6 As historically, the ‘call for sites’ submission will be kept ‘open’. Any sites submitted after the end of the formal ‘call for sites’ exercise will be assessed as part of the next update of the SHELAA.

Determining Which Sites and Areas Will Be Surveyed

4.7 The PPG requires plan-makers to assess a range of different site sizes, from small-scale sites to opportunities for large-scale developments such as village and town extensions and new settlements where appropriate and necessary.

4.8 The PPG is clear that sites should not be excluded from the assessment simply because of current policy designations. It states that *‘there may be some sites which, when taking into account national policy and designations, it will not be appropriate to carry out these more detailed assessments for, where it is clear that they will not be suitable for development.’* These initial surveys should be proportionate.

4.9 Previously, sites submitted for residential development were filtered out if they had capacity for less than 5 dwellings or for employment development this was less than 0.25ha in size or less than 500 sqm in floorspace. This is proposed to remain the same.

4.10 A number of national and local designations and other factors have informed the Stage 1 assessment. These factors include Flood Zone 3, Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and maintaining the minimum site threshold detailed above. Table 2 below sets out the criteria for excluding sites from the Stage 1 Assessment.

Table 2: Exclusion Criteria for Stage 1

Stage 1 Criteria	Reason
Sites with capacity of less than 5 dwellings for residential or 0.25ha for employment (or 500sqm of floorspace)	This is in accordance with PPG. Sites can still come forward through the planning application process.
Sites within Flood Zone 3	Land that is wholly in flood zone 3 will not be included in the SHELAA. Sites that lie partly within flood zone 3 will be carefully considered at Stage 2.
Designations including Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Local Wildlife Sites , Local Nature Reserve, Ancient Woodlands, Scheduled Ancient Monuments.	These are important designations and any sites for development within these designations will be excluded. Any sites adjacent to these designations will be carefully considered at Stage 2.

4.11 Green Belt has been excluded from this list as it tightly constrains several key settlements (including Lowdham, Blidworth and Rainworth), and as a result may be prohibitive to achieving a sustainable growth strategy for the District. Therefore, sites will not automatically be screened out based on their location in the Green Belt. A standalone Green Belt Assessment will be undertaken which will assist the Council in determining whether there are specific

areas of land that could be considered for release from the Green Belt to aid meeting housing and / or employment need.

- 4.12 Any site that is wholly, or mostly affected by any of the criteria in Table 2 will be excluded from the assessment. Where only part of a site falls within any of the criteria above, a judgement will be made whether to include the site in the SHELAA and the developable area will be reduced.
- 4.13 If there are insufficient sites to meet the housing need, it may be necessary for sites excluded at Stage 1 to be assessed through Stage 2.

5 Stage 2: Sites / Broad Location Assessment

5.1 Stage 1 will result in a list of identified sites for further assessment for housing and economic development. Stage 2 involves an assessment of the development potential of these sites and will determine whether the SHELAA sites are considered to be 'available, suitable and achievable'. The Stage 2 assessment also takes account of the findings of the desktop review.

Assessment of Availability

5.2 The starting point of Stage 2 is to determine if the site is available for development. The majority of the sites have been identified through 'call for sites' submission by a landowner or developer.

5.3 For new sites put forward through the 'Call for Sites' exercise, whereby a completed submission form is submitted, the site will automatically be deemed available. If sites have been identified through other means, such as refused planning applications, efforts will be made to identify landowners and contact them to seek their views on the potential availability of the site for development and, where possible, obtain a completed Call for Sites submission. Where it is not possible to identify or contact owners, a reasoned judgement will be made as to the likelihood of development coming forward on individual sites and therefore whether the site should be deemed available or not.

5.4 Sites with extant planning permission will be assessed as 'available' unless there is evidence to suggest otherwise.

5.5 The Council will endeavour to confirm availability at regular intervals to ensure that the sites continue to remain available for development. Where the Council has been unable to contact the landowner / developer, or a landowner confirms that there is no longer an intention to develop the site, the site will be treated as 'not available'.

5.6 Landowners with sites previously contained in the SHELAA will be contacted in 2025 inviting them to complete the new SHELAA form which has been prepared as part of updating this methodology.

5.7 Based on the assessment of availability, sites will be split into one of the following categories:

- **Red** will generally indicate that a site is not available;
- **Amber** will indicate that a site is potentially available / available in the future;
- **Green** will indicate that the site is available now.

Assessment of Suitability

5.8 The PPG requires an assessment of the suitability of the site for the intended use or mix of uses. These may include, but are not limited to:

- market housing;
- affordable housing
- self-build;
- housing for older people; and
- economic development sites.

5.9 The assessment of the suitability of sites is guided by the Development Plan and national policy, and by market and industry requirements.

5.10 The Council has developed an assessment framework for the SHELAA that will align with, and input into, the Local Plan site assessment and Sustainability Appraisal assessments, that will be undertaken as part of the preparation of the forthcoming Local Plan. The table below sets out the assessment criteria that will be used to assess the suitability of sites for development. A traffic-light system will be used to assign colours to each assessment factor:

- **Red** will generally indicate that a site is not suitable (and no mitigation measures could make it suitable) with respect to that factor;
- **Amber** will indicate some constraints or negative impacts that can potentially be mitigated against / resolved;
- **Green** will indicate a high level of suitability on that factor.

5.11 Based on the assessment of all the factors, Officers will then make a judgement as to the site's overall suitability. The suitability factors includes:

- Location in relation to existing settlement;
- Land use classification;
- Compatibility with the surrounding uses;
- Access to services via public transport / walking;
- Proximity and access to green spaces;
- Policy considerations ([for example Green Belt and Open Breaks](#));
- Physical constraints (including highways [and sewerage capacity](#));
- Impact of [fn](#) landscape and biodiversity and historic environment.

5.12 Sites with extant planning permission, or where planning permission has recently lapsed will be presumed to be suitable. Sites with constraints that need further investigation are categorised as 'may be suitable'. Sites where constraints are insurmountable are categorised as 'not suitable'.

5.13 In some instances, the suitability of a site may not be assessed due to the site not being available.

Assessment of Achievability

5.14 A site is considered achievable where there is a reasonable prospect that the type of development in question will be delivered on site within the timescale envisaged. This is essentially a judgement about the economic viability of a site, and the capacity of the developer to complete the development over a certain period.

5.15 As it is impractical to undertake a detailed viability assessment of each of the SHELAA sites, the Council has drawn from the following in order to make an assessment of achievability:

- Information taken from 'call for sites' form ([including details on any legal agreements](#));
- Informal discussions with landowners;
- Existence of any interested parties;
- Existing evidence base, including the assumptions in the Whole Plan Viability Assessment;
- Build rates for similar / nearby sites;
- Residential market strength in the area;
- Identified constraints e.g. ground conditions, abnormal costs, [covenants](#).

5.16 The findings from the achievability assessment will be categorised as set out below. As this is a high-level judgement, further detailed assessment of the site by the landowner may be able to demonstrate that the site is at least potentially available.

- **Red** will generally indicate the site is not achievable;
- **Amber** will indicate the site might be achievable or potentially be achievable in the future;
- **Green** will generally indicate the site is achievable now.

5.17 In some instances, the achievability may not be assessed as the site is not available.

Approach to Density

5.18 Another part of Stage 2 is to estimate the number of homes or the amount of employment floorspace and when this might be able to come forward. The PPG advises that the site capacity should be derived from existing Local Plan policies on density. The densities for housing in the table below are derived from the Amended Core Strategy (2019).

5.19 As a 'rule of thumb', the starting point (including where site capacity is not specified in site submissions) for determining site capacity is based on the following proportions and may be applied to the gross site area to give an indication of net developable area for different sizes of sites.

Table 3: Density Assumptions

Housing		
Site Size	Net Developable Area	Density
Newark Urban Area		
Up to 2ha	100%	40dph
2ha to 4ha	80%	
4ha+	65%	
Elsewhere		
Up to 2ha	100%	30dph
2ha to 4ha	80%	
4ha+	65%	
Employment		
Type	Ratio	Comment
Serviced plot on industrial estate fronting road	100%	
Area of land that could easily subdivide into serviced plots with road frontage	100%	
Large area of land on industrial estate too big for single scheme, having regard to other buildings on estate.	95%	Provision for spur road
Major undeveloped part of industrial estate or extension to industrial estate	90%	Provision for roads and landscaping to one or more sides
Small local allocation, requiring infrastructure	90%	Provision for spur road, but landscaping likely to be minimal
Level site allocated for industrial estate	85%	Provision for spur road and landscaping
Site allocated for industrial estate where terracing or bunding is required	75%	Provision for spur road and landscaping
Land allocated for business park with high landscape quality.	75%	Provision for spur road, extensive landscaping, balancing ponds etc
Land allocated for employment use where a single end user could be in the market.	100%	All land to be taken by single user, surplus areas to be kept for its expansion

5.20 However, whilst the table above is a good starting point, the proportion of developable area in respect of potential sites is likely to vary on a site-by-site basis, depending upon specific site

characteristics. For large sites, a bigger reduction in developable area may reflect access roads, on site open space, sustainable drainage systems and other ecological mitigation that would be expected to be provided as part of the development.

- 5.21 For these reasons, and to cautiously take account of site-specific constraints, when considering housing or employment potential of sites (no. of dwellings / amount of floorspace), the Council will have regard to:
- a. The yield set out in any planning permission or Local Plan allocation;
 - b. The yield indicated in the 'Call for Sites' submission;
 - c. Site constraints, including part of the site that may not be developable due to flood risk, nature conservation value, Biodiversity Gain Hierarchy *in accordance with its statutory duty to conserve and enhance biodiversity, or are, -needed, impacts on the significance of heritage assets (including setting)* etc or that are needed for infrastructure / open space etc;
 - d. Density assessments based on Local Plan policy, and on local circumstances.

Estimated Built-Out Rates and Lead-In Times

5.22 The assumptions on build-out rates and lead-in times are set out in the tables below. These are based on past delivery of housing sites in the District since 2013. Unless there is evidence to indicate otherwise, these assumptions will be used to inform the SHELAA trajectory.

5.23 The assumptions relating to build-out rates (based on past delivery in the District) are set out in Table 4 below. The local evidence will be updated annually as part of the Statement of Five Year Five-Year Housing Land Supply Report.

Table 4: Assumptions on Build-Out Rates

Site Size	Average Annual Build-Out Rate	Sample Size
SUE's (3,000+ dwellings)	95dpa	2
500-999 Dwellings	46dpa	1
100-499 dwellings	42dpa	8
0-99 dwellings	41dpa	15

5.24 The assumptions relating to lead-in times (to first completion) from the granting of planning permission are set out in Table 5 below. The local evidence will be updated annually as part of the Statement of Five Year Five-Year Housing Land Supply Report

Table 5: Assumptions on Lead-In Times

Site Size	Lead-In Time	Sample Size
100+ dwellings	2.34 years	11
0-99 dwellings	2.26 years	19

6 Stage 3: Windfall Assessment

- 6.1 The PPG states that incorporating a windfall allowance for housing development in the SHELAA may be justified where a local planning authority has compelling evidence as set out in Paragraph 75 of the NPPF. Such evidence includes proof that such sites have consistently become available in the District and will continue to provide a reliable source of supply.
- 6.2 The NPPF at Paragraph 75 states that:
- “Where an allowance is to be made for windfall sites as part of anticipated supply, there should be compelling evidence that they will provide a reliable source of supply. Any allowance should be realistic having regard to the strategic housing land availability assessment, historic windfall delivery rates and expected future trends.”*
- 6.3 The past delivery rates on windfall sites demonstrate that these have been a reliable source of housing over recent years. A windfall allowance will be factored into the SHELAA in recognition of the significant contribution of windfall sites to housing supply.
- 6.4 The most recent windfall assessment is included in the [2024 Five Year Housing Land Supply Report](#) with a base date of 1st April 2023 – 31st March 2024.
- 6.5 A windfall allowance will not be included in relation to employment land supply as there is insufficient local evidence to support such an approach.

7 Stage 4: Assessment Review

- 7.1. In Stage 4 of the Assessment, an indicative trajectory will be produced to show the development potential of all the sites and when they are capable of being delivered.
- 7.2. 'Deliverable' sites will therefore be those considered capable of delivery in the first five years following the intended date of adoption of the Local Plan and 'developable' sites will be those considered capable of delivery for the subsequent years 6-10 and, where possible, for years 11-15 of the remaining plan period.
- 7.3. Once the indicative trajectory has been produced, the Council will review where there are sufficient sites / locations capable of meeting the housing and employment land need.

8 Stage 5: Final Evidence Base

8.1 In line with the PPG, the SHELAA will have the following outputs:

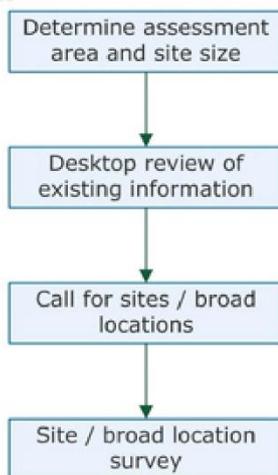
- A list of all sites or broad locations considered and their locations identified on maps;
- An assessment of each site or broad location, in terms of its suitability for development, availability and achievability to determine whether a site is realistically expected to be developed and when;
- An assessment of the potential type and quantity of development that could be delivered on each site / broad location, including a reasonable estimate of build out rates;
- Identifying any barriers to deliver and how this could be overcome;
- An indicative trajectory of anticipated development and consideration of associated risks;
- A list of discounted sites with clearly evidenced and justified reasons.

8.2 The SHELAA will be published as a written report with accompanying maps and assessments grouped by settlement. It will be published on the Council's website. The report will be split into two main chapters; housing and employment.

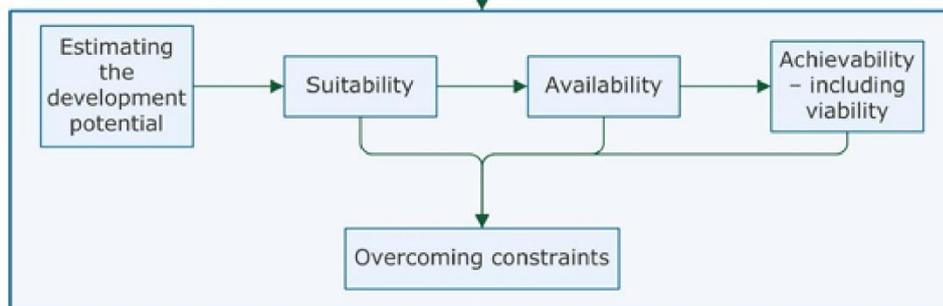
8.3 For each settlement, the SHELAA report will provide a summary of the potential supply from deliverable and developable sites.

Appendix 1: PPG Methodology Flowchart

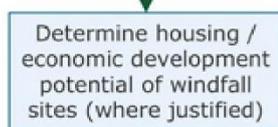
Stage 1- Site / broad location identification



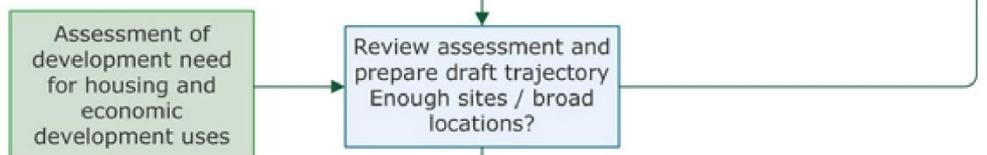
Stage 2 - Site / broad location assessment



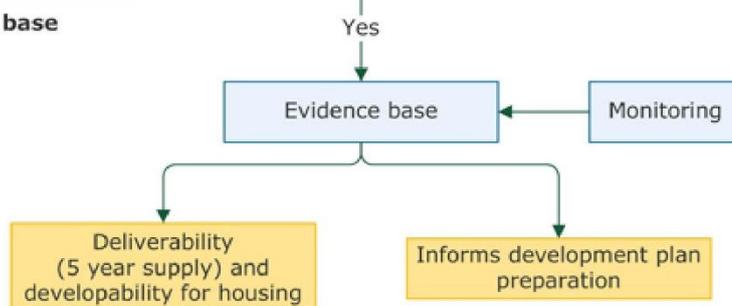
Stage 3 - Windfall assessment



Stage 4 - Assessment review



Stage 5 - Final evidence base



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¹ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/housing-and-economic-land-availability-assessment#identification-of-sites-and-broad-locations>