

Land Availability Assessment Methodology October 2023

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Document Information

Title: Land Availability Assessment Methodology: October 2023.

Status: Final paper setting out the methodology that will be used to assess sites submitted for potential allocation within the Huntingdonshire Local Plan update to aid in the consistent and equitable consideration of potential sites, the results of which will inform Huntingdonshire District Council's Local Plan Review.

Date of approval for consultation: Overview and Scrutiny (Performance and Growth) Panel, 1 March 2023. Cabinet, 21 March 2023.

Dates of consultation: 29 March to 10 May 2023

Document availability: The Huntingdonshire Land Availability Assessment Methodology 2023 can be found on the Council's [website](#). Copies can be downloaded from the website.

Please note: This document may be available in alternative formats on request.

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1 Introduction

- 1.1** The primary objective of this Land Availability Assessment (LAA) Methodology is to establish how sites promoted to the Council for some form of allocation in the Local Plan update will be systematically assessed. The outcomes of the assessments will indicate approximately what development sites could be available to meet Huntingdonshire's growth needs, what their capacity is, the constraints which would need to be overcome to deliver them and when they could be completed. This is to show whether it is possible to accommodate the development and other land use needs of Huntingdonshire during the next Local Plan period. It is proposed to provide an assessment of sites promoted uses beyond the traditional assessment of residential and employment proposals and include those such as sites for open space uses, flood mitigation or renewable energy.
- 1.2** 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. It can also identify other uses such as sites for recreation, green infrastructure, flood mitigation or renewable energy generation. The assessment of land availability includes the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment requirement as set out in paragraph 69 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The assessment of land availability will form a key part of the evidence being used to prepare the next Huntingdonshire Local Plan.
- 1.3** The role of the LAA Methodology is to provide a consistent approach to the consideration of sites put forward for development. This document sets out how the Council proposes to assess land and present the outcomes of these assessments. Consultation on the methodology ran between 29 March and 10 May 2023, all comments were reviewed and changes made to the methodology where appropriate. Further details can be found in the Council's Statement of Consultation.

- 1.4** By including sites that are potentially suitable for a wide range of development types the LAA Methodology provides the opportunity to consider both the potential benefits and impacts of development as a whole on the surrounding area and acknowledges the range of uses that are necessary to maintain viable, mixed and sustainable communities. This approach ensures that all land is assessed together as part of plan preparation to identify which sites are the most suitable and deliverable for a particular use.
- 1.5** This LAA Methodology includes all potential land uses in one comprehensive document so that a full picture of the development opportunities across the district can be identified. It is acknowledged that this may become unwieldy if very high numbers of sites are put forward and so the final format will remain flexible to maximise its accessibility to users.

What is a Land Availability Assessment?

- 1.6** Paragraph 69 of the NPPF states that '*strategic policy-making authorities should have a clear understanding of the land available in their area through the preparation of a strategic housing land availability assessment. From this, planning policies should identify a sufficient supply and mix of sites, taking into account their availability, suitability and likely economic viability....*'
- 1.7** To fulfil this requirement, an assessment of land availability needs to be undertaken. The purpose of this is to identify a future supply of land which is suitable, available and achievable for housing and economic development uses over the plan period. These terms are defined in national guidance and are set out in Chapter 2 under the 'Detailed assessment' information. It can also identify other uses such as sites for recreation, green infrastructure, flood mitigation and renewable energy generation.
- 1.8** It is important to note that the assessment does not in itself determine whether a site should be allocated for development. It is the role of the assessment to provide information on the range of sites which are potentially

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available to meet the Council’s requirements, it is for the development plan itself to determine which of those sites are the most suitable to meet those requirements.

1.9 The three main purposes of the assessment are to:

1. establish the approximate deliverable capacity of potential development sites;
2. determine whether it is possible to accommodate in full the development needs of Huntingdonshire; and
3. appraise the suitability, availability and achievability of potential development sites and consider how they can contribute to a sustainable development strategy in the next Huntingdonshire Local Plan.

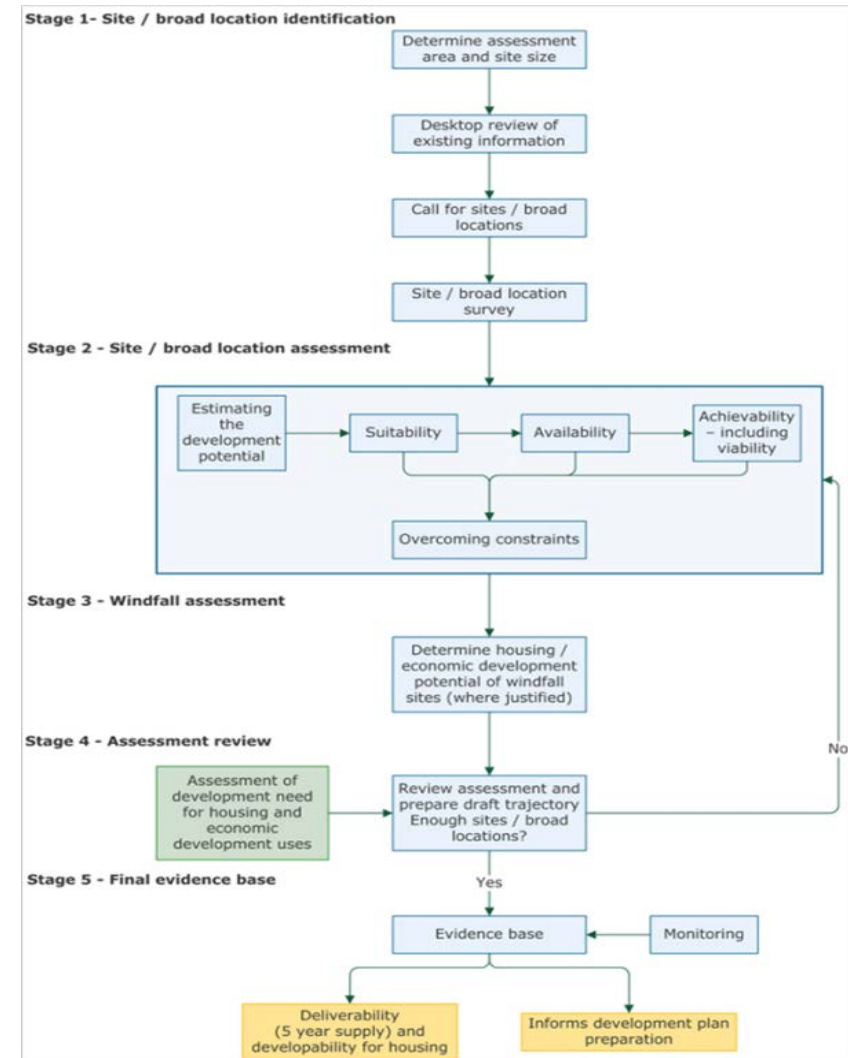
2 Methodology

2.1 National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) sets out a methodology for land availability assessments, it consists of five stages (also shown in the flowchart in Figure 2.1):

- 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

2.2 Huntingdonshire's methodology follows these stages. Where there have been alterations to the national methodology, these have been highlighted and reasons for the differences between them set out.

Figure 2.1 Land Availability Assessment



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Stage 1 - Site / broad location identification

What geographical area is the assessment covering?

- 2.3** This assessment will cover the whole administrative area of Huntingdonshire.
- 2.4** The district has long pursued a strategy of focusing development in the larger, more sustainable settlements and carefully limiting growth within small villages and the countryside. This was continued in the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 whereby the vast majority of the plan's growth were focused within the larger settlements in the district and their immediate environs defined as spatial planning areas (these were Huntingdon, St Neots, St Ives and Ramsey) or key service centres (these were Buckden, Fenstanton, Kimbolton, Sawtry, Somersham, Warboys and Yaxley). No allocations were made in the remaining settlements due to their more limited levels of sustainability and access to services and facilities. The growth strategy did however set out a role for a limited amount of sustainable development in contributing to the social and economic sustainability of these settlements and in supporting a thriving rural economy. A new Settlement Hierarchy Methodology for assessing the sustainability of settlements throughout the district has also been consulted upon. Together the finalised methodologies will provide assessments to help shape the future development strategy for Huntingdonshire.
- 2.5** The LAA Methodology looks to work in conjunction with the Call for Sites to seek proposals throughout the district. This is considered appropriate to allow for comprehensive assessment of the sustainability of different locations, the changes to people's lifestyles and aspirations arising from the Covid-19 pandemic and the wide scope of site types and uses this methodology proposes may be considered.
- 2.6** It is acknowledged that there is the possibility that sites maybe put forward that include land beyond Huntingdonshire in adjoining districts. As it is outside the scope of a single district Local Plan to allocate sites that span

district boundaries assessments will only be carried out in detail for the portion of any such site within Huntingdonshire. The Council will, however, liaise with neighbouring authorities to raise awareness of any cross-boundary proposals.

What types of sites should be considered in the assessment?

- 2.7** National guidance requires assessment to be undertaken of potential land for residential and economic development uses. However, a Local Plan covers a far wider range of issues than this to promote overall sustainable development and seeks to facilitate strong, healthy communities that will meet the needs of current and future residents. This methodology will include assessments for:
- residential uses across many tenures and types of homes
 - commercial uses including employment, retail, commercial leisure, logistics and distribution
 - mixed use proposals
 - infrastructure uses including community uses such as schools and community centres, health care uses, transport and parking, and renewable energy production and storage facilities
 - open space uses including green spaces such as woodland planting, sports and recreation grounds and allotments, land for biodiversity net gain facilitation, and land to safeguard against flooding

What size of sites should be considered in the assessment?

- 2.8** National guidance states that it may be appropriate to consider all sites and broad locations capable of delivering 5 or more dwellings, or economic development on sites of 0.25 hectares (or 500 square metres of floor space) and above. The Council can also consider alternative site size thresholds.
- 2.9** This LAA Methodology will use the size threshold stated in national guidance for residential and economic development. Any development sites that could accommodate fewer than five dwellings or fewer than 500 square

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metres of business floor space would not be included. For proposed housing developments, sites below the threshold would instead be accounted for under the windfall assessment shown in stage 3 of Figure 2.1 and provide additional diversity to supply.

- 2.10** Sites promoted for other uses such as green infrastructure, renewable energy generation, community uses or flood mitigation will also be assessed. 0.25 hectares will be the minimum threshold appropriate for these uses too. For instance, for renewable energy schemes, only sites suitable large scale standalone renewable and low carbon energy projects are appropriate rather than those attached to an existing building many of which do not require planning permission.

Desktop review of existing information

- 2.11** In accordance with national guidance, use of a comprehensive range of sources is proposed in order to identify and assess as many potential sites as possible. Sites can be identified from:

- sites that were assessed in detail and thought potentially suitable for development in the last iteration of the Housing Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) published in December 2017
- currently undecided planning applications for major development ⁽¹⁾
- recently refused or withdrawn planning applications for major development taking into account any new or updated information
- currently undeveloped allocated sites from the Local Plan to 2036
- redevelopment opportunities identified within the Markets Town Programme
- permission in principle and brownfield register sites that are above the site threshold
- council owned sites that are not currently being effectively used

- 2.12** The sources above have all been reviewed to consider the merits of including such sites within the the LAA where they have not been directly promoted for potential allocation in the Local Plan. It is acknowledged that the local planning process is typically slower than that for planning applications and undecided applications are likely to have an outcome before the Local Plan is completed and many of those approved will be either under construction or even completed and no longer require the certainty of allocation status so these have not been included at this stage.

- 2.13** Some of the redevelopment opportunities within the Market Towns Programme are being brought forward within a relatively short timeframe and will not require allocation where they are being supported through the policies of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036.

- 2.14** Sites which are currently allocated for development in Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 and have not yet been brought forward will be considered as still being suitable for their allocated use and may be included in the sites put forward as proposed allocations in the Preferred Options draft Local Plan in 2025 unless we are aware that they are no longer available for development or cannot be achieved.

- 2.15** There were no permission in principle and brownfield register sites that met the criteria for consideration. There were no council owned sites that are not currently being effectively used that met the criteria for consideration.

- 2.16** A Call for Sites has also been undertaken which has generated the majority of sites put forward for consideration. This was an opportunity for landowners, developers, agents, individuals and other interested parties to suggest sites for development, and to let us know when they may be available for development. To ensure equitable assessments, those

¹ Defined in the NPPF as being for housing, development where 10 or more homes will be provided, or the site has an area of 0.5 hectares or more. For non-residential development it means additional floorspace of 1,000m² or more, or a site of 1 hectare or more, or as otherwise provided in the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

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who promoted their site(s) previously are required to resubmit using the revised call for sites form if they wish for the site to be reconsidered. The Council will endeavour to contact known sites owners and agents.

- 2.17** A cross checking exercise was undertaken to avoid duplication of sites identified through more than one source.

Call for sites consultation and survey

- 2.18** The Call for Sites consultation ran for 10 weeks during March to June 2023 on our [online consultation portal](#). The Call for Sites consultation is an opportunity for the Council to gather evidence on a wider range of potential development opportunities located across the district to assess whether needs can be met and where they can be met.

- 2.19** To assess whether needs can be met over the plan period, the Council requires evidence on the suitability, availability, achievability and deliverability of each potential site. To gather this information, a form was been created with the following sections:

- **Current land status** - includes questions relating to the site's name, location, size, land type, current use and planning history
- **Land ownership and legal status** - includes questions on the promoter's relationship with the site, site ownership, land control arrangements, legal restrictions and site visit contact information
- **Proposed land use and delivery** - includes questions on the intended use of the site, when it will be available for development and how long the site will take to build
- **Assessment of site and constraints** - includes questions on access and servicing, constraints and how constraints may be overcome
- **Further evidence** - asks for any supporting information, surveys or assessments to be submitted alongside a completed form

- 2.20** The consultation form asked for location plans and where possible for respondents to provide a shapefile of the boundary of the site. This is so that each site can be accurately mapped onto our GIS database and compiled onto an interactive map of sites. It will also assist with site visits.

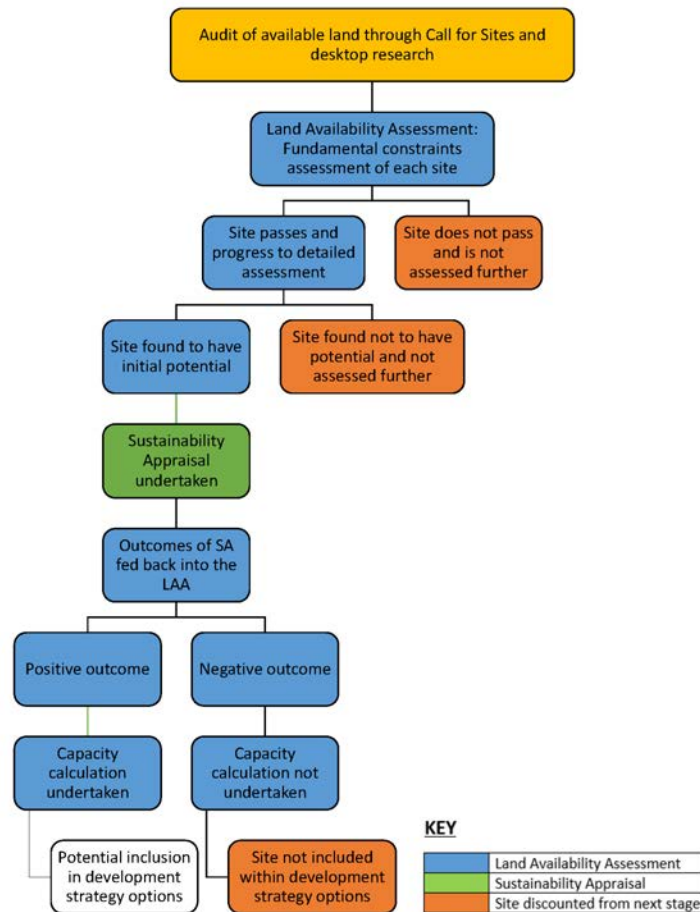
Stage 2 - Sites assessment

- 2.21** Following the desktop review and the call for sites consultation, all potential sites will be inputted into a GIS database using the location plans and shapefiles provided. This will show their spatial distribution across the district and also store key information in a single place that will be made viewable via an [interactive map](#) published on our website.

- 2.22** Parish/settlement maps will also be created and be made available in the LAA to show the spatial distribution of potential sites across each parish area. These will include all proposed land uses in order to provide a comprehensive view of potential opportunities for each parish. Each proposed land use will have a different colour/symbol so that they can be distinguished from one another. The maps will also include parish boundaries as well as neighbouring authority boundaries to clearly show where there may be cross boundary implications between parishes and other local authorities.

- 2.23** Each site will go through the following process, detailed in this document:

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2.24 Following identification of a site, an initial filter based on fundamental constraints will be undertaken to determine if a detailed assessment of the site should be undertaken or not. If fundamental constraints are identified then the site would be discounted. The relevance of different constraints will vary according to the proposed use of the site. Otherwise, the site would progress to a detailed assessment.

Identification of fundamental constraints

2.25 For step one of the site assessment methodology, the following significant environmental and policy constraints will be considered, if any of these apply to a site, then the site will be discounted and not taken forward for detailed assessment:

- the land is classed as Grade 1 agricultural land unless the proposed use is compatible with this such as being for community orchard / garden or flood mitigation purposes
- more than half the site is within flood zone 3b (functional floodplain) determined by consideration of the Council's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) and the Environment Agency's flood zone maps unless the site is proposed for water compatible development or flood mitigation purposes
- the site is registered common land or village green, or is a local green space as designated via a made neighbourhood plan unless the proposed use is compatible with the designation
- the land is designated as being a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Local Nature Reserve (LNR) or Local Geological Site (LGS) or other important nature designation such as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC), a Special Protection Area (SPA) or Ramsar Site unless the proposed use is for biodiversity net gain, green infrastructure or nature conservation which would support the site's existing designation
- development of the site would involve the loss of irreplaceable habitats such as ancient woodland or veteran trees

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- as per the [Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Plan \(July 2021\)](#), unless proposing a compatible use, the site lies within a:
 - Mineral Development Area (MDA) or within 250m of one - see policy 6 and policy 16
 - Mineral Allocation Area (MAA) and the proposed development does not meet the criteria for which it is allocated - see policy 6 and policy 16
 - Waste Management Area (WMA) or within 250m of its boundary – see policy 10 and policy 16
 - Water Recycling Area (WRA) or within 400m of its boundary – see policy 11 and policy 16
- the site is below the stated site threshold

2.26 If fundamental constraints are identified, the site will be discounted from further detailed assessment. We will consider the proposed use and the proportion of the site affected by a fundamental constraint and whether development could reasonable still be delivered on the remainder. If a site does not have any fundamental environmental or policy constraints, then it progresses to detailed assessment.

2.27 In the 'Presentation of detailed site assessments', there will be a summary table setting out if a site has passed each fundamental constraint or not.

Detailed assessment

2.28 Once it has been decided that a site shall progress to a detailed assessment, to accord with government guidance the site will then be assessed for their **suitability** (can the site be physically developed for the proposed use); **availability** (is the site available for development); and **achievability** (is there a reasonable prospect that the particular type of development will be developed on the site) for future development as whether it is **deliverable** (is suitable, available and achievable and can be

delivered within five years) or is **developable** (is the site in a suitable location with a reasonable prospect of being available and achievable at a known time).

2.29 These terms are explained further alongside how they will be assessed in the following subsections.

2.30 Taking the outcomes of the above assessment into consideration, it will be decided whether the site should progress to a Sustainability Appraisal. If yes, the site will be assessed using the sites decision aiding questions set out in the SA Scoping Report.

2.31 Following the SA of the site, a conclusion will be made in the LAA drawing together the outcomes of the LAA and SA. This will conclude whether a site could potentially be considered appropriate for development. If a site is considered potentially appropriate, an indicative capacity will be calculated. The potential capacity for each development site are set out in this methodology. These in combination with the site promoter's own anticipated capacity figures (depending on the nature of the use proposed) and will be displayed in the final assessment.

2.32 At the end of this section is a template setting out how all the above is expected to be presented in a future Land Availability Assessment document.

Suitability assessment

2.33 National guidance states that a site can be considered **suitable** if it would provide an appropriate location for development when considered against relevant constraints and their potential to be mitigated. Thus, the assessment of a site's suitability for development is a high-level assumption about whether the site physically could be developed, rather than whether the site should or would be developed. While the assessment of a site's suitability is only one aspect of the land availability assessment, it is a critical aspect of the assessment.

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2.34 Just because a site is considered potentially suitable for development for its proposed use does not mean it will necessarily come forward for allocation as it is the role of the Local Plan to determine a sustainable strategy for growth based on a settlement hierarchy supported by proposals for complementary uses such as green infrastructure and community uses. The land availability assessment serves to inform that, and to assess whether the development needs of the district can be accommodated in the plan period.

2.35 A site that has been discounted is not considered suitable for development. A site that has progressed to a detailed assessment may still be considered unsuitable for development particularly if any physical or environmental constraints present cannot be mitigated. Within the assessment for suitability, there will be a statement of whether or not the site is considered to be potentially suitable for development, and if so for what form and quantity of development, including an overview of measures that would be necessary as part of the development to overcome constraints. Details on how capacity will be calculated can be found in the 'Calculating capacity' subsection to this methodology.

2.36 When assessing the suitability of a site against constraints, national guidance states that information collected as part of a call for sites survey, as well as other relevant information should be utilised, such as:

- existing national policy;
- appropriateness and likely market attractiveness for the type of development proposed;
- contribution to regeneration priority areas;
- potential impacts including the effect upon landscapes including landscape features, nature and heritage conservation

2.37 For bullet two, this will not be assessed at this stage but will form part of the viability assessment.

2.38 In addition to those listed above, we will also assess whether a site is at risk of flooding from any source, is within a mineral development area or water recycling area as defined within the [Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Plan \(July 2021\)](#), and whether access can be achieved from a public highway.

2.39 The suitability assessment is free from assessment against current local planning policies to allow for consideration of a new growth strategy and settlement hierarchy.

2.40 Where a site is already allocated or has planning permission, it is generally considered suitable for development although it may be necessary to assess whether circumstances have changed which would alter the site's suitability particularly if the permission has been extant for several years or a planning application has not come forward on an allocated site at all or for the originally identified use.

2.41 Suitability assessment will cover a variable range of factors depending upon the proposed use(s) of the site put forward for consideration. This will be a balanced assessment of the combination of factors related to whether the site can be physically developed for the proposed use(s).

2.42 Following a review of a site's potential suitability for development, it will be categorised into one of three groups as set out below:

Potentially suitable for development with no or minor known constraints to overcome, and subject to detailed sustainability appraisal and technical assessments	+
Potentially suitable although with known constraints to overcome, and subject to detailed sustainability appraisal and technical assessments	~
Not suitable for development	-

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Availability assessment

- 2.43** The Council needs to ensure that there is a supply of sites that will contribute towards meeting the identified needs of the area and enabling a robust land supply for future development during the plan period. Following the assessment of suitability, an **availability** assessment will be undertaken.
- 2.44** Using the information available through the call for sites submission, a judgement on a site's availability will be made based on whether there is confidence that there are no legal or ownership impediments to development, the current use of the land, and when it is likely to deliver the proposed development. Where further information is needed or clarification required, we will contact the site promoters and other stakeholders as appropriate. This could include details on legal or ownership impediments or the programme for known infrastructure needed for development of the site.
- 2.45** If there is no reasonable prospect that the site will become available for development over the lifetime of the plan, then it will not be included as a realistic option for development.
- 2.46** For residential and employment use proposals national guidance states that the existence of planning permission can be a good indication of the availability of sites. Sites without permission may be considered available within the first five years depending on site specific circumstances; further guidance to this is contained in the government's 5 year housing land supply guidance. Sites meeting the definition of deliverable should be considered available unless evidence indicates otherwise. Consideration can also be given to the delivery record of the developers or landowners putting forward sites, and whether the planning background of a site shows a history of unimplemented permissions. A similar principle of considering the existence of planning permission and development history of the site may be applied to other proposals for built development. For community, open space, infrastructure and other similar uses the assessment of availability will be based on the details provided.

2.47 Availability assessment will cover a variable range of factors depending upon the proposed use(s) of the site put forward for consideration. This will be a balanced assessment of the combination of factors related to availability of the site for development for the proposed use(s).

2.48 Following a review of a site's potential availability for development, it will be categorised into one of three groups as set out below:

Available for development	+
Potentially available for development but with known constraints to overcome	~
Not available for development	-

Achievability assessment

- 2.49** For sites considered potentially suitable, a statement of the **achievability** of development including consideration of viability and any infrastructure dependencies will be made.
- 2.50** National guidance states that a site for residential or employment use is considered achievable for development where there is a reasonable prospect that the particular type of development 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 let or sell the development over a certain period. Similar judgements about achievability will be made on other proposals for built development regarding likely viability and market attractiveness to assess their potential achievability. For community, open space, infrastructure and other similar uses the assessment of achievability will be based on the details provided.
- 2.51** To assist us in this assessment, details from the call for site submission will be used relating to details on land ownership, legal restrictions and land control arrangements; any issues to be resolved before development or

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that could affect the site being developed; details on access and servicing constraints; and whether there are any known constraints that could restrict the development of the land.

2.52 Achievability assessment will cover a variable range of factors depending on the proposed use(s) of the site put forward for consideration. This will be a balanced assessment of the combination of factors related to whether there is a reasonable prospect of the proposed use(s) being delivered on the site.

2.53 Following a review of a site's potential achievability for development, it will be categorised into one of three groups as set out below:

Development is considered to be achievable with no or minor known constraints to overcome	+
Development is potentially achievable although there are known constraints to overcome and / or substantial infrastructure requirements	~
Development is not considered to be achievable	-

Deliverability / developability assessment

2.54 National guidance states that information on suitability, availability, achievability and constraints can be used to assess the timescale within which each site is capable of development. This may include indicative lead-in times and build-out rates for the development of different scales of sites. On the largest sites allowance should be made for several developers to be involved in housebuilding elements. The advice of developers and local agents will be important in assessing lead-in times and build-out rates by year. Assessment of local lead-in times and build-out rates will also be used to reflect local market circumstances.

2.55 Relating to residential development, paragraph 69 of the NPPF states that planning policies should identify a supply of:

- a. specific, deliverable sites for years one to five of the plan period; and
- b. specific, developable sites or broad locations for growth, for years 6-10 and, where possible, for years 11-15 of the plan.

2.56 The NPPF also provides a definition of **deliverable**:

To be considered deliverable, sites for housing 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. In particular:

- a. *sites which do not involve major development and have planning permission, and all sites with detailed planning permission, should be considered deliverable until permission expires, unless there is clear evidence that homes will not be delivered within five years (for example because they are no longer viable, there is no longer a demand for the type of units or sites have long term phasing plans).*
- b. *where a site has outline planning permission for major development, has been allocated in a development plan, has a grant of permission in principle, or is identified on a brownfield register, it should only be considered deliverable where there is clear evidence that housing completions will begin on site within five years.*

2.57 The NPPF states that to considered **developable**, sites should be in a suitable location for housing development with a reasonable prospect that they will be available and could be viably developed at the point envisaged. Viability testing of the proposed Local Plan and the packages of potential sites that could be included will be carried out separately at a later phase of plan preparation. Therefore, considerations of viability will not be taken into account at this stage.

2.58 Any sites which have very substantial constraints with no apparent prospect of them being overcome will be classified as not deliverable at present.

2.59 Sites that are considered to be suitable, available and achievable and also meet the tests set out in the NPPF will be considered to be deliverable.

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- 2.60** Sites that are considered to be potentially suitable, available and achievable but do not meet the tests set out in the NPPF for deliverable will be considered to be developable over the plan period.
- 2.61** The call for sites form asks how many years that the site promoter considers it will take to build out the site once planning permission has been granted. For both deliverable and developable sites, where appropriate, we will get in touch with a site promoter if we need to discuss the expected delivery rate and timings.
- 2.62** However, given the scope of the Call for Sites 2023 and the need to assess the diversity of sites put forward using this methodology it is necessary to have an equivalent for non-residential uses whilst acknowledging that it will primarily be applicable to other built use proposals rather than open space uses. The same principles will be used as are set out in paragraph 2.45 for residential development in terms of their availability, offering a suitable location for the proposed use(s) and have a realistic prospect of delivery of the intended uses in accordance with the equivalent scales of development as set out in paragraph 2.45 a) and b).

Site is considerable to be potentially deliverable	+
Site is considered to be developable	~
The site is not or is unlikely to be developable within the Local Plan timeframe	-

Progression to Sustainability Appraisal

- 2.63** Taking the outcomes of the above assessment into consideration, it will be decided whether the site should progress to a Sustainability Appraisal. There will either be a 'yes' or a 'no' outcome. Most sites are likely to progress through the an SA but some may be discounted if they have been assessed as being unsuitable or fundamental constrained.

- 2.64** If the site does progress through to an SA, it will assessed using the sites decision aiding questions set out in the SA Scoping Report.
- 2.65** Following the SA of the site, a conclusion will be made in the LAA drawing together the outcomes of the LAA and SA. This will conclude whether a site could potentially be considered appropriate for development. If a site is considered potentially appropriate, an indicative capacity will be calculated. The potential capacity for each development site are set out in this methodology. These in combination with the site promoter's own anticipated capacity figures (depending on the nature of the use proposed) and will be displayed in the final assessment.

Calculating capacity

- 2.66** In accordance with national policy, plan makers should seek to make the most efficient use of land and plan for sustainable forms of development.
- 2.67** National guidance does not set out a specific methodology for undertaking capacity studies. It does state that the estimation of the development potential of each identified site can be guided by the existing or emerging plan policy including locally determined policies on density. Therefore, calculating the potential capacity of sites should not solely rely on rigid calculations to maximise density and development potential but should balance this development potential with ensuring capacities respond to their context and incorporate appropriate amounts of landscaping, infrastructure and any flood mitigations where necessary.
- 2.68** The guidance produced by the Urban and Economic Development Group (URBED) in their 1999 report '[Tapping the Potential: best capacity](#)' is still considered a best practice source. This guide informed the approach taken in the capacity study for Huntingdonshire's Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (December 2017) which applied the guidance locally. Since then, RIC's have published guidance [Land measurement for planning and development purposes](#), this has also shaped the below approach to developable areas. Also, an assessment has been undertaken of recently completed development schemes within Huntingdonshire to

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compare actual capacities delivered to those based on 'Tapping the Potential'. The approach taken in the last HELAA has been reviewed and although has formed a starting point, it is proposed to update this based on locally specific information where feasible.

2.69 Huntingdonshire's LAA Methodology will seek to quantify deliverable capacity on sites as relevant to the proposed use to help inform preparation of options for the next Local Plan. This is a high level estimate of potential capacity to provide a guide to the existence of sufficient capacity to ensure there is enough land to meet future needs in the Local Plan update and enable exploration of alternative growth strategies.

2.70 The capacity figures calculated are indicative only and will be subject to variation dependent upon the precise details of proposed development schemes. Where appropriate these calculations have been influenced by detailed site specific knowledge of Development Management and Urban Design Officers and planning permissions that have already been granted and any initial site assessment / masterplanning undertaken by the site promoter. The character of the surrounding area as well as the site's location and context in terms of the natural, historic and built environment will also been taken into account when considering an appropriate capacity. Guidance from Huntingdonshire's [Landscape and Townscape SPD](#) and [Design Guide SPD](#) will also be applied.

2.71 The potential capacity figures arise from a combination of the developable area of a site and the density of development appropriate in the site's specific location. Density means the intensity of land use, that is, how much development is built on a site or area. Density can be calculated using the net site or gross site area. Both net and gross densities are calculated using the basic formula: the number of dwellings or building floor space divided by the area of land that they occupy.

2.72 The developable area for the purposes of calculating capacity includes only the area which will be used for housing, employment, retail and other built development and directly related uses (the net area). The below table summarises what is included within the net developable area and what is excluded:

Table 1 Net developable areas

Net developable area includes	Net developable area excludes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access roads within the site 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Major distribution roads
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Private garden space at ground level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schools
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Car/ lorry parking areas at ground level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sports pitches or open spaces serving a wider area
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incidental open space and landscaping 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Significant landscape buffers, including areas of sustainable drainage systems (SuDS)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children's play areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Areas within flood zone 3b ⁽²⁾

2.73 Where some or all of a site lies within flood zone 2 or 3a the capacity will be modified to reflect the potential need to allow additional land for flood mitigation.

2.74 The table below identifies developable area percentages, these are proposed as the starting point for assessment of a site's capacity although they are always subject to the individual site specific circumstances and detailed design proposals that may reflect differing proportions if the site

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is brought forward for development. These have been derived from page 21 of 'Tapping the Potential' and adapted to take into account local examples of development within Huntingdonshire.

Table 2 Developable areas

Site size	Developable areas
0.2 - 0.4ha	100%
0.41 - 1.99ha	80-95% depending on the nature of surrounding uses and anticipated site specific requirements
2 - 5.99ha	70-80% depending on the nature of surrounding uses and anticipated site specific requirements
6 - 9.99ha	60-70% depending on the nature of surrounding uses, anticipated site specific requirements and the potentially higher infrastructure requirements of the development
10 - 49.99ha	50-60% reflecting the need for substantial landscaping and the potentially higher infrastructure requirements of the development. On sites towards the larger end of this range, there is likely to be a range of developable areas across the site reflecting the need to accommodate a mix of sustainable uses and densities.
Over 50ha	For sites at this strategic scale, it is anticipated that there will be a range of developable areas across the whole site to accommodate a sustainable mix of uses and densities, local centres and supporting infrastructure. For these sites, the developable area will be calculated on a site by site basis taking into account the proposed uses and any environmental constraints and site specific considerations.

2.75 We will consider the use or uses being proposed and calculate the capacity of different types of development accordingly. Typically, in larger sites the proportion of developable land is lower, as there is greater need for land for uses such as landscape buffers and schools.

2.76 In this methodology details on how density calculations will be applied for residential and employment developments have been provided. These will also be applied accordingly for mixed use developments. It is important to note that densities and net developable area will also be dependent on the context and site specific considerations for each site. For proposals over 50ha, we will where appropriate talk to site promoters.

2.77 For other land uses such as those relating to renewable energy, flood mitigation, infrastructure and green infrastructure will be calculated on a case by case considering the specifics of the site and proposal taking into account the nature of the potential use and the individual site characteristics and physical constraints.

Residential development

2.78 Within Huntingdonshire the highest building densities are typically located at the centres of the market towns and larger villages, while rural areas and development nearer the edges of settlements are typically built to lower densities.



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2.79 Examples of existing residential areas commonly found across Huntingdonshire have been identified and assessed to inform potential densities of the number of dwellings per hectare (dph) that may be appropriate in different types of location. These have informed a series of categories of residential densities found across the district:

- Very high - 145 dph
- High - 85 dph
- Moderate - 50 dph
- Low - 35 dph
- Very low - 25 dph

2.80 These residential density categories are set out in detail in 4 'Appendix 1 - Residential Development Density Categories'. Alongside each category are a series of examples of residential developments across the district with an emphasis on recently completed developments, to indicate what has actually been achieved and has potential to be replicated elsewhere in the district.

2.81 These provide an illustration of the densities achieved and the potential capacity of sites when also applying their developable area. However, it is important to note that when applying these categories a degree of flexibility is required to reflect the characteristics of the individual site and its context. Densities used for each site are guided by many factors such as the characteristics of the area, the site location, surrounding context, potential flood risk, landscape and heritage constraints, biodiversity / ecology and the site's market potential.

2.82 Also, it is important to note that this LAA Methodology only provides an indicative capacity for a site, it does not establish an appropriate mix of homes for a particular site. It is the role of the Housing Needs of Specific Groups study, other policy requirements, and information regarding potential site constraints that will inform the mix of any future development. The identified site capacities therefore represent an estimate of an appropriate

amount of development for a particular based on the best available information in order to assess whether development needs over the plan period can be met.

2.83 It should also be noted that this methodology is only intended to be applied to proposals involving five or more new homes. For schemes of one to four new dwellings densities vary significantly depending on the character of the surrounding area, the shape of the site and the aspirations of the landowner. Application of a standard density calculation is unnecessary as schemes of this scale will not be considered for allocation through the Local Plan.

2.84 Where mixed use developments are proposed regard will be had to the potential reduction resulting from a mix of uses on the developable area available for new homes. These will be considered on a case by case basis. In town centre locations it is assumed that the mixed use element would be incorporated as an integral part of the development. For strategic scale sites like new settlements, it will be anticipated that there will be a range of densities and developable areas across the whole site to accommodate a sustainable mix of homes, employment opportunities, local centres, leisure, green infrastructure and supporting infrastructure. The residential capacity of new settlements or similar strategic scale proposals will be calculated based on inclusion of some homes in each of the density categories identified as they can be integrated in separate parcels of development within the scheme to contribute to diversity of character and place making. The capacity calculated for such schemes is to assist with comparisons between them. Consideration will also be given to the site promoter's proposed densities and capacity set out in their submission.

Economic development

2.85 Following the approach taken for residential developments, several categories have been devised relating to economic forms of development. Again, these have utilised examples of recently completed and under

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construction employment development to guide an appropriate range of plot ratios (gross floorspace to site area) for various locations across the district.

- 2.86** There are limited up to date national guides on calculating economic development capacities. The HELAA (2017) referred to plot ratios for employment use based on the now somewhat aged publications by Roger Tym (1997), the national guidance note on Employment Land Reviews (2004) and from other local authorities. The categories used are shown below:

Table 3 Examples of plot ratios for employment use (gross floorspace to site area)

Employment use	Roger Tym (1997)	Other studies
Business park	0.25 to 0.30	0.25 to 0.40
Industrial	0.42	0.35 to 0.45
Warehouse	0.35 to 0.40	0.40 to 0.60
Town centre office	0.41	0.75 to 2.00

- 2.87** In the HELAA (2017), it was recognised that the range of plot ratios can vary significantly depending upon the site specific circumstances of an individual site and specific employment use. This can lead to significant variations in the number of jobs created and proportion of parking required. Additionally, since then, on 1 September 2020 amendments to the Use Classes Order came into effect with the introduction of Class E which encompasses commercial, business and services as well as uses formerly covered under A and D. This allows for the change of use of a building to another use within class E without necessarily the need for planning permission.

- 2.88** To reflect recent permissions, an assessment of the delivered floorspace on sites providing employment uses has been undertaken to provide categories of:

- Business parks - 0.35 plot ratio
- Industrial areas - 0.40 plot ratio
- Retail (food stores) - 0.25 plot ratio
- Retail parks - 0.20 plot ratio

- 2.89** These economic development categories are set out in detail in 5 'Appendix 2 - Economic Development Density Categories'. When calculating the percentage of land taken with the built form, the gross site area has been used. This is due to there usually being minimal differences between net and gross site areas in schemes providing purely employment uses due to the need for large amounts of hardstanding for parking, manoeuvring and deliveries and more incidental landscaping.

- 2.90** The review of recent permissions also highlighted that many proposals for business uses falling under B1, B2 or B8 include all three uses within the description to enable a flexible approach to lettings and sales. This means that the buildings could be occupied for either or all of the uses specified. This makes setting out floorspace ratios more challenging, therefore general categories have been devised illustrating the types and variations of economic development that are being delivered across the district.

- 2.91** To facilitate flexibility in economic development uses where they are included as a potentially suitable use for a site, or part of a site, the potential capacity is given as indicative figures only to acknowledge the requirement for economic uses on the site to promote sustainability or where constraints make the site unsuitable for residential development. The ultimate decision on the proportion of the site area to be used for employment purposes will be determined through the Local Plan and planning applications.

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Town centres

2.92 For economic development within town centres, many will relate to existing buildings and either involve a change of use or demolition and rebuild. The built form could utilise a higher percentage of the site area due to the reduced need to provide parking and landscaping as these may be provided already in close proximity to the site. There are also greater opportunities to maximise floorspace by building on several floors. As such there are likely to be greater site specific considerations and constraints so no typology has been provided here. If a town centre site was identified through the desktop review or call for site consultation, then we will assess on a case by case basis seeking views of their Council specialists such as urban design, conservation and those working on the market towns programme.

2.93 Two major town centre regenerations to have completed recently are provided as examples below:

1. The redevelopment of Chequers Court within Huntingdon town centre has helped to rejuvenate the retail offer of the town. An application for the redevelopment of the 1960s units for modern units on 0.93ha of land saw the built form occupying some 50% of the site area. The site is now occupied by 11 businesses including shops and cafes. Minimal landscaping and parking were provided as a multi storey car park providing 406 spaces was built on adjoining land within an existing car parking area. This allowed for a higher plot ratio to be achieved on site. The site was completed in 2018.
2. Within St Neots, the redevelopment of land formerly comprising of a household waste recycling centre, old fire station, car park and recreation ground has increased the leisure offer within the town. The mixed use development includes a cinema, three restaurants, gym and three flats. The site is 1.08ha with the built form occupying 30% of the site. The scheme also provided some 105 car parking spaces and 65 cycle spaces as well as some open/play space to mitigate the loss of the recreation ground. The site specifics here resulted in a lower plot ratio for the site.

New units in Chequers Court, Huntingdon



St Neots Priory Quarter Rowley Arts centre



Logistics and Distribution

2.94 Huntingdonshire has a limited logistics and distribution sector. With Huntingdonshire's location in relation to the strategic road network, there is increasing interest in largescale logistics and distribution schemes, particularly along the A1(M) and A14 corridors. This is also being experienced in neighbouring areas such as Northamptonshire and Peterborough.

2.95 The ['Warehousing in the UK: Operations, Planning and Decarbonisation' briefing report \(May 2023\)](#) provides a detailed review of the UK warehousing industry, the role it plays in supply chain management and its relationship with freight transport operations. It also provides details on how plot ratios can be applied to such sites. The review highlights the same percentage ranges for plot ratios as those identified in Table 7 above. It states that the range of 35-40% is far more typical of most warehouse developments. It also identified that plot ratios are sometimes higher in urban areas due to high land values and the pressure to intensify sites, this was evidenced in the analysis by CBRE of industrial and warehousing sites in the London Plan evidence base which showed that the most plot ratios were between 40%-60%. CBRE also reviewed 56 urban logistics developments in London.

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For these sites, the plot ratios ranged from 20-62%, and the mean and median average plot ratio were 45% and 43% respectively (see page 57 of the review).

- 2.96** With Huntingdonshire being much more rural, it is not realistic or desirable to see high plot ratios for such developments. A plot ratio closer to 40% is therefore a more realistic figure in which to base capacity calculations on (bearing in mind that these are used to provide a starting point in calculating capacity). This is also in line with the largescale logistics and distribution schemes that have and are coming forward in neighbouring areas such as Northamptonshire and Peterborough.

Economic development within new settlement and urban extension proposals

- 2.97** As with the residential typologies, a typology for strategic scale economic development has not been provided here reflecting the site specific considerations and opportunities that will vary between sites and proposals. Some new settlement or urban extension proposals will be economic led, others may be residential led which will impact the mix of appropriate uses to create sustainable communities, neighbourhoods and environments and to achieve the objectives/priorities of the development.
- 2.98** Alconbury Weald is currently the key example within the district of economic development being built as part of a new settlement. The economic elements of Wintringham Park, the district's other strategic expansion location, have not yet received detailed planning approval so details on the floorspace and uses provided are yet to be determined.
- 2.99** Alongside 5,000 new homes and associated community, transport and green infrastructure, Alconbury Weald is planned to provide some 290,000sqm of employment floorspace (B uses). The majority of this will be within the 150ha Enterprise Zone designation meaning that part of the site is focussed for employment development. The Enterprise Zone is intended to encourage investment, attract innovative companies and create around 8,000 jobs within the site.

- 2.100** Of the approximately 106,500sqm of non-residential floorspace already completed across Alconbury Weald since 2012, the vast majority have been for a mix of B1 and B2 development (96,500sqm) for offices, research and development, industrial and manufacturing. B8 warehousing and storage is low at some 5,000sqm providing ancillary storage capacity on site only. Other uses relating to food & drink, a small shop, community facilities, primary school and leisure have provided some 5,000sqm. These support the needs of the growing population as the site is being developed. The development of the site and incorporation of such uses is also responsive to site specific matters such as the heritage on the site. The conservation and enhancement of heritage within the site is a key feature particularly seen in the renovation of the Watch Office into a café. These opportunities exemplify how economic development can be used as a tool to regenerate and engage people, as such there should be flexibility in how development is brought forward in these cases.
- 2.101** Across the reserved matters and full applications currently made on the site for new build economic uses, the range that the built form occupied for each application area was between 10 and 61% with the overall built form across the cumulative site areas being 41%. The quite significant range reflects that these applications are part of a wider site where parking, landscaping and access roads are in some cases shared.

Boulevard, Enterprise Zone



Swynford Stores



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Presentation of detailed site assessments

- 2.102** The suitability, availability, achievability and deliverability / developability of each site, as well as details of the site will be recorded in a standard template. The template for the assessment is provided below.
- 2.103** To provide consistency, use of the same assessment template will be used no matter the scale or use of the proposed development. However, it is recognised that the level of detail is likely to vary and be proportionate to the scale and nature of the use(s) proposed. For example, for a new settlement proposal, it would be expected that a greater amount of information will be provided by which to assess it and thus more commentary will be included in its assessment when compared to a site proposing development of 10 dwellings.
- 2.104** Sites that have demonstrated to be deliverable or developable through the detailed site assessments would then progress through to a separate Sustainability Appraisal phase. This would look at detailed aspects of the proposed site and its relationship with its surroundings including aspects such as access to services and facilities, impact on designated sites of biodiversity significance, and likelihood of experiencing pollution and its ability to contribute towards national priorities such as reusing previously developed land and reaching net zero carbon emission targets.
- 2.105** Once sites have been appraised, a summary of the key findings of the SA will be set out for each site. This will inform whether a site can be taken forward to calculating an indicative capacity.

Assessment Template

Site reference	
Site name	

Site address	Parish(es)	Site area (ha)

Fundamental Constraints

Fundamental constraints	Status	Outcome
Agricultural land grade 1		
Flood zone 3b		
Designated local green space		
Nature conservation designation		
Minerals and Waste areas		
Site over 0.25ha or large enough for at least 5 homes		

Promoter's intentions

Promoter's anticipated uses	Promoter's capacity	Promoter's delivery expectations

Core information

How was the site identified?	
Relevant planning history	

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Land type	
Current use of the site	
Supporting information	

Location and constraints map

Updates after the Initial Assessment

End of assessment template

Assessment of Site Potential

Suitability and constraints	
Availability	
Achievability	
Deliverability / developability	

Progression of Site through to Sustainability Appraisal

Should the site progress to the sustainability stage?	
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Impact of the Sustainability Appraisal on the assessment

HDC's Delivery Calculations

HDC's net developable area calculation	HDC's anticipated uses and capacity	HDC's delivery estimate

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Stage 3 - Windfall assessment

- 2.106** Windfall housing development is defined by the NPPF as being development taking place on sites not identified in the development plan. Paragraph 72 of the NPPF 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....’*
- 2.107** The delivery of housing on unidentified small sites has been and will continue to be an important source of housing supply within the district. Current windfall developed in Huntingdonshire mostly derives from enabling policies in the current Local Plan. For example, through rural exceptions housing and permissive policies such as LP 8 Key Service Centres and LP 9 Small Settlements that allow for development proposals on land within the built up area of key service centres and small settlements and on land well-related to the built-up area as long it accords with other policies in the Local Plan. These policies include but are not limited to, avoiding the irreversible loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land (Grade 1 to 3a) where possible, or recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside. In addition, some windfall development can be enabled through the NPPF, or via planning appeals.
- 2.108** Development on windfall sites provides additional flexibility to housing supply and to the types of housing found across the district. In accordance with national guidance on undertaking a land availability assessment, an assessment of potential housing supply from windfall sites is outlined below.
- 2.109** To understand the potential future windfall supply for the district we are proposing to look back at the historic rate of delivery in the district since 1 April 2011 (the start of the current Local Plan period). This approach was also used to identify windfall delivery during the examination of Huntingdonshire’s Local Plan to 2036 and was approved by the Planning Inspector. In this instance windfall supply was broken down into three categories: sites which received prior approval, rural exceptions sites and all other sites providing between 1 and 9 dwellings. This windfall delivery is documented in the Council’s housing trajectory which can be found in Part One of the [Annual Monitoring Report](#).
- 2.110** This time we will identify historic windfall on sites containing between one and four homes, this is because the LAA will be looking for potential development sites of five or more homes and therefore available, suitable and achievable land for the delivery of homes on sites that can accommodate five or more homes will have been identified via an alternative method.
- 2.111** To assess the historic rate of delivery on sites containing one to four homes officers will use past housing completions data, this data shows planning applications that have been granted permission and the number of homes that have been delivered within a specific monitoring year. Housing completions data is gathered annually in collaboration with the Cambridgeshire County Council’s Research and Monitoring Team, it is a tried and tested data gathering exercise used across the country by Local Planning Authorities. This housing completions data is also used to inform the Government of housing delivery rates across the County and feeds into the district’s Annual Monitoring Reports, housing trajectories and Housing Delivery Test calculations.
- 2.112** When assessing the historic windfall housing delivery rate on sites containing 1 to 4 homes, applications for prior approval and any planning applications relating to rural exception sites will be assessed separately to other planning applications. This is so that we can identify three types of windfall allowance:
- one for prior approvals;
 - one for rural exceptions housing;
 - and another for ‘mainstream housing supply’ (all other sites containing 1 to 4 dwellings).

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2.113 The findings of this windfall analysis will help to inform what windfall allowance may be appropriate to use for the new Local Plan.

Stage 4 - Assessment review

2.114 National guidance states that once the sites and broad locations have been assessed, the development potential of all sites can be collected to produce an indicative trajectory.

2.115 This trajectory should set out how much housing and the amount of economic development can be provided, and at what point in the future (i.e. within years 1 to 5, 6 to 10, and 11 and beyond). An overall risk assessment should be made as to whether sites will come forward as anticipated. This will utilise the evidence gathered through the desktop review, officer knowledge, call for sites consultation and communication with site promoters.

2.116 If we do not get enough land, we will also consider seeking additional sites, reviewing discounted sites to see if any circumstances have changed and potentially reconsider densities for sites where our assessment varies significantly from that of the site promoter. If necessary, an additional call for sites will be carried out to seek additional land for potential development. If this is undertaken, any submitted sites will be assessed using this same methodology and outcomes reviewed to ensure consistency of decision making at each stage.

Stage 5 - Final evidence base

2.117 National guidance expects the following standard outputs to be produced as part of the land availability assessment:

- a list of all sites or broad locations considered, cross-referenced to their locations on maps;
- an assessment of each site or broad location, including:

- where these have been discounted, evidence justifying reasons given;
- where these are considered suitable, available and achievable, the potential type and quantity of development, including a reasonable estimate of build out rates, setting out how any barriers to delivery could be overcome and when;
- an indicative trajectory of anticipated development based on the evidence available.

3 Next steps

3.1 The finalised methodology will be used to assess sites submitted through the Call for Sites.

3.2 The Land Availability Assessment outcomes will help inform options for preparation of the development strategy for the updated Local Plan. It will be used in conjunction with several other studies including but not limited to:

- Settlement Hierarchy
- Strategic Flood Risk Assessments
- Strategic Transport Assessments
- Housing Need Assessment - based on the government's [Standard Method](#)
- Infrastructure Needs Assessment

3.3 Collectively these will identify the amount of land required for different uses, constraints and opportunities which affect their prospects of being brought forward and their appropriateness in the local context. Potential sites will be put forward for engagement through the Council's Local Plan Options Document with the Land Availability Assessment and the Sustainability Appraisal forming key parts of the evidence base for the next Local Plan.

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4 Appendix 1 - Residential Development Density Categories

Very high - 145 dwellings per hectare

Where is this typically found?	Characteristics
<p>Generally found on sites in or close to town centres maximising their sustainable location. These could be regeneration opportunities. Examples include retirement or sheltered apartments or care homes where the individual dwellings typically have 1 or 2 bedrooms, communal facilities and limited car parking. May also be general market apartment blocks where undercroft car parking can be accommodated.</p>	<p>Development form</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apartments or residential homes, typically of 3-5 storeys. • Provision of predominantly 1-2 bedroom units where some communal facilities may be incorporated. <p>Parking provision</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of undercroft parking for cars and bicycles avoids dominance by surface level parking. • Limited car and bicycle parking may suffice for residential homes provided adequate space is allowed for carers and support workers. Provision should be made to accommodate ambulances and other patient transport vehicles. <p>Open space</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highly dependent on the site's context; landscaping may be necessary to integrate or screen development from its surroundings. • Limited usable open space may suffice where the site is in close proximity to existing public open space.
<p>Examples</p> <p>Walden Road/ Princes Street, Huntingdon</p>	

This is a town centre, previously developed site where a very high density, high quality scheme incorporated 110 apartments adjacent to the replacement library and the grade II listed Lawrence Court. There are 27 1-bedroom apartments and 83 2-bedroom apartments. The density is achieved by provision of undercroft car parking at ground floor level beneath the apartments with security fencing screened by limited soft landscaping. There is limited soft landscaping with preference given to the provision of interconnecting footpaths to help integrate the development into the town centre.

- 110 homes
- 0.73ha land (residential element only)
- density of 150 dwellings per hectare



Osier House, New Road, St Ives

Located on the edge of St Ives town centre, this was formerly an office unit that was demolished to provide 14 one and two bedroomed apartments. The scheme was completed in 2021. The site's sustainable location being in close proximity to the town centre provided an opportunity to maximise density on the site. Its redevelopment also provided a modest scale regeneration opportunity that enhanced the local built environment.

- 14 apartments
- 0.1ha net site area (0.1 gross) giving a net developable area of 100%
- density of 140 dwellings per hectare



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High - 85 dwellings per hectare

Where is this typically found?	Characteristics
<p>Sites within towns for general market apartments with surface level car parking or mixed schemes with some apartments and some houses typically of 2.5 or three storeys. Also, sheltered schemes with communal facilities. Sites may also be located within historic cores of villages where there is a concentration of smaller cottages and terraced homes. Such schemes may be appropriate for downsizing proposals for specialist housing for older people seeking to remain within their existing community.</p>	<p>Development form</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Predominantly apartments but may involve mixed schemes with some apartments and some houses of 2.5 or 3 storeys. Sheltered housing schemes comprising apartments or smaller houses with substantial communal facilities. <p>Parking provision</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Surface level car parking for at least one space per dwelling and some visitor spaces may be accommodated. Communal covered cycle parking may be provided adjacent to clusters of properties to avoid the need for individual storage facilities. <p>Open space</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apartments and sheltered housing schemes will have some usable communal open space, the amount depending on the nature of the scheme and level of accessibility to public open space. Mixed schemes will include some properties with private open space.

Examples

Drovers Place, Huntingdon

Drovers Place is a high density edge of town centre redevelopment of a previously developed site in Huntingdon. The general arrangement sees groups of 2.5, 3 and 4-storey units incorporating a mixture of houses and flats. The site incorporates a mixture of parking courts, parking bays and integral car ports for residents, accessed via a central spine road. The site's

redevelopment has provided an improved gateway into the town centre and conservation area and is part of a wider regeneration of the Huntingdon West area. The site was completed in 2020.

- 79 houses and apartments
- 0.8ha net site area (1ha gross) giving a net developable area of 80%
- density of 99 dwellings per hectare



Former Police Station, Ramsey

Located within a residential area, the former police station offices have now been converted to flats. There is one parking space for each flat. Under a separate application, two semi-detached homes were built to the rear of the building. The whole site was completed in 2021. The existing building was built in 1910 and has not been altered externally.

- 13 flats within the former police station and two houses to the rear
- 0.2ha net site area (0.2 gross) giving a net developable area of 100%
- density of 75 dwellings per hectare



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Moderate - 50 dwellings per hectare

Where is this typically found?	Characteristics
<p>Sites within an existing built up area either a town or larger village for housing, or a mixture of housing with some apartments. Housing is likely to be in terraced form, including a proportion of smaller properties to meet the needs of older people wishing to downsize or of smaller households.</p>	<p>Development form</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Housing, predominantly in terraced form, or a mixture of houses and apartments. May include a mixture of mainly 2 and 3 storey properties with a substantial proportion of smaller properties to meet the needs of older people wishing to downsize or smaller households. <p>Parking provision</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Surface level car parking for all properties may be accommodated. Cycle parking may be communal or some provided with individual properties. <p>Open space</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Private open space will be included for the majority of properties; apartments may include terraces. Larger schemes will include on site children's play space.
<p>Examples</p> <p>Huntingdon Street, St Neots</p> <p>Located to the north of St Neots town centre. The site formerly consisted of a former petrol filling station, commercial buildings and a significant amount of hardstanding before it was redevelopment for affordable housing consisting of 24 homes and 15 apartments. Building heights range from two to three storeys. The site was completed in 2021.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 39 homes 0.72ha net site area (0.76 gross) giving a net developable area of 95% density of 54 dwellings per hectare 	



Cades Close, Ramsey

This site was completed in 2022. The site was formerly a storage/warehousing site that has been cleared and redeveloped for 32 homes in the centre of Ramsey. The properties are arranged in terraces and semi-detached pairs with some flats over garages. Parking provision are two spaces per dwelling.

- 32 homes
- 0.6ha net site area (0.7 gross) giving net developable area of 85%
- density of 53 dwellings per hectare



Victorian terraced housing

These traditional terraces are typically of four to eight homes, predominantly two storey with occasional use of attic rooms creating a third storey. Generally properties have a small set-back from the road and can have substantial rear gardens and usually on street parking only. Victorian terraced housing is found across the district in towns and villages but in greatest quantities in the market towns. Two examples are provided below:

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Cambridge Road, Godmanchester

- 12 homes
- 0.25ha of land
- density of 48 dwellings per hectare of built form



Hartford Road, Huntingdon

- 8 homes
- 0.14ha of land
- density of 57 dwellings per hectare of built form



Low - 35 dwellings per hectare

Where is this typically found?	Characteristics
<p>Sites in larger villages which need to reflect the lower density context provided by surrounding housing. The development form is likely to be detached or semi-detached housing.</p>	<p>Development form</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing will typically comprise detached and semi-detached properties with some short terraces. Two storey properties will predominate. <p>Parking provision</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surface level car parking throughout the development; many properties may have garaging. Cycle parking provided for individual properties. <p>Open space</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual garden space for each property will be normal. Some communal open space/ play space will be incorporated to meet the needs of residents depending on the scale of the development.

Examples

Lucks Lane, Buckden

Greenfield site located on the edge of Buckden village adjoining the A1(M). The development provides a mix of one to four bedroomed dwellings designed to reflect local character and the density is consistent with the lower densities found across the village. The site's location in proximity to the strategic transport network and within the wider landscape has resulted in a lower net developable area (50%) which increased the density. The site is anticipated to complete in 2023.

- 180 homes
- 5.3 net site area (10.7 gross) giving a net developable area of 50%
- density of 34 dwellings per hectare

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North of Glatton Road, Sawtry

80 new homes on a triangular greenfield site located at the edge of the village of Sawtry. Homes range from one to four bedroomed homes arranged within five distinct islands within the site. There are a mixture of terraces with parking to the front of these properties and larger detached homes. All have modest gardens. The site completed in 2021.

- 80 homes
- 2.75ha net site area (3.8 gross) giving a net developable area of 72%
- density of 29 dwellings per hectare



Very low - 25 dwellings per hectare

Where is this typically found?	Characteristics
<p>Sites in the more sustainable smaller settlements which need to reflect the lower density context provided by surrounding housing. The development form is likely to be detached or semi-detached housing.</p>	<p>Development form</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing will typically comprise detached and semi-detached properties with the possible inclusion of some bungalows. Two storey properties will predominate. <p>Parking provision</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surface level car parking throughout the development; many properties may have garaging. Cycle parking provided for individual properties. <p>Open space</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual garden space for each property will be normal. Some communal open space/ play space will be incorporated to meet the needs of residents depending on the scale of the development.

Examples

Dutton Gardens, Great Gransden

Greenfield site located on the edge of Great Gransden providing 40 new homes ranging from one to four bedrooms with modest gardens. Parking is either on plot or for terraced homes are located to the front of the property. The density is reflective of the generally low densities found across the village. The site completed in 2022.

- 40 homes
- 1.26ha net site area (1.8 gross) giving a net developable area of 70%
- density of 29 dwellings per hectare

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The Green, Great Staughton

12 homes consisting of a mixture of one to three bedroomed affordable flats, houses and bungalows. All dwellings have two parking spaces and well proportioned garden space. The site was brought forward by the Great Staughton Community Land Trust with development of the site by Chorus Homes and home builders Aspen Homes. The site is anticipated to complete in 2023.

- 12 homes
- 0.45 net site area (0.6 gross) giving a net developable area of 75%
- density of 27 dwellings per hectare



Kym View Close, Kimbolton

This is a triangular greenfield site comprising of 21 homes (13 four and five bedroom detached homes with generous garden space and eight affordable semi-detached homes for social rent and shared ownership). Due to the site shape, plots are an irregular size and shape. There is some public open space provided within the development.

- 21 homes
- 1.37 net site area (1.4 gross) giving a net developable area of 98%
- density of 15 dwellings per hectare



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5 Appendix 2 - Economic Development Density Categories

Business Parks - 0.35 plot ratio

Where is this typically found?	Characteristics
<p>Purpose built business parks are usually located on the edges of towns and larger villages providing distinct concentrations of employment uses. They can also be found within or as extensions to existing business locations where they have been introduced to rejuvenate an area or meet changing business needs.</p>	<p>Development form</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Predominantly focused on provision of offices with B2 and B8 uses integrated Units often arranged within business courtyards with large central car parking areas <p>Parking provision</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extensive surface level car parking and some dedicated bicycle parking Parking usually provided as one space per 0.01ha of land Increasing amounts of electric vehicle charging points <p>Landscaping</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Usually incidental landscaping to break up car parking areas and soften development edges some areas have more significant amounts of landscaping if adjoining residential areas or open countryside
<p>Examples</p> <p>Eagle Business Park, Yaxley</p> <p>Following outline approval, phase 2 of the Eagle Business Park in Yaxley has been delivered via reserved matters applications and full applications related to particular plots/parcels within the site. Each provide a range of units for B1/B2/B8 uses with associated parking and some soft landscaping. Across the reserved matters and full applications currently made on the site for new build business units, the range that the built form occupied for each parcel was</p>	

between 25 and 45% with the overall built form across the cumulative site areas being 37%. Parking provision works out at approximately one space per 0.01 of land. Site has been building out since 2016.

- 6.59ha of land across with reserved matters and full approval
- approximately 24,000sqm of floorspace completed or approved
- overall built form uses 37% of the site area (parcels range between occupying 25 and 45%)



Lakes Business Park, Fenstanton

Following outline approval, the Lakes Business Park in Fenstanton parish has been delivered via reserved matters and full applications related to particular plots/parcels within the site. Each provide a range of units for B1/B2/B8 uses with associated parking and some soft landscaping. Across the reserved matters and full applications currently made on the site for new build business units, the range that the built form occupied for each parcel was between 40 and 46% with the overall built form across the cumulative site areas being 42%. Parking provision works out at approximately one space per 0.01 of land. The lowest percentage was observed on a parcel for a scaffolding depot which due to operational reasons required more open land. Site has been building out since 2019.

- 2.87ha of land across with reserved matters and full approval
- approximately 12,000sqm of floorspace completed or approved
- overall built form uses 42% of the site area (parcels range between occupying 22 and 46%)

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Hinchingbrooke Business Park, Huntingdon

Kingfisher Court is an example of an infill development within an existing business park providing a courtyard of 3 terraces with centrally located building entrances and service areas. 8 units built falling within B1a/B2/B8 uses. The Falcon Way development is another example of an infill development of six units for B1/B2/B8 uses with associated parking and manoeuvring areas. Both include some soft landscaping. Both sites were completed in 2018.

Kingfisher Court

- 0.48ha of land
- 45 vehicle parking spaces
- built form uses 34% of the site area

Falcon Way

- 0.49ha of land
- 47 vehicle parking spaces
- built form uses 40% of the site area



Industrial Areas - 0.4 plot ratio

Where is this typically found?	Characteristics
Industrial estates occur both within and on the peripheries of all the main towns, and some larger villages. These are commonly close to housing providing jobs accessible by sustainable modes of transport. Some industrial areas date back to the 1950s and now are in need of some regeneration/ rejuvenation to enhance their appearance or to comply with changing operational standards. There have been instances of trade counters and retail units for trades and home improvements diversifying industrial areas.	<p>Development form</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many units focused on manufacturing or warehousing but some include trade counters and space for offices • Usually smaller brick built or metal framed units and larger factory premises • Usually large expanses of steel security boundary fencing <p>Parking provision</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large expanses of tarmac road surface and car/lorry parking • Parking usually provided as one space per 0.01ha of land • Frequently have heavily engineered road layouts • Heavily trafficked by cars and heavy goods vehicles, but generally few pedestrians <p>Landscaping</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Usually very minimal landscaping with only incidental soft landscaping to soften development edges • Some industrial areas located with more urban areas have grass verges

Examples

Tower Close, St Peter's Road, Huntingdon

Located within an established employment area, this application saw the demolition of the existing large scale commercial building on site and the erection of two large commercial buildings to provide B1, B2 and B8 uses with associated car parking and servicing. Approximately

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100 vehicle parking spaces are provided for cars and motorbikes with additional spaces for cycle storage and four electric vehicle charging points. Modern design with features to increase biodiversity have been incorporated and some landscaping where the site site adjoins St Peter's Road. Site completed in 2022.

- 1.1ha of land
- 5,175sqm of floorspace across two units for B1/B2/B8 use
- built form uses 47% of the site area



Somersham Road Industrial Area, Nuffield Road, St Ives

Located on a prominent corner plot within in an established employment area, this was a redevelopment of a vacant plot following the demolition of pre-existing buildings in around 2006. The site was completed in 2020 and has provided 10 new B1/B2/B8 units. The whole of the site is covered with hardstanding. Very minimal soft landscaping measures and fencing due to the site's location within a pre-existing industrial area. Has incorporated approximately 20 car parking spaces with disability spaces and cycle parking.

- 0.27ha of land
- 10 B1/B2/B8 units totalling 966 sqm
- built form uses 36% of the site area with the remaining site being covered in hardstanding



Retail (food stores) - 0.25 plot ratio

Where is this typically found?	Characteristics
<p>Large food stores usually located on the edge of towns, maximising connections to the strategic road network and supporting a wider network of communities. Some smaller food stores and other retail units have been built on brownfield sites within towns adding greater market choice and being in closer proximity to the local population for those who may not be able to travel via car to settlement edges.</p>	<p>Development form</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Food stores are often stand-alone units, other goods often clustered into retail parks <p>Parking provision</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Extensive surface level car parking and some dedicated bicycle parking ● Parking is usually provided at 1.3 spaces per 0.01ha of land ● Increasing amounts of electric vehicle charging points ● Segregated rear servicing yards ● Fairly well trafficked, with bustling pedestrian movement at busy periods <p>Landscaping</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Usually integrated landscaping and around the edge to provide some softening of development edges

Examples

Aldi and Lidl, Huntingdon

Both were previously industrial sites that were cleared for medium sized food stores and associated parking. Aldi was completed in 2017 and is located on a parcel of land along the Edison Bell Way link road forming part of the wider regeneration of the Huntingdon West area. Lidl is located along Stukeley Road to the west of the railway line several hundred metres from Aldi. The site was completed in 2016. Both have large parking areas and landscaping within and along the site edges.

- 0.56ha of land
- 0.77ha of land

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- 89 vehicle parking spaces with cycle spaces
- built form uses 33% of the site area



- 97 vehicle parking spaces
- built form uses 24% of the site area



Aldi and Morrisons in St Ives

These are well placed in relation to the strategic road network via access onto the A1123 and A1096. The Aldi site is a redevelopment of a former factory site within a business park. There is an expansive car park with minimal soft landscaping, service yard to the north of the site and signage. The site was completed in 2021. The Morrisons is a larger unit by some 500 sqm than the other examples here is also accompanied by a petrol filling station and non-food retail unit with servicing, parking and associated landscaping. It also has substantially more parking. The site was completed in 2019.

- 0.79ha of land
- 126 parking spaces with 8 cycle spaces
- built form uses 22% of the site area



- 2.74ha of land
- 303 parking spaces with 40 cycle spaces
- built form uses 18% of the site area



Retail Parks - 0.20 plot ratio

Where is this typically found?	Characteristics
Retail parks with clusters of large retail units are generally found on the outskirts of settlements or as redeveloped or reused industrial areas. Larger 21st century residential led developments often incorporate smaller retail units.	<p>Development form</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Large scale units, mostly in coloured cladding ● Directional road frontage and internal signage <p>Parking provision</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Extensive surface level car parking with some dedicated bicycle parking ● Parking is usually provided at 1.05 spaces per 0.01ha of land ● Segregated rear servicing yards ● Increasing amounts of electric vehicle charging points <p>Landscaping</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Integrated soft landscaping

Examples

Quora Retail Park, Howard Road, Eaton Socon, St Neots

This was a redevelopment of a brownfield site that had formerly had an industrial unit and offices but had been vacant for several years. It is located in the south of St Neots. The retail-led regeneration of the site saw the additional of a food store, two other large retail units (non-food products), three other units for food outlets and small retail. There is soft landscaping breaking up the expansive parking area and footpaths. The site completed in 2016.

- 1.7ha site
- 203 car parking spaces
- built form uses 27% of the site area

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Abbey Retail Park, St Ives

The Abbey Retail Park is located on the eastern edge of St Ives, approximately 2 kilometres north east of St Ives town centre. It is an irregular shape with quite significant vegetation around its edges particularly where it adjoins residential neighbourhoods. The irregularity of the site makes building on parts impractical resulting in a lower net developable area. The retail park consists of several drive thrus, restaurants and small shops with units added over time intensifying the retail park.

- 1.15ha site
- Approximately 106 car parking spaces
- built form uses 13% of the site area



6 Glossary

Achievable

A site can be considered achievable for development where there is a reasonable prospect that the particular type of development will be developed on the site at a particular point in time.

Available

A site's availability will be judged based on whether there is confidence that there are no legal or ownership impediments to development, and when it is likely to deliver the proposed development.

Brownfield

See Previously Developed Land (PDL).

Community infrastructure

Facilities available for use by the community that provide for the health, welfare, social, educational, leisure, recreational and cultural needs of the community.

Deliverable

To be considered deliverable, sites for housing 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. In particular:

- a. sites which do not involve major development and have planning permission, and all sites with detailed planning permission, should be considered deliverable until permission expires, unless there is clear evidence that homes will not be delivered within five years (for example because they are no longer viable, there is no longer a demand for the type of units or sites have long term phasing plans).
- b. where a site has outline planning permission for major development, has been allocated in a development plan, has a grant of permission in principle, or is identified on a brownfield register, it should only be considered deliverable where there is clear evidence that housing completions will begin on site within five years.

Density

The amount of development on a given piece of land.

Developable

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Sites should be in a suitable location for housing development with a reasonable prospect that they will be available and could be viably developed at the point envisaged.

Economic development

Development, including those within the B Use Classes, public and community uses and main town centre uses (but excluding housing development).

Green infrastructure

The network of green spaces such as parks, playing fields, allotments and cemeteries; these may have public access or be private spaces. Traditionally including water features such as rivers and lakes these are increasingly referred to as blue infrastructure.

Infrastructure

A collective term for services such as roads, electricity, sewerage, water, education and health facilities.

Land Availability Assessment (LAA)

A study intended to assess overall potential for housing development in an area, including the identification of specific housing sites with development potential over a 15 year time span. See also HELAA and SHLAA.

Landscape

The character and appearance of land including its shape, form, natural features, biodiversity and colours and the way these components are combined.

Open space

All open space of public value, including not just land, but also areas of water (such as rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs) which offer important opportunities for sport and recreation and can act as a visual amenity.

Previously developed land (PDL)

Land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land (although it should not be assumed that the whole of the curtilage should be developed) and any associated fixed surface infrastructure. This excludes: land that is or was last occupied by agricultural or forestry buildings; land that has been developed for minerals extraction or waste disposal by landfill, where provision for restoration has been made through development management procedures; land in

built-up areas such as residential gardens, parks, recreation grounds and allotments; and land that was previously developed but where the remains of the permanent structure or fixed surface structure have blended into the landscape.

Renewable and low carbon energy

Includes energy for heating and cooling as well as generating electricity. Renewable energy covers those energy flows that occur naturally and repeatedly in the environment – from the wind, the fall of water, the movement of the oceans, from the sun and also from biomass and deep geothermal heat. Low carbon technologies are those that can help reduce emissions (compared to conventional use of fossil fuels).

Suitable

A site can be considered suitable if it would provide an appropriate location for development when considered against relevant constraints and their potential to be mitigated. Thus, the assessment of a site's suitability for development is a high-level assumption about whether the site physically could be developed, rather than whether the site should or would be developed.

Sustainable development

Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. This is at the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)

These cover a range of approaches to surface water drainage management including source control measures such as rainwater recycling, infiltration devices to allow water to soak into the ground, vegetated features that hold and drain water downhill mimicking natural drainage patterns, filter drains and porous pavements to allow rainwater and run-off to infiltrate into permeable material below ground and provide storage if needed and basins and ponds to hold excess water after rain and allow controlled discharge that avoids flooding.

Vitality and viability

In terms of retailing, vitality is the capacity of a centre to grow or to develop its level of commercial activity. Viability is the capacity of a centre to achieve the commercial success necessary to sustain the existence of the centre.