

Local Plan Panel Meeting	
Meeting Date	7 May 2020
Report Title	Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (Call for Sites)
Cabinet Member	Cllr Mike Baldock, Cabinet Member for Planning
SMT Lead	James Freeman, Head of Planning Services
Head of Service	James Freeman, Head of Planning Services
Lead Officer	Jill Peet, Planning Policy Manager
Key Decision	No
Classification	Open
Recommendations	1. Note the content of this report

1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 The Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) is part of the evidence that informs the preparation of the local plan review. It is an assessment of potential development sites that could, when considered with other evidence, become development allocations in the local plan review to meet the development needs of the Borough. This report sets out how sites have been identified and how they have been assessed. An explanation of how this information feeds into the development of strategic options for the local plan review is also given.
- 1.2 The Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (Call for Sites) is a draft document. The main body of the text, index of sites and site assessments are attached in appendix 1. It is important to note that the assessments are technical and high level and the Council is not consulting on the assessment outcome, merely the content for factual accuracy (although this could impact on the assessment outcome). Views on the technical accuracies of the assessments from landowners and/or site promoters is also currently being sought. In addition, views on the infrastructure impacts and/or subsequent potential infrastructure requirements is being considered by the various infrastructure providers (health, highways, education, utilities providers).

2 Background

- 2.1 The Council has carried out the SHLAA as part of the local plan process. It is a technical exercise that informs the preparation of the local plan development strategy and land allocations. It examines the extent to which sites are suitable, available and deliverable. Preparing a SHLAA is a required part of plan making

(NPPF paragraph 67) with a set process to follow identified in national planning policy guidance. The main objectives of the SHLAA are:

- To inform the Council's strategy for the provision of housing for the local plan review
- Identify sites with the potential for housing and assess their potential in terms of suitability, availability and deliverability

- 2.2 The SHLAA is an audit of available land at a point in time. It does not decide where new homes will be built and does not grant planning permission or agree development in principle. The first part of the SHLAA is to identify the land that is potentially available and assess it for its suitability, availability and deliverability. Sites that are taken forward in the local plan review must be deliverable.
- 2.3 SHLAA sites are submitted to the Council from landowners, developers and other interested parties. The Council is also required to identify potential sites such as surplus public sector land, existing housing allocations and land allocated or with permission for other uses which may no longer be required for those uses.
- 2.4 For a site to be included in the SLAA it must be 0.25ha or more in size and it must have the capacity to deliver 5 dwellings or more.
- 2.5 All the sites are assessed using the same methodology. Sites are assessed as being either 'suitable and deliverable', 'suitable but undeliverable' or 'unsuitable'. Unsuitable sites are those subject to high level constraints as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 11d) footnote 6) and include land that is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest, areas at risk of flooding or coastal change, for example. The sustainability criteria of the site is also assessed in terms of access to shops and services. Sites that are assessed as being in unsustainable locations for example, because of their distance from shops and services, could become sustainable through their development if the scale of the site and proximity to other sites would result in a positive contribution to new or enhanced shops and service provision. For this reason, 'unsuitable' sites may not necessarily be excluded from the local plan allocation site selection process. Similarly, 'suitable sites may not necessarily be included in the local plan allocation site selection process. The SHLAA is ultimately an initial high level assessment but identifying site allocations in the local plan review needs to take into consideration all of the other evidence and the Council's corporate objectives.
- 2.6 Following the completion of the 'Call for Sites' assessments (including the requisite feedback from infrastructure providers), a further SHLAA document will be produced that will provide detail on the 'plan/monitor/manage' approach to the provision of housing land supply and confirm a five year supply of deliverable land is available for housing as required by the NPPF. This will be reported to the Panel Members in due course as it will also form part of the evidence for the local plan review.
- 2.7 Which sites should feature in the local plan review is a discussion to be had at a later date when the full range of evidence is available. Plan making is not simply

a sifting exercise. It is not enough purely to look at sites in areas that are not subject to any high level constraints and allocate land in these locations. Other factors come into play, specifically the Council’s corporate objectives set out in the emerging corporate strategy and other evidence such as traffic modelling, air quality evidence, local landscape designations and the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment. A sustainability appraisal of the local plan review is also underway and will inform the strategic options. Once the local plan review is prepared in draft form and ready to be consulted upon (Regulation 19 stage), there will need to be an explanation to justify the Council’s strategic approach taken.

3. Proposals

- 3.1 The recommendation is for Members to note the content of the report as there are no decisions to be made about the sites contained within the document. They do not represent allocations or agree development in principle. It is purely a catalogue of promoted sites with a high level technical assessment outcome. The sites that could be included within the local plan review is a matter for debate at a later meeting of this Panel.

4 Alternative Options

- 4.1 Members could decide to carry out another ‘Call for Sites’ exercise or not to accept the submitted sites assessments. There are no grounds to refuse a site submitted under the ‘Call for Sites’ exercise if it is duly made and meets the criteria. This would delay the local plan review. The SHLAA is a key requirement for a ‘sound’ local plan and without it, the local plan review could not progress so there are no realistic alternative options other than to accept the catalogue of sites as a record of sites submitted and assessed.

5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

- 5.1 The Council is not consulting on the assessment outcomes, merely the content for factual accuracy. Views on the technical accuracies of the assessments are sought from landowners and/or site promoters. Input on the infrastructure impacts and/or subsequent potential infrastructure requirements is being sought from the various infrastructure providers (health, highways, education, utilities providers and so on). Once completed, this may result in some amendments to the assessment outcomes because it can impact on the deliverability of the site, for example. This will be reported back to Members.

6 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	Supports the Council’s Corporate Priority 1: Building the right homes in the right places

Financial, Resource and Property	Work undertaken within existing Local Plan project budget.
Legal, Statutory and Procurement	None identified at this stage.
Crime and Disorder	None identified at this stage.
Environment and Sustainability	The SHLAA is one element of the Local Plan Review evidence base. A Sustainability Appraisal / Habitats Regulation Assessment Framework has already been established for the Local Plan Review process. Future local plan consultations will be accompanied by a Sustainability Appraisal / HRA document and subsequent key stages of the process will also be subject to SA/HRA.
Health and Wellbeing	None identified at this stage.
Risk Management and Health and Safety	None identified at this stage.
Equality and Diversity	The Local Plan process will be subject to a Community Impact Assessments at appropriate points.
Privacy and Data Protection	None identified at this stage.

7 Appendices

- 7.1 The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:
- Appendix I: SHLAA Catalogue of Sites Report
 - Appendix II: Frequently Asked Questions

8 Background Papers

None.