

STOKE-ON-TRENT CITY COUNCIL

STRATEGIC HOUSING AND ECONOMIC LAND AVAILABILITY ASSESSMENT 2024 METHODOLOGY



Contents

1	Introduction & Background	4
1.1	Outputs	4
1.2	Review	5
1.3	National Planning Policy Framework	5
1.4	National Planning Practice Guidance	6
2	Methodology	8
2.1	Stage 1 – Identification of Sites / Broad Locations	8
2.2	Stage 2 – Site / Broad Location Assessment	10
2.3	Stage 3 – Assessment of Potential Windfall Sites	22
2.4	Stage 4 – Assessment Review	22
2.5	Stage 5 – Final Evidence Base	22
3	Glossary	24

1 Introduction & Background

- 1.0.1** The Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) Methodology 2024 updates the previous Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) Methodology 2019 which was jointly prepared by Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council and Stoke-on-Trent City Council. This methodology updates this methodology to take into account changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and includes a methodology for assessing employment land. This methodology is only applicable to land within the Stoke-on-Trent City Council administrative boundary.
- 1.0.2** The SHELAA is a process that has to be undertaken by Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) to identify and assess sites that have the potential for residential and / or employment development. It helps the council, as the LPA, to understand where and when new houses and business premises could be built in the future which in turn assists the council and other providers ensure that appropriate infrastructure is delivered.
- 1.0.3** The role of the assessment is firstly to identify sites and broad locations for development and then secondly, to assess whether they are suitable, available and achievable for development and the timescale for potential development to be delivered. This assessment will inform whether the council will have enough land to meet future housing and employment needs, and will be used to inform the site selection process, the five year housing land supply and brownfield land register.
- 1.0.4** The SHELAA is an important source of evidence to inform plan making but it does not itself determine whether a site should be allocated for development.
- 1.0.5** This report will set out the methodology used to inform the technical assessment of sites being considered.
- 1.0.6** **The SHELAA will not allocate land for development, and sites identified in the SHELAA will not automatically come forward, or be guaranteed planning permission. Likewise, if sites are ruled out through the SHELAA process this does not prevent a planning application being submitted on the site. Any applications for planning permission to develop sites would be considered against the most up to date national and local planning policies, together with all material planning considerations**

1.1 Outputs

- 1.1.1** To ensure that the outputs of the study are consistent with National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG), the SHELAA will deliver the following outputs.

- A list of all sites or broad locations considered, cross-referenced to their locations on maps,
- An assessment of each site or broad location,
- Details of those sites which are considered to be realistic candidates for development (*in years 0-5 (deliverable), 6-10 (developable), 11-15 (developable) and sites currently considered to not to be developable – due to constraints (availability, achievability, suitability) – these may be sites where further investigation is required in order to ascertain whether the constraints can be overcome and therefore for the site to become developable*)
- The potential type and quantity of development that could be delivered on each site/broad location, including a reasonable estimate of build out rates, setting out how any barriers to delivery could be overcome and when,
- An indicative trajectory of anticipated development and consideration of associated risks.

1.2 Review

- 1.2.1** It is anticipated that the council will update the SHELAA throughout the Local Plan process, to provide the evidence on housing and economic land supply to inform the development of the Local Plan. The SHELAA is subject to periodic review and assessments will be updated accordingly.

1.3 National Planning Policy Framework

- 1.3.1** Paragraph 72 of the NPPF requires councils to *‘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’*.
- 1.3.2** LPAs should seek to identify a supply of specific deliverable sites within the first five years of the plan period and a supply of specific developable sites or broad locations for growth for years 6-10 and, where possible, for years 11-15 of the plan period.
- 1.3.3** The glossary in the NPPF defines deliverable and developable sites as follows:
- Deliverable:

‘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).

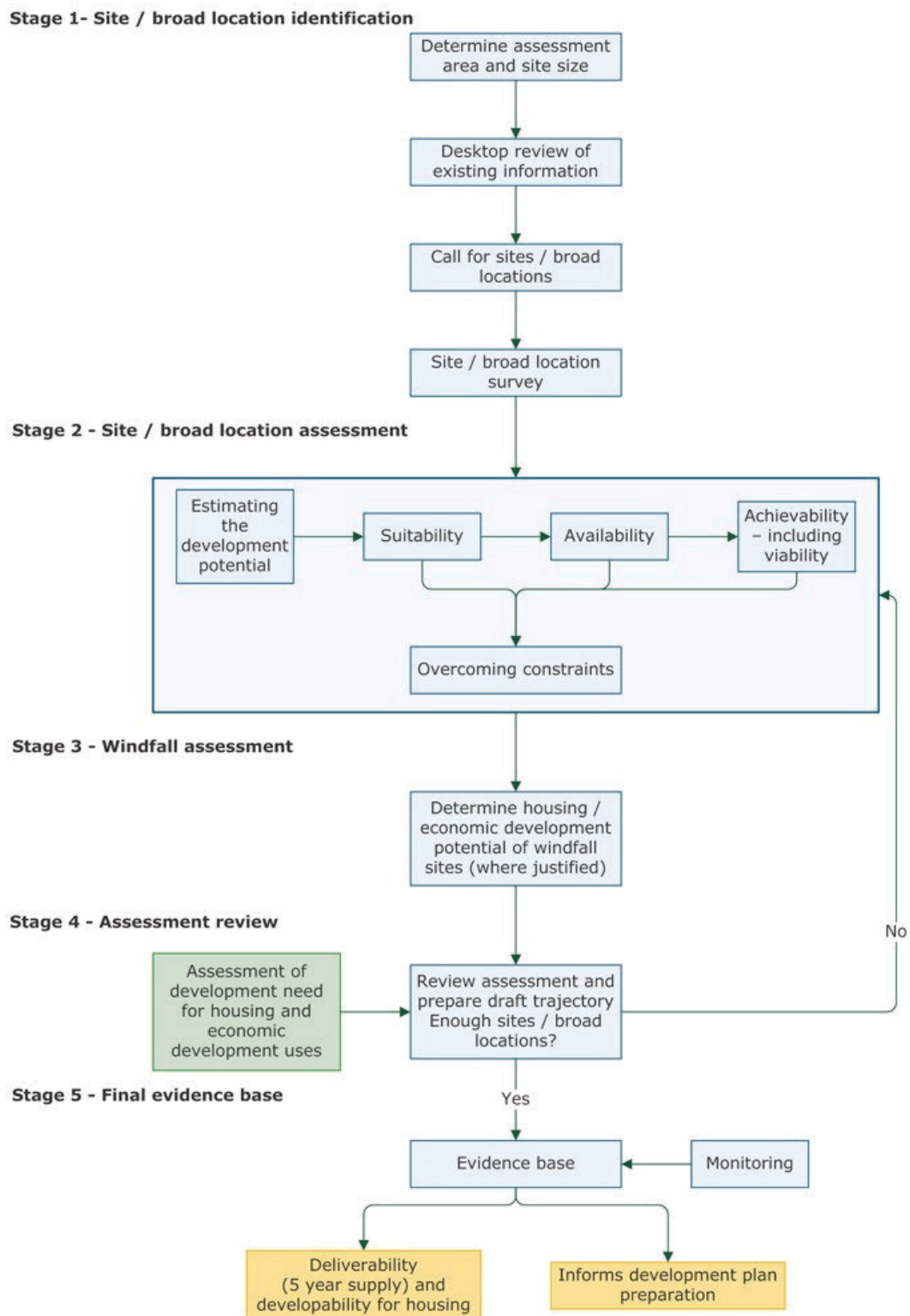
b) where a site has outline planning permission for major development, has been allocated in a development plan, has a grant of permission in principle, or is identified on a brownfield register, it should only be considered deliverable where there is clear evidence that housing completions will begin on site within five years.'

- Developable:

'To be 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.'

1.4 National Planning Practice Guidance

- 1.4.1** NPPG includes guidance on housing and economic land availability assessment. Paragraph 001 states that *'an assessment of land availability identifies a future supply of land which is suitable, available and achievable for housing and economic development uses over the plan period. The assessment is an important source of evidence to inform plan-making and decision-taking, and the identification of a five year supply of housing land.'*
- 1.4.2** NPPG states that guidance on housing and economic land availability assessment should be read in conjunction with separate guidance on the application of town centre planning policy as well as guidance on making the most effective use of land. This methodology report takes account of all relevant guidance.
- 1.4.3** NPPG is clear that the SHELAA assessment does not determine whether a site should be allocated for housing development. It is the role of the assessment to provide information on the range of sites which are available to meet the LPA's requirements but it is for the Local Plan process to determine which of those sites are the most suitable to meet those requirements.
- 1.4.4** NPPG provides a methodology flowchart as shown in Figure 1 below. The methodology flowchart comprises a five-stage process:
 - Stage 1: Site/broad location identification;
 - Stage 2: Site/broad location assessment;
 - Stage 3: Windfall assessment;
 - Stage 4: Assessment review; and
 - Stage 5: Final evidence base.
- 1.4.5** This methodology report considers each stage in turn.

Figure 1 Methodology Flow Chart

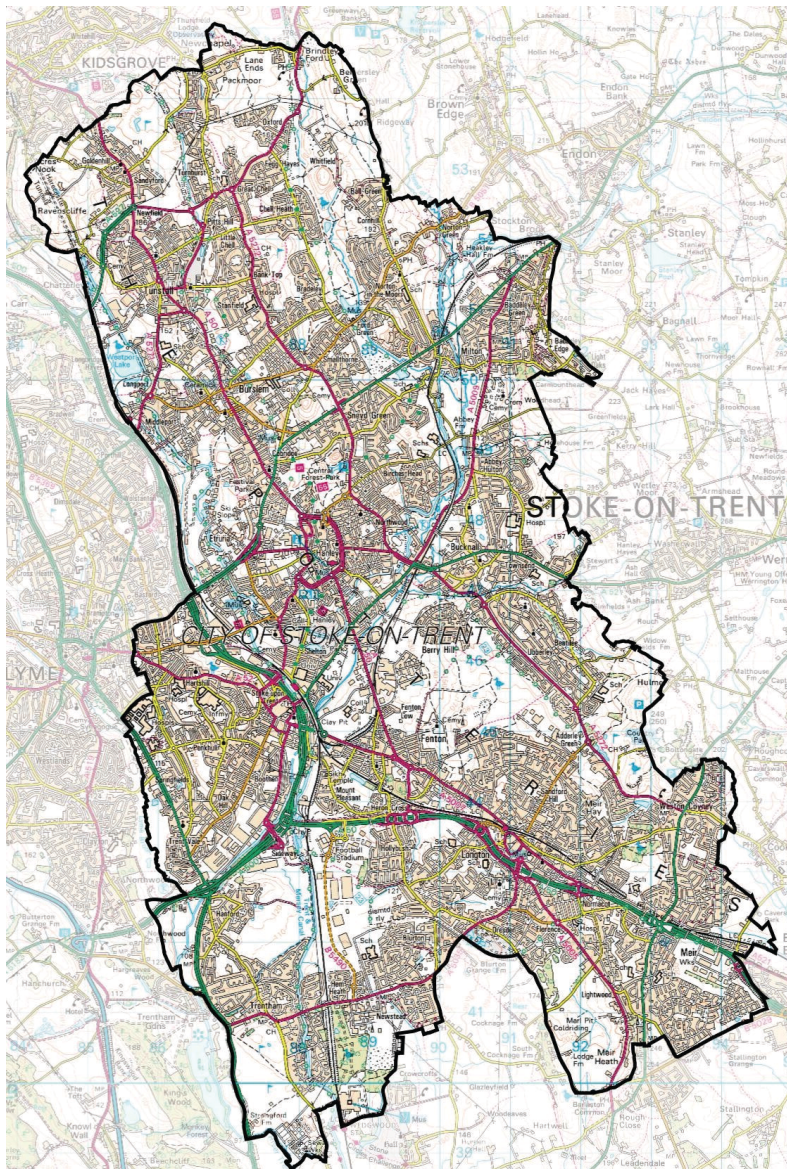
2 Methodology

2.1 Stage 1 – Identification of Sites / Broad Locations

2.1.1 Determining the Assessment Area and Site Size

- 2.1.1.1** The NPPG states that the geographical area that should be considered as part of the SHELAA process should be the plan-making area, this is the Stoke-on-Trent City Council administrative area as shown in Map 1.

Map 1 Map of Stoke-on-Trent



- 2.1.1.2** The SHELAA will assess:

- all sites capable of delivering five or more dwellings; or
- economic development on sites of 0.25 hectares (or 500 square metres of floor space) and above.

- 2.1.1.3** The NPPF expects a minimum proportion of sites identified as suitable for housing to be no larger than one hectare.
- 2.1.1.4** Historically, sites of four dwellings or less have made a significant contribution to the authority's housing supply, with a significant number of planning permissions for smaller scale schemes coming forward. These are included in the land supply calculations through separate consideration, as Windfall Sites. Further information on the latest positions is included in the Five Year Housing Land Supply Statement.

2.1.2 Desktop Review of Existing Data

- 2.1.2.1** The first stage of the assessment is to identify all sites and broad locations (regardless of the amount of development needed) in order to provide a complete audit of available land. The PPG says that plan makers should be proactive in identifying as wide a range as possible of sites and broad locations for development and should not simply rely on sites that they have been informed about but actively identify sites through the desktop review process. These sites may not always be in suitable locations should be included in the assessment for the sake of comprehensiveness and particular constraints must be set out clearly.
- 2.1.2.2** All sites considered in previous SHLAAs that have not been subsequently developed will be carried forward into this SHELAA assessment. A review of submissions will also be undertaken. In addition, the LPA will consider:
- Existing housing allocations and site development briefs not yet with planning permission;
 - Planning permissions for housing development that are unimplemented or under construction;
 - Planning applications that have been refused, have expired or withdrawn;
 - Land in the local authority's ownership;
 - Surplus and likely to become surplus public sector land;
 - Sites with permission in principle and identified brownfield land;
 - Vacant and derelict land and buildings (including empty homes, redundant and disused agricultural buildings, potential permitted development changes, e.g. offices to residential);
 - Additional opportunities for unestablished uses (e.g. making productive use of under-utilised facilities such as garage blocks);
 - Sites in rural locations;
 - Large scale redevelopment and redesign of existing residential or economic areas;
 - Sites in adjoining villages and rural exceptions sites;

- Opportunities in established uses (such as sites identified as surplus to local needs through evidence-base studies including the Employment Land Review, Playing Pitch Strategies and Green Space/Open Space Strategies)
- Urban Capacity Assessments and Officer identified sites; and
- Potential urban extensions and new free-standing settlements.

2.1.3 Call for Sites - Suggesting a Potential Development Site

- 2.1.3.1** The LPA will run a formal publicised 'Call for Sites' at key points in the Local Plan process. Stakeholders including members of the public will be invited to submit potential sites to the LPA for assessment through the SHELAA process. All contacts on the LPA's SHELAA database will be contacted as part of this exercise. Nominated sites will be added to the database and will be considered as part of the assessment. The 'Call for Sites' process will remain open on the council's website and therefore there will continue to be an opportunity to put sites forward at any point, the outcome of the assessment will be available in the proceeding published SHELAA ([Stoke-on-Trent City Council Site Information](#)).

2.2 Stage 2 – Site / Broad Location Assessment

2.2.1 Assessing the Suitability of Sites

- 2.2.1.1** All sites will be assessed on a site-by-site basis. Where available, the information will be taken from an approved planning permission (existing or expired) or details supporting a site allocation, unless further evidence suggests otherwise.
- 2.2.1.2** Sites will be assessed using the following information sources;
- Physical site surveys;
 - Historic data;
 - Geographic Information Systems (GIS) mapping data;
 - Aerial photographs;
 - Planning submissions; and
 - Consultation
- 2.2.1.3** In order to fully assess a site in terms of deliverability and developability, decisions will be based on the most up to date information available at the time of the assessment.
- 2.2.1.4** In all other cases the information will be based on an assessment undertaken by officers using the assumptions below, informed by the site submission information.

2.2.1.5 The assumptions are intended only as a starting point for estimating capacity and site delivery timescales, and will be superseded by more appropriate site-specific information where this is available.

2.2.1.6 Site survey and assessment information for the SHELAA is set within the LPA's SHELAA database and published within the annual SHELAA Update.

2.2.2 Developable Area Assumptions

2.2.2.1 Where no site-specific information is available to guide assessment of the proportion of a site required for associated infrastructure the developable area assumption in table 1 will be used. These assumptions reflect the fact that larger sites may need to provide a portion of land for necessary infrastructure, such as open space and community facilities, which may not be reflected in average density assumptions.

2.2.2.2 Officers will also consider the sites on an individual basis to determine an appropriate developable area in arriving at a judgement as to the appropriate developable area.

Table 1 Developable Area Assumptions

Site Size (Hectares)	Proportion of site for associated infrastructure	Area of site for housing
Up to 0.5	5%	95%
0.5-2	20%	80%
2+	30%	70%

2.2.2.3 The table above contains different developable areas following an assessment of planning permissions which indicated a different developable area should apply to each area.

2.2.3 Density Assumptions

2.2.3.1 The assumptions to be used to guide assessment of potential capacity per hectare are set out below. These density assumptions will be used alongside officer judgement on site specific constraints and developable area assumptions to determine site capacity.

2.2.3.2 The LPA has determined housing densities using historic data on completed schemes and extant planning permissions of 5 or more dwellings from various sub-areas. This is to ensure that these assumptions are based upon site densities which were deliverable and considered to be suitable in the context of the area.

- 2.2.3.3** Officers may also consider factors such as density and character of the immediate area surrounding a site and any other site-specific characteristics in arriving at a judgement as to the appropriate site density.
- 2.2.3.4** The density completions and commitments data has been considered for sites of 5 or more dwellings and translated into an average density for each ward. Sneyd Green, Meir Park, Meir Hay, Weston Coyney and Bradeley & Chell Heath have limited data available to inform density assumptions and therefore the assumptions set out in the Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent Core Spatial Strategy (2009) have been applied.

Table 2 Density Assumptions By Ward

Ward	Density Assumption for SHELAA (Dwellings per hectare)
Baddeley, Milton & Norton	30
Goldenhill & Sandyford Ward	30
Hanford, Newstead & Trentham	30
Hollybush	30
Lightwood North & Normacot	30
Meir Park Ward	30
Abbey Hulton	40
Basford & Hartshill Ward	40
Meir Hay North, Parkhall & Weston Coyney	40
Bentilee, Ubberley & Townsend	50
Bradeley & Chell Heath	50
Bucknall & Eaton Park Ward	50
Ford Green & Smallthorne	50
Great Chell & Packmoor	50
Meir South Ward	50
Penkhull & Springfields Ward	50
Sandford Hill Ward	50
Blurton	60
Boothem	60
Little Chell & Stanfield	60
Meir North Ward	60

Ward	Density Assumption for SHELAA (Dwellings per hectare)
Moorcroft & Sneyd Green	60
Burslem	70
Fenton West & Mount Pleasant Ward	70
Trent Vale & Oak Hill Ward	70
Burslem Park	80
Longton & Meir Hay South	90
Birches Head & Northwood	100
Dresden & Florence	100
Etruria & Hanley Ward	100
Fenton East Ward	100
Hanley Park, Joiner's Square & Shelton Ward	100
Hartshill Park & Stoke Ward	100
Tunstall Ward	100

2.2.4 Estimating the Development Potential

2.2.4.1 Given the above developable area assumptions and density assumptions the following calculation for development potential can be applied where no site-specific information is available to guide assessment.

$$\text{Development Potential} = \text{Developable Area (Ha)} \times \text{Density (Dwellings/Ha)}$$

2.2.5 Lead-in Times and Build-Out Rates

2.2.5.1 The assumptions set out in the tables below will be applied from the anticipated date of site commencement to determine site delivery timescales where no site-specific information is available to guide judgements on when sites will be delivered. These are intended only as a starting point for estimating delivery timescales and where more appropriate site-specific information is available, this will be used instead.

2.2.5.2 In determining the indicative lead-in times and build-out rates set out below, historic monitoring data was considered for all completed sites which delivered 5 or more dwellings. This has been updated to take into account larger sites across the area which weren't previously delivering.

2.2.5.3 Information was also split by completed site capacity to recognise that the scale of a proposed scheme may affect build out-rates on a site. The site size thresholds used have been chosen to ensure that rates are based on average build-out rates across a large sample of sites, to avoid single sites skewing these figures.

2.2.5.4 For lead in-times, the historic data was used to establish average timescales from a site gaining planning approval to commencement on site. Where sites are yet to receive full planning permission, an additional 12-month lead-in time has also been assumed to reflect the time taken to prepare for and to obtain planning permission.

Table 3 Site Build-out Rates

Number of Dwellings	Build-out Rate
Sites of 50 dwellings or more	20 dwellings for the first year, rising to 40 per annum for the subsequent years.
Sites of 16-49 dwellings	20 dwellings per annum
Sites of 5-15 dwellings	5 dwellings per annum

Table 4 Lead-in Times

Permission Type	Lead-in Time
With full planning permission	12 months
With outline planning permission	24 months

2.2.6 Employment Sites (Use Class E(g), B2 and B8)

2.2.6.1 The potential amount of development an employment site can deliver is dependent on the likely density of development. Information provided will be used as this is specific to the site. If detailed information is not available about the proposed employment use of the site, an assessment will be made of surrounding employment uses and an officer judgement will be made on the potential employment use of the site. Also in the case of a lack of submitted information a calculation of employment potential will be applied based upon plot ratios of gross floorspace to site area for different classes of employment use as outlined in the Housing and Economic Land Review (2019) as follows:

- 150% for E(g) offices;
- 40% for E(g)(iii) and B2 industrial uses; and
- 40% for B8 storage and distribution uses

2.2.6.2 An estimate of employment potential will be calculated for each site using the following formula:

Site area (m²) x plot ratio (% for likely use class) = employment potential (m²)

2.2.6.3 Cases where a mix of Class B uses are assessed as potentially appropriate on a single site an average of the densities for the appropriate uses will be taken and multiplied by the site area.

2.2.7 Assessing the Suitability of Sites for Housing and Employment

2.2.7.1 Sites in the Local Plan or with extant planning permission will be considered suitable for development, unless new evidence suggests otherwise.

2.2.7.2 To assess the suitability of other sites for development a number of considerations will be taken into account including:

- National policy, the development plan and emerging planning policy.
- Appropriateness and likely market attractiveness for the type of development proposed.
- Contribution to regeneration priority areas.
- Physical constraints or limitations (e.g. access, infrastructure, ground conditions, flood risk, hazardous risk, pollution or contamination etc.)
- Potential impacts on the natural or built environment including the effect upon landscapes including landscape features, nature and heritage conservation.
- Environmental conditions which would be experienced by prospective residents (e.g. neighbouring land uses).

2.2.8 Suitability Assumptions

2.2.8.1 When assessing sites suitability a number of assumptions are applied in order to determine individual site suitability. These are set out below. Equally, there may be as yet unidentified constraints which will have to be considered once clear evidence of a constraint becomes apparent.

Development Plan policies (including Green Belt)

2.2.8.2 As defined in the Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent Core Spatial Strategy (2009) Sites within the Green Belt will be considered 'unsuitable', and will only be reconsidered if exceptional circumstances are demonstrated through the preparation of the Local Plan, at that point a Green Belt review would be required to differentiate between sites that were 'potentially suitable' and those that would remain 'unsuitable'.

Sites required for other uses

- 2.2.8.3** Sites that are assessed as part of other evidence base documents, such as Green / Open Space Strategy or Playing Pitch Strategy will be considered 'unsuitable' where there is a clear up-to-date requirement to keep the site for another use. Where this evidence requires updating or is subject to review, sites will be considered 'potentially suitable'.

Contaminated Land

- 2.2.8.4** Land contamination will be established in consultation with the environmental health team and any other relevant stakeholders, such as the Environment Agency. Sites will be assumed to be suitable unless there is site-specific information which indicates that remediation is required and that it is unlikely to be able to make a site suitable.

Land Stability

- 2.2.8.5** Potential constraints with regards to ground stability will be established primarily through use of the Coal Authority's Development High Risk areas. However, it is recognised that such constraints can usually be overcome and therefore sites in Development High Risk areas may be considered 'suitable' at this stage, subject to further detailed consideration at the site allocation or planning application stage.

Amenity Impacts

- 2.2.8.6** Where site specific information indicates that development on site would be affected by significant amenity constraints, the site will be deemed 'potentially suitable'. Examples of such constraints may include being adjacent to an active landfill site or being within a Health and Safety Executive consultation zone.

Flood Risk

- 2.2.8.7** Inappropriate development in areas of high flood risk should be avoided by directing development away from areas of highest risk, but where development is necessary then it will need to be made safe from flood risk and also without increasing flood risk elsewhere. Taking the above considerations into account, the SHELAA will apply the assumptions below. Until up-to-date Strategic Flood Risk Assessments are prepared to establish the extent of Flood Zone 3b, judgements will be made based upon Environment Agency Flood Zone mapping, which does not differentiate between Flood Zones 3a or 3b. Therefore, a precautionary principle that sites in Flood Zone 3 should be treated as 'unsuitable' will be used, unless evidence or modelling suggests otherwise (for

example that remediation measures would alleviate adverse consequences). Where sites are only partially within Flood Zones 2 and 3, the area of the site will be reduced to locate development outside of these areas.

- Environment Agency Flood Zone 1 – ‘Suitable’
- Environment Agency Flood Zone 2 – ‘Potentially suitable’ i.e. constrained until an acceptable Flood Risk Assessment is produced
- Environment Agency Flood Zone 3 – ‘Unsuitable’

Historic Environment

2.2.8.8 Where a potential development site would lead to substantial harm or total loss of a designated heritage asset the site should be deemed unsuitable. The assessment however will consider whether a listed building could be considered for alternative uses i.e. the conversion to residential. Taking into account the above considerations, development on the following sites would be deemed as ‘unsuitable’:

- Scheduled Ancient Monuments.
- Registered Battlefields.
- Registered Parks and Gardens.
- Grade I Grade II*, and Grade II listed buildings (loss would be unsuitable but the impact of development maybe mitigated through layout/design which is sensitive to the significance of the designated heritage asset).

2.2.8.9 The assessment will also consider the proximity of sites to nearby heritage assets other designated and non-designated areas and structures, such as conservation areas and buildings on the local list. Based on these considerations, officers will judge the degree of harm caused by the development of a site.

Natural Environment

2.2.8.10 Development on the following sites are suggested as being classified as ‘unsuitable’:

- European designated and Ramsar - including potential Special Protection Areas and Special Protection Areas, and proposed Ramsar sites
- Ancient woodland, Local Nature Reserves & Sites of Special Scientific Interest
- Blanket Tree Preservation Order sites
- Local Wildlife Site
- Heavily wooded sites
- Regionally Important Geological Sites

2.2.8.11 It is recognised that sites may also potentially impact upon the natural environment due to their proximity to environmental designations. Expert advice and data (such as SSSI impact zones) will be used to indicate such potential impacts. Any constraints by proximity to natural sites will be recorded but will not lead to a site being considered 'unsuitable' or 'potentially suitable' at this stage unless site specific information indicates that any potential impact is unlikely to be adequately addressed at a planning application/site allocation stage.

Access to Facilities

2.2.8.12 The LPA will apply a number of measures to determine the accessibility of a site to essential facilities. Access to the following facilities will be considered:

- Primary, Secondary Schools and Further Education Colleges.
- Employment / Labour (depending on whether a residential or employment assessment).
- Retail supermarkets.
- Local retail opportunities.
- GPs / Health Care.
- Post Office / ATM.
- Bus stop with a regular service.
- Town Centre.
- Major public transport node.
- Publicly accessible green space.

2.2.8.13 An overall assessment of general accessibility will be considered by officers to determine whether the assessed site is considered 'potentially suitable'. As a starting point, this will include use of an indicative threshold of 800 metres ¹ to measure access to facilities. This measurement will be taken from the middle of each site to ensure a consistent approach. However, this threshold is only a starting point for considering accessibility, as whether a facility is within an acceptable walking distance will depend upon the type and size of facility provided and the quality of pedestrian links. Ultimately, whether or not a site is in an unsustainable location due to poor access to facilities will be determined by use of officer judgement on a case-by-case basis, rather than a set number of facilities being required within a certain distance.

¹ This is the acceptable distance for general facilities indicated in the Institution for Highways and Transportation's 'Guidelines for Providing for Journeys on Foot' and is also consistent with the Government's 'Manual for Streets' guidance, which indicates a 'walkable' neighbourhood has a range of facilities within 800m.

Highways Issues

2.2.8.14 Officer judgement will be used to make decisions on whether access constraints exist on sites. Where it is felt to be necessary, the council will consult with the highways teams and Highways England where appropriate to establish any potential highways constraints associated with sites.

Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land

2.2.8.15 The best and most versatile agricultural land is defined as land in grades 1, 2 and 3a of the Agricultural Land Classification. The NPPF requires local planning authorities to take into account the economic and other benefits of such land and should seek to use areas of poorer quality land in preference to that of higher quality. It is therefore proposed that land in grades 1 and 2 of the Agricultural Land Classification should be constrained by this factor and deemed as 'potentially suitable'.

Adverse Topography (Employment)

2.2.8.16 Consideration of whether the site is flat, undulating, gently or steeply sloping. Where the site is predominantly undulating or steeply sloping it will be identified as having an adverse topography.

Conclusion

2.2.8.17 Taking the above into account, all available information will be considered to establish the potential for suitability constraints on a site. This will then inform a judgement as to whether the site falls into one of three categories:

- **Suitable** - Sites which are free from suitability constraints, or where there is clear evidence that constraints can be overcome.
- **Potentially suitable (constrained)** - Sites which may be constrained, but where mitigation measures may be possible, enabling constraints to be overcome. These sites will not be considered suitable for inclusion in the 0-5 year supply.
- **Unsuitable** - Sites with significant suitability constraints, which are unlikely to be overcome through mitigation without a review of assessment criteria (e.g. sites within Flood Zone 3 or a Green Belt designation).

2.2.8.18 It should be noted that a judgement on a site's suitability may be subject to change as new evidence emerges.

2.2.9 Assessing Sites Availability for Development

2.2.9.1 Available information will be considered to establish whether a site is available for development. The decision on whether a site is considered available will be reached considering the following:

- Whether the site is in active use
- Whether the site could be developed now
- Whether the site is free from ownership and tenancy issues

2.2.9.2 This will then inform a judgement as to whether the site falls into one of three categories:

- **‘Available now’** - There are no known legal or physical barriers which would prevent immediate development on a site. Sites will have an extant planning permission, a resolution to grant planning permission, or be allocated for development. The landowner is willing landowner and has actively been promoting the site for development.
- **‘Available’** - There is a legal or physical barrier preventing immediate development on a site which is likely to be overcome. There may be other factors that would affect the speed at which the site could be brought forward (e.g. tenancy agreements, the site is currently operational for another business or use). The landowner is willing and has expressed an intention to develop, or an intention to sell the site for development.
- **‘Unavailable’** - The site has a legal or physical barrier preventing development on the site which is not likely to be overcome. The landowner is either unwilling or the council have not been able to contact them.

2.2.9.3 Sites will be assessed on a case-by-case basis and where evidence exists to demonstrate an alternative approach this will be justified in the assessment.

2.2.9.4 For a site to be considered available for development, the PPG identifies that information should be obtained that confirms that there is confidence that there are no legal or ownership issues, ransom strips or operational requirements of landowners.

2.2.9.5 If a site has been directly nominated by the land owner or developer in control of the site then it will be assumed that the site is available. If this is the case but the site is still in active use, the site will still be considered available unless there are known tenancy issues. If a site is in active use and hasn't been put forward by a landowner or controlling developer, it is to be assumed that the site cannot be considered available at this time. It will be the landowners responsibility to keep the local authority updated of any changes affecting a sites availability.

2.2.9.6 The existence of a planning permission does not necessarily mean that the site is available. To take account of this, where an extant planning permission has been submitted on behalf of the sole landowner/all landowners on a site, it will be assumed that it is available for development. Where a planning application has not been submitted by all relevant landowners or has been put forward by a third party, further information will be sought to establish the site's availability.

The assessment will therefore need to draw on the expertise of the Development Management team, based on first-hand knowledge to understand whether there are any potential problems that would deem a site unavailable.

2.2.10 Achievability (including Viability)

2.2.10.1 The PPG suggests ‘A site 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’.

2.2.10.2 The issue of achievability is essentially related to the viability of the development of a site for housing. This is known to be a major issue in Stoke-on-Trent where the housing market is significantly lower value than both the regional and national averages. This coupled with many major development sites being on brownfield land with often significant contamination and remediation requirements, has often led to the granting of planning permission but without the housing ever actually being delivered.

2.2.10.3 In order to assess viability and deliverability, the Council have commissioned consultants to undertake a viability assessment so that this important issue can be considered in detail. The viability assessment looks at site specific costs and values to be able to produce a model to help guide the viability of sites. The assessment will produce a model which can be used to assess the viability of the sites. The inputs into the model will be updated as further information is available.

2.2.10.4 In addition the following factors may also be considered to help achieve a decision on achievability:

- Whether there is active developer interest in the site?
- Whether pre-application advice has taken place?
- Whether similar sites have been successfully developed in the preceding years?
- Whether there are any abnormal development costs (identified through the viability study)?

Can constraints be overcome?

2.2.10.5 Where constraints are identified through the SHELAA, the LPA will consider what action could be taken to overcome them. This may include the provision of new infrastructure, dealing with fragmented landownership, environmental improvement or a need to review development plan policy. This will also include a consideration of when and how such actions could be delivered. The site-specific assessments will include a case-by-case officer judgement.

2.3 Stage 3 – Assessment of Potential Windfall Sites

- 2.3.1** Windfall sites are defined as sites which have not been specifically identified in the development plan (i.e. sites that are not allocated). The NPPF allows local authorities to make an allowance for windfall sites as part of the anticipated supply providing compelling evidence that they will continue to provide a reliable source of supply can be demonstrated. Any allowance should be realistic having regard to the SHELAA, historic windfall delivery rates and expected future trends.

2.4 Stage 4 – Assessment Review

- 2.4.1** When the assessment of sites has been completed, the Council will produce a SHELAA report showing an indicative trajectory. In terms of housing it will identify what level of housing provision is likely to come forward and at what point in the future delivery is expected. A decision will be made as to whether sufficient sites have been identified to meet these needs. If it is then determined that insufficient deliverable and developable sites have been identified, a review of assumptions made regarding the physical and policy constraints affecting sites may have to be undertaken. As part of this review, the council will also consider whether there is a need to apply a non-implementation rate at this stage.

2.5 Stage 5 – Final Evidence Base

- 2.5.1** The NPPG says that the following outputs should be produced following a SHELAA assessment:
- A list of all sites or broad locations considered, cross-referenced to their locations on maps; and
 - 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 reasonable estimate of build out rates, setting out how any barriers to delivery could be overcome and when; and
 - An indicative trajectory of anticipated development based on the evidence available.
- 2.5.2** After the sites have been assessed in the SHELAA they will be grouped into the following six categories based on the conclusion of their availability, suitability and achievability assessment:
- **Deliverable 0-5 years** – this category consists of sites that are suitable, available now and achievable now. These sites will be expected to be built

in the next five years and the category includes small sites with outline permission, sites with detailed planning permission, sites that are currently under construction and medium/large sites with outline planning permission with evidence that the site will be progressed within five years.

- **Developable 6-10 years** – this category consists of sites that are suitable and that can be delivered in 6-10 years' subject to the availability and achievability of the site. This includes sites allocated in the Local Plan that do not have planning permission, medium/large sites with outline planning permission where there is no evidence that housing completions will begin on site within five years, sites where there is a resolution to grant permission subject to s106 agreement and sites that had lapsed permission and new planning application submitted, unless information indicates that any of these sites are deliverable within the first five years.
- **Developable 11-15 years** – this category consists of sites that are suitable and can be delivered in 11-15 years subject to the availability and achievability of the site. This includes sites where a previous planning permission has now lapsed and no new planning application has been submitted.
- **Potentially suitable** – this category consists of sites that could be suitable for housing but are currently affected by policies in the Local Plans and/or other Plans. These sites will be allocated a delivery tranche (i.e. 6-10 years or 11-15 years) but will be displayed so as to make the distinction between those that are currently suitable and those that could be suitable.
- **Not deliverable or developable** – this category consists of sites that have been assessed as not suitable, not available or not achievable.
- **Complete** – this category consists of sites which were previously in the SHELAA but are now fully built.

2.5.3 Keeping the SHELAA up to date is a continuous process. The LPA will publish the SHELAA on the website. Sites that are complete will not be reported in the published document.

3 Glossary

Ancient Woodland: An area that has been wooded continuously since at least 1600 AD.

Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land: The most flexible, productive and efficient areas of agricultural land, which can best deliver future crops for food and non-food uses. The National Planning Policy Framework defines this as land falling into Grades 1,2 and 3a of the Agricultural Land Classification.

Call for Sites: A consultation exercise in which landowners, developers and the public are invited to submit land to a council, so that land can be considered for its potential suitability for development.

Deliverable Sites: Sites which are available now, offer a suitable location for development now and are achievable with a realistic prospect that housing will be delivered on the site within five years. In particular this means that the development site should be financially viable.

Developable Sites: Sites which are in a suitable location for housing, where there is a reasonable prospect that the site is available for development and could be viably developed at the point in time envisaged.

Local Plan: A Local Plan sets out planning policies and land use proposals which will be used in determining applications for planning permission and to direct strategic investment.

Employment Land Review (ELR): These assessments examine the likely demand for, and supply of, land for employment uses. They assess sites in a current employment use and potential future employment sites.

Evidence Base: The studies, reports and assessments that support the development of planning policy documents, such as the Local Plan. The evidence base should provide should be adequate, relevant and up-to-date evidence on economic, social and environmental characteristics of the area in question.

Flood Risk Zones (1, 2 and 3): Flood Risk Zones identify areas where there is a low (Zone 1), medium (Zone 2) or high (Zone 3) probability of river or sea flooding, ignoring the presence of flood defences. National planning policy requires that development should be allocated in areas at lower risk of flooding.

Green / Open Space Strategy: A strategy which seeks to ensure that green spaces fulfil their potential to deliver environmental, economic and social benefits through a strategic approach to planning and management. This is based on an audit of all existing green spaces within an area.

Heritage Asset: A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. Heritage asset includes designated heritage assets and asset identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).

Housing Market Area (HMA): An area defined by household demand and preferences for all types of housing, reflecting the key functional linkages between places where people live and work. In practice, such areas are defined by examining factors including household prices, migration patterns and commuting flows.

Local Nature Reserves: Local areas which are of special interest due to their wildlife or geological features. Designated by Local authorities under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF): The National Planning Policy Framework is a material consideration in determining planning applications and a local authority must have regard to it in preparing a Local Plan.

Local Housing Need (LHN): the number of homes identified as being needed through the application of the standard method set out in national planning guidance, or a justified alternative approach.

Planning Practice Guidance: An online resource provided by the Department for Communities and Local Government which seeks to provide plain English guidance on national planning policies and legislation.

Playing Pitch Strategy: A strategy for the maintenance and improvement of sports pitches within an area. This includes an audit of existing sports pitches and sporting need to inform future land use decisions on these sites.

Ramsar Sites: Wetlands of international importance, designated under the intergovernmental treaty of the Ramsar Convention, which aims to stop the loss of wetlands.

Regionally Important Geological Sites: Non-statutory areas of local importance for nature conservation that complement nationally and internationally designated geological and wildlife sites. Also known as Local Geological Sites.

Sites of Biological Interest: Locally designated nature conservation sites (also known as Local Wildlife Sites)

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI): Sites which are protected by national law to conserve their wildlife or geology under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Special Areas of Conservation (SACs): Sites protected by the EU Habitats Directive and English and Welsh law, due to containing habitats or species of birds that are threatened or valuable

Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA): A technical study which identifies the housing needs within a Housing Market Area (HMA). This includes factors such as the number of homes which need to be planned for, the need for affordable housing within an area and the needs of specific groups such as older people, minority groups, people with disabilities and students.

Tree Preservation Order (TPO): A Tree Preservation Order is an order made by a local planning authority in England to protect specific trees, groups of trees or woodlands in the interests of amenity.

Windfall Sites: Sites which come forward for housing despite not having been identified through the Local Plan process. Examples of windfall sites include previously-developed sites which have unexpectedly become available for development.

