

# Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment

## Teignbridge Local Plan Review

### Methodology 2020

#### 1 Introduction

Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessments are studies that form part of the evidence base for the preparation of Local Plans. They help identify potential sites that may be deliverable and developable for new housing and employment over a period that looks forward over the next 15 years (or the period of the Local Plan).

This 2020 methodology is based upon the earlier 2017 one that was prepared by local authorities within the Exeter housing market area (Teignbridge, Mid Devon, East Devon and Exeter, with the addition of Dartmoor) and updates the document in order to reflect national changes in planning policy and guidance and adjustments to meet a Teignbridge context.

A Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) is an assessment of land in a specific area that is likely to be available and capable of development for new housing or employment within a certain timeframe. The HELAA has two purposes: first, it identifies suitable sites with potential for housing and/or employment, investigates their potential and assesses whether they are likely to be developed (i.e. assessing suitability, availability and achievability); second, the HELAA assesses the five year supply of deliverable housing sites, a key requirement under national policy and also enables the local authority to set out a housing trajectory for the plan period.

The assessment of sites for new housing through the HELAA process and the identification of potential housing and employment sites in the HELAA report does not indicate that the sites will be allocated for new housing or employment within a Local Plan or be granted planning permission. The HELAA instead forms part of the evidence base to inform plan-making. Any sites deemed suitable, available and achievable by the HELAA process will still be subject to public consultation and independent examination if they are taken forward through the Local Plan preparation process. However, the HELAA may be a material consideration in the determination of planning proposals.

#### 2 National policy and guidance

The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) published by the Government in July 2019, requires all Local Planning Authorities to undertake a Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) to establish realistic assumptions about the

availability, suitability and the likely economic viability of land to meet the identified need for housing.

**Housing:** The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires local planning authorities to significantly boost the supply of housing. In particular it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed. (para 59 refers)

The NPPF states in para 65 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. 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.’

In July 2018 the Government published guidance on a new Standard Method for calculating housing need and this was updated in July 2019. This standard method uses a formula to identify the minimum number of homes expected to be planned for in the Local Plan Review, which also addresses projected household growth and historic under-supply. The district’s housing need will be reviewed should new evidence emerge, such as revised Government household projections or housing affordability ratios.

**Employment:** In relation to the supply of employment land, the NPPF is clear that the government is committed to ensuring that the planning system does everything it can to support sustainable economic growth. Paragraph 81 states that local authorities should:

- *‘set out a clear economic vision and strategy for their area which positively and proactively encourages sustainable economic growth, having regard to Local Industrial Strategies and other local policies for economic development and regeneration;*
- *set criteria, or identify strategic sites, for local and inward investment to match the strategy and to meet anticipated needs over the plan period;*
- *seek to address potential barriers to investment, such as inadequate infrastructure, services or housing, or a poor environment; and*
- *be flexible enough to accommodate needs not anticipated in the plan, allow for new and flexible working practices (such as live-work accommodation), and to enable a rapid response to changes in economic circumstances.’*

Preparation of a HELAA is one means by which local authorities achieve these objectives along with undertaking a Local Housing Needs Assessment (LHNA) and

Economic Development Needs Assessment (EDNA). Detailed guidance on how local planning authorities should undertake the assessment is set out in the government's *National Planning Practice Guidance: Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (NPPG)*. This methodology is to be read alongside the national guidance, and does not reiterate advice already provided.

To aid local implementation of HELAA, this methodology provides further detail on a number of matters including:

- Participation of key stakeholders in the process
- A minimum site size threshold
- A method for estimating the housing and employment potential for each identified potential site
- A model for calculating site commencements and build out rate.

### 3 The HELAA Panel

Integral to the preparation of HELAA is a 'panel' of key stakeholders who have a recognised interest in the development of land for housing and employment. Membership of the panel is representative of the broad cross-section of the housing and economic development sectors, including housebuilders (volume and smaller scale schemes), social landlords, local property agents and other related professions, local community representatives and other agencies. Local community representatives may be elected members or representatives of local community or voluntary organisations.

The panel operates in an advisory capacity, making use of their specialist knowledge. Local authorities will identify whether sites are 'available' and 'suitable', and the panel will then advise on 'achievability'. Panel members will also advise further on suitability of sites if required. The expertise and knowledge of panel members is important in helping the partner local authorities identify deliverable and developable sites which can contribute to the supply of housing and employment land. Panel members are not precluded from commenting on sites they have an interest in, however, they are required to declare an interest if they have a site under consideration.

### 4 Methodology

#### 4.1 Overview

The Teignbridge HELAA is produced in accordance with the methodology set out in the Planning Practice Guidance. The necessary steps are shown below.

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

## **4.2 / Stage 1: Identification of sites and broad locations**

The purpose of Stage 1 is to identify as many sites as possible for housing and economic development across the district to provide an audit of available land. Once these have been identified, the aim is to gather information about each site to inform the assessment of its development potential. (Stage 2).

The PPG states that the area selected for the assessment should be the plan-making area, in this case Teignbridge district, excluding Dartmoor National Park.

### *Site size for assessment*

Whilst recognising that a significant amount of new development delivery, particularly for housing, takes place on small sites, the partner authorities recognise that surveying all sites (particularly where a large number are small) will be a resource-intensive process. In order to strike a balance between work that is feasible and the consideration of small sites through the HELAA, a minimum site size threshold will be set. The threshold for housing is:

- 5 dwellings (gross) or 0.15 hectares.

Smaller sites of 1-4 dwellings will not be surveyed, but where planning permission has been granted these will be summarised and assumed to be available, suitable and achievable, and included in the HELAA Report's housing trajectory of potential housing delivery. This approach is in accordance with the NPPF.

The threshold for economic development is:

- 0.25 hectares (or 500m<sup>2</sup> of floor space).

### *Call for sites / broad locations*

A new Call for Sites was undertaken from 21 May 2018 as part of consultation on Local Plan Review Issues stage and closed on 31 August 2018. (An earlier Call for Sites undertaken from 27 February to 10 April 2017 for the Greater Exeter area by partner authorities provided additional sites for assessment) The exercise requested the submission of sites that could be considered suitable for the following uses:

- housing
- employment – industrial/warehousing
- employment – offices
- sites for gypsy and travellers or travelling showpeople (permanent pitches/plots or transit sites)

- residential institution
- retail
- hotel
- mixed use
- other

The form used for the submission of sites is included within the Documentation list at the end of the paper and is available on request.

### *Identifying Sites*

In addition to the “Call for Sites”, a proactive approach is used to identify as wide a range of sites as possible. The following sources are used to identify sites for housing and economic development:

- Existing Local Plan allocations;
- Sites considered in existing development briefs/masterplans;
- Unimplemented planning permissions;
- Sites under construction;
- Land in the District Council’s ownership;
- Surplus public sector land;
- Vacant and derelict land and buildings;
- Previously considered sites;
- Urban capacity study sites\*;
- Garden Community ‘Urban Renewal’\* and ‘Urban Fringe’ projects\*; and
- Other recent site submissions.

\*The Urban Capacity Study (UCS) was undertaken in 2019/20. It identifies potential sites and seeks to maximise opportunities within the current built-up area in line with national planning policy. A Teignbridge UCS Summary note is attached at Appendix 1.

The Urban Renewal project completed in September 2020 has examined opportunities for regeneration and redevelopment, using densification and garden communities principles as a guide for change within Newton Abbot. It forms part of the evidence base for the Garden Community proposals which embrace residential and other compatible uses coming forward.

Also linked to the Garden Community project is the identification of potential Urban Fringe Sites. These provide another potential supply of residential development and related infrastructure opportunities for Newton Abbot beyond the existing built-up area which will be particularly relevant for a longer time horizon within the plan period.

### *Site Data*

The majority of sites used to inform this assessment come from Teignbridge District Council and Devon County Council managed databases:

- The **HELAA database** which records sites for residential or economic development that have been identified through the 'call for sites' or through the approach described above;
- The **Residential Land Monitor database** which records all planning permissions for housing development and tracks their progress;
- The **Employment Land Monitor database** which records the progress of planning permissions for economic development, and;
- The **Comino database** which records all planning applications and their progress towards a decision, including those subject to a S.106 agreement or a planning appeal.

Each of the sites on the HELAA database are given a unique reference number. The sites have also been plotted on maps/layers and will be able to be found in due course within the Teignbridge Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment.

### *Desktop review of existing information*

All sites (apart from those with planning permission) are subject to an initial desktop review.

### *Visiting Sites*

Ideally, all sites that meet the inclusion criteria should be visited. However, this may not be possible given the resources available, particularly if a significant number of sites are identified. Sites that have planning permission may not need a visit, if the necessary information can be obtained from planning and building control records.

Site surveys are to be undertaken by officers from the Spatial Planning team. Panel members may also undertake site visits in order to provide detailed advice on the potential deliverability and developability of sites. A common pro forma to record site suitability will be used.

## **4.3 / Stage 2: Site / broad location assessment**

Stage 2 seeks to establish the development potential, suitability, availability and achievability of each site. This is undertaken through desk top exercises and site visits where necessary.

### *Estimating the development potential for each site*

The whole area of a proposed site may not all be developable. This is because the area for development on larger sites may be reduced through the provision of access

roads, strategic open space or landscaping. The development potential of individual sites may also be affected by constraints such as biodiversity conservation, protected trees or the presence of heritage assets.

The **gross** development area is taken to be the whole of the required site area for a development excluding any unsuitable land such as that identified as floodzone 3, that which is crossed by high voltage powerlines, or is of such steep topography, identified as more than 1:6 gradient, as to be considered unusable unless it is integral to the site (i.e. surrounded by suitable development land within the site area). For example, if there is an area of land which is too steep for development that is contained within the centre of a submitted site and the land surrounding it is considered to be suitable development land then it will be integral to the gross development area, however, if it is an area of such steep topography on the edge of the site then it will be excluded from the gross development area.

The **net** developable area is taken to be the site area which remains for the delivery of housing/employment uses including buildings for these uses, garages, gardens, driveways, amenity space, service/estate roads, parking areas, children's play space, local centre amenities (shops) and incidental green space (Space Left Over After Planning – SLOAP), after subtracting other required land uses such as highways infrastructure, sports pitches, allotments, parks, Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDS), schools and other infrastructure requirements.

### *Estimating the development potential – yield*

To reflect the realistic developable site area, indicative 'gross to net ratios' will be applied to all sites. Exceptions to this rule will only be acceptable where evidence justifies an alternative ratio (such as through testing against similar locations) or on advice from the HELAA panel. In these circumstances the authority will take account of other relevant factors which materially impact on these stated ratios for individual sites and may adjust density assumptions accordingly, before identifying development allocations for the Local Plan Review later in the plan preparation process.

The ratios to be used are:

#### **Housing**

<b>Site size</b>	<b>Gross to net ratio</b>
Up to 0.4 hectare	100%
0.4 to 2 hectares	80%
2 hectares and above	60%

In order to calculate the potential housing yield for each site, density assumptions will be applied to the net developable area:

<b>Location</b>	<b>Density (dwellings per hectare, net)</b>
Town centre	51 to 100 (*75.5 mid)
Planned urban extension	31 to 40 (*35.5 mid)
Suburban / rural settlement	20 to 30 (*25 mid)

## **Employment**

<b>Development type/use</b>	<b>Example scheme</b>	<b>Gross to net Ratio</b>
Retail – larger format (A1) convenience	Large supermarket	40%
Retail – larger format (A1) comparison	Retail warehousing – edge of centre	25%
A1 – A5: small retail	Convenience stores	50%
B1(a) Offices: town centre	Office building	60%
B1(a) Offices: out of town centre	Office building (business park/various)	40%
B1(a) Offices: rural	Farm diversification, rural business centres, ancillary to other rural area uses	40%
B1, B2, B8: industrial/ warehousing	Start-up / move-on unit	40%
B1, B2, B8: industrial/ warehousing	Larger industrial/warehousing unit including offices – edge of centre	40%
C1 – Hotel	Hotel – various types – tourism-led (range dependent on market/type).	80%
C2 – Residential institution	Nursing home / care home	60%
Sui Generis		case-by-case

### *Assessing suitability for housing and economic development*

A site is suitable for development if it offers a suitable location for development. A two stage approach is applied to determining whether potential sites are in suitable locations for housing and economic development.



The following locations will be considered unsuitable and removed from the process under Stage A:

### **Stage A assessment criteria**

Locations considered to be unsuitable for housing and economic development are where the majority of the site impacts upon the following sites of biodiversity or geodiversity importance:

- Designated Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
- Designated or possible Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
- Designated, listed or proposed Ramsar site (wetlands of international importance)
- Designated or potential Special Protection Area (SPA)
- Sites identified or required as compensatory measures for adverse effects on European sites, potential SPAs, possible SACs and listed or proposed Ramsar sites.
- National policy advises against development that would have an adverse impact on national and internationally important nature and geology conservation interests; and
- Flood zone 3b – comprises land within the functional floodplain

Sites that have been deemed suitable under Stage A will then be considered against further criteria within Stage B. The site criteria take into account policy restrictions, physical problems or limitations, potential impacts, and the environmental conditions which would be experienced by prospective residents. While Teignbridge spatial planning officers will conduct the initial assessments of site suitability covering a range of specialist topics (such as highways, historic environment, minerals etc.), specialist advice sought from external organisations such as Highways England, Devon County Council, the Environment Agency and Natural England, may alter the local authority's conclusions regarding transport, environmental or other impacts.

### **Stage B assessment criteria**

All sites are assessed for their potential impact on:

- Access (highway, pedestrian, cycle links and public transport, services and facilities)
- Air Quality
- Ecology
- Flood Risk, Water Quality and Drainage
- Heritage and Archaeology
- Infrastructure Capacity
- Landscape
- Minerals
- Safety

- Soils and Contamination
- Waste
- Climate Change Impacts

Sites allocated in existing plans for housing or economic development or with planning permission for housing or economic development will be regarded as suitable unless there have been subsequent changes in circumstances which may affect this position. Where access to a site relies upon third party land that does not form part of another HELAA site with identified housing or economic potential, it will be regarded as undeliverable unless there is firm evidence that this constraint has clear and realistic prospects of being overcome within a reasonable period.

A standard pro forma has been used by the planning authority to assess suitability. A traffic light system is incorporated into the site potential and achievability assessment sections of the pro forma which provides a clear display of how a particular submission site has fared against the constraints and climate change impacts, with the following meanings:

Key	Level of Constraints	Achievability (Timescale)
Green	Limited	0 – 5 years
Yellow	Minor	6 -10 years
Amber	Moderate	11 – 15 years
Red	Significant	No Development

### *Deliverability and Developability*

Paragraph 73 of the NPPF requires Local Authorities to “identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide a minimum of five years’ worth of housing against their housing requirement set out in adopted strategic policies”.

The NPPF 2019 amends the previous definitions of Deliverability and Developable and these now state:

***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:*

- *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).*
- *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*

#### *Assessing availability for housing and economic development*

Sites brought forward during a call for sites, including those nominated by any Landowner /agent /developer or the planning authority, need to be confirmed as available by the landowner/agent via a Site Proforma.

Sites with planning permission subject to the completion of a S106 agreement will be assumed to be available unless the local authority has evidence to the contrary or following advice of the panel.

Further investigation will be undertaken to identify any legal or ownership problems, such as multiple ownerships, restrictive covenants, ransom strips, tenancies or operational requirements of landowners which could affect genuine availability.

#### *Assessing achievability – Role of the HELAA panel*

A site will be considered achievable where there is a reasonable prospect that development will occur on the site at a particular point in time.

It is primarily at this stage that the panel provide their input, this forming a significant element of the overall HELAA process. It is the role of the panel to advise on the 'achievability' of each site based on the information supplied by the local authority collated through the earlier stages of the process. The local authority should inform the panel whether there are known to be abnormal costs relating to infrastructure, and what requirements may exist for the provision of affordable housing, open space and other community facilities or biodiversity considerations to make development acceptable in sustainability terms. The panel will advise whether a potential site can be determined achievable by there being a reasonable prospect that housing or economic development will be developed on the site at a particular time. The panel may also wish to adjust the housing yield for sites due to constraints or advise on the likely number of dwellings that can be accommodated.

Teignbridge DC may choose to supplement panel responses through the use of viability modelling, and/or documented advice from other sources where this may be relevant to help determine whether housing or employment development is an economically viable prospect for a particular site. The authority may also examine the robustness of the findings through testing against alternative delivery scenarios.

The panel and local authority will work together to consider ways to overcome constraints where they have been identified as preventing a site from being currently deliverable or developable. Due to the complexity of issues and variations across

sites, it is likely this will have to be approached on a site by site basis and a local authority must work with the consultees and other partners to consider the best course of action.

All suitable and available sites considered for site allocations will be assessed for viability in a 'Whole Plan Viability' assessment that will be conducted as part of the Local Plan Review. The commencement date for sites reflects the amended definition of what is deliverable within five years in the NPPF 2019.

### *Calculating delivery rates of housing sites*

To support the role of the HELAA panel, and to subsequently enable calculation of the housing trajectory and five year housing supply, a model is used to set out the commencement and build out rate of sites. A 15 year period is used to set out the delivery period of all housing sites, which begins from the April of the year following the HELAA or HELAA review. The calculation is applied to those housing sites deemed suitable, available and achievable. Sites stipulated by the panel as unachievable are not included. The adopted approach gives regard to the capacity of the development industry to build, reflected through past rates of completion and the need for the industry to respond to increased future rates of delivery to meet likely future strategic planning provision requirements.

Two calculation models have been previously agreed by the local authorities in the Exeter housing market area and the HELAA panel members for the timescales within which sites are anticipated to be delivered. The 'standard model' was originally developed before the recession of 2008, whilst the 'market conditions model' reflected more recent economic conditions. Where there are known time constraints to delivery, the panel may choose to assume a later commencement. Similar adjustments can be taken to build out rates if the panel is aware of circumstances likely to affect the rate particular sites are constructed. (The standard model for calculating housing delivery rates is shown in Appendix 2)

### *Local Housing Need*

In a broader context, following more recent government guidance (contained within NPPF from July 2018) the required approach is the standard method for calculating housing need. It is designed to simplify and streamline the various methods previously used by local authorities into a national approach used by all authorities. The way this is implemented for Teignbridge can be gleaned from the latest 2020 Five Year Land Supply Statement. (<https://www.teignbridge.gov.uk/planning/local-plans-and-policy/evidence-facts-and-monitoring/homes/> )

It should be acknowledged that the present method may change following introduction of Planning for the Future (White Paper) reforms expected during 2021. These include a revised standard method which is nationally determined and will set binding housing requirements that local planning authorities would have to deliver through their Local Plans.

#### **4.4 / Stage 3: Windfall assessment**

##### *Determining housing potential of windfall sites*

Windfall sites are considered to be any site that is/has not been allocated in an adopted or emerging Local Plan / LDF / Neighbourhood Plan. Local authorities may make an allowance for windfall sites if there is compelling evidence that such sites have consistently become available in the local area and will continue to provide a reliable source of supply.

Where such circumstances exist, and where there is a likely insufficient number of dwellings through the HELAA to meet development plan provision totals, a windfall allowance may be used. The current approach for calculating the likely supply of windfall sites in future years is set out in Appendix 3.

##### *Calculating delivery rates of employment sites*

Unlike housing sites, a delivery model has not been developed to consider the rate at which employment sites could be built out. This will instead be considered on a case by case basis informed by discussions with the site proposer and advice provided by the HELAA panel.

Anticipated delivery rates will be recorded within the HELAA report and used to develop an employment land delivery trajectory which will be important for planning policy monitoring purposes.

#### **4.5 / Stage 4: Assessment Review**

The evidence set out in the assessment presents a snap shot in time and will be updated regularly. Planning applications for housing and economic development uses are continually monitored by the Council and are received and approved or refused permission on an on-going basis. Any review will be dependent on circumstances and resources available, this may take place annually or after another period specified in the authority's most recent HELAA report. A full HELAA review may require a new call for sites, whilst a part review will only require an updating of the report.

Both a full or part review of the assessment will provide an update on the availability and achievability of sites in the HELAA, including an evaluation of any changes in circumstances.

The following information should be recorded:

- Whether sites have been completed or are under construction
- Whether sites are the subject of planning applications, permissions or refusals
- Progress which has been made on removing constraints to development and the achievability of sites
- The identification of any new constraints.

- Whether any previously unidentified sites have come forward that were not included in the HELAA but meet the minimum site size threshold (i.e. 5 dwellings / 0.15ha or 0.25 hectares (500m<sup>2</sup>) for employment land.)
- Summaries of small sites below the 5 dwellings / 0.15ha and 0.25ha/500m<sup>2</sup> threshold to provide important monitoring information on windfalls which can be used to inform revisions of HELAA.

It may be necessary to allocate new sites for housing in order to maintain a five year supply of specific deliverable sites. To keep the land supply up to date, and inform any reviews of strategic and/or local planning documents, a full HELAA review will need to be undertaken repeating the call for sites and a more comprehensive survey.

If the assessment or subsequent reviews highlight that insufficient sites have been identified to meet development plan targets, a 'broad locations' approach can be taken, which will locate general directions of growth for new development. If this approach is taken it will need to be justified in the HELAA report and any estimates of potential housing supply will need to have regard to the nature and scale of opportunities within the area identified and market conditions.

#### **4.6 / Stage 5: Final evidence base**

##### *The HELAA Report*

Teignbridge District Council will produce a report upon completion of the assessment which will form part of the planning policy evidence base.

The report will include:

- A detailed assessment for each potential site, cross referenced to a map / plan showing the location and boundary of the site.
- A spreadsheet listing all potential sites presenting the potential commencement of development and build out on an annual basis, grouped in five year tranches.
- An indicative housing trajectory showing potential delivery each year on sites deemed suitable, available and achievable.
- Whether a windfall allowance has been included.
- Details of residual valuation models used to supplement panel responses on achievability (if applicable)

Paragraph 73 of the NPPF requires local authorities to identify and update annually a supply of sites for five years duration of their housing requirements. The authority will use the HELAA to review and update its calculation of the 5 year supply, which provides a 5 year look forward from April in the following year (i.e. years 1-5 of the HELAA delivery period). It will be included in the calculation for the 5 year supply and the housing trajectory within future Annual Monitoring Reports.

## Documentation

The following list sets out the main documents that are in use for the HELAA project:

- Potential Development Site Pro Forma (Submission Sites)
- Site Suitability Appraisal Pro Forma
- Parish profile
- Spreadsheet for presentation of potential sites

Copies of the documentation are available on request from the Spatial Planning Team at Teignbridge District Council.

## **Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Teignbridge Urban Capacity Study Summary Note.

Appendix 2 – Standard Model for calculating the delivery rates

Appendix 3 – Determining housing potential of windfall sites