

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

DISTRICT PLANNING EXECUTIVE PANEL – 25 JULY 2013

REPORT BY EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR STRATEGIC
PLANNING AND TRANSPORT

STRATEGIC LAND AVAILABILITY ASSESSMENT (SLAA) -
ROUND 3 - UPDATE REPORT

WARD(S) AFFECTED: ALL

Purpose/Summary of Report

- The purpose of this report is to update Members on the status of Round 3 of the Strategic Land Availability Assessment (SLAA) and to provide an interim list of sites identified to date that will be considered for assessment in Round 3.

**RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DISTRICT PLANNING EXECUTIVE
PANEL AND EXECUTIVE: That:**

(A)	the list of identified sites, contained as Essential Reference Paper ‘B’ to this report, which includes responses received to the Call for Sites, be noted and taken into account as part of the preparation of Round 3 of the East Herts Strategic Land Availability Assessment (SLAA); and
(B)	any future Call for Sites suggestions be included and assessed as part of the preparation of Round 3 of the SLAA, and subsequently as part of the annual monitoring and review of the SLAA.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COUNCIL: That:

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	3 of the East Herts Strategic Land Availability Assessment (SLAA); and
(B)	any future Call for Sites suggestions be included and assessed as part of the preparation of Round 3 of the SLAA, and subsequently as part of the annual monitoring and review of the SLAA.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 Publication of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in March 2012 has reiterated the requirement for local planning authorities to prepare a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) ‘to establish realistic assumptions about the availability, suitability and the likely economic viability of land to meet the identified need for housing over the plan period’ (NPPF paragraph 159).
- 1.2 In acknowledging the wider spatial objectives of the planning system, East Herts Council has opted to prepare a Strategic Land Availability Assessment (SLAA) to look at land supply for all development including employment, retail, leisure and community uses, rather than just prepare a SHLAA in respect of housing.
- 1.3 The SLAA is part of the proactive plan-making process and will help ensure that the Council meets its requirement to maintain a continuous five year supply of housing across the district.
- 1.4 The SLAA is being undertaken in stages or rounds in tandem with the preparation of the District Plan. It is however, a separate and technical piece of work.
- Round 1 - series of stakeholder meetings to provide advice and guidance on SLAA sites
 - Round 2 - assessment of sites deemed to be available for development within settlement boundaries
 - Round 3 - assessment of sites outside settlement boundaries and any further sites within settlement boundaries
 - Round 4 - annual update of SLAA to review site assessments and assess any additional sites

- 1.5 In addition to the fact that the SLAA is being undertaken in rounds, it should be noted that the SLAA is an ongoing piece of work in the sense that its conclusions will be updated annually. This is because the overriding purpose of the SLAA is to have up-to-date information on the availability of land across East Herts. Thus if the status of a particular site changes (e.g. a site ceases to be occupied) this change should be reflected in the SLAA.
- 1.6 The District Planning Executive Panel on 28th November 2012 supported the use of the Initial Report of the SLAA Technical Study - Rounds 1 and 2 (October 2012) to inform the preparation of the East Herts District Plan and for housing supply purposes. The work is available to view as a background paper to this report at www.eastherts.gov.uk/slaa. The study explains how the SLAA has been undertaken and presents an assessment of the deliverability of sites assessed through Round 2 of the SLAA. The SLAA Technical Study will be updated and re-published at the end of Round 3 to take account of the additional sites that have been assessed. It will then be revised and re-published annually (Round 4) to ensure that it provides a robust assessment as possible of the availability of land in East Herts.
- 1.7 It should be remembered that the SLAA does *not* make decisions about whether a site should come forward for development: it simply provides an assessment as to the *likelihood* of a site coming forward for development.

2.0 Report

- 2.1 In preparation for Round 3 of the SLAA, an interim list has been compiled of all the sites outside of the settlement boundaries of the six main settlements and Category 1 villages, which will be considered for assessment. The list can be found as **Essential Reference Paper 'B'** to this report. It should be regarded as an interim list, as sites to be assessed will only be finalised shortly before Round 3 commences and are subject to change in the meantime.
- 2.2 The sites in this list have been gathered largely from Call for Sites suggestions received by the Council, as well as from

other sources such as the Housing Capacity Assessment (2007). Of the sites put forward through the Call for Sites exercise that would be considered for assessment in Round 3, two have since been withdrawn; one only partly. However, these sites will still be considered for assessment in Round 3, as the SLAA addresses land availability as part of its assessment of deliverability. These sites have been identified as withdrawn/partly withdrawn in the interim list.

- 2.3 In addition to assessing sites outside of the settlement boundaries, Round 3 will also assess sites within the settlement boundaries that have been identified since Round 2 was undertaken. To date, there have not been any new sites within the settlement boundaries suggested through the Call for Sites exercise since Round 2 of the SLAA was undertaken in October 2012.
- 2.4 Round 3 of the SLAA was scheduled to commence in Spring/Summer 2013. However, given that public consultation on the District Plan has been delayed, Round 3 is now expected later, after public consultation on the draft District Plan.
- 2.5 It is therefore possible that further Call for Sites suggestions will be received by the Council between now and the start of Round 3. These will be included and assessed as part of Round 3, and subsequently as part of the review of the SLAA (Round 4).
- 2.6 Sites could also be removed from the list between now and the start of Round 3 when considered against the site size threshold for assessment. Sites that have implemented planning permission since being suggested in the Call for Sites will also be removed. These factors have not yet been considered, as site boundaries are subject to amendment through the Call for Sites exercise and further sites could gain and implement planning permission over the following months. They will be taken into account when finalising the sites to be assessed in Round 3 of the SLAA.
- 2.7 As the sites to be considered for assessment in Round 3 are subject to change and not yet finalised, site maps have not yet been produced for publication. However, copies of all

Call for Sites submissions are publically available from the Council offices at Wallfields and the Housing Capacity Assessment (2007) is available on the Council's website at www.eastherts.gov.uk/technicalstudies.

2.8 For reference purposes, a full list of sites submitted to the Call for Sites exercise to date is attached as **Essential Reference Paper 'C'** to this report.

3.0 Implications/Consultations

3.1 Information on any corporate issues and consultation associated with this report can be found within **Essential Reference Paper 'A'**.

Background Papers

Initial Report of the SLAA Technical Study – Rounds 1 and 2 (October 2012)

<http://www.eastherts.gov.uk/slaa>

Housing Capacity Assessment, Entec UK Ltd (2007)

<http://www.eastherts.gov.uk/index.jsp?articleid=15664>

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), CLG (March 2012)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

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