

# Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) Review 2020

## Volume 1 - Main Report

October 2021

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 The Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA)<sup>1</sup> is used by Basildon Borough Council to identify a future supply of land which is suitable, available and achievable for housing and economic development uses over the plan period.
- 1.1.2 The *National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)* and its subsequent *Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)* require Local Planning Authorities to identify a future supply of land which has potential to accommodate housing and economic development to meet the identified needs for these uses. As Basildon Borough Council's last HELAA report was published in March 2020 for the period of 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019, this report takes into account new sites submitted to the Council between 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020, for both housing and employment.
- 1.1.3 The current HELAA and Brownfield Land Register (BLR) Methodology 2017 was formerly adopted by the Council on 19 July 2017 and this HELAA Review is based on that methodology.
- 1.1.4 In October 2021 the Council also adopted the 12<sup>th</sup> edition of the Local Development Scheme (LDS) for 2021 to 2023 which sets out the project plan and updated timetable for preparing the Borough's Local Plan<sup>2</sup>. The Local Plan will set out the strategy for growth, as well as sites that will be allocated and the criteria policies that planning applications will be assessed against.
- 1.1.5 Establishing a land supply and identifying sites for development through the Local Plan must be based upon a robust evidence base. The Local Plan should only consider land which is suitable, available and achievable for development and the HELAA will provide this evidence.
- 1.1.6 The HELAA does not represent policy and will not determine whether a site should be allocated or granted permission for development. The HELAA will simply determine which sites are currently considered suitable, available and achievable for potential housing and economic development. This information will then be carried forward into the Local Plan process for consideration alongside other factors, such as the findings of other evidence base documents and the Council's development strategy
- 1.1.7 The HELAA should:<sup>3</sup>
- i. Identify sites and broad locations for potential development;
  - ii. Assess their potential;
  - iii. Assess their suitability of development and the likelihood of development coming forward (their availability and achievability).

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<sup>1</sup> It was formerly known as the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA).

<sup>2</sup> Basildon Borough Council (2021), *Local Development Scheme 2021 – 2023*

<sup>3</sup> MHCLG (2019), *Planning Policy Guidance*, Housing and economic land availability assessment

## **2. Policy Context**

### **2.1 National Policy Context**

- 2.1.1 As part of the decentralised approach to local planning the *NPPF* and the *PPG* were introduced in March 2012 and March 2014 respectively. The *NPPF* has also since been updated with further revised versions published in July 2018, February 2019 and July 2021. Both the *NPPF* and the *PPG* support the production of the HELAA and outline the advantages of carrying out land assessments for housing and economic development as part of the same exercise, in order that sites may be allocated for the use which is most appropriate.
- 2.1.2 The *NPPF* details that local planning authorities should have a clear understanding of housing needs in their area. They should prepare a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment, taking into account the availability, suitability and the likely economic viability of land to meet the identified need for housing over the plan period.
- 2.1.3 The *PPG* sets out what considerations should be given to economic development potential. The Council has an employment evidence base that it will keep up to date to give more specific information in terms of the Borough's economic needs and supply.
- 2.1.4 The *PPG* sets out the methodology to the land availability assessments which the Council's revised HELAA and BLR Methodology is based on. The HELAA Review will be prepared in accordance with the *NPPF* and the *PPG* and will assist the Council in maintaining an up-to-date rolling supply of deliverable sites against the housing and economic requirements that will be determined locally.

### **2.2 Local Policy Context**

- 2.2.1 In September 2007, Basildon Borough Council in liaison with the Secretary of State, applied to 'save' some of its Local Plan policies from the 1998 Basildon District Local Plan. Those that were confirmed as being 'saved' continue to form a material consideration in the assessment of planning applications for the Borough and will remain in place until they are replaced by the new Local Plan.
- 2.2.2 In accordance with regulation 22 of the *Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (As Amended)*, Basildon Borough Council submitted the *Basildon Borough Local Plan 2014 - 2034* to the Secretary of State on 28 March 2019 for examination by a Planning Inspector. In 2019 the Examination was paused due to an Air Quality Directive issued by Defra. This has now been resolved and the Examination in Public resumed in December 2020 along with the receipt of the Inspector's Initial Questions (IIQs). The Council responded to the IIQs in January 2021. Following this, and in lieu of the Council's additional evidence base work and national policy changes since Submission, the Inspector has requested an updated housing land supply calculation arising from the use of the standard methodology which is now national guidance and a further six-week consultation on the new evidence, the proposed modifications and the responses to his initial questions. The Council has now published an up-to-date assessment of the minimum number of homes needed in the

Borough over the Local Plan period, using the standard method and is aiming for the public consultation to take place early 2022

## **2.3 South Essex Plan (SEP)**

- 2.3.1 The Association of South Essex Local Authorities (ASELA), which consists of Basildon, Brentwood, Castle Point, Essex County, Rochford, Southend-on-Sea, and Thurrock Councils, have recognised the need to work across borders on strategic issues such as infrastructure, planning and growth.
- 2.3.2 Leaders and Chief Executives agreed in June 2017 to develop a joint 'place vision' for the region up to 2050. Part of the South Essex growth ambition will be realised through the preparation a South Essex Plan (SEP). The South Essex Plan will be a non-statutory development plan which will inform key planning decisions. It will not replace each authority's own local plans but will provide the overarching spatial strategy, level and distribution of housing and employment land to be provided across the area, and will also identify the strategic infrastructure required to deliver the growth. Each authority's local plan will then need to align with the South Essex Plan.
- 2.3.3 A Strategic Growth Locations Study has been undertaken for the SEP which includes a review of the SHLAAs/HELAAAs across South Essex, the results of which may alter the methodology used for the HELAA and how is undertaken in the future.

## 3. Methodology

### 3.1 Background

- 3.1.1 The first SHLAA Methodology was adopted by the Council in October 2009 and subsequently updated in March 2013. In October 2013 there were further minor changes made to the methodology to reflect the introduction of the *NPPF*, the revocation of the Regional Spatial Strategy, and to provide clarification on some points within the previous methodology.
- 3.1.2 Since the 2013 SHLAA Methodology was last reviewed further planning guidance was published by National Government in the form of the *Planning Practice Guidance*. As a result, Basildon Borough Council prepared a revised methodology which reflected the new guidance and allowed for the assessment of land for both housing and economic development. The revised methodology was subjected to a targeted stakeholder consultation during November and December 2014 and then endorsed by Cabinet on 5 March 2015.
- 3.1.3 The Town and Country (Brownfield Land Register) Regulations 2017 then came into force and the methodology was updated to incorporate the methodologies together in one document. This latest HELAA and BLR Methodology 2017 can be viewed on the Council's website: [www.basildon.gov.uk](http://www.basildon.gov.uk).

### 3.2 Process & Outputs

- 3.2.1 All individual site assessments have followed the Council's adopted HELAA and BLR Methodology, which itself is in line with the standard methodology in the housing and economic land availability assessment section of the *PPG*<sup>4</sup>. The standard methodology contains five main stages, with two optional stages covering broad locations and windfall. All stages are shown in Figure 1.
- 3.2.2 This HELAA Review will provide the following information in line with the outputs of Stage 5 as stipulated in the *PPG*:
- a list of all sites or broad locations considered, cross-referenced to their locations on maps;
  - an assessment of each site or broad location, in terms of its suitability for development, availability and achievability (including whether the site/broad location is viable) to determine whether a site is realistically expected to be developed and when;
  - contain more detail for those sites which are considered to be realistic candidates for development, where others have been discounted for clearly evidenced and justified reasons;
  - 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<sup>5</sup>; and

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<sup>4</sup> MHCLG (2019), *Planning Practice Guidance*, Housing and economic land availability assessment

<sup>5</sup> Due to the often specialist nature of constraint mitigation, the Council will only make recommendation where it is possible and appropriate to do so.

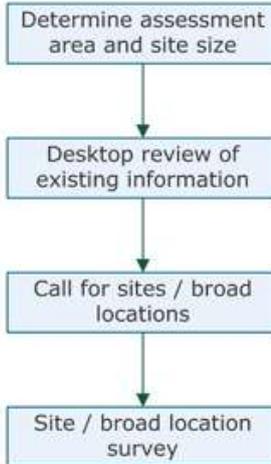
- an indicative trajectory of anticipated development and consideration of associated risks.

### **3.3 Informing & Supporting the Process**

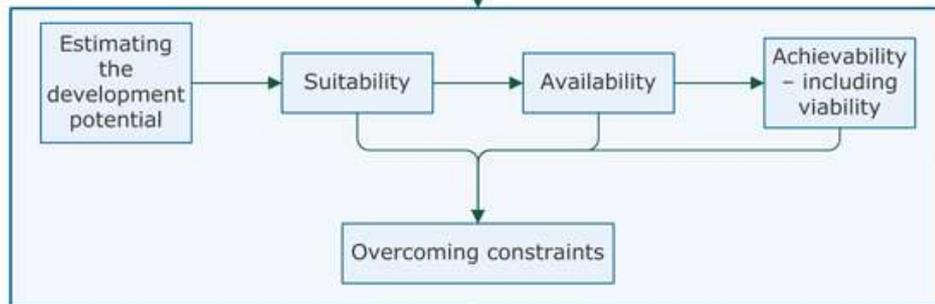
- 3.3.1 To support the undertaking of the HELAA the Council appointed Porter Planning Economics Ltd (PorterPE) to carry out the economic viability assessments of all sites that were assessed as being suitable and available (part of Stage 2) and could deliver 5 dwellings or more. This independent appraisal has contributed fundamentally to the findings of the HELAA.

Figure 1: HELAA Methodology

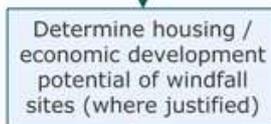
**Stage 1 - Site / broad location identification**



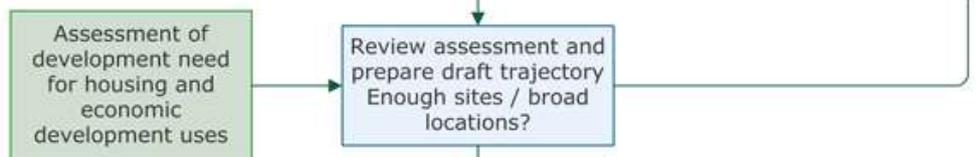
**Stage 2 - Site / broad location assessment**



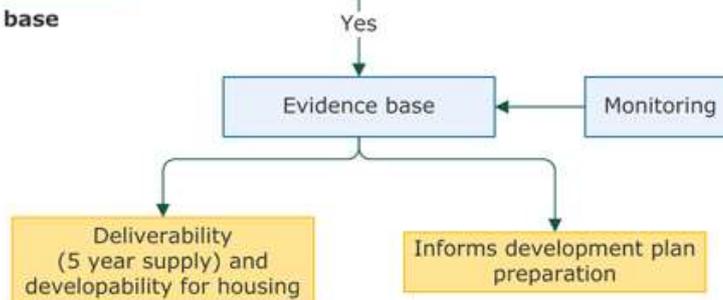
**Stage 3 - Windfall assessment**



**Stage 4 - Assessment review**



**Stage 5 - Final evidence base**



Source: Basildon HELAA Methodology (March 2015) taken from Planning Practice Guidance, Housing and economic land availability assessment section

## 4. Stage 1: Identification of Sites

### 4.1 Sources

- 4.1.1 The majority of sites in the HELAA were sourced from three 'Call for Sites' exercises which were conducted in 2007, 2008, and 2019. The most recent 'Town Centre Call for Sites' concluded September 2019, where the scope for the search was Basildon Town Centre only. The remaining sites have been identified through the *Urban Capacity Study (2004)*, Replacement Local Plan exercises (2005), unimplemented allocations, or submitted as a new site, which was possible until 31 March 2020.
- 4.1.2 Since some of the sites were identified through studies and processes undertaken over a period of time and from varying sources, the Council has considered sites in a rational manner to ensure that those sites being assessed remain legitimate. For example, for sites identified in the *Urban Capacity Study (2004)*, only those which have not been developed as of 1 April 2016 have gone forward for assessment in the HELAA process. These sites will continue in future reviews and only be removed where information has been presented which makes development unlikely or when the site has been developed.
- 4.1.3 There are also a number of sites which have been built out since their original submission and have therefore been removed from the HELAA. There have also been a few occasions where the intention to develop the site has altered and the landowner has requested the sites removal from the HELAA. As there is no merit in detailing these eliminated sites and for the sake of the landowners privacy the Council have not identified these sites in the report.

### 4.2 Exclusions

#### Sites with Permission

- 4.2.1 Sites which have been granted planning permission have been removed from the HELAA calculations and included within the annual Residential Land Availability (RLA) Assessment. This enables the Council to closely monitor the delivery of housing on these sites, and avoids double counting when the HELAA and the RLA are combined in the Five Year Housing Land Supply calculation.

#### Other Exclusions

- 4.2.2 Only in very specific circumstances would a site, submitted to the local planning authority for consideration in the HELAA, be excluded from the process. Such circumstances include where a site is not large enough to accommodate a dwelling, and/or the site is affected entirely by the following constraints<sup>6</sup>:
- Scheduled Monuments;

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<sup>6</sup> Where a HELAA site has a constraint covering part of the land, the site will be amended to exclude the part covered by the constraint enabling the remainder of the site to be considered further. This is explained further in the HELAA & BLR Methodology 2017.

- Areas within a functional flood plain (Flood Zone 3b);
- Sites of Scientific Interest (SSSI);
- Local Nature Reserves (LNR);
- Land within the Marshes Protection Area;
- Buffer zones around wastewater / sewage treatment plants<sup>7</sup>

4.2.3 Whilst other constraints could result in a site being found unsuitable, they were not considered significant enough to justify a sites exclusion as circumstances may change in the future.

4.2.4 There are 728 sites currently held in the HELAA database and they form the basis of the HELAA Review 2020. They have been assessed for their suitability and availability and where appropriate their achievability in accordance with the Council's methodology.

4.2.5 The map and list of all sites assessed as part of this HELAA Review can be found at Appendix A.

4.2.6 Please note: Sites submitted following the closure of the submission period for the 2020 HELAA Review do not form part of this HELAA Review. They will be considered in the next HELAA Review.

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<sup>7</sup>The Cordon Sanitaire of 400m may be flexible as outlined in the HELAA and BLR Methodology 2017.

## **5. Stage 2: Assessment of Sites**

### **5.1 Assessment Process**

5.1.1 Detailed desktop assessments and site surveys, where applicable, were undertaken for each site to establish whether the site was suitable and/or available for development. Only sites which were found to be both suitable and available progressed through the assessment process and were tested for their achievability.

#### **Fact Checking Exercise**

5.1.2 The 'Fact Checking Exercise' took place in March 2020. The Council sent landowners, or their representatives, a fact checking form accompanied by a site map and invited them to provide updated information. All responses received were reviewed and helped inform the final site assessments, a summary of which are set out in Appendix B.

5.1.3 It also provided the Council with an opportunity to check that the submitters and landowners contact details were up to date and that they still wished the site to be included in the HELAA. This information informed the availability part of the assessment.

### **5.2 Suitability**

5.2.1 Suitability of a site is the first part of the assessment and takes into account information available to the Council from various sources and stakeholders, as listed in the approved HELAA and BLR Methodology. This provides the Council with an understanding of the site area in terms of any constraints that may be present, which could have implications to a site's development potential.

5.2.2 The Council considered the following constraints as the basis for assessing the suitability of land for development:

- Environmental constraints;
- Location & sustainability considerations;
- Accessibility & constraints to access;
- General physical constraints & considerations; and
- Planning policy constraints.

#### **Environmental Constraints**

5.2.3 Environmental considerations for the HELAA are set out in Annex 2 of the Council's approved HELAA and BLR Methodology and have only been expanded on below where it was felt necessary to further clarify the assessment process. Knowledge of the environment contributes to the understanding of a site and enables the Council to build up a picture of how development could impact upon the potential for development and is therefore an important part of the process in determining suitability.

5.2.4 A site has an environmental constraint if any of the following are present within the site or in close proximity to the site. Some of these include protective designations for the

historic and natural environment while others represent a more logistical issue for development:

- Flood Zone Classification;
- Washlands;
- Marshes Protection Area;
- Critical Drainage Areas;
- Ground Water Vulnerability;
- Susceptibility to Surface Water Flooding;
- Village Green & Common Land;
- Existing Industrial Areas;
- Minerals Safeguarding Areas;
- Oil/Gas Pipelines;
- Electricity Pylons;
- Major Hazard Sites;
- Wastewater Treatment Works;
- Potentially Contaminated Land;
- Definitive Footpaths;
- Tree Preservation Order (TPO);
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI);
- Special Areas of Conservation (SAC);
- Special Protection Areas (SPA);
- Ramsar Sites;
- Local Nature Reserves (LNR);
- Ancient Woodland;
- Local Wildlife Sites;
- Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) Priority Habitat Sites;
- Potential Protected Species Areas;
- Nature Improvement Areas;
- Scheduled Monument;
- Listed Buildings;
- Conservation Area;
- South East Marine Plan area;
- Archaeological Finds Area

5.2.5 Environmental constraints were appraised through the desktop assessment and during site visits and supported by GIS mapping and information provided by key stakeholders such as the Environment Agency, Historic England, and Natural England. If other environmental aspects such as ponds or rivers were identified during the assessment process, these were also noted.

#### *Buffer Zones*

5.2.6 In the following cases buffer zones have been applied around particular areas for the benefit of sensitivity and precaution, and to ensure that development potential is considered with these valuable environmental/utility facets in mind:

*Table 1: Buffer Zone Distances for Environmental Designations*

Environmental Designations	Buffer Zone Distance
Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	2km
Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)	5km
Special Protection Area (SPA)	5km
Ramsar (wetland area)	5km
Local Nature Reserve (LNR)	100m
Ancient Woodland	100m
Local Wildlife Site	100m
Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) Priority Habitat	100m
Potential Protected Species Area	10m

*Table 2: Buffer Zone Distances for Utilities*

Utilities	Buffer Zone Distance
Wastewater Treatment Works	400m
Major Hazard Area	150m
High Voltage Overhead Transmissions Lines (HVOTL)	30m-60m <sup>8</sup>
High pressure gas pipe lines	60m
Oil pipelines	6m

5.2.7 The buffer zone threshold for SSSI, SAC, SPA and Ramsar are all determined through Environmental Impact Regulations 2011. In the cases of other environmentally sensitive designations listed, these have been determined and agreed upon with key stakeholders including Historic England, Natural England, Essex County Council Ecology teams and the Wildlife Trust during the production of the Basildon Borough Council Strategic Environmental Assessment Scoping Report 2011<sup>9</sup>.

5.2.8 The precautionary measure of applying buffer zones is generally taken to bring awareness to the proximity of a site of these valued environmental designations, but a site's location within the buffer zone will not necessarily make a site unsuitable for that reason alone and may have little or no effect. As these designations relate to wildlife

<sup>8</sup> Buffer varies depending on voltage. See HELAA and BLR Methodology 2017 for further details.

<sup>9</sup> The SA/SEA Scoping Report has since been updated and the above buffer zones still apply.

and biodiversity which can travel over land, it is important to highlight where development could affect corridors, habitats and/or watercourses to make sure that the possibility of migration is taken into account.

- 5.2.9 With regards to the buffer zones around the utilities, these were all set by statutory bodies such as Anglian Water and the Health and Safety Executive as well as relevant stakeholders and are to be kept in mind when considering a site's suitability.

#### *Flooding*

- 5.2.10 Known areas of flooding continue to be a national cause for consideration and areas prone to flooding can result in land being unsuitable for development as well as exacerbate flooding issues for existing developments due to increased water run-off. Using mapping information provided by the Environment Agency and information from the Council's own studies, the HELAA was able to have regard to any flooding issues which may relate to sites, and take account of this in the assessment for suitability.
- 5.2.11 With regards to fluvial and coastal flooding, the HELAA used the flood risk vulnerability and flood zone compatibility tables within the *PPG* to consider the potential impact of this type of flooding on a site's suitability. The tables show the different flood zones and acknowledges that land within flood zone 1 is suitable for all land uses. Therefore sites located within flood zone 1 were not considered to be environmentally constrained by flooding.
- 5.2.12 A more cautionary view was taken regarding sites within flood zones 2 and 3a. These zones within the Technical Guidance are considered to be acceptable to accommodate a certain amount and type of development providing a flood risk assessment accompanies the proposal. Therefore, during the HELAA assessments, sites that fell within flood zones 2 and 3a were considered to have an environmental constraint, but not 'unsuitable' as some development may be permissible subject to the application of the sequential and exception tests set out in the *NPPF*.
- 5.2.13 Flood zone 3b constitutes a functional floodplain and only essential infrastructure or water compatible uses<sup>10</sup> are permitted in these areas. As residential and employment uses (use class B) do not fall within either category, the HELAA has excluded sites from the assessment that are located wholly within flood zone 3b which also includes washlands. Any site that lay partially within flood zone 3b were amended to discount the area in flood zone 3b. Such an approach ensured that the remainder of the site has potential to be considered suitable for development.

#### *Potentially Contaminated Land*

- 5.2.14 Potential land contamination relates to the previous uses of the site, which may have adversely impacted upon the quality of the land and soil. Land and soil quality information can be sourced from historic maps, information gathered under the

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<sup>10</sup> As defined within Table 3 of the *Planning Practice Guidance, Flood Risk and Coastal Change*, Paragraph: 067, Reference ID: 7-067-20140306.

Basildon Borough Council's *Contaminated Land Strategy* (2007) and information supplied by the Council's Environmental Health Department. However the data is not entirely up to date, and therefore all sites were considered to have a potential risk of contamination, subject to further investigation prior to development, to avoid any inconsistencies.

- 5.2.15 Land contamination may not prohibit development but it is a factor associated with both suitability and achievability, and the type of development possible, and was therefore a necessary consideration for the assessment process.

### **Location & Sustainability Considerations**

- 5.2.16 The entire HELAA process is underpinned by the principles of sustainability and the location of a site is central to achieving sustainable development. The Council advocates sustainable development and have therefore utilised the most up to date settlement hierarchy as a way to inform where development could be best accommodated in terms of service provision and existing infrastructure as well as those locations which do not provide sufficiently for potential new development.
- 5.2.17 In order to ensure that sites located within the Green Belt but within close proximity to existing settlements may be found suitable, proximity criteria were developed. Sites located outside the urban area and within the Green Belt were considered as suitable, subject to other suitability criteria also being fulfilled, where they are located within 400m of a major urban area (Basildon), 250m of a town (Wickford and Billericay) or 100m of a serviced village (Bowers Gifford, Crays Hill and Ramsden Bellhouse). Where a site is in the Green Belt and does not meet this criteria it has been considered unsuitable.
- 5.2.18 The proximity criteria are applied at increasing distances and are proportionately based on the size of the settlements to ensure that the sites will be within a sustainable location and that the approach taken is justified.
- 5.2.19 Sites where physical problems and/or significant constraints created a barrier between the edge of the settlement and the site were generally found unsuitable unless clear and viable mitigation could be demonstrated during the HELAA process. Examples of such barriers include, but are not limited to:
- Dual carriageway roads;
  - Functional Flood Zone 3b;
  - Significant environmental constraints;

#### *Consideration for residential development*

- 5.2.20 Whilst the HELAA Review includes sites with the potential to provide at least one net dwelling, sites were assessed as being suitable if they were capable of delivering five or more net dwellings as per the *PPG*<sup>11</sup>. Those sites likely to accommodate less than

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<sup>11</sup> MHCLG (2019), *Planning Practice Guidance*, Housing and economic land availability assessment, Paragraph 009, Reference ID: 3-009-20190722

five net dwellings were kept within the HELAA as they help inform the Council on small supply from the urban area.

*Consideration for economic development*

- 5.2.21 In addition to the above, the Council also assessed a site's suitability for employment by considering a site's location in relation to existing employment areas and town centres. Sites within or adjacent to existing employment areas including town centres, as identified in the *Employment Land and Premises Study (2013)* were generally considered suitable because they could positively support existing employment areas. Sites were required to be 0.25ha or more in size<sup>12</sup>, unless within a town centre where business and office development may be appropriate due to town centres having higher densities.
- 5.2.22 To ensure flexibility, sites located away from existing employment areas but within the settlement buffer, as detailed above, were not necessarily found unsuitable for all B class employment uses. If a site was of a sufficient size, could accommodate development without detrimentally impacting on residential amenity, and the highways access was adequate, it may have been considered suitable in terms of its location for B1 uses (business), B2 uses (general industrial) or B8 uses (storage and distribution).
- 5.2.23 It should be noted that the assessment process was carried out prior to the reforms to the Use Class Order which came into force on 1 September 2020. Class E 'Commercial, Business and Service' was created as part of this, which fused the former A1-5, B1, and D1 and D2 use classes. Changes of use from one Class E use to another do not constitute development and will not require a full planning application. This change in national policy may lead to additional sites coming forward for employment-generating uses which were not envisaged during the production of the *ELPS* in 2013. A further complication from the changes is that the requirements for sequential testing and retail impact assessments may now be sidestepped in some instances, as Class E fuses main town centre and non-town centre uses. This makes it considerably more challenging for a Local Authority to refuse such proposals.
- 5.2.24 Similarly, the range and scope of circumstances whereby Permitted Development Rights (PDR) can be used has been reformed and expanded several times during the last eight years, most recently in September 2020. Since the *ELPS* was prepared in 2013, the loss of some employment land or premises to other uses (especially residential) under Permitted Development Rights (PDR) may have impacted on the overall mix of uses within a given area. The *NPPF* requires all planning policies and decisions to make effective use of land, especially brownfield sites. Together with Class E and the expansion of the scope of PDR, these changes provide greater open support for the mixing of employment and housing uses noted above.

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<sup>12</sup> In line with Paragraph 009 of the *PPG - MHCLG (2019), Planning Practice Guidance*, Housing and economic land availability assessment, Paragraph 009, Reference ID: 3-0090-20190722.

**Accessibility & Constraints to Access:**

*Services and Amenities*

5.2.25 In order to appraise both the practicalities of a site and its location in terms of distance to services, the accessibility was considered to help inform a site’s suitability for development. As such, alongside identifying the main access(s) to the site as verified by maps and site visits, the distance of a site to the following key services and amenities were assessed using mapping software:

- Primary School;
- Secondary School;
- GPs/Health Centre;
- Local Centre;
- Town Centre;
- Public Open Space;
- Bus Stop; and
- Railway Station

5.2.26 Distances to each of the services were broken down into the following categories and these distances were used as the standard guide for recording information during assessment:

*Table 3: Distances to services*

Service / Facility	Distance	
Primary School	Within 600m	
Secondary School	Within 1500m	
GPs/Health Centre;	Within 800m	
Local Centre	Within 800m	
Town Centre	Within 800m	
Public Open Space	Allotments & Community Gardens,	Within 400m; and Within 800m
	Amenity Green Spaces;	Within 400m; and Within 800m
	Children and young people spaces;	Within 400m; and Within 800m
	Churchyards and cemeteries;	Within 400m; and within 800m
	Civic Spaces;	Within 400m; within 800m and within 2,000m
	Country Parks;	Within 400m; within 800m and within 2,000m
	Educational Fields;	Within 400m; and within 800m

Service / Facility	Distance	
	Natural and semi-natural green space;	Within 400m; and within 800m
	Outdoor Sports Facilities; and	Within 400m; within 800m and within 2,000m
	Urban Park and Gardens	Within 400m; within 800m and within 2,000m
Bus Stop	Within 800m	
Railway Station	Within 1,000m and within 1,600m	

5.2.27 These distances are the result of various evidence bases and guidance including the Council's *Strategic Environmental Assessment Scoping Report; Assessing needs and opportunities: a companion guide to PPG17 (2002)* and discussions with Essex County Council. The use of these categories is also supported by *Shaping Neighbourhoods: A guide for health, sustainability and vitality*<sup>13</sup> which defines the benchmarks in relation to walking distances:

- Sites within 400m are within a 5 minute walking distance;
- Sites within 800m are within a 10 minute walking distance; and
- Sites over 800m indicate the potential requirement for the private car or public transport

5.2.28 Accessibility has been provided as a guide for developers, the local planning authority and the public to indicate the distances of sites to relevant services. Accessibility is not a determining factor on the suitability or sustainability of sites and the findings of accessibility are not defined as a constraint to development. Proximity of sites to facilities is just one of many considerations and a site will not usually be found unsuitable for reasons of inaccessibility alone as new facilities could be provided or existing ones enhanced where need and opportunity arises.

#### *Physical Access*

5.2.29 Where access to the site is not established or is problematic, this would be considered as a constraint to development and it has led to some sites being found unavailable. Examples of such constraints could be where a site is 'land-locked' and/or would require the demolition of properties which were not within the boundary of the site submitted for consideration through the HELAA.

5.2.30 Access to a site is a key consideration for potential development and if there was no evidence of an access to the site via existing provisions as part of the submission, or the potential for an access, a site was found unavailable at this time.

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<sup>13</sup> H. Barton et al (2003), *Shaping Neighbourhoods: A guide for health, sustainability and vitality*

- 5.2.31 In terms of wider accessibility issues, a very brief assumption was made regarding potential highway issues. However it should be noted that with any detailed development applications submitted to the Council for consideration, a transport assessment is required which will in turn be assessed by Essex County Council Highways Authority against their relevant policies.
- 5.2.32 The assessment also recorded the category of road which the site would be accessed from specifically for employment purposes. Sites accessed via A and B roads were considered potentially suitable for all B class employment uses as they are defined as strategic routes, main distributors and secondary distributors within Essex County Council's Route Hierarchy<sup>14</sup> and therefore able to deal with heavy goods vehicle movements (HGVs). Sites accessed by lower category roads were not considered suitable for B8 uses for this criteria unless they were within existing employment areas. Sites accessed via an adopted road were generally considered suitable for B1 uses while sites only accessed via Class III, A or B roads were considered suitable for B2 uses.

### **General Physical Constraints & Considerations**

#### *Gradient of land and site levels*

- 5.2.33 Identified during both the desktop assessment and site visit phases of the HELAA process; land gradient and site levels were considered to account for potential barriers to development of a site where inhabitants of the sites or adjacent sites could be affected. Any concerns were incorporated into the site description.

#### *Village Greens & Common Land*

- 5.2.34 Detailed within the HELAA and BLR Methodology, village greens and common land will generally be found as unsuitable for development due to the restrictions and covenants attached to the classification of land which also impacts upon the availability of a site.
- 5.2.35 At the time of this review, there were three areas within the Borough that have been granted village green status.

### **Planning Policy Constraints**

- 5.2.36 Whilst the Council acknowledge that the HELAA forms part of the wider evidence base that will assist in the drafting of an up to date Local Plan, there is merit in having regard to key planning policies, including land designations, that extend beyond the local level and which hold weight independently of the Local Plan process. Included within this are:
- Open Spaces - which contribute a valued amenity to communities;
  - Employment Land - which must be balanced alongside housing growth and which is key to the prosperity of the Borough; and

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<sup>14</sup> Essex County Council (2011), *Essex County Council Development Management Policies*

- Green Belt - which is a nationally imposed land designation and must be considered appropriately in line with the *NPPF* and up to date evidence.

5.2.37 Failing to have regard to these particular policy related matters during the HELAA process could result in a list of potential sites which is not realistic or representative of the developable land within the Borough. As such, the Council took into consideration the most up to date evidence bases and applied them to the findings of the 'suitability' stage of assessment in the following way:

#### *Open Space*

5.2.38 The role of open space and recreation land for communities cannot be underestimated and the Council has a duty to its residents and visitors to ensure that open spaces and recreation grounds are not unnecessarily lost to development.

5.2.39 As large scale development schemes could incorporate open space, it is difficult to rule out sites on existing open space without knowing specific development proposal details. Therefore if open space is present on the site, it will not render the site unsuitable on this criteria alone; instead it will be noted for further consideration when more detailed proposals are submitted to the Council.

#### *Employment Land*

5.2.40 Basildon Borough has an established business base and this economic success will be encouraged and protected to the best of the Council's abilities. In assessing HELAA sites, the Council considered the findings of the *Employment Land and Premises Study (2013)*.

#### *Green Belt*

5.2.41 The Council has produced a *Green Belt Review (2017)* which examined the role that the Borough's Green Belt land plays in achieving the five Green Belt purposes and contributing to preserving the openness<sup>15</sup>. The findings of the Review informed the preparation of the new Local Plan which is required by the *NPPF* to establish Green Belt boundaries and set the framework for Green Belt and settlement policy.

5.2.42 The Review considered the entire Borough's Green Belt and divided it into 74 broad areas which were defined by strong physical boundaries (rivers, railways and roads). Once these areas were established, each parcel was individually assessed and scored, with the assistance of the Landscape Study, to determine to what extent it met the purposes of the Green Belt function.

5.2.43 This HELAA Review does not deem any sites as unsuitable based solely on the *Green Belt Review (2017)* area results. Where a site is within the Green Belt and within settlement proximity criteria, the site was found to be suitable. If the site does not comply with this criteria then it is found to be unsuitable.

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<sup>15</sup> See Chapter 13 of the *NPPF (2021)* for a definition of the Green Belt and its five purposes.

5.2.44 Whilst the HELAA Review does not deem any sites unsuitable based on the *Green Belt Review (2017)* results, it may be the case that the *Green Belt Review* identifies potential impacts on the Green Belt that when all evidence is considered on balance mean that the harm to the Green Belt would not outweigh the benefits of development, affecting which sites are released from the Green Belt through the Local Plan.

### **5.3 Availability**

5.3.1 According to the PPG “a site is considered available for development, when, on the best information available, there is confidence that there are no legal or ownership problems, such as unresolved multiple ownerships, ransom strips, tenancies or operational requirements”<sup>16</sup>. The ‘fact checking exercise’ which the Council undertakes on an annual basis, and the responses received during the Local Plan consultations, helped to ensure that the HELAA contains the most up to date information available for the sites.

5.3.2 Establishing the availability of a site is central to determining whether a site will come forward for development and helps assess whether there is an intention and/or desire to develop the site. If there is doubt over whether a site will come forward, or that certain constraints prevent it from being considered available, then it cannot realistically be included as a potential option. The key elements for establishing ‘availability’ for the HELAA are:

- Ownership constraints and preference;
- Land use constraints;
- Access constraints; and
- Sites with planning consent.

#### **Ownership Constraints and preference**

5.3.3 Where ownership issues were identified, such as the consent from all landowners of a site had not been submitted, a site had been submitted without landowners consent or they were simply unknown, or where contact with the landowner had not been had for a significant amount of time, the site was found unavailable.

5.3.4 These ownership constraints were predominantly identified through consultations, desktop review and site visits but the Council also proactively checks landownership details through a ‘fact checking exercise’ which was undertaken in March 2020 for this 2020 HELAA Review. This exercise gave submitters/landowners the opportunity to amend details if necessary and to provide updates on the progress of their site.

5.3.5 It also enabled the Council to obtain information on the preferences of the landowner/promoter regarding the type of development they wanted on the site. Sites that are being promoted for a specific type of development such as housing are unlikely to come forward for other types of development if it is not the intention of the landowner/promoter. Therefore the preference of the landowner/promoter has been

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<sup>16</sup> MHCLG (2019), *Planning Practice Guidance*, Housing and economic land availability assessment, Paragraph 019, ID: 3-019-20190722

taken into consideration for the availability of a site where it has been provided. Where no preference has been given, the site has been assessed as potentially available for both housing and employment purposes under this criteria.

### **Land Use Constraints**

- 5.3.6 As discussed under section 5.2, the need to retain existing employment areas, as set out in the *ELPS (2013)*, has informed this assessment process. A number of suitability constraints were used to score each of the 22 employment sites within the *ELPS* for their employment suitability (e.g. environmental quality, access, etc.). Of the total sites 16 sites received a good score, 5 sites received a fair score and 3 sites received a poor score. The three sites which scored poorly (sites 18, 19 and 22) were not considered within the HELAA to be safeguarded for employment, however the remaining 19 were, due to the recommendations in the *ELPS*. Sites allocated for employment through the Local Plan Saved Policies (2007) were also considered as a land use constraint and only suitable for employment use.
- 5.3.7 Consideration was also given to whether sites that are occupied/utilised or contain an occupied dwelling would need to be demolished for the development to take place. In general this was recognised as a constraint to development and would result in a site being found unavailable. However, exceptions to this would be where a site is being actively promoted by the landowner or is of a significant size and there was a low likelihood that the occupied dwelling would prevent development from taking place. Sites affected by this were considered on a case by case basis and information detailed through the assessment process.

### **Access Constraints**

- 5.3.8 Similar to the suitability considerations, access to a site is fundamental to its potential for development. For this HELAA Review, sites with no available access or access is subject to a ransom strip, the site will be found unavailable for development at this time.

## **5.4 Calculating Development Potential**

- 5.4.1 The housing potential of a site refers to the net number of dwellings that the site can be assumed to accommodate through its development or conversion of existing buildings. The *PPG* advises that the development potential of sites should be guided by existing or emerging planning policy, including locally determined policies on density.
- 5.4.2 The HELAA uses figures identified within the *Urban Capacity Study (2004)* to estimate housing potential for a site in the existing urban area. Typical urban character assessments were carried out across the Borough which offer an indication as to densities in the vicinity of areas, where details were not available, densities of adjacent sites, existing/recent developments and/or applications were also considered. This is set out in the Table 4 below.

*Table 4: Typical Urban Area Types*

Typical Urban Area types	Average density Dwellings / ha
Other	16
1950's/1960's Council	29
1950's/1960's Private Housing	21
1970's Private Housing	24
70's/80's Private Housing	26
Essex Design Guide	40-50
High Density 1970	54
Open Plan 1960's	16
Radburn 1960's	34
Recent 1985 onwards	29

5.4.3 Where a site would potentially form an urban extension then the potential density will likely vary from the typical urban area types detailed above. Densities for potential urban extensions have been identified as part of the evidence base for the Local Plan through the review of landscape capacity. The *Outline Landscape Appraisals of Potential Strategic Development Sites (2015 and 2017)* provides some steer from a landscape perspective as to potential average densities which could be achieved in some of the proposed urban extension locations across the Borough. Table 5 below was produced to guide the density calculation that was applied to potential urban extensions in the following areas:

Table 5: Urban Extension Area Types

Location	Average density Dwellings / ha
North Billericay	30
Rest of Billericay	35
Wickford	35
East Basildon	30
South Basildon	35
West Basildon	35
Great Burstead and South Green	35
Little Burstead	35
Ramsden Bellhouse	20
Crays Hill	20
Bowers Gifford	30

5.4.4 It was also considered that smaller sites within the Green Belt, which would not be considered as potential urban extensions but found to be suitable and available, should have their potential densities identified at a density consistent with Green Belt exceptions policy on infill as set out in the *NPPF*.

5.4.5 In addition to the application of approximate densities to determine a sites residential capacity, a formula which discounts a percentage of a sites size was also applied. The formula discounts a percentage of a sites size in order to take account of support facilities, open space provision and infrastructure requirements for residential development, this is detailed below in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Estimating Housing Potential

- If a site is up to 0.4ha then the area calculated will remain unchanged;
- If a site is between 0.4ha - 2ha then 82.5% of the site will be calculated with the density requirement to establish residential capacity;
- If a site is between 2ha - 35ha then 62.5% of the site will be calculated with the density requirement to establish residential capacity; and
- If a site is over 35ha then 50% of the site will be calculated with the density requirement to establish residential capacity.

## 5.5 Achievability

- 5.5.1 A site is considered achievable for development in the *PPG* where there is a reasonable prospect that the particular type of development will be developed on the site at a particular point in time.
- 5.5.2 Assessing the achievability (also known as viability) of sites requires a specialised knowledge and an understanding of market factors, cost issues and delivery of development and is central to the findings of the HELAA in identifying land potential. Due to the importance of this phase of the assessment Basildon Borough Council commissioned consultants to undertake viability assessment which not only ensures an informed appraisal of sites viability, but also ensured an independent view.
- 5.5.3 In 2021, the Council commissioned Porter Planning Economics Ltd (PorterPE) to carry out the viability assessment of suitable and available sites (of 5 dwellings or more) identified in the Borough's HELAA to provide evidence on the achievability of these sites as potential housing land supply to underpin the emerging Local Plan. The findings of the assessment are set out in Stage 4 of this report and can be viewed in full at Appendix G.

### **Porter Planning Economics – HELAA Viability Update**

- 5.5.4 Of the 728 sites assessed in the HELAA, 229 were found to be Suitable and Available (which could accommodate 5 dwellings or more) and it is these sites that have been comprehensively appraised for their achievability and viability. A further 92 sites which could accommodate less than 5 dwellings were not viability tested but the assumption was made that these smaller sites would be viable. The 92 additional sites could provide a yield of 205 dwellings, information relating to the sites is set out in Appendix D.
- 5.5.5 The study by PorterPE aimed to:
- Meet the criteria contained in the *National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)* and *Planning Policy Guidance (PPG)* by assessing the achievability of sites is based on current market conditions.

- Show the extent of achievability of the suitable and available HELAA sites after taking into consideration the current economic climate and costs that will be associated with residential development in Basildon borough.
- 5.5.6 The method used by PorterPE for testing viability complies with the HELAA and BLR Methodology (2017), the Harman Report (June 2012)<sup>17</sup> on viability testing local plans and also RICS guidance on local plan viability, which supports the use of Residual Value models for assessing the viability of sites allocated within local plans<sup>18</sup>.
- 5.5.7 The 229 sites were assessed based on the policy conditions set out in the *Basildon Borough Local Plan 2014 - 2034* of 31% affordable housing content on sites with a potential yield of 11 or more dwellings, with a 70% social/affordable rented and 30% shared ownership which is based on the figure recommended within the *South Essex Strategic Housing Market Assessment Addendum 2017*. Infrastructure costs have also been tested in the updated appraisals. Using this information the HELAA Review is able to identify sites that are suitable, available, achievable, deliverable and developable in line with *PPG*.

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<sup>17</sup> Local Housing Delivery Group Chaired by Sir John Harman (2012) *Viability Testing Local Plans*

<sup>18</sup> RICS (2012), *Financial Viability in Planning*, RICS First Edition Guidance Note

## **6. Stage 3: Windfall Assessment**

### **6.1 Consideration of Windfall in this HELAA Review**

- 6.1.1 The term “windfall sites” is defined as “*Sites not specifically identified in the development plan.*”<sup>19</sup>
- 6.1.2 The *NPPF* and *PPG* state that, where justified, windfall sites can contribute towards housing supply. However, it is discouraged and the emphasis on 'justification' and 'compelling evidence' that sites are realistic and will consistently become available must be set out.
- 6.1.3 A windfall allowance has been calculated based on evidence of past windfall supply and the potential for similar sources of windfall supply to come forward in future years. The windfall assessment does not form part of this HELAA Review 2020 and is available as a separate report.

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<sup>19</sup> MHCLG (2021), *National Planning Policy Framework*, Annex 2: Glossary

## 7. Stage 4: Review of the Assessment

### 7.1 The Findings

7.1.1 The following section summarises the key findings of Basildon Borough Council's HELAA Review which will inform the Council's emerging Local Plan.

#### **Residential development potential**

7.1.2 Of the 728 sites on the HELAA database, as listed in Appendix C, 417 were assessed as being suitable for residential development and 534 were assessed as being available. When combined, 229 of these sites were both suitable and available for residential development (plus an additional 92 sites which were less than 5 dwellings and not assessed for viability) and progressed to the next stage to be assessed on their achievability.

7.1.3 The 229 sites were then tested against the baseline condition of 31% affordable housing content on sites with a potential yield of 11 or more dwellings, with a 70% social/affordable rented and 30% shared ownership which is based on the figure recommended within the *Basildon Borough Local Plan 2014 - 2034* proposed affordable housing policy. The estimated infrastructure contributions were identified at £19,149 per dwelling.

7.1.4 The overall HELAA viability results for the Basildon Borough are represented in the following tables.

*Table 6: Overview of the Sites Viability Assessments Results*

		<b>Affordable Housing content at 31%</b>
Number of Sites	Viable	199
	Marginal	5
	Unviable	25

*Table 7: Overview of the Potential Yield Viability Assessments Results*

		<b>Affordable Housing content at 31%</b>
Dwelling Yield	Viable	21,269
	Marginal	1,290
	Unviable	6,820

7.1.5 Table 7 identifies the potential deliverable and developable yield of dwellings at the tested sites. With 72.4% it is concluded that some 21,269 dwellings out of a potential for 29,379 dwellings would likely be achievable with compliance to full policy

requirements in the emerging Local Plan. With the addition of the marginal viable sites, whereby not all policies might be met or there is a small change in values and/or costs, this would increase the potential delivery to 22,559 units.

#### **Sites able to accommodate less than 5 dwellings**

- 7.1.6 There were 92 sites within the HELAA that could accommodate less than 5 dwellings per site, these were not assessed for their viability by PorterPE as it is considered that they would be viable based on their smaller size. The total yield that could come from these sites totals 205 dwellings.
- 7.1.7 This takes the total number of suitable, available and achievable sites to 291 with a potential yield of 22,764 dwellings.

#### **Economic Development Potential**

- 7.1.8 Whilst the HELAA identifies those sites that are potentially suitable and available for economic purposes, the *Employment Land and Premises Study (2013)* provides specific information in terms of the Borough's economic needs and supply and should be considered alongside the findings of this HELAA Review when the Council determines the future supply and deliverability of employment land.
- 7.1.9 Of the 728 sites on the HELAA database, as listed in Appendix C, 302 were assessed as being suitable for economic development and 142 were assessed as being available. When combined this resulted in 67 HELAA sites being both suitable and available for economic development.
- 7.1.10 The 67 sites represent a potential supply of up to 478.9 hectares of employment land. However, 34 of these sites have also been found suitable, available and achievable for residential development, therefore it is unlikely that all of this land would be promoted for employment purposes. There will also be instances when a site would be expected to deliver a mixed use development where employment would only account for a proportion of the total size of the site. Furthermore some of the sites submitted through the HELAA are already within existing designated employment areas or in an employment use and may not be considered as additional employment land if they were to come forward.
- 7.1.11 Of the 67 sites with economic development potential, 36 were within existing employment areas or town centres, or adjacent to these areas.
- 7.1.12 The suitability of sites for economic development was further categorised into Employment Use Classes B1 (Business), B2 (General Industry) and B8 (Storage and Distribution), and the results are detailed in Appendix E.
- 7.1.13 Of the 67 sites that were found to be suitable and available, all were considered to be potentially suitable for B1 uses (Business). Of those 67 sites 32 may also be suitable for B2 uses (General Industry) and 24 of them may also be suitable for B8 uses (Storage and Distribution).

## 8. Stage 5: Final Evidence Base

### 8.1 Deliverable, Developable, Non-developable

8.1.1 The determination of a site's suitability, availability and achievability for residential development, combined with timeframe for development directly informs the overall site assessment as either:

- Deliverable and Developable;
- Developable; or
- Non-developable.

8.1.2 To be considered deliverable, sites should be available now, offer a suitable location for development now, and be achievable with a realistic prospect that housing will be delivered on site within five years and in particular that development of the site is viable. Sites with planning permission should be considered deliverable until permission expires, unless there is clear evidence that schemes will not be implemented within five years<sup>20</sup>. The calculation of the Borough's five year housing land supply sits outside this document and is set out within *Basildon Borough Council Five Year Land Supply Report (2019-2024)*.

8.1.3 To be considered developable, sites should be in a suitable location for housing development and there should be a reasonable prospect that the site is available and could be viably developed at the point envisaged. A developable site is Suitable, Available and Achievable and has timeframe for development of 6-10 years or 11+ years<sup>21</sup>.

8.1.4 A site is non-developable where the prospect of development is unlikely, and it does not meet all three criteria of suitable, available and achievable.

#### **Deliverable and Developable**

8.1.5 As set out in chapter 7 of this report, there are 321 sites which are considered to be in both a suitable location for development and available for development. Table 6 within chapter 7 demonstrates that the majority of these sites are viable when affordable housing provision is set at 31%. The deliverability and developability of those sites that were suitable, available and achievable for residential development are set out in Appendix B of the Viability Study which can be viewed in full at Appendix G of this HELAA Review.

8.1.6 The availability of land over time is not just a function of the viability of development, for development of a site to occur there must be a willing landowner, prepared to sell their land for development purposes, and a willing developer (house builder) in place. Additionally, any policy constraints such as nature conservation mitigation and Green Belt limitations must be overcome before planning permissions can be granted and implemented. Getting all such arrangements in place can take time, particularly in the

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<sup>20</sup> MHCLG (2021), *National Planning Policy Framework*, Annex 2

<sup>21</sup> MHCLG (2021), *National Planning Policy Framework*, Paragraph 68

case of sites in the Green Belt, which require a change in planning policy to be adopted before they can be brought forward. Consequently whilst a site may be being promoted, and development may be viable on that site, it may not necessarily be “available now” as set out in the definition of “deliverable”.

- 8.1.7 Each suitable, available and achievable site has therefore been reviewed in greater detail to determine whether it is available now “deliverable” or else there is a reasonable prospect of it being available in the future, and therefore being “developable”. A formula for standard build rates and lead-in times was created, and combined with local developer knowledge it was applied to the HELAA sites and the potential yield was split accordingly over four time periods; less than 5 years, 6 to 10 years, 11- 15 years and beyond 15 years. Table 8 sets out the summary results of this detailed review, Appendix F details the standard build rates and lead-in times formula.

*Table 8: Summary of detailed review of Availability over time (Deliverable and Developable)*

Viable	Deliverable	Developable		
	< 5 Years	6 – 10 Years	11 – 15 Years	Beyond 15 years
Yes	2,717	9,182	6,507	2,863
Marginal	154	625	511	-
No	2,631	339	3,499	351

### **Recommendation**

- 8.1.8 There are some possible revisions to the HELAA and BLR Methodology (2017) that could take place to allow for more flexibility when calculating the potential developable area of a site and at what density it could accommodate housing. Further review of these elements should be considered as there is no set national methodology for identifying this criteria.
- 8.1.9 By revising the HELAA Methodology accordingly it is likely the HELAA Review will identify further suitable, available and achievable sites within the Borough which will be able to demonstrate that the Council is maximising reasonable opportunities to consider whether it can meet the Borough’s OAN.
- 8.1.10 The South Essex Plan (SEP) is also considering HELAA/SHLAA data in order to identify potential opportunities for strategic growth across South Essex. The review of the SHLAAs/HELAAAs across South Essex may identify ways in which the six different methodologies could be amended to bring them in line with one another and potentially identify different ways of identifying additional sites or additional capacity on sites

already within a HELAA/SHLAA. Amendments to the HELAA/SHLAA Methodology are supported by the *PPG* providing they can be justified.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>22</sup>In line with Paragraph 004 of the *PPG* - MHCLG (2019), *Planning Practice Guidance*, Housing and economic land availability assessment, Paragraph: 004 Reference ID: 3-004-20190722

## 9. Glossary of Terms

Relevant Abbreviation	Term	Definition
-	Allocation	Land assigned for a particular purpose in the Local Plan, e.g. housing, industry etc.
-	Ancient Woodland	<p>Ancient woodland is an area that has been wooded continuously since at least 1600 AD. Ancient woodlands are of prime ecological and landscape importance. Many rare and threatened species are associated with this habitat. Furthermore relatively undisturbed woodland often contains features of historical, archaeological and landscape importance.</p> <p>Ancient woodland is listed under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, as being of principal importance for the purpose of conserving biodiversity in England.</p>
AMR	Authorities Monitoring Report	Survey, monitoring and review are crucial to the successful delivery of Development Plans. Local Planning Authorities must undertake a number of monitoring tasks, the results of which are published annually in the AMR. The AMR is published on the Council's website annually.
-	Basildon	When "Basildon" is mentioned in text, it refers only to the area of the Basildon New Town including Laindon and Pitsea and not the whole Borough.
-	Brownfield	Land that has been developed previously.
CFS	Call for Sites	An open invitation to landowners, developers and others in the Borough to put forward sites situated in either urban or rural areas to inform the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) now referred to as the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA).
CIL	Community Infrastructure Levy	A planning charge introduced by the Planning Act 2008 that LPAs can choose to charge on new developments in their area to fund infrastructure that the

<b>Relevant Abbreviation</b>	<b>Term</b>	<b>Definition</b>
		Council, local community or neighbourhoods want.
-	Community Strategy	Overarching documents which sit at the top of all strategic and service plans for a particular area which promote a long term vision for improving the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of an area.
DLUHC	Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities	The central Government department with responsibility for Planning. Formerly DTLR / DETR / DoE / ODPM / DCLG / MHCLG
-	Designated Heritage Asset	A World Heritage Site, Scheduled Monument, Listed Building, Protected Wreck Site, Registered Park and Garden, Registered Battlefield or Conservation Area designated under the relevant legislation.
-	Comparison Floor Space	Comparison retailing is the provision of items not obtained on a frequent basis. These include clothing, footwear, household and recreational goods.
-	Conservation Area	Areas of Towns or Villages which have special architectural or historic interest and deserve to receive careful protection are designated as Conservation Areas. Conservation areas give broader protection than listing individual buildings: all the features listed or otherwise, within the area, are recognised as part of its character.
-	Convenience Floor Space	Convenience retailing is the provision of everyday essential items, including food, drinks, newspapers/magazines and confectionery.
-	Designated Heritage Asset	A World Heritage Site, Scheduled Monument, Listed Building, Protected Wreck Site, Registered Park and Garden, Registered Battlefield or Conservation Area designated under the relevant legislation.
-	Evidence Base	The collection of information and studies which a Local Planning Authority will use

<b>Relevant Abbreviation</b>	<b>Term</b>	<b>Definition</b>
		to draw up suitable planning policies for its area.
-	Green Belt	A restrictive land use designation around major built up areas that have existed since 1947 to restrict urban growth and safeguard the countryside for agriculture, forestry and recreation. They are protected by the national and local policies.
-	Greenfield	Land that has not been previously developed.
GDP	Gross Domestic Product	The market value of all final goods and services produced within an area in a given period.
-	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 assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing),
HELAA	Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment	An assessment of land availability which identifies a future supply of land which is suitable, available and achievable for housing and economic development uses over a Local Plan Period.
HRA	Habitat Regulations Assessment	A legal assessment prepared in accordance the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 which considers whether a plan or project is likely to have a significant effect on a European site directly or indirectly, alone or in combinations with other plans or projects.
IDP	Infrastructure Delivery Plan	Part of the Evidence Base of the Local Plan which provides an overview of the infrastructure requirements of an area, who is responsible for delivery together with phasing, costs and funding mechanisms.
-	Intensification	The process of increasing housing densities in urban areas through

<b>Relevant Abbreviation</b>	<b>Term</b>	<b>Definition</b>
		redevelopment, infill development, conversions or change of an existing land use.
-	Listed Building	Buildings designated to be of 'special architectural or historic interest' by the Secretary of State under the Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act 1991.
LDS	Local Development Scheme	The formal timetable of how a Local Planning Authority will prepare a Development Plan.
LEP	Local Enterprise Partnership	Local enterprise partnerships are partnerships between local authorities and businesses. They decide what the priorities should be for investment in roads, buildings and facilities in the area.
LNR	Local Nature Reserve	Local Nature Reserves are for both people and wildlife. They offer people special opportunities to study or learn about nature or simply to enjoy it. To qualify for LNR status, a site must be of importance for wildlife, geology, education or public enjoyment.
-	Local Plan	Policy Plan for the Borough setting out detailed planning policies, proposals and Policies Maps for use when determining planning applications and spatially guiding strategic development.
LPA	Local Planning Authority	The local authority responsible for planning matters in its area. Essex County Council and Basildon Borough Council are both Local Planning Authorities for different planning matters in Basildon Borough.
LoWS	Local Wildlife Sites	Local Wildlife Sites previously known as Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) or County Wildlife Sites (CoWS) are areas of land with significant wildlife value. Local Wildlife Sites support both locally and nationally threatened wildlife, and many sites will contain habitats and species that are priorities under the Essex or UK Biodiversity Action Plans that sets out

Relevant Abbreviation	Term	Definition
		strategies for the conservation of much of our most vulnerable wildlife.
-	Material Consideration	Any consideration that relates to the use and development of land is capable of being a material planning consideration.
-	Mixed Use	A site that is developed for more than one use, e.g. retail, residential, business, leisure etc.
<i>NPPF</i>	National Planning Policy Framework	Sets out the Government's economic, environmental and social planning policies for England.  It was published March 2012 and has since been updated in July 2018 and February 2019 and July 2021.
<i>PPG</i>	Planning Practice Guidance	Planning guidance to support the <i>NPPF</i> .
OAN	Objectively Assessed Need	The <i>NPPF</i> requires that local planning authorities identify objectively assessed housing need (the OAN), and that Local Plans translate those needs into land provision targets. OAN refers to both market and affordable housing.
-	Outline Planning Application	Planning application that contains few details beyond the general proposed use of the land. Used to establish the principle of development on a site. Details of the proposal are submitted later as "reserved matters" which must be approved by the Local Planning Authority before development can take place.
-	Plotland	Thirteen Green Belt settlements in the Basildon Borough that originated following the agricultural depression of the early 20th Century. Following the arrival of the railways, many people bought smallholdings, buildings small shacks and dwellings they could visit at weekends and for holidays to escape East London. Following the Second World War, many people moved to these areas on a permanent basis despite the majority not

Relevant Abbreviation	Term	Definition
		<p>having running water, electricity or fuel connections.</p> <p>The majority of Plotlands were cleared during the building of Basildon New Town in the mid-late 20th Century, however, thirteen remain and are home to about 2000 people.</p>
PDL	Previously Developed Land	<p>Land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land (although it should not be assumed that the whole of the curtilage should be developed) and any associated fixed surface infrastructure. This excludes: land that is or was last occupied by agricultural or forestry buildings; land that has been developed for minerals extraction or waste disposal by landfill, where provision for restoration has been made through development management procedures; land in built-up areas such as residential gardens, parks, recreation grounds and allotments; and land that was previously developed but where the remains of the permanent structure or fixed surface structure have blended into the landscape.</p>
-	Ramsar Site	<p>Ramsar sites are wetlands of international importance, designated under the Ramsar Convention. The Ramsar Convention is an international agreement signed in Ramsar, Iran, in 1971, which provides for the conservation and good use of wetlands.</p>
REM	Reserved Matters	<p>The details of a proposed development, which relate to an outline planning permission already granted. The Local Planning Authority has to approve the reserved matters before development can take place.</p>
-	Scheduled Monument	<p>'Scheduling' is shorthand for the process through which nationally important sites and monuments are given legal protection by being placed on a list, or 'schedule'.</p>

Relevant Abbreviation	Term	Definition
		A schedule has been kept since 1882 of monuments whose preservation is given priority over other land uses.
s.106	Section 106 Agreement	<p>An agreement entered into between a landowner and the Local Planning Authority, whereby the landowner undertakes to do specific actions in relation to the development the section 106 (of the Town &amp; Country Planning Act) agreement relates to. This could cover, for example, providing public open space or agreeing the detailed use of the land. Also referred to a Planning Obligation.</p> <p>A s.106 agreement or Obligation can only be imposed if it is necessary to make the proposal acceptable in land-use planning terms.</p>
-	Spatial Strategy	The section of the Local Plan which sets out the level of development the Borough will accommodate in the next plan period and how it's to be distributed between the area's settlements.
SAC	Special Area of Conservation	SACs are areas which have been given special protection under the European Union's Habitats Directive. They provide increased protection to a variety of animals, plants and habitats and are a vital part of global efforts to conserve the world's biodiversity.
SPA	Special Protection Areas	SPAs are areas which have been identified as being of national and international importance for the breeding, feeding, wintering or the migration of rare and vulnerable species of birds found within European Union countries. They are European designated sites, classified under the 'Birds Directive 1979'.
SSSI	Special Site of Scientific Interest	SSSI's are the country's very best wildlife and geographical sites. There are over 4,000 Sites of Special Scientific Interest in England, covering around 7% of the land area. More than 70% of these sites by area are internationally important for their wildlife, and are also designated as Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas or Ramsar sites

<b>Relevant Abbreviation</b>	<b>Term</b>	<b>Definition</b>
SCI	Statement of Community Involvement	A Development Plan document which explains to the public how they will be involved in planning matters in their area. They are a legal requirement of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment	An assessment required by EU legislation that predicts and evaluates the effects of implementing a plan, project or programme and identifies mitigation measures necessary to make the plan, project or programme acceptable in environmental terms.
SHLAA	Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment	A key component of the evidence base of Development Plan to support the delivery of sufficient land for housing to meet the community's needs for more homes. Now referred to as the HELAA.
SPG/SPD	Supplementary Planning Guidance/ Supplementary Planning Document	Provide additional, more detailed guidance for the implementation of Local Planning policies. SPG have been superseded by SPD under the Local Plan system. They are material considerations when determining planning applications.
SA	Sustainability Appraisal	An appraisal of economic, environmental and social effects of a plan to allow decision to made in accordance with the principles of sustainable development.
-	Sustainable Development	International and national bodies have set out broad principles of sustainable development. Resolution 42/187 of the United Nations General Assembly defined sustainable development as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
TGSEP	Thames Gateway South Essex Partnership	Sub-Regional partnership that aims to facilitate development in the Thames Gateway area within South Essex.
	Windfall sites	Sites not specifically identified in the development plan.