



Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) Review Addendum 2021

Volume 1 - Main Report

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Introduction	1
1.1 Background	1
1.2 Local Policy Context	1
2. Methodology.....	3
2.1 Process & Outputs.....	3
2.2 Informing & Supporting the Process	3
3. Stage 1: Identification of Sites	4
3.1 Sources	4
4. Stage 2: Assessment of Sites.....	5
4.1 Assessment Process	5
4.2 Achievability	5
5. Stage 3: Windfall Assessment.....	7
5.1 Consideration of Windfall in this Addendum.....	7
6. Stage 4: Review of the Assessment	8
6.1 The Findings.....	8
7. Stage 5: Final Evidence Base.....	10
7.1 Deliverable, Developable and Non-developable	10
10. Appendices	
Appendix A: List and Maps of All HELAA Sites	12
Appendix B: Detailed Site Assessments for Addendum sites	59
Appendix C: HELAA Addendum Sites - Suitability, Availability and Achievability	69
Appendix D: Site Suitability for Economic Development by Use Class	70
Appendix E: Standard Build Rates and Lead-in Times	71
Appendix F: Basildon HELAA 2020 Viability Assessments	72
Appendix G: Basildon HELAA 2021 Viability Assessments	110

List of Tables

Table 1: Overview of the Sites Viability Assessments Results.....	8
Table 2: Overview of the Potential Yield Viability Assessments Results	8
Table 3: Summary of detailed review of Availability over time (Deliverable and Developable).....	11

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 The Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) 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.
- 1.1.3 Basildon Borough Council's last HELAA report was published in October 2021 for the period of 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020. This HELAA Review Addendum 2021 should be viewed in addition to the HELAA Review 2020. This Addendum will solely consider new sites, and any updated sites¹, submitted between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021. This Addendum does not reassess all the sites considered in the HELAA Review 2020, however the results of the 2020 Assessment can be viewed in Appendix F.
- 1.1.4 The current HELAA and Brownfield Land Register (BLR) Methodology 2017 was formerly adopted by the Council on 19 July 2017 and this Addendum is based on that methodology. For conciseness, details of the methodology used for the HELAA, which are usually included in the report, have not been duplicated in this Addendum. All previous iterations of the HELAA, and the adopted Methodology are available to view on the Council's website.

1.2 Local Policy Context

- 1.2.1 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 a new Local Plan.
- 1.2.2 Following the decision of Full Council on 3 March 2022 to withdraw the Basildon Borough Revised Publication Local Plan 2014 - 2034, the council is in the process of preparing a programme of work to prepare a new Local Plan for the borough. This will be reported to the Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Infrastructure (SPI) in due course and it will feed into

¹ Updated sites refers to those where there may be an update in relation to ownership, site area or other matters which could affect the assessment of a site.

the development of a new Local Development Scheme for adoption by the Council once approved.

2. Methodology

2.1 Process & Outputs

2.1.1 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*².

2.1.2 This Addendum will provide the following information for the new and updated 2021 sites, 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, including:
- where these have been discounted, evidence justifying reasons given;
- where these are considered suitable, available and achievable, the potential type and quantity of development, including a reasonable estimate of build out rates, setting out how any barriers to delivery could be overcome and when;
- an indicative trajectory of anticipated development and consideration of associated risks.

2.2 Informing & Supporting the Process

2.2.1 To support the undertaking of the HELAA Addendum the Council worked with Porter Planning Economics Ltd (PorterPE) to carry out the economic viability assessments on the new and updated 2021 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.

² MHCLG (2019), *Planning Practice Guidance*, Housing and economic land availability assessment

3. Stage 1: Identification of Sites

3.1 Sources

- 3.1.1 There are 726 sites currently held in the HELAA database³. As part of this Addendum, nine new sites were submitted and nine existing sites have been updated. The new sites are referenced as: SS0833 to SS0841, and the existing sites which have been updated are: SS0156, SS0282, SS0323, SS0390, SS0436, SS0530, SS0752, SS0799 and SS0819.
- 3.1.2 These sites have been assessed for their suitability and availability and where appropriate their achievability in accordance with the Council's methodology.
- 3.1.3 For completeness, the maps and a list of all sites within the HELAA database can be found at Appendix A.
- 3.1.4 Please note: Sites submitted following the closure of the submission period for the 2021 HELAA Review do not form part of this HELAA Review. They will be considered in the next HELAA Review.

³ A number of sites have also been removed from the HELAA database as they have been built out and are no longer considered to be available for development.

4. Stage 2: Assessment of Sites

4.1 Assessment Process

4.1.1 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. Three sites out of the 18 sites included within this Addendum were considered to be suitable and available for housing development. For suitability and availability criteria please refer to the HELAA and BLR Methodology.

4.2 Achievability

4.2.1 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.

4.2.2 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 worked with PorterPE to undertake the viability assessment which ensures an informed appraisal of site viability and also an independent viewpoint.

4.2.3 The findings of the viability assessment are set out below, and at Appendix G.

Porter Planning Economics – HELAA Viability Update

4.2.4 Of the 18 sites assessed in the HELAA Review Addendum 2021, three 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.

4.2.5 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 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.

4.2.6 The method used for testing viability of the HELAA sites in this study complies with Basildon HELAA Methodology (2017) and the National Framework (as documented by the NPPF 2019 and the PPG Viability) in

testing market viability. It also considers the RICS Guidance note, Financial Viability in Planning, 1st edition (2012), to help inform the approach to the viability testing and some of the input assumptions for, yet unknown, factors.

- 4.2.7 The three sites were assessed based on the policy conditions set out in the (now withdrawn) *Basildon Borough Local Plan 2014 - 2034*⁴ of 31% affordable housing on sites with a potential yield of 11 or more dwellings, with a 70% social/affordable rented and 30% shared ownership split. This 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 Addendum Review 2021 is able to identify sites that are suitable, available, achievable, deliverable and developable in line with *PPG*.

⁴ This Addendum was commenced prior to the withdrawal of the Basildon Borough Local Plan 2014 – 2034, assessments were carried out using the current Plan information at the time.

5. Stage 3: Windfall Assessment

5.1 Consideration of Windfall in this Addendum

- 5.1.1 The term “windfall sites” is defined as “*Sites not specifically identified in the development plan.*”⁵
- 5.1.2 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.
- 5.1.3 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 Addendum Review 2021 and is available as a separate report.

⁵ MHCLG (2021), *National Planning Policy Framework*, Annex 2: Glossary

6. Stage 4: Review of the Assessment

6.1 The Findings

6.1.1 The following section summarises the key findings of Basildon Borough Council's HELAA Addendum Review 2021.

Residential development potential

6.1.2 Of the 18 new and updated sites, as listed in Appendix C, 5 were assessed as being suitable for residential development and 14 were assessed as being available. When combined, three of these sites were both suitable and available⁶ for residential development and progressed to the next stage to be assessed on their achievability.

6.1.3 The three sites that were found to be suitable and available through the 2021 Addendum were appraised as being viable. These three sites were then added to those tested as part of the HELAA Review 2020. The overall HELAA viability results for the suitable and available sites in the Basildon Borough are represented in the following tables.

Table 1: Overview of the Sites Viability Assessments Results

		Affordable Housing content at 31%
Number of Sites	Viable	201
	Marginal	5
	Unviable	25

Table 2: Overview of the Potential Yield Viability Assessments Results

		Affordable Housing content at 31%
Dwelling Yield	Viable	21,869 dwellings
	Marginal	1,290 dwellings
	Unviable	6,820 dwellings

6.1.4 Table 2 identifies the potential deliverable and developable yield of dwellings at the tested sites. It is concluded that some 21,869 dwellings out of a potential for 29,979 dwellings (73%) would likely be achievable with

⁶ There were also 199 sites that had been found to be viable, and 5 marginally viable, through the 2020 assessments. However the results from the viability assessments as part of the HELAA Review 2021 still apply.

compliance to the full policy requirements within the now withdrawn 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 23,159 units.

Economic Development Potential

- 6.1.5 Whilst the HELAA Review Addendum 2021 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 Addendum Review 2021 when the Council determines the future supply and deliverability of employment land.
- 6.1.6 Of the 18 new and updated sites for 2021, as listed in Appendix C, 5 were assessed as being suitable for economic development and 4 were assessed as being available. When combined this resulted in 2 HELAA sites being both suitable and available for economic development.
- 6.1.7 The two sites represent a potential supply of up to 6.25 hectares of employment land. However, one of these sites has 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.
- 6.1.8 Of the two sites with economic development potential, one is within an existing employment area.
- 6.1.9 The suitability of sites for economic development was further categorised into Employment Use Classes B1 (Business), B2 (General Industry) and B8 (Storage and Distribution)⁷, and the results are detailed in Appendix D.
- 6.1.10 Of the two sites that were found to be suitable and available, one was considered to be available for just B1 (Business) use and the other site is considered to be potentially suitable for B1 (Business), B2 (General Industry) and B8 (Storage and Distribution) uses.

⁷ The production of the HELAA Review Addendum 2021 commenced prior to the update to the Use Class Order and the introduction of Class E (August 2021). Therefore the category B1 (Business) has still be considered for this Addendum and the new Use Class Order will be considered in future HELAA work.

7. Stage 5: Final Evidence Base

7.1 Deliverable, Developable and Non-developable

- 7.1.1 The determination of a site's suitability, availability and achievability for residential development, combined with the timeframe for development directly informs the overall site assessment as either:
- Deliverable and Developable;
 - Developable; or
 - Non-developable.
- 7.1.2 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 years⁸. 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 (2021-2025)*.
- 7.1.3 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+ years⁹.
- 7.1.4 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

- 7.1.5 As set out in chapter 6 of this Addendum, there are a total of 231 sites which are considered to be in both a suitable location for development and available for development. Table 2 within chapter 6 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 Studies for 2020 and 2021 which can be viewed in full at Appendix F and G of this HELAA Review.
- 7.1.6 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

⁸ MHCLG (2021), *National Planning Policy Framework*, Annex 2

⁹ MHCLG (2021), *National Planning Policy Framework*, Paragraph 68

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 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”.

- 7.1.7 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 out 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 3 sets out the summary results of this detailed review. Appendix E details the standard build out rates and lead-in times formula.

Table 3: 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	9,406	6,809	2,937
Marginal	154	625	511	-
No	2,631	339	3,499	351