

**Basildon Borough Council**

# **Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) Review 2015**

## **Volume 1 – Main Report**

**November 2015**



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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 The Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) is a key component of the evidence base that will support Basildon Borough Council's Local Plan production and its approach to the delivery of housing and employment development within the Borough. It was formerly known as the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA).
- 1.1.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (*NPPF*) published in March 2012 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 (known as the SHLAA Review) was published at the end of 2013 for the period of 2012 to 2013, this report takes into account new sites submitted to the Council between 1 April 2013 and 31 March 2015 for both housing and employment.
- 1.1.3 In addition to the submission of further sites, the methodology for undertaking the assessments has been altered to reflect the Government's introduction of the Planning Practice Guidance. The HELAA Methodology was formerly adopted by the Council on 5 March 2015 and this HELAA Review is based on the revised methodology.
- 1.1.4 On 4 December 2014 the Council also adopted a new Local Development Scheme (LDS) for 2015 to 2018 which sets out the project plan and timetable for preparing the Borough's Local Plan<sup>1</sup>. In the LDS the Council agreed to produce a single Local Plan document which 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 Please note however, that 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>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Basildon Borough Council (2014), *Local Development Scheme 2015-2018*

<sup>2</sup> DCLG (2015), *Planning Policy Guidance*, Housing and economic land availability assessment

- i. Identify sites and broad locations for potential development;
- ii. Assess their potential;
- iii. Assess their suitability for development and the likelihood of development coming forward (their availability and achievability).

## **2. Policy Context**

### **2.1 National Policy Context**

- 2.1.1 As part of the decentralised approach to local planning the National Planning Policy Framework (*NPPF*) and the Planning Practice Guidance (*PPG*) were introduced in March 2012 and March 2014 respectively. 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 Paragraph 159 of the *NPPF* states that “*Local planning authorities should have a clear understanding of housing needs in their area. They should prepare a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment to establish realistic assumptions about the availability, suitability and the likely economic viability of land to meet the identified need for housing over the plan period.*”
- 2.1.3 Paragraph 161 of the *NPPF* goes on to state that “*Local planning authorities should use the evidence base to assess the existing and future supply of land available for economic development and its sufficiency and suitability to meet the identified needs.*” The Council has an Employment Land and Premises Study that it will keep up to date to give more specific information in terms of the Borough’s economic needs and supply approximately every 3 to 5 years.
- 2.1.4 The *PPG* sets out the methodology to the land availability assessments which the Council’s revised HELAA Methodology is based on. HELAA Reviews 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. Current saved planning policies are considered as a policy constraint for the HELAA and have been considered during the assessment process where applicable. A list of the current ‘saved policies’ is attached to this report at Appendix A.
- 2.2.2 The last iteration of the emerging Local Plan was the Core Strategy Revised Preferred Options Report which was published for consultation between January and April 2014. The Core Strategy identified the housing and economic targets for the Borough up to 2031 as well as broad locations for future development.
- 2.2.3 The responses to the public consultation on the Core Strategy raised concerns that it was too strategic and did not provide enough detail for people to make informed

comments. The Council took this into account and through the adopted LDS committed to preparing a single Local Plan document which sets out the strategy for growth, as well as the specific site allocations and development management policies. This approach is supported by the *NPPF* and the *PPG* which expect local planning authorities to demonstrate that their Local Plans can deliver sites to provide for the development needs of the area for the first five years of the plan period.

- 2.2.4 As part of the production of the next version of the Local Plan the Borough Council will take into account a number of evidence base documents, which inform current and future levels of need and demand for housing and economic purposes, and using the HELAA, identify the quantum of land available for such development. This will contribute to the determination of local targets for the plan period.



## 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 *RSS*, 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 has been 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.
- 3.1.3 The revised methodology was subjected to a targeted stakeholder consultation during November and December 2014 and then endorsed by Cabinet on 5 March 2015. This latest methodology replaced the 2013 version and a copy of it can be viewed on the Council's website: [www.basildon.gov.uk](http://www.basildon.gov.uk).
- 3.1.4 Cabinet also resolved to delegate authority to the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Planning to approve any future changes to the HELAA Methodology to ensure it remains fit for purpose.

### 3.2 Process & Outputs

- 3.2.1 All individual site assessments have followed the Council's adopted HELAA Methodology, which itself is based upon the standard methodology in the Housing and economic land availability assessment section of the *PPG*<sup>3</sup>. The standard methodology contains five main stages, with two optional stages covering broad locations and windfalls. 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;

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<sup>3</sup> DCLG (2015), *Planning Practice Guidance*, Housing and economic land availability assessment

- 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>4</sup>; and
- an indicative trajectory of anticipated development and consideration of associated risks.

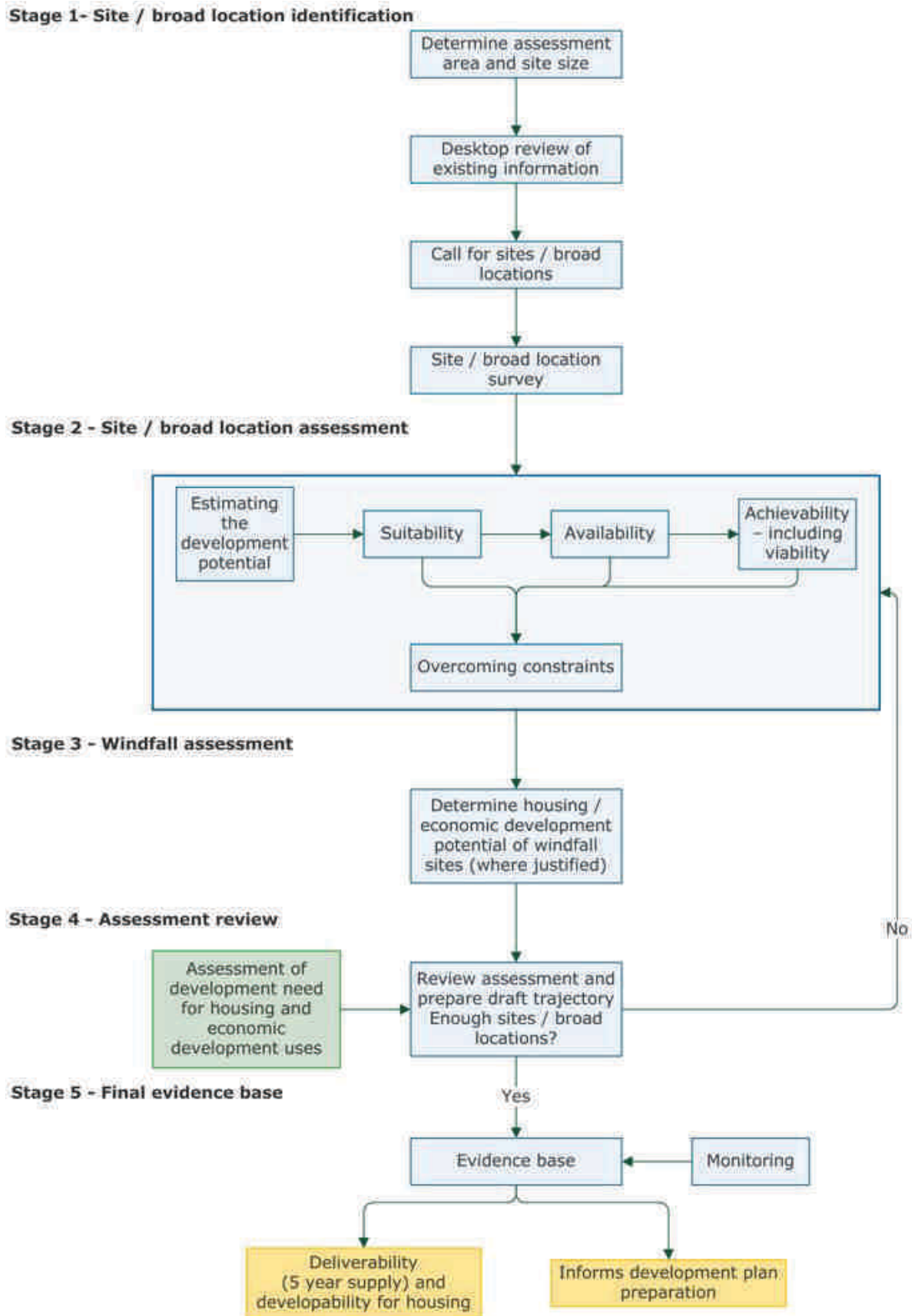
### **3.3 Informing & Supporting the Process**

- 3.3.1 To support the undertaking of the HELAA the Council appointed Peter Brett Associates LLP (PBA) to carry out the economic viability assessments of all sites that were assessed as being suitable and available (part of Stage 2). This independent appraisal has contributed fundamentally to the findings of the HELAA and was conducted in liaison with local developers, professionals, and other key stakeholders who have an informed insight and understanding of housing development in the Basildon Borough.
- 3.3.2 A stakeholder workshop was held on 7<sup>th</sup> July 2015 to assist in setting a robust and informed assessment of the market as part of the viability appraisal stage. An overview of this stakeholder meeting can be found within PBA's report included at Appendix F.

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<sup>4</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.

Figure 1: HELAA Methodology



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 the two 'Call for Sites' exercises which were conducted in 2007 and 2008 or submitted as new sites since the end of the second 'Call for Sites' exercise until 31st March 2015. The remaining sites have been identified through the *Urban Capacity Study (2004)*, Replacement Local Plan exercises (2005), and unimplemented allocations.

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 1st April 2015 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 and included within the annual Residential Land Availability. This ensures that the Council can monitor the delivery of housing on these sites.

#### 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>5</sup>:

- Scheduled Monuments;
- Areas within a functional flood plain (Flood Zone 3b);
- Sites of Scientific Interest (SSSI);

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<sup>5</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 Methodology 2015.

- Local Nature Reserves (LNR);
- Land within the Marshes Protection Area;
- Buffer zones around wastewater / sewage treatment plants<sup>6</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 557 sites currently held in the HELAA database and they form the basis of the HELAA Review 2015. 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 B.
- 4.2.6 Please note: Sites submitted following the closure of the submission period for the 2015 HELAA Review do not form part of this HELAA Review. Those submitted after 31st March 2015 will be considered in the next HELAA Review and have therefore not been added to the database.

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<sup>6</sup>The Cordon Sanitaire of 400m may be flexible as outlined in the HELAA Methodology 2015.

## 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 A significant amount of information was drawn on to carry out the desktop assessments. To ensure the robustness of the process, individual site assessments were shared with those who submitted each site to the Council before they were finalised, and before a decision was taken on the suitability and availability of each site.

5.1.3 This 'Fact Checking Exercise' took place in June 2015. The Council sent landowners, or their representatives, an initial assessment of their site accompanied by a site map and invited them to provide feedback. All feedback received was reviewed and helped inform the final site assessments which are set out in Appendix C.

5.1.4 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 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 Annexe 2 of the Council's approved HELAA 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 the following are present or in close proximity to the site. Some are protective designations for the natural environment or heritage 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;
- 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>7</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 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>8</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

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<sup>7</sup> Buffer varies depending on voltage. See HELAA Methodology 2015 for further details.

<sup>8</sup> The SA/SEA Scoping Report has since been updated and the above buffer zones still apply.



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 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 *Technical Guidance to the National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012)* to consider the potential impact of this type of flooding on a site's suitability. Table 1 of the Technical Guidance shows 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>9</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. 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.

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<sup>9</sup> As defined within Table 2 of the DCLG (2012), *Technical Guidance to the National Planning Policy Framework*

### *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 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 Sustainability is an important consideration when assessing a site's suitability for development. In the absence of an up to date spatial strategy which classifies the role of each settlement in the Borough and helps to guide the physical location of development, the Council adopted the following approach when considering the location of sites.
- 5.2.17 A site was found unsuitable where it wasn't within or adjacent to the settlement boundary or adjacent to a site, which if combined, would be adjacent to the settlement boundary.
- 5.2.18 The main Basildon conurbation (including Laindon and Pitsea), Wickford and Billericay have been considered as the key settlements for the purposes of this HELAA Review. These areas are easily defined and have an established resident population and service infrastructure. Outside of these key areas the villages of Crays Hill, Bowers Gifford and Ramsden Bellhouse were considered to be of sufficient size and service provision to also be referred to as settlements within the HELAA. This approach is in line with the Borough's *Settlement Hierarchy Review 2015*.
- 5.2.19 If an environmental and/or physical constraint was seen to create a barrier between the edge of the settlement boundary, thus completely separating the site from the rest of the built area, the site was not be considered adjacent to the settlement boundary and was therefore unsuitable. 'Barriers' included physical features such as rivers, railway lines and certain roads, and environmental designations such as SSSI, LNR, Ancient Woodland and LoWS.
- 5.2.20 In the case of roads, the Council took the view that the presence of a dual carriageway at the edge of the settlement boundary created a significant barrier between the settlement and the site outside the settlement while roads in a lower category in the Route Hierarchy did not.

### *Consideration for residential development*

- 5.2.21 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>10</sup>. Those sites likely to accommodate less than five net dwellings were kept within the HELAA as they help inform the Council on small/windfall supply from the urban area.

### *Consideration for economic development*

- 5.2.22 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>11</sup>, unless within a town centre where business and office development may be appropriate due to town centres having higher densities.
- 5.2.23 To ensure flexibility, sites located away from existing employment areas but within or adjacent to the settlement boundary were not necessarily found unsuitable for all B class employment uses. If a site was of a sufficient size, could accommodate development without detrimentally impact 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).

### **Accessibility & Constraints to Access:**

#### *Services and Amenities*

- 5.2.24 In order to appraise both the practicalities of a site and its location in terms of distance to services, accessibility considerations 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

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<sup>10</sup> DCLG (2015), *Planning Practice Guidance*, Housing and economic land availability assessment, Paragraph 10, Reference ID: 3-010-20140306

<sup>11</sup> In line with Paragraph 10 of the PPG - DCLG (2015), *Planning Practice Guidance*, Housing and economic land availability assessment, Paragraph 10, Reference ID: 3-010-20140306.

- Railway Station

5.2.25 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
	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	

5.2.26 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>12</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

5.2.27 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*

5.2.28 Where access to the site is not established or problematic, this would be considered as a constraint to development and it has led to some sites being found unsuitable. 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.

5.2.29 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 unsuitable at this time.

5.2.30 In terms of wider accessibility issues, a very brief assumption was been 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

5.2.31 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>13</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.

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<sup>12</sup> H. Barton et al (2003), *Shaping Neighbourhoods: A guide for health, sustainability and vitality*

<sup>13</sup> Essex County Council (2011), *Essex County Council Development Management Policies*

## **General Physical Constraints & Considerations**

### *Gradient of land and site levels*

- 5.2.32 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*

- 5.2.33 Detailed within the HELAA 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.
- 5.2.34 At the time of this review, there were three areas within the Borough that have been granted village green status.

## **Planning Policy Constraints**

- 5.2.35 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 Development 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
- Green Belt - which is a nationally imposed land designation and must be considered appropriately in line with the National Planning Policy Framework and up to date evidence.

- 5.2.36 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*

- 5.2.37 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.
- 5.2.38 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*

- 5.2.39 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*

- 5.2.40 The Council has produced a *Green Belt Study (2013)* 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>14</sup>.
- 5.2.41 The Green Belt Study considered the entire Borough's Green Belt and divided it into 73 broad areas which were defined by strong physical boundaries (rivers, railways and roads). Once these areas were established, each parcel was individually assessed, with the assistance of the Landscape Study to determine to what extent it met the purposes of the Green Belt function.
- 5.2.42 For this HELAA Review, sites that fell within areas that were achieving the purposes, and therefore fulfilling a Green Belt role/ function, were generally considered to be unsuitable in accordance with the HELAA methodology. Where detailed information was provided by a developer/agent which proposed a smaller extent of land for development compared to their initial HELAA submission, further consideration has been given to the site on whether it could be deemed suitable.
- 5.2.43 It is important to note that other sites which are located within areas which serve a Green Belt function but found to be unsuitable were not excluded from the HELAA in perpetuity. They will continue to be included and listed as unsuitable until such time as revised evidence alters this.
- 5.2.44 As a point to note, the Green Belt Study was in the process of being reviewed when the HELAA site assessments were carried out and therefore the site assessments are based on the original study. The next HELAA Review will be informed by the revised Green Belt Study.

## **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>15</sup>. The 'fact checking exercise' which the Council undertakes on an annual basis, and the responses received during the Local Plan consultations,

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<sup>14</sup> See Chapter 9: Protecting Green Belt Land of the National Planning Policy Framework (2012) for a definition of the Green Belt and its five purposes.

<sup>15</sup> DCLG (2015), *Planning Practice Guidance*, Housing and economic land availability assessment, Paragraph 20, ID: 3-020-20140306

help ensure that the HELAA contains the most up to date information available for 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, 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 June 2015 for this 2015 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 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 *Employment Land and Premises Study (2013)*, has informed this assessment process. Where sites were located within an existing employment area they were generally found to be unavailable for housing but available for employment.

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 Achievability**

- 5.4.1 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.
- 5.4.2 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.
- 5.4.3 In 2013, the Council commissioned Peter Brett Associates (PBA) to carry out the viability assessment of suitable and available sites identified in the Borough's SHLAA to provide evidence on the achievability of these sites as potential housing land supply to underpin the emerging Local Plan. This assessment was later updated following the revisions to the SHLAA methodology in 2013 and published in the 2012/13 SHLAA Review.
- 5.4.4 Following a tendering process PBA were commissioned to undertake the viability assessment work for the 2015 HELAA Review and the findings of the assessment are set out in Stage 4 of this report and can be viewed in full at Appendix F.

### **Peter Brett Associates – HELAA Viability Update**

- 5.4.5 Of the 557 sites assessed in the HELAA, 165 were found to be Suitable and Available and it is these sites that have been comprehensively appraised for their achievability and viability.
- 5.4.6 The study by PBA aimed to:
- Confirm the economic viability of all sites identified by the Council as being, in principle, both suitable and available for residential or mixed-use development in the HELAA, taking into consideration the current economic climate and costs that will be associated with residential development;
  - Meet the criteria contained in the *NPPF* and *PPG* in assessing the achievability of sites, by considering market conditions, costs and delivery factors.

- 5.4.7 The method used by PBA for testing viability complies with the HELAA methodology, the Harman Report (June 2012)<sup>16</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>17</sup>.
- 5.4.8 The study reports yields, timescales and viability of sites based on three different scenarios for affordable housing policy, namely 30%, 36% and 40% affordable housing provision for sites of 10 dwellings or more. This is based on 70% social/affordable rented and 30% intermediate tenure mix and S106 contributions set at £2,230 per dwelling. Using this information the HELAA Review is able to identify sites that are suitable, available, achievable, deliverable and developable in line with the *PPG*.

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<sup>16</sup> Local Housing Delivery Group Chaired by Sir John Harman (2012) *Viability Testing Local Plans*

<sup>17</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 which have not been specifically identified as available in the Local Plan process. They normally comprise previously-developed sites that have unexpectedly become available*”.<sup>18</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 Paragraph 48 of the *NPPF* allows for justified windfall sites to be included within 5-year supplies. However, despite having previous trends of windfall delivery in the Borough, the Council cannot confirm with certainty that these trends will continue into the future. A windfall allowance will not therefore be factored into the calculations of supply within this HELAA in the first instance, although further consideration may be given to the capacity for windfall if a small shortfall in supply is identified at the end of the plan-making process.

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<sup>18</sup> DCLG (2012), *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 557 sites on the HELAA database, as listed in Appendix D, 216 were assessed as being suitable for residential development and 440 were assessed as being available. When combined, 165 of these sites were both suitable and available for residential development and progressed to the next stage to be assessed on their achievability.

7.1.3 The 165 sites were then tested against three different affordable housing scenarios for their economic viability by PBA. The baseline scenario was 30% affordable housing content on sites with a potential yield of 10 or more dwellings, with a 70% social/affordable rented and 30% intermediate tenure mix. The S106 contributions were set at £2,230 per dwelling for yields of 10 or more<sup>19</sup>. The affordable housing content was based on the Council's current affordable housing policy.

7.1.4 The other two scenarios used the same information above, however the affordable housing content was 36% which was proposed in the *Core Strategy Revised Preferred Options Report (2013)* and 40% as recommended in the *2013 Strategic Housing Market Assessments (SHMA)*.

7.1.5 The overall HELAA viability results for each scenario for the Basildon Borough are represented in the following tables.

*Table 4: Overview of the Sites Viability Assessments Results*

		Affordable Housing Scenarios		
		30%	36%	40%
Number of Sites	Viable	153	148	143
	Marginal	7	8	11
	Unviable	5	9	11

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<sup>19</sup> Based on the average S106 payment per dwelling using a sample of 21 sites across the Borough as of May 2013.

Table 5: Overview of the Potential Yield Viability Assessments Results

		Affordable Housing Scenarios		
		30%	36%	40%
Dwelling Yield	Viable	19,531	19,004	15,490
	Marginal	370	703	4,186
	Unviable	64	258	289

*30% affordable housing*

7.1.6 The base scenario indicates that the current affordable housing policy is broadly working across the borough. Under this scenario the number of viable sites is 153 out of 165, with a potential to yield some 19,531 out of a possible 19,965 dwellings. A further 7 sites are within the marginal viability buffer, in that they fall within a 20% range (i.e. 10% above or below) around the benchmark land value. The inclusion of these marginal sites increases the potential available supply yield to 19,901 dwellings.

*36% affordable housing*

7.1.7 Testing viability in line with this higher affordable housing policy, as identified in the *Core Strategy Revised Preferred Options Report (2013)*, indicates that five additional sites would no longer be viable, with the potential loss of just over 500 possible dwellings from the base position. The potential yield from those sites considered to be viable is 19,004. The potential yield increases to 19,707 with the inclusion of eight marginally viable sites.

*40%, affordable housing*

7.1.8 The final scenario indicates that 143 viable and 11 marginally viable sites would still be achievable out of the 165 sites under the higher affordable housing rate of 40%, as recommended by the previous *SHMA (2013)*. These sites have potential to yield approximately 15,490 viable dwellings and 4,186 dwellings with the inclusion of the marginally viable sites.

**Economic Development Potential**

7.1.9 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.

7.1.10 Of the 557 sites on the HELAA database, as listed in Appendix D, 203 were assessed as being suitable for economic development and 273 were assessed as being available. When combined this resulted in 93 HELAA sites being both suitable and available for economic development.

- 7.1.11 The 93 sites represent a potential supply of up to 542 hectares of employment land. However, 73 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.
- 7.1.12 Of the 93 sites with economic development potential 23 were within existing employment areas or town centres, or adjacent to these areas either directly or via another suitable and available site.
- 7.1.13 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.
- 7.1.14 All 93 sites that were found to be suitable and available were considered to be potentially suitable for B1 uses (Business). Of those 93 sites 48 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 as is set out within *Basildon Borough Council Five Year Land Supply Report (2015-2020) (November 2015)*.

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 165 sites which are considered to be in both a suitable location for development and available for development. Table 4 within chapter 7 demonstrates that the vast majority of these sites are viable when affordable housing provision is set at 30% or less. The deliverability and developability of those sites that were suitable, available and achievable for residential development are set out in Appendix C of the Viability Study which can be viewed in full at Appendix F of this HELAA Review.

8.1.6 Further consideration has been given in the Viability Study as to when sites are likely to come forward for development based on viability. This has enabled the potential housing yield from the suitable, available and achievable sites to be split over five year periods (from 0 to 5, 6 to 10 and 11 to 15 year periods) as shown in Table 6.

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<sup>20</sup> DCLG (2012), *National Planning Policy Framework*, Footnote 11

<sup>21</sup> DCLG (2012), *National Planning Policy Framework*, Footnote 12

*Table 6: Overview of Potential Deliverability of the Viable Dwellings by Delivery Time based on the Viability Study*

		Affordable Housing Scenarios		
		30%	36%	40%
Timeframe	<5 years	14,585	14,058	13,139
	6-10 years	4,411	4,411	2,351
	11–15 years	535	535	-

8.1.7 However, 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 his 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 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”. 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”. Table 7 sets out the summary results of this detailed review.

*Table 7: Summary of detailed review of Availability over time (Deliverable and Developable)*

Deliverable	Developable		
< 5 Years	6 – 10 Years	11 – 15 Years	Beyond 15 years
915	5,676	7,862	5,448

8.1.8 The detailed review considered the availability of sites that were identified in the Viability Study as being viable or marginally viable when the affordable housing provision is set at 30% or less. It identified 915 dwellings that could come forward within the first five years and would therefore be classed as Deliverable. A further 18,986 dwellings could come forward beyond the first 5 years. These are considered to be on Developable sites, however it was recognised that a proportion of this total (5,448 dwellings) is likely to come forward beyond the first 15 years.



## 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 held in 2007 and 2008 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.
DCLG	Department Communities and Local Government	The central Government department with responsibility for Planning. Formerly DTLR / DETR / DoE / ODPM.
-	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.
-	Evidence Base	The collection of information and studies which a Local Planning Authority will use 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

<b>Relevant Abbreviation</b>	<b>Term</b>	<b>Definition</b>
		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 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

<b>Relevant Abbreviation</b>	<b>Term</b>	<b>Definition</b>
		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 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.

Relevant Abbreviation	Term	Definition
-	Mixed Use	A site that is developed for more than one use, e.g. retail, residential, business, leisure etc.
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework	Sets out the Government's economic, environmental and social planning policies for England.  It was published March 2012.
-	Planning Practice Guidance	Planning guidance to support the <i>NPPF</i> .
-	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 having running water, electricity or fuel connections.  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.
PDL	Previously Developed Land	Land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of developed land and any associated fixed surface infrastructure.

Relevant Abbreviation	Term	Definition
		<p>It excludes agricultural/forestry land, landfill sites, private residential gardens, parks, recreation grounds, allotments and playing fields.</p> <p>It also excludes land that was previously developed but where the remains of the permanent structure or fixed surface structure have blended into the landscape in the process of time, to the extent that it can reasonably be considered as part of natural surroundings.</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> <p>A schedule has been kept since 1882 of monuments whose preservation is given priority over other land uses.</p>
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.</p> <p>Also referred to a Planning Obligation.</p>

Relevant Abbreviation	Term	Definition
		A s.106 agreement or Obligation can only be imposed if it is necessary to make the proposal acceptable in land-use planning terms.
-	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 its 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
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,

<b>Relevant Abbreviation</b>	<b>Term</b>	<b>Definition</b>
		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.
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.
-	Topic Papers	Thematic discussion papers prepared to support the Core Strategy. They contain background information, policy review and facts and figures relevant to the Borough on each topic area.
TGSEP	Thames Gateway South Essex Partnership	Sub-Regional partnership that aims to facilitate development in the Thames Gateway area within South Essex.