

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

1.1 The Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) is an appraisal of the amount of land available within the borough for housing and economic development which is required in order to assess the capacity of suitable land. The period covered is the same as the Local Plan review 2016 to 2036.

1.2 Its purpose is to test whether there is sufficient land to meet the full objectively assessed need (FOAN) and identify where this may be located.

1.3 It is important to note that the HELAA does not allocate land for development or determine whether a site should be given planning permission for development. This is the role of the Local Plan and the development management process. Similarly, the non-inclusion of a site does not preclude future development, providing proposals meet planning policy that is in place at the time that a site comes forward.

1.4 The HELAA aims to provide a realistic number of dwellings that each site can potentially provide by assessing each site in order to determine whether it is suitable, available and achievable for housing. It also indicates the timescales for their delivery.

1.5 The HELAA Methodology we intend to use has been prepared in accordance with the NPPF and the PPG. A Link to the planning practice guidance HELAA section is provided below:

<http://planningguidance.communities.gov.uk/blog/guidance/housing-and-economic-land-availability-assessment/>

1.6 This methodology has been developed by all of the Norfolk Local Planning Authorities as part of the 'Duty to Cooperate', through the housing working group of the Norfolk Strategic Framework.

1.7 Using a consistent methodology should ensure that each planning authority prepares its HELAA in a consistent way. The methodology has been through public consultation in 2016. The final agreed HELAA methodology can viewed by following the link below, and is included as an appendix to this paper:

<http://www.north-norfolk.gov.uk/planning/21445.asp>

1.8 The HELAA is a key background evidence document, which together with other studies, informs and supports the housing delivery strategy in the King's Lynn and West Norfolk Local Plan review.

1.9 Overleaf is a brief overview of the HELAA process, the steps involved and the outcomes of this technical study. For a more detailed approach please see the final agreed Norfolk HELAA methodology.

**The Norfolk HELAA covers this in greater detail, but briefly the process is:**

- 1. Identify sites and broad locations** – here sites from a variety of sources including local plan allocations and those with extant planning permission, along with those from the recent ‘Call for Sites and Policy Suggestions’ consultation are identified. We have decided to set a threshold of sites that are capable of delivering 5 or more dwellings, or are at least 0.25 hectares in size within or immediately adjacent to development boundaries of settlements identified for larger scale growth within the adopted Local Plan and emerging Local Plan review Settlement Hierarchy. This doesn’t apply to those sites with planning permission or within an adopted Local Plan document. At this stage some sites will be discounted such as those within environmental designations, functional flood plain (FZ3b), and those at risk from coastal erosion.
- 2. Site Assessments** – the purpose of this stage is to determine if sites are deliverable or developable. Deliverable sites are sites which are suitable, available now and achievable within five years. Developable sites are sites which are suitable with a reasonable prospect that they could be available and achievable within the plan period. We intend to use the same approach to calculating housing capacity as previously used, this is described in the HELAA methodology. The assessment of suitability - the suitability of a site is influenced by national planning policy, local planning policy (where policy is up to date and consistent with the NPPF) and other factors including physical constraints affecting the site, the impacts of the development of the site, the market attractiveness of the sites proposed use and location and the impacts on amenity and environment of neighbouring areas. To assess the suitability of sites a ‘red’, ‘amber’ ‘green’ (RAG) approach will be applied to assessing the various types of constraints and potential impacts which may affect the development of sites.

The types of constraint and impacts the sites will be assessed against are:

Constraints:

- Access to site
- Access to local services and facilities
- Utilities capacity
- Utilities infrastructure
- Contamination
- Flood risk
- Coastal change
- Market attractiveness

Impacts:

- Landscape/townscape
- Biodiversity and geodiversity

- Historic environment
- Open Space
- Transport and roads
- Compatibility with neighbouring uses

Again the methodology goes into greater detail for each criterion, and of course the relevant statutory consultees will be consulted on the sites which have come forward as part of the recent call for sites and policy suggestions consultation, with their expert comments being taken on-board.

Assessment of availability and achievability will be based upon the information gained from the call for sites; hence we asked those responding for an increased level of detail on these issues than previously. We did gain such information before for but at a later stage and predominantly just for those being proposed as preferred options / allocations.

- 3. Windfall Sites** – we will make an allowance for windfall sites. We may depart slightly from the methodology here although remaining broadly consistent. As we have a local approach to calculating this for both large and small sites, which has been tested at examination, mentioned and accepted by the ‘Heacham’ appeal Inspectors decision letter.
- 4. Review** – essentially this is review of the HELAA process, ensuring that there is enough land within the borough to meet the FOAN, and explore options if there is not.
- 5. Finalising the HELAA** – Planning Policy Guidance is clear that the HELAA should contain certain standard outputs. These are:
  - 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;
  - 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; and,
  - an indicative trajectory or anticipated development and consideration of associated risks. This would include the five year housing land supply position.

**Please note that this is a broad and brief overview of the HELAA process, as previously mentioned more detail is included within the agreed Norfolk HELAA methodology.**