

Southend-on-Sea Borough Council Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment

Final Report

May 2010



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1. Introduction

1.1. Background

- 1.1.1. This report is the final (May 2010) version of the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) for Southend-on-Sea Borough Council.
- 1.1.2. The SHLAA provides an informed estimate of land availability for housing at a given point in time, to inform plan-making and to ensure that councils maintain a five-year supply of housing land.
- 1.1.3. In July 2007, Communities and Local Government (CLG) published the Practice Guidance 'Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment'. The Guidance provides the government's view on how it considers SHLAA should be undertaken and therefore provides the basis for conducting such studies. All the relevant stages of the SHLAA process, as outlined in the guidance, have been followed in this study.
- 1.1.4. The Practice Guidance is intended to be "practical" (Para 1) and essentially contains a step by step guide to undertaking an assessment. It is made clear that the methodology set out in the document is intended as a blueprint for assessments to follow and that "When followed, a local planning authority should not need to justify the methodology used in preparing its assessment, including at independent examination" (Para 15).
- 1.1.5. The SHLAA provides a key element of the evidence base for the Local Development Framework (LDF) and is intended to be used by the Council in preparing further documents, notably the Southend-on-Sea Central Area Action Plan (AAP) (formally known as Town Centre AAP), Seafront AAP and Shoeburyness AAP, in preparing the Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) and in preparing evidence for the review of the relevant Regional Spatial Strategy, the East of England Plan.
- 1.1.6. The study has been produced based on the best available information at the time of writing, drawing on the professional judgement of all those involved.
- 1.1.7. The Practice Guidance is however very clear "The Assessment is an important evidence source to inform plan making but does not in itself determine whether a site should be allocated for housing development" (para 8). **Therefore, this document must be considered as part of the wider evidence base for the Local Development Framework but cannot be construed as committing the Council to allocate any particular parcel of land for a particular use, nor approve any application for development.**

1.2. Relationship with RSS

- 1.2.1. The East of England Plan was published in May 2008. It identifies a housing requirement for Southend-on-Sea for the 20 year period 2001-2021 of a minimum of 6,500 dwellings, an annual average requirement of at least 325 dwellings. Of this, as at 1st April 2006, 2,130 dwellings had been completed at an annual average rate of 430 dwellings. For the period 2006 to 2021, therefore, the minimum requirement still to find is 4,370 dwellings, at an annual average rate of 290 dwellings.
- 1.2.2. Work on the review of the Plan, to put in place a further step change in the delivery of housing to meet forecast household growth, has now begun. This SHLAA will provide evidence of potential future housing delivery from within the administrative boundaries of Southend-on-Sea, which will help to inform this review.
- 1.2.3. In order to ensure a consistent approach, all sections of the study use a base date of 1st April 2008. Consequently it is anticipated that the study provides a robust part of the evidence base for the LDF, founded on the most recently available data.

1.3. Document format

- 1.3.1. This document presents the findings of the study, the methodology used to arrive at these and therefore it's compliance with the Practice Guidance
- 1.3.2. The report comprises :
- 1.3.3. Section 2 describes the methodology which was followed in preparing this study. It is based on the original methodology agreed with the Council at the inception meeting but has been adapted to reflect the requirements of the Practice Guidance and the changing requirements emerging from the review of the RSS.
- 1.3.4. Section 3 sets out a review of the housing market in Southend-on-Sea which has been prepared in consultation with developers and agents in the study area. The market appraisal provides an important element of the SHLAA as it is drawn from consultations with a range of local agents and developers and has been used to provide the basis for understanding the local market.
- 1.3.5. Section 4 provides the first of the findings of the study, which is the stock of sites with planning permission at the base date, which is 1 April 2008. Details of all of these sites are included in Appendix 1. These sites are considered to be deliverable and this has been assessed after discussions with the relevant landowners and/or developers.
- 1.3.6. Section 5 includes a summary of the assessment of site specific opportunities for housing within the existing built up area of Southend-on-Sea Borough. The summary findings are based on an assessment of identified sites arising from all sources. Sites which have been assessed but are judged not currently developable are listed in Appendix 2, including a reason for their rejection. Summaries of all of the sites which are considered

to provide potential housing land within the study period are included in Appendix 3 and the detailed assessments of each of those sites are included in Appendix 4.

- 1.3.7. Section 6 draws all of the previous information together to provide a review of the current situation and indicate the level of housing land which is likely to be available within the plan period, in line with Stage 8 of the Practice Guidance.
- 1.3.8. The review of the study indicates that the identified supply meets the minimum requirements set out in the East of England Plan and the adopted Core Strategy. However, there may be additional capacity required as part of the review of the RSS. As a result it has been necessary to consider site specific opportunities identified outside but adjoining the built up area of Southend-on-Sea and other potential sources of supply set out in the final two stages of the Practice Guidance, Stages 9 and 10 and how any future shortfall of housing land might be met.
- 1.3.9. Section 7 considers the opportunity for the provision of windfall sites to come forward. This analysis is based on past trends as well as local policy and an understanding of the local market.
- 1.3.10. Section 8 sets out an assessment of broad locations both within and outside the built up area of Southend-on-Sea, together with specific promoted sites located outside the built up area. These assessments have included urban design based remodelling of previously developed areas and a review of the urban fringe through landscape analysis. The urban design analysis of 2 broad locations within the urban area is included in Appendix 6, the landscape appraisal report in Appendix 7 and conclusions on the sites outside the existing built up area are set out in Appendix 8.
- 1.3.11. Finally, section 9 provides a summary of the findings of the study.

2. Study methodology

2.1. Introduction

- 2.1.1. This methodology is based on Communities Practice Guidance “Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments” published in July 2007, and “SHLAA and development plan preparation” prepared by Planning Officers Society in January 2008, together with best practice emerging from housing studies across the country.
- 2.1.2. The SHLAA is an important evidence source to inform plan-making. However, the SHLAA does not in itself determine whether a site should be allocated for housing development or all locations where future housing growth will occur. The SHLAA sets out information on developable land availability for growth options to be investigated further through the plan-making process.

2.2. Methodology in brief

- 2.2.1. The project commenced with the Council undertaking a “Call for Sites” exercise during summer 2008, inviting agents, developers and landowners to submit sites for consideration for housing, employment and waste management facilities, as part of the development of the SHLAA, a parallel Employment Land Review (ELR), and for the Waste Core Strategy. A total of 35 sites were identified from this exercise.
- 2.2.2. The SHLAA Inception Meeting was held on 15 August 2008. Letters were sent to key stakeholders setting out the proposed methodology for consultation. In parallel with this key documents were reviewed and sites from published sources identified.
- 2.2.3. On 22 September 2008, a Steering Group met to agree the methodology and discuss the programme for the SHLAA. This was followed by a Stakeholder Workshop at which developers, agents and other organisations were introduced to the SHLAA and discussed the housing market and study assumptions.
- 2.2.4. Through the autumn 2008 consultants Baker Associates carried out detailed surveys of sites identified for assessment and assessed whether sites were suitable, available and achievable. These initial results were then discussed and reviewed by officers from the Councils.
- 2.2.5. On 18th November 2008 the Project Team and Steering Group considered the initial findings of the SHLAA which identified that the identified supply from sites within Southend-on-Sea was close to meeting local policy requirements but that there may be a need to find additional sites. At this point it was agreed that further work regarding sites outside the urban area, broad locations within Southend-on-Sea and windfall should be undertaken.

- 2.2.6. On 28th July 2009 the final draft findings of the SHLAA were reported to the Steering Group and to stakeholders.
- 2.2.7. The following sections follow the stages set out in the CLG Practice Guidance and set out in more detail the stages followed in completing the study.

2.3. Stage 1 Planning the Assessment

- 2.3.1. The first stage is about addressing the management issues in preparing a SHLAA.
- 2.3.2. The project management for this Southend-on-Sea SHLAA was led by Viv Burdon, Team Leader – Strategic Planning at Southend-on-Sea Borough Council.
- 2.3.3. The SHLAA was prepared by consultants Baker Associates, working with officers from the Borough Council. A Project Team of officers and consultants met periodically to co-ordinate the running of the project and to agree actions at key stages in the process.
- 2.3.4. A wider Steering Group was established, consisting of officers from the Council, consultants from Baker Associates, together with representatives from the Home Builders Federation, Renaissance Southend Ltd and the Housing Corporation. This Steering Group considered and agreed key stages of the SHLAA including agreeing the methodology, considering the housing trajectory at stage 8 in order to determine the need to undertake stages 9 and 10 and agreeing the final report.
- 2.3.5. A project plan was prepared for the work setting out: the work programme and project milestones.
- 2.3.6. In this initial stage of project planning it was necessary to set all of the study parameters relating to the physical and time extents to be considered.

Time periods

- 2.3.7. The study must be specific about the time period to which it relates. Housing supply information is required to be set against Local Development Framework (LDF) targets, or the requirements set out in Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) and against the 5 year supply required by PPS3. For this SHLAA, to ensure that housing supply information relates to the adopted Core Strategy timescale of 2001-2021, informs both emerging AAPs and DPDs and responds to the need to demonstrate a rolling 5 year supply of deliverable sites available for housing, time periods will relate to a 15 year period from 2008.
- 2.3.8. A base date is required to act as a baseline against which to assess information. This date is particularly important when considering the distinction between sites with planning permission and those where an application is submitted but not determined. The base date for this SHLAA is 1 April 2008.

- 2.3.9. Any site where planning consent has been issued before the base date, is counted as a site with planning permission and any site where there is a committee resolution to approve, or where an application is lodged but not determined is counted as a site specific opportunity.
- 2.3.10. It is necessary, in the context of national policy and the practice guidance, to provide an assessment of potential housing land in a series of time bands. The practice guidance indicates that this should relate to “the first five years of a plan” “years 6 – 10” and “ideally years 11 – 15” (para. 5), whilst PPS3 and National Indicator 159 for housing delivery require local planning authorities to be able to demonstrate a rolling 5 year supply of deliverable sites available for housing. For this first SHLAA since the adoption of the Core Strategy in December 2007, therefore, the assessment of supply has been made on the basis of periods 2008-13, 2013-18, 2018-23, with additional references to the Core Strategy time periods 2001-11 and 2011-2021 and to the forward looking 5 year land supply for the period 2009-14.

Study extent

- 2.3.11. The study also needs to identify where sites will be sought. The prime concern of national planning policy is to develop sustainable communities. In general these locations will be focused on existing settlements and the location for the majority of housing development should be focused on larger settlements where a range of services can be accessed.
- 2.3.12. The practice guidance states that the study should “aim to identify as many sites with housing potential in and around as many settlements as possible in the study area” (para. 7). However, the extent of geographical coverage should also take into account:
- The nature of the housing challenge – how high are the housing targets relative to current supply?
 - The nature of the area – small rural settlements or range of towns and urban areas?
 - The nature of land supply – small or large sites likely to form the bulk of supply?
 - Resources available
- 2.3.13. One of the first tasks was therefore to consider the extent of the study. Given the densely built up nature of the Borough, the environmental constraints and the clear steer provided by the adopted Core Strategy, the SHLAA has looked at all sites within the Borough but focussed upon the Key Growth & Regeneration Areas. These are:
- Southend Town Centre & Central Area
 - Seafront
 - Shoeburyness
 - Priority Urban Areas (District centres of Westcliff and Leigh, Southchurch Road Shopping Area and West Road/Ness Road Shopping Area and the Cluny Square Renewal Area)

Specific site size threshold

- 2.3.14. The practice guidance implies that all sites with housing potential should be identified but recognises that for site survey a “minimum size of site” may be chosen (para. 25). This should reflect the local circumstances of the area and its housing market but also reflect the resources available to the study.
- 2.3.15. If this study were to attempt to identify all sites, including individual housing plots, living over the shop units and/or sub-division of smaller buildings, it would not only be an onerous and extremely time consuming task but also a potentially endless one.
- 2.3.16. The use of numerical thresholds is to be preferred, since this is more often used for defining large and small sites for monitoring and windfall projection. It also avoids the problem of monitoring and projecting small sized sites that accommodate a relatively high number of dwellings. For new sites, sites capable of accommodating 5+ dwellings were surveyed.

Consultation with stakeholders

- 2.3.17. A key part of the practice guidance and the adopted methodology is consultation with stakeholders.
- 2.3.18. The practice guidance states that key stakeholders should be involved at the outset of the assessment (para. 12). The approach for this SHLAA was to set up a Steering Group to consider and agree key stages of the SHLAA including agreeing the methodology, considering the housing trajectory at stage 8 in order to determine the need to undertake stages 9 and 10 and agreeing the final report. In addition, initial consultation with the Government Office and the Regional Assembly took place regarding the methodology to be followed. This provided the opportunity at an early stage to influence the way in which the study was progressed.
- 2.3.19. Landowners, developers, architects and agents were contacted by the Council through a “call for sites” exercise in order to identify the maximum number of opportunities for housing sites. An initial stakeholder event was convened, to which all interested parties were invited, at which the SHLAA process was explained and opportunities given for participants to influence the methodology, and input to the market assessment and relevant issues such as local constraints, yields and questions of viability. A second stakeholder event was held in July 2009 at which the final draft findings were presented for comments before the report was finalised.
- 2.3.20. The guidance stresses the importance of involving house builders and local property agents to take a view on the deliverability and developability of sites and how market conditions may affect economic viability (para. 12). A number of agents and developers were contacted during the consideration of sites to discuss the local market for housing and the likely viability of sites.

2.3.21. In addition, a Stakeholder Panel of agents and developers was set up to examine the achievability of a sample of 20 sites identified through the survey work.

2.4. Stage 2 Determining which sources of sites will be included in the Assessment

2.4.1. The maximum range of sources for sites were considered in order to provide the most robust assessment of likely availability. This fell into two groups of potential housing sources: those sites within the planning process already and those which are not.

Sites currently within the planning process

- **Planning permissions for housing**
Sites within the planning process include those with unimplemented planning permissions for housing and those which are under construction. All the information held by the Council regarding planning permissions was included within this study.
- **Planning applications for housing**
Sites where there are current planning applications for housing which are likely to be approved are also included as sites within the planning process. This includes sites where there is a resolution to approve an application subject to signing a legal agreement.
- **Existing housing allocations and site development briefs**
All housing allocations which are not subject to extant consents for development were included as opportunity sites in the study. Development briefs, prepared by the Council or others, were also identified through the process of information gathering. Any reasons why these sites have not yet been delivered were investigated.
- **Land allocated or with permission but no longer required for employment or other land uses**
Where there was evidence that a site allocated for a use other than housing was no longer required for that use, it was considered as part of the SHLAA. It is not reasonable to review every single consent for uses other than housing. However, where sites with consent for other uses were identified by the Council, or by landowners/agents, as having potential for housing use, these sites were examined. A separate Employment Land Review of the Borough has been carried out by consultants Baker Associates, and each study has informed each other through the process.

Sites not currently in the planning process

2.4.2. Sites where previous applications have been refused were not necessarily considered, as those sites are generally not currently developable. However, there were sites which have previously been refused for site specific reasons, such as design or massing, but where the principle of housing development may be accepted.

2.4.3. A “call for sites” exercise was undertaken by the Council as part of the SHLAA process. Sites put forward through this exercise were be considered along with all other site specific opportunities.

2.4.4. Sites not currently in the planning process may include a further range of sites and the guidance provides examples of potential sources. These are indicative but not necessarily an exhaustive list:

- Vacant and derelict land and buildings

Buildings which are not in efficient and/or economic use have always been identified as part of urban housing potential studies. Sites identified by landowners or developers during the course of this project were included, together with sites identified by survey teams during site visits.

- Surplus public sector land

Consultation with the Council and its public sector partners was undertaken through the SHLAA process and any potential sites were considered and assessed against the three main tests.

- Land in non-residential uses

The whole range of land was considered through site surveys and many sites which were identified through the “call for sites” exercise are currently in non residential uses.

- Land in existing housing areas

All land within residential areas will potentially be suitable for housing development and opportunities were identified through site survey and from the call for sites. Garage courts, open spaces and areas where there are large gardens providing infill opportunities were all considered as part of the study. However, many of the spaces within existing residential areas are valued for the space that they provide and add to the character of the environment. Not all opportunities are therefore suitable. Therefore, sites, such as informal open spaces, were considered but were often rejected through the assessment process.

- Urban extensions and free standing settlements

It is not the role of the SHLAA to identify the need for major urban extensions and new settlements in any form. That is properly the role of the development planning process. This SHLAA has been carried out within the context of the adopted Core Strategy which seeks to achieve the required housing growth through renewal and regeneration of the existing urban area. However, it is the role of the SHLAA to identify sufficient sites with potential for housing to meet local policy requirements and where it is not possible to do so it should provide the evidence base to assess whether sites outside the urban area and/or broad locations elsewhere may be required.

Scope of the assessment

2.4.5. The practice guidance clearly states that except for clear cut designations, such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest, areas should only be excluded from the assessment in

exceptional cases which must be justified. For this SHLAA, apart from clear cut designations¹, no areas were explicitly excluded from consideration. However, the focus for sites was at those locations within the existing urban area identified within the adopted Core Strategy.

2.5. Stage 3 Desktop review of existing information

- 2.5.1. All published material was reviewed and assessed. This included site based information such as completed urban housing potential studies, site allocations in development plans, planning applications and permissions together with other site records such as NLUD, register of public land, employment land studies, recreation land assessments, empty property registers, house condition surveys, etc. Information provided by estate agents, landowners and developers was added through the “call for sites”.
- 2.5.2. Physical constraints and local policy designations were identified together with those studies which would assist in site selection.
- 2.5.3. Ordnance Survey mapping is a key element to any SHLAA and provides the base for all assessment and presentation. All constraints, designations and identified sites were mapped onto a GIS base for the study area and linked to a site database.
- 2.5.4. A database was set up capable of storing all site details and dwelling yields, linked to site maps. This database has potential to be linked in the future to existing and proposed land availability monitoring systems so that annual reviews of the SHLAA can feed directly into 5 year land supply returns to Government.

2.6. Stage 4 Determining which sites and areas will be surveyed

- 2.6.1. Decisions made at stage 1 regarding the extent of the areas to be studied and the site thresholds to be used, determined the sites and areas to be surveyed.
- 2.6.2. All relevant sites which came forward from desktop studies were included within the site search, together with sites put forward from the “call for sites” exercise.

2.7. Stage 5 Carrying out the survey

- 2.7.1. Site surveys were undertaken by consultants Baker Associates. All sites identified were visited and details recorded in a standard template format, regarding the characteristics of the site and its surroundings. Photographs of all sites were also be taken. Findings were written up and recorded in the access database which was used as the basis for reporting.

¹ The clear cut designations agreed for this SHLAA are: International, European or national environmental designations (including SPAs, SACs, RAMSAR, RIGs, SSSIs, SNCIs), nature reserves, historic parks and gardens, scheduled ancient monuments

2.7.2. Any sites that are currently in an alternative use, with no evidence or obvious prospect of being available for housing and those where constraints mean that they will not be suitable for housing development were rejected and recorded with the reason for rejection.

2.8. Stage 6 Estimating the housing potential of each site

2.8.1. For each site which was considered to provide an opportunity for housing (see stage 7), a yield was calculated based on the characteristics of the particular site. For some sites proposals were sufficiently advanced that a yield had already been indicated from either a masterplan or from a planning application. However, for many sites a yield was assessed.

2.8.2. We used generic layouts to identify potential approaches based on the setting and characteristics of sites. These were used as a basis for considering appropriate layouts and therefore yields. These provided a layer of analysis which was then confirmed through the consideration of particular schemes for specific sites. Yields achieved on similar sites were identified through the housing market assessment process and through the examination of planning histories on similar sites. In addition, for some sites the study team prepared simple sketch schemes in order to arrive at reasonable levels of yield for any particular site.

2.9. Stage 7 Assessing when and whether sites are likely to be developed

2.9.1. The practice guidance seeks to consider all sites in one of three categories:

- **deliverable** – available now and with a reasonable prospect of development within 5 years.
- **developable** – sites suitable for housing and having a reasonable prospect of being delivered within the period of the plan.
- **not currently developable** – these are the identified sites which, for whatever reason, cannot currently come forward for housing. These were included within the rejected sites list.

Stage 7a: Assessing suitability for housing

2.9.2. The site proformas specifically considered the suitability of sites and indicate why each of those sites is considered suitable for housing development. Factors which make a site suitable for housing were considered throughout the assessment process. Review of relevant policy constraints and planning history indicated the potential restrictions to development and identified physical problems and impacts on issues such as landscape character.

2.9.3. During site visits the potential physical limitations of sites and the conditions experienced by potential occupiers were judged. Issues of infrastructure provision, contamination and flood risk were all assessed through review of available data and discussions with stakeholders.

Stage 7b: Assessing availability for housing

- 2.9.4. Many sites which were considered during the assessment are being promoted by landowners or developers either through planning applications, through pre-application discussions or other informal approaches to the Council. Further sites have been promoted through the LDF process or as a response to the “call for sites”.
- 2.9.5. In each of these cases the landowner and/or developer were identifiable and their intentions were often made clear. Where this was not the case efforts were made to identify landowners through Council records. However, this was not always successful. In these instances, sites were not identified as being available at the current time and further work will therefore be required by the Council as part of the review of the SHLAA to determine future availability for the purposes of housing delivery.

Stage 7c: Assessing achievability for housing

- 2.9.6. The guidance is clear that achievability relates to the economic viability of a site and this should be determined through a consideration of the market, as well as the particular circumstances of each site.
- 2.9.7. A market assessment forms a key part of the methodology of this study and discussions were held with developers and agents regarding the local market conditions in the area for different types of housing. This was informed by the Strategic Housing Market Assessment and the Council’s Housing Strategy.
- 2.9.8. Favoured house types for different types of site, as well as land values for competing land uses (not just residential), sales rates, selling prices, efficiency of residential land use, and the market for differing types of housing, in different areas were considered. This information enabled us to predict, with as much certainty as possible, the type of housing, and therefore the likely yield, for each site, as well as the likely viability of marginal locations. This process was an essential part of assessing the deliverability of each site opportunity, and the time band for likely development.
- 2.9.9. The effect of any community gain package was taken into account, in particular, by reference to existing local policy and guidance. The assessment of economic viability has been critical to this SHLAA.
- 2.9.10. A number of model spreadsheet valuations were produced for a small selection of sites that were typical of housing conditions in the Borough, that addressed the aspects of the local housing market and that arrived at a basis for concluding economic viability. The basis of this was a Residual Valuation Model (RVM), of a similar type developed by Baker Associates for previous work carried out for other Councils in looking at site viability for housing allocations.

- 2.9.11. In cases of marginal viability, an assessment of what might need to be done to achieve viability was carried out. This can involve the reduction in the level of provision of different development requirements and obligations.
- 2.9.12. A Stakeholder Panel of 6 agents and developers was set up to examine the achievability of a sample of 20 sites identified through the survey work. This provided an additional structured and transparent assessment of the local market and the consideration of specific sites. This group was drawn from local and national house builders (with advice from the HBF), surveyors and agents active in the housing land market and Registered Social Landlords. The conclusions reached on the sample sites were used to test and validate the conclusions reached on all other sites.

Stage 7d: Overcoming constraints

- 2.9.13. In certain locations and on certain sites the potential for development will be limited by a range of constraints. In some instances these constraints may be overcome through considering sites together, through shifts in policy or by the creation or improvement of infrastructure.
- 2.9.14. For all sites and locations, constraints to development were identified during the assessment process and if the constraints were considered to represent a barrier to development a site was rejected. Where constraints were considered to be able to be overcome, the site was included as an opportunity.

2.10. Stage 8 Review of the Assessment

- 2.10.1. Following site visits and review of site data, all information was collated. An indicative housing trajectory was prepared. This indicated the level of housing supply in relation to the overall requirement and its distribution by area.
- 2.10.2. Sufficient land was initially identified to meet the current housing policy requirements for Southend-on-Sea. However, in order to inform future RSS derived housing targets, the study considered site specific sources outside of the built up area and other sources of supply, such as broad locations (stage 9) and windfall (stage 10).

2.11. Stage 9 Identifying and assessing the housing potential of broad locations (where necessary)

- 2.11.1. The practice guidance identifies potential sources for broad locations:
- within settlements – development within settlements, in specific locations, might be encouraged and this could be a particular centre where local policy actively encourages infill or redevelopment. The adopted Southend-on-Sea Core Strategy specifically identifies Key Growth & Regeneration Areas within the existing urban area for development.

- adjoining settlements – the guidance identifies the opportunity to provide for “small extensions to settlements” which may provide a sustainable form of development.
 - outside settlements – the need to explore major urban extensions and free standing settlements will usually be signalled by the RSS. No major urban extensions are proposed within the current RSS, although the review of the RSS is likely to consider these.
- 2.11.2. Based upon the clear steer of the adopted Core Strategy, this SHLAA has looked firstly to identify broad locations at the Key Growth & Regeneration Areas where redevelopment and urban remodelling is considered to be appropriate.
- 2.11.3. The practice guidance suggests that criteria should be developed to assess the suitability of broad locations. A similar approach has been taken to the identification of suitable sites undertaken at stage 7a, firstly identifying relevant local policy restrictions or positive plans for action including regeneration initiatives, then identifying any physical constraints.
- 2.11.4. Two broad locations were identified through site survey within the Town Centre and Central Area boundary as having potential capacity for future housing delivery, as part of mixed use redevelopment. Relevant agencies and utility providers were consulted to identify whether there were any key infrastructure constraints to delivery.
- 2.11.5. Potential impacts were assessed having regard, for example, to impacts upon the historic built environment, including listed buildings and conservation areas and the extent to which remodelling could have a positive impact upon the wider townscape. The extent to which development could assist with wider regeneration initiatives and tackling local deficiencies or deprivation was also considered.
- 2.11.6. When determining a potential housing yield for these broad locations, this SHLAA has used existing regeneration frameworks and design studies, informed by specifically commissioned urban design case work, to examine remodelling of the urban fabric. Information from relevant developers and landowners was critical to informing this exercise and to establishing more widely whether sites within such broad locations were likely to be genuinely available and achievable.
- 2.11.7. Having assessed the potential for identifying broad locations within the urban area, the identified housing supply was reassessed to determine whether further broad locations were required beyond the existing urban area.
- 2.11.8. A small area of greenfield land remains undeveloped, to the north east of the Borough. This area was assessed, having regard to physical constraints and potential landscape impact for future development.

2.12. Stage 10 Determining the housing potential of windfall (where justified)

- 2.12.1. The expectation of PPS3 is that, for the first 10 years of supply, housing should come forward on identified sites. If, however, an exceptional case can be made for a windfall allowance, this can be estimated by reference to past completions records for development on brownfield sites. Beyond 10 years, the provision from specific sites is less certain and windfall can be considered.
- 2.12.2. Much of Southend-on-Sea Borough Council's housing provision is currently being met through renewal and intensification across the Borough which was expected and as such included within the Core Strategy spatial distribution of growth (Policy CP8). The Plan Inspector considered that in a wholly built up area where a high proportion of development in the past has been on small sites "it is not unsound to accept that there will be a heavy reliance on unidentified sites." The spatial strategy also envisaged that this would and should diminish over time as more rigorous development management policies are adopted to discourage inappropriate intensification and Area Action Plans are adopted to assist in intensification and growth of the Town Centre/Central Area, Seafont and Shoeburyness.
- 2.12.3. Consequently, this SHLAA has examined past rates of completion on unallocated previously developed sites within the urban area, to determine the likely future supply from sources of intensification. Care has been taken to avoid the potential for double counting provision from specific sites within the Key Growth & Regeneration Areas and within the broad locations identified.

2.13. Summary

- 2.13.1. The previous section indicates the 10 stages followed in completing the Southend-on-Sea SHLAA, reflecting the advice in the Practice Guidance.
- 2.13.2. The following sections present the findings of the various stages of the study and provides more information regarding the methodology for each particular phase.

3. Market assessment

3.1. Introduction

3.1.1. The SHLAA Practice Guidance advocates a partnership approach working together with stakeholders such as house builders and local agents to help shape the approach, and to assist in the assessment of the deliverability of sites, and how market conditions may affect viability.

3.1.2. Therefore, in reaching conclusions about whether and when sites will come forward, and for which kind of dwellings, it is first essential to assess the suitability of each of the identified sites for housing development, taking account of:

- the characteristics of the site
- alternative possible land uses
- environmental and policy constraints to development such as nature conservation value
- physical development constraints such as access, flood risk, and ground conditions
- market considerations.

3.1.3. A key element in understanding where, how much, and what type of housing is likely to come forward in any particular area is the operation of the local housing market. Understanding the economics of the local market is identified as a central component of a SHLAA by the practice guidance and the input of house builders and local property agents is important to this understanding.

3.1.4. Therefore in preparing this study a brief overview of the current state of the housing market has been undertaken, and has been utilised in considering the likely type and number of dwellings which will come forward on identified sites, in line with advice in para. 41 of the practice guidance. It is not considered necessary, practical, or appropriate in the context of a SHLAA to undertake a residual valuation of each and every site.

3.1.5. A starting point was a consideration of the Thames Gateway South Essex Strategic Housing market Assessment (SHMA). This looks at housing needs and supply across the five local authorities of Basildon, Castle Point, Rochford, Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock. Much of the research for this study was carried before the 'Credit Crunch' became a full-blown recession. The SHLAA has therefore provided an updated position on the state of the private housing market, but has used the SHMA to update affordable housing need.

- 3.1.6. Accordingly, the assessment of opportunities has been assisted by consultations undertaken during the work with people familiar with the areas and knowledgeable about the operation of the local markets, such as the local agents and house builders, some of whom took part in the Stakeholder Group meetings, which was set up to oversee the SHLAA approach, particularly in the context of taking account of the market. In this way, the SHLAA was able to build up knowledge of the factors affecting the likely type of development on different sites, and when it might be expected to be completed.
- 3.1.7. In addition, the assessment has tried to take account of a variety of 'deliverability' factors, particularly in the first five-year period, when sites should be demonstrably suitable, available and achievable. These factors include access, ownership, adjacent land uses and economic viability in the light of local market considerations, though exhaustive investigations have not been possible in every instance.
- 3.1.8. Those familiar with the housing market over the long-term appreciate that any analysis is a view at a particular time. The market will undoubtedly vary over the period considered by this study, and it should be reviewed at regular intervals. This is particularly relevant at the time of this study at the start of an economic recession.

3.2. Current market conditions

- 3.2.1. Due to the current market downturn resulting from the reduced availability of credit apparent since September 2007, developers, agents and private housing developers confirm a significantly downturned local housing market. The three largest volume housebuilders have temporarily stopped land acquisition in response to reduced demand for new housing, preferring instead to rely on their current land banks. Developers are in particular wary of large schemes of flats, volume sales of which were highly dependent upon the buy to let market that relies on short-term capital growth, and which were frequently financed by mortgage schemes that would no longer be viable. No one can predict the length or severity of the current downturn, but its effect will evidently be to limit market capacity in the short term.
- 3.2.2. Property experts predict that after a period of re-adjustment underlying demand will return to recent levels, albeit at re-structured prices. The market emphasises that there must be a balanced delivery of a mix of house types, and an over-reliance on one type of dwelling, such as flats, creates over-supply and low demand problems. The assessment of dwelling yield and types, and timescales for delivery, for all sites in this SHLAA has been informed by this market assessment.
- 3.2.3. Because of these recent market difficulties, there is now evidence that residential land values have decreased by around 50% since September 2007, depending on individual and local circumstances. By then, land values had reached an unsupportable level partly due to intense competition, driving prices up because of a combination of low supply and high demand. The most obvious change in the land market is that developers have no immediate reason to acquire sites, as well as having little finance available, so 2009 is likely to see a further softening of price due to this reduction in demand.

- 3.2.4. A number of recent research reports corroborate this position: Savills reported in December 2008 that transaction levels in all markets are at an all time low, down by between 60% and 65% from the peak of September 2007.
- 3.2.5. The consequence of this is that the price of new homes has fallen faster and further than the mainstream UK market. While across the country, average house prices fell by some 16.6% in the year to January 2009, according to the Nationwide indices, new build prices have typically fallen by 15% to 25%. In some markets, an overhang of unsold stock means values have fallen even further.
- 3.2.6. The position in Essex reflects the situation across the country, with annual price decreases ranging from 4% to 21%, with Southend-on-Sea at minus 8.1% (Land Registry of England and Wales, March 2008 - March 2009). This is summarised in the table below:

district	change in house price 2008 - 2009
Castle Point	- 4.3%
Uttlesford	- 4.6%
Thurrock	- 6.4%
Chelmsford	- 6.5%
Southend-on-Sea	- 8.1%
Basildon	- 9.3%
Rochford	- 12.4%
Harlow	- 14.1%
Brentwood	- 14.7%
Maldon	- 15.3%
Epping Forest	- 16.7%
Colchester	- 18.2%
Braintree	- 18.5%
Tendring	- 21.0%

- 3.2.7. Knight Frank's Residential Development Land Index showed similar falls in the value of residential sites over the past year. In November 2008, the Nationwide reported an annual 13.9% fall in average house prices (monthly 0.4%), significantly less than that seen in October when house prices fell by 1.3%. In February 2009, the Halifax states that for 2008 as a whole, prices fell 16.2%, down to the levels of August 2004, the Nationwide reported a 17.6% annual fall, and HBOS reported a 17.8% fall from February 2008, indicating that prices are still falling at over 2% per month.
- 3.2.8. Land trading has, with few exceptions, completely halted, as buyers for standard development sites with planning permission have all but disappeared. However, deals have been salvaged by restructuring to include joint ventures, build licences and phased payments, thus minimising the loss of overall value.

3.3. Future prospects

- 3.3.1. The return of investment activity in the UK residential sector will be an early indicator of a change in market sentiment. Given that constraints on access to debt are likely to continue to suppress demand from the buy to let sector, equity investors are likely to be the first to respond to signals of an impending upturn.
- 3.3.2. Expectations are that a renewal of equity investment will be concentrated first in prime central London, London, the South East, together with the more affluent university cities, where housing scarcity is greatest, with good prospects of long term capital and rental growth.
- 3.3.3. Once the market does turn, first time buyers will re-enter the market, driven by the renewed affordability of owning over renting, with shared ownership schemes in high demand, for example, the government's Homebuy scheme.
- 3.3.4. The government's house building targets of 200,000 annual completions appear now to be impossible to achieve, with just 75,000 likely to be started in 2009. Residential development will not proceed until site values increase sufficiently to incentivise owners to release land. This will happen in due course as the market recovers, and developers are seeking to re-negotiate the terms of Section 106 requirements to achieve viability.
- 3.3.5. Land with higher infrastructure or remediation costs will experience a deeper and more prolonged downturn in residual site values. This may have significant implications for deliverability conclusions, and the five year land supply. Many complex sites will currently be unviable, and assumptions need to be made about delays in delivery.
- 3.3.6. Property experts expect a gloomy 2009, with a recovery in 2010 - 2011. The government's rescue package may not have averted recession, but intervention and national policy initiatives look set to ease liquidity slowly. This will improve mortgage availability and increase residential market turnover towards levels more usually seen in a downturn, rather than the historic lows currently being experienced. Interest rates have

already fallen sharply and it is anticipated further cuts as the economy weakens. The rate was cut from 2% to 1.5% on 8 January, and to an unprecedented 0.5% on 5 March 2009.

3.4. Medium/long term prospects

- 3.4.1. Whilst short-term demand has fallen, medium and long-term demand is still considered by the market to be strong. This is underpinned by government policy to deliver a much increased level of housing to meet a national shortage, arising from a continuing high level of new household formation. The government is testing the deliverability of high completions rates in the context of affordability levels, through work being carried out by the National Housing and Planning Advice Unit.
- 3.4.2. In the medium term, the housing land market in the Southend area will continue to be comparatively strong for most house types in all locations, whilst housebuilders and private vendors will adjust prices to align with demand.
- 3.4.3. It is considered that, due to the historically strong land values in the area, it is unlikely that many sites will remain unviable in the medium term because of decreased selling prices, abnormal development costs or competing land uses, although some flat schemes in the centre of the town will be delayed for some time.
- 3.4.4. Most experts consider that within about two years, a recovery will be under way. In those circumstances, land values will start to recover, and most abnormal development costs and community gain packages to be absorbed without falling below the value for alternative uses, such as general employment and warehousing land. Whilst economic viability is currently a significant issue, over the medium term there is unlikely to be delivery problems for the housing sites identified in this study. Viability issues and likely revised start dates have been built into site assessments and completion programmes.
- 3.4.5. In some parts of the country Councils are preparing temporary policies to allow developers to negotiate a flexible approach to planning gain contributions, including reduced or deferred payments. This is intended to ease viability problems and assist in maintaining delivery.
- 3.4.6. Each identified site has a dwelling yield attributed based on the characteristics of the particular site, as well as a consideration of the market. For some sites proposals will be sufficiently advanced that a yield will already be indicated from either a masterplan or from a planning application. However, for many sites a yield has been assessed. The starting point for assessing yield was the generation of indicative yields through the use of density multipliers, which provides an indication of the likely levels of housing provision.
- 3.4.7. However, every site is different and therefore the density multiplier is only an initial indication. In some cases, indicative layouts of typical sites have been used as a basis for considering appropriate developments and therefore yields.

3.4.8. Housing land availability studies are about informing the decisions to be made in the LDF about the relationship between housing provision and supply based on what is possible and what is desirable, but also what is probable. There are very many factors affecting whether an opportunity should be used and is likely to be developed, and design considerations are only one part of this spectrum of relevant issues. The design that proves to be 'right' for a site when it is eventually developed may well be different from, though just as appropriate as, what is suggested during the study, and for this reason, annual monitoring by the LPA is an essential element of the SHLAA.

3.4.9. Set out below is a selection of schemes currently, or soon to be, on the market. These were sourced from the surveys, from discussions with the Stakeholder Panel, with individual developers, from local newspapers, local agents, and generic websites such as The Right Move.

Table 1: Market schemes

Developer/agent	Location in Southend	Dwelling types
WOW Property	Jersey House, Palmerston Road, WESTCLIFF-ON-SEA	2 bed flats, £75k 50% shared ownership, OMV of £150k
Bovis	Hera Close, SOUTHEND-ON-SEA, Essex, SS2	2 bed flats, £75k 50% shared ownership, OMV of £150k
Easy-move	Ramuz Drive, Westcliff-On-Sea	2-bed flat, £120k
George Wimpey	Urban Base, Bircham Road, Southend On Sea, Essex, SS2	1 & 2bed flats, £130k
Bovis	Pegasus Court at Lifstan Way Southend-On-Sea SS1	2-bed flats £150k, 3-bed houses £250k, 4-bed det £360k
EC New Homes	Priorywood Mews Leigh on Sea	2-bed flats, from £155k
Gladedale	Gunners Rise at Chapel Road, Shoeburyness, SS3	1-bed flat from £159k
EC New Homes	Royal Mews Plaza, High Street, Southend-On-Sea SS1	2-bed flats, from £160k
George Wimpey	AmbleSide Drive Southend	1-bed flats from £165k
Bairstow Eves	24 Central, Southchurch Road	1 & 2-bed flats, from £140k
Connells	Rayleigh Road, Eastwood, Leigh-On-Sea	2-bed flat £185k
McCarthy & Stone	Montague Court, Hamlet Court Road, Westcliff-on-Sea	97 1 & 2-bed retirement flats from £193k
Countrywide	Thorpe Bay	2-bed flats, from £200k - £485k
Countryside	Eastwood Old Road, Leigh-on-Sea	4-bed semis, from £315k
Appointmoor Estates	Leigham Court Drive, Leigh-On-Sea	3-bedroom semis from £395k
Gladedale	Chapel Road, Shoeburyness	2-bed flats from £400k
Dedmans	Westbourne Grove, Westcliff	4 bed det houses, from £440k
Essex Countryside	22 The Leas, Westcliff On Sea	2 bed flats, from £550k - £875k, 3-bed flat, £1.050k

3.4.10. Extensive discussions with developers and agents sought views on the state of the housing market, land values in different parts of the study area, sales vales, the types of development targeted by developers on different sites, and sales rates. The house building industry generally still works in imperial rather than metric measurements, and

rather than confuse the situation with a mixture of both, or use metric for the sake of convention, we have opted here to use imperial measurements, such as sq. ft. and acres.

3.4.11. The following individuals and organisations assisted discussions:

Table 2: Market stakeholders

Individual	Organisation
Kerry Preston & Carol Eastwick	Estuary HA
Alan Randall	Dedman
Geoff Spiller	Glenny
James Waterhouse	Iceni Projects
Ian Beatwell	Landmark
Larry Fenttiman	Inner London Group
Graeme Humphrey	Taylor Wimpey
Mike Lambert	Renaissance Southend
Robin Gray	Bovis
Dan Percy, James McCray	Gladedale
Chris Weedon	Countrywide/Stonebond
Justin Elcombe, David Godden	Hollybrook Residential Developments

3.5. Affordable housing

- 3.5.1. The draft Housing Strategy 2008 - 2011 demonstrates that the net annual housing need for affordable housing is 257 dwellings, whilst the 2008 SHMA calculates this to have increased to an annual need of 344 dwellings. Both figures are significantly in excess of the supply of affordable housing on an annual basis, and the SHMA figure is in excess of the total RSS housing provision, although it must be said that RSS provision and affordable housing need are calculated in completely differently.
- 3.5.2. In terms of delivering the Core Strategy DPD provision for 6,500 net additional dwellings between 2001 and 2021, the high level of completions over the period 2001 to 2007 mean that for the remaining period to 2021 Southend Borough Council must plan for 3,347 net additional dwellings.
- 3.5.3. With regard to affordable housing provision, whilst the RSS requires that 35% of all housing provided across the region to be affordable, local conditions and priorities have led to a lower policy approach to affordable housing. Core Policy CP8 requires all residential proposals of 10-49 dwellings or 0.3ha up to 1.99ha make an affordable housing or key worker provision of not less than 20% of the total number of dwellings on the site.
- 3.5.4. All residential proposals of 50 dwellings or 2ha or more should make an affordable housing or key worker provision of not less than 30% of the total number of dwellings on

the site. For sites providing less than 10 dwellings (or below 0.3 ha) or larger sites the Council will negotiate a financial contribution to fund off-site provision.

- 3.5.5. In view of current downturn in market conditions, and the strong possibility of sites being rendered temporarily unviable, nationally £200m has been set aside to purchase newly built properties that developers have been unable to sell. This could also give a boost to the ailing property market by clearing excess supply. Alongside this the Housing Corporation has also announced in its Regular Market Engagement: Guidance July 2008, that in some circumstances, it is prepared to allow some flexibility in the space and sustainability standards to allow homes that may have been previously designed for market sale to be offered for affordable housing.
- 3.5.6. The position is exacerbated by the continuation of the right to buy. The view of the Council's Housing Enabling Officer is that there is a continuing high unmet requirement for affordable housing, and particularly for social housing for rent.

3.6. Residential land values

- 3.6.1. Land values for open market housing in the Southend area increased significantly between 2001 and 2007, and before the recent collapse, ranged from around about £1.5 million to £2 million per net developable acre of open market housing, depending on the precise location and suitability to a particular market. The hitherto important market for flats bears little relation to values per acre, but this equates to a plot value of about £60,000.
- 3.6.2. Land values are currently theoretical because of the current problems in the housing market, which means that few, if any, developers are contemplating further land purchases, preferring to build out sites currently under construction. If, as the Savills Development Land Index reports, land values have fallen by 50%, the range will be about £750k to 1m per acre, assuming there are any purchasers who can secure finance. Anecdotal evidence suggests that actually achievable land values might currently be even lower.

3.7. Coverage, saleable floorspace

- 3.7.1. In order to establish housing land values, assumptions need to be made about the likely saleable floorspace of the dwellings, in order to generate an overall sales turnover. The total floorspace is referred to as 'coverage', which measures the efficiency of a residential scheme, and evidently varies according to individual type of scheme. This is not simply a matter of housing density, but the amount of saleable floorspace that is accommodated in a unit area, and which governs the sales turnover, and hence the land value, of a housing scheme.
- 3.7.2. For example, a development of 16 units/acre (40 dph) could be a mix of 2 and 3-bed 2-storey units at 600-800 sq. ft each, giving an overall coverage of only 11,200 sq. ft. per acre (sfa). This would be regarded as inefficient coverage. However, the vast majority of

housing schemes are now relatively efficient, ranging from around 15,000 to 18,000 sfa for predominantly 2 - 2.5 storey development, and up to 18,000 - 24,000 sfa for 2.5 - 4 storey scheme.

- 3.7.3. An efficient scheme of 16 units /acre (40 dph) would be likely to include a mix of larger 3-bed units with a higher average floorspace of say 1050 sq.ft, which would result in a scheme of 16,800 sfa, as opposed to 11,200 sfa for the previous example above for 2 and 3-bed units. A recent trend is that developers are finding, with the relaxation of density standards encouraged by PPS3, coverage is reducing to an average of about 15,000 - 16,000 sfa. There is often a diminishing return on the third storey in townhouses, since lower sale prices per sq.ft are achieved, and there comes a point where a higher land value can be generated on traditional 2-storey dwellings.
- 3.7.4. With that proviso, coverage has a major effect on sales turnover, and in turn, land value, which is a consequence of the relationship between sales turnover and development costs, profit, and overhead. Total turnover, and hence, land value, is dramatically increased by greater coverage. It must also be understood that the overall scheme and its density must be designed to accord with the character of the surrounding area.

3.8. Sales prices and rates

- 3.8.1. In terms of achievable sales prices, the open market for housing schemes in the Southend area generally varies from around £180 up to £260 per sq. ft (down from £220 - £300 per sq.ft.) in the more attractive areas, and for up-market specifications. The schemes that generate the highest sales values are those in the favoured areas of the borough such as Thorpe Bay, Westcliffe, Leigh-on-Sea, and Eastwood, with Shoeburyness being a more challenging market.
- 3.8.2. Values are also affected by the size of the site, reflecting return on capital employed across a period of time, the cost of financing a purchase compared with the time taken to receive all site sales value. Sales rates obviously have a major effect on the overall financing, and most large projects will seek to achieve around 35 - 40 sales per year in order to justify the land economics upon which the land purchase is based.
- 3.8.3. Currently, sales are much reduced, with 1 or 2 sales per month being common, which if replicated across the year, will result in annual rates of around 15 dwellings per year, which would be disastrous particularly for the volume house builders who require high volume sales across the country to justify overheads and to maintain economies of scale. Smaller developers have attempted to minimise sales rate falls by price adjustment to reflect market demand. The volume builders have the ability to offer considerable incentives to purchasers, including shared equity, whereby the developer retains a share (typically 25%), until such time as the property has increased in value to enable the purchaser to take 100%.
- 3.8.4. Sales rates are not only governed by the capacity of the market, but also, particularly in flat schemes, by achievable construction programmes. Value is also obviously affected

by development costs, physical as well as costs derived from planning and other legal agreements.

- 3.8.5. A summary of the market in terms of the theoretically achievable land values, sales price per sq. ft, coverage and house types is shown in the table below:

Table 3: Market summary

Land value / net dev acre	Sale price/ sq ft	Sales rates per year	Coverage sq ft / acre	Target house types by market
£750k million - £1 million	£180 - £260	15 - 30	16,000- 18,000 Much higher for flat schemes such as the Leas at Westcliffe	Underlying strong market (temporarily depressed) for traditional 2, & 3 bed properties with gardens, and 4 & 5-bed detached dwellings in the right location. Weak market for flats particularly on large schemes. Recovery expected in 2010-2011.

- 3.8.6. Overall, it is considered that, due to the still relatively high land values in the Southend area, compared with competing uses such as employment land, it is unlikely that community gain obligations or abnormal development costs will adversely affect the economic viability for housing of any of the identified sites in the medium term. Many sites are being delayed until there is evidence of a recovery.
- 3.8.7. Over the medium term, most abnormal development costs, (such as piled foundations, or remediation of contaminated land) can be able to be absorbed without falling below the value for alternative uses, such as general employment and warehousing land, (as opposed to office and retail); employment land (B1/B8) is worth about £500,000 per acre across the district. Housing land is worth at least £250,000 more per developable acre than employment land, which enables most instances of abnormal development costs to be allowed for, including affordable housing, still producing a higher land value.
- 3.8.8. However, some sites will not currently be viable, and work has stopped on some sites. Viability is now an issue that is being raised by developers in negotiating planning obligations. The other unknown issue is the effect of the Community Infrastructure Levy.

3.9. Residual valuation

- 3.9.1. To test the application of the market assessment and consider the achievability of sites, a small number of development appraisals have been undertaken for Southend-on-Sea Borough Council. The purpose of the development appraisals are to test the viability of the sites for residential development in the current and future market context.

- 3.9.2. The case-study sites were chosen on the basis that they reflect a number of issues that brownfield sites across the area are currently facing – such as the relative land values between competing land-uses, the impact of Section 106 contributions or high cost of abnormalities such as flood prevention.
- 3.9.3. The critical viability issue is identifying the level that the land value has to reach before the development is considered viable and to establish reasonable landowner expectations of a residual land value, once all costs have been deducted. The approach we have taken is to assume that if a valuation arrives at a site value which is in reasonable excess of the current or alternative site value, the landowner will be targeted by developers, and the site will be delivered through the operation of the market.
- 3.9.4. Therefore, the definition of ‘viability’ for the purposes of this assessment is the attainment of a site value sufficiently in excess of the current site value that all stakeholders, including the purchaser and landowner, acting reasonably and rationally, would accept, thus securing delivery of the proposed development.
- 3.9.5. It should be noted that the development appraisals undertaken are based upon the best available knowledge at the current time. They provide an indication of the current situation but clearly, not all landowners will adhere to the same concept of reasonableness and rationality in defining viability.
- 3.9.6. In addition, development appraisals should be regularly reviewed as the situation will change in relation to both the market context and the level of detail available for costs (e.g. cost of contaminated land remediation) as more detailed technical work is undertaken.

Former College of Technology, Carnarvon Road

- 3.9.7. The site comprises a 6 storey building and amenity space. Surrounding uses comprise public car park and railway to the east, police station to the south and semi-detached housing to the north.
- 3.9.8. The site is identified as a major redevelopment site within the Southend Central Area Masterplan. The masterplan proposes residential uses with tall residential buildings to signal the entry into Southend by rail.
- 3.9.9. The SHLAA assessment concludes that redevelopment of the site for residential uses is appropriate and there are not considered to be any major site issues affecting the viability in the longer term.
- 3.9.10. The development appraisal assumes :
- a) demolition of the existing college building;
 - b) 267 residential units and community space (including crèche) reflecting the existing planning application;

c) affordable housing at 25%.

- 3.9.11. From the information available, it is considered that there is not a reasonable prospect that housing will be delivered on the site within the current market as the site suffers from low sales values as a result of a depressed market for apartments. The indicative valuation results in a negative uplift factor.
- 3.9.12. The site would benefit from improving market context or reducing abnormal costs placed on the development (such as the % of affordable housing) to ensure deliverability within the SHLAA time period.

Civic Centre Carpark, Carnarvon Road

- 3.9.13. The site comprises a car park serving surrounding uses. Surrounding uses comprise the former Southend College of Technology to the west, railway to the east, police station to the south and semi-detached housing to the north.
- 3.9.14. The site is identified as a redevelopment site within the Southend Central Area Masterplan and this proposes residential uses and open space.
- 3.9.15. The SHLAA assessment concludes that redevelopment of the site for residential uses is appropriate and there are not considered to be any major site issues affecting the viability in the longer term.
- 3.9.16. The development appraisal assumes :
- a) 70 residential units in apartments
 - b) affordable housing at 25%
- 3.9.17. From the information available, it is considered that there is no reasonable prospect that housing will be delivered on the site within the current market as the site suffers from low sales values as a result of a depressed market for apartments. The indicative valuation gives an uplift factor of <1 which falls below the viability threshold that would encourage a landowner to bring forward the site for redevelopment.
- 3.9.18. The viability of the site would increase in an improving market context or by increasing the residential densities upon the site. Reducing abnormal costs placed on the development (such as the % of affordable housing) would also assist in achieving deliverability within the identified SHLAA time period.

Maybrook, Southchurch Road

- 3.9.19. The site is cleared but artificially raised by the foundations of former buildings. Surrounding uses comprise residential, retail and commercial uses.

- 3.9.20. The site is being actively promoted (with the adjacent site) by the Council as landowner and a concept statement has been prepared. The concept statement seeks a mix of housing (including 30 – 40 units of extra care housing) and an emphasis on family housing. The brief also requires the site to deliver 50% affordable housing and demonstrate high standards of sustainability (including code for sustainable homes level 4 / 5).
- 3.9.21. The SHLAA assessment concludes that redevelopment of the site for residential uses is appropriate and there are not considered to be any major site issues affecting the viability in the longer term.
- 3.9.22. The development appraisal assumes :
- a) 40 residential units
 - b) affordable housing at 50%
 - c) additional build costs to reflect Code for Sustainable Homes (level 4/5)
- 3.9.23. From the information available, it is considered that there is not a reasonable prospect that housing will be delivered on the site to meet the aspirations of the concept statement. The indicative valuation (based upon the requirements of the concept statement) gives a negative uplift factor indicating that development of this form is not viable in this location.
- 3.9.24. By reducing additional costs on the site (such as the sustainable construction, housing mix and affordable housing requirements), it is considered that residential development on this site within the timeframes of the SHLAA could be viable.

327 Southchurch Road

- 3.9.25. The site comprises three older industrial buildings and offices that are currently in employment uses. The site is situated to the rear of Maybrook (see above) and other surrounding uses comprise residential and commercial properties.
- 3.9.26. This site is being actively promoted by the landowner and a concept statement has been prepared which includes this site and adjoining Maybrook. The concept statement seeks a mix of housing with an emphasis on family units. The brief also requires the site to deliver 50% affordable housing and demonstrate high standards of sustainability (including code for sustainable homes level 4 / 5).
- 3.9.27. The development appraisal assumes :
- a) 45 residential units
 - b) affordable housing at 50%
 - c) additional build costs to reflect Code for Sustainable Homes (level 4/5)

3.9.28. From the information available, it is considered that there is a no reasonable prospect that housing will be delivered on the site to meet the aspirations of the concept statement. The indicative valuation (based upon the requirements of the concept statement) gives a negative uplift factor indicating that development of this form is not viable in this location.

3.9.29. By reducing additional costs on the site (such as the sustainable construction, housing mix and affordable housing requirements), it is considered that residential development on this site within the timeframes of the SHLAA could be viable.

3.10. Conclusion

3.10.1. Despite the recent downturn, a summary of the views of agents, private housing developers and housing associations confirms a relatively strong underlying local market for both open market and affordable housing, which is temporarily depressed, but which is anticipated to be relatively strong in the foreseeable future.

3.10.2. No-one can predict accurately how long a recovery in the market will take, but most accept that markets operate in cycles. The last housing recession started in 1990 and did not recover until about 1995, but was caused by different economic circumstances.

3.10.3. The Council will need to monitor carefully the housing market over the coming years in order to be able to respond in whatever way it can to assist in the provision of housing across the market area.

4. Sites with Planning Permission for housing

4.1. Introduction

- 4.1.1. A major change from the previous system of Urban Capacity Studies is the inclusion of sites with existing consent for housing development. The inclusion of this material is intended to provide a comprehensive view of the likely housing coming forward within an area.
- 4.1.2. Sites with planning permission for housing are the most deliverable, having already overcome any barriers to the principle of development from the planning system.
- 4.1.3. Sites with permission for housing in Southend-on-Sea at 1 April 2008 are set out in a separate table in Appendix 1. The analysis of sites is split between large and small sites (more or less than 5 units) for the Central Area, Shoeburyness, Seafront and the rest of the urban area, in order to reflect the information coming forward from site specific sources in later sections.
- 4.1.4. The main source of this information is the Southend-on-Sea Annual Monitoring Report and background housing monitoring statistics. Information has been provided by the Southend-on-Sea Borough Council based on the status of sites as at 1 April 2008.
- 4.1.5. Sites with planning permission on both brownfield and greenfield locations have been included. National planning policy is likely to retain a focus for development on brownfield locations within settlements and this is the objective of the current Southend-on-Sea Core Strategy spatial strategy. For these reasons, this study concentrates on these locations to identify future opportunities.
- 4.1.6. Each planning consent will be limited by condition requiring commencement within 3 years or 5 years before 2006. Generally, the market for such sites is good, even allowing for current market conditions and it is considered that the majority will come forward for development during the next 5 years.

4.2. Large sites

- 4.2.1. Figures for large sites (5 dwellings or more) with planning permission have been included within this analysis.
- 4.2.2. A deliverability statement has been completed for each site based upon discussions with agents, landowners and developers, as appropriate to identify whether each site is available and achievable and when it is likely to come forward.

- 4.2.3. Where information indicates that the permission is unlikely to be implemented, or where it has not been possible to contact the agent or owner, figures have been excluded from the total supply considered deliverable.
- 4.2.4. Appendix 1 sets out the details of each site and the deliverability statement which accompanies it.
- 4.2.5. Out of a total figure of 1,419 dwellings (net) with planning permission on large sites, a total of 1,056 dwellings are considered currently deliverable.

4.3. Small sites

- 4.3.1. Figures for small sites (less than 5 dwellings) with planning permission have also been included within this analysis.
- 4.3.2. 204 dwellings currently have planning permission on small sites.

4.4. Summary

- 4.4.1. Analysis indicates that a total of **1,260 dwellings** have planning permission for development as at 1 April 2008 and are considered currently deliverable.
- 4.4.2. Of these, 449 dwellings are deliverable within the Central Area, 352 dwellings within Shoeburyness, 52 dwellings within Seafront and 407 dwellings within the rest of the urban area
- 4.4.3. The practice guidance makes no reference to the requirement to discount any of these figures to reflect any non completion figure and it is not intended to do so for the purposes of this study.
- 4.4.4. The figures provide a clear indication of the level of housing which might come forward and there is considered to be no material reason why the full number cannot be achieved.
- 4.4.5. It will, however, be for the Council to continually monitor the provision of housing land and completions in order to confirm that the figures are being achieved.

5. Site specific sources

5.1. Introduction

- 5.1.1. The identification of a range of sites from various sources is discussed in earlier sections; including sites previously proposed for development and those promoted through the 'call for sites' process. From this wide range of sources **122 sites were identified** within the existing built up area of the Borough. Each site was mapped on the GIS base and linked to an access database to store information about the site and the assessment of its potential for housing.
- 5.1.2. These sites were visited and assessed by the consultant team and discussed at meetings with the relevant officers of the Council. Based on these assessments and an understanding of previous planning history where appropriate, the consultant team has identified a total of **64 sites** which are considered to provide opportunities for housing within the current local policy framework.
- 5.1.3. The list of these sites is included in Appendix 3 and each is considered in detail in Appendix 4. For each site, consideration of its particular characteristics, assessment of the local market and owner expectations all combined to provide a likely yield for the site and, in line with the practice guidance, was indicated in one of three time periods.
- 5.1.4. A number of sites were considered as not being suitable, available or achievable and these are included in the list of rejected sites in Appendix 2.
- 5.1.5. A few sites identified through the study, mainly from promotion by landowners or developers, were outside of the built up area, within the Green Belt. These are considered not currently developable. However, they may be acceptable in the future if policy changes are made in the Core Strategy or other DPDs resulting from requirements in the RSS review to provide additional housing land. As a result, the future potential from these sites has been assessed, together with broad locations within the built up area and the results of this exercise are set out in section 8.

5.2. Findings

- 5.2.1. The analysis of sites indicates that from a total of 121 sites identified across the study area, a total of **3,502** dwellings could potentially be developed in the period to 2023. The majority of these are considered likely to be developed in the period before 2018, within the first 10 years.
- 5.2.2. Within these figures there are a range of sources of housing which has been identified and the following sections break down the total figure above into the individual sources.

CENTRAL AREA MASTERPLAN

- 5.2.3. A total of 1,856 dwellings have been identified as likely to come forward on sites identified in the Southend Central Masterplan, produced by Renaissance Southend-on-Sea, the Urban Regeneration Company for Southend-on-Sea.

PUBLIC SECTOR LAND

- 5.2.4. The Council is actively pursuing a long term phased programme of urban renewal of its housing stock, which is in a poor condition and replace it with dwellings that match clients needs and that incorporate good urban design principles. Whilst it is not anticipated that there will be significant net additional housing to be identified from the refurbishment and redevelopment of the existing housing stock itself, a total of 23 dwellings have been identified as likely to come forward from the development of existing redundant land, garages and parking courts within these housing areas.

EMPLOYMENT SITES

- 5.2.5. The protection of employment uses in order to provide for a balanced local economy remains a key aspect of sustainable development and therefore the loss of employment land is resisted. Policy CP1 of the Core Strategy sets out criteria for ensuring that all new development contributes to the objective of regeneration of the local economy. However, parallel with this SHLAA, consultants have carried out a full Employment Land Review (ELR) to examine the Borough's future employment land requirements.
- 5.2.6. As part of the two assessments, some existing employment land (B uses) has been identified as no longer fit for purpose and appropriate for redevelopment either solely for housing, or for mixed development, including housing. A total of 135 dwellings have been identified from these sources.

OTHER BROWNFIELD LAND

- 5.2.7. 1,401 dwellings are anticipated to come forward on other identified brownfield sites within the Southend-on-Sea urban area. These will come forward on a range of sites, from conversions of existing buildings, to redevelopment of land and buildings.

SUITABLE GREENFIELD

- 5.2.8. Within the built up area of Southend-on-Sea, a number of sites which would be categorised as greenfield locations have been identified and assessed. In many instances such sites have been considered not currently developable as they are subject to protection from recreation or open space policies. However, where such sites are surplus to requirements or where replacement land has been provided, development for other uses may be appropriate. A total of 87 dwellings have been identified from these sources.

5.3. Summary

- 5.3.1. Following the methodology set out in section 2 sites identified from the variety of sources have been visited and have been assessed. Appendix 2 identifies all those sites which were identified but not considered to represent an opportunity for housing development, i.e. not currently developable.
- 5.3.2. Appendix 3 Site Yield Summary lists the sites likely to come forward for housing. Details of those sites and assessment of the dwelling yield for each are set out in Appendix 4.
- 5.3.3. These site specific sources have been identified by location within the Borough to indicate the extent to which development is likely to be delivered within each of the Key Regeneration Areas set out within the current Core Strategy. The assessment has identified 2,888 dwellings from 32 sites within the Central Area, 88 dwellings from 4 sites within the Seafront, 60 dwellings from 2 sites within Shoeburyness, 120 dwellings from 6 sites within District Centres and 346 dwellings from 20 sites within the rest of the urban area.
- 5.3.4. The total number of identified dwellings from all sources (on sites of 5 dwellings or over) is **3,502** dwellings.

6. Review of assessment

6.1. Introduction

- 6.1.1. The SHLAA Practice Guidance identifies that once site assessments have been completed, the housing potential of all sites can be summarised as an indicative housing trajectory, setting out how much housing can be provided and at what point in time.
- 6.1.2. The following table summarises the potential housing supply within the built up area of Southend-on-Sea Borough for a 15 year period which has been identified from sites with planning permission at 1 April 2008 and from site specific sources.

Table 4: Potential housing supply within the built up area

Source of housing potential	2008 - 13	2013 - 18	2018 - 23	2008 - 23
Sites with planning permission				
Large sites				
Central Area	399	0	0	399
Shoeburyness	339	0	0	339
Seafront	45	0	0	45
Other Urban Areas	273	0	0	273
Small sites				
Central Area	50	0	0	50
Shoeburyness	13	0	0	13
Seafront	7	0	0	7
Other Urban Areas	134	0	0	134
Site specific sources				
Central Area	900	1913	75	2888
Shoeburyness	20	40	0	60
Seafront	88	0	0	88
District Centre: Leigh	29	0	0	29
District Centre: Southchurch Rd	82	0	0	82
District Centre: West Rd	9	0	0	9
District Centre: Westcliff	0	0	0	0
Other Urban Areas	279	67	0	346
Total housing	2667	2020	75	4762
Average per annum	533	404	15	317

6.2. Comparing against Plan requirements

- 6.2.1. The Southend-on-Sea Core Strategy, adopted in December 2007, requires delivery of 3,350 net additional dwellings between 2001 and 2011 (335 per annum) and for 3,150 net additional dwellings between 2011 and 2021 (315 per annum), a total of 6,500 for the 20 year period.
- 6.2.2. In May 2008, the East of England Plan, the revision to the Regional Spatial Strategy, was published. This identified that the 6,500 dwellings identified for Southend-on-Sea for the period 2001-2021 should be considered a minimum requirement. Between 2001 and 2006, 2,130 dwellings had been built in Southend-on-Sea at an annual average rate of 430 dwellings, leaving a minimum of 4,370 dwellings to be found between 2006 and 2021, at an annual average rate of 290 dwellings.
- 6.2.3. The RSS also requires that local planning authorities should plan for delivery of housing for at least 15 years from the date of adoption of their DPDs. In so doing they should assume that the average annual rate of provision after 2021 will be at the same rates for 2006-2021 or 2001-2021 which ever is the higher. This means for Southend-on-Sea that a full 15 year housing supply from adoption of the Core Strategy (December 2007) should be for the period 2008 - 2023. On this basis, the 15 year provision should be 13 years at 290 per annum and 2 years at 325 per annum, a minimum requirement of 4,420.
- 6.2.4. Figures for the completion of dwellings have been provided by Southend-on-Sea Borough Council from the Annual Monitoring Report.
- 6.2.5. Taking account of past completions, the supply from identified sites within the existing urban area and from deliverable permissions is as follows:

Table 5: Comparing potential supply with current policy requirements

Source of housing potential	2001 – 08	2008 - 13	2013 - 18	2018 - 23	2001 - 21	2008 - 23
Completions - all sites	2809				2809	
Sites with planning permission						
Large sites		1056			1056	1056
Small sites		204			204	204
Site specific sources						
Large sites		1407	2020	75	3502	3502
Total housing supply	2809	2667	2020	75	7571	4762
Average per annum					379	317

Core Strategy/RSS requirement						6500	4420
Average per annum						325	295
Shortfall / surplus						+1071	+ 342

- 6.2.6. This table indicates that there is a current surplus against both the 20 year Plan requirements and against 15 year Plan requirements.
- 6.2.7. Work on a review of the RSS to identify the development needs of the region to 2031 and beyond has now commenced.
- 6.2.8. A number of scenarios are being tested, including four housing scenarios. Set out overleaf is a table summarising the identified SHLAA housing supply from within the urban area compared with the dwelling targets derived from these scenarios. This table indicates the relative shortfall of the current identified supply against each scenario.
- 6.2.9. The table indicates a shortfall of between 2,652 and 10,572 dwellings depending on the final RSS requirement. In any event the figures establish a requirement to consider further opportunities.
- 6.2.10. Sections 7 and 8 of this study investigates the potential provision of housing from broad locations within the built up area, site specific opportunities outside but adjoining the built up area and also from windfall opportunities.

6.3. 5 year land supply

- 6.3.1. Planning Policy Statement 3 (PPS3) Housing requires local planning authorities to plan for a continuous five year supply of deliverable sites. National indicator 159 now sets out a formulae for making an annual return to Government and the Planning Inspectorate has published CLG advice on how to undertake the calculation.
- 6.3.2. Set out below is a table which assesses the extent to which the supply identified in this SHLAA from sources set out above satisfy the 5 year land supply requirement from the adopted Core Strategy.

Table 6: 5 year land supply

X = The amount of land that can be built on deliverable sites for the 5 year period 1 st April 2009 to 31 st March 2014	3168 dwellings (from SHLAA deliverable sites and permissions)
Y = The planned housing provision set out in the RSS for the 5 year period	1450 dwellings (290 per annum X 5 years)
The indicator of the degree to which a supply of ready to develop housing sites is being maintained	218% (X/Y) x100

Table 7: Comparing potential supply with future policy requirements

RSS Review	Total Dwellings 2011-2031	DPA 2011-2031	Identified Sites SHLAA 2011 - 2023 - Permissions - Sites within urban area	Shortfall to be found (total)	Shortfall to be found (DPA)
Scenario 1	6080	304	3428	2652	133
Scenario 2	6080	304	3428	2652	133
Scenario 3	11140	557	3428	7712	386
Scenario 4	14000	700	3428	10572	529

- 6.3.3. The table shows that the SHLAA site assessment work has identified 10.9 years supply of ready to develop sites (218% of requirement), more than the required 5 year land supply, within Southend-on-Sea at the current time. There is therefore no immediate requirement to identify additional land and planning applications for development for housing can continue to be determined having regard to PPS3 (in particular paragraph 69, Development Plan policies and other material considerations).
- 6.3.4. The emerging review of the RSS is likely to identify an increased housing requirement in Southend-on-Sea (see above). Whilst it is not a Government requirement to calculate the 5 year supply on the basis of these emerging figures as housing provision figures are available in the current Development Plan for the following 5 years, the table below sets out a purely illustrative example for 2008-2013, to inform the development of the emerging RSS.

Table 8: 5 year supply based on RSS review scenarios

RSS Review	Identified supply of dwellings for 5 years [2008-2013]	Planned 5 year supply of dwellings [2008 – 2013]	Indicator of supply of ready to develop sites
Scenario 1	2667	[3x290] + [2x304] = 1478	180% (9 years supply)
Scenario 2	2667	[3x290] + [2x304] = 1478	180% (9 years supply)
Scenario 3	2667	[3x290] + [2x557] = 1984	134% (6.7 years supply)
Scenario 4	2667	[3x290] + [2x700] = 2270	117% (5.9 years supply)

7. Housing potential from windfalls

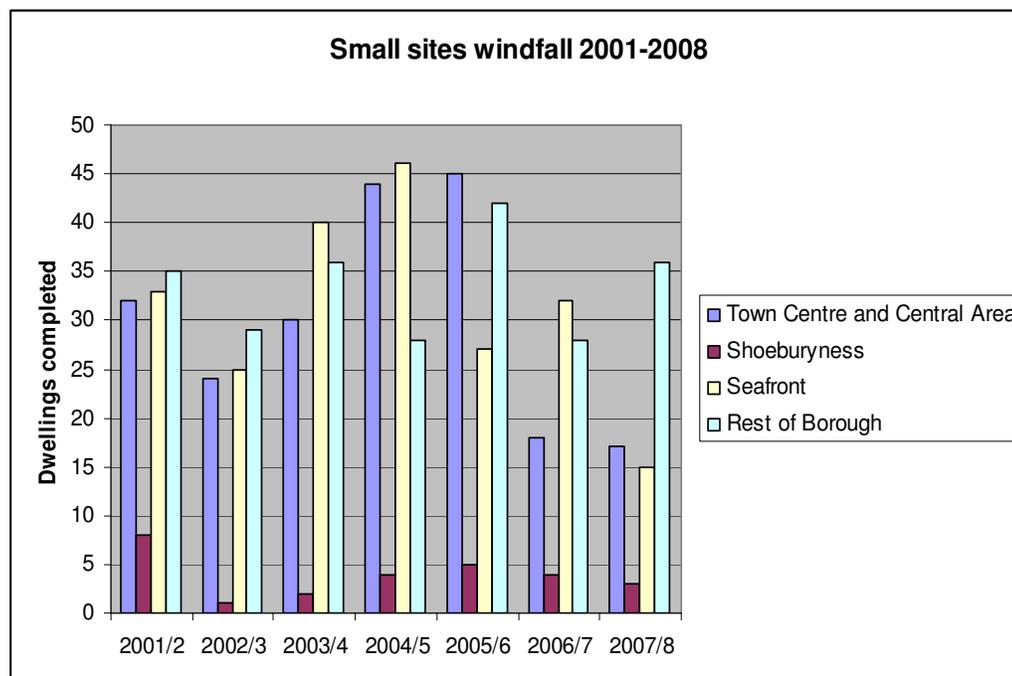
7.1. Introduction

- 7.1.1. The SHLAA Practice Guidance indicates that there may be local circumstances where a windfall allowance may be justified and this may be included where the housing land available falls below the required level.
- 7.1.2. PPS3 is clear that, in assessing land supply, no allowance should normally be made for windfall within the first 10 years of adoption of the relevant Development Plan Document. However, where a LPA can provide robust evidence of genuine local circumstances that prevent specific sites being identified, an allowance can be included, but that it should be realistic and based upon historic windfall delivery rates and expected future trends (para. 58).
- 7.1.3. In the case of Southend-on-Sea Borough, the Core Strategy Inspector considered in 2007 that in a wholly built up area where a high proportion of development in the past has been on small sites “it is not unsound to accept that there will be a heavy reliance on unidentified sites.”
- 7.1.4. Past completion rates can be used as a basis for identifying a potential future supply from unidentified sites. The figures for completion rates used in the analysis below exclude greenfield sites which may have come forward in the past.
- 7.1.5. The analysis below is based on figures provided by the Borough Council regarding housing completions from 2001 to 2008 and summary graphs are provided in the text below.

7.2. Small sites

- 7.2.1. The graph below illustrates the annual completion rates for small site schemes of below 5 dwellings over the period from 2001/2 to 2007/08 for each of the Regeneration Areas in Southend-on-Sea.
- 7.2.2. The figures show a fluctuation of completions over time for most of the Regeneration Areas, although completions over the Rest of the Borough appear relatively consistent. The total average annual provision from small sites for this period is 28 dwellings per annum.
- 7.2.3. Given the fact that the SHLAA has only identified sites capable of delivering 5 or more dwellings and the fact that the Core Strategy accepted that unidentified small sites would continue to form a significant part of supply, it is considered appropriate to include an allowance for small sites of below 5 dwellings in the overall potential supply. On the assumption that existing small sites permissions will be completed by 2011, it is

considered reasonable to include a small sites windfall allowance for the period 2011-2023, based upon past rates of completion.



7.2.4. Future housing provision on small previously developed sites within Southend-on-Sea will continually come forward and the market will seek to identify opportunities where possible.

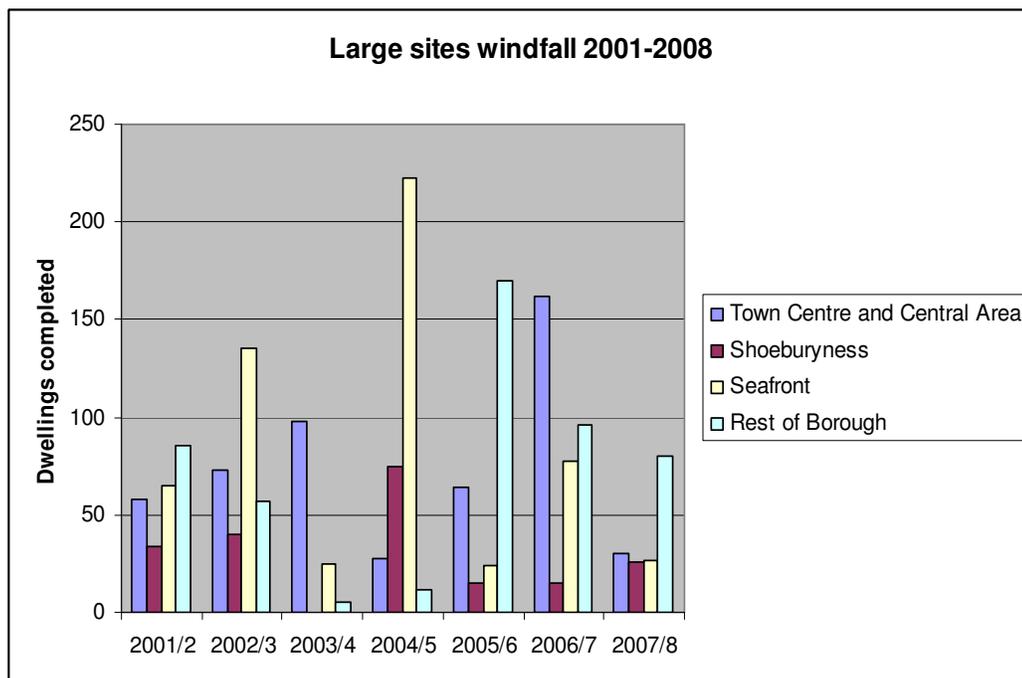
7.2.5. Based on the analysis of past rates, an average of **28 dwellings per annum** from small sites may be considered appropriate. This reflects a figure in line with the average since 2001 but below recent high levels, to avoid the more extreme market fluctuations.

7.3. Large sites post 2018

7.3.1. This study has sought to identify specific large sites (5+ dwellings) which will come forward for housing development. Given the constraints of this study with regard to time, resources and imperfect information for the future, the assessment of likely yield from identifiable sites is considered robust within the short term, but beyond the next 10 years the identification of individual sites is not necessarily reliable. Built-up areas will continue to recycle land from existing uses. The use of broad locations within settlements can identify potential foci for such activity, but it would be inappropriate to identify all areas as broad locations.

7.3.2. Therefore an allowance for housing provision on large sites beyond the next 10 years may also be included in order to provide a realistic indication of possible yield.

7.3.3. The graph below illustrates the previous completion of dwellings on large previously developed sites within the urban area over the period from 2001/02 to 2007/08. To avoid potential double counting, allocated sites have been removed from this completions data.



7.3.4. The graph shows a fluctuation in completions over time, with no discernible pattern. The total number of completions over the period of 7 years was 1798 dwellings, on average 64 dwellings per annum (dpa).

7.3.5. Based on the analysis of past rates and future expectation an average of **64 dwelling per annum** is considered appropriate as an estimate of windfall supply from large sites (above 5 dwellings) which could be achieved for the rest of the Plan period after the next 10 years.

7.4. Conclusion

7.4.1. National planning policy will continue to promote the re-cycling of land within settlements and this is likely to continue in the future. In Southend-on-Sea, a specific allowance for future intensification within built up urban areas was included in the Core Strategy, although this is expected to reduce in the future, as more rigorous development management policies are adopted to control inappropriate intensification and Area Action Plans are adopted to promote proposals for positive regeneration and growth.

- 7.4.2. The figures presented earlier in this document indicate the opportunities for specific sites within the Southend-on-Sea urban area to come forward generally within the next 15 years but it is accepted that other currently unidentified sites will also come forward. It is considered reasonable to assume a supply of **28 dwellings per annum** from small sites from 2011/12 and a supply of **64 dwellings per annum** from large sites, from 2018/19, based upon past completion rates in Southend-on-Sea. However, should the Council introduce more rigorous development management policies to discourage inappropriate intensification in the future, this potential supply may need to be reviewed downwards.
- 7.4.3. During the monitoring of this study new sites will continually emerge from a variety of sources so that over time the number of dwellings in the windfall category will be reduced as the plan period progresses and certainty increases.

8. Broad locations and sites outside the built up area

8.1. Introduction

- 8.1.1. Sufficient land was initially identified to meet the current housing policy requirements for Southend-on-Sea. However, in order to inform future RSS derived housing targets, the study has considered site specific sources outside of the built up area and other sources of supply, such as broad locations
- 8.1.2. The SHLAA practice guidance states that “broad locations are areas where housing development is considered feasible and will be encouraged, but where specific sites cannot yet be identified” (para. 46).
- 8.1.3. Broad locations can either be within existing settlements or the expansion of existing settlements through urban extensions.
- 8.1.4. In the case of Southend-on-Sea, the adopted Core Strategy provides a clear steer towards focussing development within the existing urban area in order to deliver “urban renaissance”. Therefore this SHLAA has firstly looked at identifying broad locations within the urban area, before identifying the potential for identifying areas outside of the existing built up area.

8.2. Within the built up area

- 8.2.1. Within settlements, broad locations could include particular centres where local policy actively encourages infill or redevelopment. The adopted Southend-on-Sea Core Strategy specifically identifies Key Growth & Regeneration Areas within the existing urban area where redevelopment and urban remodelling is considered to be appropriate to achieve regeneration.
- 8.2.2. Two broad locations were identified through site survey within the Central Area boundary as having potential capacity for future housing delivery, as part of mixed use redevelopment. The location of these areas are shown on the Southend-on-Sea maps in Appendix 5. The assessment of these areas and their potential for residential development are summarised below and the full urban design analysis is set out in Appendix 6.

Broad Location A: Victoria Avenue

- 8.2.3. Victoria Avenue is located immediately to the north of Southend-on-Sea town centre and comprises a series of vacant and outdated office buildings on the western side and predominantly public buildings on the east. The western side has been previously identified in the Central Area Masterplan for refurbishment or redevelopment to deliver a more attractive mix of residential and office space in an improved public realm.

- 8.2.4. The site appraisal identifies an existing juxtaposition of established residential areas giving way to large scale, imposing post war office buildings. Victoria Avenue itself and the ring road to the south have created barriers to pedestrian movement resulting in Victoria Avenue becoming a road dominated by traffic rather than a street which provides the focus for public life for the area. Despite the dominance of employment uses and high pedestrian footfall at times, there is almost no active frontage onto Victoria Avenue.
- 8.2.5. The design concept has been to create a new mixed use neighbourhood with a more human scale that is primarily residential but with a strong cultural feel, providing for a range of other uses including some smaller scale employment. The indicative layout suggests medium rise mixed use development arranged around perimeter blocks interspersed with a series of public spaces. A total of 883 1-4 bed apartments and houses are identified as well as around 35,000 sqm of office space and ancillary retail, leisure cultural and community uses. The potential housing capacity net of existing permissions within this area is 603 dwellings.

Broad Location B: Sutton Road

- 8.2.6. Sutton Road is located to the north west of the Town Centre and comprises a diverse mixture of residential, employment and retail areas between Sutton Road in the east and Victoria Station in the west. Sutton Road industrial area is identified in the Core Strategy as one of the Priority Urban Areas to be the focus for regeneration and renewal.
- 8.2.7. The site appraisal identifies an existing mix of uses which do not gel together in any coherent way. Employment and retail uses relate poorly to residential streets and the townscape is in need of repair. There are remnants of quality townscape in both residential and employment areas which could be complemented by new development.
- 8.2.8. The design concept has been to repair, unify and knit together the townscape to create a better neighbourhood that retains a variety of uses but where these uses relate better to each other. The indicative layout includes design solutions for four sub areas which include new apartment blocks replacing old industrial units in peripheral locations and new and refurbished employment units with some residential apartments in the central Grainger Road area. A total of 187 apartments and houses are identified as well as around 17,000 sqm of employment and 300 sqm of retail.

8.3. Outside the built up area

- 8.3.1. The SHLAA practice guidance supports the surveying of specific locations outside of settlements for future housing potential. The “call for sites” consultation identified a small number of greenfield sites outside of the built up area of Southend-on-Sea which landowners and developers wished to be considered as part of the SHLAA.
- 8.3.2. The practice guidance also states that a SHLAA can identify broad locations for development which can include small extensions to settlements or where signalled by the

relevant RSS major urban extensions, growth points, growth areas, new free-standing settlements and eco-towns.

- 8.3.3. However, the SHLAA cannot replace the appropriate process of plan making, which is the LDF. If this study, without appropriate public consultation and consideration of options, were to identify preferred locations for development, this would negate the LDF process and raise significant issues for the role of plan making.
- 8.3.4. Therefore the following analysis seeks to identify opportunities for future housing provision outside of the built up area of Southend-on-Sea for future consideration through the relevant plan making process.
- 8.3.5. There is no definition of how large a “small extension” might be other than to differentiate it from a “major urban extension”. Therefore, it is likely that “small extensions” may in fact include significant developments of hundreds of dwellings.
- 8.3.6. The methodology adopted in identifying and assessing site specific sites and broad locations is set out in the section below, followed by the findings.

Methodology

- 8.3.7. This study seeks to identify possible locations which may be suitable for development in the future to meet housing requirements. In order to achieve this, a process has been followed to assess locations for development.

DESIGNATIONS AND CONSTRAINTS

- 8.3.8. Designations and key constraints relating to the edge of Southend-on-Sea were first considered. This follows advice in the Practice Guidance that the scope of any assessment should not be “narrowed down by existing policies designed to constrain development” but that “clear cut designations such as SSSI” (para 21) may be excluded from the areas of search.
- 8.3.9. “Clear –cut” designations are considered to relate to resources which are generally irreplaceable without significant cost, if at all. These are generally wildlife, nature conservation and/or geological designations such as SSSI, SPAs, RAMSAR, RIGs, SSSIs, SNCIs and nature reserves.
- 8.3.10. In addition, designations which seek to protect the historic built environment such as Scheduled Ancient Monuments are also considered to be “clear-cut”.
- 8.3.11. Key physical constraints include Flood Zones 2 and 3 which relate to areas where there may be greatest sensitivity to development.

- 8.3.12. Other constraints are not “clear cut” but may influence decisions on the preferred directions of growth and the form, scale and nature of any future development. These include locally defined landscape designations, such as Special Landscape Areas, and other designations such as listed buildings, identified high quality agricultural land and the location of mineral deposits.
- 8.3.13. Green Belt policies are specifically targeted at restricting development and therefore should not be identified as clear cut designations or constraints within a SHLAA. They are not generally applied to land with intrinsic value but are applied in order to protect land for the sake of preserving openness only. SHLAA guidance produced by the Planning Advisory Service states that whilst there may be strong planning reasons for avoiding or minimising the loss of greenfield land in such locations, it may be appropriate to review Green Belt boundaries if there is a shortfall of available land from other sources to meet Plan targets.
- 8.3.14. A review of policy designations in the adopted Core Strategy and previous Borough Local Plan, together with known physical constraints, resulted in the identification of relevant constraints and these are reproduced in Appendix 5 on the Southend-on-Sea maps.
- 8.3.15. Areas or sites which are subject to clear cut designations and areas within flood zone 3 should be rejected.

LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT

- 8.3.16. A key consideration for identifying locations for future urban extensions is the characteristics of the landscape and its sensitivity to change.
- 8.3.17. For this study, Chris Enderby Associates has assessed the principal landscape constraints and opportunities to accommodate development at the north eastern edge of Southend-on-Sea to identify the most appropriate areas for future growth, if required. The landscape appraisal report is included in Appendix 7.
- 8.3.18. Landscape assessment information forms the basis for conclusions on the housing capacity of sites/areas.

Findings

- 8.3.19. The following section sets out the findings relating to the areas or broad locations identified outside the built up area of Southend-on-Sea. These broad locations are identified on the Southend-on-Sea map in Appendix 5. For the specific identified sites promoted through the call for sites exercise, there is a summary of our conclusions in the table located in Appendix 8.

Broad location 1

- 8.3.20. This is an area to the east of Fossetts Farm and north of Eastern Avenue (A1159) which is currently occupied by leisure uses, comprising Essex Golf Course and sports pitches associated with the Garon Park leisure centre.
- 8.3.21. There are no clear cut environmental or landscape designations which affect this area. However, the whole of this area is within the Metropolitan Green Belt. The area is identified as containing best and most versatile agricultural land, however, its current uses are not agricultural and earth moving associated with the golf course may have involved the importing of other soils. There are few physical or topographical constraints, although the land occupies a slightly higher area of land on the northern edge of the town. The land is not identified as being subject to flooding.
- 8.3.22. The area is approx.1.5km from the nearest railway station at Prittlewell and regular bus services operate via Garon Park, Bournes Green (adjacent to site) and Southchurch (Hamstel Road) to Southend-on-Sea and Shoeburyness. The site is adjacent to major leisure facilities at Garon Park and local schools. The nearest District Centre is Southchurch Road approx 1.2km away, although there is more local shopping at Cluny Square and Hamstel Road (within 600m).
- 8.3.23. A preliminary landscape appraisal indicates that the extensive golf course provides a significant landscape buffer between the northern edge of the town and the arable landscape that falls away gently towards the River Roach to the north, within the Crouch and Roach Farmland LCA. As the planting within the course develops it will assist in reinforcing a landscape framework along this periphery of the town. This slightly higher area of land is also apparent in views back towards the town from the countryside beyond. At present it appears that the land contains much of the urban area to the south, thereby contributing to the functions of the Metropolitan Green Belt.
- 8.3.24. Overall, we conclude that this is an area that is unlikely to be suitable for accommodating housing development due to the fact that the land already fulfils important leisure/recreational functions which would need to be replaced elsewhere, which is likely to give rise to effects in alternative location(s).

Broad location 2

- 8.3.25. This is an area to the east of Garon Park, north of Eastern Avenue (A1159) and west of Wakering Road. To the north lies the small settlement of Stonebridge, within Rochford District. The land is currently in agricultural use, except for the south western portion which is laid out as a Golf Course.
- 8.3.26. There are no clear cut environmental or landscape designations which affect this area. However, the whole of this area is within the Metropolitan Green Belt. The area is also identified partly as proposed country park linked with land within Rochford District in the Southend-on-Sea Core Strategy. The area is identified as containing best and most

versatile agricultural land, however, the western part of the area is not agricultural land but laid out as a Golf Course. The area adjoins two listed buildings (Lawn Cottage and Southchurch Lawn (part of Eton House School) but the current landscape does not contribute significantly to their settings. There are few physical or topographical constraints and the land is not identified as being subject to flooding.

- 8.3.27. The area is approx.900m from the nearest railway station at Thorpe Bay and regular bus services operate via Bournes Green (adjacent to site) to Southend-on-Sea and Shoeburyness. The site is within 700m of major leisure facilities at Garon Park and local schools. The nearest District Centre is Southchurch Road approx 1.2km away, although there is more local shopping at Hamstel Road (within 1km).
- 8.3.28. The area falls within a wider County defined Special Landscape Area. However, the area is generally well contained from the wider landscape by a combination of gentle topography (north west) the settlement of Stonebridge (north) and vegetation (east). It largely falls within the existing visual envelope of the urban fringe. There are few landscape constraints to its development and the site offers an opportunity to bring forward development that would be generally well contained from the wider landscape (which is at odds with the general nature and sensitivity of the land identified in the Crouch/Roach Farmland LCA).

Broad location 3

- 8.3.29. The area is located to the east of Wakering Road and north of Bournes Green Chase (A13). The land is currently in agricultural use.
- 8.3.30. There are no clear cut environmental or landscape designations which affect this area. However, the whole of this area is within the Metropolitan Green Belt. The area is also identified partly as proposed country park linked with land within Rochford District in the Southend-on-Sea Core Strategy. The site is predominantly best and most versatile agricultural land of grade 2 quality, with land to the west of lower agricultural quality (grades 3a and 3b). The site contains known brickearth deposits, previously used in the manufacture of local stock bricks at the neighbouring Star Lane brickworks. However, no brickearth has been extracted for many years, and in August 2005, the owner/operator of the nearby brickworks advised that the deposits are no longer commercially viable. The adopted Core Strategy does not contain a safeguarding policy, but any proposal that would result in the permanent sterilisation of workable or potentially workable deposits would need to demonstrate that extraction now or in the future is not commercially viable (Policy CP5). The area adjoins a listed building to the west (Southchurch Lawn (part of Eton House School)) but the current landscape does not contribute significantly to its settings. There are few physical or topographical constraints and the land is not identified as being subject to flooding.
- 8.3.31. The area is approx.750m from the nearest railway station at Thorpe Bay and regular bus services operate via Bournes Green roundabout to Southend-on-Sea and Shoeburyness and to Great Wakering via Bournes Green Chase, adjacent to the area. The site is within

400m of a neighbourhood park and 400m of a local school. The nearest District Centre is Southchurch Road approx 1.5km away, although there is more local shopping at Thorpe Bay (within 800m).

- 8.3.32. The area forms half of a single landscape compartment that extends seamlessly to the east (into broad location 4) and to the north. The land, whilst lacking in landscape features due to intensive arable farming, together with the land to the east, extends the countryside right up to the periphery of the town and contributes to its setting. There is no boundary or distinction between the land within the area and the wider landscape beyond and therefore the area does not benefit from containment. Any development within it would be highly visible; this would engender a perception of encroachment, and consequently development may also be perceived as 'unrestricted sprawl'.
- 8.3.33. Whilst robust mitigation could assist, over time, in creating a new edge and providing containment it is possible that such treatment may appear out of place within the wider landscape and it is unlikely that a further extension of development towards Great Wakering could be resisted based upon a similar strategy.

Broad location 4

- 8.3.34. The area is located to the north of North Shoebury Road (A13) / Poynters Lane and to the west of Star Lane. Great Wakering lies to the north east of the area. The land is currently in agricultural use.
- 8.3.35. There are no clear cut environmental or landscape designations which affect this area. However, the whole of this area is within the Metropolitan Green Belt. The area is also identified partly as proposed country park linked with land within Rochford District in the Southend-on-Sea Core Strategy (Policy CP7). The area is identified as containing best and most versatile agricultural land. The site contains known brickearth deposits (see broad location 3 comments above). The area adjoins a grade II listed building to the south (North Shoebury House) and any development would need to respect its immediate setting. There are few physical or topographical constraints and the land is not identified as being subject to flooding.
- 8.3.36. The area is approx. 1.2km from the nearest railway station at Thorpe Bay and regular bus services operate to Southend-on-Sea and Great Wakering via Poynters Lane, adjacent to the area. The site is within 300m of a neighbourhood park and 800m of a local school. The nearest District Centre is Shoeburyness approx 2km away, although there is more local shopping at North Shoebury (within 800m).
- 8.3.37. The area forms half of a single landscape compartment that extends seamlessly to the west (into broad location 3, see above) and to the north. The area does not benefit from containment and the proximity of this area to Great Wakering makes development in this location likely to be perceived as 'unrestricted sprawl', leading to coalescence with the neighbouring settlement.

8.4. Conclusion

- 8.4.1. The site survey assessment identified potential locations both within and outside of the built up area of Southend-on-Sea suitable to accommodate any housing shortfall arising from future RSS requirements.
- 8.4.2. The Southend-on-Sea adopted Core Strategy provides a clear steer towards focussing development within the existing urban area in order to deliver “urban renaissance”. Two broad locations at Victoria Avenue and Sutton Road have been identified in addition to specific promoted sites where urban remodelling has the potential to deliver significant levels of additional housing, as part of mixed use development.
- 8.4.3. Should small scale greenfield extensions be required in the future, our assessment has identified that potential land exists within identified broad location 2, on land to the east of Garon Park, north of Eastern Avenue (A1159) and west of Waking Road. There may be some potential on land within broad location 1, but this would depend upon the reconfiguration and possible relocation of existing leisure uses which provides additional constraints.
- 8.4.4. Any future large scale urban extension would need to be subject to joint working with Rochford District and examination through the RSS process.
- 8.4.5. The SHLAA is intended as part of the evidence base for the LDF and the inclusion any site or area within this study does not determine whether a site or area should be allocated for housing development. Those identified as having potential need to be considered further through the plan making process.

9. Summary

- 9.1.1. This document follows the process for undertaking a SHLAA, set out in the CLG Practice Guidance, in order to identify as many sites with housing potential at Southend-on-Sea. It has sought to do this in an inclusive manner, consulting with land owners, developers and local agents, as well as with officers of the Council.
- 9.1.2. It has considered all sites coming forward from previous studies along with sites promoted from a wider call for sites. Additional sites have been identified through survey such that this study provides as comprehensive a review as is possible within the budget available.
- 9.1.3. The SHLAA is intended as part of the evidence base for the LDF and the inclusion of any site within this study does not provide support to any particular scheme. Sites are considered based on available information and those identified as having potential are considered to be acceptable as housing sites in principle.
- 9.1.4. The total number of dwellings which can come forward on identified sites for the Plan period 2001-2021 is 7,571 dwellings, which is above the Plan requirement of at least 6,500 dwellings. For the 15 year period 2008-2023 the total number of dwellings identified is 4,762 dwellings, again above the current RSS minimum requirement of 4,420 dwellings. The current calculation of housing supply indicates a 10.9 years supply of ready to develop sites. This housing capacity is set out in section 6 and made up of sites with planning permission and specific sites identified from various sources.
- 9.1.5. The total level of housing potential on identified sites is likely to be below the level which the emerging RSS will require to be provided and therefore other sources of housing land are required to be investigated.
- 9.1.6. The study has therefore looked at the potential supply which could come forward from windfall sites, that is, sites which will come forward for development but are currently not identifiable. This is set out in section 7.
- 9.1.7. It is considered reasonable to assume a supply of 28 dwellings per annum from small sites from 2011/12 and a supply of 64 dwellings per annum from large sites from 2018/19, based upon past completion rates in Southend-on-Sea. However, should the Council introduce more rigorous development management policies to discourage inappropriate intensification in the future, this potential supply may need to be reviewed downwards.
- 9.1.8. In parallel with the consideration of windfall opportunities, the study has looked at potential broad locations within Southend-on-Sea which could provide a long term source for housing development. Broad locations have been identified at Victoria Avenue and at Sutton Road, which have the potential to provide around 790 dwellings as part of mixed use development, based upon urban design modelling. This is set out in section 8.

- 9.1.9. If further land is required to meet future RSS requirements, an analysis of land outside the built up area but within the administrative boundary of Southend-on-Sea has identified that potential land exists to the east of Garon Park, north of Eastern Avenue (A1159) and west of Wakering Road to accommodate a small scale greenfield urban extension. This is set out in section 8.
- 9.1.10. A key element of this study will be its updating “at least annually” (Practice Guidance para 17) and it is through this monitoring that the Council should identify how specific sites progress towards development, what other sites come into the system and how progress is being made towards achieving the requirements of the RSS.
- 9.1.11. This study should provide the basis for future monitoring and enable the Council to manage the future release of land as necessary.

Appendix 1
Sites with planning permission

Appendix 2
Table of rejected sites

Appendix 3
Site yield summary table

Appendix 4
Site analysis forms and location plans

Appendix 5
Southend-on-Sea maps

Appendix 6
Broad locations urban design analysis

Appendix 7
Landscape appraisal

Appendix 8
Sites outside the built up area