

STRATEGIC HOUSING AND ECONOMIC LAND AVAILABILITY ASSESSMENT (SHELAA)

Planning Advisory Committee - 19 April 2017

Report of Chief Planning Officer

Status For consideration

Key Decision No

Executive Summary:

This report sets out the findings of the Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA), which is a technical assessment of the amount of land that is available and suitable to meet the District's housing and employment needs. The SHELAA will help to inform the development strategy for the new Sevenoaks District Local Plan 2015-35.

Portfolio Holder Cllr Robert Piper

Contact Officer Emma Boshell, Senior Planning Officer, Ext.7358

Recommendation to the Planning Advisory Committee:

To endorse the Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) attached at Appendix A as a robust evidence base from which the Local Plan strategy will be developed.

Reason for recommendation: In order to plan for the development needs of our residents and to prepare a Local Plan that is based on sound and robust evidence.

Introduction and Background

- 1 The Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) is a technical assessment of the amount of land that is available and suitable to meet the District's housing and employment needs. It is an important evidence base document that informs plan-making, but **it does not determine whether a site should be allocated for development in the future, nor does it influence the likelihood of gaining planning permission on any of the sites identified.**
- 2 The SHELAA forms part of a suite of evidence that will help to inform the development strategy for the new Sevenoaks District Local Plan 2015-35. The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) was completed in September 2015 and identifies an objectively assessed need (OAN) of 12,400 new homes over the plan period. The OAN is an unconstrained figure and is not the

District's housing target. Equally the Economic Needs Study (ENS) was completed in September 2016 and identifies a need for 11.6 hectares of B1-B8 employment floorspace over the plan period. The SHELAA identifies potential sites to address some of these needs.

Policy Context

- 3 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) places great emphasis on boosting the supply of housing (para 47) and sets out that local authorities should 'prepare a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment to establish realistic assumptions about the availability, suitability and the likely economic viability of land to meet the identified need for housing over the plan period' (para 159). Paragraph 161 sets out that 'reviews of land available for economic development should be undertaken at the same time as, or combined with, Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments and should include a reappraisal of the suitability of previously allocated land.'
- 4 Assessing the development needs of the District and identifying specific and deliverable sites in order to facilitate development is a crucial aspect of the Local Plan process. By undertaking a SHELAA and reviewing housing and employment sites together and at the same time, ensures that sites are considered for the most appropriate use.

Methodology

- 5 The methodology for undertaking the SHELAA was developed taking into account advice contained within the NPPF and the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG). It was agreed through a Portfolio Holder Executive Decision in January 2016. The SHELAA methodology contains 7 important steps:
 - (1) Determine assessment area and site size;
 - (2) Desktop review of existing information;
 - (3) Call for sites;
 - (4) Site survey;
 - (5) Site assessment;
 - (6) Windfall assessment; and
 - (7) Assessment review.
- 6 Steps 1-5 are documented in detail in the SHELAA, attached at Appendix A. The windfall assessment and any non-implementation rates will be calculated in the coming weeks to take account of the latest and most recent completion data and new planning permissions for the monitoring year 2016-17.

Categorisation of Sites

- 7 Following step 4, sites were placed into one of five categories:

Category 1	Sites within identified settlements
Category 2	100% brownfield sites in the Green Belt

Category 3	Partial brownfield sites in the Green Belt
Category 4	Greenfield sites in the Green Belt adjacent to identified settlements
Category 5	Greenfield sites in the Green Belt in rural locations

- 8 Sites were assessed according to these categories, which represent a priority order. Sites within category 1 represent the most sustainable sites, and sites within category 5 represent the least sustainable. Sustainability was measured in two ways, taking account of locational sustainability but also looking at the sustainable use and reuse of land i.e. brownfield sites. Many brownfield sites are run down and not fit for purpose. If they are not redeveloped they will become even more redundant, unsafe, and will impact negatively on the character of the area. In many cases redevelopment would help improve the character of the area.
- 9 Where sites contain a mix of brownfield and greenfield land (category 3), it was assumed that the brownfield part of the site was suitable, and in these cases the developable area has been reduced to reflect this.
- 10 Brownfield land was considered in the wider sense and was not subject to the exclusions set out in the NPPF. Generally it was considered that much of the land within categories 2 and 3 will never return to agricultural farmland.
- 11 **It is important to note that existing policy constraints such as the Green Belt were not considered to prevent the site from being assessed to be suitable, but would rely on other evidence e.g. the Green Belt Assessment to assess whether that designation should change through the Local Plan process. The District Council has made a commitment to explore the reuse of brownfield land in the Green Belt. The remaining Green Belt sites submitted through the call for sites process are not likely to be considered further unless an ‘exceptional circumstances’ case can be made.**
- 12 The individual site assessments, by category, can be viewed and downloaded from the website.

Findings

- 13 The findings of the SHELAA are as follows, by category:

	Potential no. units	Density range
Category 1	260 - 344	30-50 DPH
Category 2	391 - 528	30-40 DPH
Category 3	835 - 1,133	30-40 DPH
Category 4	4,518 - 6,025	30-40 DPH
Category 5	0	N/A

- 14 By focusing on sites within identified settlements and only reusing brownfield land in the Green Belt, it is estimated that these sites could deliver **2,000 units** based on a density range of 30-50 DPH. In addition, the existing housing allocations in the Allocations and Development Management Plan (ADMP) were reassessed and it is estimated that these sites could deliver an additional **100 units**.
- 15 With regard to employment sites, a number of these were found suitable and available for B1-B8 uses. The majority of the existing employment sites in the District are performing well and should be retained. Consideration should be given to the expansion of some of these sites in addition to finding new sites to meet the overall need.

Next Steps and Timescales

- 16 The full picture of land supply to include the latest and most recent completion data and new planning permissions for the monitoring year 2016/17 will be calculated in the coming weeks and will be reported to this Committee on 22nd June 2017. Land supply contains the following elements:
- Suitable, available and achievable SHELAA sites;
 - ADMP housing allocations (including additional units);
 - Outstanding planning permissions at 1st April 2017; and
 - Completions since 1st April 2015.
- 17 The SHELAA, once endorsed, will form part of the Local Plan evidence base alongside other evidence to inform the development strategy for the new Sevenoaks District Local Plan 2015-35. The Local Plan Issues and Options will be brought to this Committee for consideration on 22nd June 2017 prior to going out to public consultation.

Other Options Considered and/or Rejected

The preparation of a Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) is required as part of the plan-making process, and provides key evidence on housing and employment land availability. Not preparing a SHELAA would risk the Local Plan being found unsound at examination and is not recommended.

Key Implications

Financial

The preparation of the SHELAA has been funded from the Local Plan budget.

Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement

The preparation of a Local Plan is a statutory requirement. There are defined legal requirements that must be met in plan-making which are considered when the Plan is examined by a Government Planning Inspector. Risks associated with plan-making are set out in the Local Development Scheme.

Equality Assessment

The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act. There is no perceived impact on end users.

Appendices

[Appendix A - Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment \(SHELAA\) April 2017](#)

Background Papers

[Report to Planning Advisory Committee - 2 February 2016 - SHELAA Progress](#)

[Report to Planning Advisory Committee - 19 April 2016](#)

[Report to Planning Advisory Committee - 21 June 2016](#)

Richard Morris
Chief Planning Officer