

Draft Local Plan

Site Appraisals

Draft Local Plan

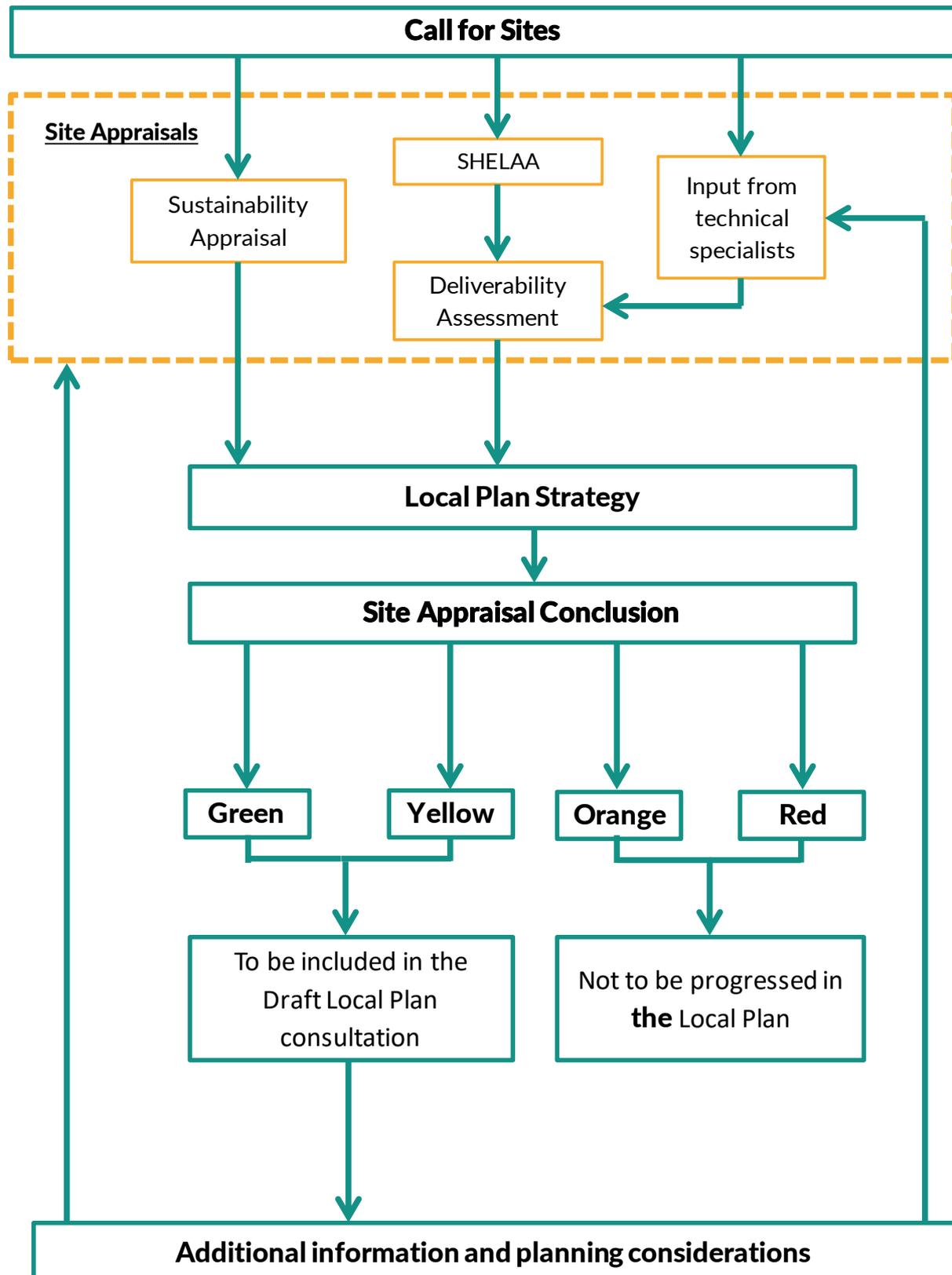


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1. Methodology

All sites submitted for development were subject to a thorough appraisal following the process set out below.



Call for sites

Landowners and developers were invited to put forward sites for potential development since 2015. This included sites for housing, employment, retail, gypsy and traveller pitches and mixed use. New sites can be submitted up to the publication of the final draft of the Local Plan (expected Autumn 2018). Details on how to submit sites can be found on the Call for Sites page at www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/localplan. The sites are collected into batches periodically and site visits are undertaken to begin the process of site assessment.

Sustainability Appraisal (SA)

All sites submitted to the District Council for consideration are subject to a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) in accordance with the Strategic Environment Assessment Directive. The SA assesses sites irrespective of local policy or strategy and with a focus on the potential environmental, social and economic impact of development on the site. The findings of the SA led to the following actions within the site appraisal:

- Substantially negative impacts on sustainability were noted in the appraisal as “Key Messages from the SA”.
- Site boundaries were amended to exclude protected areas or where the constraints are unlikely to be overcome e.g. Ancient Woodland, SSSI, Flood Zones. The sites were then subject to a further SA on the reduced site area and continued in the site appraisal process.
- The SA identified where input from technical specialists or technical surveys may be needed e.g. the Environment Agency or Natural England.
- The SA findings resulted in additional design guidance or where additional information was required for any proposed allocations.

Details of the SA process and findings can be found in the sustainability appraisal report.

Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA)

The 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 a particular site.

A SHELAA was published in July 2017 and included assessments of the following sources of supply:

- Sites submitted for all types of development through the ‘call for sites’ process between September 2015 and August 2016;
- Sites already allocated in the Allocations and Development Management Plan (ADMP) that were yet to come forward;

- In addition the empty properties register, refused/withdrawn planning applications, and 2008/09 SHLAA sites were also interrogated.

Sites were assessed for their suitability, availability and achievability. Full details of the methodology used and process followed are set out in the SHELAA 2017 document and associated appendices.

The SHELAA is an iterative process and a 2018 update is planned for publication in Summer 2018 to sit alongside the public consultation on the draft Local Plan. This update will include assessments of new sites submitted between September 2016 October 2017, and any updates to the assessments set out in the SHELAA 2017 where additional information has been submitted. In addition it will include assessments of sites within existing settlements and any sites proposing new social and community infrastructure that have been submitted up to May 2018, so that these sites can be included in the public consultation on the draft Local Plan.

A further update of the SHELAA is planned for publication later this year, to include assessments of new sites submitted after November 2017.

Site Deliverability Assessment

Whilst the SHELAA and Sustainability Appraisal provide details on the suitability and sustainability of sites, they do not consider any policy constraints or site specific information that could be material considerations. The introduction of a deliverability assessment for all sites allowed the consideration of such data, including drawing out suitable brownfield sites and greenfield sites in the Green Belt where social and community infrastructure is proposed. Essentially, the deliverability assessment introduced a policy-on approach. This was particularly important given the significant constraints that exist within the District (93% Green Belt and 60% AONB).

The deliverability assessments considered the following issues:

- Whether an existing use would be lost;
- Any access requirements;
- For sites within the Green Belt, whether the Green Belt in that location is performing well and if there are any boundary issues;
- Any viability issues;
- Whether new social and community infrastructure is proposed;
- Whether any input from technical specialists is required; and
- Any other site specific considerations.

On completion of this information, sites were given a **deliverability conclusion**, based on the following rules:

- Green:
 - Sites within existing settlements where there are no deliverability issues.
 - Greenfield sites in the Green Belt where they lie within a weakly performing Green Belt parcel and propose social and community infrastructure.
 - Previously developed and locally defined brownfield sites in the Green Belt where they lie within a weakly performing Green Belt parcel and propose social and community infrastructure.

- Yellow:
 - Sites within existing settlements where there are minor deliverability issues.
 - Sites where an existing use would be lost e.g. employment, community, open space.
 - Previously developed sites in the Green Belt where there are no deliverability issues (and where relevant, the exclusion of any greenfield land).
 - Greenfield sites in the Green Belt where they lie within a moderate or strong performing Green Belt parcel and propose social and community infrastructure.
 - Previously developed and locally defined brownfield sites in the Green Belt where they lie within a moderate/strong performing Green Belt parcel and propose social and community infrastructure.

- Orange:
 - Locally defined brownfield sites in the Green Belt where there are no deliverability issues (and where relevant, the exclusion of any greenfield land).
 - Greenfield sites in the Green Belt where they lie within a weakly performing Green Belt parcel but propose no social and community infrastructure.

- Red:
 - Sites already allocated for a particular use e.g. employment, open space.
 - Sites located in a strategic gap.
 - Greenfield sites in the Green Belt where they lie within a moderate or strong performing Green Belt parcel and propose no social and community infrastructure.
 - Sites that are subject to constraints that are unlikely to be overcome.

Input from technical specialists

Some sites lie within or adjacent to designated, protected or sensitive areas where input from technical specialists has been sought to determine the potential impact of development. This includes but is not limited to:

Constraint/designation	Technical Specialist	When consulted
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty	Kent Downs AONB Unit High Weald AONB Unit	During site appraisal process and draft Local Plan consultation
Flood zone	Environment Agency	During site appraisal process and draft Local Plan consultation
Surface Water runoff	Kent County Council	Draft Local Plan consultation
Source protection zones	Environment Agency	During site appraisal process and draft Local Plan consultation
Air Quality Management Area	Environmental Health	During site appraisal process and draft Local Plan consultation
Historic Landfill Sites	Environmental Health	During site appraisal process and draft Local Plan consultation
Heritage Assets including Conservation Area, locally register historic park and garden and listed buildings	Conservation Team Historic England	Following additional information received during the draft Local Plan consultation
Ancient Woodland	Natural England	Draft Local Plan consultation
Areas of High Biodiversity Value	Biodiversity Team fieldwork	During site appraisal process
Areas of Archaeological Potential	KCC Archaeology	Draft Local Plan consultation
Registered Parks and Gardens	Historic England	Draft Local Plan consultation
Scheduled Monument	Historic England	Draft Local Plan consultation
Sites of Special Scientific Interest	Natural England	Draft Local Plan consultation
Areas along the road network with specific traffic issues	KCC Highways	During site appraisal process and draft Local Plan consultation
Strategic Road Network e.g. M25	Highways England	Draft Local Plan consultation

Local Plan Strategy

A strategy has been produced for addressing:

- Housing Need
- Employment Need
- Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Need
- Retail Need

The strategies are summarised in this document below however the full strategy explanation can be found in the relevant sections of the draft Local Plan.

Housing Strategy

The strategy for identifying land for new housing development is as follows:

- Maximising densities in existing settlements (non-green belt);
- Redeveloping sustainable brownfield sites in the Green Belt (PDL and locally defined brownfield); and
- Developing greenfield sites in the Green Belt only where there are convincing exceptional circumstances such as the inclusion of evidenced social and community infrastructure that benefits the existing community as well as the proposed.

Employment Strategy

The strategy for identifying new sustainable employment land is as follows:

- Sites close to the existing transport network, particularly the strategic road and rail network;
- Sites adjacent to or close to existing protected employment land; and
- Sites on the edge of existing settlements.

Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Strategy

The strategy to identify locations for additional permanent pitches has been developed, subject to site sustainability and suitability, and has been endorsed by Local Members:

- Identifying existing temporary pitches that can be made permanent;
- Identifying additional permanent pitches on sites with existing pitches within the current site boundary to achieve a higher density; and
- Identifying additional permanent pitches on sites with existing pitches with small scale minor boundary amendments in consultation with Local Members.

Retail Strategy

The strategy for the retail need for the District focuses on:

- Redeveloping, regenerating and intensifying existing town centres;
- Allocating additional retail floorspace within suitable employment or mixed use allocations; and
- Providing additional retail floorspace on suitable brownfield land located close to transport hubs.

Site Appraisal Conclusion

Sites have been separated into appraisal categories according to the findings of the site appraisal and whether the sites accord with the relevant Local Plan Strategy. Rules have been developed to help the categorisation of sites, these are outlined below.

In addition to the “Green, Yellow, Orange and Red” categories some sites have been placed in the “Blue” category.

A site has been placed in the “Blue” category if:

- The site is too small to accommodate at least 5 housing units; or
- The site lies within the Green Belt and has been promoted for employment use and is currently in that use.

Sites in the “Blue” category can be developed under existing and/or proposed policy in the Local Plan.

Where a site located in the Green Belt contains a mix of greenfield and brownfield land, and no social or community infrastructure is proposed, the site area has been reduced to exclude the greenfield element of the site in order to accord with the strategy. An exception to this rule is where a site contains a dwelling and associated garden and the site lies adjacent to the built confines of a settlement.

How sites have been categorised

A site has been placed in the “Green” category if it is consistent with the relevant Local Plan Strategy and if:

- There are no overriding constraints to restrict development;
- The development is unlikely to have an impact on any protected land, heritage assets;
- There are no site specific issues which are unlikely to be overcome e.g. access;
- The site is deliverable with no viability issues;
- The proposed loss of the existing use is acceptable.

A site has been placed in the “Yellow” category if it is consistent with the relevant Local Plan Strategy but more information is required to assess if:

- There are no overriding constraints to restrict development
- development is unlikely to have an impact on any protected land, heritage assets;
- There are no site specific issues which are unlikely to be overcome e.g. access;
- The site is deliverable;
- The proposed infrastructure and/or community benefits relate to an evidenced local need;
- The proposed loss of the existing use has not yet been assessed.

A site has been placed in the “Orange” category if it is not consistent with the relevant Local Plan Strategy but doesn’t meet any of the “Red” criteria. This may be for one or more of the following reasons:

- The site is promoted for housing and is greenfield with no proposed infrastructure and/or community benefits to warrant exceptional circumstances in accordance with the strategy; and/or
- The site is promoted for housing and is part greenfield, part PDL/brownfield on the edge of a settlement where the PDL/brownfield element alone would result in a site not capable of accommodating at least 5 units and the site does not meet the criteria for greenfield exceptional circumstances.

A site has been placed in the “Red” category if one or more of the following applies:

1. The site lies within an area of land wholly or mostly designated as an “absolute constraint”:
 - Site of Special Scientific Interest
 - National or European designated site
 - Floodplain 3b
 - Scheduled Ancient Monument
 - Registered Park and Garden
 - Ancient Woodland
2. The site lies within an area of land wholly or mostly designated as:
 - Local Wildlife Site
 - Floodplain 3a
 - Local Nature Reserve
 - Historic Park and Garden in Kent (local designation)
3. The site is greenfield, does not lie adjacent to an existing settlement Green Belt boundary, is considered to be in an unsustainable or unsuitable location and is not consistent with the relevant Local Plan Strategy.
4. The site lies within the strategic gap between Green Belt settlements.

5. The site is cannot be developed due to impacts or restrictions unlikely to be overcome, including but not limited to:

- Impact on the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- Inadequate access arrangements
- Impact on air quality or impact of an AQMA
- Loss of habitat and impact on biodiversity and wildlife
- Existing allocations for a protected use
- Sites with multiple constraints
- Overdevelopment of site
- Development will have a detrimental impact on local character

2. Introduction to Site Appraisals and Map Legend

The site appraisals have been structured according to the relevant site appraisal conclusion category.

Each site appraisal consists of:

- A map showing the site and relevant constraints and land designations;
- A site deliverability assessment; and
- A site appraisal conclusion.

Sites have been listed by the lead reference number depending on the use proposed in the Draft Local Plan. Other relevant SHELAA reference numbers are listed in the Site Deliverability Assessment section of the appraisal.

The Sustainability Appraisal findings have been included in section 10.