

## **Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) Update 2016**

### **Explanatory Note**

The SHLAA is part of the evidence base that underpins the St Albans City and District Strategic Local Plan (SLP) and Detailed Local Plan (DLP). The SHLAA is a requirement identified in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). It provides a comprehensive review of land put forward by owners as available for housing development.

The SHLAA does not determine whether a site should be allocated for housing development. Such decisions are taken by the Council as part of its SLP and DLP process.

The Council's SHLAA published in 2009 was comprehensive and identified many potential housing development options for consideration in the SLP and DLP. Full reports are available in the Planning Policy Document Library.

Recording of further SHLAA site submissions received since 2009 and routine monitoring of housing land supply information (included in the Authority's Monitoring Report [AMR] published every year and available in the Planning Policy Document Library), has ensured that information on housing land availability and supply evolving from it is robust.

The 5 and 15 year positions on housing land supply are very important considerations. Information on this is updated yearly in the AMR.

All housing land supply information has been subject to detailed scrutiny at several recent major planning appeal public inquiries.

In 2016 an overall update of the SHLAA was undertaken, with a particular focus on work for the DLP. However, this update also provides useful background information for continued work on the SLP.

The update was based on:

- Collation and review of all informal site submissions / promotions received since the SHLAA 2009 report;
- A new, formal, 'Call for Sites'. This is a process asking landowners and developers if they wish to suggest new sites to the Council for consideration in future Local Plan work. The Call for Sites ran from 22 February to 4 April 2016. Details of the SHLAA Call for Sites are available in the Planning Policy Document Library.

**It is important to further emphasise that, where sites are identified in the SHLAA, this does not mean that there will be an allocation for housing in the SLP / DLP or that planning permission for residential development**

**will be granted. Also, the non-inclusion of a site does not necessarily mean it would not be considered for allocation in future plans or receive planning permission for residential development.**

The SHLAA Update 2016 is presented in the form of:

**Table 1- SHLAA Update 2016: All Sites List by Settlement Areas**

This Table lists all the sites that have been put forward in the SHLAA 2009 and since. It provides a site reference, name and gross area for all sites and is organised according to defined settlement areas (see below).

Each site has a unique reference number which includes the following information:

- A suffix (GB / U) to indicate whether the site is within the Green Belt or in an excluded, urban, area (in the 1994 adopted District Local Plan Review). This is important background information in respect of the planning policy position currently applicable to the site and is taken into account in site assessment.
- An abbreviation indicating the settlement area to which the site is allocated (see below)

Reference numbers for SHLAA 2009 sites are re-used so that the SHLAA history of the site can be traced back into the SHLAA 2009 report.

All sites are mapped with reference numbers (again by settlement).

The settlement areas used for the list and mapping are as follows (with settlement abbreviations in brackets):

- Bricket Wood and Surrounds (BW, OS)
- Chiswell Green, Colney Street, How Wood, Park Street and Surrounds (CG, HW, PS, SA)
- Colney Heath, Sleaphyde, Smallford and Surrounds (CH,SL,SM, SA)
- Harpenden and Surrounds (H )
- London Colney, Harperbury Hospital and Surrounds (LC, OS)
- Redbourn and Surrounds (R)
- Sandridge and Surrounds (S)
- St Albans and Surrounds (SA)
- West of District (OS)
- Wheathampstead and Surrounds (W)

These settlement areas and settlement abbreviations are identical to those used in the SHLAA 2009.

A separate reference map for the whole District is also provided.

The settlement areas are defined only for convenience of reference in work on the SLP / DLP.

**Table 2- SHLAA Update 2016: All Sites List with Sources by Settlement Areas**

This Table provides an analysis of all sites according to the source of the site suggestion. The sources are listed (and also colour coded on the maps) as follows:

- SHLAA 2009 (mapped in red)
- Interim 2009 to 2016 (site availability additions and updates received or collected informally in this period) (mapped in green)
- SHLAA Update 2016 (these sites come from the 2016 Call for Sites) (mapped in blue)
- Where a SHLAA Update 2016 site is a re-submission of a SHLAA 2009 site, this is also mapped in blue

Some sites overlap in geographical areas between sources and this is shown on the maps.

In this Source analysis, where a site is a re-submission, it is listed under both its earlier and later sources, so that the SHLAA history of the site can be traced back into the 2009 SHLAA report.

**Table 3 - SHLAA Update 2016: All Sites List With Initial Assessment and Indicative Development Capacity**

This Table provides an initial assessment of the potential suitability of the sites to provide land for housing development under future Local Plans. If a site is assessed as potentially suitable the site is termed 'shortlisted'. Shortlisted sites are those that have an indicative development capacity recorded in "Indicative Development Capacity 2016" column of the Table. All other sites are noted as 'rejected'.

Some of the sites identified in the SHLAA (2009 and 2016 Update) have now received planning permission or have been developed. For larger sites these instances are indicated generally in Table 3 below, but the information for smaller sites is not comprehensive at this stage of SHLAA work. Sites where development was complete at the time of the SHLAA update (in early 2016) are show on the maps as a 'completion' (mapped as a red outline to site boundary). In these cases the sites are recorded as having nil future capacity.

For all sites an indicative development capacity is illustrated using standard density multipliers of 35 and 40 dwellings per hectare (dph). In some cases this is adjusted based on site specific assessments for shortlisted sites.

**Assessment - SHLAA 2009 sourced sites**

- Detailed assessments for the SHLAA 2009 sites are generally retained as listed and included in the published SHLAA 2009 report. The SHLAA 2009 report provides a detailed explanation of shortlisting / rejection at that time. The assessments undertaken then usually remain relevant. However, in some cases, a site shortlisted then may now have planning permission, or have been developed. This is noted in the Table under the heading ‘Indicative Development Capacity 2016’ with a nil capacity.
- In the Table a limited up-date of the 2009 site assessments has been made for the purposes of new work on the DLP. This assessment is not comprehensive or final and the shortlist may be reconsidered as work progresses. At this stage the update identifies a revised 2016 shortlisting including the sites listed in 2009 now regarded as suitable because they are one of the following:
  - (1) within a current urban area; or
  - (2) within areas identified in the Council’s comprehensive Green Belt Review (See Planning Policy Document Library) “for further assessment”; or
  - (3) within the current Green Belt, but of a scale that may come forward through Neighbourhood Plans or the DLP (circa 50 dwellings max) and likely to have a relatively lower impact on Green Belt purposes if developed
- Where appropriate the indicative development capacity of shortlisted sites (from this update only) is noted in the Table. In some cases adjustments from the 2009 indicative capacity are noted. Additionally some sites are noted as subject to further assessment, because the extent and scale of potential development to be considered is expected to be of a lesser area than put forward by the site promoter.

Assessment - Interim and SHLAA Update 2016 sourced sites

- All these sites have been assessed. As above, shortlisted (potentially suitable) sites must be one of the following:
  - (1) within a current urban area; or
  - (2) within areas identified in the Council’s comprehensive Green Belt Review (See Planning Policy Document Library) “for further assessment”; or
  - (3) within the current Green Belt, but of a scale that may come forward through Neighbourhood Plans or the DLP (circa 50 dwellings max) and thus likely to have a relatively lower impact on Green Belt purposes if developed

- The same outcome terms as those applied in 2009 (shortlisted as 'potentially suitable' / rejected) are used for the interim and 2016 sourced site assessments.

### General points on shortlisted sites

- Sites shortlisted as a result of their identification for "further assessment" in the Green Belt Review are indicated as "potential\*" in the Table. No indicative development capacity is stated for these sites pending this further assessment. There is a table footnote making this clear.
- In respect of some sites, the SHLAA Update 2016 indicative development capacity, and that for SHLAA 2009 are different. The adjustments are due to emerging SLP and DLP policy implications and also subject to further detailed assessment. There is a further table footnote covering this point.
- For all Interim and SHLAA Update 2016 sourced sites, separate detailed assessment forms have been prepared, in a revised format (from that used in 2009). The form template is reproduced as Appendix 1 to these Notes as mentioned above. There are separate templates for urban sites and for Green Belt sites.

### Assessment forms

All shortlisted sites have assessment forms. The assessment forms of the SHLAA 2009 shortlisted sites are provided in the SHLAA 2009 report. Separate detailed assessment forms have been prepared, in a slightly revised format (from that used in 2009) for the post SHLAA 2009 sites. The form template is reproduced as Appendix 1 to these Notes. The completed 2016 Update forms will be published as SHLAA work progresses. It is important to note that for the 2016 assessment forms:

- The forms include a key constraints map and record additional information on physical and policy constraints. The forms may also include details on ownership, planning history, overall character of site location and gross area / potential net developable area (ha).
- For Green Belt sites, specific criteria have also been included in relation to the purposes of including land in the Green Belt as set out in NPPF (e.g. whether development would result in unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas; would result in neighbouring towns merging into one another; would encroach into the countryside; would harm the setting and special character of historic towns) or the local Hertfordshire criterion from the Green Belt Review where development would not maintain the settlement pattern.
- The capacity assessments for Green Belt sites are more detailed and estimates are adjusted to take account of specific site characteristics or known constraints including relevant planning history, the shape of the site,

adjacent uses and developer intentions. Consideration has also been given to whether any land would need to be set aside for necessary infrastructure including open space. It should be emphasised that estimated capacities are not based on detailed designs for each site, so a capacity stated within the SHLAA cannot be assumed as acceptable for the purpose of development management decisions and will not prejudice any future decision that the Council may make regarding any site.

### **List of Documents**

- 1 – Site Assessment Form Template
- 2 – Table 1 - SHLAA Update 2016: All Sites List By Settlement Areas
- 3 – Table 2 - SHLAA Update 2016: All Sites List With Sources by Settlement Areas
- 4 – Table 3 - SHLAA Update 2016: All Sites List With Initial Assessment and Indicative Development Capacity
- 5 – Settlement Maps
- 6 – SHLAA Assessment Forms