

Links to strategic housing land availability assessments

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Chapter 24. Links to strategic housing land availability assessments

24.1 Introduction

The CLG issued guidance on Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments (SHLAAs) in July 2007. They are seen as a key component of the evidence base to support the delivery of sufficient land for housing to meet the community's need for more homes and are required by Planning Policy Statement 3: *Housing* (PPS3) and go hand-in-hand with SHMAs.

The guidance gives practical suggestions on how to carry out an assessment to identify land for housing and assess the deliverability and develop-ability of sites. This chapter outlines the guidance, provides links to each district's individual assessments and a summary of each SHLAA as at February 2008. These will be reviewed and updated in future as they develop further.

24.2 National planning policy context

A top priority for Government is to ensure that land availability is not a constraint on the delivery of more homes. Planning Policy Statement 3: *Housing* (PPS3), underpins the Government's response to the *Barker Review of Housing Supply* and the necessary step-change in housing delivery, through a new, more responsive approach to land supply at the local level. It requires local planning authorities to:

- Identify specific, deliverable sites for the first five years of a plan that are ready for development¹, and to keep this topped up over-time in response to market information.
- Identify specific, developable sites for years 6–10, and ideally years 11–15, in plans to enable the five year supply to be topped up.
- Where it is not possible to identify specific sites for years 11–15 of the plan, indicate broad locations for future growth.
- Not include an allowance for windfalls in the first 10 years of the plan unless there are justifiable local circumstances that prevent specific sites being identified.

24.3 Purpose of the Assessment

The primary role of the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment is to identify sites with potential for housing, assess their housing potential and assess when they are likely to be developed.

It should aim to identify as many sites with housing potential in and around as many settlements as possible in the study area. The study area should preferably be a sub regional housing market area, but may be a local planning authority area, where necessary. As a minimum, it should aim to identify sufficient specific sites for at least the first 10 years of a plan, from the anticipated date of its adoption, and ideally for longer than the whole 15 year

¹ Paragraph 7, PPS3 and Advice produced by Communities and Local Government – Demonstrating a five year supply of deliverable sites (2007). This note sets out advice to Government Offices and the Planning Inspectorate on considering whether local planning authorities are able to demonstrate a five year supply of specific, deliverable sites. It is only available on PINS website, see: www.planning-inspectorate.gov.uk/pins/advice_for_insp/advice_produced_by_dclg.htm

plan period. Where it is not possible to identify sufficient sites, it should provide the evidence base to support judgements around whether broad locations should be identified and/or whether there are genuine local circumstances that mean a windfall allowance may be justified in the first 10 years of the plan.

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. The Assessment findings will be particularly relevant at the issues and options stage of development plan preparation. It will identify:

- The recent pattern of housing development.
- The choices available to meet the need and demand for more housing and provide a basis for making decisions about how to shape places in the future.
- Whether action would need to be taken to ensure sites will become deliverable (including infrastructure investment) or whether plan policies need to be reviewed to enable identified sites to be developed for housing.

The Assessment is not a one-off study, and updating it should be an integral part of the Annual Monitoring Report process. A comprehensive first assessment will generally be required. Thereafter, it should only be necessary to carry out a full re-survey when plans have to be reviewed and rolled forward to a longer time horizon, or some other significant change makes it necessary, for example, if a local planning authority is no longer likely to be able to demonstrate a five year supply of specific deliverable sites for housing.

There are advantages in undertaking land availability assessments, particularly for housing, employment, retail and other built uses, in parallel so that land availability and suitability can be considered across the whole range of land requirements. However, individual assessments may need to be carried out whenever necessary, to ensure planning is sufficiently responsive to market information.

24.4 The importance of a partnership approach

This guidance advocates that regional planning bodies and local planning authorities work together, and with key stakeholders, to undertake assessments to ensure a joined-up and robust approach. Assessments should preferably be carried out at the sub-regional level, for separate housing market areas, by housing market partnerships (where established). Housing market partnerships should include key stakeholders such as house builders, social landlords, local property agents, local communities and other agencies, such as English Partnerships where they have a recognised interest in an area.

Key stakeholders should be involved at the outset of the Assessment, so that they can help shape the approach to be taken. In particular, house builders and local property agents should provide expertise and knowledge to help the partnership to take a view on the deliverability and developability of sites, and how market conditions may affect economic viability. Key stakeholders should also be involved in updating the Assessment from time to time.

There may be particular reasons why an assessment cannot be prepared for the whole housing market area, for example, where a local planning authority needs to urgently update its five year supply of specific deliverable sites. Where this is the case the Assessment should be capable of aggregation at a housing market area level at a later date.

24.5 Core requirements of the Assessment

An assessment should, as a minimum, provide the core outputs and follow the process requirements set out below.

SHLAA core outputs

- A list of sites, cross-referenced to maps showing locations and boundaries of specific sites (and showing broad locations, where necessary)
- Assessment of the deliverability/developability of each identified site (i.e. in terms of its suitability, availability and achievability¹⁰) to determine when an identified site is realistically expected to be developed
- Potential quantity of housing that could be delivered on each identified site or within each identified broad location (where necessary) or on windfall sites (where justified)
- Constraints on the delivery of identified sites
- Recommendations on how these constraints could be overcome and when

SHLAA process checklist

- The survey and Assessment should involve key stakeholders including house builders, social landlords, local property agents and local communities. Other relevant agencies may include the Housing Corporation and English Partnerships (a requirement in areas where they are particularly active)
- The methods, assumptions, judgements and findings should be discussed and agreed upon throughout the process in an open and transparent way, and explained in the Assessment report. The report should include an explanation as to why particular sites or areas have been excluded from the Assessment

The methodology set out in Section Two of this guidance has been designed to meet these requirements. The use of this standard methodology is strongly recommended because it will ensure that the Assessment findings are robust and transparently prepared. When followed, a local planning authority should not need to justify the methodology used in preparing its assessment, including at independent examination. However, where a different methodology is used, the Assessment report will need to explain the approach chosen and the reasons for doing so, and the approach may need to be justified at independent examination.

24.6 Keeping the assessment up-to-date

The Assessment, once completed, should be regularly kept up-to-date (at least annually) as part of the Annual Monitoring Report exercise, to support the updating of the housing trajectory and the five-year supply of specific deliverable sites. The main information to record is whether:

- Sites under construction have now been developed, or individual stages have been developed.
- Sites with planning permission are now under-construction and what progress has been made.
- Planning applications have been submitted or approved on sites and broad locations identified by the Assessment.
- Progress has been made in removing constraints on development and whether a site is now considered to be deliverable or developable.

- Unforeseen constraints have emerged which now mean a site is no longer deliverable or developable, and how these could be addressed.
- The windfall allowance (where justified) is coming forward as expected, or may need to be adjusted.

The Guidance goes into much more detail about methodology, to see the full guidance go to: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/planningandbuilding/pdf/StrategicHousingLandAvailability>

24.7 The situation in the Cambridge sub-region

All of the Housing Land Availability Assessments carried out so far within the Cambridge sub region have been district based. Table 1 sets out the overall position, however the evidence base is being continually updated so it is wise to check with the Local Planning Authority concerned to find out the latest position. Summaries of the available studies are included in sections 24.8 to 24.15, as at February 2008.

Table 1: Progress on SHLAAs across the sub-region at December 2007

Local Planning Authority	Housing Land Availability Assessment Published?	Other evidence
Cambridge City Council	No. But expected to be completed by Spring 2008.	The Cambridge Urban Capacity Study 2002 was completed as part of the evidence base for the 2006 Cambridge Local Plan. This document can be viewed at: http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/ccm/content/policy-and-projects/future-housing-capacity.en
East Cambridgeshire District Council	Yes. The emerging East Cambridgeshire LDF draws on the evidence provided by the East Cambridgeshire Housing Land Availability Assessment April 2007. The East Cambridgeshire HLAA can be viewed at: http://www.eastcambs.gov.uk/docs/publications/devservices/ldfhlaa.pdf	Not relevant.
Fenland District Council	Yes, in draft form. The emerging Fenland LDF draws on the evidence provided by the draft Fenland Housing Land Availability Assessment 2007. The Fenland HLAA can be viewed at: http://www.fenland.gov.uk/assets/LDF/draft_strategic_housing_land_availability_assessment.pdf	Not relevant.
Huntingdonshire District Council	Yes. The emerging Huntingdonshire LDF draws on the evidence provided by the Huntingdonshire Land	Not relevant.

Local Planning Authority	Housing Land Availability Assessment Published?	Other evidence
	Availability Study October 2007, which can be viewed at: http://www.huntsdc.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/699B24DB-7D19-454C-A249-8CDFC0E3CEEE/0/Introduction.pdf	
South Cambridgeshire District Council	Yes. The Statement of Housing Land Supply was published in September 2007 and can be found at <a href="http://www.scambs.gov.uk/document/retrieve.htm?pk_document=905933<sup>2</sup>">http://www.scambs.gov.uk/document/retrieve.htm?pk_document=905933²	In addition, the South Cambridgeshire Urban Capacity Study 2005 was completed as part of the evidence base for the South Cambridgeshire LDF. This document can be viewed at: http://www.scambs.gov.uk/Environment/Planning/DistrictPlanning/LocalDevelopmentFramework/Archive/capacityStudy.htm
Forest Heath District Council	No.	The Forest Heath Urban Capacity Study 2002 was completed as part of the evidence base for the emerging LDF and updated in 2005. This document can be viewed at: http://www.forest-heath.gov.uk/Planning/Forward+Planning/856-+Local+Development+Framework.htm St Edmundsbury, Forest Heath and Mid Suffolk will carry out a new joint SHLAA, starting in April 2008.
St. Edmundsbury Borough Council	No.	The St Edmundsbury Urban Capacity Study 2003 was completed as part of the evidence base for the replacement local plan and updated in 2005. The study can be viewed at: http://www.stedmundsbury.gov.uk/sebc/live/Urban-Capacity-Study.cfm St Edmundsbury, Forest Heath and Mid Suffolk will carry out a new joint SHLAA, starting in April 2008.

Source: Cambridgeshire County Council Strategic Planning.

This table shows the good progress made on bringing forward district based housing land availability assessments across the sub region. Those areas without SHLAAs will need to consider replacing existing Urban Capacity Studies at an appropriate point in their LDF cycle. The CLG guidance published in July 2007 indicates that SHLAAs should preferably be carried out at a sub regional level. This has not happened to date but there may be scope for a more strategic approach to be adopted in respect of planned SHLAAs in future.

² Note: The South Cambridgeshire Site Specific Policies DPD is currently undergoing Examination. The Inspectors wrote to the Council in March 2008 indicating that they consider there to be a 1600 dwelling shortfall in current provision to meet the Core Strategy requirement of 20,000 dwellings between 1999 to 2016. This figure excludes provision as a result of the North West Cambridge AAP. No information on why this shortfall was given by the Inspectors in that letter.

24.8 Cambridge City

Urban Capacity Study 2002

The Cambridge Urban Capacity Study 2002 identifies potential capacity for residential development within the existing urban area of Cambridge. The results of the Cambridge Urban Capacity Study demonstrate that there is sufficient capacity to meet the requirements of the Structure Plan for housing within the urban area of Cambridge.

The study identifies individual sites where there may be potential for residential, development on all or part of the site. It does not indicate that planning permission for residential development on a particular site would necessarily be granted. By its very nature, this study has to look in general terms at the potential of sites for residential development.

It is also important to note that the total discounted potential does not assume that all of the sites that have been identified will be ultimately be developed. An allowance has been made in the Study to take account of the fact that not all of the sites identified will come forward for development.

Table 2 provides a summary of the main findings of the Urban Capacity Study. It identifies the overall Capacity from 1st July 1999 taking into account completions as well as implemented and unimplemented planning permissions and identified discounted potential capacity.

Table 2: Summary of findings of Cambridge's Urban Capacity Study 2002

Completions 1st July 1999 – 31st March 2002	451
Planning permissions that have been implemented but not completed as at 31st March 2002	832
Extant unimplemented planning permissions as at 31st March 2002 discounted by 10% (1380-138 =1242)	1,242
Sites with resolutions to grant planning permission subject to S106 agreement/not included in monitoring of planning permissions discounted by 10% (372-37=335)	335
Identified discounted potential capacity – sites without planning permission that may have potential for residential development, taking into account the overall likelihood of development taking place on different types of sites in the years to 2016	3,671
Total	6,531

Source: Cambridge Urban Capacity Study 2002

Cambridge Local Plan 2006

The Urban Capacity Study 2002 examined land within the inner Green Belt boundary. The Local Plan 2006 removed land from the Green Belt to enable the creation of major sustainable urban extensions to the City. By February 2008 planning applications had been submitted for 5,027 dwellings on land removed from the Green Belt at the NIAB, Clay Farm, Trumpington Meadows and the Bell School sites. Further planning applications will follow in coming years at the Cambridge University North West Cambridge site, at Glebe Farm and at Cambridge East.

24.9 East Cambridgeshire

East Cambridgeshire's Housing Land Availability Assessment (HLAA) of April 2007 is an assessment of land likely to be available for housing development in the district up to 2024. It identifies larger sites within the built-up framework of main settlements which have potential to accommodate further housing, and estimates the likely future yields from smaller and larger sites across the district. The purpose of the HLAA is to inform the process of planning for housing growth in the district, and inform preparation of the new Local Development Framework.

The Council published the first study of this type in 2002 as the 'East Cambridgeshire Urban Capacity Study' and updated the study in each subsequent year. However, Urban Capacity Studies are now replaced with SHLAAs, following new Government guidance and policy. This HLAA has been informed by the Government's draft practice guidance paper on HLAAs (2005), and builds on techniques in the Government document 'Tapping the Potential' (2000). The key change is that the HLAA looks at potential capacity across the district, while Urban Capacity Studies only looked at potential within Ely, Soham, Littleport and Burwell. The HLAA results indicate there is potential capacity for an estimated 6,287 dwellings between 2006 and 2024. Taking account of housing completions between 2001 and 2006, it is estimated that a total of 9,538 dwellings could be delivered over the LDF period 2001 to 2024. A summary of estimated supply is shown in the table below. This compares to a district housing target of 9,890 – as set out in the draft Regional Spatial Strategy (2006).

Table 3: Summary of estimated capacity/supply 2001-2024 in East Cambridgeshire (summary)

Location	Estimated capacity / supply 2006-24						Est. supply outside settlements 2006-24	Historical completions 2001-06	Est. capacity / supply 2001-24
	A Housing allocation	B Other large comm. sites	C1 Large specific windfall sites	C2 Large non-site specific source	D Small windfall sites	Total			
Ely	646	69	178	74 (23%)	346	1313	N/A	1,530	N/A
Soham	277	129	306	67 (21%)	324	1103	N/A	289	N/A
Littleport	683	207	183	48 (15%)	249	1370	N/A	300	N/A
Bottisham	42	-	118	22 (7%)	72	254	N/A	53	N/A
Burwell	-	36	28	23	158	245	N/A	210	N/A
Haddenham	-	-	20	22	86	128	N/A	70	N/A
Newmarket fringe	59	-	25	22	35	141	N/A	8	N/A
Sutton	98	14	34	22	177	345	N/A	182	N/A
Fordham	-	-	0	19	50	69	N/A	49	N/A
Isleham	-	-	0	0	50	50	N/A	47	N/A
Little Downham	-	20	22	0	75	117	N/A	62	N/A
Stretham	-	-	0	0	47	47	N/A	62	N/A
Wilburton	-	-	0	0	68	68	N/A	44	N/A
Witchford	-	-	15	0	72	87	N/A	68	N/A
Other villages	-	20	-	-	283	303	N/A	277	N/A
Total	1805	495	929	319	2092	5640	647	3251	9538

Source: East Cambridgeshire's Housing Land Availability Assessment (April 2007)

24.10 Fenland

Fenland District Council's Draft Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment includes some broad conclusions, as at February 2008. These are that the Assessment:

- Identifies deliverable land for 3287 dwellings to 2012.
- This is enough deliverable land for 6.5 years.
- Identifies developable land for 240 dwellings to 2014 from identified sites.
- Identifies developable land for 5200 dwellings from the Preferred Broad locations in the Core Strategy to 2024.

This provides sufficient developable land for 10 years and 15 years from the date of adoption.

24.11 Huntingdonshire

Produced in October 2007, Huntingdonshire District Council's Housing Land Availability Study summary provides a table summarising the sites put forward in Market Towns and Key Centres, giving an indication of which sites are suitable, available, the number of potential houses the site could deliver, whether the site is greenfield or brownfield, and whether the site is being considered for mixed use development; and a summary of the number of the number of rural exception sites in each the settlements which meet accessibility criteria.

A separate annex lists the sites put forward in the rest of the district. Sites have been identified that could provide approximately 9000 dwellings within the Market Towns and Key Centres. There are over 20 rural exception sites in settlements with good facilities. There are a number of further sites that have been put forward in other settlements across the district, which, depending on their access to services and amenities could provide further rural exception sites. Table 4 briefly reviews the summary tables.

Table 4: Summary of Huntingdonshire's HLAS table for key centres and market towns.

	Number of sites listed	Total greenfield	Total brownfield	Overall total
Brampton	17	390	435	825
Buckden	7	70	0	70
Fenstanton	6	60	55	115
Godmanchester	13	620	40	660
Huntingdon	21	459	684	1143
Kimbolton	8	0	8	8
Little Paxton	7	370+	0	370+
Ramsey and Bury	19	300+	180	485+
Sawtry	13	230+	0	230+
Somersham	13	18	8	26
St Ives	18	380	145	525
St Neots	19	3915	132	4047
Warboys	7	113	17	130
Yaxley	12	172	70	242

Table 5: Summary of the sites considered for rural exception schemes in villages meeting accessibility criteria

Settlement	Number of sites
Alconbury	2
Bluntisham	2
Earith	2
Elton	0
Farcet	3
Great Gidding	2
Great Gransden	4
Great Paxton	2
Great Staughton	1
Hemingford Grey	0
Houghton	0
Needingworth	3
Stilton	0
Upwood	0

24.12 South Cambridgeshire

South Cambridgeshire produced a Statement of Housing Land Supply in September 2007. The document had two purposes:

- to identify housing land supply available to meet the target in Policy ST/2 of the Core Strategy DPD
- to demonstrate the land supply available to meet the housing land supply phasing requirements of PPS3 Housing.

The Statement of Housing Land Supply identified sufficient land to meet the requirement of the Core Strategy to deliver 20,000 dwellings between 1999 to 2016.

The South Cambridgeshire Site Specific Policies DPD is currently undergoing examination. The Planning Inspectors wrote to the Council in March 2008 indicating that they consider there to be a 1,600 dwelling shortfall in current provision to meet the Core Strategy target. This figure excludes provision as a result of the North West Cambridge AAP. The Inspectors have indicated at this stage neither why they consider there is a shortfall, nor which elements of the land supply statement they consider to be unsound. The paragraphs below therefore reflect the Statement of Housing Land Supply from September 2007, and does not take account of the shortfall identified by the Inspectors.

Supply Compared with Housing Requirements: Land Supply 1999 to 2016

The Core Strategy DPD states that at the end of March 2006, '*Land so far identified has a capacity of approximately 19,000 dwellings during the plan period.*'

Table 6 below provides a direct comparison between the sources of land that made up that figure and the current land supply situation updated to end of March 2007. It can be noted that the total deliverable land supply figure is broadly similar despite an anticipated reduction in the delivery of dwellings from Northstowe in the period up to 2016 due to delay in the submission of the planning application. This is because the extra capacity at Cambourne applying current densities is higher than previously anticipated, and unimplemented planning

permissions have increased compared with completions, partly due to the number of windfall sites coming forward.

Table 6: Housing land supply 1999 to 2016 - sources identified in adopted core strategy DPD³

	Core Strategy DPD – March 2006	Updated Position - March 2007
Completions 1999 to...	5,088	6,016
Northstowe	4,800	4,150
Urban extensions (Cambridge East, Cambridge Northern Fringe, Cambridge Southern Fringe) ⁴	4,180	3,280
Unimplemented planning permissions	3,136	3,786
Forecast windfalls	984	852
Additional development at Cambourne (increasing density within existing footprint)	700	950
Rural settlement housing allocations	142	100
Total	19,030	19,134

Table 7 shows the sources of land which it is anticipated will make up the shortfall in deliverable housing land supply. As anticipated, the additional supply comprises dwellings that will result from allocations in the Site Specific Policies DPD, and the emerging North West Cambridge Area Action Plan.

Table 7: Additional Sources of Housing Land Supply 1999 - 2016 and those in the LDF

Source	Supply 2007 - 2016
Draft North West Cambridge AAP allocation – area in South Cambridgeshire	400
Draft Site Specific Policies DPD allocation – Former Bayer Cropscience Site, Hauxton	250
Draft Site Specific Policies DPD allocation – Papworth West Central	87
Total	737

The Structure Plan identifies North West Cambridge as an area for development. Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council are preparing a joint Area Action Plan. It is anticipated that at least 400 dwellings will be completed within South Cambridgeshire as part of this development by 2016. The second two sources are draft allocations in the submission Site Specific Policies DPD. It should be noted that the Council subsequently resolved to grant outline planning permission for up to 380 dwellings on the Bayer Cropscience site at Hauxton.

By including these sources, the total land supply 1999 to 2016 identified in the Statement is therefore 19,871, within 1% of the requirement of Core Strategy DPD policy ST/2 (with the additional dwellings at Bayer Cropscience the Statement would show the requirement as fully met). It should be noted that there are potentially additional sources of land supply that cannot be fully confirmed as 'deliverable' at this stage according to the HLAA methodology, and have therefore not been included in the figures but which have potential to provide additional supply subject to consideration of current planning applications for numbers higher than taken into account in the supply considerations.

³ Development Plan Document

⁴ Figure now excludes Cambridge Northern Fringe West, which has gained planning permission and is under construction

Five year Land Supply

The housing trajectory anticipates that 7,485 dwellings will be completed between April 2007 and March 2012. This is within 4% of the highest definition of the five-year land supply requirement (annualised average requirement of remaining 2016 target: 7,770). It has always been anticipated that higher development rates would occur towards the end of the plan period when the major developments begin to deliver at their peak rates.

It should also be noted that the trajectory anticipates that the 7,770 figure for five year land supply will be exceeded in the following years, i.e. the trajectory for 2008 to 2013 anticipates delivery of 7,745 dwellings; the trajectory 2009 to 2014 anticipates delivery of 7,803 and the trajectory 2010 to 2015 anticipates delivery of 7,852. The identified deliverable five year housing land supply exceeds that required by the draft East of England Plan by over 600 dwellings. The Statement therefore concluded that that within South Cambridgeshire there are sufficient available, suitable, and achievable sites identified to meet the five-year land supply requirement.

Table 8: Housing land supply – completions anticipated 2007 to 2012

Source	Supply 2007 – 2012
Northstowe	1,150
Urban extensions (Cambridge East, Cambridge Northern Fringe, Cambridge Southern Fringe) ⁵	930
Unimplemented planning permissions	3,786
Forecast windfalls	324
Additional development at Cambourne (increasing density within existing footprint)	950
Rural settlement housing allocations	100
Urban extensions (North West Cambridge)	0
Draft Site Specific Policies DPD allocation – Former Bayer Cropscience Site, Hauxton	180
Draft Site Specific Policies DPD allocation – Papworth West Central	65
Total	7,485

Land Supply 2001 to 2021

Land supply for the period post 2016 is anticipated to come from Northstowe, Cambridge East, North West Cambridge, and the continuation of windfalls. At this time the major developments will be reaching their peak delivery rates. It is anticipated that housing delivery will have begun on the main airport site at Cambridge East, and the high rates of delivery will continue at Northstowe. This will provide sufficient dwellings in order to meet the draft East of England Plan requirement. It is also considered that this situation will continue in 2022, and therefore land supply is demonstrable for the full 15-year period indicated by PPS3.

Conclusion

The Statement of Housing Land Supply considers the housing land supply requirements for South Cambridgeshire examining short, medium and longer-term provision, and when sites are likely to be delivered within those periods. It demonstrates that there is broadly sufficient land supply to meet all of these periods, the requirements of the Core Strategy DPD and of the draft East of England Plan.

⁵ Figure now excludes Cambridge Northern Fringe West, which has gained planning permission and is under construction

The Housing Land Supply Statement will need to be updated to reflect the outcome of the Site Specific Policies DPD Examination.

24.13 Forest Heath

The Forest Heath Urban Capacity Study was produced in October 2003 following the advice contained in Planning Policy Guidance Note 3 – Housing (March 2000) that housing should be provided in the most sustainable locations. Studies such as this are at the heart of the Government's 'plan, monitor and manage' approach to housing development.

The Local Plan is currently being reviewed and will be replaced by the framework and will contain planning policies for the period up to 2016. The aim of producing an urban capacity study is to establish how much additional housing can be accommodated in urban areas to the end of the Local Development Framework period. The study assesses the possible yield of dwellings from the use of previously developed land and buildings within sustainable settlements and as a result minimises the use of greenfield sites.

The results of the urban capacity study can be used by Forest Heath District Council to inform the delivery of housing provision during the Local Development Framework period, determine the contribution that urban sites are likely to make to the overall housing total, set brownfield targets and help in considering the delivery of affordable housing policy.

St Edmundsbury, Forest Heath and Mid Suffolk will carry out a new joint SHLAA, starting in April 2008.

24.14 St Edmundsbury

In 2003 St Edmundsbury's Urban Capacity Study was prepared by the council following the guidance set out in the Suffolk Urban Capacity Methodology. The 2003 study was prepared to identify how much housing could be accommodated within the built-up areas of sustainable settlements in St Edmundsbury. For the purposes of the Study, and in accordance with the selection criteria of policy CS3(e) of the Suffolk Structure Plan Review, the following settlements were assessed:

- Bury St Edmunds
- Haverhill
- Clare
- Ixworth
- Stanton

Urban Capacity Study Review

In 2005 White Young Green Planning were commissioned by the council to undertake a review of the 2003 Urban Capacity Study. The purpose of the review is to provide the borough council with a critique and re-evaluation of the methodology and findings of the original study. It was also used to inform the council's evidence submitted to the Public Local Inquiry into objections to the Replacement Borough Local Plan.

St Edmundsbury, Forest Heath and Mid Suffolk will carry out a new joint SHLAA, starting in April 2008.

24.15 Summary of SHLAA outcomes

Cambridge City

“The results of the Cambridge Urban Capacity Study demonstrate that there is sufficient capacity to meet the requirements of the Structure Plan for housing within the urban area of Cambridge.”

East Cambridgeshire

“The HLA results indicate there is potential capacity for an estimated 6,287 dwellings to come forward between 2006 and 2024. Taking account of housing completions between 2001 and 2006, it is estimated that a total of 9,538 dwellings could be delivered over the LDF period 2001 to 2024. A summary of estimated supply is shown in the table below. This compares to a district housing target of 9,890 – as set out in the draft Regional Spatial Strategy (2006).”

Fenland

“The SLAA identifies developable land for 5200 dwellings from the Preferred Broad locations in the Core Strategy to 2024. This provides sufficient developable land for 10 years and 15 years from the date of adoption.”

Huntingdonshire

“Sites have been identified that could provide approximately 9000 dwellings within the Market Towns and Key Centres. There are over 20 rural exception sites in settlements with good facilities.”

South Cambridgeshire

The 2007 Statement of Housing Land Supply “considers the housing land supply requirements for South Cambridgeshire examining short, medium and longer-term provision, and when sites are likely to be delivered within those periods. It demonstrates that there is broadly sufficient land supply to meet all of these periods, the requirements of the Core Strategy DPD and of the draft East of England Plan”.

Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury

Not yet completed. Outcomes to feed into SHMA updates once available, later in 2008.

24.16 Future plans

Ⓡ Cambridge County Council and the district councils within the Cambridge Sub Region need to consider what technical studies and assessments are now required as part of the forthcoming review of the Regional Spatial Strategy, including the possibility of a sub regional strategic housing land availability assessment. The RSS review is due to commence shortly after the draft RSS is finalized, in 2008.

Ⓡ A practical issue that needs to be resolved in preparing a sub-regional SHLAA is the precise area that it should relate to. The boundaries of the Cambridge Sub Region are currently different for housing and planning purposes. The housing sub region covers the administrative areas of all seven district councils while the planning sub region includes Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire district, plus parts of the administrative areas of the other five district councils as well as parts of Essex (Saffron Walden in Uttlesford District) and Hertfordshire (Royston in North Hertfordshire).