

Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment

A brief guide to the process in East Devon

1. The purpose of a SHLAA is to identify land that could be used to provide homes over the next 20 years. It is a technical document that will record information about these sites, but will not make value judgements about their relative merits.
2. The requirement to produce a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment or SHLAA was introduced by the Government in November 2006 (Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing). This is available on the Department of Communities and Local Government web site under Planning Policy/Planning Policy Statements (PPS's).
3. Practical guidance on how to produce a SHLAA was published in July 2007 (Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments Practice Guidance). This is also available on the DCLG web site under PPS 3/ related publications.
4. The practice guidance has been used as a basis to prepare a joint methodology with other Local Planning Authorities in the Exeter Housing Market Area Sub-region (Teignbridge District Council, Exeter City Council, Mid Devon District Council, Dartmoor National Park Authority and Devon County Council). The draft methodology will be updated and published on the web site in July. This methodology will be used to guide the preparation of SHLAA's but, due to differing plan preparation timetables, each local authority will prepare a SHLAA individually.
5. The assessment needs to identify all the sites already in the planning process (allocations, permissions and sites under construction) and assess whether they are likely to proceed/how many dwellings could be provided.
6. It will also be necessary to try to identify sites within the built up areas that could be developed for housing and assess whether they are suitable, available and achievable.

7. Where the SHLAA approach differs from anything that has been required before is that sites that would not be considered appropriate under current planning policy (for example sites outside the Built-up Area Boundaries defined in the Local Plan) must now be assessed for housing potential. However, sites will need to be capable of contributing to 'sustainable mixed communities' so remote sites, whilst considered, will be liable to be discounted early in the process.
8. To submit a site for consideration as part of the SHLAA it will be necessary to submit a pro-forma that will record details of the size, location and current use of the site, together with potential constraints to development and when it could be available for development. These forms are available to print on the East Devon District Council web site.
9. Sites submitted will be initially assessed to ascertain whether they offer a suitable location for development (in the context of Stage 7a of the Practice Guidance). Sites that are found to be suitable will be investigated to collate information about the housing potential and whether sites are suitable, available and achievable for housing.
10. A Panel comprising representatives of housing developers, local land agents, local communities and social landlords will consider all the sites that have been initially found to be suitable and will form a view on whether they are available and achievable. The Panel will also consider whether the sites are likely to be brought forward for development in 5 year time bands.
11. The Local Planning Authority concerned will consider the views of the Panel and publish a report setting out the potential number of dwellings that could be provided in 5 year time bands.
12. The SHLAA will be updated on an annual basis.