

Central Lancashire Local Plan

Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment:

Methodology Statement

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# Introduction

* 1. The Central Lancashire Authorities of Preston, South Ribble and Chorley are working towards the preparation of a new joint Local Plan. Once adopted, the Local Plan will guide future growth and development in Central Lancashire and supersede the Central Lancashire Core Strategy (adopted in 2012), the Chorley Local Plan (adopted 2015), the South Ribble Local Plan (adopted 2015), the Preston Local Plan (adopted 2015) and the Preston City Centre Plan (adopted 2016).

What is a Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA)?

* 1. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires strategic policy-making authorities to have a clear understanding of the land available in their area (for housing and economic development uses) through the preparation of a strategic housing and economic land availability assessment (SHELAA).
  2. The Central Lancashire Authorities of Preston, South Ribble and Chorley will carry out a land availability assessment for both housing and economic development uses. This will enable the suitability of land for different uses to be considered and sites to be identified for the most appropriate use(s); i.e. housing or economic development uses (such as retail, leisure, cultural, office or warehousing), or a mix of uses (including housing where appropriate). The Central Lancashire Authorities will draw on information in the SHELAA to identify a sufficient supply and mix of specific deliverable/developable sites to meet the area’s identified housing and economic land requirements.
  3. The overall purpose of the availability assessment is to identify a future supply of land that is:
* suitable for housing or economic development uses;
* available for development now or at a point during the plan period;
* achievable (i.e. likely to be viably developed during the plan period and at the point envisaged).

N.B. A site is considered achievable for development where there is a reasonable prospect that a specific type of development will be delivered within a certain timescale. This is essentially a judgement about economic viability, and whether/to what extent development can be delivered within years one to five, years six to ten, and years eleven to fifteen of the plan period.

* 1. The Central Lancashire SHELAA will aim to provide a complete audit of available land by identifying all the sites available for development across Central Lancashire. The SHELAA will not in itself determine whether a site should be allocated for development in the Local Plan. The role of the assessment is only to provide information on the range of sites that are available to meet Central Lancashire’s housing and economic land requirements; it is for the Local Plan itself to determine which sites are the most suitable to meet those requirements. The assessment will, however, provide information on the range of sites available to meet Central Lancashire’s objectively assessed needs for housing and economic development uses.
  2. The SHELAA will:
* list all potential development sites - cross-referenced to their locations on maps;
* assess each site in terms of its suitability, availability, and achievability (i.e. its overall deliverability and developability having identified and taken account of any constraints to development);
* identify site-specific constraints and justify where a site has been discounted or considered to have less development potential due to those constraints;
* identify the type and quantity of development that could be delivered on suitable, available, and achievable sites (taking account of any barriers to delivery and how/when these could be overcome);
* outline an indicative trajectory of anticipated development based on the evidence available (including reasonable estimates of build out rates) - N.B. The trajectory will set out the amount of housing/economic development that can be provided, and at what point in the future (i.e. within years 1 to 5, 6 to 10, and 11 and beyond).
  1. **In summary, the Central Lancashire SHELAA will:**
* **identify sites with potential for development;**
* **assess their suitability for development;**
* **assess their development potential; and**

* **assess the likelihood of development coming forward (their availability and achievability).**

**The Central Lancashire SHELAA will not constitute planning policy nor determine whether a site should be allocated for development. The Local Plan itself will determine which sites are most suitable to meet the area’s housing and economic land requirements.**

# Methodology

## How will the SHELAA be carried out?

* 1. The Central Lancashire Authorities of Preston, South Ribble and Chorley will undertake a joint SHELAA in accordance with the methodology outlined below, which follows the requirements set out within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and national Planning Practice Guidance (PPG). The flowchart below outlines the stages of the SHELAA process (PPG Paragraph Reference ID: 3-005-20190722). The flowchart illustrates the inputs and processes that lead to a robust assessment of land availability. Plan-making bodies are expected to have regard to this in preparing and updating their assessments. This methodology statement focuses on Stages 1 and 2 of the SHELAA process and supersedes previous iterations of the methodology (i.e. Iteration 1 issued in April 2019 and the Addendum to Iteration 1 issued in September 2020).



## Stage 1 (a): Identifying sites with potential for development

* 1. In order to undertake a robust assessment of land availability and identify as many potential opportunities for development as possible across Central Lancashire a call for sites was issued. The initial call for sites consultation was undertaken for 12 weeks between 17th August and 9th November 2018. This was followed by a second call for sites consultation that ran for 10 weeks between 28th January and 8th April 2019. A third call for sites consultation was subsequently held between 18th November 2019 and 14th February 2020. The consultations gave stakeholders (including landowners, site promoters, property agents, developers, public bodies, parish councils and local communities) the opportunity to propose land they consider suitable for future development.
  2. The call for site consultations sought information from respondents regarding:
* site size, boundaries, and location;
* current land use and character;
* uses and character of the surrounding area;
* the type/mix of development that may be appropriate;
* the amount of development that could be accommodated (i.e. the number of dwellings or the amount of non-residential floorspace);
* constraints to development (physical and environmental);
* consistency with the development plan;
* relevant development plan designations/allocations;
* access;
* proximity to services and other infrastructure;
* ownership details;
* market interest;
* planning history;
* economic viability.
  1. It is important that plan-makers do not simply rely on sites that they have been informed about, but seek to actively identify sites that may assist in meeting the development needs of an area through a desktop review process. When carrying out a desktop review, plan-makers need to be proactive in identifying as wide a range of sites for development as possible (including existing sites that could be improved, intensified, or changed).
  2. Therefore, a desktop review of existing data sources will also be undertaken to identify any additional sites with potential for development. This will accord with national planning practice guidance by considering all the types of sites and sources of data identified in the table overleaf.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Type of site | Potential data source(s) |
| Existing housing and economic development allocations (without planning permission) and site development briefs | Local and neighbourhood plans  Planning application records  Development briefs |
| Planning permissions for housing and economic development (including sites with permission in principle)  that are under construction, unimplemented, or expired | Central Lancashire authorities housing land database and housing trajectory  Planning application records  Development start and completion records |
| Identified brownfield land | Brownfield land registers (parts 1 and 2)  National Land Use Database  Valuation Office database  Active engagement with sector |
| Planning applications that have been refused (including those subject to appeal) or withdrawn | Planning application records |
| Undetermined planning applications, including those subject to pending legal (Section 106) agreements |
|  |
| Land in local authority ownership | Engagement with the Central Lancashire authorities  Local authority records |
| Surplus and likely to become surplus public sector land | National register of public sector land  Engagement with public sector bodies and statutory undertakers |
| Vacant and derelict land and buildings | Engagement with the Central Lancashire authorities  English Housing Survey  National Land Use Database  Commercial property databases  Valuation Office database  Active engagement with sector  Brownfield land registers |
| Additional opportunities in established uses | Engagement with the Central Lancashire authorities  Ordnance Survey maps  Aerial photography/site surveys  Planning applications |
| Business requirements and aspirations | Enquiries received  Engagement with the sector |
| Sites in rural locations | Local and neighbourhood plans  Planning applications  Assessments of residential/employment areas Local knowledge  Local Members  Parish Councils  Local and neighbourhood plans  Ordnance Survey maps  Aerial photography  Site surveys |
| Large scale redevelopment and redesign of existing residential or economic areas |
| Sites adjoining settlements and rural exception sites |
| Potential urban extensions and new free-standing settlements |

* 1. In accordance with national planning practice guidance the following information will be recorded for any sites identified through the desktop review:
* site size, boundaries, and location;
* ownership details;
* current land use and character;
* uses and character of the surrounding area;
* physical constraints (e.g. access, contamination, steep slopes, natural/man-made features of significance, location of infrastructure/utilities);
* potential environmental constraints (e.g. flood risk);
* consistency with the development plan’s policies;
* proximity to services and other infrastructure, such as public transport;
* where relevant, development progress (e.g. ground works completed, number of units started, number of units completed); and
* whether the site is suitable for a particular type of use or as part of a mixed-use development.

## Site size (thresholds)

* 1. The SHELAA will assess all potential housing sites, irrespective of their size. National planning practice guidance suggests it may be appropriate to only consider sites capable of delivering 5 or more dwellings, however it does also identify that plan-makers may wish to consider alternative site size thresholds. Hence, no site size threshold will be applied to sites proposed/identified for residential use.
  2. The NPPF (at paragraph 69) also acknowledges that small and medium sized sites can make an important contribution to meeting the housing requirement of an area and are often built-out relatively quickly. Furthermore, it identifies that to promote the development of a good mix of sites local planning authorities should identify land to accommodate at least 10% of their housing requirement on sites no larger than one hectare. It is to facilitate achieving this and the overall housing requirement for Central Lancashire that no size threshold will be applied when assessing sites for residential use.
  3. In accordance with national planning practice guidance any sites proposed/identified solely for economic development uses will only be included in the assessment if they are 0.25 hectares or above in size, or able to deliver at least 500 square metres of floorspace.

## Stage 1 (b): Initial site survey

* 1. At this stage, an initial survey of the sites identified at Stage 1 (a) will be undertaken to identify those that are potentially suitable for development and which warrant further detailed assessment at Stage 2. The initial survey will use Geographic Information System software (GIS) to assess the sites against a range of constraints. This will ascertain whether any land they comprise is unsuitable for development (i.e. affected by national policies or designations that protect areas or assets of particular importance and which provide a strong reason for restricting development).
  2. Accordingly, SHELAA Stage 1 (b) will assess whether and to what extent the sites identified at Stage 1 (a) are affected by the following national policies and designations:
* Flood Zone 3b;
* High Risk Surface Water Flooding;
* Sites of Special Scientific Interest;
* Special Protection Areas (including potential SPAs);
* Special Areas of Conservation (including candidate and possible SACs);
* listed RAMSAR sites (including proposed RAMSAR sites);
* Scheduled Monuments;
* Registered Park and Gardens;
* Country Parks;
* Ancient Woodland.
  1. Land (within a site) covered by any one of the above constraints will be considered unsuitable for development. Consequently, if a site is covered entirely by one (or a combination) of the above constraints it will not be assessed at Stage 2. Land (within a site) that is not affected by any of the above constraints will be considered potentially suitable for development and subject to a more detailed assessment at Stage 2. Consequently, sites that are somewhat affected by one (or a combination) of the above constraints (i.e. partially constrained sites) will be taken forward to Stage 2 in order to gain a more detailed understanding of the extent to which they may or may not be suitable for development. The boundaries of the sites taken forward to Stage 2 will not be amended to exclude any of the constraints listed above in paragraph 2.11.
  2. Furthermore, the SHELAA will be a ‘policy off’ assessment; therefore, development plan policies (i.e. local plan designations) will not determine whether a site is assessed in more detail at Stage 2. This includes any sites within or comprising land designated as Green Belt. Relevant development plan policy designations will be noted and taken into account when assessing a site’s suitability, availability, achievability, and development potential at Stage 2.
  3. The initial survey may also:
* ratify inconsistent information gathered through the call for sites and desktop review processes, i.e. Stage 1 (a);
* identify development progress, i.e. where sites identified at Stage 1 (a) have planning permission (i.e. outline, full, or permission in principle);
* re-evaluate the type and scale of development that may be appropriate (i.e. by reviewing the appropriateness of the type/scale of development proposed and considering whether a different type/scale of development would be more appropriate);
* appraise deliverability (i.e. any barriers to delivery and how they might be overcome);
* check or add to the information identified through the call for sites and desktop review processes (i.e. verify/record the information outlined above at paragraphs 2.3 and 2.6);
* identify further sites with potential for development that were not identified through Stage 1 (a).

N.B. The information outlined above at paragraph 2.6 will be recorded for any further sites identified.

Stage 2: Assessing whether sites are likely to be developed

* 1. Stage 2 of the SHELAA will assess the suitability, availability, and achievability of sites (including whether they are economically viable to develop). This stage will inform plan-making and decision-taking about whether a site is deliverable within the next five years, developable over a longer time period,

What factors will be considered when assessing the suitability of sites?

* 1. A site will be considered potentially suitable for development if it would provide an appropriate location for the type of development proposed in view of relevant constraints and their potential to be mitigated.
  2. **To assess the suitability of identified sites the information collected during Stage 1 (b) will be considered as well as other relevant information, such as:**
* **national policy;**
* **development plan policy;**
* **appropriateness and likely market attractiveness for the type of development proposed;**
* **contribution to regeneration priorities (including whether land has been previously developed);**
* **the effect upon landscape features and character (including any valued landscapes);**
* **other physical, environmental and policy constraints** -for example:
  + locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity or geodiversity;
  + habitats, ecological networks, and wildlife corridors;
  + green infrastructure (such as open space);
  + best and most versatile agricultural land;
  + veteran trees;
  + topography and landform (including natural features such as trees);
  + heritage assets;
  + flood risk from all sources;
  + major hazard sites, installations, and pipelines;
  + minerals resources of local and national importance;
  + ground conditions (e.g. instability);
  + pollution or contamination;
  + land developed for minerals extraction, mining, or waste disposal by landfill;
  + former/existing uses (buildings and fixed surface infrastructure, e.g. pylons);
  + access;
  + utilities provision;
  + infrastructure requirements;
  + public rights of way;
  + the amenity of neighbouring and intended occupiers.
  1. Whether a site is suitable for a particular type of development will therefore depend on the considerations outlined above. Sites will be categorised in the assessment as either *potentially* *suitable* or *unsuitable*.
  2. The boundaries of the sites taken forward to Stage 2 will not be amended to exclude any of the constraints listed above in paragraph 2.17). Sites allocated in existing development plan documents or with planning permission (including outline and permission in principle) will be considered suitable for development unless circumstances have changed their suitability for the use(s) allocated or permitted. Sites identified on a brownfield land register (i.e. Part 1) will also be considered suitable for residential development.

Estimating the development potential of sites taken forward from Stage 1(a)

* 1. Development potential is a significant factor that affects the economic viability of a site. When assessing development potential, plan makers should seek to make the most efficient use of land in line with policies set out in the National Planning Policy Framework.
  2. The SHELAA will only estimate the development potential of land that is suitable for development. Accordingly, the development potential of sites that are wholly unconstrained (i.e. not affected by the constraints listed above in paragraphs 2.11 and 2.17) will be estimated using ‘gross site area’ figures. The development potential of sites that are partially constrained (i.e. comprise land affected by the constraints listed above in paragraphs 2.11 and 2.17) will be estimated using ‘net developable site area’ figures. A site’s net developable area is the quantum of land within the boundary that is unconstrained and thus potentially suitable for development.
  3. Geographic Information System software (GIS) will be used to calculate the quantum of land that is suitable/unsuitable for development within partially constrained sites. The net developable area of a partially constrained site can be calculated by deducting the quantum of land that is unsuitable for development (i.e. land affected by the constraints listed above in paragraphs 2.11 and 2.17) from the ‘gross site area’.

How will the development potential of housing sites be estimated?

* 1. To estimate the development potential (i.e. yield) of sites proposed for housing a density multiplier (i.e. a dwellings per hectare figure) will be applied to the developable area of sites (i.e. the ‘gross site area’ where a site is unconstrained, or the ‘net developable site area’ where a site is partially constrained). The density multiplier applied will depend on a site’s location, context and surrounding built form. For example, in suburban and rural locations a density of at least 30 dwellings per hectare will be assumed, whereas in town/city centre locations higher densities will be assumed (i.e. between 50 and 500 dwellings per hectare depending on site specific circumstances).
  2. Housing potential will therefore be estimated using the following formula:

**Density Multiplier x Developable Area\* = Housing Potential (units)**

(\* the ‘net developable site area’ where a site is partially constrained, or the ‘gross site area’ where a site is unconstrained).

* 1. For sites where a mix of housing and economic development uses are proposed (and assessed as being potentially appropriate) a density multiplier will be applied to the portion of the developable area put forward for housing.
  2. If a landowner or site promoter has prepared a masterplan this may be used to inform density assumptions (where agreed by the Council). Equally, if planning permission has been previously granted, the quantum of development approved may be assumed to constitute the development potential of a site. The final SHELAA report will identify the density multipliers that have been applied to each site and justify any assumptions made. It will also set out where and to what extent constraints have affected the development potential of a site.

How will the development potential of sites for economic development uses be estimated?

* 1. The SHELAA will assess the development potential of sites proposed for economic development uses (i.e. retail, leisure, entertainment, cultural, tourism, office, financial/professional services, general industry, storage, and distribution uses). For the purpose of the assessment each site will be assessed in the context of its likely function and use class as set out in the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended).
  2. The development potential (floorspace capacity) of sites proposed for employment uses (i.e. Class E Office, Class E Research and Development, Class E Industrial Processes, Class B2 General Industry or Class B8 Storage and Distribution) will be estimated using the following plot ratios:
* 2.0 for Class E Office in Preston City Centre and Leyland and Chorley town centres (0.50 for Class E Office elsewhere in Central Lancashire);
* 0.45 for Class E Research and Development/Industrial Processes, and Class B2 General Industry;

* 0.40 for Class B8 Storage and Distribution.
  1. Employment potential will therefore be estimated using the following formula:

**Plot Ratio x Developable Area\* = Employment Potential (floorspace m2)**

(\* the ‘net developable site area’ where a site is partially constrained, or the ‘gross site area’ where a site is unconstrained).

* 1. For sites where an economic development use is proposed alongside housing (and assessed as being potentially appropriate) a plot ratio will be applied to the portion of the developable area put forward for economic use. For sites where a range of economic development uses are proposed an average of the plot ratios for the uses in question will be applied to the portion of the developable area put forward for economic use.
  2. If a landowner or site promoter has prepared a masterplan this may be used to inform floorspace assumptions (where agreed by the Council). Equally, if planning permission has been previously granted, the quantum of development approved may be assumed to constitute the development potential of a site. The final SHELAA report will identify the plot ratios that have been applied to each site and justify any assumptions made. It will also set out where and to what extent constraints have affected the development potential of a site.

What factors will be considered when assessing availability?

* 1. Availability is determined by owner intentions (i.e. whether a landowner intends to sell or develop their land). A site will be considered available for development, when, on the basis of the information available (from the call for sites consultations, land owners, or legal searches where appropriate) there is confidence that there are no legal or ownership impediments to development (e.g. unresolved multiple ownerships, ransom strips, tenancies or easements that may affect site availability).
  2. Sites allocated in existing development plan documents or with planning permission (including outline or permission in principle) will be considered available for development unless there is clear evidence to the contrary. Sites identified on a brownfield land register (i.e. Part 1) will also be considered available for residential development.

* 1. Sites controlled by a landowner/developer who has expressed an intention to develop will be considered available. Sites identified through the desktop review process will only be considered available if the owner(s) can be identified and contacted to confirm the availability of their landholdings.
  2. Sites will be categorised in the assessment as either *available*, *currently* *unavailable* or *availability uncertain*.

What factors will be considered when assessing achievability?

* 1. The achievability assessment will use a combination of survey and desktop information (such as the views of agents and developers) to draw conclusions about site achievability (i.e. whether a site could deliver development in the short term or whether it would be developable in the medium to longer term). The achievability assessment will evaluate the overall feasibility of bringing a site forward for development accounting for its availability, suitability, and any other factors (such as known constraints).
  2. The active marketing/promotion of a site by a landowner or agent can indicate that development is likely to be achievable (as this may result in developer interest in, or ownership of, that site). Nevertheless, a site will only be considered to be achievable where there is a realistic and reasonable prospect that housing or economic development uses can be developed on the site at a particular point in time (i.e. delivered at the point envisaged). Accordingly, the achievability assessment will also consider the economic viability of sites and the capacity of a developer to complete and sell/let a development over a certain period. As part of this the SHELAA will assess a range of cost and delivery factors including planning policy requirements; land values/prices; material and labour costs/availability; enabling/abnormal costs (due to constraints); S106/CIL costs; finance and disposal costs; market performance/strength; local property values/prices; mortgage availability and deposit requirements; and also interest rates).
  3. Sites allocated in existing development plan documents or with planning permission (including outline and permission in principle) will be considered achievable unless there is clear evidence to the contrary (e.g. that a site is no longer viable or there is no longer a demand for the type of development allocated/permitted). Sites identified on a brownfield land register (i.e. Part 1) will also be considered achievable. Furthermore, sites allocated in existing development plan documents, with permission in principle, with outline planning permission (i.e. for minor development) or with full planning permission (i.e. for either minor or major development) will be considered achievable within five years unless there is clear evidence that completions cannot begin within that time period. Sites identified on a brownfield land register (i.e. Part 1) or with outline planning permission (i.e. for major development) will be considered achievable within five years where there is clear evidence that completions can begin within that period.
  4. Information pertaining to site suitability, availability and achievability will be used to assess the timescale within which a site is capable of delivering development (i.e. when development might be able to commence and where a site should be placed in an indicative trajectory). The SHELAA will set out an indicative trajectory of anticipated development based on the evidence available (i.e. the amount of housing/economic development that can be delivered at and by certain points in the future; e.g. within years 1 to 5, 6 to 10, and 11 and beyond). It will also identify indicative lead-in times and build-out rates for the development of different types/scales of sites (accounting for the number of developers likely to be involved). The advice of developers and agents will inform the assessment of lead-in times and build-out rates. Consideration will also be given to the delivery record of the developers and landowners that have put sites forward, and whether the planning background of a site shows a history of unimplemented permissions.
  5. Sites will be categorised in the assessment as either *deliverable* (within years 1 to 5), *developable* (within years 6 to 10 or 11 and beyond) or *currently unachievable*.

What if constraints are identified that impact on a site’s suitability, availability, or achievability?

* 1. Where constraints have been identified an assessment will be made as to whether, when, and how they could be realistically overcome (i.e. potential actions/mitigation measures). Examples of constraints that may affect the developability (and development potential) of a site include policies in the National Planning Policy Framework, policies/designations in the adopted or emerging development plan, and legal or ownership impediments to development (e.g. unresolved multiple ownerships, ransom strips, tenancies or easements). Any assumptions made as regards how and when constraints could be overcome will be justified.
  2. The final SHELAA report will outline an overall assessment for each site based on the results of the suitability, availability, and achievability assessments. This will clearly identify the development potential of each site and categorise it as either *deliverable (within 5 years)*, *developable (within 6 to 15 years and beyond), not currently developable (within the plan period and beyond)* or *undevelopable (unsuitable for development).*

# Monitoring and Review

* 1. The Central Lancashire authorities will update the SHELAA periodically to take account of whether sites have been granted planning permission or developed (e.g. the number of units consented, started, and completed). Subsequent reviews of the SHELAA will also include assessments of any new sites that have been identified or submitted for consideration since it was last updated.

# Glossary

CIL: Community Infrastructure Levy

GIS: Geographic Information System

NPPF: National Planning Policy Framework

PPG: Planning Practice Guidance (national)

RAMSAR: A wetlands site of international importance

SAC: Special Area of Conservation

SHELAA: Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment

SPA: Special Protection Area

SSSI: Site of Special Scientific Interest

S106: Section 106 Agreement