

Dover District Council



Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment

Interim Statement

January 2009



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1. INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE

- 1.1 GVA Grimley Ltd was instructed by Dover District Council (DDC) in August 2008 to undertake a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) for the District. The purpose of this study is to undertake a review of housing land availability within the District, to determine the aggregate housing supply within the District, and identify an appropriate supply of developable and deliverable sites across a 5, 10 and 15 year housing land supply.

HOUSING TARGETS

- 1.2 While land for up to 14,000 homes will be allocated the target is to complete a minimum of 10,100 by the end of 2026, consistent with the emerging Regional Spatial Strategy. Should the market wish to take these up at a faster rate, or the Regional Spatial Strategy requirements be reviewed upwards, the local planning frameworks is in place without the need for an immediate review of the Strategy.

CURRENT STATUS

- 1.3 The Dover District Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment is nearing completion and is on target for publication by the end of February 2009. Before publication takes place site scoring must be finalised and site categorisation must be undertaken to determine the final list of sites comprising the five year land supply. Further to this a Steering Group meeting, scheduled early for February, will take place before the Final Report can be completed.

GUIDANCE

- 1.4 The Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment - Practice Guidance was produced by Communities and Local Government (CLG) to assist in the delivery of SHLAA's by Local Authorities and their partners and sits alongside guidance contained in PPS3 (Housing). Throughout this process this guidance alongside the Kent and Medway SHLAA protocol has been consulted with to assist the direction of the study. The following four stages are particularly key tasks.
- **Identifying Sites** – All sources of capacity have been considered including sites with planning permission, existing housing allocations, vacant land and derelict buildings, surplus public sector land and land in non-residential use that may be suitable for re-development for housing such as commercial buildings or car parks (fig.4 in the practice guidance).

- **Surveying the capacity** – Capacity has been quantified using existing data, desktop review which was followed on by field surveys of all sites (practice guidance fig. 5). A comprehensive desktop review took place including frequent consultation with the District’s Planning Department and the SHLAA Working Group.
- **Estimating Household Potential** - Housing potential has been estimated (Stage 6 of the guidelines) by using density multipliers agreed by the Kent and Medway sub region and Dover District which reflect efficient use of the available land. Local site capacity and contextual conditions were key considerations in making density assumptions.
- **Discounting potential** - This step moves the SHLAA from unconstrained potential supply to a more realistic assessment of what is achievable, available and suitable for housing. (stage 7 of the practice guidance) The discounted capacity is a fair reflection and assessment of the aggregate potential of the level of residential development that may be brought forward within the District for the plan period. For this study a range of discounting criteria were used to establish the deliverability of sites and are outlined in Section 3.

STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

1.5 Following this introduction, this interim report sets out:

- In Section 2 – an explanation of how the initial list of sites forming the potential housing land was derived.
- In Section 3 – an explanation of how the list of potential sites is further assessed to derived the deliverability of housing and the categorisation of sites for the purpose of defining the 5,10 and 15 year supply.
- In Section 4 – an initial estimate of the District’s housing land potential is made and the next steps to completion of the SHLAA.

2. INITIAL SITE IDENTIFICATION

2.1 A copy of the Dover District SHLAA Methodology Statement has been attached as Appendix A. The following section gives an abridged version of this statement.

2.2 The process of site identification brought forward 425 sites in the district from the following nine sources.

- Dover District Local Plan 2002;
- Dover District LDF Core Strategy (Issues and Options Report);
- Previous Urban Capacity Study;
- Call for sites;
- Surplus public sector land;
- NLUD Brownfield sites;
- Dover District Council Property services team;
- Sites with unimplemented planning permission
- Appropriate previously rejected sites.

2.3 After initial review, a number of these sites were removed due to size or insurmountable physical or environmental constraints. In order to create a useable list of sites, a cut off point of 0.17 Ha, (equating to five units at a 30 unit per hectares density) was used as the minimum threshold. Furthermore a number of sites fell within national and regional policy designations which were deemed as absolute, insurmountable or unsustainable constraints to housing developments. The following physical or policy designations were considered as restrictive to housing development.

- Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty;
- Heritage Coast;
- Special Area of Nature Conservation (SAC);
- Special Protection Area (SPA);
- RAMSAR;
- Site of Special Scientific Interest;
- Area of Ancient Woodland; and
- Flood Risk Zone 3B

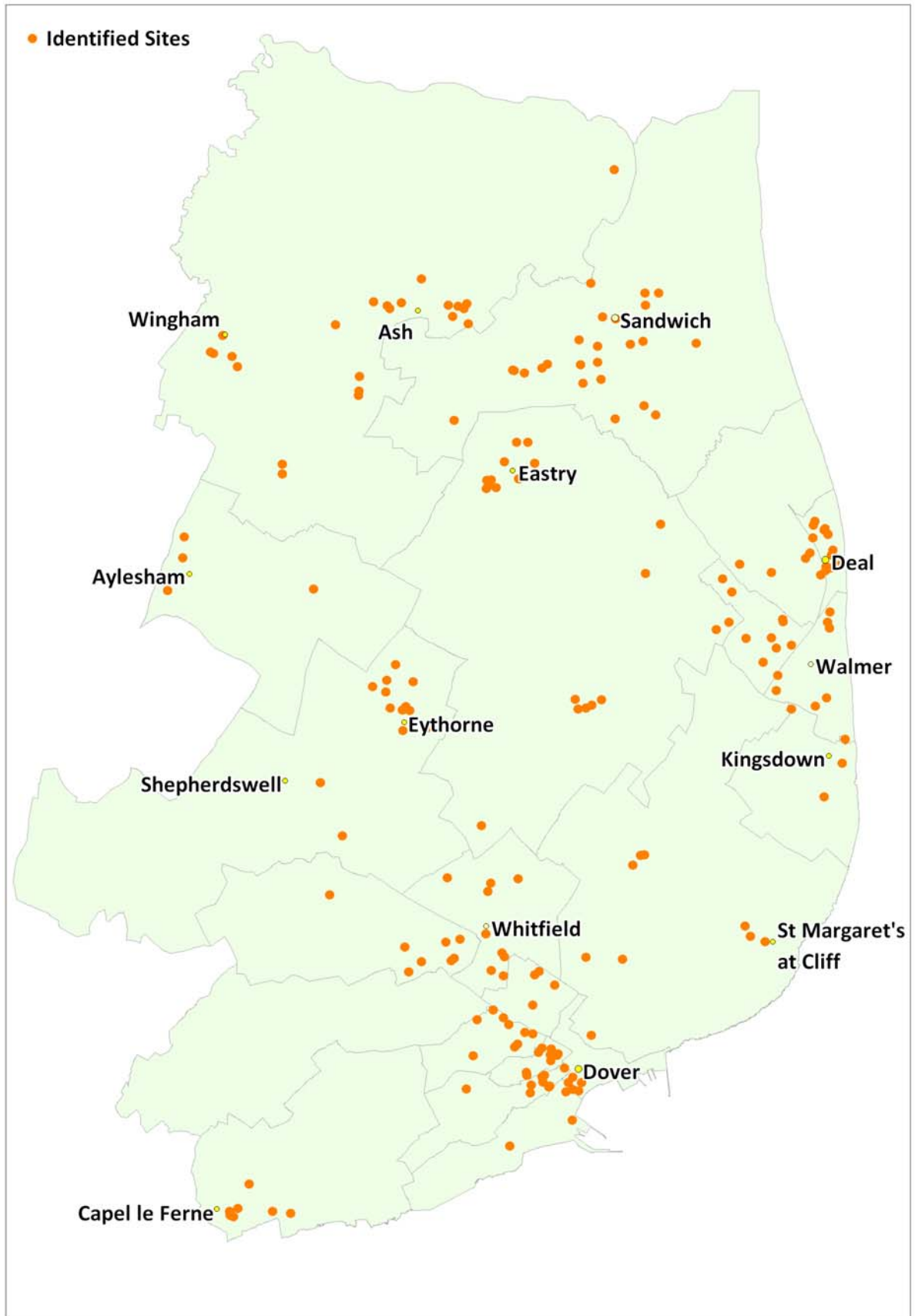
- 2.4 In addition to this a number of duplicate sites were removed as they had been identified from multiple sources. The remaining sites after this process numbered 193 and covered an area of just over 1,000 Hectares. The source of these sites is outlined in the following table. These sites form the basis for more detailed assessment of housing potential.

Table 1 - Source of Identified Sites

| Source | Sites |
|--|-------|
| Sites Identified During SHLAA Process | 93 |
| LDF Housing Sites | 41 |
| Sites Identified During Previous UCS | 23 |
| LDF Potential Housing Sites | 20 |
| Sites with Planning Permission | 11 |
| DDC Local Plan allocated Housing Sites | 5 |
| Total | 193 |

- 2.5 The distribution of identified sites with housing potential is across all wards in the District with the exception of the River ward. The map overleaf outlines the location of the sites identified as having housing potential in the district.

Map 1 - Distribution of Potential Housing Sites



3. DISCOUNTING HOUSING POTENTIAL

- 3.1 This section explains how the initial site list is assessed to derive housing potential and discount sites that cannot deliver housing.

STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION

- 3.2 The advice of a wider steering group of experts has been sought using round table meetings and progress updates throughout. As well as consulting with local house builders and estate agents on the current and future housing demand in the district a range of representatives including local RSL's, Homes and Communities Agency, and Kent County Council were involved in the SHLAA process. The following table outlines the individuals and groups they represent that have been asked to stakeholder consultation.

Table 2 – Stakeholder Consultation Group

| Name | Company |
|-----------------|---|
| Jaimie Ragg | Abbey Developments Ltd |
| Ian Bull | Crest Homes |
| Briony Turner | Homes and Communities Agency formerly English Partnerships |
| Alison Thompson | English Rural Housing Association |
| Nicholas Rooke | G W Finn & Sons |
| Alan Burns | Gillcrest Homes |
| David Jarman | Hobbs Parker |
| Julian Dipper | Kent County Council |
| Jane Davis | Rural Housing Trust |
| Heather Juman | Homes and Communities Agency formerly The Housing Corporation |
| Tim Warren | Town & Country Housing Group |
| Annabel McKie | Strategic Projects Manager |
| Jeanne Taylor | Lee Evans Planning |

SITE ASSESSMENT

- 3.3 A scoring methodology was derived using seven criteria in order for to rank and assess each site in terms of its deliverability and developability. The scoring criteria were weighted to ensure that the most important factors in assessing a sites deliverability are given precedence of those constraints which could be more easily overcome. Site testing criteria were tested and agreed with the stakeholder group.
- 3.4 Site assessment was a two stage approach the first based on desktop analysis of the sites followed by an onsite assessment of each sites.
- 3.5 The first three of the seven scoring criteria were conducted through desktop analysis using GIS tools with the remainder of the criteria assessed through on site surveying and analysis. The criteria for site assessment is set out below with further details in the remainder of the section;

- Policy Alignment;
 - Physical Constraints;
 - Market Attractiveness;
 - Ownership;
 - Current Use;
 - Accessibility; and
 - Relationship with Key services and Facilities
- 3.6 The first criteria as to assess each site in relation to existing local planning policy. Sites previously allocated for housing where positively scored over those with no designation or outside the existing development envelope.
- 3.7 Each sites developability was assessed for physical constraints including discounting sites which were in areas likely to flood, those with heavy tree coverage, coastal areas and sites with significant adverse topology (such as sloping). Other characteristics such as high voltage power cables or those contaminated which would greatly inhibit development were also identified.
- 3.8 By consulting with local estate agents and house builders active in the area a market demand and attractiveness it was possible to consider what types of development would be most likely to succeed in particular areas/ locations and confirm value zones. Those sites whose likely profile meant a low cost of development and in an area where profit would be higher were scored more favourable than those with high cost and low yields with a range in between.
- 3.9 Ownership information was coupled with planning details and Council knowledge allowed us to appraise ownership issues for each site. This criterion influences the timescale of development as theoretically at least sites with large numbers of owners would require more protracted negotiations than those in single ownership. Publicly owned sites were positively assessed given that only those sites which were deemed as surplus to operational/existing use were included in the SHLAA site database.
- 3.10 The current use is another key criterion which affects the potential deliverability of a site. A site which is vacant is considered more suitable than in-use sites and scored accordingly. In line with national policy previously developed sites are scored more favourably than land which has not previously developed.
- 3.11 Poor access increases the cost of site infrastructure and the complexity of development, reducing the likelihood for development diminishes therefore each site was assessed in relation to its adjacency to current road infrastructure. This assessment allows a consideration of whether there

will be additional cost implications from infrastructure investment such as sites in backland or requiring a land take to gain access.

- 3.12 The final criterion reflected sustainability issues. Each site was judged regarding its proximity to existing local services and amenities, and public transport, with scoring taking into account graduated walking distances to access such amenities. Social infrastructure was focused on the sites proximity to schools and GPs surgery, as these are considered to be the most critical community service facilities.

CATEGORISATION

- 3.13 The combined scores across these criteria allows each site to be ranked in terms of its deliverability and developability or if they are unlikely to be developable for housing at all. The most deliverable sites will have higher scores across all the scoring criteria. As the frequency of positive scores reduces, a series of cut-off points are established to reflect the frequency and magnitude of constraints facing sites. The category that a site falls in will determine whether the site is carried forward as having development potential over the lifespan of the RSS and whether this is in the first five years or later. This will effectively allow the housing potential land supply trajectory to be created. The categories are:

- **Category 1 – Deliverable** sites within the next first five years are those sites that have little or no constraints to development at the present time.
- **Category 2 – Likely future developable** sites with only limited constraints to development. These sites are likely to be deliverable within the next 5 to 10 years.
- **Category 3 - Possible futures developable** sites with reasonable development potential (10 to 15 years), but with some surmountable constraints in the short-to-medium term.
- **Category 4 – Developable** sites that face significant constraints that are only likely to be overcome in over 15 years time.
- **Category 5 – Not Suitable for Development** are those sites with insurmountable constraints and/or in unsuitable locations for residential development.

- 3.14 While the total score is key to a sites ranking and categorisation a more detailed assessment and discussion with the Stakeholder group will determine how those sites at the margins to test, identify and validate an appropriate score and for separating and re-grading sites into each five year housing land supply tranche.

4. DOVER DISTRICT HOUSING POTENTIAL

ESTIMATE OF HOUSING POTENTIAL

- 4.1 An average density approach will be used to estimate the housing potential of surveyed sites in different locations, taking the reference densities from PPS3 and the Kent and Medway SHLAA Protocol of 50/Ha in principal urban areas (Dover and Deal) and 30/Ha elsewhere. In addition to this a density of 70 units per hectare will be applied to sites in the defined Dover Town Centre area, particularly in St James and Mid-Town, where this higher density is likely to be achievable within the character of the centre. Ward based data will be used to reflect the densities of different locations.
- 4.2 The following section outlines unconstrained capacity which is the total housing supply if all the sites identified in Dover District were delivered as housing. These findings are only at an interim stage and will change as scoring criteria and categorisation occurs. The final SHLAA analysis will determine exact housing supply and trajectory of delivery
- 4.3 The sites identified if developed fully at the densities outlined above provide the district with a very large unconstrained capacity of around 42,500 homes, although this figure does not reflect the likely levels of development in the District.
- 4.4 This level of unconstrained development suggests that there is sufficient land supply available in the district for 14,000 homes.
- 4.5 A conservative estimate would suggest that only around 60% of the total capacity will come forward and from that only 60% would be delivered in the next 15 years which would equate to some 15,300 new homes.
- 4.6 This indicates that Dover District has the suitable quality site capacity for both the Growth Point and Amended South East Plan Housing Target once discounting has occurred.
- 4.7 As stated the figure of 15,300 is very high level estimate and includes all options for urban expansion given by the council therefore in some cases only one out of the two or three sites options identified may come forward for housing. For example there have been three options identified as possible expansion areas to the South West of Deal; all three of these sites have been included in that unconstrained capacity when in reality only one may be chosen as an expansion area.
- 4.8 Categorisation notwithstanding, the figure of 42,500 new homes is dependent on just eight large sites which contribute over 60% percent of the District unconstrained housing land capacity. Seven of these sites represent extensions to the main settlements of Dover, Deal and Sandwich

with the additional site, an extension of Aylesham. An outline of the unconstrained output is across the district is shown in figure 3.

- 4.9 This is indicative of the fact that a slight majority (97 against 96 sites) of identified sites within the District are greenfield sites however a much larger majority of the housing output (around 85%) as greenfield land. The following table outlines the split between greenfield and brownfield sites identified as having the potential for housing.

Table 3 - Brownfield Greenfield Split

| Sub-Area | Brownfield | | | Greenfield | | | Total Output |
|----------|------------|--------|-------------|------------|--------|-------------|--------------|
| | Sites | Output | % of Output | Sites | Output | % of Output | |
| Dover | 38 | 2241 | 10.6 | 11 | 18860 | 89.4 | 21101 |
| Deal | 20 | 1735 | 24.1 | 14 | 5477 | 75.9 | 7212 |
| Sandwich | 9 | 1126 | 37.9 | 15 | 1846 | 62.1 | 2972 |
| Aylesham | 2 | 41 | 2.0 | 2 | 1994 | 98.0 | 2034 |
| Rural | 27 | 1207 | 13.2 | 55 | 7932 | 86.8 | 9139 |
| Total | 96 | 6350 | 15.0 | 97 | 36108 | 85.0 | 42458 |

- 4.10 The unconstrained output from Brownfield sites is not enough to cover the desired housing figure of 14,000 homes, therefore it is likely to be necessary to release greenfield land in order for the district council to meet its housing targets.
- 4.11 The identified housing sites within the District's LDF Core Strategy issues and options housing sites only have very minor constraints regarding their future deliverability and developability. These constraints centre around the sites' current use and in time would be surmountable, with this in mind coupled with the unconstrained capacity it could be concluded that there is no need to allocate any further sites for housing.
- 4.12 The District's submitted Core Strategy policy CP3 outlines the proposed distribution of housing provision throughout the District. Table 3 reflects these broad proportions and the potential level of unconstrained housing potential development generated from the identified SHLAA sites.

Table 3 - Core Strategy against Unconstrained Housing Potential

| Area | Core Strategy | | Unconstrained Potential | |
|-------------|---------------|-----|-------------------------|-----|
| | Units | % | Units | % |
| Dover | 9,700 | 70 | 21,101 | 50 |
| Deal | 1,600 | 10 | 7,212 | 17 |
| Sandwich | 500 | 5 | 2,972 | 7 |
| Aylesham | 1,000 | 7 | 2,034 | 5 |
| Rural Areas | 1,200 | 8 | 9,139 | 22 |
| Total | 14,000 | 100 | 42,458 | 100 |

- 4.13 Broadly there are similar scales of development for each of the sub areas between the SHLAA and Core Strategy although there is a shift from Dover to Rural Areas in terms of the expected and potential level of development.
- 4.14 All of the levels of housing provision outlined in the LDF Core Strategy sub-areas are lower than the SHLAA unconstrained capacity acknowledging that these are achievable targets and in most cases significantly more capacity exists even taking a conservative view of the final constrained supply.
- 4.15 The Core Strategy also identifies broad locations for potential urban expansion within the District. The sites at Whitfield score well across the housing site criteria with the only area of concern being their market attractiveness as is the case with the identified expansion areas in Sandwich. The expansion sites in Sholden have mixed prospects with two sites scoring well with another two scoring poorly particularly on physical constraints. The small potential expansion area in Walmer scores extremely positively on all criteria.

NEXT STEPS

- 4.16 The site assessment findings are currently being reviewed by the District Council to ensure accurate site assessment and scoring. The fully scored and ranked sites will be delineated into five categories reflecting deliverability potential, at which stage a further review of borderline sites will safeguard accurate assignment of category. Once fully categorised the sites will be analysed for the likely scale, location and timing of development of housing across the district and will form the basis of conclusions drawn from the SHLAA process.
- 4.17 The Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment will inform the Site Allocations DPD with assessment of the supply of housing land within the District. It is anticipated that this will recommend that while the sites with potential for housing outlined in the Final SHLAA Report will be sufficient to meet the RSS and Growth Point housing targets, the current housing allocations should be retained on the basis that they are key to the District's overall vision for their areas and to stimulate a range and mix of sites suitable for different forms of housing.
- 4.18 The interim unconstrained housing supply will be fully reviewed by the District Council at the beginning of February 2009 with a draft final report by Mid February 2009 for consultation shortly afterwards. The final SHLAA document is due for publication by the end of February 2009.

APPENDIX A – METHODOLOGY STATEMENT

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 GVA Grimley have been asked to assess the housing capacity within the Dover District area through the undertaking of a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment. This paper outlines the proposed methodology to be undertaken by GVA Grimley on behalf of Dover District council as part of the SHLAA
- 1.2 This paper is an amended version of the initial document published for discussion at the stakeholder's workshop on Friday the 3rd of October. There were an number of amendments taken on board from this discussion and the appropriate sections have been amended accordingly

2. PHASE 1: INITITAL REDUCTIONS

EXCLUSIONS

- 2.1 There are four criteria which constitute the initial sieving of sites from the initial long list, which if agreed upon will provide a more manageable number of sites of those with the greatest chance of being developed. These criteria are as follows each of which will be assessed using GIS. These sites will not be excluded indefinitely but will be reviewed with the Client Team as with all sites after the surveying stage.

DOUBLE COUNTING

- 2.2 On occasion the same sites come forward from two or more sources. Where this occurred between two sites with exactly the same boundary we have deleted any additional sites leaving one remaining. Where sites overlap we have attributed the overlapping area to one or the other but kept the remainder of the other site. Where sites have a similar border but not exactly the same we have taken the larger of the two to assist the analysis.

SIZE

- 2.3 Depending on likely deliverability we may choose to exclude sites which are unlikely to produce more than 5 units. Using the national indicative minimum of 30 dwellings per hectare as outlined by PPS3, this would mean all sites smaller than 0.17 hectares being excluded from the SHLAA.
- 2.4 Where there is a cluster of smaller sites we have agreed with the council to group these together to create a larger site for analysis. We will group sites that are smaller than 0.17 Ha and are within 20 metres of each other.

POLICY DESIGNATION

- 2.5 A number of national, regional and local policies particularly those relating to the environment, constitute a potential major barrier(s) to housing development. For this reason we propose that those sites which fall within the list of policy designations outlined in the table below are excluded. The criteria we have adopted are the same as the first tier of constraints from the Dover District LDF Core Strategy Sustainability Assessment. Where a site straddles these designations we propose that the site area is redrawn to exclude the part of the site within the designated policy area.

| Policy Designation |
|--|
| Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Outside of Development Envelope |
| Heritage Coast |
| Special Area of Conservation (SAC) |
| Special Protection Area (SPA) |
| RAMSAR |
| SSSI |
| Flood Risk Zone 3B |
| Ancient Woodlands |

ADVERSE TOPOGRAPHY OR CURRENT USE

- 2.6 Using the latest MasterMap data provided to us by Dover District Council we will be able to analyse which sites are subject to adverse sloping. Areas of significant sloping are outlined in Mastermap. An initial search of sites which overlap with sloping landform will allow us to highlight sites where this may be an issue. Where sloping covers a large majority of the site will be excluded from the SHLAA. Where sites have partial sloping or sloping covering a minority of the site then the site will go forward into the assessment with redrawn boundaries with the Council's agreement; such sites will be highlighted for assessment and will be surveyed.
- 2.7 We have also agreed with the council to exclude sites which are on the high pressure gas main pipeline which runs north to south in the District on Health and Safety grounds.

SUMMARY

- 2.8 The above criteria will exclude a number of sites and where possible will mean the boundaries being redrawn to exclude the constraint(s). We will supply the Council's Client Team with a final comprehensive list of sites before commencing both the desktop review and survey.

3. PHASE 2: SITE ASSESSMENT

- 3.1 Our proposed site assessment is broken into two stages. The first stage incorporates a desktop review (as outlined by task 1.3 in our proposal) followed by an on-site evaluation of sites (task 2.5). We will endeavour to visit all sites in the District surviving the first cut however we will be particularly focusing or assessing those sites where there is questionable topographic or policy constraints highlighted in the initial desktop review.
- 3.2 Drawing from the initial long-list, we will prepare a final survey short-list in table and map form for confirmation with the Client Team prior to survey. We will also confirm our scoring for each individual criteria in order to ensure that our scoring and categorisation system reflects their relative importance in the Dover District context and in the case of adverse issues/ constraints, the level of difficulty with which they might be resolved.
- 3.3 An example of this is that policy alignment constraints may not be as easy to overcome as accessibility issues therefore we have attributed policy alignment criteria greater range of scores in previous exercises.
- 3.4 The range of scores within higher weighted criteria, will contribute more to the final site assessment score. This serves to increase the maximum possible overall score and potentially create a greater spread of scores, creating a clearer distinction between deliverable, developable and other sites. The highest scoring sites are those which are more likely to be developed. In all cases the scores for each site will be reviewed by the Client Team to ensure the most accurate scoring possible.
- 3.5 In the following section we propose a scoring criteria followed by an example site scoring.

DESKTOP REVIEW AND ANALYSIS

- 3.6 The first three of the scoring criteria are completed through a desktop review using GIS to initially assess sites, if required, carried out during our site visits. We have outlined the scoring methodology for these criteria in the remainder of this section.

POLICY ALIGNMENT

- 3.7 We will assess each site in relation to existing local planning policy. A site allocated within The Local Plan would be considered more deliverable than a site outside an urban area, settlement

development boundary or within an area of open space. We have decided to proceed with this scoring despite concerns that it may not assess all sites fairly. We believe that these sites are more likely to come forward therefore we should reflect this. Furthermore the body of evidence behind such allocations lead us to believe that these sites are the most likely to come forward for housing development. Green Wedge/Corridor and other Open space issues will also need to be considered here, particularly the potential for any review over the plan period.

- 3.8 This criterion allows for the promotion of areas currently designated for housing as well as guiding development inside the development envelope to make best use of previously developed land and focus development in locations where there is a better opportunity to access jobs, services and facilities.
- 3.9 Sites within an agreed distance of environmental designations will be seen as encroaching on environmental constraints; For Dover District we would recommend that the distance varies depending on the environmental designation. To measure encroachment we will initially assess only sites outside the development envelope within 400 metres of the European designations of SAC, SPA, RAMSAR and SSSI and sites 200 metres of AONB, Ancient Woodlands and Heritage Coast. This is in line with Nature England recommendations on the protection of habitats from urbanisation.
- 3.10 The following table outlines our proposed approach to scoring:

| Score | Policy Alignment |
|-------|--|
| | Reason |
| 10 | Designation as Housing Allocation Site and within Development Envelope (Settlement boundaries) |
| 8 | Within Development Envelope (settlement boundaries) and/or non-housing designation or Housing Allocation Site Outside Development Envelope |
| 7 | Sites within Development Envelope (settlement boundaries) with no designation |
| 6 | Partially Outside Development Envelope with no designation |
| 4 | Completely Outside Development Envelope with no other designation |
| 3 | Completely Outside Development Envelope and Impacting upon Environmental Constraints |
| 2 | Outside Development Envelope and non-housing designation |
| 1 | Outside Development Envelope, fully within Open Space or Statutory Nature reserve or Green Wedge, Green Corridor, or Historic Park |

PHYSICAL CONSTRAINTS

- 3.11 We will assess physical constraints to each site which may affect deliverability. This will include discounting sites which are in areas likely to flood and where this would be prohibitive (in terms of suitability and viability) to development coming forward. Using Mastermap GIS data we have already removed sites which have significant sloping and redrawn boundaries of those which have limited sloping. Other features such as pylons which would greatly inhibit development will also be identified. Sites we have identified as having slopes will be assessed further to ensure that the slope is not encroaching of development potential.
- 3.12 The following table outlines the proposed approach to scoring in this criterion.

| Score | Physical Constraints |
|-------|--|
| | Reason |
| 8 | No obvious physical constraints |
| 6 | Site with small areas of sloping land , woods, hedgerows, to be addressed |
| 4 | Within or partially within Flood Zone 1 |
| 3 | Within or partially within Flood Zone 2 or with Pylons & utilities or contamination issues |
| 2 | Within or partially within Flood Zone 3 |
| 1 | Sites close to cliff or coastal areas liable to erode |

- 3.13 Where sites have been marked down for physical constraints the site visit will assess, where possible, the impact the physical constraints will have on development potential of each sites and increase or decrease scores accordingly.
- 3.14 We will establish wherever possible any contamination issues from the data held by Dover District Council.

MARKET ATTRACTIVENESS / ACHIEVABILITY

- 3.15 Arguable the most important factor in the current climate is the attractiveness to developers to make the investment in these sites and deliver them as housing as such we believe it is prudent to investigate which sites would be the most profitable bearing in mind type, location and current house prices in the area.

- 3.16 We propose to assess market attractiveness using a typology-based approach. This task corresponds to Task 7c in the CLG SHLAA Guidance. We will consider as part of this task market factors, potential cost factors and delivery factors. This will focus on a selected number representative of sites to draw out conclusions relating to, location and housing typologies. The assessment will be based on the following steps:
- *Soft Market Testing* - We propose to consult with local agents and house builders active in the area to develop existing knowledge built through the familiarisation stage, to consider what types of development would be most likely succeed in particular areas/ locations and confirm value zones. We will draw on the expertise of our in-house Residential Land Agency business unit to review the relative opportunity and challenge associated with sites. Initial consultation will be at the stakeholder workshop.
 - *Development Profiling* - We will profile recent development schemes in Dover District to develop our understanding of dwelling type and densities, and particularly the values achieved. However we will be cognisant of the impact of recent market downturn. Typical development typologies will include for instance town centre, suburban, rural medium density, and rural low density. This profiling exercise would allow us to establish development typologies and realistic sales prices for different sizes/ types of housing in each of the value zones.
- 3.17 We propose to profile the value of development based on the surrounding areas and recent price profiles from the Land Registry using postal sectors. This will take into account the likely type of development. Likewise the cost of development will be based on location and dwelling type and areas adjudged on the discussion we have with house builders in the area as well as our in house experts.

| Score | Market Attractiveness |
|-------|---------------------------|
| | Reason |
| 8 | Higher Value, Normal Cost |
| 6 | Medium Value, Normal Cost |
| 4 | Higher Value, High Cost |
| 3 | Lower Value, Normal Cost |
| 2 | Medium Value, High Cost |
| 1 | Lower Value, High Cost |

3.18 We propose a postal sector based geography to establish areas of higher value land cross reference to the SHLAA and to determine development profile type types.

ON-SITE SURVEY

3.19 We propose to undertake the survey during 19th to 21st of November 2008. We will review all sites focusing on those highlighted as having some physical constraint or encroaching upon an environmental constraint for further assessment. Site surveys will be undertaken in a concentrated time period to maximise time on-site and efficiency of our resources.

3.20 At the end of the survey period an initial review of the survey data will be undertaken to confirm completeness and draw out any immediate findings, this will be done in conjunction with the Client Team. Any data and images captured will be reviewed and checked prior to entry into the GIS database to ensure accuracy and agreement. We will be gathering a range of information for each site including:

- Site name
- Location in relation to settlement hierarchy
- Confirmation of boundaries
- Principal site features – vegetation, existing structures, etc.

- Surrounding uses and activities
- Additional Constraints
- Surrounding Densities
- Current Use – Housing, Mixed, Employment, Other

3.21 Many of these criteria require some initial desktop review to highlight those sites which require further onsite assessment. We will continue with onsite assessment and scoring each site on the criteria outlined in the remainder of this section.

OWNERSHIP

3.22 Initial scoring of each site will be established through information provided on planning applications, site representations, as well as the Council's databases.

3.23 Where there is doubt or the information is unknown, each site will be scored in terms of its likely ownership, with favourable scores given to those with the least number of owners reflecting the time/ cost implications of site assembly (unless the site is being promoted jointly by multiple owners). A number of assumptions are made at this stage in that, within reason each building or group of buildings or each plot of land has single ownership.

| Score | Ownership |
|-------|-----------------------------------|
| | Reason |
| 5 | Single Public Sector Ownership |
| 4.5 | Single Private Ownership |
| 4 | Multiple Public Sector Ownerships |
| 3.5 | 2-3 Ownerships |
| 3 | Multiple up to 1 hectare |
| 2.5 | Multiple 1-5 hectare |
| 2 | Multiple 5-10 hectares |
| 1 | Multiple over 10 hectares |

3.24 Where there are a number of existing leases which would have to be extinguished to facilitate site redevelopment, this will be reflected in the assessment and such sites given a lower score. The larger the area in multiple ownerships the more constraints will be evident and the scoring reflects this. Where a site is in single ownership these sites will be scored highly.

3.25 Public sector owned sites will score more highly as those sites which can be established public put forward will be viewed as surplus to operational/existing use will be more readily available for development.

CURRENT USE

3.26 Information held by the Council will allow current uses to be broadly established for each of the sites. Like the ownership constraints where this is unknown and map and photographic evidence is inconclusive the site survey will assess the current use of a site and/or confirm the current use.

3.27 Vacant land is considered more suitable than in-use sites. This will be reflected in the deliverability of sites and how much work is required before they can be developed. We propose that additional scoring promotes bringing forward vacant previously used land at the expense of land which has not previously been developed or contributes to local green space.

| Score | Current Use |
|-------|---|
| | Reason |
| 7 | Vacant brownfield land or buildings identified as derelict |
| 5 | Vacant building not in commercial use including lock ups etc |
| 4 | Partially occupied single use site |
| 3 | Fully occupied single use (e.g. factory, school) |
| 2 | Previously not developed land inside settlement boundaries (designated open space but not environmental designation). |
| 1 | Fully occupied multiple use (e.g. retail with housing above) or previously not developed land outside settlement boundaries (designated open space) but not environmental designation). |

ACCESSIBILITY

- 3.28 Poor access increases the cost of site infrastructure and the complexity of development, reducing the likelihood for development diminishes. We propose to assess sites in terms of proximity to current road infrastructure. If a site is less than five metres from a current road it will be deemed as accessible for development and given a higher score. This initial assessment will be undertaken using GIS. We will also assess sites which have access with poor visibility, such as those accessed from bends on busy roads; this will be assessed on the ground, with sites' scores reduced accordingly. These sites will be viewed as having access investment requirements.
- 3.29 All sites will be further assessed through on-site assessment with a view to identify whether they are backland, (plots of land with access but to the rear of existing development) or a land take is required (sites requiring some form of proactive land assembly) to gain access.
- 3.30 Where known new road infrastructure or junction improvements would be required to support development this will be taken account of in the scoring. Sites which require a land take or access improvement in rural areas are less sustainable than those in urban areas and the scoring adjusted accordingly. The reasoning behind these criteria is to both reflect the degree of difficulty of development, and the subsequent cost as well as the increased likelihood of cost being incurred through land assembly etc.

| Score | Land Accessibility |
|-------|---|
| | Reason |
| 5 | Less than 5 metres from road assuming direct access to site |
| 4 | Access investment required in an urban area including site visibility |
| 3 | Backland, land take required in an urban area including potential ransom strips |
| 2 | Access investment required in a rural area including site visibility |
| 1 | Land take required in a rural area including potential ransom strips |

SUSTAINABILITY ISSUES

- 3.31 In order to reflect a development's sustainability, each site will be judged regarding its proximity to existing local services and amenities, and public transport, our scoring criteria will be based on the following steps.
- 3.32 We will use 400 and 800 metre buffer zones from each site to broadly reflect the number of services within 5 and 10 minutes walk of the site. Where public transport is concerned we are scoring on the number and quality of modal access with sites located next to train stations scoring better than those with only bus access. This assumes that sites with rail access can act as transport and modal hubs with increased levels of public transport options.

| Score | Sustainability |
|-------|---|
| | Reason |
| 7 | Within 5 minutes walk of rail station, local shops and social infrastructure |
| 6 | Within 5 minutes walk of bus and / or local shops and social infrastructure |
| 4.5 | Site with at least 2 of 3 from: public transport, local shops or social infrastructure with 5 minutes walk |
| 4 | Site within 10 minutes walk of rail station, local shops and social infrastructure |
| 3.5 | Site within 10 minutes walk of bus and / or local shops and social infrastructure |
| 3 | Site with at least 2 of 3 from: public transport, local shops or social infrastructure within 10 minutes walk |
| 2.5 | Site with at least 1 of 3 from: public transport, local shops or social infrastructure with 5 minutes walk |
| 2 | Site with at least 1 of 3 from: public transport, local shops or social infrastructure with 10 minutes walk |
| 1 | Site with no public transport, local shops or social infrastructure with 10 minutes walk |

3.33 The social infrastructure we will focus on will be all schools and GPs surgery, as these are the most critical community service facilities to the capacity of the area. Further to this we will work with the Council on the general sustainability of each of the major settlements and alter scoring accordingly

3.34 Were there is an identified need to score sites outside of these criteria we will use a further exceptional scoring criteria in the final site assessment. This will ensure transparency of all decisions and will enable scoring to be more flexible and will assist in incorporating local knowledge of a site particularly where this may contradict what has been established in the desktop review and site visits.

4. PHASE 3: ASSESSING HOUSING POTENTIAL

ESTIMATE HOUSING POTENTIAL

- 4.1 An average density approach will be used to estimate the housing potential of surveyed sites in different locations, taking the backstop density from the PPS3 and the Kent and Medway SHLAA Protocol of 50/Ha in principal urban areas and 30/Ha elsewhere. In addition to this we will look to apply a density of 70 units per hectare in Dover Town Centre developments particularly in St James and Mid-Town developments where this higher density is likely to be achievable. We will use ward based data we to reflect the densities of different locations and agree these working densities with the exclusion of the Dover Town Centre areas whose defined boundary will be used instead.
- 4.2 The following table outlines the densities used to calculate the unit output from each site.

| Ward | Density |
|----------------------------|----------------------|
| Aylesham | 30 Units per Hectare |
| Buckland | 50 Units per Hectare |
| Capel-le-Ferne | 30 Units per Hectare |
| Castle | 50 Units per Hectare |
| Eastry | 30 Units per Hectare |
| Eythorne & Shepherdswell | 30 Units per Hectare |
| Little Stour & Ashstone | 30 Units per Hectare |
| Lydden & Temple Ewell | 30 Units per Hectare |
| Maxton, Elms Vale & Priory | 50 Units per Hectare |
| Middle Deal & Sholden | 50 Units per Hectare |
| Mill Hill | 50 Units per Hectare |
| North Deal | 50 Units per Hectare |
| Ringwould | 30 Units per Hectare |
| River | 30 Units per Hectare |
| Sandwich | 30 Units per Hectare |
| St Margaret's at Cliffe | 30 Units per Hectare |
| St Radigunds | 50 Units per Hectare |
| Tower Hamlets | 50 Units per Hectare |
| Town & Pier | 50 Units per Hectare |
| Walmer | 50 Units per Hectare |
| Whitfield | 50 Units per Hectare |
| Dover Town Centre | 70 Units per Hectare |

- 4.3 Apply appropriate density standards – the application of the agreed density standards will be made to each of the surveyed sites to derive an overall housing potential figure for all sites. A detailed analysis of the geography of different site densities and potential will be prepared.

5. PHASE 4: IDENTIFY DELIVERY TRAJECTORY

- 5.1 The purpose of this phase is to assess whether identified sites can be considered deliverable, developable or currently not developable for housing purposes. These terms are defined as follows:

- **Deliverable** – the site is available now, offers a suitable location for housing development now and there is a reasonable prospect that housing will be delivered on the site within five years.
- **Developable** – the site should be in a suitable location for housing development, and there should be a reasonable prospect that it will be achievable for and could be developed at a specific point in time.

- 5.2 The intent of this step is to discount sites which are not considered to have housing potential in the plan period, leaving a set of acceptable sites. Sites which are deliverable form the five, ten and fifteen year supply.

- 5.3 An integrated approach to assessing site suitability, availability and achievability is effective at allowing a rounded assessment of the developability and deliverability of identified sites.

- 5.4 The most deliverable sites will have higher scores from across the scoring criteria. As the frequency of positive scores reduces, a series of cut-off points will be established to reflect the frequency and magnitude of constraints facing sites. The final stage of the process will be assigning each site using its weighted score to five categories. The category that a site falls in will determine whether the site is carried forward as having development potential over the lifespan of the LDF and will effectively allow the housing potential land supply trajectory to be created:

- **Category 1** – Sites '**Deliverable**' within the first five years of the plan (from scheduled adoption date) are those sites scoring at the lower end of the scale in the discounting process. These sites have little or no constraints to development at the present time.
- **Category 2** – Likely future **developable** sites with only limited constraints to development. These sites are deliverable within the first 10 years of the plan.
- **Category 3** - Possible futures **developable** sites with reasonable development potential (10 years+) but with some constraints to overcome which are not insurmountable in the short-to-medium term.

- **Category 4 – Developable** sites that face significant constraints that can only be overcome in over 20 years time.
- **Category 5 - Discarded** sites with insurmountable constraints and/or in unsuitable locations for residential development.

5.5 The cumulative score for each surveyed site across all of the delivery and developability criteria will be calculated. Sites will be ranked by score, identifying those with the easiest path to delivery and the best characteristics supporting development scoring highly. It is our experience that most sites can be broadly grouped into those that are deliverable and developable at this stage. More detailed assessment and discussion with the Client Team and Stakeholders will be carried out on those at the margins to test, identify and validate an appropriate score for separating and re-grading sites into each 5 year housing land supply tranche.

5.6 Where sites are of a certain size we will stage the timing of development across two five year periods. We propose that any development over 750 units will be across two eras of developability to reflect the timescales involved with such large projects. This will mean that for example where a site is likely to have a unit output of 1000 units the first 750 units will be in the category the site scoring reflects for example Category 2, then the remaining 250 units will be in category 3 and subsequently fall into the following 5 years period.

EXAMPLE HOUSING SITE SCORING

5.7 The following scenario is hypothetical and gives a broad overview of the mechanisms of our scoring system.

- The local authority school has just been rebuilt on a new site leaving the existing building in a derelict state and about to be demolished. The site is within the existing settlement boundary although has no other designation placed upon it. The site covers an area of 6 hectares.
- The small stream to the rear of the site has been liable to flooding in severe weather and was designated as Flood Zone one by the Environment Agency. There are no other physical barriers in place which would increase cost or development potential.
- The surrounding area is relatively dense although this is mostly with higher cost family housing and also includes local shops, bus stops and a GP surgery in close proximity to the site.

5.8 We can therefore score the site as follows based on the above

- Policy Alignment – 7 -Sites within Development Envelope (settlement boundaries) with no designation

- Physical Constraints – 4- Within or partially within Flood Zone 1
 - Market Attractiveness – 8- Higher Value, Normal Cost
 - Ownership – 5- Single Public Sector Ownership
 - Current Use – 7- Vacant Brownfield land or buildings identified as derelict
 - Land Accessibility – 5- Less than 5 metres from road assuming direct access to site
 - Sustainability – 6- Within 10 minutes walk of bus and / or local shops and social infrastructure
- 5.9 This would give the site a total score of 42 in most likelihood would be seen as falling into category 1, deliverable in the first five years. The site is in a higher density area and would therefore likely to be delivered at around 50 units per hectare giving a unit outcome of around 300 units.