

Appendix 3: Summary of Responses to Consultation on SHLAA Methodology

Home Builders Federation
HBF support the application of a methodology that is in general accordance with the Government's SHLAA practice guide (July 2007) and the North East England SHLAA Regional Implementation Guide (March 2008).
Document needs to convey the importance of delivery.
HBF and other key stakeholders should have been involved earlier in the process.
Methodology should cover management and scrutiny arrangements, and resources. Should have been a management meeting" to determine what is and what is not available and in what timescales.
"Only sources which have a reasonable chance of coming forward should be included within the SHLAA. It is for the Project Group to agree the parameters for this".
Who determined site exclusions ? Should not be blanket removal of sites outside settlement limits.
In accordance with POS and PINS guidelines, land in the ownership of the Council or Public bodies should only be included if it is evidenced by a resolution to sell and a timetable for disposal.
Object to prioritising search areas. The POS and the Government are clear that the objective is to find "suitable sites which can cover urban and rural areas, and may go beyond existing settlement". A sequential approach should not be followed.
Higher Density will be encouraged in the following locations ...", why? Will this make sites deliverable? Will it deliver the objectives of RSS? or the SHMA? HBF would ask does the Partnership know what the mix of a scheme is at 30 or 40 or 50 or 60 dwellings per hectare?
No indication of who makes any decisions. What is the relevance of "Political Constraints" in the Planning Evidence Document?
Market Factors. I draw your attention to the HBF's letter to yourselves of 7 April 2008.
Comment about market capacity not relevant to the SHLAA, as it is not a policy document.
Workshops do not work if the stakeholder is simply "presented with a map ... and completed site survey sheet and invited to give their views. The stakeholder needs to visit the site as an absolute minimum before he can comment. A workshop may be used as a discussion forum. The document is "owned" by the stakeholders and therefore criteria should be informed by the "professional opinions" of them and not solely "relevant officers".
HBF object most strongly to the preferencing of sites.
Broad locations - what are the search criteria?
HBF absolutely object to the inclusion of any windfalls. There is no evidence provided to justify this statement. If an unforeseen windfall occurs the SHLAA can take account of it in its review. The document is not about constraints, it is about delivery or over delivery where no harm occurs.
The assessment pack is way too detailed and also "scores" sites. All scoring issues should be removed and the assessment pack radically simplified.
HBF would request that it is a signatory to the final document. This would give it weight and substance in the future.
Natural England
Request that comments on the regional approach be considered in finalising Darlington SHLAA.
Category 1 list : Ancient woodland should be in the category 2 list, as whilst it is listed under PPS9, it is not a statutory designation. Category 2 list of designations/uses which affect the development of land, we noticed the following had been omitted :
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heritage Coasts • Community Forests • Local Nature Reserves • Potential for impact on protected species (this should be a broader category than the identified 500m from great crested newt ponds). • BAP Priority Habitat and Species • Regionally Important Geological Sites • National Trails • Areas where development and use likely to impact on a Category 1 site (especially SPA/SAC/Ramsar/SSSI/NNR and in relation to issues such as hydrology, access, disturbance) methodology should recognise the need to consult Natural England on the suitability of such sites as part of the process • Habitat networks (PPS9 paragraph 12) • Cumulative impacts
Stage 5 - we suggest that proximity to Category 1 list areas and likely indirect impacts on these areas should be added to this list of site characteristics.
Stage 7d paragraph 3.34 – the assessment should consider whether the constraint can reasonably be addressed, in the light of the issues and conflicts identified, or if the allocation is inappropriate.
Ward Hadaway (on behalf of Dean & Chapter of Durham)
General This consultation does not seem to constitute involvement "at the outset" as suggested in paragraph 12 of the CLG Practice Guidance on SHLAAs. Disappointed that HBF have not been involved at an earlier stage.
Site Specific Sources Slight concern that the split in site specific sources between 'those identified by the study team' and 'those promoted externally' implies some element of pre judgement by the 'study team'. Should use the distinction of 'sites in the planning process 'and 'sites not currently in the planning process'.

<p>We are also concerned at the terminology used in the two categories of site - 'Showstoppers' and 'Restraint categories that should be assessed'. We do not see why Category 2 should include sites outside settlement limits.</p>
<p>Grouped Sources Not really sure what data of any benefit will come forward by looking at grouped sources. In the national guidance document identifying the potential of broad areas is seen as Stage 9, and then only to be undertaken 'where necessary'. Concerned that the way Grouped Sources is handled in the draft Darlington methodology is in fact a way of introducing an allowance for windfalls 'by the back door'. Consideration of Grouped sources needs to be left to the later stages of the process, and should only take place then if necessary.</p>
<p>Question why surveying sites is to be prioritised according to the sequential criteria in RSS Policy 4. A more pragmatic approach would be to look at those sites identified and consider the factors listed in paragraph 25 of the CLG Practice Guidance and then come to a view on programming the survey work in consultation with the steering group.</p>
<p>Identified site area threshold Confused about treatment of small sites.</p>
<p>Estimating Yield from Sites Application of density ranges not well explained. No indication is given as to the type of sites or locations where 30 dph would apply, or the 30 –40 dph band. What does higher density mean ? Re: applying a lower density level than 30dph, some sensitive sites can nonetheless prove suitable for higher density development – for example the development which took place a number of years ago at Greystones on Carmel Road North. Political factors should not be taken into account in assessing yield; this should refer to 'any known development control constraints which suggest that a particular density of development would be appropriate' instead.</p>
<p>Achievability Not sure about whether statement about market capacity is well founded; for example a new build rate of 500 units per year could be a reflection of supply as much as demand? We think that what is more significant is what the house builders feel the market can sustain if there were to be a given supply on certain types of sites. It is important that undue weight is not applied to what may be seen as policy restrictions at the present time, when viewed against the other factors of Availability and Achievability, because current policy is in a state of some flux due to the ageing nature of the saved Local Plan policies and the early stage that has been reached in the emerging Local Development Framework.</p>
<p>Site Groupings based on Location No objection to the three categories, but there seems to be some implied policy bias. We also consider that the reference to Overcoming Constraints appears as something of an afterthought. If there is potential for major developments in the form of, say a large Urban PDL site, or a Greenfield Urban Extension, but with some infrastructure constraints to be addressed, in our view this should be certainly given full consideration to establish what may be needed to overcome those constraints and what the implications may be in terms of timescale. The CLG Practice Guidance says that where constraints are identified, the assessment should consider what action would be needed to remove them.</p>
<p>The Assessment Pack The number of factors that must be examined for each site is lengthy, and it will be very time consuming to gain all of the information stated. Is it necessary to hold all of this information to reach a realistic view on whether a site is suitable ? What happens if some information is unavailable for all the sites to be assessed? It is clearly relevant to note whether the site is within or outside existing development limits (22) but the suggestion that this represents a sequential test to us implies a policy bias against sites outside the existing development limit. Likewise, the use of the term 'Maximising the use of Previously Developed Land' suggest a presumption in favour of PDL sites. A similar comment can be made in the way that Employment Land is treated in the assessment pack. The reference in line 23 to 'safeguarding ' implies policy bias against residential use for any site falling in those areas. Why not simply ask whether the site is currently allocated for employment purposes in the Local Plan? The assessment pack seems to have a policy edge in terms of favouring certain types of site.</p>
<p>Barton Willmore on behalf of St. Modwen</p>
<p>Consultation on the methodology should have taken place at an earlier stage, prior to the Assessment Packs being available for the submission of sites. This would have enabled any issues with the Assessment Packs to be ironed out before they are used to formally submit sites. This would have been a more transparent way of undertaking the initial stages of the SHLAA.</p>
<p>2021 is too short a timeframe for the assessment of sites, given that the Core Strategy is unlikely to be adopted until 2010 at the earliest. The SHLAA should assess the potential for housing land in the Borough up until 2025 as a minimum.</p>
<p>In addition, this Section notes that site-specific sources may include sites currently allocated for non-residential purposes, such as industry. We note that PPS3, paragraph 38 advocates the use of vacant or under-used existing employment land for this purpose.</p>
<p>Prioritising search areas and filtering and discounting of sites in advance of the Officer site visits is in direct conflict with the Government's Guidance on how to carry out a SHLAA, which states that as a minimum, all sites identified by the desk-top review should be visited.</p>
<p>The Section entitled 'Stage 8: Identifying and Assessing the Housing Potential of Broad Locations' should also include a sentence which refers to broad locations being identified where sufficient sites to meet the 15 year requirement cannot be identified. In addition, it should be noted that this should be carried out in a pro-active and transparent manner, which will enable the positive planning of areas for growth.</p>
<p>Stage 9: Determining the Housing Potential of Windfall', it should be emphasized that the identification of sites is the first priority, followed by the broad locations for growth and only followed by a windfall allowance if there are genuine local circumstances which would necessitate its inclusion.</p>