

Oxfordshire Joint Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment Methodology

November 2021



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

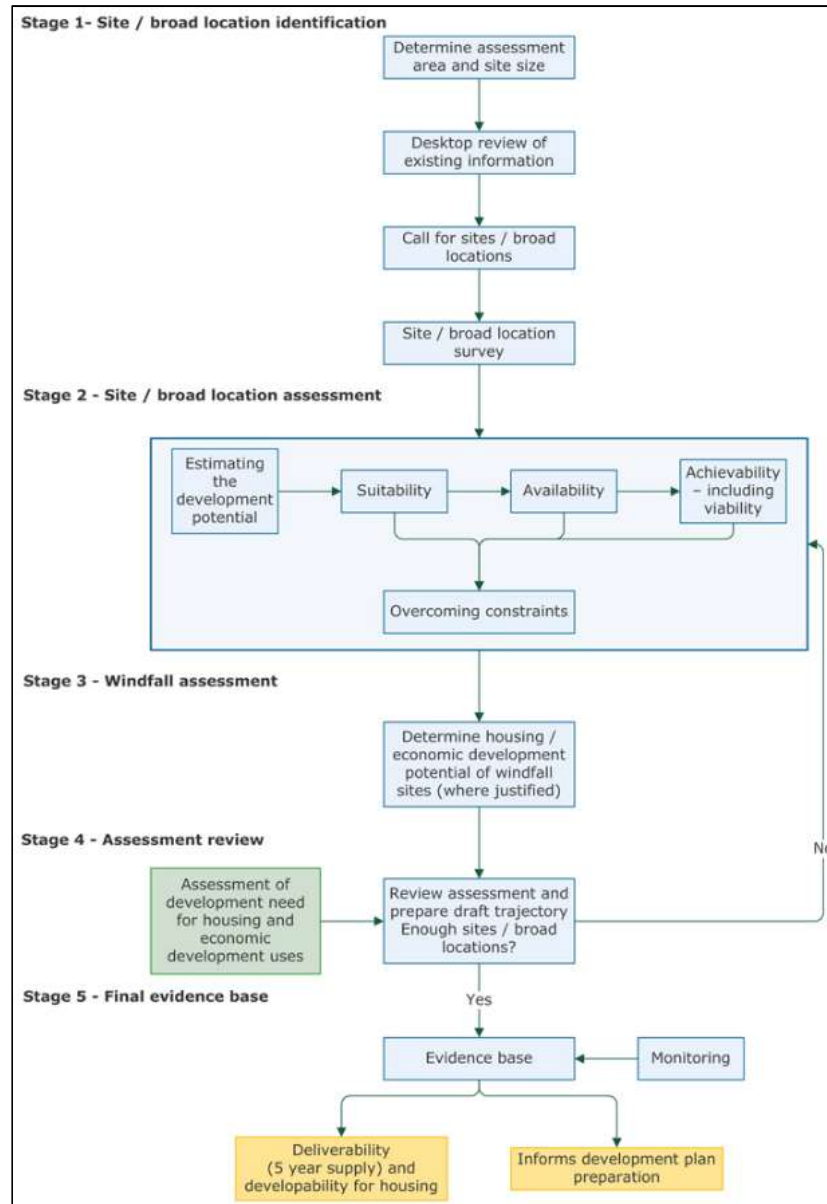
- 1.1 This paper sets out a proposed draft methodology for undertaking Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessments (HELAAAs) on a consistent basis across Oxfordshire. It has been jointly prepared by Cherwell District Council, Oxford City Council, South Oxfordshire District Council, Vale of White Horse District Council and West Oxfordshire District Council, working in partnership with Oxfordshire County Council.
- 1.2 A HELAA is an audit of all sites and broad locations that are assessed in terms of their suitability, availability and achievability for housing and/or economic development in an area, irrespective of the amount of development needed. HELAAAs provide an indication of land expected to come forward for development, the type and scale of development that might be delivered and likely timescales for delivery. HELAAAs are an important source of evidence to inform plan-making, brownfield registers and the identification of a five-year housing land supply, but HELAAAs do not in themselves determine whether land should be allocated or granted planning permission for development. Similarly, if land is not included in a HELAA, it does not in any way preclude future development provided it meets the planning policy framework that exists at the time.
- 1.3 In the past, the City and District Councils in Oxfordshire have each devised their own methodology for producing HELAAAs. Whilst the methodologies are similar, due to their reflecting national planning guidance, there are variations in the approaches applied. Developing a shared methodology for undertaking HELAAAs in Oxfordshire will enable future City and District Council HELAAAs to be undertaken using the same approach and assumptions, resulting in a more consistent picture of land availability across the Oxfordshire housing market area and functional economic market area. This will help to inform cross-boundary strategic planning, including the preparation of the Oxfordshire Plan 2050, and future local plans.
- 1.4 Within this shared HELAA methodology, it may be appropriate to retain some variation in approaches to ensure a thorough and robust process and to take account of local circumstances. In particular, there may be instances where a slightly different approach is appropriate for the urban authority of Oxford City, where land availability is more constrained, compared to the more rural Oxfordshire authorities, where land availability is less constrained. Where variation in the proposed methodology is considered appropriate, it is clearly stated within this paper.

2.0 HELAA PROCESS

2.1 National planning guidance on producing HELAAs is provided in the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)¹ which accompanies the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)². The proposed HELAA methodology set out in this paper has been produced with regard to the NPPF and PPG.

2.2 The PPG sets out a five-stage process for undertaking HELAAs (Figure 1).

Figure 1: PPG Summary of HELAA Process³



¹ The Planning Practice Guidance is an [online resource](#).

² Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (February 2019) [National Planning Policy Framework](#)

³ Planning Practice Guidance: Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment, Paragraph: 005 Reference ID: 3-005-20190722

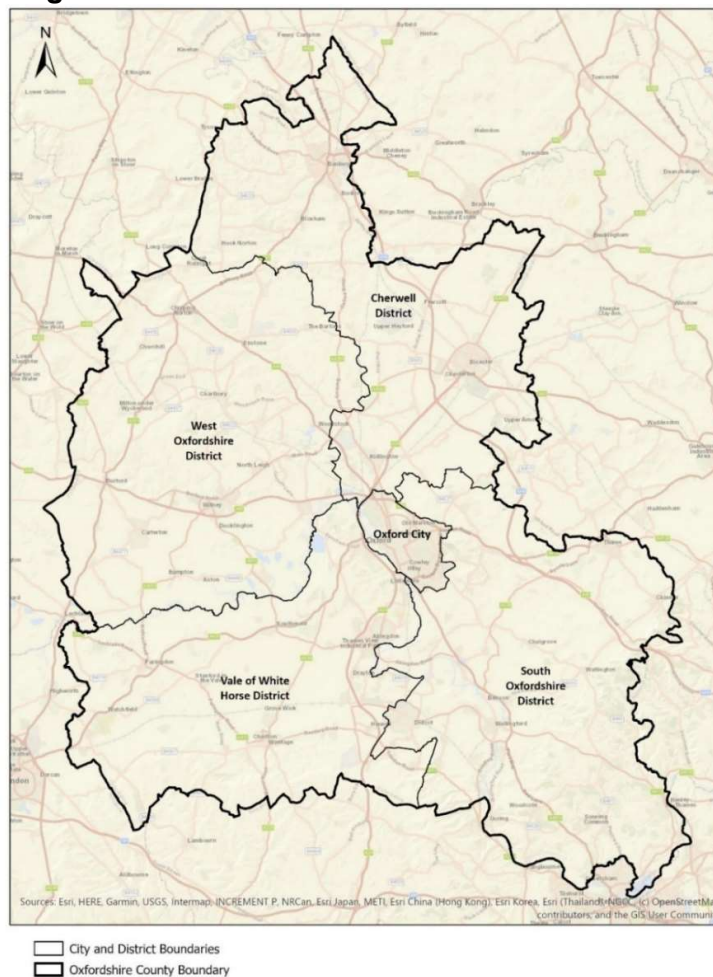
3.0 PROPOSED HELAA METHODOLOGY FOR OXFORDSHIRE

Stage 1: Site and Broad Location Identification

i) Assessment Area

- 3.1 The PPG states that the geographical area selected for assessment should be the plan-making area.⁴
- 3.2 The Oxfordshire City and District Councils will each undertake a HELAA covering their entire administrative areas (Figure 2). This is consistent with the geographical areas for local plans.
- 3.3 As the HELAAs undertaken by the City and District Councils will all follow the methodology set out in this paper, collectively they will provide a consistent set of information on housing and economic land availability across Oxfordshire to support cross-boundary strategic planning, including the production of the Oxfordshire Plan 2050.

Figure 2: Oxfordshire Administrative Boundaries



⁴ Planning Practice Guidance: Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment, Paragraph: 006 Reference ID: 3-006-20190722

ii) Land Uses

- 3.4 The City and District Councils have agreed that the shared methodology for undertaking land availability assessments in Oxfordshire will focus on housing and economic land uses only. This is in line with the PPG which provides guidance on assessing land availability for housing and economic uses. However, this does not preclude the Oxfordshire City and District Councils from choosing to incorporate additional land uses (such as environmental, community or infrastructure uses) within their land availability assessments should they consider this to be appropriate. These land uses will be identified in addition to land being identified for residential or economic land uses.
- 3.5 The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) order 1987 (as amended) groups uses of land and buildings into various categories known as 'Use Classes'.
- 3.6 For the purposes of undertaking HELAAs in Oxfordshire, housing will be defined as development falling within Use Class C3 (residential dwellings).
- 3.7 The City and District Councils may choose to incorporate additional types of housing within their land availability assessments should they consider this to be appropriate. (For example, additional housing types might include Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Show People sites, residential care homes and student accommodation.)
- 3.8 The PPG suggests that economic land uses include retail, leisure, cultural, office, warehousing, etc.⁵
- 3.9 For the purposes of undertaking HELAAs in Oxfordshire, economic uses will be defined as development falling within the following Use Classes:
Use Class B2 (industrial)/Use Class B8 (storage or distribution)
Use Class E (commercial, business and service uses)
- 3.10 It should be noted that Use Class E is a new category of development that was introduced on 1st September 2020. Use Class E includes uses such as offices, research and development, retail and indoor recreation.
- 3.11 Where the City and District Councils are identifying sites and broad locations for HELAAs and are considering submissions made prior to 1st September 2020 (before Use Class E was introduced) they will include development falling within the use classes now subsumed within Use Class E.
- 3.12 The City and District Councils may choose to incorporate additional types of economic development within land availability assessments should they consider this to be appropriate. (For example, additional economic development uses might include hotels, non-residential education and training centres, and cinemas.)

⁵ Planning Practice Guidance: Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment, Paragraph: 012 Reference ID: 3-012-20190722

iii) Size Thresholds

3.13 HELAAs in Oxfordshire will apply the following size thresholds, in accordance with the PPG⁶:

Residential Size Threshold:

Cherwell District Council, South Oxfordshire District Council, Vale of White Horse District Council and West Oxfordshire District Council: Sites and broad locations capable of delivering 5 or more dwellings or with an area of at least 0.25 hectares.

A site or broad location submitted to a Council (for example through a call for sites or planning application) as having capacity for five or more dwellings will be included in the HELAA. If no capacity has been proposed (for example in respect of officer identified land) a size threshold of 0.25 hectares will be applied.

Oxford City Council: Sites and broad locations with an area of at least 0.25 hectares.

Reason: This is due to the large number of small sites in Oxford, many of which are infill developments that are hard to identify.

Economic Size Threshold: Sites and broad locations of at least 0.25 hectares or capable of delivering at least 500 square metres of floorspace.

For the purposes of including land within a HELAA, a size threshold of 0.25 hectares will be used unless a submission to a Council (such as a call for sites submission or planning application) suggests that a site or broad location of less than 0.25 hectares may be capable of delivering 500 square metres or more of economic floorspace.

3.14 It should be noted that capacity assumptions made at this stage are extremely high level and do not necessarily reflect the amount of development that might be appropriate on a site or broad location. No consideration is given to site constraints or planning policy requirements at this stage. Capacity assumptions made at this stage should only be used to determine whether a site or broad location is included within a HELAA.

3.15 It may be appropriate to consider higher, strategic-scale site and broad location thresholds to inform the production of the Oxfordshire Plan 2050. However, it is proposed that all sites and broad locations meeting the above thresholds are included within HELAAs to ensure a comprehensive audit of housing and economic land availability in Oxfordshire. Higher site and broad location

⁶ Planning Practice Guidance: Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment, Paragraph: 009 Reference ID: 3-009-20190722

thresholds can then be applied through the strategic plan-making process as appropriate. In this way we can ensure that strategic plan-making does not exclude sites that may not be considered strategic-scale individually but could be considered collectively with other sites to form a 'strategic mass'. This approach will also ensure that a range of different site sizes are considered through local and strategic plan making processes in accordance with the PPG⁷.

iv) Desktop Identification of Sites and Broad Locations

- 3.16 The PPG states that when carrying out a desktop review, plan-makers need to be proactive in identifying as wide a range of sites and broad locations as possible. It is important that plan-makers do not simply rely on sites that they have been informed about, but actively identify sites through the desktop review process that may assist in meeting the development needs of an area.⁸
- 3.17 Table 1 sets out the minimum data sources that the City and District Councils will use for the desktop identification of sites and broad locations. It is expected that, in particular, Oxford City Council will identify and consider additional desktop sources due to the highly constrained nature of Oxford's land supply.

⁷ Planning Practice Guidance: Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment, Paragraph: 009
Reference ID: 3-009-20190722

⁸ Planning Practice Guidance: Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment, Paragraph: 010
Reference ID: 3-010-20190722

Table 1: Minimum Sources for the Desktop Identification of Sites/Broad Locations	
Data Sources	Type of Sites/Broad Locations Identified
Adopted and Emerging Planning Policy Documents ⁹	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buildings and land subject to adopted and emerging allocations • Buildings and land subject to adopted and emerging development briefs
Planning Policy Evidence Base	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopted and emerging Development Plan omission sites • Buildings and land considered through the council's previous land availability assessment • Buildings and land which an Employment Land Review (or similar) has identified as having development potential • Buildings and land submitted directly to the Council including, but not limited to, buildings and land submitted through relevant call for sites, consultations and other engagement • Buildings and land submitted through the Oxfordshire Plan process, including (but not limited to) the Call for Ideas, where agreement has been given to share this information with the local planning authority
Local Authority Planning Application Records	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buildings and land with an extant planning permission or prior approval that is yet to be implemented • Buildings and land with a planning permission or prior approval that is currently being implemented/under construction • Buildings and land with a refused planning application or prior approval application within the previous 12 months • Buildings and land with a withdrawn planning application or prior approval application within the previous 12 months • Buildings and land with a dismissed planning appeal within the previous 12 months • Buildings and land subject to an undetermined planning application or prior approval application • Land subject to an undetermined planning appeal
Local Authority Brownfield Land Registers (<i>Parts 1 and 2</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buildings and land with permission in principle • Brownfield land
Local Authority Empty Property Register	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vacant and derelict buildings and land
Local Authority Land Ownership Records	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buildings and land in the local authority's ownership
National Register of Public Sector Land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surplus and likely to become surplus public sector buildings and land
Engagement with other public bodies ¹⁰	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surplus and likely to become surplus public sector buildings and land
Ordinance Survey Maps, Aerial Photography and Site Visits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential opportunities for intensification, redevelopment or redesign • Potential opportunities for un-established uses (e.g. making productive use of under-utilised facilities such as garage blocks) • Potential opportunities to extend existing settlements • Potential opportunities for new settlements • Other land identified by officers or members

⁹ This includes the Joint Statutory Spatial Plan, Local Plans, Area Action Plans, Supplementary Planning Documents and Neighbourhood Plans.

¹⁰ Engagement with other public bodies via the call for sites/broad locations as a minimum.

3.18 At this stage, all sites and broad locations that meet the residential and economic size thresholds (Paragraph 3.13) will be included in the assessment for comprehensiveness, regardless of constraints.

v) Call for Sites and Broad Locations

3.19 The City and District Councils will undertake a call for sites and broad locations to ensure that the process to identify land is transparent and identifies as many potential opportunities as possible. This may be undertaken for a fixed period of time or on an ongoing basis.

3.20 In accordance with the PPG, the call for sites and broad locations will be aimed at as wide an audience as is practicable so that those not normally involved in development have the opportunity to contribute.¹¹

3.21 The City and District Councils will engage with other public sector bodies, such as Oxfordshire County Council, the National Health Service, Thames Valley Police, Oxfordshire Fire Service, utilities providers and statutory undertakers, through the call for sites and broad locations as a minimum.

3.22 The call for sites and broad locations may identify land that was not identified through the desktop review. It may also provide more up to date or detailed information about land identified through the desktop review.

vi) Sites and Broad Locations with Overlapping Boundaries

3.23 When identifying sites and broad locations from a wide range of different sources there is the potential for duplication and overlapping boundaries.

3.24 Where there is duplication of a site or broad location with identical boundaries, the site or broad location will only be assessed once within a HELAA.

3.25 Where site or broad location boundaries overlap, the first action will be to explore the reason for this. This can be done by considering the source(s) of the sites/broad locations in the first instance. In the situation that a more recent submission or data source clearly supersedes an earlier submission or data source, the more recent boundary will be used. In the situation that two or more distinct sites or broad locations overlap, they will be assessed together as a whole, with commentary provided on the suitability, availability and achievability of individual parcels.

¹¹ Planning Practice Guidance: Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment, Paragraph: 012 Reference ID: 3-012-20190722

vii) Sites and Broad Locations that Cross Administrative Boundaries

- 3.26 Where a site or broad location extends across administrative boundaries within Oxfordshire, the relevant authorities will work together to jointly undertake an assessment of the entire site or broad location. The City and District Councils will only include land that is within their administrative boundary within their HELAAs but will note where this forms part of a larger site or broad area.
- 3.27 Where a site or broad location crosses Oxfordshire's administrative boundaries and lies partly within a neighbouring authority area, engagement will be undertaken with the relevant neighbouring authority to inform the site or broad location assessment as appropriate. The City and District Councils will only include land that is within their administrative boundary within their HELAAs but will note where this forms part of a larger site or broad area.

viii) Initial Site and Broad Location Survey

- 3.28 The City and District Councils will map each of the sites and broad locations identified through the desktop review and call for sites and broad locations on their GIS systems and will undertake an initial survey.
- 3.29 The purpose of this initial survey is to establish up-to-date, high level information on each site and broad location in relation to its character and key constraints. This will help to obtain a better understanding of the type and scale of development that may be appropriate and to gain a more detailed understanding of deliverability, including any barriers and how they could be overcome.¹² The minimum information that the City and District Councils will gather for each identified site and broad location at the initial survey stage is set out in Table 3.
- 3.30 In stage 1, decisions about whether to take forward a site are made using a 'policy-off' approach; i.e. existing policies that protect playing pitches and green belt, for example, are not restrictions to a site being taken forward to stage 2. However, in accordance with the PPG, in assessing the suitability of sites for development and particularly in considering the type and scale of development, regard will be had to any relevant constraints from national planning policies and relevant local policies.

¹² Planning Practice Guidance: Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment, Paragraph: 013 Reference ID: 3-013-20190722

Table 3: Minimum Initial Survey Information	
Type of Information	Description of what will be included
Site or Broad Location Size, Boundaries and Location	
Name	Site/broad location name.
Reference	Depending on timing, HELAAs will include both the City/District Council's reference and the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 reference where available/appropriate.
Size	Unit of measurement: Hectares
Parish	Note if the site/broad location is within a parish.
Settlement	Note the settlement nearest to the site/broad location and its position in the District's settlement hierarchy. <i>(Oxford City is not required to include this information as all sites and broad locations will be within Oxford.)</i>
Current Land Use and Character	
Land Type	High level description based on the majority of the site/broad location (e.g. greenfield/brownfield).
Current Land Use	High level description of current land use(s).
Land Uses and Character of Surrounding Area	
Surrounding Land Uses and Character	High level description of surrounding land uses and character (e.g. urban/rural character).
Physical Constraints	
Access	High level description of any physical constraints in terms of vehicular, cycle or pedestrian access.
Contamination	High level description of any known land contamination constraints.
Flood Risk	High level description based on the majority of the site/broad location. Use fluvial flood risk zones.
Utilities Infrastructure	High level description of any known physical constraints such as pylons, overhead power lines, substations, transmission pipelines and their safeguarded area, and water/wastewater infrastructure.
Potential Environmental Constraints	
Agricultural Land Classification	High level description based on the majority of the site/broad location. Only to be provided for greenfield sites/broad locations.
Air Pollution: Background Sources	Note which background pollution zone(s) the site/broad location is within (e.g. Highest, High, Medium, Low or Lowest). ¹³ High level description based on the majority of the site/broad location.
Air Pollution: Roadside Sources	Note if any part of the site/broad location is close to, or includes, a significant source of roadside pollution meeting one or more of the following criteria: Within, or accessed from, an Air Quality Management Area Within 100 metres of an A-road or motorway Within 50 metres of a B-road
Ancient Woodland	Note ancient woodland within or adjacent to the site/broad location.
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)	Note if site/broad location is within or adjacent to an AONB
Designated Sites of International Biodiversity Importance	Note if there is a Special Area of Conservation, Special Protection Area or wetlands of international importance designated under the Ramsar Convention within or adjacent to the site/broad location.

¹³ Use DEFRA benchmarked modelled background NO₂, PM_{2.5} and PM₁₀ data.

Proposed Sites of International Biodiversity Importance	Note if there is a proposed Special Area of Conservation, Special Protection Area or wetlands of international importance designated under the Ramsar Convention within or adjacent to the site/broad location.
Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	Note if there is a SSSI within or adjacent to the site/broad location.
Local Wildlife Site (LWS) ¹⁴	Note if there is a LWS within or adjacent to the site/broad location.
Proposed new or extended Local Wildlife Site (LWS)	Note if there is a proposed new or extended LWS within or adjacent to the site/broad location.
Conservation Target Area (CTA)	Note if the site/broad location is within or adjacent to a CTA.
Habitats of Principal Importance ¹⁵	Note if there is a habitat of principal importance within or adjacent to the site/broad location.
Oxfordshire Nature Recovery Network	Note if the site/broad location is within the Core Zone, Recovery Zone or Wider Landscape Zone.
Body of Water	Note if there is a body of water that might affect development potential within or adjacent to the site/broad location.
Potential Heritage Constraints	
Archaeological Areas	Note if there is an archaeological area within or adjacent to the site/broad location.
Conservation Areas	Note if there is a conservation area within or adjacent to the site/broad location.
Listed Buildings	Note if there is a listed building within or adjacent to the site/broad location.
Registered Battlefields	Note if there is a registered battlefield within or adjacent to the site/broad location.
Registered Parks and Gardens	Note if there is a registered park or garden within or adjacent to the site/broad location.
Scheduled Monuments	Note if there is a scheduled monument within or adjacent to the site/broad location.
Development Plan Consistency	
Allocation	Note if the site/broad location is subject to an allocation in an adopted local plan, minerals and waste plan or made neighbourhood plan.
Green Belt	Note if the site/broad location is within Green Belt.
Local Green Space	Note if there is a Local Green Space designation within the site/broad location.
Proximity to Services and Infrastructure	
Access to public transport services	High level description of access to public transport services.
Potential Type of Development	
Submitted/Promoted Use	Note submitted/proposed use as per call for sites and broad locations or planning application submissions. If officer identified, leave blank.
Source of Site or Broad Location	Note how the site/broad location was identified for inclusion in the HELAA.

¹⁴ It should be noted that Local Wildlife Sites may have varying characteristics across Oxfordshire as they are assessed against locally defined criteria.

¹⁵ In accordance with Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.

ix) Initial Sift of Sites and Broad locations

3.31 The PPG states that there may be some sites and broad locations which, when taking into account national policy and designations, are clearly not suitable for development.¹⁶ These sites and broad locations can be rejected at this stage.

3.32 It is proposed that the criteria set out in Table 4 are used to reject sites and broad locations which are clearly not suitable for development in Oxfordshire.

Table 4: Criteria for Rejecting Sites/Broad Locations with No Reasonable Development Potential	
Criteria	Rejection Criteria
Sites of International Biodiversity Importance ¹⁷	Reject if the designation covers the entire site or broad location. If the designation only covers part of the site or broad location, a judgement will be made based upon the sensitivities of the designation and likely impacts of development.
Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	Reject if the designation covers the entire site or broad location. If the designation only covers part of the site or broad location, a judgement will be made based upon the sensitivities of the designation and likely impacts of development.
Ancient Woodland	Reject if the designation covers the entire site or broad location. If the designation only covers part of the site or broad location, a judgement will be made based upon the sensitivities of the designation and likely impacts of development.
Flood Risk	<u>Cherwell District Council, South Oxfordshire District Council, Vale of White Horse District Council and West Oxfordshire District Council:</u> Reject if the site or broad location has 50% or more of its site area within Flood Zone 3b. (Districts may choose a percentage higher than 50% if considered more appropriate in their area). <u>Oxford City:</u> Reject if 50% or more of the site (or a percentage higher than 50% set by Oxford City) is within <i>undeveloped</i> Flood Zone 3b. Reason: Due the highly constrained nature of Oxford's land supply, and based upon existing evidence, it is clear that, in applying a sequential approach, Oxford City will be unable to meet development needs within the areas of the lowest flood risk. It is therefore appropriate to apply a different approach for Oxford City in regard to flood risk.
Scheduled Monuments	Reject if the designation covers the entire site or broad location. If the designation only covers part of the site or broad location, a judgement will be made based upon the sensitivities of the designation and likely impacts of development.
Registered Parks and Gardens	Reject if the designation covers the entire site or broad location. If the designation only covers part of the site or broad location, a judgement will be made based upon the sensitivities of the designation and likely impacts of development.

¹⁶ Planning Practice Guidance: Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment, Paragraph: 014 Reference ID: 3-014-20190722

¹⁷ Special Area of Conservation, Special Protection Area and wetlands of international importance designated under the Ramsar Convention.

Local Green Spaces	Reject if the designation covers the entire site or broad location, unless a Local Green Space designation is under review as part of a plan-making process. If the designation only covers part of the site or broad location, a judgement will be made based upon the sensitivities of the designation and likely impacts of development.
Town or Village Greens ¹⁸	Reject if the designation covers the entire site or broad location. If the designation only covers part of the site or broad location, a judgement will be made based upon the sensitivities of the designation and likely impacts of development.
Planning Status	Reject if development has been completed. Reject if development has commenced and there is no potential to further increase capacity. ¹⁹

3.33 Adjustments have been made to the criteria for rejecting sites with no development potential in Oxford City given the limited land available within Oxford and the need to thoroughly consider all possible development opportunities.

3.34 To ensure transparency, each of the City and District Councils will publish a list of sites and broad locations rejected at this stage, and the reason for rejection, either within the HELAA report or as an appendix to the HELAA.

Stage 2: Site and Broad Location Assessment

i) Estimating Development Potential

3.35 The PPG²⁰ states that estimating the development potential of a site or broad location can be guided by existing or emerging planning policy, including policies on density. Plan makers should seek to make the most efficient use of land in accordance with the NPPF²¹.

3.36 The PPG²² also states that development potential is a significant factor that affects the economic viability of a site or broad location and its suitability for a particular use. Due to this, assessing achievability and suitability can be carried out in parallel with estimating the development potential.

3.37 The City and District Councils will assess development potential on a case by case basis, taking account of each site and broad location's unique characteristics, constraints and relevant planning history. Consideration will be given to national planning policy and guidance, as well as emerging or

¹⁸ As registered under the Commons Registration Act 1965 or Commons Act 2006.

¹⁹ For example, there may be greatest potential to increase capacity on large sites that are phased to deliver different parcels of land over time or at areas identified for development which include a number of sites under different ownership.

²⁰ Planning Practice Guidance: Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment, Paragraph 016 Reference ID: 3-016-20190722

²¹ National Planning Policy Framework (February 2019) Chapter 11: Making Effective Use of Land

²² Planning Practice Guidance: Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment, Paragraph 016 Reference ID: 3-016-20190722

adopted local planning policies as appropriate. All councils will engage with each other as part of making density/developable area assumptions.

- 3.38 Estimating the developable area of a site or broad location is an important part of considering development potential. As a minimum, the City and District Councils will exclude land covered by the following constraints from the developable area of a site or broad location:
- Flood Risk
(Cherwell District Council, South Oxfordshire District Council, Vale of White Horse District Council and West Oxfordshire District Council will exclude land within Flood Zone 3b from the developable area (although a site having some land in Flood Zone 3b will not necessarily lead to the site being filtered out at stage 1). Oxford City Council will exclude *undeveloped* land within Flood Zone 3b from the developable area for the reasons set out in Table 4.)
 - Site of Special Scientific Interest
 - Special Areas of Conservation
 - Special Protection Areas
 - Town Greens
 - Wetlands of international importance designated under the Ramsar Convention
- 3.39 Assumptions made in relation to developable areas and capacity at this stage remain indicative in many cases where capacity has not been tested thoroughly through a development management process.
- 3.40 If, in assessing the development potential of a site or broad location, it is found that the developable site area or potential capacity falls below the size thresholds set out in Paragraph 3.13 of this document then the site or broad location will be excluded from further assessment. The site or broad location, and its reasons for exclusion, will be included on the list of rejected sites and broad locations (Paragraph 3.33).
- 3.41 The City and District Councils may consider development potential for housing and economic uses separately due to their different characteristics and policy requirements.

ii) Suitability

- 3.42 The PPG states that a site or broad location can be considered suitable if it would provide an appropriate location for development when considered against relevant constraints and their potential to be mitigated. When considering constraints, plan-makers may wish to consider the information collected as part of the initial site survey as well as other relevant information such as national policies, contribution to regeneration priority areas, appropriateness and likely market attractiveness for the type of development

proposed and the potential impacts including the effect upon landscapes (including landscape features, nature and heritage conservation).²³

3.43 The City and District Councils will consider suitability on a case by case basis taking account of the considerations listed in Table 5. It is important that both positive and negative impacts are considered.

Table 5: Factors that will be considered when Determining Suitability	
Physical Constraints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access • Contamination • Flood Risk • Topography • Utilities Infrastructure
Environmental Constraints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agricultural Land Classification • Air Quality - background sources and roadside sources (see Table 3) • Ancient Woodland • Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) • Conservation Target Area (CTA) • District Wildlife Sites • Habitats of Principal Importance²⁴ • Local Wildlife Site (LWS) (designated, proposed new and proposed extensions) • Nature Reserves managed by conservation groups²⁵ • Oxfordshire Nature Recovery Network • Bodies of Water • Protected Species • Public Rights of Way (PROW) • Site of Specific Scientific Interest (SSSI) (designated, proposed new and proposed extensions) • Special Area of Conservation (SAC) (designated, proposed new and proposed extensions) • Special Protection Area (SPA) (designated, proposed new and proposed extensions) • Tree Preservation Order (TPO) • Wetlands of international importance designated under the Ramsar Convention (designated, proposed new and proposed extensions)
Heritage Constraints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Archaeological Areas • Conservation Areas • Listed Buildings • Registered Battlefields • Registered Parks and Gardens • Scheduled Monuments
Development Plan and NPPF Consistency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopted/emerging allocations within Local Plans, Neighbourhood Plans and the Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Plan • Green Belt • Land type (brownfield/greenfield, urban/rural)

²³ Planning Practice Guidance: Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment, Paragraph 018 Reference ID: 3-018-20190722

²⁴ Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006

²⁵ Conservation groups such as Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust (BBOWT), the Woodland Trust and other local conservation groups as appropriate.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Green Space designations • Minerals Safeguarding Areas • Potential to contribute to regeneration objectives/projects
Proximity to Services and Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proximity to public transport services • Proximity to other services/settlements, with particular consideration given to supporting walking and cycling • Potential for site/broad location to deliver new services, facilities and/or infrastructure
Impact of development on the surrounding area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Likely impact of development on neighbouring land uses • Likely impact of neighbouring land uses on development • Likely impact on the highway network • Likely impact of development on the character of the area • Likely impact of the character of the area on development
Market Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriateness and likely market attractiveness for the type of development proposed
Planning History	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning applications and appeals • Submissions to Councils (through call for sites or consultations) • Status of site (i.e. under construction, not started, completed)
Other Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Common Land

iii) Availability

- 3.44 The PPG states that a site or broad location can be considered available for development, when, on the best information available (confirmed by the call for sites and broad locations, information from land owners and legal searches where appropriate), there is confidence that there are no legal or ownership impediments to development.²⁶
- 3.45 The PPG states that the existence of planning permission can be a good indication of availability and that sites meeting the definition of deliverable²⁷ should be considered available unless evidence indicates otherwise.²⁸
- 3.46 The City and District Councils will consider availability on a case by case basis, taking account of available evidence, including, but not limited to:
- Call for sites and broad location submissions
 - Information from landowners
 - Legal searches
 - Planning history (and if there is a history of unimplemented permissions)
 - The delivery record of developers or landowners putting forward sites

²⁶ Planning Practice Guidance: Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment, Paragraph 021 Reference ID: 19-019-20190722

²⁷ National Planning Policy Framework (February 2019) Glossary: Deliverable

²⁸ Planning Practice Guidance: Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment, Paragraph 021 Reference ID: 19-019-20190722

iv) Achievability

- 3.47 The PPG²⁹ states that a site or broad location is considered achievable for development where there is a reasonable prospect that the particular type of development will be developed on the site at a particular point in time. This is essentially a judgement about the economic viability of a site or broad location, and the capacity of the developer to complete and let or sell the development over a certain period.
- 3.48 The City and District Councils will use professional judgement and available evidence to determine the achievability of sites and broad locations on a case by case basis. In doing so, the Councils may seek to hold discussions with land promoters/owners and may seek to undertake additional evidence work to determine market attractiveness and economic viability.
- 3.49 Sites and broad locations that are identified as not being suitable and available for development will not be considered achievable.
- 3.50 Sites and broad locations that are identified as being suitable for development but not available may not be deliverable within the first five years but may be identified as being achievable later in the plan period.

Stage 3: Windfall Assessment

- 3.51 The City and District Councils may include a windfall allowance where this is justified in accordance with national planning policy and guidance.
- 3.52 A windfall allowance accounts for development on land not specifically identified as suitable, available and achievable in a HELAA, but which can realistically be expected to be delivered over the plan period and therefore counted in a local authority's land supply. For example, windfall allowances might take account of the following:
- Development/land that might be too small to meet the HELAA size thresholds;
 - Developments on land that was not known about at the time the HELAA was undertaken; and
 - Development on land which was assessed in the HELAA as not being suitable, available and/or achievable but where circumstances have changed to result in development being brought forward.
- 3.53 Windfall allowances will be assessed by the City and District Councils on an individual basis based on local circumstances and in accordance with national planning policy and guidance. Any windfall allowance should be realistic, having regard to the land availability assessment, historic windfall delivery rates and expected future trends.³⁰

²⁹ Planning Practice Guidance: Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment, Paragraph 021 Reference ID: 3-021-20190722

³⁰ National Planning Policy Framework (February 2019) Paragraph 70

Stage 4: Assessment Review

- 3.54 Once sites and broad locations have been assessed, the City and District Councils will produce an indicative trajectory of housing and economic land availability within their boundaries. The trajectory will set out the amount of housing and economic development that could be provided and when.
- 3.55 Sites and broad locations assessed as suitable, available and achievable for either housing or economic development will be considered in relation to the relevant use.
- 3.56 In the situation that a site or broad location is assessed as being suitable, available and achievable for both housing and economic development, or for a mix of uses, the capacity will be assessed on a case by case basis with consideration given to the preferred use and market attractiveness.
- 3.57 The PPG suggests that land supply trajectories consider the timeframes 0-5 years, 6-10 years and 11+ years³¹. These timeframes are appropriate for producing local plans which are required to cover a time period of at least 15 years.³²
- 3.58 However, as HELAAs in Oxfordshire will also be providing evidence for the Oxfordshire Plan which covers a 30 year period to 2050, trajectories for Oxfordshire will need to cover the following timeframes:
- 0 – 5 years
 - 6 – 10 years
 - 11 – 15 years
 - 16 – 30 years
- 3.59 It is recognised that information to inform years 16-30 will be inherently less certain, less detailed and indicative. However, assessments will be updated on a regular basis and it is expected that more information and detail will become available over time.
- 3.60 The City and District Councils will work together, in partnership with Oxfordshire County Council and the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership, to consider the relationship between land availability and development needs on an Oxfordshire-wide basis, taking account of the entire housing market area and functional economic market area, through the production of the Oxfordshire Plan 2050.

³¹ Planning Practice Guidance: Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment, Paragraph: 024 Reference ID: 3-024-20190722

³² National Planning Policy Framework (February 2019) Paragraph 22

Stage 5: Final Evidence Base

- 3.61 The HELAAs produced by the City and District Councils will, as a minimum, include the following information in accordance with the PPG³³:
- A list of all sites and broad locations considered, cross-referenced to their locations on maps;
 - An assessment of each site and broad location, including:
 - where these have been discounted, evidence justifying reasons given;
 - where these are considered suitable, available and achievable, the potential type and quantity of development, including a reasonable estimate of build out rates, setting out how any barriers to delivery could be overcome and when;
 - An indicative trajectory of anticipated development based on the evidence available.
- 3.62 Assessments will be made publicly available in an accessible form.
- 3.63 Assessments will be used to inform
- Strategic cross-boundary planning, including the production of the Oxfordshire Plan 2050;
 - Emerging Local Plans;
 - Emerging Neighbourhood Plans;
 - Decision taking;
 - Brownfield Land Registers; and
 - Five-year housing land supplies.

³³ Planning Practice Guidance: Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment, Paragraph: 026
Reference ID: 3-026-20190722