



Nathaniel Lichfield  
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Planning. Design. Economics.



Epping Forest District Council  
**Strategic Land Availability  
Assessment**

**Executive Summary**

May 2012





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12991/MS/MT

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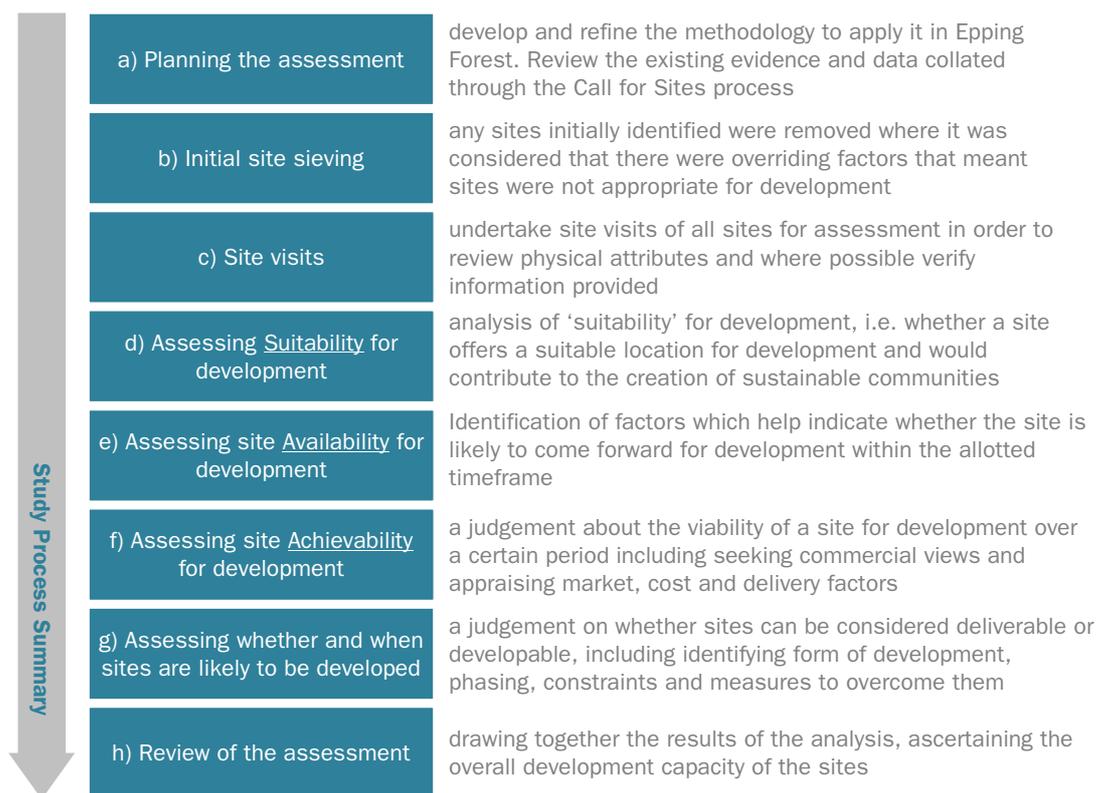
## Executive Summary

This report provides the results of the Strategic Land Availability Assessment (SLAA) for Epping Forest prepared for Epping Forest District Council (EFDC) by Nathaniel Lichfield & Partners (NLP).

In line with the Council's approved SLAA methodology, and Government guidance, this study assesses sites for their suitability, availability and achievability for development for residential, commercial or retail use, concluding with an assessment as to whether or not it is deliverable or developable. The assessment is informed by, rather than driven by, existing local policy (adopted 1998 with alterations in 2006), so that, for example, the Green Belt status of a site does not automatically rule out a site for development if it is otherwise suitable for development.

In summary the study, and the sites assessed, have followed the process set out below.

Figure ES1 Study Process Summary



Overall the SLAA considers a large number of sites, as follows:

- a 416 sites were identified to feed into the SLAA;
- b 44 sites were filtered from the assessment at the initial stage and not assessed. These sites were filtered for a variety of reasons, including duplication with other sites, sites too small for assessment and sites which had already achieved planning permission. This left 372 sites

which were appraised against the SLAA assessment criteria set out in the methodology;

- c A further 28 sites were identified as being not suitable due to strategic constraints and were filtered at the initial stage from any further assessment of their suitability, availability or achievability;
- d The remaining 344 sites were fully assessed through the SLAA for their suitability (including whether they fall within or outside the parameters of existing local planning policy), availability and achievability for development.

The headline results of the assessment for the 372 sites appraised through the SLAA are summarised in the table below.

Table ES1 Deliverability and Developability of Sites

Site Classification	No. of Sites	Dwelling Yield	Commercial Yield (m <sup>2</sup> )	Retail Yield (m <sup>2</sup> )
Suitable Within Current Policy, Available & Achievable	20	1,122	3,000	17,570
Suitable Outside Current Policy, Available & Achievable	199	40,071	887,894	6,000
<b>Deliverable (0-5 Years) Sub Total:</b>	<b>219</b>	<b>41,193</b>	<b>890,894</b>	<b>23,570</b>
Suitable Within Current Policy, Available in Future & Achievable	1	19	0	1,500
Suitable Outside Current Policy, Available in Future & Achievable	15	7,119	201,020	0
Suitable Within Current Policy, Available/Available in Future & Unknown/Marginal Achievability	3	49	2,200	3,800
Suitable Outside Current Policy, Available/Available in Future & Unknown/Marginal Achievability	11	1,783	142,320	0
<b>Developable (5 Years Onwards) Sub Total:</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>8,970</b>	<b>345,540</b>	<b>5,300</b>
Suitable Within Current Policy, Unknown Availability, Achievable	3	6	10,140	0
Suitable Outside Current Policy, Unknown Availability, Achievable	73	31,878	220,640	0
Suitable (Within/Outside Current Policy), Unknown Availability & Unknown/Marginal Achievability	8	1,182	129,120	2,000
<b>Not Deliverable or Developable on Current Information Sub Total:</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>33,066</b>	<b>359,900</b>	<b>2,000</b>
Suitable & Available but Not Achievable	1	20	0	0
Suitable but Not Available	1	0	4,000	2,000
Not Suitable - Local or Site Specific Constraints	9	~	~	~
Not Suitable - Strategic Constraints	28	~	~	~
<b>Not Deliverable or Developable Sub Total:</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>~</b>	<b>~</b>	<b>~</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>372</b>	<b>~</b>	<b>~</b>	<b>~</b>
Of Which Suitable	335	83,249	1,600,334	32,870
Of Which within current Planning Policy	32	1,216	50,860	24,870

Source: NLP Analysis

Full results of the study, the methodology adopted, and the individual site appraisals are included in the main body of the report and its appendices.

It is clear that, by adopting the Council's SLAA methodology, a large number of the 372 sites assessed by NLP are considered to be suitable, available and achievable for development. Theoretically, this adds to a significant capacity for development. However:

- 1 This SLAA is just one part of the evidence base that Epping Forest will be drawing upon in preparing its Local Plan. It should not be read in isolation.
- 2 Identification of a site in this SLAA as being suitable, available and achievable should not be taken as an indication that it should or will be allocated for development in the Local Plan or that the Council would look favourably on a planning application for the site's development;
- 3 The SLAA identifies sites throughout the District that the Council can consider for allocation in the Local Plan if the objectively assessed need for development and other spatial planning priorities indicate that development is needed and/or would benefit any given area.
- 4 Overall, the property market in Epping Forest is strong which means most sites are likely to be capable of being developed on a viable basis. However, the assessment of the achievability of sites in this SLAA is made on a site-by-site basis, and does not take account of the cumulative market capacity within any given area, which might affect the ability of a site to be developed and/or the rate at which it was built out. So, the identification of several achievable sites in a given location does not mean that all of those sites would be viable if allocated together.
- 5 A significant number of sites are identified as being suitable for development, but their development would not necessarily conform with adopted Local Plan (1998) policy, for example, due to Green Belt or designation as open space. The Council will need to consider to what extent the need for development in the District justifies a change from adopted policy designations.

It will be for the Council to define how it wishes to proceed with development in the District, taking into account the evidence in this SLAA alongside other factors. Such other factors for consideration include the objectively assessed need for development, as assessed as part of the separate Essex Planning Officers Association (EPOA) commission on Population and Household forecasts, as well as the Council's the spatial priorities for different parts of the District. From the SLAA it is clear that:

- There is relatively limited capacity for development on sites where development would not require a change from the policies of the existing Local Plan adopted in 1998.

- If the need for housing in Epping Forest is greater than can be accommodated on deliverable and developable sites in line with existing policy (capacity of 1,190 dwellings) plus existing permissions (859 dwellings) plus an allowance for windfalls (estimated at circa 82 dwellings per annum), the Council will need to actively consider whether those existing policies should be changed, including exploring the role of some Green Belt sites or areas of open space within settlements.



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