

Nottingham Core Housing Market Area Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA)

Site Assessment Panel - Terms of Reference

Context

1. The Site Assessment Panel is to establish the potential developability of sites put forward for housing development, as part of the evidence base for the Nottingham Core Authorities work to prepare an aligned Local Development Framework Core Strategy.
2. The sites to be considered will be some of the potential housing sites included in the first stage of the Nottingham Core SHLAA; where independent advice is sought, over and above the technical advice used in the assessment. This will be principally to consider the housing market aspects of the assessment.
3. The Panel will consider the suitability, deliverability or capacity of potential housing sites presented to them by the authorities where there is either:
 - some unresolved concern raised by stakeholders over the results of the assessment,
 - or the authority requires further guidance on a site.The points at issue will be made clear in each case; the matrix of evidence gathered by the authorities for all sites will be made available to the Panel.
4. The panel will have regard Stages 6 & 7 of the Government practice guidance on SHLAAS (See Notes below).

Process and method

5. With sites where the issue is over suitability the Panel will consider the guidance stage 7a and the relevant part of the matrix of evidence.
6. With suitable sites the panel will consider the housing development potential (developability) of sites in order to establish their availability in terms of years (e.g. now, within 5 years, etc). They will consider as appropriate the following:
 - Market demand for housing in the area
 - Potential costs associated with site development, including physical / infrastructure constraints, contamination.
 - Potential financial viability of site for housing development.
 - Potential housing capacity of a site.
 - Known ownership / attitude of owners.
7. The Panel will provide, for each site presented, a brief, reasoned judgment, setting out the factors taken into account, and an indication of what period for development (if any) the site should be included in (i.e. 0-5 years, 6-10, 11-15, 15+/not at all). Where relevant the Panel may indicate a housing capacity for the site.

Panel membership

8. The panel will consist of representatives from the local authorities, and local agents, developers and others with property interest / infrastructure knowledge within the area. These will be:
 - three local authority representatives (planning officers),
 - a County Council officer,
 - An independent housing market analyst; estate agent, quantity surveyor or similar,
 - Two representatives of the house building industry in the area (these will be suggested by /agreed with the regional Home Builders Federation),
 - A representative of the social / affordable housing sector, i.e. an officer of a local housing authority, the Housing Corporation or a major Registered Social Landlord in the area,
 - Specialist technical advisors will include representatives of Natural England to advise on environmental aspects; others may be invited or asked to comment on some evidence (e.g. drainage, highways).

Panel guidance and behaviour

9. Panel members will not be expected to advise on areas beyond their experience, for example a market advisor would not be asked for opinion on delivery of drainage. The authorities will aim for a consensus on the result amongst relevant members. Any different minority views will be recorded only on request.
10. Panel members will be expected to declare their financial or other interests in any site under discussion. The names and contact details of panel members will be recorded and made available in the final report.
11. Results for each site considered by the panel will be made available, and will eventually be published along with other information on sites.
12. The SHLAA databases will remain the property of the authorities, which will be responsible for changes to the SHLAA databases as a result of the panel decisions.
13. No payment will be offered for attendance at the panels. Lunch and teas / coffees will be available where appropriate.

Notes:

1. Guidance on HLAA's and what such assessments should consider can be found in Government Guidance- "Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments- Practice Guidance", Communities and Local Government, July 2007
2. A description of the work is provided on the Nottinghamshire County Council Website, including a methodology and these terms of reference.
<http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/regionalspatialstrategy.htm>