

Land Availability Assessment (LAA): A non-technical summary

This document looks at the amount of land that could possibly be developed in Eden over the years 2014-2032. It is part of the evidence base for the Eden Local Plan and its job is to check whether we have enough land to meet our development needs and to inform us about which sites may be the most suitable for development. This document will replace our previous Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment which was produced in 2009.

Some **key tasks** of the LAA are:

Identifying sites that may have potential for housing.

- This stage pulls together a long list of sites that could have potential for housing development. These sites are identified from a wide range of sources.
- At this stage basic site information is recorded such as current land use, surrounding land uses, site size, site constraints.

Assessing whether sites are suitable, available and achievable for housing.

- This stage of the assessment looks at whether sites could realistically be developed for housing, by looking at whether they are 'suitable', 'available' and 'achievable'.
- To decide whether a site is suitable we look at a wide range of site constraints (such as flooding, steep slopes, wildlife designations etc), whether it fits with our current and future planning policies, and what the impacts of the development would be (for example impacts on the landscape, local heritage, roads etc).
- To decide whether a site is available we use our information on site ownership and check with landowners and their agents to see if the owners still wish to see their site developed. We also take account of things like restrictive covenants.
- To decide whether a site is achievable we consider whether the site is in an attractive location for housing, whether there is developer interest, and whether there are any constraints or difficulties that might make the site too expensive to develop profitably.

Deciding when sites are likely to be developed and preparing schedules of sites and graphs to show likely future housing land supply.

- Based on our research on each site, for those sites we consider to have potential for housing we decide whether they are likely to be built quickly, in the first 5 years of the plan period (these sites are called 'deliverable'), or likely to be longer term sites (these are called 'developable').
- We produce schedules of sites with maps, and graphs to show the likely supply of housing over the years of the Local Plan.

Deciding whether we have enough land to meet our 'objectively assessed need' for housing and whether the sites are in the right place.

- We need to compare the land supply we have identified in the LAA with the housing need identified through our Strategic Housing Market Assessment ('Taking Stock') to see if we have enough land to meet our development needs.

Some **key findings** of the LAA are:

- The Land Availability Assessment has identified housing sites that could be developed for 4,763 houses over the period 2014-32. This compares with our target of 3,600 in the draft Local Plan.
- It also predicts how many houses we may see built on small sites fewer than four houses. This adds an extra 713 houses to the land supply over the period, taking the overall supply to 5,476. We have included an allowance for small sites such as this as they are not looked at individually in the LAA but we know they make a significant contribution to our land supply, especially in the villages.
- The spread of the sites in the LAA matches well with our proposed targets in the draft Local Plan for half of the new houses to be built in Penrith, 4% in Alston, 9% in Appleby, 7% in Kirkby Stephen. 20% in the 'key hubs' and 10% in the smaller villages and hamlets. We have found enough, and in fact extra land in all of these places to make sure the Local Plan targets can be met.
- A challenge will be to make sure enough sites come forward in the first five years as we have only just found enough land that we consider to be 'deliverable', although we have been quite cautious in how we have judged sites and some might come forward sooner than we think.
- The spread of sites identified in the LAA, and the target in the draft Local Plan is shown in the graph below.



- The overall picture from the LAA is that there is enough developable housing land in Eden to meet our housing needs over the Local Plan. This allows us to be far more 'plan-led' and to set out the best plan for new housing rather than needing to react to unexpected proposals from developers.