

Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA)

Sevenoaks District Council

June 2026

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Introduction

What is a SHELAA?

- 1.1. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires all strategic policy-making authorities to have a clear understanding of the land available, within their administrative area, through the preparation of a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA).
- 1.2. Further, Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) sets out that plan-making authorities may carry out land availability assessments for both housing and economic development as part of the same exercise, in order that sites may be identified for the use(s) that are most appropriate. This is known as a Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA). In addition to housing and economic development, this SHELAA 2026 also considers land for Gypsy and Traveller use and community uses.
- 1.3. Sevenoaks District Council has therefore prepared a SHELAA which considers land for housing and economic development, using a methodology that is consistent with that set out in the PPG. The SHELAA is a technical assessment of the amount of land that is available and suitable to meet the District's identified housing and employment needs. It is an important evidence base document that informs plan-making, but it does not determine in itself whether a site should be allocated for development in the future, nor does it influence the likelihood of gaining planning permission on a particular site.

What is included in the SHELAA?

- 1.4. The SHELAA includes an assessment of potential sites for housing growth (capable of accommodating 5 or more residential units and/or over 0.15 Ha) and for economic growth (500sqm or more and/or over 0.25 Ha) that have been promoted to the District Council by landowners, agents or developers or have been identified by the Council. The assessments have considered whether each site is suitable, available and achievable (as defined in the PPG), taking into account any identified constraints to development, as well as identifying the potential number of residential units and/or area of economic development that could be accommodated on each site.
- 1.5. The Council's SHELAA 2022, which was prepared to accompany the Regulation 18 Part 1 (Autumn 2022) version of the Sevenoaks District Local Plan, proposed a strategy that sought to make the best and most efficient use of land in existing settlements. As such, the SHELAA assessed potential sites which were located within existing settlements only.

- 1.6.** A further SHELAA was prepared in Autumn 2023, to accompany the Regulation 18 Part 2 consultation of the Local Plan. This iteration considered development opportunities outside of settlements (i.e. Green Belt sites). The Regulation 18 Part 2 proposed a development strategy for releasing Green Belt land, in exceptional circumstances, in the most suitable and sustainable locations across the District. These were considered to be sites adjacent to the urban confines of the District's top 8 settlements, as defined by the Settlement Hierarchy 2022. Sites had also been considered where they are large enough to accommodate a new settlement. The Development Strategy sets out three growth options for allocation, which would each meet the District's Housing Need in full.
- 1.7.** A further iteration of the SHELAA was prepared to inform the third Regulation 18 consultation in Autumn 2025. The Regulation 18 Autumn 2025 consultation proposed a development strategy for releasing grey belt Green Belt sites, in the most suitable and sustainable locations across the District. These were considered to be sites adjacent to the urban confines of the District's top-tier settlements, namely the Principal Town, Towns, Primary Service Settlements and Secondary Service Settlements, as defined by the Settlement Hierarchy 2025, and where these settlements are not washed over by National Landscapes. Sites were also considered where they were large enough to accommodate a new settlement. The Development Strategy set out two growth options for allocation.
- 1.8.** A new iteration of the SHELAA has now been prepared to inform the Regulation 19 Publication (Summer 2026) of the new Local Plan for Sevenoaks District.

How will the SHELAA be used?

- 1.9.** The SHELAA, alongside other evidence base documents that the District Council has completed, has and will continue to be used to inform the development strategy and potential site allocations in the new Sevenoaks District Local Plan over the plan period up to 2042.
- 1.10.** The government provides a standard methodology for calculating housing need, introduced alongside the December 2024 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). This methodology is based on a baseline of 0.8% of the existing housing stock in each local authority area, with an upward adjustment applied to reflect local affordability pressures. This replaces the previous standard methodology, which relied on household projections from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and a different affordability adjustment mechanism.
- 1.11.** For Sevenoaks District, this means the provision of 1,164 homes per year, equating to 17,460 new homes over the 15-year plan period. The Economic Needs Study (ENS) 2022, and its 2025 update, identify a need for 40,400 sqm of employment floorspace over the Plan period, whilst the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment

(GTAA) 2025 identifies a need for 192 additional pitches across the District over the Plan period. The SHELAA assesses potential sites to address these needs.

- 1.12.** It is important to emphasise that the assessments of potential sites in the SHELAA are based on the best information available at the current time and that they provide a starting point to inform future decisions in relation to plan-making and the determination of planning applications. The conclusions of the assessments for the potential sites do not mean the District Council has decided whether planning permission should be granted for housing or economic development on those sites. Any planning applications received for any potential sites included in the SHELAA will be considered on their planning merits, taking into account adopted national and local planning policies and any other material considerations.

Policy Context

National Policy and Guidance

- 2.1. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024 places great emphasis on boosting the supply of housing (para 61) and sets out that local authorities should 'have a clear understanding of the land available in their area through the preparation of a strategic housing availability assessment' (para 71). Para 127 sets out that planning policies need to reflect changes in the demand for land. Therefore, in addition to assessing sites submitted in the 'call for sites' the District Council has undertaken a review of the existing site allocations (both housing and mixed use) that have not yet come forward, to explore any potential opportunities to ensure that we are making the best and most efficient use of land within our existing settlements.
- 2.2. The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) sets out a clear methodology for undertaking the SHELAA in the form of a flow chat. This is set out overleaf.

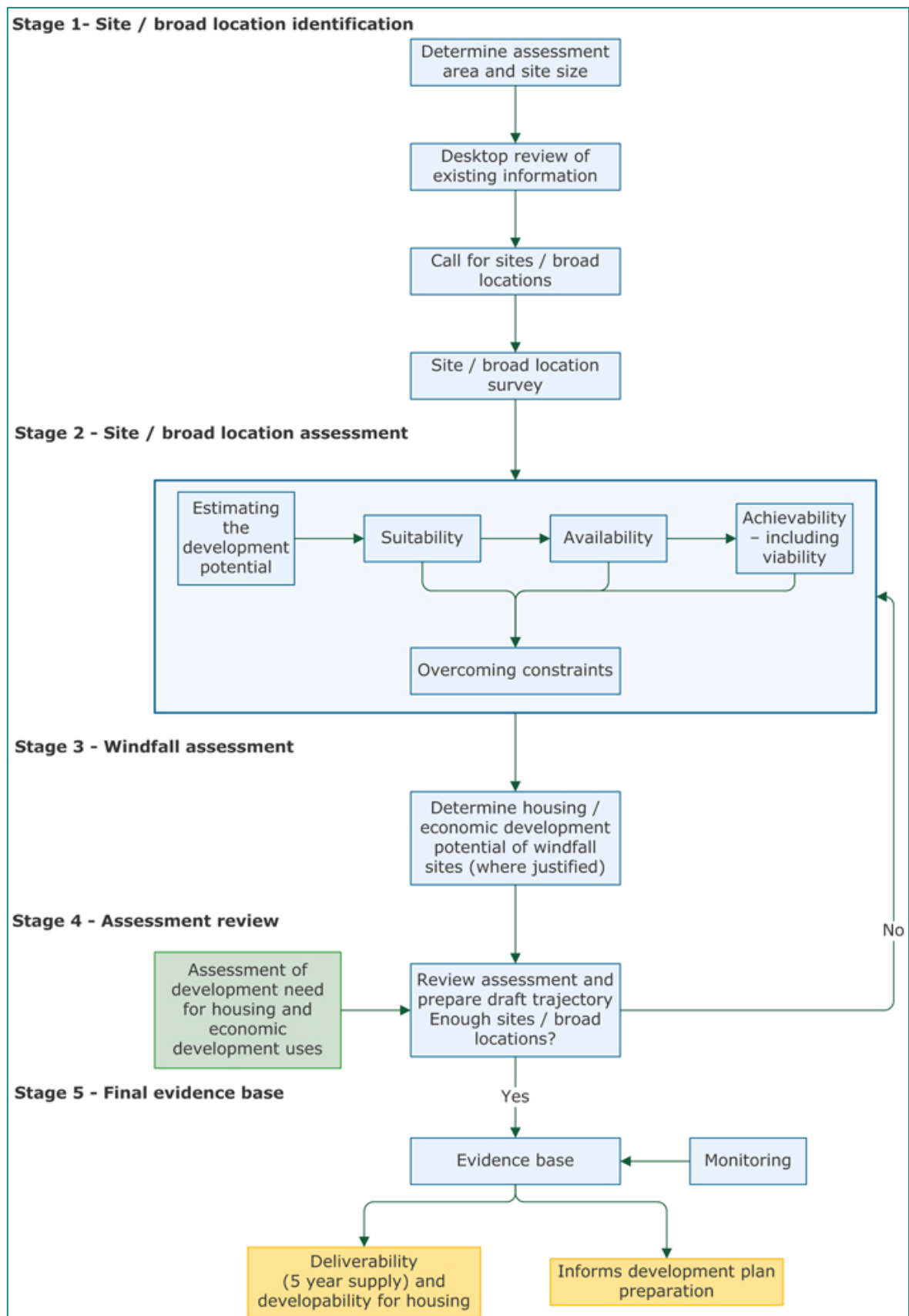


Figure 1: Housing and economic land availability methodology - flowchart
 Planning Practice Guidance Paragraph: 005 Reference ID: 3-005-20190722

- 2.3.** The PPG suggests a five-stage approach which, when followed, will lead to a robust assessment of land availability. The assessments should be thorough but proportionate. This methodology and advice was followed when undertaking the site assessments.

Local Policy

- 2.4.** The Core Strategy (2011) and Allocations and Development Management Plan (ADMP) (2015) make up the development plan for Sevenoaks District. These documents continue to be used in determining planning applications.
- 2.5.** The District Council is preparing a new Local Plan which will replace the Core Strategy and ADMP. The Regulation 19 Publication (Summer 2026) has recently published. The SHELAA forms a key part of the evidence base, identifying available and suitable sites which would help in boosting the supply of housing and other types of development across the District.
- 2.6.** The sites identified in the SHELAA have been assessed in a 'policy-neutral' manner. This means that they are not judged in detail against any current local planning policies the way a planning application would be. Having said that, regard may be had to current policies to provide appropriate context e.g. if a site is already allocated for a particular use, and evidence indicates that use should be retained.

Methodology

- 3.1. Sevenoaks District Council has followed the standard methodology for assessing housing and economic land availability as set out in the PPG and shown on the flowchart at Figure 1.
- 3.2. There are a number of stages to the SHELAA methodology. These are as follows:
 1. Determine assessment area and site size;
 2. Desktop review of existing information;
 3. Call for sites;
 4. Site survey;
 5. Site assessment;
 6. Windfall assessment; and
 7. Assessment review.

Potential sites

Step 1 – Determine Assessment Area and Site Size

- 4.1.** The extent of the assessment area is the District Council administrative boundaries. Whilst the housing market area (HMA) extends to the Tonbridge part of Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council (TMBC) and into Tunbridge Wells Borough Council (TWBC) area, it was considered that keeping the assessment to the geography of the District boundaries represents the most pragmatic approach. Both TMBC and TWBC have undertaken their own SHELAA's, and the three documents can be used to understand the overall potential supply of land by HMA and by functional economic market area (FEMA).
- 4.2.** With regard to site size, the PPG states that 'it may be appropriate to consider all sites and broad locations capable of developing 5 or more dwellings, or economic development on sites of 0.25 hectares (or 500 square meters of floorspace) and above' (Paragraph: 009 Reference ID: 3-009-20190722). The District Council has previously applied a site size threshold of 5 or more dwellings and currently makes provision for a windfall allowance (sites that come forward unexpectedly and have not been identified for housing through the Local Plan process) for housing development of 1-4 units. The District Council's approach to site size in the SHELAA is therefore consistent with the PPG.

Step 2 – Desktop Review of Existing Information

- 4.3.** The District Council has been, and will continue to be, proactive in identifying as wide a range of potential sites for development as possible. This includes a review of the current allocated sites in the Council's adopted Allocations and Development Management Plan (ADMP). The information provided in the PPG on the 'type of sites and potential data source' (Paragraph: 011 Reference ID: 3-011-20190722) has been followed to ensure that the District Council considers all available types of sites and sources of data that may be relevant in the assessment process. A summary of this is set out in Table 1 below.

Type of site	Potential investigated
Current ADMP allocations not yet with planning permission	There is 1 site allocated in the ADMP for housing development which is yet to come forward. This site has been reviewed and forms part of this SHELAA, with an uplift in capacity, in light of the greater need for housing. In addition, the support for 5 ADMP sites is reconfirmed. However, these sites are not included with any uplift in capacity from their ADMP allocation as availability is uncertain.

Type of site	Potential investigated
2017/18 SHELAA sites not resubmitted or with planning permission	There are a number of sites within existing settlements that were considered in the previous 2018 SHELAA that have not been resubmitted or gained planning permission. These sites remain suitable, but to establish updated information on land availability, landowners have been written to as part of the Local Plan process and invited to resubmit. Sites not resubmitted to the Local Plan process do not currently form part of the SHELAA.
Sites on the Brownfield Register	This iteration of the SHELAA, and the previous 2018 SHELAA, have been used to help identify sites suitable for the brownfield register, which is updated regularly to ensure the information remains accurate and up to date.
Refused / withdrawn planning applications	A number of sites located within existing settlements that can accommodate 5 or more units had planning permission refused or their application withdrawn within the last five years. These sites were investigated but it was deemed that none were suitable.
Empty properties register	The Housing Strategy 2022-2027 contains a strategy for bring empty homes back into use which is ongoing and regularly monitored.
Land within the Council's ownership	The Council has worked closely with its internal teams to identify key sites owned by the Council that have potential for housing and mixed-use development. These have been included in this SHELAA.
Exploring potential for increased site densities	The Settlement Capacity Study and District-wide Characterisation Study explore potential to increase site densities, including identifying vacant and underutilised land within urban confines and highlighting the types of areas that are suited to higher density development and have less sensitivity to change. These important evidence based studies have informed the assessment of sites to ensure any future development makes the best and most efficient use of land, whilst respecting local character.

Table 1: Desktop review of existing information

Step 3 – Call for Sites

Call for Sites 2021

- 4.4. A two stage call for sites was undertaken in Autumn/Winter 2021/22 in order to establish initial land availability for all types of development including housing and economic development. It was aimed at as wide an audience as possible, targeting Town and Parish Councils, local landowners, developers, businesses and other interested parties and relevant interest groups, including all those who are on our Local Plan mailing list.
- 4.5. The Stage 1 Call for Sites invited the submission of sites in non-Green Belt locations and commenced on 14 October 2021. The Stage 2 process, for all other areas of the District, began on 25 November 2021. The Call for Sites ended for both Stage 1 and Stage 2 on 20 January 2022. In addition, a small number of sites were submitted through the Regulation 18 consultations in 2022, 2023 and 2025 for consideration in the SHELAA.
- 4.6. A total of 532 sites were received into the process, via the Call for Sites and Regulation 18 consultations. A further 11 sites were identified through the Settlement Capacity Study and 8 existing site allocations from the Allocations and Development Management Plan (ADMP) were reconsidered. These 551 total sites are the focus of this SHELAA.
- 4.7. The District Council has not assumed that the information relating to sites which were put forward for consideration as part of the previous 2018 SHELAA remains up-to-date and such sites were therefore not automatically considered as part of this SHELAA. During the Call for Sites, site promoters were contacted and encouraged to resubmit their sites if they wished them to be considered for assessment through the SHELAA.

Targeted Call for Sites – April 2025

- 4.8. In April 2025, the District Council re-opened a targeted Call for Sites. This provided a further opportunity for landowners and site promoters to suggest potential sites that may be suitable for housing, employment or other uses. Sites submitted to the Targeted Call for Sites needed to be within one of the following three categories, in order to be considered:
- Urban sites (within existing settlement boundaries);
 - Previously Developed Land (PDL) / Brownfield land; and/or
 - Potential greenfield 'grey belt' land (as introduced by NPPF 2024).

Step 4 – Site Survey

- 4.9. Potential sites were assessed through detailed surveys in order to gain a better understanding of what type and scale of development may be appropriate as well as any barriers to delivery and how they could be overcome. This was achieved using a two-stage assessment process, which was presented to the Development and Conservation Advisory Committee (DCAC) in March 2022 and is set out in Figure 2 below. The detailed site assessment framework can be found at Appendix A.

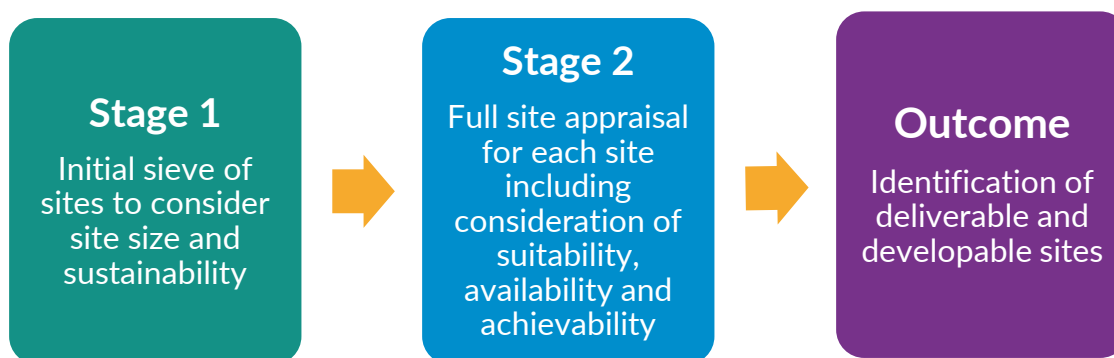


Figure 2: Two Stage Assessment Process

- 4.10. The Stage 1 assessment consisted of an initial sieve of the sites to consider site size and sustainability. Sites were discounted where they did not meet the minimum size threshold as set out in the PPG (able to accommodate 5 or more dwellings or larger than 0.15 Ha), and/or where they were not in a sustainable location. Further information on the methodology used at this stage can be found at Appendix A.
- 4.11. The Stage 2 assessment then consisted of undertaking a full site appraisal for each site, utilising the information provided by applicants, GIS data, site visits and stakeholder involvement in order to establish the suitability, availability and achievability of each site. This information was then used to determine which sites were deliverable and developable.
- 4.12. The Stage 2 assessments have been updated, where applicable, as part of the SHELAA 2026, to reflect further information received via the Regulation 18 consultation process. This includes key information from site promoters, statutory consultees and other respondents.

Step 5 – Estimating the Development Potential

- 4.13. The PPG states that an estimate of the development potential of each identified site can be guided by existing or emerging plan policies, including any locally determined policies on density and that, when assessing development potential, plan makers should seek to make the most efficient use of land in line with policies set out in the

NPPF (Paragraph: 016 Reference ID: 3-016-20190722). The NPPF clearly states that development should make optimal use of the potential of each site, and that densities should be uplifted significantly in city and town centres and other locations that are well served by public transport (paragraph 130).

- 4.14.** The emerging Development Strategy for the Sevenoaks District Local Plan Regulation 19 Publication (Summer 2026) complies fully with the NPPF in this regard. The Council is firstly focussing on making the best and most efficient use of land within urban confines, outside of the Green Belt. It is considered that these are the most sustainable locations in the District, well served by public transport and with good access to services and facilities. Focusing development firstly in these areas, in accordance with the NPPF, will promote sustainable development firstly in these areas, in accordance with the NPPF, will promote sustainable transport choices which is key for the Council's commitment of tackling the challenge of climate change across the District. Density options were consulted on at all three Regulation 18 stages of the emerging Local Plan and have been used to inform density work through site specific Development Briefs.
- 4.15.** Detailed site-specific Development Briefs have been prepared alongside the site assessments for all residential and mixed-use sites, and form part of Policy ST2 – Housing and Mixed-Use site allocations. The briefs seek to promote design excellence, support an efficient planning process and promote optimised densities on sites proposed across the District, considering the character of the surrounding area, site sensitivities and the proximity to public transport and local services. A 'character-led' approach supports the delivery of appropriate densities that make the best and most efficient use of land in settlements across the District, in accordance with paragraph 124 and 125 of the NPPF.

Suitability Assessment

- 4.16.** Suitability is a high-level assumption about whether a site could be developed, not whether a site should or will be developed. The suitability of a site is one, albeit crucial, aspect of the SHELAA assessment process. Determining a site's suitability is done by taking into account the information available to help build a picture and general understanding of the site in relation to its development potential. Consideration was given to the suitability of all sites that passed the Stage 1 assessment.
- 4.17.** It is important to note that national and local policy, and environmental and land use constraints are subject to change and therefore the suitability conclusions made within the SHELAA 2026 are considered appropriate at the point of publication.
- 4.18.** The Stage 2 assessment considered both environmental and physical constraints (see site assessment framework at Appendix A). Where sites were found to be unsuitable,

due to issues such as flooding, ancient woodland, impact on National Landscapes, unsuitable access or topography, the reasons are clearly set out in the site assessment proforma.

- 4.19. Other constraints were also considered and were particularly relevant in respect of existing land and open space allocations. Again, where sites were found to be unsuitable owing to these issues, the reasons are clearly set out in the site assessment. If sites had no known constraints or limitations that would prevent development, then sites were viewed as being suitable.
- 4.20. In line with the NPPF 2024, the SHELAA 2026 continues to consider the concept of grey belt, as introduced as an assessment criterion in the 2025 iteration. This reflects the findings of the Green Belt evidence base, published in 2025. The Green Belt Assessment (2025) identifies certain areas as provisional grey belt, based on their alignment with Green Belt purposes, specifically A, B and D, but does not undertake an assessment on Footnote 7 constraints.
- 4.21. The NPPF defines grey belt as “land in the Green Belt comprising previously developed land and/or any other land that, in either case, does not strongly contribute to any of purposes (a), (b) or (d) in paragraph 143. “Grey Belt excludes land where the application of the policies relating to the areas of assets in footnote 7 (other than Green Belt) would provide a strong reason for refusing or restricting development”.
- 4.22. Notwithstanding the emerging national policy direction to remove Footnote 7 constraints as a grey belt consideration, the SHELAA 2026 does incorporate Footnote 7 assessments. Whereas the 2025 iteration identified sites as ‘provisional grey belt’, the Footnote 7 assessments as part of this iteration have confirmed the grey belt status for suitable sites. The Footnote 7 assessments for the relevant sites are included at Appendix B of this SHELAA.
- 4.23. Finally, where sites were discounted as a result of not meeting the requirements of the Stage 1 assessment, these have been listed in the SHELAA so as not to limit opportunities, however the assessment clearly sets out that they are Discounted from the SHELAA (for example, where a site is too small or has been withdrawn or been granted consent), or are contrary to the SHELAA strategy at Appendix A. For clarity, the smaller sites have not been included in the windfall allowance in order to prevent double counting.

Availability Assessment

- 4.24. Availability helps to establish whether a site is a valid option for consideration and relates to a landowner’s willingness to see a site developed. Given the role of the SHELAA in enabling the District Council to establish a land supply for future

development, if there is serious doubt over whether a site will come forward or that certain constraints prevent it from being considered available then it cannot realistically be included as a potential option.

- 4.25. Detailed availability work has been undertaken ahead of the Regulation 19 Publication, with site promoters and landowners, and updated information regarding each site's availability is included in the site assessment proformas. A judgement was then made based on the most recent information available for each site as to whether the site was to be considered available and when it is likely to come forwards.

Achievability Assessment

- 4.26. The PPG states that "a site 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". It goes on to explain that "this is essentially a judgement about the economic availability of a site, and the capacity of the developer to complete and let or sell the development over a certain period" (Paragraph: 020 Reference ID: 3-020-20190722).
- 4.27. Assessing achievability requires specialist knowledge and an understanding of market factors, cost issues and delivery of development. A high-level viability assessment on the Regulation 19 Publication (Summer 2026) has been prepared; however this information was not available when the SHELAA assessments were being undertaken. Therefore, for the purposes of the SHELAA a judgement was made, based on information submitted by the site promoter, in each assessment as to whether there is likely to be any abnormal costs associated with developing the site.

Overcoming Constraints

- 4.28. Where constraints to development have been identified through the SHELAA, the assessment makes it clear whether mitigation measures are appropriate or required. It is acknowledged that such measures may impact on the deliverability of sites. The Council has used the information on suitability, availability and achievability, together with that provided by the applicant, to assess the timescale within which each site is capable of coming forwards for development.

Site Capacities and Density

- 4.29. Previous iterations of the SHELAA includes site capacities put forward by the site promoter for consultation. However, further capacities work has now been undertaken, through the preparation of detailed Development Briefs for each site, utilising the Local Plan evidence base, information submitted to previous Regulation 18 consultations and other relevant knowledge. The Development Brief propose an appropriate density range for each site allocation and, for the purpose of the SHELAA

2026 and the Regulation 19 Publication, the mid-point of this range has been utilised for housing supply and allocation purposes.

4.30. The density levels set out below have also fed into the preparation of site-specific Development Briefs, in order to assess potential site capacity. These are based on examples of well-designed and high-quality development that has recently been delivered within or adjacent to existing settlements across the District. These densities have been reflected in emerging Policy H7 – Housing Density and Intensification, supporting the Local Plan aim to make the best and most efficient use of land.

- In urban areas of higher tier settlements*, densities of 50-150 dwellings per hectare should be achieved, with densities at the upper end of this range being achieved in more highly sustainable locations (e.g. town centre/transport hubs).
- At the edge of urban confines of higher tier settlements*, densities of 40-60 dwellings per hectare should be achieved
- Within and at the edge of villages* and rural locations, densities of 30-60 dwellings per hectare should be achieved.

**Settlements are defined within the Settlement Hierarchy. Higher Tier Settlements refers to settlements categorised as Towns (including the Principal Town), Primary and Secondary Service Settlements.*

4.31. It is not expected that the upper density levels will be achieved in all cases, rather recognising that in some instances development schemes will come forward at a lower density than estimated, and in other cases at a higher density, thus allowing a more detailed design to come forward as appropriate. There is certainly potential, however, particularly in the District's town centres and within close proximity to transport hubs, for these areas to exceed the density levels significantly.

Developable Areas

4.32. The developable area of a site is not always the same as the gross area of the site. This can be due to a range of issues such as (but not limited to) constraints that cannot be overcome (known as 'absolute constraints'). For example, this may be flooding or ancient woodland, the requirement for new infrastructure on the site, topography or potential land contamination. Where this is the case, the justification is clearly set out in the assessment proforma.

Timing Assessment

Phasing Methodology – Deliverable / Developable

4.33. In determining the phasing of each site allocation, the Council have prepared a set of phasing rules as a starting point. These are as follows:

Urban Sites:

- Deliverable (Short Term – Years 1-5) – All Housing schemes and All Mixed-Use schemes up to and including 99 units.
- Developable (Medium Term – Years 6-10) – Mixed-Use schemes 100+ units, unless a planning application which is pending determination, in which case consider Deliverable (Short Term – Years 1-5).
- Developable (Long Term – Years 11+) – Not used for urban sites unless evidenced by Site Promoter.

4.34. Justification – Sites within existing urban areas (i.e. outside of the Green Belt) typically benefit from existing infrastructure, public transport links and proximity to key services and facilities. Prioritising urban sites in the short term supports sustainable development and aligns with national policy objectives to make the best and most efficient use of land. Mixed-use schemes up to 50 units are encouraged within Years 1-5 to bring forward regeneration opportunities and town/settlement centre uses, whereas larger mixed-use schemes may require more complex planning and infrastructure coordination, making them more suitable for medium term delivery. Long term phasing for larger urban sites may be appropriate, where evidence is provided.

Previously Developed Land (PDL) Sites:

- Deliverable (Short Term – Years 1-5) – Housing and Mixed-Use schemes up to and including 49 units.
- Developable (Medium Term – Years 6-10) – Housing and Mixed-Use schemes of 50+ units, unless a planning application which is pending determination, in which case consider Deliverable (Short Term – Years 1-5).
- Developable (Long Term – Years 11+) – Not used for PDL sites unless evidenced by Site Promoter (for example remediation).

4.35. Justification – Previously Developed Land (PDL) sites present opportunities for redevelopment that align with the brownfield-first approach in national policy. Smaller schemes of up to 30 units are generally more straightforward to deliver and can contribute to early housing supply. Larger schemes may involve remediation and infrastructure upgrades, which justifies their placement in the medium term. Long term phasing for PDL sites may be appropriate, where evidence is provided.

Grey belt sites

- Deliverable (Short Term – Years 1-5) – Housing schemes up to and including 49 units.
- Developable (Medium Term – Years 6-10) – Housing schemes of 50+ units and all Mixed-Use schemes, unless a planning application which is pending determination, in which case consider Deliverable (Short Term – Years 1-5).
- Developable (Long Term – Years 11+) – Larger Housing and Mixed-Use schemes where evidenced by site promoter.

4.36. Justification – Whilst grey belt land is often greenfield land within the Green Belt, national policy does not restrict these sites from coming forwards through the Development Management process. However, grey belt land, on the edge of our top-tier settlements may have rural characteristics and be sensitive to development. Smaller grey belt schemes up to 49 units are appropriate in the short term to meet housing needs without significant landscape or infrastructure impacts. Medium-term phasing allows for housing schemes over 49 units, and all mixed-use schemes. Larger housing and mixed-use schemes, where evidenced, are deferred to long term to allow for more complex planning and infrastructure coordination.

Greenfield sites in the Green Belt (non-grey belt) and/or National Landscapes

- Deliverable (Short Term – Years 1-5) – Not used for greenfield sites in the Green Belt and/or National Landscapes
- Developable (Medium Term – Years 6-10) – All Housing and Mixed-Use schemes up to and including 499 units, unless a planning application which is pending determination, in which case consider Deliverable (Short Term – Years 1-5).
- Developable (Long Term – Years 11+) – All Housing and Mixed-Use schemes of 500+ units, , unless a planning application which is pending determination, in which case consider Developable (Medium Term - Years 6-10).

4.37. Justification – Greenfield sites which are not classified as grey belt, and greenfield sites in National Landscapes require further testing at Development Management stage and it is highly likely that these sites would need to be removed from the Green Belt, through the Local Plan process, prior to seeking a full planning permission. These sites are therefore unable to be phased within years 1-5 of the Plan period. Medium term phasing allows for schemes up to 499 units, whilst long term phasing accommodates larger schemes over 500 units, to allow for Local Plan adoption and complex planning considerations.

Phasing Methodology – Build Out Rates

- 4.38. Within the Deliverable and Developable phasing periods of Years 1-5, Years 6-10 and Years 11+, it is then necessary to set phasing rules for the build out rates within these phasing periods. The phasing rules are used as a starting point for preparing the Housing Trajectory, but site specific evidence can also be taken into account and where this is the case, the housing trajectory will set this out. The baseline phasing rules are set out at Tables 2, 3 and 4 overleaf:

Table 2 – Sites capable of accommodation of 5-9 units

Type of Site	Phasing Rule
Urban	Completions in year 2 of phasing period. Justification: small site, planning permission does not rely on adoption of the Local Plan
PDL	Completions in year 2 of phasing period. Justification: small site, planning permission does not rely on adoption of the Local Plan
Grey belt	Completions in year 2 of phasing period. Justification: small site, planning permission does not rely on adoption of the Local Plan
Greenfield in Green Belt and/or National Landscapes	Completions in year 3 of phasing period. Justification: small site, planning permission relies on adoption of Local Plan and removal of site from the Green Belt

Table 3 – Sites capable of accommodation of 10-34 units

Type of Site	Phasing Rule
Urban	Completions in year 3 of phasing period. Justification: medium sized site, planning permission does not rely on adoption of the Local Plan
PDL	Completions in year 3 of phasing period. Justification: medium sized site, planning permission does not rely on adoption of the Local Plan
Grey belt	Completions in year 3 of phasing period. Justification: medium sized site, planning permission does not rely on adoption of the Local Plan
Greenfield in Green Belt and/or National Landscapes	Completions in year 4 of phasing period. Justification: medium sized site, planning permission relies on adoption of the Local Plan and removal of the site from the Green Belt

Table 4 – Sites capable of accommodating 35 or more units

Type of Site	Phasing Rule
Urban	Approx. 35 completions in year 3 of phasing period, followed by approx. 70 completions in subsequent years. Justification: large site, planning does not rely on adoption of the Local Plan, average of 70 units per year based on evidence from the House Builders Federation (HBF).
PDL	Approx. 35 completions in year 3 of phasing period, followed by approx. 70 completions in subsequent years. Justification: large site, planning does not rely on adoption of the Local Plan, average of 70 units per year based on evidence from the House Builders Federation (HBF).
Grey belt	Approx. 35 completions in year 3 of phasing period, followed by approx. 70 completions in subsequent years. Justification: large site, planning does not rely on adoption of the Local Plan, average of 70 units per year based on evidence from the House Builders Federation (HBF).
Greenfield in Green Belt and/or National Landscapes	Approx. 35 completions in year 4 of phasing period, followed by approx. 70 completions in subsequent years. Justification: large site, planning permission relies on adoption of the Local Plan and removal of the site from the Green Belt, average of 70 units per year based on evidence from the House Builders Federation (HBF).

Phasing Methodology – Build Out Rates for larger strategic sites

- 4.39.** In addition to the above phasing methodology, the Council have utilised the ‘Start to Finish 3’ Report published by Lichfields in March 2025, which sets out the below build out rates per year for larger strategic sites:

Site size	Lichfields Research	SDC Approach
500-999 units	Approx. 69 dwellings per annum	Apply 70 dwellings per annum as with smaller sites methodology
1000-1999 units	Approx. 100-188 dwellings per annum	Apply middle of range built out rate – 144 dwellings per annum
2000+ units	Approx. 161 dwellings per annum	Apply 161 dwellings per annum

Table 5 – Build Out Rates assumptions for larger strategic sites

Deliverable Sites

- 4.40. Paragraph 72 of the NPPF requires local authorities to identify deliverable sites. Annex 2 of the NPPF sets out that “to be considered deliverable, sites for housing should be available now, offer a suitable location for development now, and be achievable with a realistic prospect that housing will be delivered on the site within five years”.
- 4.41. For the purpose of the SHELAA 2026, the availability of each site has been determined using information provided by the landowner or promoter in their submission form. Applicants were requested to indicate a broad time frame that they anticipated the site would become available. Sites were considered deliverable if they were found to be suitable, achievable and if it was anticipated that the site would come forward within years 1-5, unless there was other specific information to suggest that the site would not be available within 5 years.
- 4.42. Table 6 below sets out, by settlement, the number of deliverable sites, phased in years 1-5, and the potential number of units these sites could yield.

Settlement	No. Deliverable Sites	Potential no. units
Sevenoaks Urban Area	10	291
Swanley	7	140
Edenbridge	4	55
Westerham	2	28
Hartley	3	79
Otford	1	10
New Ash Green	2	34
West Kingsdown	1	20
Kemsing	3	56
South Darenth	7	129
Hextable	3	59
Halstead	4	109
Horton Kirby	2	84
Chiddingstone Causeway	3	88
Swanley Village	1	14
Noahs Ark	1	14
Broke Hill	1	741
Totals	56	1,951

Table 6: Sites considered deliverable by settlement

Developable Sites

- 4.43. Paragraph 72 of the NPPF requires local authorities to identify developable sites. Annex 2 of the NPPF sets out that ‘to be considered developable, sites should be in a

suitable location for housing development with a reasonable prospect that they will be available and could be viably developed at the point envisaged’.

- 4.44. The availability of each site has been determined in line with the availability section above. Sites were considered developable if they were found suitable, achievable and if the landowner or promoter anticipated that the site would come forward during years 6-10 or years 11+.
- 4.45. Table 7 below sets out, by settlements, the number of developable sites, and the potential number of units these sites could yield.

Settlement	No. Developable Sites	Potential no. units
Sevenoaks Urban Area	8	3,043
Swanley	5	967
Edenbridge	8	1,384
Hartley	1	190
Otford	1	203
New Ash Green	3	822
West Kingsdown	2	384
Kemsing	1	167
South Darenth	1	230
Hextable	4	547
Standalone	1	2,600
Totals	34	10,537

Table 7: Sites considered developable by settlement

Developable Areas

- 4.46. Windfall sites are defined as “sites not specifically identified in the development plan” and, in Sevenoaks District, are an important element of the overall housing supply. Paragraph 75 of the NPPF sets out that “where an allowance is to be made for windfall sites as part of anticipated supply, there should be compelling evidence that they will provide a reliable source of supply. Any allowance should be realistic having regard to the SHELAA, historic windfall and expected future trends’.
- 4.47. The delivery of unidentified small sites in the District has been, and will continue to be, an important source of housing supply, and therefore the SHELAA should include an estimation of future housing delivery from windfall sites. Given that the SHELAA considers all sites capable of delivering 5 or more dwellings, to avoid double counting, the windfall allowance includes sites capable of delivering 1-4 dwellings only.
- 4.48. Table 8 below sets out housing completions on windfall sites in Sevenoaks District over the last 9 years:

Year	Total no. units on sites of 1-4 units
2017-18	82
2018-19	64
2019-20	92
2020-21	54
2021-22	112
2022-23	82
2023-24	58
2024-25	55
2025-26	59
Total	658
Annual average	73

Table 8: Windfall completions 2017-18 to 2025-26

- 4.49.** The inclusion of these historic delivery rates are considered reasonable because it is an extensive period post adoption of the Core Strategy (2011) and Allocations and Development Management Plan (ADMP) (2015). Further, there is no evidence to show that supply from this source is diminishing. Therefore, the historic delivery of windfalls from small sites over a lengthy period provides compelling evidence that they will continue to provide a reliable source of supply. The allowance of 73 units per year is realistic being based on the annual average windfall supply from sites capable of delivering 1-4 dwellings over that period. To avoid double counting with extants, the windfall allowance is not applied to years 1-2 of the plan period. Over the plan period, the windfall allowance totals to 949 residential units.

Step 7 – Assessment Review

- 4.50.** The information from this SHELAA forms part of the evidence base for the emerging Local Plan, identifying where there are sites that are available, suitable and achievable within the District's settlement boundaries that could be brought forward or allocated for development to assist in meeting the District's development needs over the period 2025-2040.
- 4.51.** The SHELAA currently identifies 1,459 residential units to be delivered within the District's existing settlements (i.e. within urban confines) and 11,079 residential units to be delivered outside of urban confines (i.e. in the Green Belt, on previously developed and greenfield land).
- 4.52.** As set out in Section 1, this SHELAA has been prepared to accompany the Regulation 19 Publication (Summer 2026) of the Sevenoaks District Local Plan 2027-2042, and as such, focuses on the potential to meet development needs in full across the Plan period. The SHELAA therefore assesses all potential sites which passed the Stage 1 of the SHELAA process (Figure 2), located within existing settlements, adjacent to urban

confines of the District's top 14 settlements, and where sites are large enough to accommodate a standalone settlement.

- 4.53. A housing trajectory has been prepared and published alongside the Regulation 19 Publication, showing the development potential of sites against the overall housing requirement.

Employment Sites

- 5.1. The Economic Needs Study (ENS) was completed in August 2022 and updated in 2025. It identifies a need for a minimum of 40,400 sqm of employment floorspace, including 14,600 sqm for industrial activity and 25,800 sqm for office activity over the Plan period up to 2042. Using standard plot ratios, this equates to an indicative land need of 6.3 ha. It is recognised that it might be possible to accommodate some of this forecast need through the intensification of uses on existing sites.
- 5.2. The ENS also provides an assessment of the existing allocated employment sites in the District, including consideration of quantity, quality and whether they meet current and expected future demand. It was found that the majority of these sites are performing well, but there is scope for the consideration of alternative uses (e.g. housing) in some cases.
- 5.3. No previously unidentified sites located within existing settlements were submitted through the call for sites for employment use. However, a number of existing employment sites (allocated and non-allocated) were submitted through the call for sites for housing. These sites were assessed in exactly the same way as the housing and mixed use sites, but with the ENS conclusions on the assessment of existing employment sites a key factor in determining whether the existing employment uses on these sites could be lost or not.

Gypsy and Traveller Sites

- 6.1. An updated Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) was published alongside the Regulation 18 consultation (2025) and identifies a need for 192 permanent pitches over the plan period up to 2042.
- 6.2. A number of sites were submitted through the Call for Sites for Gypsy and Traveller use, and these have been assessed in line with the SHELAA methodology. Sites which have been found suitable, as well as a detailed breakdown of the supply of Gypsy and Traveller pitches over the Plan period, are proposed at emerging Policy GT1.

Next Steps and Future Updates

- 7.1. Undertaking and updating the SHELAA is an iterative process and as such, any future reviews required will incorporate any new information put forward to the District Council.

Appendix A – Site Assessment Framework

Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) Site Assessment Framework Summer 2026

Stage 1 Assessment

Undertake initial sieve of sites. Discount sites that:

1. Are unable to accommodate 5 or more units (sites of 0.15 Ha or less) for housing or mixed use, or 500sqm or more (sites of 0.25 Ha or less) for employment uses.
2. Are not in an appropriate/sustainable location for development, for all development types.

Not appropriate/sustainable location is defined, by the Settlement Hierarchy 2025, as:

- More than 400m from the urban confines of the Principal Town (Sevenoaks Urban Area) and Towns (Swanley, Edenbridge and Westerham)
- More than 400m from Greater London built up area
- More than 250m from the urban confines of Primary Service Settlements (Hartley, Otford and New Ash Green) and Secondary Service Settlements (West Kingsdown, Eynsford, Seal, Kemsing, South Darenth, Pratts Bottom and Hextable).
- All sites elsewhere in the District unless the site could be considered a self-sustaining settlement (1,500 units or larger) or has a clear justification and separate exceptional circumstances case for consideration.

Stage 2 Assessment

Undertake detailed site appraisal.

SUITABILITY ASSESSMENT - RAG analysis

Suitability criteria	Green	Amber	Red
Is the site within urban confines?	Yes	Partial or No	
Land use	PDL	Mixed	Greenfield
Existing use to be lost?	No Yes but reprovided	Yes (non-allocated)	Yes (allocated)
Existing allocation / designation?	No		Yes
Proposed use / designation	No		Yes
Is the site in the Green Belt?	No	Partial or Within (adjacent to urban confines)	Within (not adjacent to urban confines)
Green Belt Stage 3 (2025 Assessment)	Not in the Green Belt Grey belt		Strongly performing and not grey belt
Footnote 7 Assessment	No Footnote 7 constraints / Not in Green Belt	Presence of Footnote 7 constraint – Limited impact	Presence of Footnote 7 constraint – Unacceptable impact
Is the site in the National Landscapes?	No	Partial or Adjacent	Within
Landscape sensitivity	Low Low-Medium	Medium	Medium-High High
Agricultural land quality	Grade 4 and 5 / non-agricultural	Grade 3	Grade 1 and 2
Flood risk	None or FZ1	FZ 2	FZ3
SSSI	No	Partial or Adjacent	Within

Suitability criteria	Green	Amber	Red
SSSI impact risk zone	N/A	Requirement to consult KCC	
Local Wildlife Site	No	Partial or Adjacent	Within
Local Nature Reserve	No	Partial or Adjacent	Within
Ancient woodland	No	Partial or Adjacent	Within
Presence of designated and non-designated heritage assets	None	Assets on site or in vicinity and further consideration on impact of significance is required	
Contamination issues	None	Sites with a previous use	Within or adjacent to a current or former landfill site
Noise pollution	None	Within or adjacent to noise-generating uses	Within or adjacent to significant noise-generating uses
Air Quality	No specific risk	Air Quality Assessment required (Impact on Road Network)	Air Quality Assessment required (Impact on Development and on Road Network)
Mineral safeguarding areas	None	Partial or Adjacent	Within
Site access	Existing access utilised	New/additional access required	Access is difficult
Site capacity	Capacity on transport network	Limited capacity on transport network and requires improvements	No capacity on transport network

Suitability criteria	Green	Amber	Red
Settlement classification	Within/adjacent to towns (400m buffer) and local service centres/service villages (250m buffer)	Within/adjacent to villages	Within/adjacent to hamlets or in open countryside
Proximity to nearest town and local centre (using walking routes)	Up to 800m (walkable in 10 mins)	800m-2km (walkable and cycle friendly)	Over 2km
Proximity to nearest train station (using walking routes)	Up to 800m (walkable in 10 mins)	800m-2km (walkable and cycle friendly)	Over 2km

AVAILABILITY ASSESSMENT

Determine when the site is available for development, based on the information included within the submission:

- Within years 1-5 and therefore deliverable;
- Within years 6-10 or years 11+ and therefore developable; or
- Not available within plan period 2027-2042 and therefore not currently developable.

ACHIEVABILITY ASSESSMENT

Determine when the development of the site is achievable, based on the information included within the submission:

- Within years 1-5 and therefore deliverable;
- Within years 6-10 or years 11+ and therefore developable; or
- Not achievable within plan period 2027-2042 and therefore not currently developable.

DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

Determine an overall conclusion for the site, based on the assessment of suitability, availability and achievability:

- Site can be considered deliverable overall if it is suitable, available and achievable within years 1-5;
- Site can be considered developable overall if it is suitable, available and achievable within years 6-10 or years 11+;
- Site is considered not currently developable overall if it is not suitable, available or achievable within the plan period 2027-2042.

Determine capacity of site by multiplying developable area by appropriate density range.