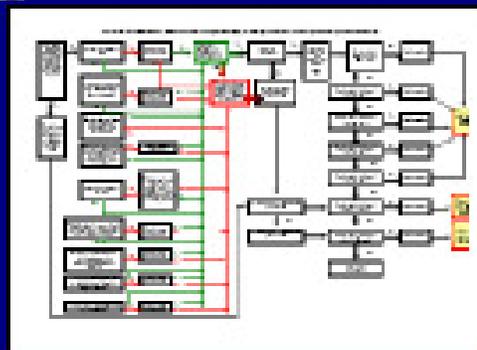




Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment Report

DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION

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Ribble Valley Borough Council Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment Report

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- This is Ribble Valley Borough Council's first Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA). It follows the Practice Guidance¹ with the primary aim of identifying the amount and the general locations of land for possible future development in the borough.
- It is important to note that whilst this SHLAA provides background evidence on the potential deliverability of land and identifies potential housing sites, decisions regarding which of these sites will actually be selected for development will be made at a later stage. The SHLAA is one of the tools that will be used by the Council to inform this later policy-making process.
- Overall there were 308 sites to be considered for assessment in the SHLAA through either submissions to the Council or through survey work undertaken by the Council.
- Each of the 308 sites was put through an initial filtering process to exclude those that didn't meet the SHLAA methodology criteria. This saw 33 sites being excluded. The remaining 175 sites met the SHLAA methodology criteria and were then assessed further in terms of suitability, availability and achievability.
- The final stages of the SHLAA involved indicating when land might come forward for development in terms of a 0-5 year, 6-10 year and 11-15 year of supply (from the time the SHLAA was undertaken). The SHLAA identified 138ha of land in the 5-year supply. This equates to 5441 dwellings. The majority of the land is located within the key service centres of Clitheroe, Longridge and Whalley and would provide for 70% of the identified 5-year supply. The remaining 30% of the 5-year supply is composed of development within the villages.
- The SHLAA also indicates that there is the potential for 1010 dwellings (equating to 27.7ha of land) that could be developed within years 6-10 and 3,603 dwellings (equating to 100ha of land) that could be developed within 11-15 years from the time of the SHLAA being undertaken.
- The SHLAA therefore shows that based on the Regional Spatial Strategy annual housing figure (of 161/yr), there is approximately 62 years supply of residential land available in the borough that is deliverable and developable over the 15-year period. 54%² of this is deliverable and is therefore included within the 5-year land supply.
- There is therefore no need to identify broad locations for future housing growth or windfall sites for this SHLAA.

¹ Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments: Practice Guidance (July 20078), CLG.

² Which is equivalent to 34 years supply of potential housing land.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This is the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (**SHLAA**) Report for Ribble Valley Borough Council (**the Council**). The Development Services Forward Planning Team at the Council has produced this document with the support of other Council officers and external bodies. The report is intended to form an important part of the evidence base for the Council's Local Development Framework (**LDF**).
- 1.2 The main aim of this SHLAA is to identify the amount and the general locations of land for possible future development in the borough. This should help the Council to ensure that attempts to meet the Government's priority of delivering more homes are not constrained by the lack of availability of housing land.
- 1.3 It is important to note that whilst this SHLAA provides background evidence on the potential deliverability of land and identifies potential housing sites, decisions regarding which of these sites will actually be selected for development will be made at a later stage. The SHLAA is one of the tools that will be used by the Council to inform this later policy-making process.

The SHLAA is not a statement of Council policy, nor does it allocate land or grant planning permission. While the SHLAA will assess whether sites have potential for housing, this should only be taken to mean that they are suitable provided that they are not required for other purposes.

- 1.4 The methodology used in this assessment follows the guidance contained in two core guidance documents, namely:
- The Communities and Local Government (**CLG**) Practice Guide 'Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments' (**the CLG Guidance**);³ and
 - Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing (**PPS3**), which advocates an evidence-based approach to housing policy formulation.
- This document refers to these guidance documents where necessary.
- 1.5 Although similar to an urban capacity study, a SHLAA is more detailed and comprehensive and designed to provide a more realistic approach to land supply. The SHLAA goes further than the Urban Capacity Study by assessing:
- Whether sites are deliverable;

³ Available on the CLG's website.

- Whether sites are developable;
 - Sites with potential for housing in rural settlements; and
 - Determining the availability of the site.
- 1.6 The CLG Guidance explains that if a Local Planning Authority (**LPA**) follows the recommended standard methodology⁴ in producing its SHLAA, the SHLAA should be sound. Such a SHLAA's findings are likely to be robust and transparently prepared and the LPA should not need to justify its methodology. If an LPA deviates away from the recommended standard methodology in producing its SHLAA, the CLG Guidance advises that this may need to be justified.
- 1.6 The Council has used the recommended standard methodology in producing this SHLAA guidance.
- 1.7 A diagrammatic outline of the process used (as set out in CLG Guidance) and more information on the stages carried out by the Council can be found in section 3 (*figure 1*).

⁴ As set out in the CLG Guidance.

2. POLICY CONTEXT

- 2.1 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 received Royal Assent in 2004 (the **Act**). The Act overhauled the planning system and the way in which future plans are produced by LPAs. Regulations made under the Act provided further detail on Local Development Frameworks (**LDF**).
- 2.2 The regulatory framework provides that a strong and robust baseline for the LDF must be developed. This ensures that LDF policies are formulated on a thorough and transparent baseline of evidence which takes into account the local situation and which allows changes in local situations to be easily reflected.
- 2.3 One element of the LDF baseline is the Housing Market Assessment (**HMA**) for Ribble Valley. The HMA is comprised of the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (**SHMA**)⁵, which provides details on type, tenure, need, and affordability of housing in the Ribble Valley, and the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (**SHLAA**).
- 2.4 The HMA needs to be updated annually in order to effectively reflect changes in national, regional and local policy and circumstance. It is anticipated that these updates will be published each year in December along with the Annual Monitoring Report (**AMR**)⁶.

Policy context: National

- 2.5 Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing (**PPS3**) underpins the delivery of the Government's strategic housing policy objectives and works towards the aim of ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to live in a decent home, which they can afford in a community where they want to live. PPS3 reflects the Government's commitment to improving the affordability and supply of housing in all communities, including rural areas, as informed by the findings of the Affordable Rural Housing Commission. The delivery of housing in rural areas should respect the key principles underpinning PPS3, providing high quality housing that contributes to the creation and maintenance of sustainable rural communities in market towns and villages.
- 2.6 As stated within PPS3, LPAs should consider the extent to which emerging Local Development Documents (**LDD**) and Regional Spatial Strategies (**RSSs**) have regard to the policies in this statement whilst maintaining plan-making programmes. The Core Strategy, which is the central document of the LDF, will be fundamental in setting out the direction in which the borough will be moving, in terms of housing development. It will be from this document that the specific Housing and Economic Development Plan Document (**DPD**), which will include allocations, will be developed.

⁵ The SHMA is available to view on the Council website at www.ribblevalley.gov.uk.

⁶ The AMR monitors LDF policies and progress.

Policy context: Regional

- 2.7 The Regional Spatial Strategy (**the RSS**) was adopted on 30th September 2008. It replaced the previous RSS⁷ and covers a range of strategic issues and targets including the economy, the environment, transport, infrastructure and housing. The RSS also sets out the housing figures for each region within the North West.
- 2.8 These figures, which set out how much housing development should be provided in each borough in the North West, have been through extensive formulation and examination. The adopted RSS sets the Ribble Valley figure at 161 residential units to be provided per year.
- 2.9 The RSS also promotes SHLAAs to use data from sub-regional housing assessments, such as that completed by Nevin-Leather Associates on behalf on the North West Regional Assembly⁸ (**NWRA**). This report, like all housing market assessments, brought together information on all north west SHMAs, as well as data from urban capacity and urban potential studies. Unfortunately, Ribble Valley had never undertaken an urban capacity study and therefore no such information could be included within the SHLAA.
- 2.10 The Nevin-Leather Associates report identified Ribble Valley as a single housing market area. This means that Ribble Valley shares very few similar housing characteristics with its spatial neighbours in East Lancashire, and as a result the SHLAA was undertaken by Ribble Valley alone rather than being prepared jointly with a neighbouring authority as many surrounding authorities have done. Consultation with key stakeholders did take place however, which ensured an element of partnership working occurred during the SHLAA process.

Policy context: Local

- 2.11 As discussed, the adopted Districtwide Local Plan is to be replaced by the LDF under the Act. As the policies included within the LDF need to be strong, robust and built on credible and up-to-date evidence, a set of baseline documents are in the process of being produced. These include the following:
- Employment land and retail study
 - Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (**SFRA**)
 - SHMA
 - SHLAA
 - Infrastructure Plan

⁷ This was Regional Planning Guidance 13 (RPG13)

⁸ NWRA became 4NW in 2008.

- Topic papers which include information on the following
 - Transport
 - Greenbelt
 - Economic Strategy
 - AONB Management Plan
 - Settlement Audit
 - Housing Needs Assessments
 - Gypsy and Travellers Needs Assessment
 - Biodiversity
 - Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Schemes
 - Housing Strategy

2.12 The SHLAA is one of these baseline documents. The main aim of the SHLAA in this context is:

- To ensure there is an adequate housing supply in the borough for the first 5 years and if possible years 6-15,
- To ensure that the requirement set out in the RSS is met.

3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

AIMS OF THE SHLAA STUDY

3.1 The aims of the SHLAA study are as follows:

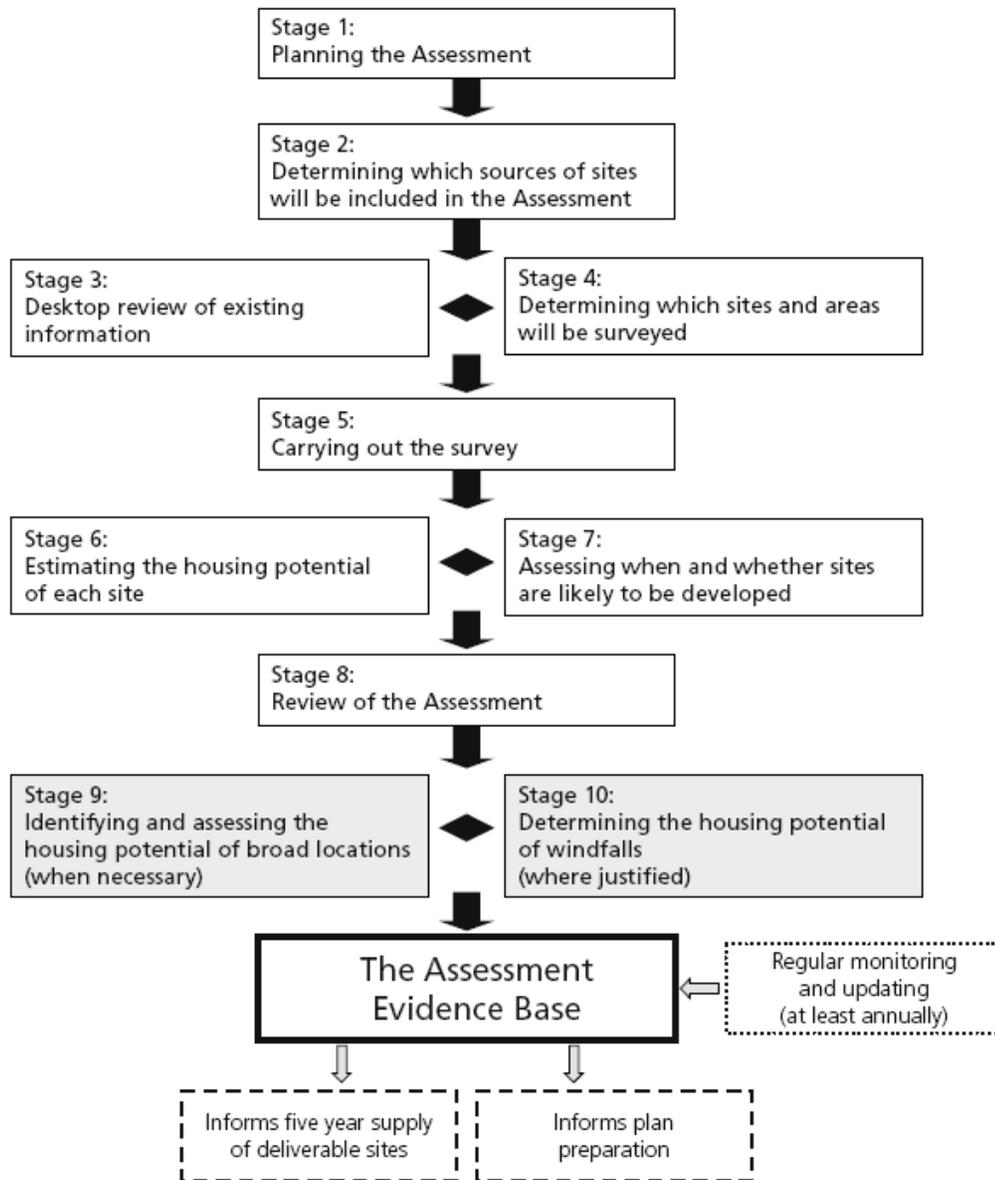
- To identify land and buildings that have development potential for housing
- To assess the potential level of housing provision on the identified land/buildings
- To assess developability of the sites by identifying constraints and sustainability issues that may make the sites unavailable or unsuitable for future development. In other words assess when they are likely to be developed if at all.

OBJECTIVES OF STUDY

3.2 The objectives of the SHLAA study are as follows:

- To provide a robust evidence base to assist in the production of the Core Strategy
- To rank sites in terms of their developability in order to establish whether they are suitable for inclusion as available land within the first five years of the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS)
- CLG guidance states that as a minimum such studies should aim to identify sufficient specific sites for at least the first 10 years of a plan from the anticipated date of its adoption, and ideally for longer than the whole 15-year plan period. This study will make provision for these longer-range forecasts.

DIAGRAMMATIC STAGES OF THE ASSESSMENT (*figure 1*)



Source: CLG SHLAA guidance (2007)

4. SOURCES OF SUPPLY AND SURVEY AREA

IDENTIFYING THE SURVEY AREA

4.1 The CLG guidance states that a study should aim to identify as many sites with housing potential in and around as many settlements as possible within a study area. For the purpose of this study, the survey area is defined as the borough of Ribble Valley with focus being on identifying sites within or immediately adjacent to settlements identified within the Ribble Valley Districtwide Local Plan.

4.2 The following list identifies the settlements that appear within that document.

- | | |
|------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Wilpshire | 18. Hurst Green |
| 2. Clitheroe | 19. Langho |
| 3. Longridge | 20. Mellor |
| 4. Whalley | 21. Newton |
| 5. Billington | 22. Osbaldeston |
| 6. Mellor Brook | 23. Pendleton |
| 7. Read and Simonstone | 24. Ribchester |
| 8. Barrow | 25. Rimington |
| 9. Bolton By Bowland | 26. Sabden |
| 10. Copster Green | 27. Sawley |
| 11. Chatburn | 28. Slaidburn |
| 12. Chipping | 29. Tosside |
| 13. Downham | 30. Waddington |
| 14. Dunsop Bridge | 31. West Bradford |
| 15. Gisburn | 32. Wiswell |
| 16. Grindleton | 33. Worston |
| 17. Holden | |

4.3 Whilst the Council is aware of the replacement of the Joint Lancashire Structure Plan (**JLSP**) with RSS, the settlement hierarchy has been 'saved'. Therefore the settlements of Clitheroe, Whalley, Longridge are identified as key service areas. It is possible that this hierarchy will

change; however if this does occur, this will be highlighted in future SHLAAs. Wilpshire is in a unique position in that it is seen as part of the urban area of Blackburn as part of the regional plan (RSS) and this is acknowledged as part of the SHLAA process.

CONSIDERING THE SOURCES OF SUPPLY

4.4 The CLG guidance sets out where Ribble Valley should look for sites that have the potential for housing, and should therefore be considered as part of the assessment. These potential sites can be subdivided into two categories.

- Those already in the planning process;
- Those not already in the planning process.

4.5 Those already in the planning process consist of sites with existing planning permissions for housing⁹ and allocations for residential development. The later are sites that are allocated within the Districtwide Local Plan for housing development however Ribble Valley does not have any remaining land allocated for residential use.

4.6 In terms of sites allocated for other uses, there is an allocated employment site in Longridge for employment use. The owners of this site requested that the site be assessed for residential use however and therefore it has been included within the SHLAA. To help determine what land use this site should be used for, this site was also considered within the Employment Land and Retail study¹⁰ which concluded that there is a need for employment land in Longridge though if the SHLAA showed there to be a strong need for housing development then the Council should consider its release to housing. This is something that will be addressed within the LDF as it develops.

4.7 In terms of those sites not currently in the planning process these can include any of the following.

- Vacant and derelict land and buildings,
- Land in non-residential use that may be suitable for re-development for housing in planning and land use terms. This can include uses such as commercial buildings, additional housing opportunities in established residential areas (such as under used garage blocks), sites in rural settlements, rural exceptions sites and urban extensions to the existing key settlement areas.

⁹ This information was readily available from the Council's Housing Land Availability Schedule, which is updated biannually.

¹⁰ Undertaken by the Be Group consultants as part of the LDF evidence base (published in November 2008 and available to view at www.ribblevalley.gov.uk)

5. METHODOLOGY FOR IDENTIFYING THE SUPPLY

5.1 The Council used the following sources of information to identify potential housing sites:

- Sites identified via a settlement audit carried out by planning officers: October 2006
- Sites promoted by developers/ landowners/ planning agents as part of the LDF process: February 2007
- Press release calling for site identification: March 2008
- Request form from Council website (site identification survey- see appendix 7): March 2008
- Sites refused for residential development within the last three years on the grounds of pre-maturity
- Discussions with development control officers

5.2 The CLG guidance states that 'particular types of land or areas may be excluded from the assessment' on condition that sufficient justification is provided'. As a result the following were not considered.

- **National Land Use Database (NLUD):** The NLUD is a national database of Brownfield land sites that each borough in the country provides an annual return for. The information from each borough's return is collated by English Partnerships. The NLUD was not used in this year's assessment, however English Partnerships has changed the way in which the information for this database is sourced. Information is now taken from completed SHLAAs and new sites that have come forward. As this is Ribble Valley's first SHLAA, information from NLUD will not be relevant and any sites that have come forward will be picked up through the MVM system¹¹.
- **Unimplemented/outstanding planning permissions for housing and unimplemented/outstanding planning permissions for housing that are under construction:** Unimplemented/ outstanding planning permissions for housing were not used to identify potential sites in the first SHLAA as these had already been determined as suitable for residential development.

¹¹ This is a database that the Council uses to record information on planning applications, enquiries and pre-application advice. This system can also generate reports to provide key statistics.

6. SITE SURVEY

- 6.1 Once a list of all the identified sites had been collated¹², an initial desktop study of each of the sites was undertaken prior to visiting the site. This assisted in identifying potential constraints on development. Aspects that were considered included assessing the Conservation Area status, whether there were any Listed Buildings on site and identifying if there were any other protective or restrictive designations. Relevant planning histories were also explored to examine whether there had been any historic restraints on development. In addition to this, aerial photographs were obtained for each area and the site boundary drawn. These proved useful prior to the site visits to give some context to the suggested site, but also when out on site as they could be used to confirm the location of some of the sites where it was difficult to be certain.
- 6.2 To ensure a consistent approach to evaluation of the sites, at both the desktop and on-site stage, a standard assessment form was devised to ensure that the same criteria were applied to each site. This form involved gathering information on the following:
- Site area and boundaries (all sites will be recorded on a 1:1250 map base)
 - Current Land Use(s)
 - Landscape/ Topography
 - Visual Prominence
 - Highway Issues
 - Neighbouring Uses
- 6.3 Following the site visits, all sites were subject to more detailed evaluation to assess their potential capacity in terms of how many houses could be built on site and whether they were likely to be developed in the short, medium or longer term.

The identification of a site at this stage does not in any way prejudice what may happen should a planning application be submitted.

The purpose of this study is to identify potential areas of development which will then still need to be explored fully throughout the Development Control process.

¹² Of which there were 308 sites

7. ESTIMATING THE HOUSING POTENTIAL OF EACH SITE

7.1 To accurately calculate the amount of potential housing land across the borough, it was necessary to estimate the potential capacity of each of the sites. This was basically an assessment of how many houses could be developed on each of the sites. In doing this for each identified site, the following factors were taken into account:

- Physical constraints
- Major policy constraints
- Neighbouring uses
- Design issues/ area character
- Density – to estimate the development potential of each site and calculate capacity, a density of 40 dwellings per hectare was used for the key service centres¹³ and a density of 35 dwellings per hectare was used in the remaining settlements¹⁴. This is compliant with Government guidance¹⁵.
- Accessibility to infrastructure/ facilities (main road network, shops, schools, doctors)

Initial site filtering and sustainability criteria

7.2 In assessing all of the above factors for each site, a set of sustainability scoring criteria was used. This was essentially a list of 21 questions regarding the site, incorporating the above factors, with scores given to each of the questions dependent upon the answer.

7.3 The same criteria were applied to every site to ensure that a comprehensive and consistent approach was applied. A final criteria score was calculated from each of the 21 questions, which assisted in determining the sustainability of each of the sites. The sustainability criteria are set out in the appendix 1 of the report.

7.4 In addition to scoring the sites in terms of their sustainability, it was at this stage that some of the sites were excluded from the SHLAA study.

Sites were excluded where the following was applicable:

- a) Where an existing employment use (operational at time of site visit) was evident.** In the key service centres, this meant that sites that were operational strategic employers would be excluded from the SHLAA (see appendix 6). In the villages, businesses that were

¹³ For the purposes of this SHLAA this included Clitheroe, Longridge and Whalley (as designated Key Service Centres in the Districtwide Local Plan) and Wilpshire (as designated as a key growth area within the Regional Spatial Strategy).

¹⁴ Referred to during this SHLAA as 'villages'.

¹⁵ See paragraph 47 of PPS3.

operational at time of survey were excluded. This was a mechanism to ensure that the delivery of housing land in the borough would not compromise the economic development of the borough.

- b) **Garden sites** were excluded from the SHLAA as there were a sufficient number of alternative sites that weren't garden sites. Where a site encompassed both garden land and non-garden land, only the non-garden land was assessed and the net site area amended to reflect this. It may be that garden sites will be considered in later revisions of the SHLAA, however in this particular assessment they were not taken forward.
- c) Sites were also excluded **where housing development had started or was newly completed** on a site. This resulted in the site being unavailable for residential development (as development had already taken place). This occurred on a number of sites as development through the planning application process came forward quicker than the completion of this SHLAA exercise.
- d) Sites within the key service centres **that were 0.20ha¹⁶ or less** were also excluded from the SHLAA as Ribble Valley considered that these sites were not of a sufficient size for the purposes of a strategic level assessment. It is important to note that this threshold is not used when determining planning applications and any of the sites that have been excluded from the SHLAA for being 0.20ha or less could still come forward as windfall sites.
- e) **Sites that are wholly within the Greenbelt.** Sites where the whole site area fell within the greenbelt were excluded, as this is a national land designation that is restrictive to development. In some cases a section of the site fell outside of the greenbelt. Where this was the case, the section of the site that was outside of the greenbelt was calculated as the net site area and this was taken forward. If this occurred on a site within a key service centre and the net area (minus the greenbelt) was brought below 0.20ha, then the site would then be excluded (in line with section d of paragraph 7.4).

7.5 Following the filtering process, a list of 'excluded' sites and a list of 'included' sites was produced. The former is essentially a list of sites that would not be considered as part of the SHLAA process and the later a list of sites that would be considered and assessed further. These lists are available to view in appendix 2 and 3 of this report.

¹⁶ This is equivalent to approximately half of an acre.

8. ASSESSING WHEN AND WHETHER SITES ARE LIKELY TO BE DEVELOPED

8.1 Once the site filtering and scoring had been undertaken, it was found that 133 sites were excluded¹⁷ from the SHLAA and 175 sites were taken forward as potential housing sites. These were then assessed against the requirements of PPS3 and the CLG guidance to establish whether they were ‘deliverable’ or, if not, if they were ‘developable’ for housing development. **This resulted in the potential for the development of 10,054 houses on 266ha of land.**

DELIVERABILITY

To be considered **deliverable** (and therefore deliverable in the short term) a site must fulfil the following criteria:

- Be suitable
- Be available
- Be achievable

8.2 Within each of these three criteria (i.e. suitable, available and achievable) there are a series of tests. The detail of these tests is set out in detail further in this chapter. Whether a site passes these tests or not determines if they are suitable, available and achievable for development.

8.3 If a site was found to be suitable, available and achievable then it was considered to be deliverable. This means that a site has the potential to deliver housing from the land use allocation in the RSS within the short term- that is, within the first five years.

DEVELOPABILITY

8.4 PPS3 states that in addition to the deliverable sites LPAs should identify a further supply of specific developable sites for the medium term and, where possible, the long term.

8.5 Where a site was not considered to be deliverable, the site was viewed as **developable** within the medium to long term. To be developable “a site should be in a suitable location for housing development and there should be a reasonable prospect that the site is available for, and could be developed at a specific point in time¹⁸”. This is determined by using the tests set out for assessing suitability, availability and achievability but for a site to be developable (unlike for a site to be deliverable) the site does not have to meet all these tests.

¹⁷ This resulted in 50ha of land being excluded from the study, which would have allowed for a potential of 1,840 houses. These were excluded as they did not meet the criteria of the SHLAA methodology, as discussed in section 7 of this report.

¹⁸ CLG Practice Guidance.

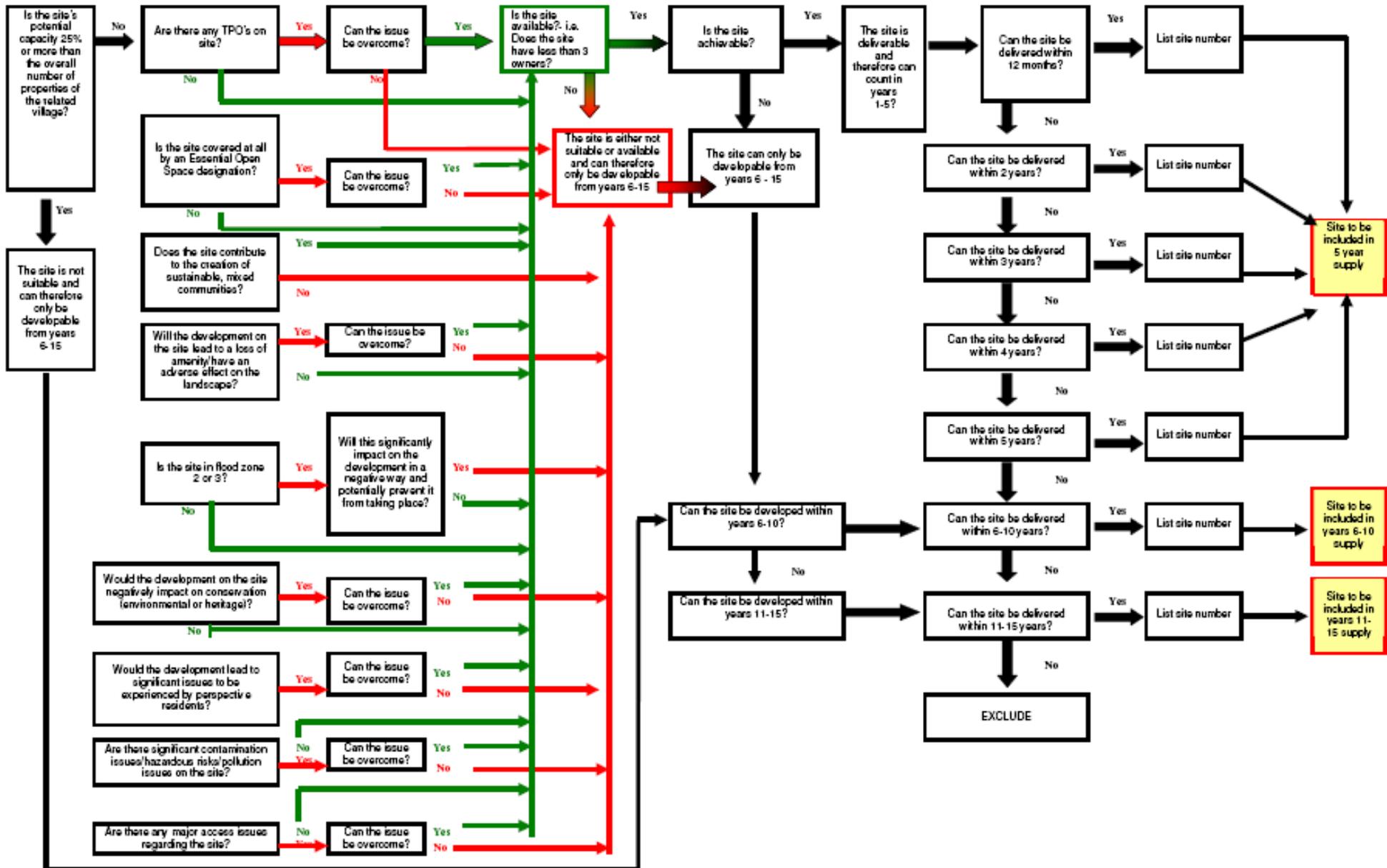
8.6 The SHLAA aims to assess within which year sites might come forward. Therefore, for the purposes of clarity, the following applies.

- Short term= years 0-5 from time of SHLAA Deliverable
- Medium term= years 6-10 from time of SHLAA Developable
- Long term= years 11-15 from time of SHLAA Developable

8.7 A flow chart that clearly illustrates the process of determining deliverability and developability is shown at figure 2. Ribble Valley Borough Council formulated this flowchart based on the CLG guidance. This shows the process that Ribble Valley followed in assessing each of the 175 sites with the potential for housing. Using this flow chart helps to determine whether sites will come forward in the short, medium or long term. This same process was applied to each of the sites to ensure transparency in decision-making.

Figure 2

Flow chart to show SHLAA process of determining land supply, including the tests of suitability, availability and achievability



8.8 The first stage in assessing deliverability and developability is to assess the **suitability** of each of the sites.

Suitability

8.9 *A site is suitable for housing if it offers a suitable location for development and would contribute to the creation of sustainable, mixed communities... The following factors should be considered to assess a site's suitability for housing, now or in the future:*

- *Policy restrictions;*
- *Physical problems or limitations;*
- *Potential impacts; and*
- *The environmental conditions¹⁹.*

8.10 To thoroughly assess the suitability of each of the sites, a set of ten suitability criteria were formulated, based on the SHLAA practice guidance. These were as follows:

- 1) Is the site's potential capacity 25% or more than the overall number of properties of the related village?
- 2) Are there any Tree Preservation Orders on site?
- 3) Is the site covered at all by an Essential Open Space Designation?
- 4) Does the site contribute to the creation of sustainable, mixed communities?
- 5) Will the development on the site lead to a loss of amenity or have an adverse effect on the landscape?
- 6) Is the site in flood zone 2 or 3?
- 7) Would the development on the site negatively impact on conservation (environmental or heritage)?
- 8) Would the development lead to significant issues to be experienced by prospective residents?
- 9) Are there significant contamination issues/hazardous risks/pollution on the site?
- 10) Are there any major access issues regarding the site?

¹⁹ CLG guidance.

8.11 These criteria (and how they relate to assessing suitability overall) can be seen in figure 2. Each are set out below in greater detail. If a site failed any of the suitability criteria and these issues could not be overcome then the site was not considered as suitable and therefore not deliverable as part of the 5 year supply. Instead, the site was considered in the medium to long term (years 6-15). As the SHLAA process is updated annually then some of these year 6-15 sites may eventually come forward into the 5-year supply.

POTENTIAL CAPACITY OF SITES

8.12 The first of the suitability criteria focussed on the potential capacity of the sites in the villages. To ensure that a site is proportional to the size of the village that it belongs, it was decided that if a sites' potential capacity exceeded 25% of the overall number of properties of the related village then it would not be deemed suitable for development within the short term (the next 5 years). This automatically resulted in the site falling into the medium to long term, i.e. years 6-15 supply. The precise category²⁰ that it will come forward in will be determined later in the SHLAA process (see section 9 of this report).

8.13 The 25% threshold was not applied to the key service centres or to sites within the existing settlement boundaries but it was applied to sites that were immediately adjacent to the G3 and G4 village settlements²¹. If a site was remote from a G3 and G4 settlement boundary it was excluded. Numbers of properties within each of the settlements were counted using the query facility in GGP²² (using the Address Point information²³). A full listing of these sites can be found in appendix 4 of this report.

TREE PRESERVATION ORDERS (TPO)

8.14 One of the tests of suitability asked if the site was affected by a TPO. Where this was the case, the Council's Countryside Officer was consulted. The Countryside Officer stated that any sites with trees growing either within the site and/ or around the perimeter would be affected in the following way:

"There will be restrictions on the developability of any site on which there are trees growing both within and/or around the perimeter of a site. This is due to the influencing distance that trees have on site constraints and tree resentment issues²⁴"

8.15 When assessing the SHLAA sites affected by a TPO, it was found that in the majority of cases, the TPO would not prevent development from taking place, but instead could be progressed with restrictions.

²⁰ Whether this is years 6-10 or 11-15 years

²¹ G3 and G4 settlements are outlined within the Districtwide Local Plan but include all settlements in the District apart from Wilpshire, Clitheroe, Longridge and Whalley.

²² GGP is an electronic mapping system that the Council uses to record and analyse data.

²³ This task was undertaken on 20/11/08

²⁴ Email from RVBC Countryside Officer, David Hewitt, January 2009.

ESSENTIAL OPEN SPACE

8.16 Another of the tests of suitability related to whether the site was affected by a current Essential Open Space (EOS) designation. This could be determined by cross-referencing sites with the saved Districtwide Local Plan. Where a site was designated as EOS for a use such as play space this issue could be overcome, since such uses could be relocated. Where the site was EOS as it was used, for example, for a car park to a business, then it was felt that this issue could not be overcome as losing this EOS would affect the commercial viability of the related business.

CONTRIBUTION TO SUSTAINABLE/ MIXED COMMUNITIES

8.17 In assessing the suitability of each of the potential sites, the CLG guidance requests that we ensure that sites contribute to the creation of sustainable, mixed communities. To adequately assess this we looked at the settlement hierarchy methodology (which is based on CLG guidance) and used eight indicators of settlement sustainability. If the site fell within a settlement that could satisfy all of the eight indicators then it would contribute to the creation of sustainable/ mixed communities.

8.18 The eight indicators of settlement sustainability are set out below.

- The presence of a bus stop
- The presence of a food shop/store
- The presence of recreational land or a recreational facility
- The presence of a village hall
- The accessibility to broadband
- The presence of health provision
- The presence of educational provision
- The presence of employment

8.19 Each of these indicators of settlement sustainability have their own criteria that must be met in order for the site to contribute to the creation of sustainable/ mixed communities. These are as follows:

- **Bus Stop-** to contribute to sustainable/mixed communities a bus stop must be present within the settlement boundary.
- **Food shop/ store-** to contribute to sustainable/mixed communities a food shop or store must be present within the settlement boundary or within 400m of the settlement boundary.
- **Recreational Land/Facility-** to contribute to sustainable/mixed communities there must be present recreational land or a recreational

facility within the settlement boundary or within 800m of the settlement boundary.

- **Village hall**- to contribute to sustainable/mixed communities there must be a village hall within the settlement boundary or within 600m of the settlement boundary.
- **Broadband access**- to contribute to sustainable/mixed communities, broadband access must be available within the settlement boundary.
- **Health provision**- to contribute to sustainable/mixed communities there must be health provision present within the settlement boundary or within 1000m of the settlement boundary.
- **Educational provision**- to contribute to sustainable/mixed communities there must be a primary school within the settlement boundary or within 600m of the settlement boundary.
- **Employment**- although the presence of employment is an important part of creating balanced and mixed/sustainable communities, in Ribble Valley, which is a predominantly rural area, there must be an acceptance that employment will not necessarily always be found within the same village as housing opportunities, particularly the smaller settlements. This indicator is therefore excluded from our SHLAA in terms of assessing if the site contributes to the creation of sustainable/mixed communities.

8.20 After applying these indicators to each of the settlements, some of the settlements didn't satisfy all of the indicators. The settlements that did not meet all the indicators (and therefore did not have all the necessary services to contribute to the creation of sustainable/ mixed communities are set out below.

- Holden does not have 5 of the services
- Wiswell does not have 5 of the services
- Worston does not have 5 of the services
- Pendleton does not have 4 of the services
- Copster Green does not have 4 of the services
- Sawley does not have 4 of the services
- Wilpshire does not have 4 of the services
- Tosside does not have 3 of the services
- Grindleton does not have 3 of the services

- Newton does not have 3 of the services
- Osbaldeston does not have 3 of the services
- Rimington does not have 3 of the services
- West Bradford does not have 2 of the services
- Downham does not have 2 of the services

8.21 Due to its close proximity to Blackburn and also its designation as a growth area in the RSS, the view was taken that any development in the settlement of Wilpshire would still lead to the development of mixed and sustainable communities. It was also felt that the spatial proximity of Wiswell to the key service centre of Whalley would allow for the creation of mixed communities in terms of SHLAA sites in this settlement.

8.22 With the exception of Wilpshire and Wiswell therefore, where there were sites with the potential for housing development within any of the settlements listed above which do not have 3 or more of the listed services then it was determined that the sites would not contribute to the creation of sustainable, mixed communities.

8.23 Also, for the purposes of this element of the SHLAA, sites in locations not designated as settlements in the settlement hierarchy²⁵ do not contribute to the creation of sustainable/mixed communities.

8.24 The settlements that do not contribute to the creation of sustainable/mixed communities are listed below.

- | | |
|-----------------|---------------|
| • Holden | • Newton |
| • Pendleton | • Osbaldeston |
| • Wosrton | • Rimington |
| • Copster Green | • Sawley |
| • Grindleton | • Tosside |

8.25 Following the settlement hierarchy methodology assisted in adhering to the principles of sustainable development set out in Planning Policy Statement 1 (**PPS1**). The extract below illustrates that the settlement hierarchy methodology clearly considers the issues of sustainable development, particularly in ensuring that suitable land is made available in line with economic, social and environmental objectives to improve people's quality of life.

²⁵ As they are in locations that are too small to be regarded as settlements.

8.26 Planning should facilitate and promote sustainable and inclusive patterns of urban and rural development by:

- Making suitable land available for development in line with economic, social and environmental objectives to improve people's quality of life;
- Contributing to sustainable economic development
- Protecting and enhancing the natural and historic environment, the quality and character of the countryside, and existing communities;
- Ensuring high quality development through good and inclusive design, and the efficient use of resources; and,
- Ensuring that development supports existing communities and contributes to the creation of safe, sustainable, liveable and mixed communities with good access to jobs and key services for all members of the community²⁶.

LOSS OF AMENITY SPACE/ ADVERSE IMPACT UPON THE LANDSCAPE

8.27 Another aspect of assessing the suitability of the sites looked at whether development on the site would lead to a loss of amenity space or have an adverse impact upon the landscape. This involved a partnership approach to assessment by working with a Senior Development Control Planning Officer to obtain their opinion of this issue.

8.28 Although subjective and varying on a site-by-site basis, it was possible to make an informed assumption about this issue on each of the sites even with the limited information available such as capacity and site size. For the majority of sites, even when there was a potential issue with a loss of amenity space or an adverse impact upon the landscape, this issue could be overcome.

SITES IN FLOOD RISK-ZONES 2 AND 3

8.29 In determining suitability, paragraph D14 on page 28 of PPS25²⁷ states that flood risk should be taken into account.

8.30 In the PPS25 definition, **dwelling houses** are classified as a '**more vulnerable**' use of land.

8.31 PPS25 states that '**more vulnerable**' uses of land are **appropriate** in flood zone 2'.

8.32 In flood zone 3 however, '**more vulnerable**' uses are only permitted if the site is on a previously developed site. Therefore, in principle the sites in flood zone 3 that are on **previously developed land (PDL)** are **appropriate**.

²⁶ Extract taken from PPS1: delivering Sustainable Development

²⁷ PPS25: Development and Flood Risk

8.33 If a site falls within flood zone 3 but is not on PDL then the site must pass the exception test outlined in PPS25. Information is given below on the criteria required to pass this exception test.

8.34 For the exception test to be passed the development proposals must:

- a) **Demonstrate that the development provides wider sustainability benefits that outweigh flood risk;**
- b) **Be able to demonstrate that there are no reasonable alternative sites on pdl.**

In order to justify these criteria (a) and (b) PPS25 states that,

- c) **A Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) must demonstrate if the development will be safe, without increasing flood risk elsewhere.**

8.35 Where a site in flood zone 3 passed section (a) and (b) of the test then it was determined that the issue of flooding could be overcome.

8.36 It is important to acknowledge that a level 2 SFRA is required to justify these decisions. As Ribble Valley had not completed its level 1-SFRA and had no timetable set out for a level 2-SFRA whilst this SHLAA was being undertaken, then there is a possibility that a reduced degree of accuracy regarding the suitability of the sites (in terms of flooding) has been incorporated.

8.37 As a result of this, and to assist with decision making to increase the level of accuracy as much as possible, where, in our opinion, the risk of flooding could not be overcome, then the Environment Agency was consulted for further advice. The Environment Agency considered these sites and wrote back to us with a list of recommendations. As a result, on the sites where there remained a risk of flooding on part of the site, then the net area of the site was adjusted accordingly to represent the area of the site that could still be developed.

8.38 In the absence of a completed SFRA, information was used from GGP²⁸, which used data from the July 2007 Flood Risk Overlay maps. It is anticipated that the SFRA will be completed by the time an update of the SHLAA is undertaken.

NEGATIVE IMPACT UPON CONSERVATION

8.39 This test of suitability looked at the issue of conservation. For the purposes of this test, 'conservation' related to both heritage conservation and environmental conservation.

8.40 Where it was evident that the development may potentially have an impact on heritage conservation, the Council's Design and Conservation

²⁸ GGP is the Council's Geographical Information System, which includes maps and overlays of visual data such as flood risk maps.

Officer was consulted to determine if this issue could be overcome or whether it would prevent any residential development being undertaken on the site.

8.41 In terms of assessing the impact of environmental conservation, specific details for each site had already been collected as part of the sustainability criteria. This included information such as the presence of sites of special scientific interest (SSSIs), County Biological Heritage sites (CBH), Local Nature Reserves (LNRs), Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) quarry information and Mineral Notification Areas.

8.42 The earlier collection of this information assisted in determining the impact of the potential housing development upon the environmental conservation of the site. This stage was undertaken in partnership with the Council's Countryside Officer.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES EXPERIENCED BY PROSPECTIVE RESIDENTS

8.43 Another of the ten tests of suitability related to whether prospective residents of the developments would be affected if the development were to go ahead.

8.44 This was assessed by the SHLAA team members and occasionally in consultation with Environmental Health where it was felt that bad neighbour uses might cause a potential problem.

8.45 As with other tests of suitability, the information previously gathered for the sustainability criteria was valuable in accurately assessing this.

SIGNIFICANT CONTAMINATION ISSUES/HAZARDOUS RISKS/ POLLUTION ON THE SITE: LANDFILL GAS

8.46 The penultimate test of suitability assessed if a site was affected by significant contamination issues, hazardous risks or pollution on the site.

8.47 To determine if a site was suitable in these terms, it was necessary to determine if a site fell on top of or within the consultation zone for landfill gas or a high-pressure pipeline. Advice was sought from the Environment Agency to assist with the assessment of this test of suitability.

8.48 The following advice relates to the sites that are within the consultation zone for landfill gas but not directly on top of the landfill site.

8.49 *"Where a development is proposed adjacent to or within 250m of a former landfill site, the major concern is landfill gas migration. We feel that landfill gas is more of a human health concern, as there is no detrimental effect on controlled waters. Although the EA is currently the statutory consultee on landfill gas, we issued local advice to each council in the area several years ago that said unless a development was actually proposed on top of a former landfill, we didn't need to see it. If a development is not on a landfill, and there are no other obvious land*

contamination issues, then landfill gas is something that can be dealt with through appropriate construction techniques. However, I would advise you to contact your Environmental Health department to discuss landfill gas as they will probably know more about it than us²⁹.

8.50 In response to this advice, it was determined that any site proposed adjacent to or within 250m of a former landfill site would be shown to the Council's Environmental Health Department to consider if this issue could be overcome or whether it would prevent residential development occurring on the site. Environmental Health stated that **if a site is adjacent to or within 250m of a former landfill site then this issue can be overcome with mitigation measures.** These mitigation implications may make the site financially unviable for development, however in terms of the effect of contamination on the suitability of the site then this issue can be overcome.

8.51 In terms of the sites that are directly upon landfill, the following advice was received from the Environment Agency:

8.52 *"Where a development is actually proposed on top of a former landfill site, there are contaminated land concerns, both in terms of the risk to human health and the risk of pollution to controlled waters. Landfill gas would still be a concern, but it would need to be considered as part of a full site investigation/desk study. Such a survey would be required to determine the extent of contamination on site, whether or not the proposed use was appropriate given any contamination and if not, whether a remediation of the site would facilitate the development. Now depending on how contaminated a site is, there is always likely to be a remediation solution, however this may be constrained by cost, which in turn may affect the viability of a development. Considering the precautionary approach advocated in PPS23³⁰, this is going to be something you will need to consider if any of the sites highlighted by the SHLAA are on such sites³¹"*

8.53 In response to this advice, it was determined that the sites on top of a former landfill site should be considered by the Environment Agency to determine if this impact on the suitability of the site could be overcome.

8.54 Once the Environment Agency had sufficient time to consider these sites, advice was received back. There was only one site where it was seen as potentially impossible to mitigate the effects of landfill gas. The site in question was flagged up as having a potential risk of pollution, which in turn could result in a risk to human health and controlled waters.

²⁹ Phillip Carter, Planning Liaison Officer, Environment Agency (December 2008).

³⁰ PPS23: Planning and Pollution Control (2004)

³¹ Phillip Carter, Planning Liaison Officer, Environment Agency (December 2008).

SIGNIFICANT CONTAMINATION ISSUES/HAZARDOUS RISKS/ POLLUTION ON THE SITE: HIGH PRESSURE PIPELINE

- 8.55 For the sites that fell within the consultation zones of a high-pressure pipeline, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) was consulted. This was done using the HSE PADHI+ system (Planning Advice for Development near Hazardous Installations), which is an online tool, used by LPAs to gain advice from the HSE regarding proposed developments.
- 8.56 Various details are requested by the system and on the basis of these a response is generated. As well as consulting with the HSE it is also required that the pipeline operator is consulted, eg. National Grid or Huntsman, to seek their comments on the proposals. This was done by e-mail.
- 8.57 For all but one site that fell within a consultation zone, results from the HSE and the PADHI+ system showed that development would be possible. The only site where an issue was raised related to a site in West Bradford where the HSE advised against development.

MAJOR ACCESS ISSUES

- 8.58 The final suitability criteria related to access issues. Where it was felt that there were major access issues that would negatively impact upon the sites, the Highways Officer at Lancashire County Council (**LCC**)³² was consulted and advice sought on these sites to determine if this issue could be overcome.
- 8.59 It was found that potential access issues could be overcome on the majority of sites where access had been flagged as a potential constraint to the suitability of development.

³² Martin Nugent, Traffic and Development Engineer at Lancashire County Council

8.60 Following the tests of suitability, the availability of sites needed to be assessed. This assisted in assessing the delivery and developability of each of the sites.

Availability

8.61 *A site considered available for development, when, on the best information available³³, there is confidence that there are no legal or ownership problems such as multiple ownerships, ransom strips³⁴, tenancies or operational requirements of landowners³⁵.*

8.62 In some instances persons putting forward potential sites will have provided sufficient information for us to evaluate the availability of a site, but in others further investigation will be required. This level of detail may prove difficult to obtain and where the information is not known it may be necessary to contact the Land Registry or request further details from persons/individuals known to have an interest in the site.

GENERAL APPROACH

8.63 The availability of each potential and suitable site was assessed in terms of land ownership.

8.64 As per the CLG Guidance, the assessment was carried out on the best information available. Where the best information available was inconclusive, it was necessary to decide whether the land would be deemed to be available or unavailable. In such cases where the land has, at this stage, been deemed available; this assessment will be revised if and when better available evidence comes to light in respect of a given parcel of land.

8.65 This approach has been adopted since it is hoped that publication of this SHLAA Report will, in itself, act as a catalyst to draw such owners out into the open and highlight any further potential issues. It is envisaged that an (overly) inclusive approach, is preferable, at this stage, to an (overly) restrictive approach, in that the former:

- allows scope for further and better information to come forward and to be considered; and
- affords a broader base of potentially affected landowners with the opportunity to contact us.

8.66 The steps carried out in order to assess legal or ownership problems were as follows:

³³ This can be confirmed by legal searched but these can only be relied upon for a short period (CLG guidance)

³⁴ Also known as an access strip (CLG guidance)

³⁵ CLG guidance (2007)

AGENT/ LANDOWNER SUBMISSIONS

8.67 Where the land ownership was known (as the information had been included with the site submission) then the land ownership information was inputted directly into the SHLAA database.

8.68 Where the land ownership was not known, but the site had been submitted by someone who had included their own contact details (i.e. a land or planning agent of the house or landowner), then this person was contacted in order to try to ascertain ownership. A copy of the letter sent to these agents can be found in appendix 5 of this report.

8.69 The information received back as a result of these requests was then entered into the SHLAA database.

8.70 The letter sent to these individuals stated that if they did not respond within a specified time frame then we would determine there to be no ownership issues relating to the site. In a small number of cases, this situation occurred. We therefore determined there to be no ownership issues relating to these sites.

SETTLEMENT AUDIT IDENTIFIED SITES

8.71 Where a site was identified through the Council's own survey work (through the settlement audit) and no consultee details were available, index map searches of Land Registry records were undertaken by the Council's Legal Department. This enabled us to establish the number of titles, if any, registered in respect of each site.

8.72 Where the results of these index map searches showed land to be unregistered, the Council was unable to find out about legal or ownership problems in respect of that particular site (or that particular part of the site), i.e. we felt that we had reached the end of the road in terms of best available information. A working assumption was therefore made that this land would be deemed to be available. As explained above, if and when further information becomes available in respect of the ownership of such sites, a further assessment will be necessary.

8.73 Where the results of the index map search showed that there was only one title in respect of that site, the following approach was adopted.

- Sites that have the potential capacity to deliver 15 or more houses were viewed as being 'large' sites. This is in line with PPS3³⁶. A decision was taken that due to the amount of residential development that these sites could provide, a more accurate assessment of site ownership was required. Therefore on sites involving registered land with the potential for more than 15 dwellings, office copies were

³⁶ PPS3 states that sites of over fifteen dwellings are required to provide an element of affordable housing. Therefore in terms of the SHLAA, Ribble Valley takes this site size threshold to represent 'large' sites.

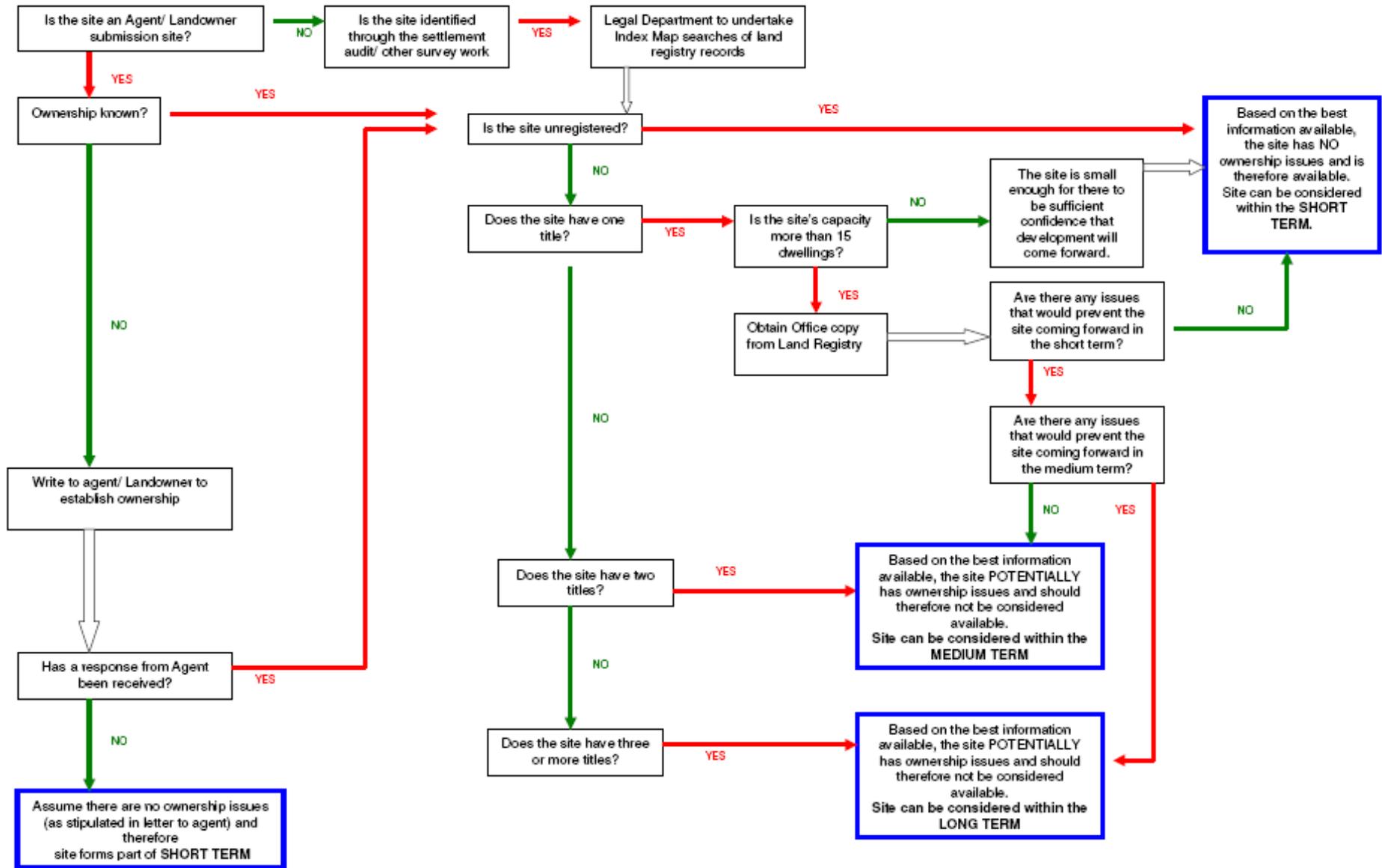
obtained from the Land Registry. This information provided us with the names of the registered proprietors for the land in that site.

- For sites with the capacity for less than 15 dwellings, these were viewed as 'small' sites. On small sites there is a sufficient degree of confidence that development could be secured. Therefore, the names of those with the title to the land were not obtained.

8.74 As with the sites that had one title, where the legal searches showed there to be multiple titles, a further search was undertaken by the land registry, to establish who owned the title of the land. This process was undertaken on all sites (irrelevant of capacity threshold).

8.75 A flow chart that explains this can be found at figure 3.

Figure 3: Flow chart showing SHLAA process in determining the availability of sites.



- 8.76 As set out in the flow chart at figure 3, it was necessary to establish when the land might come forward for development in terms of availability alone. The following criteria were therefore applied to each site.
1. Where a site was unregistered, the agent had stated that there were no ownership issues, or only one registered proprietor was shown on the office copies (land registry searches), the site was deemed to be deliverable within the short term (years 0-5).
 2. Where legal searches showed there to be two owners, it was felt these sites would be available in the medium term (years 6-10).
 3. Where there were 3 or more owners, it was determined that these sites would not be available until the long term (years 11-15).
- 8.77 This approach predominantly focuses on how many titles a site has in terms of assessing availability as the SHLAA is intended to be an indicative study of possible sites rather than a firm legal assessment of the viability of actual sites.
- 8.78 The timetables set out above relate to availability only. In order to assess years in which sites will come forward, the suitability and achievability of a site should be considered. The suitability of the site was discussed earlier in this chapter. The next section relates to assessing the achievability of sites.

Achievability

- 8.79 *A site is considered achievable for development when there is a reasonable prospect that housing will be developed on the site at a particular point in time. This is essentially a judgement about the economic viability of a site, and the capacity of the developer to complete and sell the housing over a certain period. It will be affected by market factors, cost factors and delivery factors. There are a number of residual valuation models available to help determine whether housing is an economically viable prospect for a particular site³⁷.*
- 8.80 To assist with the measurement of economic viability assessments, the SHLAA followed the methodology set out in the 2003 Entec report. This report was undertaken on behalf of the North West Regional Assembly (NWRA³⁸), and is a tried and tested method of establishing if a site is potentially economically viable.
- 8.81 Although much of this work was undertaken in-house, the CLG guidance highlights the usefulness of the views of house builders and local property agents³⁹. Therefore, Ribble Valley Borough Council worked jointly with members of the Housing and Employment Market Partnership (**HEMP**) group (as valuation experts) to assess the viability of the sites⁴⁰.
- 8.82 The data that fed into the economic viability assessments was as up to date as possible. However, the sites have no draft layout and are instead simply location plans with the proposed housing site outlined in red. Therefore as no specific data was available (i.e. as is provided with a planning application) it was necessary to use averaged data.
- 8.83 Average build costs (£/m²) and size (m²) were taken from the Building Cost Information Service's (BCIS) quarterly review of building prices⁴¹. Where necessary, some additional information was taken from SPON'S Architects and Builders Price Book 2009.
- 8.84 Average house price information was taken from an online house price information provider⁴², which uses information from the Land Registry on actual sales since the year 2000. The information on this website was last updated in November 2008 and was therefore as up to date as feasibly possible. In two settlements there were no sale prices available due to the small nature of the settlement and therefore it was necessary to look for current sale price information to assist in formulating an average cost of properties in these settlements.

³⁷ CLG guidance (2007)

³⁸ The NWRA became 4NW in 2008

³⁹ Two local Estate Agents and a Strategic Land Manager for UK -wide land developer were used for this task.

⁴⁰ CLG guidance states that house builder and local property agents should provide expertise and knowledge to help take a view on how market conditions may affect economic viability.

⁴¹ October 2008, Issue Number 11

⁴² www.nethouseprice.com

8.85 It was accepted that on the 'large' sites (sites of over 15 dwellings) there would be abnormal development costs, which needed to be incorporated into the overall development costs. This abnormal development cost figure was used to take the cost of affordable housing provision into account⁴³.

8.86 It was decided that in the absence of more detailed information for each site, an average figure of a 5% discount of the expected build costs was used as the abnormal development costs figure. Disposal fees were set at 4% GDV and land finance was set at 8%.

8.87 To assess the level of viability for each of the sites, it was necessary to make informed estimates regarding the potential development options for the site (i.e. is the development likely to be detached, semi-detached or mixed etc.). The potential development options were taken from the following.

1. Terraces/ Town Houses/ Mews (One-off Development)
2. Semi -Detached (One-off Development)
3. Detached (One-off Development)
4. Mixed Developments, housing (Mixed Estate)

8.88 The 'mixed developments' data was used on all sites over 15 dwellings and utilised the 'mixed development-housing' information from the BCIS. The remaining three options were chosen depending on the type of development on existing sites surrounding the proposed SHLAA site. So for example, if a site was situated in the middle of a terraced row, then the information for terrace properties was used to establish what build costs would be for the site as it would be expected that this is the type of development that would come forward.

8.89 The overall aim of assessing achievability was to determine whether "there was a reasonable prospect that housing will be developed"⁴⁴.

8.90 The aim, in undertaking the economic viability assessments, was to filter the sites as follows:

- Where a site was found to be economically viable, and was also shown to be suitable and available, then it would be considered to be a potentially deliverable site within the short term as part of the 5-year supply.

⁴³ It was for this reason that the abnormal development costs were only applied to schemes of a potential capacity of 15 dwellings or over. This 15 dwelling threshold was the affordable housing provision threshold used by RVBC at the time the SHLAA was undertaken.

⁴⁴ CLG guidance (2007)

- Where a site was not seen to be economically viable, then the site was not deliverable and therefore was considered as part of the medium-long term (years 6-15 supply).

Issues with achievability

8.91 As discussed, a partnership approach to assessing achievability of the sites was adopted by involving members of the HEMP group to act as assessors of viability⁴⁵. The assessors raised some issues that are discussed below.

8.92 These issues ranged from broad concerns about the current economic downturn⁴⁶ and its potential impact, to more specific concerns on the lack of detail on variables regarding specific developments that could influence viability.

8.93 For example, when assessing a development at planning permission stage it is generally possible to look at the specific details of a scheme, including information on building materials, the split of type and tenure on site and remediation solutions to name just a few. As the SHLAA sites remain as potential development sites that don't yet have draft layouts and actual schemes drawn up, it was recognised that it was not possible to apply this level of detail to each of the sites and that such detail went beyond the general intention of this assessment model.

8.94 As a result, as discussed in paragraph 8.82, averaged data had to be used which resulted in some loss of accuracy, but did provide an indication as to what may come forward on a site, consistent with a broad assessment. The data appraised was sourced from industry standard sources. Whilst the level of viability of the sites overall came out as relatively high, by using averaged data it was decided that the achievability of the sites would be considered again in detail at application stage. This ensured sites were not prevented from being considered as part of the 5-year supply because the information used in the achievability section of the process was based upon model assumptions.

8.95 It is worth noting two things at this stage in respect of the economic viability assessment:

- The economic viability of sites, is, necessarily, a moving target. What is achievable one day, may prove to be unachievable the next. As recent fluctuations with the economy have illustrated, it is impossible to estimate, with any degree of certainty, what may or may not be economically viable in respect of a given site at some point in the future, the exercise is therefore, at best, a hypothetical one; and

⁴⁵ CLG guidance states that LPAs should work with key stakeholders in preparing the SHLAA. Housing market partnerships should (and do in the case of Ribble Valley) include key stakeholders.

⁴⁶ During the preparation of the SHLAA the British economy moved into recession, which doesn't reflect the 'normal' situation, as the majority of developments would not be seen as viable.

- Practitioners involved in this part of the assessment process noted that they did not feel at ease with the methodology that was required of them in carrying out such a hypothetical SHLAA assessment (being used to firmer, more solid criteria for assessment in their day-to-day working life). The hypothetical nature of the assessment meant that they were being asked to estimate viability with regard to actual sites, based on likely/probable, rather than on actual, future conditions. It is therefore unsurprising that a conservative assessment of the economic viability of the specific sites was given.

9. REVIEW OF THE ASSESSMENT: FINAL FIGURES AND RISK ASSESSMENT

9.1 Having undertaken the assessments of suitability, availability and achievability of the SHLAA sites, the following system was used to interpret these results to determine which year's supply they should fall into.

Determination of supply for SHLAA sites

YEARS 0-5

- Suitable- passes all tests
- Available- No availability issues (site is unregistered or has one title)
- The site is achievable

YEARS 6-10

- Suitable but failing one test
- Available- No availability issues (site has either unregistered or has up to two registered owners)
- Can be achievable or not achievable

YEARS 11-15

- Suitable but failing two or more tests
- Not available (the site is either unregistered or has multiple registered owners)
- Can be achievable or not achievable

9.2 At this stage in the assessment, the findings of the overall study were drawn together to devise an indicative housing trajectory that sets out how much housing could be provided and at what point in the future.

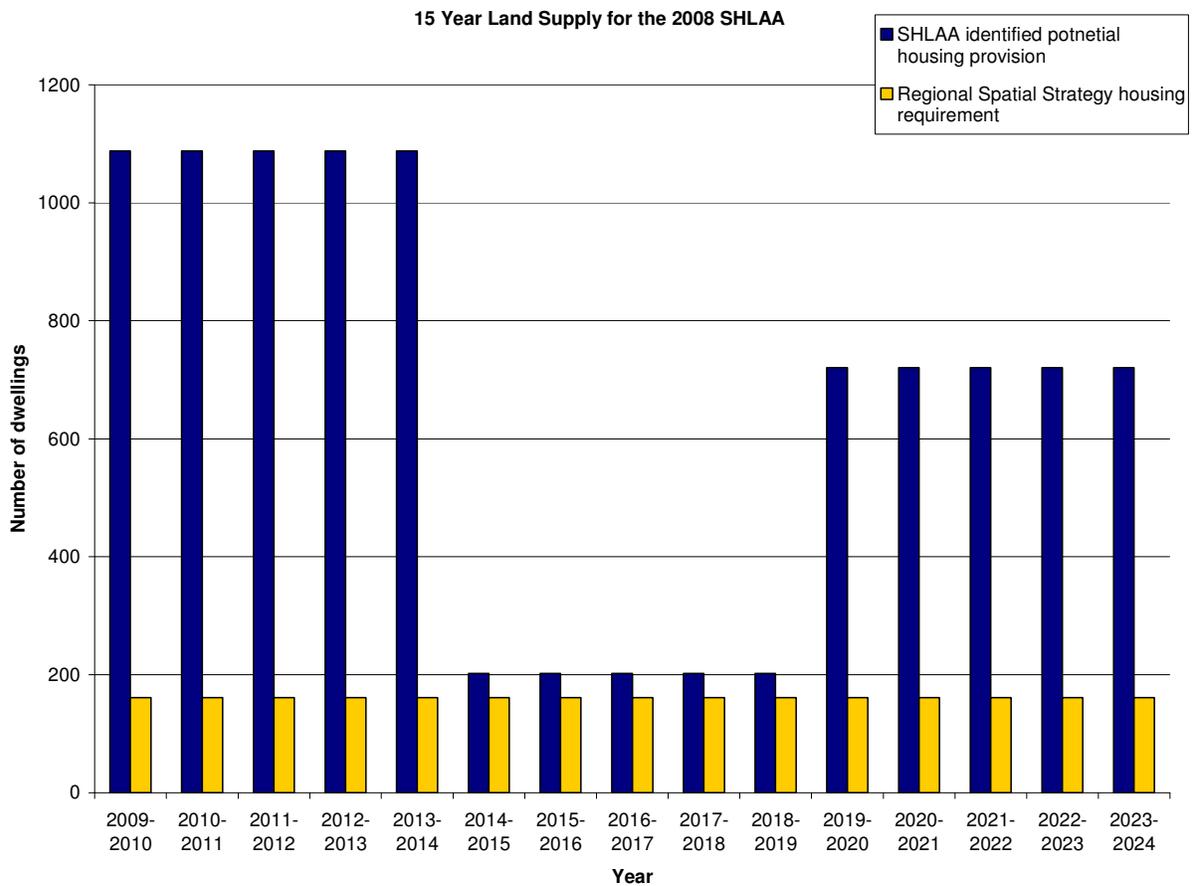
9.3 The housing trajectory indicates if there are sufficient deliverable and developable sites identified by the SHLAA in line with housing targets⁴⁷. The housing trajectory can be found at figure 4.

⁴⁷ As set out by the North West RSS

9.4 If at this stage the Council had not been able to demonstrate a five-year supply of housing land then there would have been two options open to the Council – the identification of broad locations for future housing growth or the use of a windfall allowance.

9.5 However, based on RSS annual housing figures (of 161/yr), the SHLAA process has shown that there is approximately 62 years supply of residential land available in the borough that is deliverable and developable over the 15-year period. 54%⁴⁸ of this is deliverable and is therefore included within the 5-year land supply. Therefore, there is no need to identify broad locations for future housing growth or windfall sites for this SHLAA.

Figure 4: Indicative Housing Trajectory (housing land requirement)



RISK ASSESSMENT

- 9.6 In the practice Guidance it states that an overall risk assessment should be made as to whether sites will come forward as anticipated.
- 9.7 Although there is sufficient land identified for the whole of the 15-year period which clearly meets (and exceeds) the RSS housing target, an issue that did occur was correctly phasing this across the five, ten and fifteen year period.
- 9.8 Due to oversupply of housing against the Joint Lancashire Structure Plan (JLSP)⁴⁹, Ribble Valley Borough Council operated a housing restraint policy⁵⁰ from 2002 until September 2008 to bring figures back in line with the JLSP housing targets. This policy restricted market housing development in all locations and permitted only affordable housing that met an identified local need.
- 9.9 As a direct result of this, completion rates for the last six years have been extremely low. It is therefore not possible to use these completion figures to make accurate predictions regarding when the housing land identified in the SHLAA will come forward. As a result, for the purposes of this SHLAA it has been necessary to annualise the figures to provide an indication of the level of housing that will be provided each year. This is shown in figure 4.
- 9.10 Following the relaxation of the housing restraint policy in September 2008, it is anticipated that within the next few years, there will be a better level of completion rates on which to base the projected completions for future updates of the SHLAA.

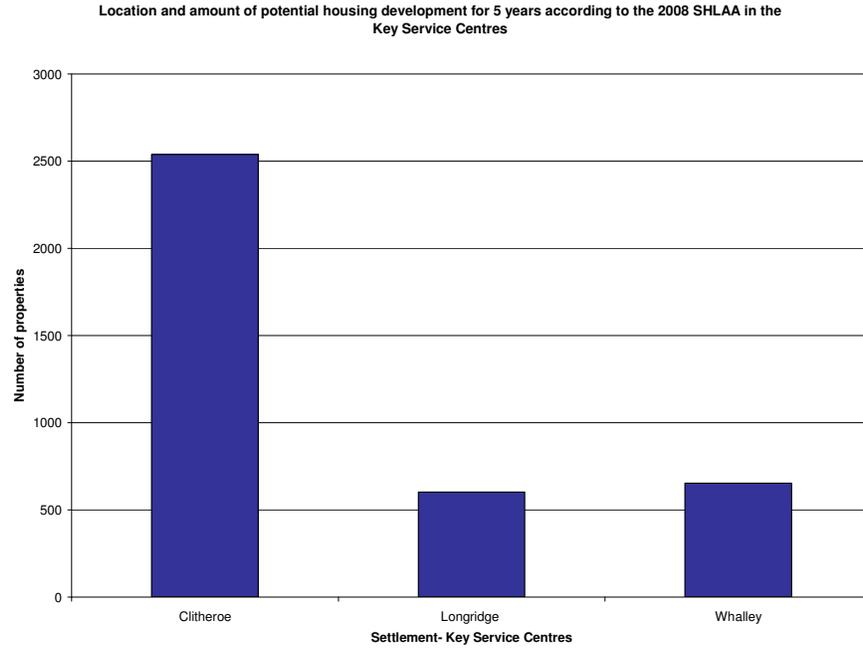
LOCATION OF THE DEVELOPMENT

- 9.11 The SHLAA has identified 138ha of land in the 5-year supply. This equates to 5441 dwellings. The majority of the land is located around the key service centres of Clitheroe, Longridge and Whalley and would provide for 70% of the identified 5-year supply (see figure 5).

⁴⁹ which was only superseded by the RSS in September 2008

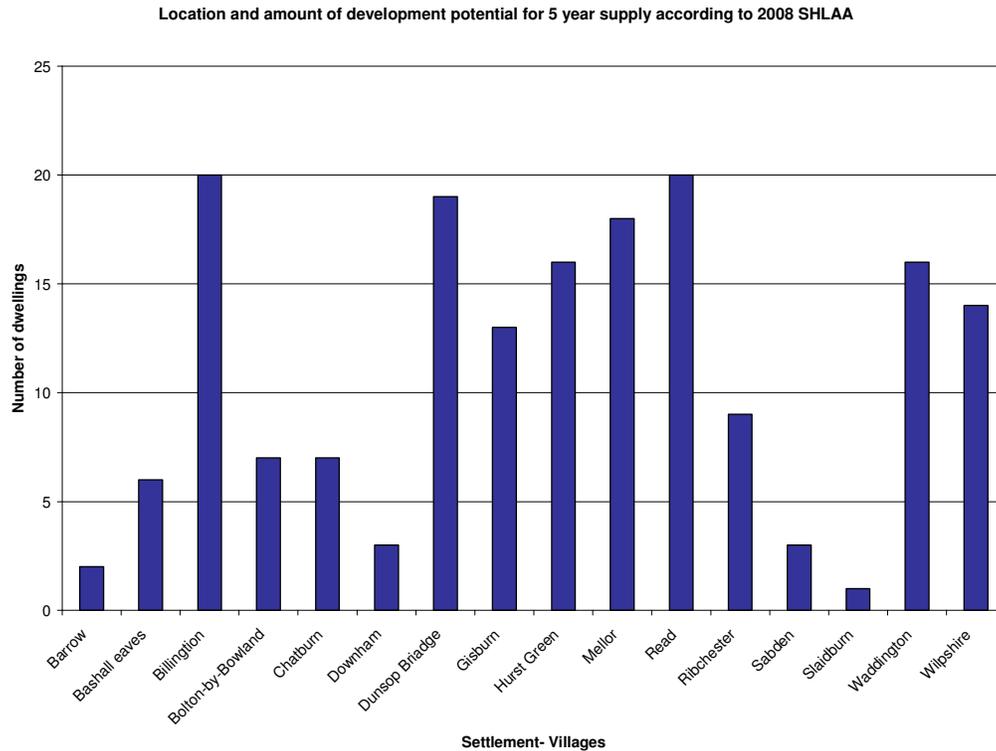
⁵⁰ Often referred to as the moratorium

Figure 5



9.12 The remaining 30% of the 5-year supply is composed of development within the villages. This is shown in figure 6.

Figure 6



IMPLICATIONS ON THE LDF

9.13 In terms of the implications on the LDF, the data obtained by undertaking the SHLAA will feed into the Core Strategy and the Housing and Economic Development DPD. The data will help to make estimations regarding where development land will come forward over the plan period and assists in the identification of strategic sites.

10. MONITORING & CONSULTATION

MONITORING

- 10.1 It is intended that an update of the SHLAA will be produced in December 2009 alongside the Annual Monitoring Report (AMR). This will include potential new sites (following a call for sites exercise) and will, where necessary update information from this first SHLAA. So, for example, employment uses that were operational in the 2008 SHLAA may have ceased operations by the time this 2009 update has been produced and therefore can be considered for housing development.
- 10.2 Information will also feed into future updates of the SHLAA from the Housing Land Availability Reports (HLA) that are produced bi-annually by the Council. Sites that were submitted to the SHLAA will be monitored as part of the HLA and therefore if a planning application for residential development is approved on a site then this information will be inputted into the SHLAA database, which will then effectively remove the site from the SHLAA.
- 10.3 It is important that this process is undertaken to ensure that the SHLAA information remains accurate, is not double counted and that the Council can accurately monitor the amount of potential residential land that is deemed as deliverable and developable.

CONSULTATION

- 10.4 Consultation was undertaken throughout the SHLAA process, particularly with the Borough Members and Parish Councillors to ensure that the process was transparent and that there was a degree of awareness surrounding what the SHLAA aimed to achieve.
- 10.5 In June 2008 a full day conference was held for all Borough Members to discuss many aspects of the LDF, with the majority of the afternoon session focussing on the SHLAA.
- 10.6 In early July 2008 a Parish Council workshop was held which was well attended. This also focused heavily on the SHLAA and each parish Councillor was given the opportunity to view the submitted sites.
- 10.7 Following these conferences and workshops, the opportunity was given to all Parish Councillors and Borough Members to meet with a member of the SHLAA team to discuss the SHLAA and have any questions answered that they may have had. There was a high take up on this offer with many meetings taking place with the SHLAA team.
- 10.8 Following these meetings and workshops, though still early in the overall SHLAA process the methodology for the SHLAA was consulted upon for a six-week period in September 2008⁵¹. This was made available at the Council offices and also published on the website for comment.

⁵¹ See appendix 9.

Although no comments were received on the published methodology, minor changes were made to this methodology following the consultation to ensure that the SHLAA accurately followed the CLG SHLAA practice guidance.

PUBLICATION OF FINDINGS

10.9 This SHLAA report forms the basis of the 2008 SHLAA along with the SHLAA database and the Booklet of Sites that breaks down the submitted sites into 'Included sites'⁵² and 'Excluded sites'⁵³. Within these two main sections, the sites are then arranged into settlements in alphabetical order. A reference copy of this will be made available in planning reception on level D of the Council Offices. The report will also be published on the Council's website at www.ribblevalley.gov.uk, where it will also be possible to view the booklet of plans online.

10.10 The consultation will last for a four-week period and following this, any representations will be considered and necessary changes made to the final SHLAA document prior to adoption in consultation with the Chair of Planning and Development Committee.

10.11 Comments on the SHLAA can be made via the response form that can be downloaded from the Council's website, by emailing Planning@ribblevalley.gov.uk, or by writing to the following address

Forward Planning
Development Services
Ribble Valley Borough Council
Council Offices
Church Walk
Clitheroe
Lancashire
BB7 2RA

If you have any questions then please call 01200 425111 and ask for Forward Planning.

10.12 It is anticipated that during the consultation period, on at least one afternoon per week, it will be possible to have a face-to-face meeting with a member of the SHLAA team to discuss any queries regarding the SHLAA. Please call the number above for further information.

10.13 Please note that during the consultation, the only opportunity to meet with a member of the SHLAA team will be on this designated afternoon. Alternatively you can email, phone or write to the team.

⁵² These Included sites are essentially sites that were taken forward in the process and assessed in terms of the suitability, availability and achievability (see section 7).

⁵³ These Excluded sites are sites that were not included within the SHLAA assessment, as they did not meet the criteria set out in the SHLAA methodology (see section 7).

11. GLOSSARY OF TERMS

ALLOCATION- The use assigned to a piece of land in a development plan.

AMENITY- An element of a location or neighbourhood that helps to make it attractive or enjoyable for residents and visitors.

AMR-Annual Monitoring Report- Monitors the LDF using set of established indicators that can be compared year on year to show how elements of the LDF are performing. Submitted to Government Office North West each December.

ACHIEVABILITY- For the purpose of this study this relates to whether there is a reasonable prospect that housing will be developed on the potential housing site at a particular point in time.

AVAILABILITY- For the purpose of this study this relates to whether, on the best information available, there is confidence that there are no legal or ownership problems such as multiple ownerships, ransom strips, tenancies or operational requirements of landowners.

BASELINE or EVIDENCE BASE- This is made up of the information and documents that inform the Local Development Framework. For the LDF to be sound it must be based upon a credible, robust and transparent baseline.

BCIS- Building Costs Information Service. Provides information on building costs for a specified time period.

BROWNFIELD- Brownfield land is land that has previously had development on it.

CLG- the department for Communities and Local Government. A central government department that deals with Planning issues.

CORE STRATEGY-The Core Strategy is the central document of the Local Development Framework and sets out the development principles for the Ribble Valley.

DC- Development Control. This is the department of the Council that deals with and determines planning applications.

DELIVERABLE- For the purpose of this study a site is deliverable if it is deemed to be suitable, available and achievable.

DEVELOPABLE- For the purpose of this study a site is considered to be developable when it is not deemed to be deliverable.

DISTRICTWIDE LOCAL PLAN- This is the saved development plan for the borough. It is the document against which all planning applications are determined. This will eventually be replaced by the LDF.

DPD- Development Plan Document. This is a statutory planning document that forms part of the LDF.

EOS- Essential Open Space. This is a land designation that is set out in the Districtwide Local Plan. This protects areas of land (open space) from development.

FIVE-YEAR SUPPLY- Each Local Planning Authority is required to demonstrate a five-year supply of land for housing. Ribble Valley is required to provide 161 residential units each year and therefore is required to demonstrate that 805 units (161x5) can be provided. If a five-year supply cannot be demonstrated then it becomes difficult to resist applications for residential development, even if they are not suitable.

FRA or SFRA- Flood Risk Assessment or Strategic Flood Risk Assessment. An assessment of the likelihood of flooding in a particular area so that development needs and mitigation measures can be carefully considered.

GONW- Government Office North West. This is the regional government department that deal with planning issues and work closely with CLG.

GREEN BELT- Areas of land where development is particularly tightly controlled. This is a national designation and is infrequently reviewed to ensure land is protected.

GREENFIELD- This is land that has not previously had development upon it. It is not the same as Green belt land as it is not necessarily protected from development.

HEMP- Housing and Employment Partnership. Ribble Valley Borough Council established this partnership group in 2006. It consists of a variety of stakeholders that have interest in the land within Ribble Valley.

HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT- All aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time.

HLA- Housing Land Assessment. This is a report that is produced by Ribble Valley Borough Council bi-annually. It presents a collation of data on housing planning permission and completions.

HMA- Housing Market Assessment. This is required as part of the baseline for the LDF. It is comprised of the Strategic Housing Market Assessment and the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment.

HSE- Health and Safety Executive.

JLSP- Joint Lancashire Structure Plan. This document is no longer used as it was superseded in 2008 by the RSS. It set out regional housing figures and sub-regional planning policy.

KEY SERVICE CENTRES- These are seen as the largest settlements in the borough. For the purposes of this study this relates to Clitheroe, Longridge and Whalley and where specified, Wilpshire.

LAND CONTAMINATION- Contamination by substances with a potential to harm the environment from any previous use or activity.

LANDFILL- The permanent disposal of waste into the ground by the filling of man-made voids or similar features, or the construction of landforms above ground level (land-raising).

LCC- Lancashire County Council. This is a sub-regional organisation.

LDF- Local Development Framework. This will eventually replace the saved Districtwide Local Plan. It is comprised of a suite of documents rather than one plan.

LDS- Local Development Scheme. this sets out the timetable of production for all the documents that make up the LDF.

LISTED BUILDINGS- The Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport is responsible for compiling the statutory list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest. English Heritage provides expert advice on which buildings meet the criteria for listing, and administer the process. Buildings are graded to indicate their relative importance.

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT DOCUMENTS- These are documents that together make up the LDF.

LPA- Local Planning Authority. For the purposes of this document, this is Ribble Valley Borough Council.

NLUD- National Land Use Database. This is a database of information that includes information on previously developed land and its location across the whole of England.

NWRA- North West Regional Assembly. This organisation became 4NW in 2008. It acts as the regional planning body for the north west and produces documents such as the RSS.

PADHI+- This is the Planning Advice for Development near Hazardous Installations system, which is an online tool, used by LPAs to gain advice from the HSE regarding proposed developments.

PDL- Previously developed land. This is the same as Brownfield land in that it is land that has previously been developed. The definition in Annex B of PPS3 is 'previously- developed land is that which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the development land and any associated fixed surface infrastructure'.

PPS1- Planning Policy Statement 1- Sustainable Development. This sets out the principles for sustainable development. It is a national planning policy document. Planning applications are determined against this.

PPS25- Planning Policy Statement 25- Development and Flood Risk. It is a national planning policy document. Planning applications are determined against this.

PPS3- Planning Policy Statement 3- Housing. It is a national planning policy document. Planning applications are determined against this.

RSS- Regional Spatial Strategy. This is the regional planning policy document. Planning applications are determined against this.

SAVED POLICIES- these are policies from the Districtwide Local Plan that have been saved for a time period during the production of replacement Local Development Documents.

SHLAA- Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment. This is an evidence base document for the LDF which looks at the potential of land for residential development and makes estimates on when this potential land may come forward.

SHMA- Strategic Housing Market Assessment. This is an evidence base document for the LDF that looks at the level of affordability in the borough and the types and tenures of housing that are present in the borough.

SPON'S- SPON'S Architects and Builders Price Book. This sets out price information on a range of items that are integral to the building process.

SUITABILITY- For the purpose of this study this relates to whether a potential site offers a suitable location for development and would contribute to the creation of sustainable, mixed communities.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT- The most commonly used definition is that of the 1987 World Commission on Environment and Development, the Brundtland Commission: 'development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'.

TPO- Tree Preservation Order. These are made by the Local Authority to protect trees.

URBAN POTENTIAL STUDY or URBAN CAPACITY STUDY- This is a study produced by a LPA examining the potential capacity if urban areas to accommodate additional housing.

VILLAGES- These are the smaller settlements within the borough and for the purposes of this study, this relates to all settlements in the borough excluding Clitheroe, Longridge, Whalley and Wilpshire.

WINDFALL SITES- This is a site that is not specifically allocated for development in the Districtwide Local Plan or LDF but which becomes available for development or is granted planning permission during the lifetime of a plan.

YEARS 0-5- This is the time period from the time that the SHLAA was undertaken. So for example if the SHLAA was published in 2009, years 0-5 would cover 2009- 2013.

YEARS 6-10- This is the time period from the time that the SHLAA was undertaken. So for example if the SHLAA was published in 2009, years 6-10 would cover 2014- 2018.

YEARS 11-15- This is the time period from the time that the SHLAA was undertaken. So for example if the SHLAA was published in 2009, years 11-15 would cover 2019- 2024.



Ribble Valley Borough Council
Forward Planning, Development Department
Council Offices, Church Walk, Clitheroe, BB7 2RA
Tel: 01200 425111 Fax: 01200 414487
Email: Planning@ribblevalley.gov.uk