

Report to: Strategic Planning Committee



Date of Meeting: 1 November 2022

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Review date for release N/A

East Devon Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment 2022

Report summary:

This report follows on from a report to the committee on 3rd May 2022 where an interim East Devon Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) 2022 was considered. This report details the further work that has been done on the HELAA since that time and includes the key findings of the final HELAA report.

Is the proposed decision in accordance with:

Budget Yes No

Policy Framework Yes No

Recommendation:

1. That Strategic Planning Committee endorse the East Devon Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment November 2022 report for use as evidence for the purposes of the new Local Plan and other spatial plan making, for development management, and in support of achieving East Devon District Council's corporate objectives; and
2. That Strategic Planning Committee give delegated authority to the Service Lead – Planning Strategy and Development Management in consultation with the chair of the committee, to finalise the HELAA for consultation. To include making any minor changes to correct possible factual or grammatical errors, ensure links to background reports are made and other minor amendments that do not materially change content; and
3. That Strategic Planning Committee agree that the East Devon Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment November 2022 report be published on the council's website as part of the new Local Plan evidence base.

Reason for recommendation:

To advise members of receipt of completion of the work on the East Devon Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment November 2022 report to allow them to review the full report content, and to enable timely availability and use of the report as evidence.

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Portfolio(s) (check which apply):

- Climate Action and Emergency Response
- Coast, Country and Environment
- Council and Corporate Co-ordination
- Democracy, Transparency and Communications
- Economy and Assets
- Finance

- Strategic Planning
- Sustainable Homes and Communities
- Tourism, Sports, Leisure and Culture

Equalities impact Low Impact

Climate change High Impact

Risk: Low Risk;

Links to background information

Priorities (check which apply)

- Better homes and communities for all
 - A greener East Devon
 - A resilient economy
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Background

- 1.1 At their meeting on 3 May 2022, Strategic Planning Committee members considered a report on the interim results of the 2022 East Devon Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA). This was the Part 1 report. Members noted the contents of the report and also noted that Part 2 would be brought to Committee late summer/early autumn 2022.
- 1.2 The HELAA is a technical evidence document. It focuses on the availability, suitability and achievability of potential sites for development. This enables the Council to have a clear understanding of land available in East Devon. Its assessments are reported and used to inform spatial plan-making, development management and in support of the Council's corporate objectives. The HELAA does not make policy decisions. However, it is the first step in the site selection process to identify sites for allocation in the emerging local plan.
- 1.3 Work on Part 2 of the HELAA has been completed. This includes two HELAA Panel meetings held in September 2022. Information about the Panel's role in the assessment of the 'achievability' of sites is set out in the HELAA report. Members are reminded that responsibility for the HELAA report rests with the Council, not the Panel. The Part 2 work includes assessment of sites that were put forward through the 2022 Call for sites as well as employment-led sites from the 2017 and 2021 Call for sites.
- 1.4 Owing to the overlaps between these sites and sites that were assessed in Part 1, it became necessary in the Part 2 stage to revisit the assessment of the Part 1 sites regarding site capacity, to avoid double counting. This took additional work. The Part 2 work also produced trajectories for the delivery of development over the plan period and beyond for each site. Those trajectories are combined into District trajectories for housing and for employment.
- 1.5 Consequently, the East Devon HELAA 2022 report attached, contains the assessments of all the sites from Parts 1 and 2. The report has been produced 'in-house', and includes several technical appendices. To aid understanding, all the detailed site assessment profiles have been combined into a single appendix. The sites are grouped by parish and ordered by their site reference number. For ease of use, the on-line appendix is broken down by parish. Some sites are in more than one parish, but to avoid duplication these are listed only in the parish which contains the majority of the site area.
- 1.6 The East Devon HELAA 2022 report opens with an executive summary, which provides a relatively quick overview of key conclusions from the work, though for a more complete picture the report should be read in its entirety.

2. Key report findings in the HELAA report

- 2.1 The first step in the HELAA is to identify which sites are available. 827 site submissions in total were received from the 2017, 2021 and 2022 Call for sites. Of these, 7 sites have since been withdrawn from the HELAA process or confirmed as no longer available. Excluding not available sites and avoiding double-counting from overlaps and resubmissions, resulted in a net 636 sites being available for development. This is a very substantial number of sites for a single District HELAA. It shows that the HELAA process has encouraged sites to come forward. Whilst the available sites are spread across East Devon, there is a large concentration in the west of the District. Sites submitted range from proposals for single dwellings up to sites for thousands of dwellings and mixed use as new settlements.
- 2.2 The additional Call for Sites requested by Members at their 8 March 2022 meeting was held in March to May 2022. It resulted in 145 submissions (one since withdrawn). 90 were new sites ranging from 0.01 Ha to 15 Ha, which added a potential supply of approximately 1,600 dwellings and 38.7Ha employment land being available, suitable and achievable. Another 54 sites were whole or part resubmissions with updated information on availability. Further information on availability came from information provided to Members through presentations in January, August and September 2022, Additional updates about 2017 sites' availability came from an in-house questionnaire sent to site submitters.
- 2.3 However, three calls for sites has led to a complex picture of potential supply sources. The original 2017 submissions were added to be new sites, resubmissions, part resubmissions, and multiple overlaps from the 2021 and 2022 data. Some of the 2017 submissions not being reconfirmed as still available. The HELAA report has an Appendix to clarify this.
- 2.4 Consequently the key findings of the HELAA report relate to the supply counts coming from:
- 614 sites or parts of sites are available for housing or housing and mixed used development.
 - 57 sites or parts of sites are available for employment led development. These have been assessed for suitability and achievability.
- 2.5 In addition, there were 20 sites submitted in 2022 for other/mixed use without specifying the proposed use. These sites could not be tested for site suitability, and the HELAA Panel concluded that a Panel conclusion on site achievability could not be reached, because the proposed use of the site is unclear. Without knowing the intended type of development it is not possible to assess whether there is a reasonable prospect that a development will be developed on the site at a particular point in time in accordance with PPG.
- 2.6 The main analysis in the HELAA report focuses on how much of the available sites are also suitable and achievable. It is important to remember that a site being suitable and achievable does not necessarily mean it would be appropriate to allocate it. The findings of the HELAA are distinct from the figures and trajectories presented elsewhere which are based on the preferred and 2nd choice allocations and have thus been calculated following site assessment work. The key findings below include sites judged to be unacceptable as well as acceptable sites.

The key findings from all available sites assessed are as follows:

- Approximately net 26,054 dwellings on sites not yet allocated, committed or completed that are available for housing or housing and mixed use, are assessed as being suitable and achievable for housing (this includes 7103 forecast for delivery after the plan period).
- Approximately net 175.1 hectares of land on sites not yet allocated, committed or completed that are available for housing or housing and mixed use, are assessed as being suitable and achievable for employment.

- Plus approximately net 148.6 hectares of land on sites not yet allocated, committed or completed that are available for employment led development, are assessed as being suitable and achievable for employment uses.
- 197 sites submitted as available for housing or housing and mixed use (including overlaps), are assessed as not suitable or not achievable for housing.
- 23 sites submitted as available for employment-led use (including overlaps), are assessed as not suitable or not achievable for employment uses.
- The HELAA includes an indicative district housing trajectory based on the evidence available. It forecasts when dwellings may be delivered, based on reasonable build out rates as set out in the methodology. Adding the 26,054 to the 12,800 dwellings on commitments, completions, forecast windfalls and Cranbrook allocations gives a grand total of 38,854 dwellings potential supply.
- This trajectory combines HELAA site trajectories with completions to 2022, and the delivery trajectories from the Housing Monitoring Update 2022 for commitments from planning approvals and the Cranbrook Plan expansion areas. The forecasts are on a year by year basis, using the monitoring year. The HELAA district trajectory forecasts potential for delivery of dwelling completions from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2040 as follows:

Completions* in East Devon	HELAA FORECAST SUPPLY POTENTIAL				Post plan period
	Deliverable	Developable			
2020/21 to 2021/2022	Years 1-5	Years 6-10	Years 11-15	Years 16-18	
1,906	4,783	18,081	5,307	1,674	7,103

* Including 2017 submission sites without confirmation of continued availability

- The housing trajectory has been calculated using the HELAA methodology. It reflects the scale of housing supply identified as “available, suitable and achievable” at this point in time. Members are advised that following a risk assessment the following issues have been identified:
 - If all supply in Years 1 to 18 (29,845 dws) were to be built and added to the 1,906 completions in 2020/21 and 2021/22, there could be potential for a supply 31,751 dwellings in the plan period. It is much more than is needed. This does not include 7,103 dwellings forecast to be completed after the plan period. However, this number will be reduced through the ongoing plan site selection process as the spatial strategy and Local Plan policies are applied (see *Section 3 below*).
 - There is a major spike in the HELAA housing delivery forecast in years 6 to 10. It reflects the evidence that most site submitters expect their sites to start delivering in the first 5 years. Even using Year 6 as the ‘first year’ to allow for lead in times so that the sites are assessed as ‘developable’, it results in a bunching of forecast delivery early on.
- To address these issues, we will produce a Local Plan housing trajectory next year, relating to the forecast supply for the plan period including allocations. It will provide up to date supply and delivery evidence as required by PPG. This will apply a ‘reality check’ about potential delivery in East Devon and its main settlements. It will be fully PPG compliant, and be accompanied by audit trail evidence. It will only forecast completions for planning permissions, allocations (including the adopted Cranbrook Plan sites) and windfalls to add to the known completions for 2020/21 to 2021/22,

and future years when the data is available. The Local Plan trajectory will supersede the HELAA trajectory.

- As required by PPG, the HELAA also provides a 5 year housing land supply assessment. That assessment is based on housing trajectories for HELAA sites which are based on the agreed HELAA methodology. The methodology is an initial, basic approach to site trajectories. Members are advised that:
 - The housing trajectory in the HELAA report will be superseded when the full housing trajectory for the Local Plan is produced, once site allocations are identified for the Local Plan. That trajectory will need to be fully PPG compliant, with full audit trail documentation.
 - The 5 year housing land supply assessment in the East Devon HELAA 2022 report does not supersede the 5 year housing land supply assessment set out in the East Devon Housing Monitoring Update 2022 that is used for development management purposes, which Members noted at their 4 October 2022 meeting.
- The HELAA also provides a district employment land trajectory. This forecasts when employment development will be completed. The HELAA employment trajectory forecasts potential for employment land delivery (hectares) as follows:

Completions in East Devon *	HELAA FORECAST SUPPLY POTENTIAL (Hectares)				Post plan period
	Years 1-5	Years 6-10	Years 11-15	Years 16-18	
2020/21-2021/22					
9.9	25	176.2	177.3	32.6	0

* Including 2017 submission sites without confirmation of continued availability

- The HELAA concludes that:
 - With 18,951 dwellings on sites that are available, suitable and achievable added to the 13,552 dwellings supply from completions to 2022, commitments and the Cranbrook Expansion Areas, there is substantial potential housing supply (32,503 dws) in East Devon for the plan period. However, if sites submitted in 2017 but not confirmed as still available in 2022 are omitted, then potential housing supply falls by 950 to 31,553 dwellings.
 - With 323.6 hectares of land on sites that are available, suitable and achievable, added to the 97.35 hectares supply from 2020/21 completions and commitments plus net Local Plan allocations (including the 18.4 Ha at Cranbrook Plan area) there is substantial potential employment land supply (421 Ha) in East Devon in the plan period. However, if sites submitted in 2017 but not confirmed as still available in 2022 are omitted, then potential employment land supply falls to 410.4 hectares. Again, this scale of potential supply is more than needed. The number will be reduced through the site selection process as the spatial strategy and local plan policies are applied. Some of this land is also land which is available and counted under the housing supply assessment.

2.7 The Council continues to investigate the potential for other sites as part of the active process of site identification. Members are advised that if this adds to sites already identified through the latest HELAA desktop review process then the Council can produce a HELAA update, probably in the form of an Addendum Report.

3. Making use of the HELAA report

3.1 NPPF and PPG requires the Council to produce a relevant, up to date, robust and proportionate Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment. It is essential that the

Council's plan-making is underpinned by such evidence. Use of this evidence is integral to the decisions which the Council makes when shaping Local Plan policy and proposals. The HELAA report and its findings are essential evidence. They are the start of the process of site selection to identify potential sites to allocate in the local plan.

- 3.2 Many of the HELAA sites, if allocated, could well deliver housing, but Members will be aware that it is not the HELAA that allocates sites for development as that role falls to the Council. It should be noted that several HELAA sites that could deliver housing could well be poor or bad allocation choices because they would run counter to the emerging local plan strategy, and more generally would be inconsistent with good planning practice.
- 3.3 PPG on HELAA states that the plan-making authority may carry out the HELAA as part of the same exercise as the Local Plan site selection process. However, the Council is undertaking the work on site selection separately. PPG on HELAA allows the Council to use a site assessment method that differs from the guidance. This separation in our two step process helps to distinguish between the HELAA evidence and the decision making process for identifying and choosing the sites which are the most appropriate to be allocated for development. Members should note that the new local plan's spatial strategy is still emerging, so was not available to inform the HELAA site assessments undertaken in 2017, 2021 and 2022. The on-going site selection work is being informed by emerging Local Plan strategy and policies. Together, the site selection process and the Local Plan housing trajectories will ensure that site assessments meet evidence requirements set out in PPG.
- 3.4 The report emphasises that identification of potential development sites within the HELAA as available, suitable and achievable does not mean that the Council will grant planning permission for development. All planning applications will continue to be considered against the appropriate policies in the Local Plan and any other material considerations.
- 3.5 The HELAA evidence is available for use for Development Management purposes, and for use in support of achieving the Council Plan's objectives, mindful that there will be further evidence informing the Local Plan site selection process.
- 3.6 The HELAA report is evidence that is also available for other spatial plan making, notably for Neighbourhood Plan preparation. The availability of HELAA information is subject to the provisions of the relevant Privacy Notice published on the Council's website.

4. Next steps

- 4.1 Subject to Committee endorsing the use of the East Devon Housing and Economic Land Availability 2022 report for evidence purposes, Committee are also requested to agree that the report will then be published as part of the new Local Plan's evidence base.

Financial implications:

There are no financial implication identified in the report.

Legal implications:

This report updates members as to the growing evidence base used in developing the special policies within the draft Local Plan. There are no legal implications from this report.