



Strategic Housing & Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA)

Frequently Asked Questions

We know there is often a lot of interest about sites that have been suggested to the council for future development. These FAQs explain why we need the information and how it is used.

Key Facts

- Put simply, the SHELAA is the council's register of available land options.
- Anyone can put a site forward, on any type of land, including Green Belt.
- Being included in the SHELAA is NOT an automatic green light for development.

What is the SHELAA?

Every local planning authority publishes a SHELAA which is a register of land that has been suggested for future development. It also contains more technical information on land supply in the district. It must conform to strict guidelines found in the government's Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) and is evidence which is used when we prepare our 5 Year Housing Land Supply and when reviewing our Local Plan.

What sort of land is in the SHELAA?

Site suggestions can be submitted for any piece of land within the district, large or small, and which could include land for self and custom build, possible new settlements, or other land away from our existing villages, and land within the Green Belt. We currently have around 600 sites registered.

Why is Green Belt land included?

Isn't Green Belt land protected from new development?

Government guidelines are clear that ALL land should be included in the register. This is because the SHELAA is an assessment of available land, including land that might have policy constraints such as Green Belt, or that is in a current use. But, most importantly, the SHELAA doesn't choose the sites for development, because that is done through the review of the Local Plan.



SHELAA v Local Plan

This is where most of the confusion arises. A SHELAA is a register of land which landowners, developers or planning agents have told us is available for development. The Local Plan is the planning framework which sets out future sites for development. When we are looking for sites for the Local Plan, our starting point is to assess the options in the SHELAA to see whether any are suitable for development, but just being included in the SHELAA does not mean the council has given the go-ahead for the sites to be developed.

I've seen very detailed plans of some sites in the SHELAA online, surely this means they will definitely be developed?

No, landowners must provide us with basic information to be included in the SHELAA, including a map of the site. However, some landowners may engage planning agents or developers to promote the land on their behalf. Sometimes very detailed plans of how land might be developed are produced to support the site suggestion, but this is all done at the landowners' risk and does not mean the council has endorsed those plans or given permission for development.

But I've seen these plans on the council's website...

When we carry out a consultation on the Local Plan, some planning agents and developers submit the same sort of detailed plans of how they see the land being developed as part of their response. The council publishes all consultation responses online, but again, these are the views of the person making comments on the consultation, not an endorsement by the council.

What are Calls for Sites?

We carry out regular Calls for Sites asking for site suggestions to be submitted to us to update the information in the SHELAA, or sites can be submitted separately. However, as the SHELAA is only updated annually, new information may not be published until the review of the SHELAA is complete. Ad hoc site suggestions will be considered dependent on the stage of the Local Plan review process. Again, asking for details of available land does not mean those sites will definitely be developed.

Can I object to a site being included in the SHELAA?

The simple answer is no. This is because there is nothing to object to. As explained above the SHELAA is simply a register of land that has been suggested to us - we cannot refuse a site suggestion. The time for objections to be made is when sites are consulted on as part of the review of the Local Plan. The sites in the Local Plan will have been subject to separate, additional rigorous site evaluation and assessment.



Where can I see the suggested sites?

Site options are mapped on the council's interactive Local Plan map and more information and inset plans can be seen [here](#).

Can I put my land forward for the SHELAA?

Yes, please contact the Local Plans Team for a Site Suggestion Form or see the SHELAA page on the council's website, link above.

Contact us:

Local Plans Team - localplans@sstaffs.gov.uk or telephone **01902 696000**



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