Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council

Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment

Final Report

March 2010
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prepared by</th>
<th>Checked by</th>
<th>Verified by</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ros Woodhall</td>
<td>Richard Shepherd</td>
<td>Keith Nutter</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Signed:

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.01 WYG was appointed in April 2008 to undertake a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) for the administrative area of Knowsley Metropolitan Borough. The project forms part of a sub-regional review of housing land availability and has been undertaken in conjunction with the neighbouring authorities of Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council and West Lancashire Borough Council.

1.02 The three authorities commenced preparatory work on the SHLAA in 2007, collating information and producing a comprehensive list of potential housing sites to be reviewed through the SHLAA process. As part of the commission, WYG was asked to review the work completed by the authorities and take the project forward to completion, ensuring compliance with Government good practice guidance.

1.03 The results of the survey work completed as part of the project have been captured on a Microsoft Access database. This system will assist the authority in tracking the availability of housing land and in monitoring the supply of sites. This will provide a useful tool informing future Local Development Framework (LDF) documents, such as the Land Allocations Development Plan Document and provide data for the authority’s Annual Monitoring Report.

What is a SHLAA?

1.04 A SHLAA is a key part of an authority’s LDF evidence base. The assessment will assist in formulating the Council’s policy on the delivery of new housing, but does not itself represent a statement of Council policy. Whilst this study will inform the LDF process, it is for the LDF Core Strategy and Land Allocations documents to decide which sites should come forward for residential development and by what timescale. The inclusion of sites within this study should not therefore be taken to imply that they will be allocated for development or that the Council will necessarily consider planning applications favourably.

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1 Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment: Practice Guidance, Communities and Local Government, July 2007.
1.05 The good practice guidance on undertaking SHLAA indicates that the principal aims of an assessment should be to:

- determine whether previously identified sites are still available for development and to review assumptions on housing potential;
- identify additional sites with potential for housing which were not required to be investigated by Urban Capacity Studies, such as sites in rural settlements, brownfield sites outside settlement boundaries and suitable greenfield sites, as well as, where necessary, broad locations for future housing development;
- carry out further survey work within settlements to identify additional brownfield sites which have come forward since previous land studies were carried out; and
- assess the suitability/achievability of all sites for residential development.

1.06 The key outputs of a SHLAA should:

- identify specific sites for the first five years of the LDF that are ready and available for development;
- identify specific sites for years 6 to 10 and ideally 11 to 15 of the LDF which, in time, will top up the five year supply;
- indicate broad locations for future growth when it is not possible to identify specific sites beyond 10 years; and
- exclude any windfall allowance for the first 10 years unless local circumstances justify such an allowance.

1.07 The SHLAA process is expected to be dynamic. Assessments should be the subject of ongoing monitoring and adjusted to reflect changing circumstances as time goes by.

The Report Format

1.08 This introduction to the study is followed by Section 2, which provides a brief overview of the Knowsley administrative area in order to understand the evolution of the Borough, its main settlements and the continuing development trends of the area. Section 2 also includes an overview of the regional and local planning policy framework.
1.09 Section 3 sets out the methodology which has been employed in the undertaking of the SHLAA. This section sets out the work completed by the local authority prior to WYG’s involvement, along with a thorough examination of the processes involved in completing the study. Reference is also made in this section to the key consultation stages in the SHLAA process.

1.10 Section 4 provides a detailed review of the findings of the study, highlighting the availability and distribution of land within the Borough against regional housing delivery targets.

1.11 Section 5 applies a ‘risk assessment’ to the identified housing supply.

1.12 Section 6 sets out the study conclusions and is followed by a series of appendices which provide the individual site records used to derive the report’s findings, illustrate the geographic spread of sites across the Borough and summarise responses received from interested parties at Draft Report stage.
2.0 KNOWSLEY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH PROFILE

Overview of the Borough

2.01 The Metropolitan Borough of Knowsley came into being on 1 April 1974. It takes its name from the village of Knowsley, where the Earls of Derby have lived, at Knowsley Hall, since the 14th century.

2.02 Knowsley Borough is located between Liverpool to the west and St Helens to the east. To the north are Sefton and West Lancashire, and to the south is Halton.

2.03 The Borough comprises a belt of towns, suburbs and countryside. It covers an area of 8,620 hectares, of which 4,644 hectares is designated as Green Belt. The largest urban areas are Kirkby, Huyton, Prescot, Whiston and Halewood. Each of Knowsley’s communities has its own quite different historical background and particular characteristics.

2.04 The communities within Knowsley are largely a creation of the 20th century. With the exception of Prescot and a few other smaller, older settlements, the majority of the existing development in the area now known as Knowsley took place between the 1920s and the mid 1970s. Much of this expansion was as a result of Liverpool overspill development. However, the trend of the Borough’s population increasing in size ceased in the early 1970s.

2.05 It is estimated that the population of Knowsley at June 2007 was 150,900. After 25 years of significant decline, the Borough population shows signs of stabilisation. A modest increase in population is predicted over the next ten years or so.

2.06 The number of households in Knowsley is set to rise over the period covered by the Knowsley Replacement Unitary Development Plan\(^2\) (UDP), which is to 2016. This forecasted increase is due largely to the increase in the number of single-person households caused by elderly people living longer, higher rates of separation and divorce, and more young people forming single households of their own.

\(^2\) Adopted June 2006.
2.07 According to the 2001 Census, 61.7% of Knowsley homes are owner occupied and 31.5% are social rented accommodation, with the remainder being privately rented. Knowsley had the second lowest percentage of owner occupied dwellings in Greater Merseyside (after Liverpool) at the time of the census. The Council is aiming, through its housing and planning policies, to create a more sustainable tenure structure.

**Statutory Development Plan**

2.08 The statutory development plan for Knowsley consists of The North West of England Plan (RSS), read together with the ‘saved’ policies of the Knowsley Replacement UDP. Following the enactment of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, relevant policies in the UDP were saved on 12 June 2009 and will remain in place to guide development in the Borough until replaced by the emerging LDF.

**The North West of England Plan: Regional Spatial Strategy to 2021**

2.09 The North West RSS was published in September 2008 and provides a framework for development and investment in the region over the next 15 to 20 years. One of the key focuses for the RSS is to achieve adequate levels of housing growth across the region during the plan’s lifetime and to ensure that this growth is targeted in the right priority areas to meet its strategic aims.

2.10 The RSS sets a minimum target for Knowsley Borough to provide 8,100 new homes between 2003 and 2021. This is equivalent to an annual average of 450 dwellings, although clearly there may be variations from year to year. The RSS sets a target of 65% of new housing to be delivered on previously developed land.

2.11 The RSS advises that housing development strategy for Knowsley should be focused on regenerating existing housing areas which suffer from high levels of deprivation and should be complementary to the regeneration of the Greater Liverpool conurbation’s inner core.

**Replacement Knowsley Unitary Development Plan**

2.12 The Replacement Knowsley UDP was adopted in June 2006 to guide land use and development in the Borough. The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires the Council to replace the UDP with new Development Plan Documents (DPDs) which will form part of the LDF. To ensure a smooth transition to the new system, the Act automatically ‘saved’ the UDP policies for a period of three years.
from adoption (i.e. until 14 June 2009). The policies lapsed at that date unless ‘saved’ by the direction of the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government under Schedule 8 of the Act.

2.13 The Council applied to and received the consent of the Secretary of State to save many of the UDP policies beyond 14 June 2009. These policies will gradually be replaced as DPDs, such as the Core Strategy, are adopted.

2.14 A Direction was issued on 12 June 2009, saving all UDP policies apart from four. The policies which have not been saved are:

- Policy H1: Strategic Housing Land Requirements – this policy is no longer appropriate as the housing numbers it refers to have been replaced by the Regional Spatial Strategy;
- Policy S3: Huyton Town Centre – this policy is no longer needed as the former supermarket site it refers to has been redeveloped;
- Policy S8: Location of Development for Town Centre Uses – this policy conflicts with more up to date national planning guidance; and
- Policy T4: Major Highway Schemes – this policy is no longer needed as the two highway schemes it refers to have been implemented.

2.15 As a consequence of the Secretary of State’s Direction, the above policies expired on 14 June 2009 and no longer form part of Knowsley’s adopted development plan.

2.16 Accordingly, the below ‘saved’ policies of the UDP are those which have been taken into account in undertaking this SHLAA:

- Policy H2: Sites Allocated for Housing Development;
- Policy H3: North Huyton and Tower Hill (Kirkby) Action Areas;
- Policy H4: Development Opportunity Site (Valley Road, Kirkby);
- Policy H5: Development within Primarily Residential Areas;
- Policy EC1: Strategy for Provision of Employment Land;
- Policy S2: Diversification of Uses within Existing Town Centres;
- Policy T6: Ensuring Choice of Travel to Serve New Developments;
- Policy G1: Development within the Green Belt;
- Policy OS2: Urban Greenspace;
• Policy OS3: Quantitative Standards – Public Open Space for General Amenity Use, Allotments and Children’s Play;
• Policy OS4: Protection of Playing Pitches and Other Formal Sporting Facilities;
• Policy DQ1: Design Quality in New Development;
• Policy ENV7: Flood Risk and Drainage; and
• Policy ENV9: Protection of Habitats and Designated Sites.

Emerging Development Plan

RS2010: Regional Strategy for England’s Northwest

2.17 The Regional Strategy is in the early stages of preparation by the 4NW Regional Leaders’ Board and the North West Development Agency. The strategy provides an opportunity to integrate regional policy by bringing together spatial, economic, social and environmental strategies into a single document. Consultation on a published Principles and Issues Paper was undertaken early in 2009 and a Consultation Draft of Part 1 of the Regional Strategy followed on 4 January 2010.

2.18 Part 1 sets out a high-level framework and outlines the overarching vision, priorities and action areas for the strategy. The consultation draft seeks to ensure that new housing is well located in relation to need, employment opportunities, transport and services, and is well designed, high-quality and affordable. Moreover, the Draft Strategy also seeks to allow the housing market to maximise its role in regenerating communities and supporting economic growth through the restructuring of vulnerable housing markets. The Consultation Draft indicates that there will be a continued focus on Housing Market Renewal areas.

2.19 Although the methodology utilised by this study was clearly developed in advance of the publication of the Draft Part 1 of the Regional Strategy, it is considered to broadly accord with the strategy and its stated aspirations.

Local Development Framework

2.20 Knowsley Council is currently working towards producing its Core Strategy, along with a range of complementary LDDs. The consultation process for the Core Strategy started in July 2008 with a series of stakeholder and community workshops. The Council then published an Issues & Options...
document for consultation in November 2009 and will seek to adopt its Core Strategy by early 2012. The Core Strategy will set out a vision, key objectives and strategic planning policies for Knowsley. It explains what sort of place Knowsley is today and what sort of place it will be in the future.

2.21 Another key DPD is the Site Allocations and Development Policies document, which will identify specific sites for development. The detailed timetable for the production of the Site Allocations and Development Policies DPD is yet to be confirmed, but it will follow the production of the Core Strategy.

2.22 In May 2007, the Council adopted a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI). The SCI sets out the Council’s approach to public and stakeholder consultation, both on planning policy and development control issues. In addition, all local authorities are required to prepare an Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) which explains the Council’s performance in relation to key targets.

2.23 Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) provide detailed guidance on specific aspects of the development process. Knowsley Council has adopted area specific SPDs for North Huyton and Tower Hill in Kirkby, the main purpose of which is to guide the regeneration of these areas. In addition, the Council has adopted an SPD on Greenspace Standards and New Development.

2.24 Both DPDs and SPDs are informed by the Council’s evidence base. The evidence base is a critical element of local plan making required to support policy and provide a robust framework against which future development proposals will be measured. This SHLAA will form a key part of the evidence base.
3.0 STUDY METHODOLOGY

3.01 The methodology employed in completing this study is derived from that set out in the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment good practice guidance published in July 2007. The ten stage process advocated by the guidance is illustrated below.

Figure 3.1: Ten Stage SHLAA Process Extracted from Practice Guidance

- Stage 1: Planning the Assessment
- Stage 2: Determining which sources of sites will be included in the Assessment
- Stage 3: Desktop review of existing information
- Stage 4: Determining which sites and areas will be surveyed
- Stage 5: Carrying out the survey
- Stage 6: Estimating the housing potential of each site
- Stage 7: Assessing when and whether sites are likely to be developed
- Stage 8: Review of the Assessment
- Stage 9: Identifying and assessing the housing potential of broad locations (when necessary)
- Stage 10: Determining the housing potential of windfalls (where justified)

The Assessment Evidence Base

- Regular monitoring and updating (at least annually)
- Informs five year supply of deliverable sites
- Informs plan preparation
3.02 An inception meeting for the study was held in April 2008, at which time it was agreed that the methodology employed would be in line with the ten stage process set out on the previous page. The work undertaken on the SHLAA has been completed by both Knowsley Council and WYG, with the Council responsible for identifying sites for survey and the generation of GIS data. Stages 2, 3 and 4 of the assessment have therefore been completed by the authority. The methodology employed by the Council is recorded in this report and has been reviewed by WYG to ensure compliance with good practice guidance. Stages 5 to 10 have been completed by WYG.

3.03 A detailed account of the methodology employed at each stage in the process is recorded below.

**Stage 1 – Planning the Assessment**

3.04 The general approach to completing SHLAAs is well documented, with a significant number of studies now having been completed by local authorities throughout the country. The methodology employed in completing the Knowsley SHLAA was agreed with the Council at the commencement of WYG’s involvement in the study.

3.05 The SHLAA good practice guidance recommends that the production of the assessment is informed by engagement with key local stakeholders through a Housing Market Partnership (HMP). Such a Partnership should include house builders, social landlords and local property agents, amongst others. Whilst no formal HMP was organised as part of the SHLAA, extensive consultation has been undertaken with key stakeholders at various stages of the study.

3.06 The programme of consultation has included two formal stakeholder workshops (comprising of house builders, social landlords, local property agents and representatives of 4NW), a comprehensive ‘call for sites’ exercise and comprehensive public consultation at Draft Report stage, to which key stakeholders were invited to comment. It is WYG’s view that this level of consultation and involvement effectively constitutes a Housing Market Partnership, even though this title was never formally conferred.

3.07 Unfortunately, it was not possible to fully extend this partnership approach to the wider housing market area. Other local authorities within the sub-region were unable to participate in the joint SHLAA owing to the different stages in production of their respective LDFs. However, representatives from neighbouring authorities attended the stakeholder workshops and also submitted comments in response to the public consultation exercise. In addition, WYG understands that officers from
Knowsley, Sefton and West Lancashire have participated in steering groups for neighbouring authorities’ SHLAAs and have actively contributed to their production in this way.

3.08 The base date for the Knowsley SHLAA is 1 April 2008. Sites with an extant residential planning permission at 1 April 2008 have not been surveyed as part of the assessment, but the likely capacity yield from this source has been quantified and included as an important component of the overall housing supply.

3.09 The study assesses housing sites across three housing supply periods. The supply over the first five year period from the base date comprises sites with a high probability of delivery which are largely in compliance with planning policy. Many sites identified as part of the five year supply will be those forwarded through the ‘call for sites’ as this will provide a clear indication of the site’s availability for development in the short term.

3.10 The 6 to 10 year supply incorporates sites with good housing potential which could accommodate future residential development and have few significant identified constraints. However, these sites may require some assembly, or currently accommodate existing buildings, or uses which may need to locate elsewhere.

3.11 Sites identified in the 11 to 15 year supply would be those which are considered to offer realisable potential over the long term only. Such sites may be in a number of multiple ownerships, and therefore are unlikely to be assembled in the short term, or may be the subject of significant constraints involving matters such as access or contamination. In practice, as the majority of sites included in the SHLAA are only of moderate size and are subject to only limited constraints, none are considered appropriate for residential development in the long term only.

3.12 The original ‘call for sites’ consultation was completed by the three local authorities between 25 October and 13 December 2007, at the beginning of the SHLAA process and prior to WYG’s involvement in the project. At the inception meeting it was decided that a second formal ‘call for sites’ consultation period should be provided to capture any remaining land owner and third party interest who wished to promote land for housing. This second consultation period was completed between 27 May and 18 July 2008. In addition, in order for the study to be as comprehensive as possible, it was agreed with the Council that further sites submitted for consideration by third parties on publication of the draft report in August 2009 would also be assessed at this final report stage.
3.13 In order to assist in the identification of land and buildings with definite residential development potential, a scoring system has been used to help assess the sites. The scoring proforma (provided at Stage 5 of this section) has been used to inform the evaluation but does not override professional judgement in instances where it is evident that there are other factors influencing the likelihood of a site coming forward for residential use.

3.14 The use of scoring systems was a recognised way of differentiating between sites during housing assessments completed under previous best practice guidance such as Tapping the Potential⁵. Whilst such scoring systems can be useful for evaluating each site's potential, the specific requirements of the SHLAA guidance rely on a thorough evaluation of individual sites and an identification of deliverable and available sites to meet an authority's housing targets. Further information on the use of the scoring proforma is outlined in Stages 6 and 7 below.

**Stage 2 – Determining Sources of Sites**

3.15 An initial list of sites to be surveyed was produced by the Council. The list was accompanied by GIS information and a database including background information on the identified sites. The principal sources of these sites are set out below.

**Knowsley Urban Capacity Study**

3.16 Knowsley last undertook an Urban Capacity Study in 2003, with the findings being published in 2004. Sites identified in the study which had not received planning permission or had received planning permission which had not been implemented and had subsequently lapsed were added to the SHLAA database for assessment.

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Ordnance Survey Mapping and Aerial Photography

3.17 Using suitable scale OS maps (1:10,000) and aerial photography dating from 2005 and 2006, all of the Borough’s urban areas were examined for potential plots of land, however small, which would have potential to accommodate residential development.

National Land Use Database (NLUD)

3.18 Much of the information which is contained within the NLUD database is derived from other datasets, such as the Council’s Land Availability database (LARS) and the UCS. Sites identified in the NLUD dataset are previously developed and may often have significant redevelopment potential, subject to any identified constraints.

Open Space and Outdoor Sports Provision: Green Space Audit

3.19 The Council’s Green Space Audit was undertaken in 2005 and has been the subject of regular updates since. It provides a comprehensive review of all open space and outdoor sports provision within the Borough, regardless of whether a site is allocated in the Replacement UDP. Updates to the Audit have acted to identify areas of open space and outdoor sports provision which are no longer in use or which were incorrectly included in the original Audit, which could potentially be released for alternative uses subject to other policy constraints. The SHLAA assesses whether such sites could have potential for residential use, either in part or in whole.

3.20 Areas of open space and outdoor sports provision which were not specifically identified for potential release, and are designated under Policies OS3 and OS4 of the Replacement UDP, were only considered for inclusion in the SHLAA where the site had been identified by a previous study, such as the Urban Capacity Study or NLUD. An assessment was then made given the overall surplus or deficit within the relevant Substantial Residential Area as to whether individual sites may be able to be released for housing or other forms of development under current UDP policy.

Discussions with Development Quality and Asset Management Departments

3.21 Discussions with Knowsley’s Development Quality and Asset Management departments were undertaken as part of the study. This allowed the study team to draw upon local knowledge of the Borough and identify potential sites which may have otherwise been missed by other parts of the site
identification process. During the site identification stage of the study the Council’s Asset Management department submitted a large number of sites which were assessed in terms of their suitability for residential development and, where appropriate, were included in the study.

Expired and Unimplemented Existing Planning Applications

3.22 A query was run on Knowsley’s LARS database to identify any sites which had expired and unimplemented planning permissions. The sites with expired planning applications were checked for subsequent applications, and those remaining without permission for housing were included in the list of sites to be assessed.

Site Specific Regeneration Areas (Action Areas and Development Opportunity Sites) and Allocated Housing Sites

3.23 The Council currently has a number of regeneration priorities within the Borough which have been included in the SHLAA, along with UDP housing allocations which were not built out at the study’s base date. Many of these sites are subject to Development Briefs which have Supplementary Planning Document status and, in some cases, are designated Action Areas. These provisions have been made by the Council to help promote regeneration efforts within these areas and act to assist in identifying issues which will impact on bringing the sites forward for development.

Call for Sites

3.24 As set out at paragraph 3.12 of this report, the Council (along with the other partner authorities) invited stakeholders, landowners and other interested parties to submit sites for consideration as part of two ‘call for sites’ exercises which ran between October and December 2007, and May and July 2008. This stage of the SHLAA was advertised in national and local press, and on the Council’s website. All sites submitted via this process were reviewed against information already gathered by the Council and, where necessary, duplicates were removed prior to the submitted sites being entered into the SHLAA database for assessment.

Stage 3 – Desktop Review of Information

3.25 The portfolio of sites identified by Stage 2 of the process has been the subject of thorough examination by officers at Knowsley. WYG has developed its own bespoke database – which has also
been utilised in the Sefton and West Lancashire assessments – to record key facts and judgements concerning the identified sites. The database records 25 criteria in order to provide a comprehensive information source to assist in the undertaking of independent survey work and the assessment of each site's development potential.

3.26 The 25 criteria are not policy judgements, rather they are an assessment of factors that could influence the delivery of housing. The criteria are as follows.

1. Is the site within a Conservation Area?
2. Are there any Listed Buildings on the site?
3. Is the site within a primarily residential area?
4. Does the site comprise previously developed land?
5. Is there any likelihood of contamination?
6. Does the site need significant new infrastructure in order to be developed for housing?
7. Are there any physical constraints?
8. Is the site situated within Flood Zones 2 or 3?
9. Are there any buildings requiring demolition?
10. Is satisfactory access possible?
11-16. Accessibility and distance from local services.
17. Are there any nature conservation issues?
18. Would redevelopment have a positive regeneration impact on the area?
19. Is the site subject to any un-neighbourly uses?
20. Is the site more suited to non-residential uses?
21. Are there any ownership issues?
22. Is the site owned by developer, or is the owner willing to sell to a developer?
23. Is the site in active use?
24. Is the site underused?
25. Is the site within a strong residential area?

3.27 The results have been recorded and inputted into WYG's SHLAA database. Information provided by the Council has only been amended by WYG when a site survey has provided more accurate or up to date information.
Stage 4 – Determining Sites to be Surveyed

3.28 Due to the large number of sites identified at Stage 2, it was decided that it was not cost-efficient or methodologically advantageous to visit all sites less than 0.1 hectares in size. Instead, a 10% statistically representative sample of such sites has been undertaken in order to calculate their likely contribution to the overall housing supply. The yield that is estimated to be delivered from the sample is used as a multiplier to provide a calculation of the supply from all such sources. This ‘small site allowance’ is distinct from a windfall allowance as the sites have been identified on an individual basis, rather than the assessment of supply being entirely theoretical and derived from historical precedent.

3.29 Following the removal from the dataset of the 90% of small sites below 0.1 ha which were not surveyed, a total of 235 sites have been identified and visited by WYG’s survey team.

3.30 In determining the study methodology, consideration was given as to whether currently vacant homes could make any contribution to the housing supply. In this regard, it is commonly accepted that there will always be a number of vacant properties within the system, often as a result of short term issues such as the renovation of a property following purchase or due to probate issues. Such transactional vacancies are considered normal and may, typically, account for around 2-3% of the housing stock being vacant at any one time.

3.31 Given this, it is notable that Knowsley’s Empty Homes Strategy 2008-2010\(^4\) identifies the Borough as having, at 2007, a relatively limited number of empty homes when compared to both the region and to England as a whole. This is illustrated by Table 3.1 overleaf.

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Table 3.1: Rates of Empty Homes

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>Total Empty Home</th>
<th>Percentage of the Housing Stock Empty</th>
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<tr>
<td>Knowsley</td>
<td>1,366</td>
<td>2.12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liverpool</td>
<td>14,825</td>
<td>7.02%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merseyside</td>
<td>31,863</td>
<td>5.13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England</td>
<td>671,924</td>
<td>3.02%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Knowsley Council

3.32 Accordingly, it is evident that Knowsley is subject to a significantly lower incidence of long term empty homes than its neighbour Liverpool and that its vacancy rates are consistently lower than those across the Merseyside sub-region as a whole. Accordingly, it is considered highly unlikely that vacant properties will make a significant contribution to the supply of housing in Knowsley in coming years. Accordingly, no provision is made in the supply identified by this SHLAA for any additional dwellings to be provided through the re-occupation of empty homes.

Stage 5 – Carrying out the Assessment

3.33 Each of the 235 sites was visited and assessed by WYG surveyors, with the results being recorded using the survey proforma (provided at Figure 3.2). The format of the proforma is derived from WYG’s previous experiences undertaking similar studies and is tailored to meet the specific requirements of the project. Whilst much of the site survey record is used to assist in the scoring of sites, additional information, such as the current land use and the type of potential the housing opportunity represents, has also been recorded.

3.34 Site visits were carried out by members of the WYG team accompanied by members of the Council’s Planning team. Comments were agreed and noted on the individual proformas and queries were also noted to be resolved subsequently through further research and discussion. During the site visits, a number of sites were found to be unsuitable (for example, they are and are likely to remain inaccessible) or unavailable (including sites which have already been developed) and these were subsequently excluded from the study. In total, 81 of the sites assessed are considered to offer realistic realisable housing potential and have been included in the identified housing supply.
### Figure 3.2: Joint Housing Land Availability Assessment Draft Proforma

#### SITE DETAILS:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Site Reference</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Settlement</th>
<th>Existing Use</th>
<th>Opportunity Type</th>
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#### SUITABILITY:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Partially</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Comments</th>
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<tr>
<td>Does the site suffer from any physical constraints (e.g. topography)?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Is the site affected by un-neighbourly uses (heavy industry, power lines, railway lines, motorways, etc)?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is there a possibility that the site is heavily contaminated?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can satisfactory access be achieved to the site?</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
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</table>

#### AVAILABILITY:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Partially</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is the site in active use?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the site subject to multiple or difficult land ownerships?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the site owned by a developer or is the owner willing to sell?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</table>

#### ACHIEVABILITY:

<table>
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<th>Partially</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is the site known to be located within a strong residential market?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the site set within an attractive local environment?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are there any known significant abnormal costs (including remediation, demolition, etc)?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the site need significant new infrastructure to be suitable for residential development?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### CLASSIFICATION:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>Yes/No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Urban Brownfield</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Greenfield (including Greenspace available for development)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Extensions Outside the Greenbelt</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Extensions Inside the Greenbelt</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greenbelt Non-contiguous</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sites Subject to Flooding</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### SITE COMMENTS/CONSTRAINTS:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
3.35 Each site has been scored against a number of key criteria. These criteria are used to assess the potential of each site for residential development, taking into account its suitability, availability and achievability in accordance with the SHLAA guidance. Whilst, as previously stated, the scoring has not been used prescriptively to determine the overall suitability of the site, the final score should be taken to be a broad indication of the potential of a given site to be redeveloped for housing.

**Assessing Availability for Housing**

3.36 The availability of a site relates to its known constraints and how this may impact upon the likelihood of it being developed for housing over the next 15 years. The issues affecting availability which have been considered are as follows:

- whether a site is currently in use or not;
- ownership constraints, relating to whether a site is thought to be in multiple ownership or not; and
- whether the owner is known to be willing to sell.

**Assessing Suitability for Housing**

3.37 A site is suitable for housing development if it offers a suitable location for development and would contribute to the creation of sustainable, mixed communities. The factors assessed in considering each identified site’s suitability for housing are:

- policy restrictions, such as allocations, protected areas and existing planning policies;
- physical problems or limitations, such as access, infrastructure provision and flood risk (sites lying wholly within Flood Zone 3 are not considered to offer realistic potential for redevelopment for housing and have been excluded from the housing supply);
- the site’s proximity to amenities and public transport nodes; and
- the environmental conditions which would be experienced by prospective residents, in particular those that may arise from any adjacent land uses being ‘bad neighbours’.

**Assessing Achievability of Housing**

3.38 The strength of the housing market differs across Knowsley and, in the current economic climate, the viability of developing some of the sites for housing is acknowledged to be an issue. It is therefore
important to assess the specific constraints impacting on the delivery of each site in order that the future phasing of sites can be accurately assessed.

3.39 A site is considered achievable for development where there is a reasonable degree of certainty 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 a development over a certain period. It is affected by:

- market factors, within which we include both housing demand in the general locality and the likely attractiveness of the site to the market; and
- cost factors, in terms of whether a site is known to be contaminated, thus requiring significant remediation works in order to be developed for residential purposes, and whether there are buildings requiring demolition on site.

3.40 In order to gauge housing demand in general localities, enquiries have been made of residential land agents and estate agents. This research has been supplemented through the analysis of sales and census data in order to provide an appropriate context for the judgements and assumptions made. This research is summarised by way of the Housing Market Overview provided at Appendix 1.

3.41 Each site subject to detailed assessment has been scored out of a total of 100 in terms of how it performs against the above criteria and the results are provided in the datasheets at Appendix 2 and Appendix 3 of this report. Appendix 2 details those sites which comprise the housing supply identified by the SHLAA and Appendix 3 details those sites which have been considered in detail but which are, at present, excluded from the supply for a particular reason. A further schedule is provided at Appendix 4 which indicates those sites which were excluded from the study prior to the Consultation stage.

3.42 The weighting attributed to each criterion has been informed by WYG’s previous experience of SHLAA and Urban Housing Capacity work, and was agreed in discussion with the Council prior to the commencement of survey work.

3.43 A judgement on most of the criteria set out in paragraphs 3.33 to 3.36 has been arrived at through either on-site survey work or desk-based research. However, GIS mapping has been used to provide an accurate appraisal of each site’s proximity to six key sustainability criteria (primary schools, local centres, health centres, commercial/employment opportunities, railway stations and bus stops).
3.44 The following distances from any part of a particular site to the provision have been used as a representation of satisfactory access:

- primary school – 600 metres;
- local centre – 800 metres;
- health centre – 1,000 metres;
- commercial/employment opportunities – 5,000 metres;
- railways station – 400 metres; and
- bus stops – 200 metres.

3.45 The distances have been agreed with the Council in accordance with good practice recommendations. Each site has been awarded three points for each provision that is adjudged to be within reasonable travelling distance\(^5\).

3.46 Similarly, GIS has been used to determine whether any part of a site lies within either Flood Zone 2 (medium probability of flooding) or Flood Zone 3 (high probability of flooding or functional floodplain), as defined by PPS25: Development and Flood Risk (2006). The flood maps used are those established by the Knowsley and Sefton Councils’ Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (June 2009), which in turn are derived from Environment Agency data for fluvial and tidal flooding. The maps result from the application of a general model which has been augmented by detailed hydraulic modeling and information provided by historical flooding outlines. As a consequence, the flood risk comments provided for individual site basis do not give detailed consideration to the presence of flood defences and do not consider the effect of development on surface water run off.

3.47 To ensure that final scorings for each site can be ordered logically each site was categorised. This categorisation is important when comparing site scores in different categories. The five categories are listed below:

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\(^5\) For which it is assumed the journey will be undertaken on foot, with the exception of 'commercial/employment opportunities' where 5,000 metres is considered to be representative of a reasonable cycling distance.
• Urban Brownfield;
• Urban Greenfield including Greenspace available for development;
• Urban Extension outside of the Green Belt;
• Urban Extension inside the Green Belt; and
• Green Belt non-contiguous.

3.48 The two Green Belt categories of housing supply have been excluded from the overall quantification of supply provided by the SHLAA. It is WYG’s understanding that the residential development potential of land within the Green Belt is to be assessed through a separate study which will consider broad locations for future growth. Such a review is outside the scope of this commission and, accordingly, this SHLAA does not ascribe any dwelling yield to these sites.

Stage 6 – Estimating Housing Potential of Each Site

3.49 In order to estimate the housing potential of each site, an assessment of its developable area needs to be made. There are a number of factors which may influence the developable area of a site. Limiting factors include topography, irregular shaped plots and site specific constraints such as underground services or flood zones. In Knowsley all sites that are affected by flooding lie within Flood Zone 3. In each case, that part of the site which lies within Flood Zone 3 has been excluded from the developable area.

3.50 Allowance has been made on larger sites for the on-site provision of access roads, along with facilities such as green infrastructure and community uses, to serve the development. The assumptions used in calculating net developable areas are set out below and are based on research undertaken during the preparation of advice set out in government documents such as Tapping the Potential and the Housing Land Availability Assessments: Draft Practice Guide. Whilst this approach is considered robust and appropriate for the purposes of this study, it should be noted that the net developable area is an indicative figure and that the Council will negotiate appropriate non-housing provision on a site-by-site basis when considering future development proposals.
Table 3.2: Net Developable Site Area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gross Site Area</th>
<th>Net Developable Area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 0.4 ha</td>
<td>100% of developable area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.4 ha to 2 ha</td>
<td>90% of developable area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sites over 2 ha</td>
<td>75% of developable area</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Derived from Tapping the Potential, ODPM, 2000

3.51 In order to assess the housing potential of each site, a range of density multipliers have been applied. The multiplier applied to each site is that which, in the opinion of WYG, best reflects the character of the area, the type or mix of housing that would be appropriate on the site and the site’s proximity to a defined centre and to services. The ranges of densities used are set out in Table 3.3. Alternative densities have been applied in a limited number of cases where it is evident that the shape or character of a site suggests a particular, more specific density. In all such cases, guidance has been sought from Council officers to ensure that the applied density is appropriate.

Table 3.3: Applied Site Densities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Housing Character</th>
<th>Applied Density (Dwellings per ha)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low density suburban mix (detached and semi-detached)</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low to medium density urban mix (town houses and semi-detached)</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium density urban mix (mainly town houses)</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High density urban mix (town houses and apartments)</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apartments (up to six storey)</td>
<td>70 and above</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.52 Following the identification of a proposed development density, the yield for each site is calculated by multiplying the net site area by the density. The datasheets provided at Appendix 2 indicate the proposed density and yield of each site.

3.53 In the past, many urban capacity and housing land availability studies have tended to seek to maximise the potential supply of housing by applying higher densities than the 30 dwellings per hectare regarded as the minimum acceptable. This has led to concerns over town cramming, particularly where sites included in the study, whilst being vacant and meeting the criteria for development, contribute to the amenity of the local area.
3.54 In Knowsley, many of the sites are classified as brownfield because they are sites which were previously developed for housing or other uses. The properties have been demolished; in many cases the foundations have been left in situ and grassed over creating an amenity space. These sites are generally small with limited capacity. In order not to over-estimate the potential for sites, a benchmark density of 30 dwellings per hectare has generally been applied, unless site conditions suggest a higher density can be satisfactorily achieved.

3.55 The approach taken by WYG in determining the likely densities of identified sites is considered to cautious and based upon the clear expectation that the type of residential development scheme presently being considered by housebuilders will likely result in a lower average development density than that has been typically achieved in recent years. The average net density applied to the SHLAA sites included in the identified housing supply is 33.5 dwellings per hectares.

3.56 Clearly, the densities applied to sites are indicative and are provided solely for the purposes of this SHLAA. They should not be taken to be a statement of Council policy on the amount of housing that a given site may accommodate, which will need to be determined through the planning application process.

**Stage 7 – Assessing When a Site Will be Developed**

3.57 Assessing when each site is likely to come forward for development is not an exact science. Predictions also inevitably become less certain the further into the future a site is forecast to be developed. The Council’s ongoing plan, monitor and manage programme will provide the process for managing changes to this study’s findings as time goes by.

3.58 None of the sites in Knowsley that have been surveyed are known to be constrained by major infrastructure projects - such as a bypass or new sewage treatment works – which could significantly delay development. We have attempted to identify where abnormal levels of enabling works would be required in order to bring a site forward and these instances are noted in the database. In a study of this size it is clearly not practical to undertake a detailed development feasibility of each individual site and this analysis is very much a high level strategic assessment.

3.59 The viability of each site has been assessed by taking into account the strength of the residential market in the locality, the type of housing that could be developed and any implications for construction costs, including costs relating to such factors as demolition and contaminated land. High
scoring sites will generally be available for development in the short term, although the timing of release may be influenced by national housing market factors and developer/landowner intentions. Low scoring sites are less likely to be available for development in the short term.

3.60 The supply of housing in the first five years of the study can be identified with a relatively high degree of certainty as sites in this phase will have scored highly and are generally in compliance with saved development plan policy. These sites will have few, if any, known constraints to development and are generally vacant or known to be available for redevelopment. Accordingly, a large number of sites identified with the five year housing supply were promoted for development through the call for sites exercise.

3.61 Sites placed within the 6 to 10 year housing supply will have some policy or development constraints which limit the speed at which they will come forward for development. In some instances these sites may require a change of allocation as part of the emerging LDF process.

3.62 The viability of each site has been assessed by taking into account the relative strength of the residential market in the locality, the type of housing that could be developed and any implications for construction costs, including costs relating to such factors as demolition and contaminated land. High scoring sites will generally be available for are more likely to come forward earlier although the timing of release may be influenced by national housing market factors.

3.63 Many of the sites included in the first five year period are vacant and in Council ownership. Nearly all are brownfield. Although market conditions will ultimately determine which sites will be developed during this period, the identified sites are free of constraints and are available for development.

3.64 For the 6 to 10 year housing supply period, sites have been assessed and considered suitable for housing based on the site visit assessment and the scoring criteria. Although the majority of sites included in the 6 to 10 year supply are previously developed, there are a greater number of greenfield sites than in the five year supply. Sites in the 6 to 10 year supply will typically have policy or development constraints which will affect the timeframe within which they come forward for development. In some cases, these sites may require a change of allocation or policy as part of the emerging LDF process. Most of these sites are small and many have a designation within the Council’s Open Space Needs Assessment, or are classified as Urban Greenspace within the Council’s Replacement UDP, or, whilst not being formally designated, may contribute to the amenity of the local area.
3.65 Although the RSS sets out a clear need to ensure that brownfield land is developed in preference to greenfield, the situation in Knowsley is not clear-cut. Many of the sites which the SHLAA has defined as brownfield have a very similar appearance to greenfield sites, as they have been grassed over and in general there is little trace remaining above ground of the previous use (typically being residential properties which have been demolished). They also currently fulfil a similar function as amenity space.

3.66 In practice, a judgment on individual sites will need to be made by the Council taking into consideration the impact on the provision of local Greenspace. It is understood that the Council may undertake a review of Greenspace in the Borough via the LDF process. The findings of this SHLAA may therefore need to be adjusted in the light of any future review.

Stage 8 – Review of the Assessment

3.67 A review of the initial SHLAA survey findings was carried out in September 2008 with Council officers, including representatives from Planning and Regeneration, Asset Management and Highways. This review focused on sites within the urban area which had been identified as having potential for development for housing. A number of sites were ruled out at this stage, mainly as a result of difficulties with access. Some sites were found to have limited capacity as a result of access constraints. A list of excluded sites is provided in Appendix 4.

3.68 Following the issue of the draft SHLAA report for consultation in August and September 2009, all representations received have been reviewed, considered and acted upon, where necessary, in order to improve the accuracy of the assumptions made in undertaking the study and to thereby provide increased justification for the study’s findings. Particular attention has been given to the re-evaluation of sites placed in the short and medium-term housing supply following comment and feedback from members of the public and third party stakeholders. Amendments have been made where additional information has been provided with regard to site ownership, development constraints, development aspirations and boundary issues, and any inconsistencies in approach to individual sites have been addressed. WYG is grateful for the assistance provided at this stage by landowners, developers, statutory bodies and other interested individuals which has assisted in ensuring that the study’s findings are as robust as possible.
3.69 A schedule summarising all representations submitted in response to consultation at Draft Report stage is provided at Appendix 5. The appendix also sets out WYG’s response to representations and any revisions which have been actioned as a result.

**Stage 9 - The Housing Potential of Broad Locations**

3.70 The capacity identified by the study is compared with current RSS targets in order to quantify the number of years housing land supply that Knowsley has. Should any SHLAA identify a future shortfall in housing land, this would be a matter for the emerging Core Strategy to consider, which provides an opportunity for local people, key stakeholders and the development industry to make detailed comments about the direction of future growth.

3.71 Additional urban capacity may be found in the future through, for example, sites which are currently in active use becoming unexpectedly available, such as the closure of large employment sites which are not required for future business use. Capacity which comes forward from previously unidentified development sites will be recognised in future revisions of this study. Any additional capacity provided in this manner would ultimately reduce the need for, or delay the phasing of, extensions to the urban area.

3.72 In the context of prospects for achieving additional capacity within the urban area in the future, it is of note that, in response to the Government’s plan for increased investment in primary schools, Knowsley Council has submitted proposals for the rationalisation of primary schools within the Borough. The proposals within the document, entitled ‘Future Schooling in Knowsley: Strategy for Change 2008-2010’ build on the success of the ‘Building Schools for the Future’ programme, the positive results of which are now visible in secondary schools and communities within the Borough.

3.73 The need for rationalising the primary school provision in Knowsley results from a history of below average educational attainment, deprivation, poor building condition and until recent years, significant population loss resulting in a number of surplus school places.

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In this regard, it is noted that the Halton, Knowsley, Sefton and West Lancashire Joint Employment Land and Premises Study (published in January 2010) indicates that the employment land supply in the Borough is limited and should generally be retained in this use. Accordingly, any proposals to develop sites in employment use for housing will usually need to address the loss of employment land.
3.74 Although the programme is still in an embryonic phase, it is evident that a number a primary schools may become surplus to educational requirements over the 15 years of the strategy’s existence. Given the nature of the sites, at least some of them could be potentially suitable for residential development.

3.75 For the purposes of this study, it will be unwise to speculate which sites may be deemed suitable for residential development in the future. However, as the SHLAA is reviewed annually as part of the monitoring process a clearer picture will emerge, enabling quantification of the potential contribution that former school sites could make to the Borough’s housing land supply.

3.76 In the event that more substantial shortfalls remain, there may be a requirement for planned urban expansions. The form of any urban extension is for the LDF to consider, in the context provided by the findings of the forthcoming Green Belt Study, and taking into account factors such as sustainability, environmental impact on the surrounding area and existing infrastructure.

Stage 10 – Windfalls

3.77 The SHLAA Practice Guidance advises that, in line with PPS3: Housing, the supply of land for housing should be based upon specific sites which have been the subject of a survey. The use of windfall allowances should not usually be used within the first ten years of a plan unless there are justifiable local circumstances that prevent specific sites being identified.

3.78 In recent years Knowsley has achieved significant housing completions on unallocated windfall sites. There are likely to be further opportunities from sites that become unexpectedly available in the future. However, in accordance with the SHLAA good practice guidance, no allowance for windfalls, as such, has been made in this study, but, as previously stated, the methodology does include provision for an estimation of the likely capacity which will be provided by small sites under 0.1 ha. As set out at paragraph 3.28 of this report, the small site allowance included in the assessment of housing supply is distinct from a windfall allowance as each site has been identified individually, rather than the assessment of supply being entirely theoretical and a derivation of historical completions.

7 The Council’s Annual Monitoring Report indicates that there were 1,159 dwelling completions on windfall sites in Knowsley Borough between 1 April 2006 and 31 March 2009.
Any future development on windfall sites will be recorded in the Council’s Annual Monitoring Report and will be accounted for in future updates to this SHLAA.
4.0 ASSESSMENT OF SUPPLY

4.01 This section sets out the findings of the SHLAA study and reviews the supply of housing land against the current targets for Knowsley set out in the RSS.

Regional Spatial Strategy Housing Requirement

4.02 The housing requirement for Knowsley is 450 dwellings per annum as set out in the recently published Regional Spatial Strategy (September 2008). The start date for the requirement is 2003 and this supersedes the previous RSS (2003) which set a lower housing requirement for the Borough. The RSS stipulates that 65% of new housing in Knowsley should be provided on previously developed land.

Knowsley Annual Monitoring Report 2008

4.03 The Annual Monitoring Report covers the period from 1 April 2007 to 31 March 2008 and contains information on the implementation of the LDF and the effectiveness of policies within the Replacement Knowsley UDP. The report sets out the Borough’s past performance in relation to housing delivery.

4.04 A Housing Constraint Policy operated in Knowsley from 2005 to 2008 to restrict the number of dwellings being built in excess of the 2003 Regional Spatial Strategy housing target and to protect the regeneration priorities which were the Action Areas. This led to a shortfall at 31 March 2008 of 1,289 dwellings compared to the 2008 RSS requirement. Given the current economic climate and the reduction in activity by housebuilders, the Council considers it is appropriate to distribute the 1,289 dwellings shortfall over the latter part of the RSS plan period, in the seven years between 2014 and 2021. This means that four-sevenths of the shortfall is made up as part of the 6 to 10 year supply, and three-sevenths is made up during years 11 to 15.

4.05 In addition, the Council has been advised by Knowsley Housing Trust of its proposal to undertake the demolition of 600 dwellings in its current stock, in addition to demolitions accounted for in North Huyton. However, as neither the exact details of this programme of demolition, nor the type of dwellings proposed as replacement homes, are confirmed, we are not able to make accurate provision for this programme in the assessment of housing supply. Accordingly, the proposed demolitions need to be monitored in order for proper account to be made in any future revision to this study.
4.06 In order to meet the RSS requirement of 450 net dwellings each year and the existing deficit set out above, it is anticipated that 2,250 dwellings will have to be completed in the five years to 2013. Between 2013 and 2018, 2,987 dwelling completions will be required.

**SHLAA Housing Supply**

4.07 In order to provide an estimation of housing supply in the Borough over coming years, existing housing commitments are added to the assessment of housing yield provided by the appraisal of each site included in this study and to the ‘small site allowance’. The small site allowance is calculated through analysis of the 10% sample of such sites that was undertaken.

4.08 Table 4.1 sets out the identified housing supply in the Borough over the 15 years from 1 April 2008. Should any of the identified capacity not be realised within an ascribed period, then this capacity may be carried forward to the following supply period. The information on the supply arising from allocated sites, Action Areas and extant planning permissions is derived from information set out in Knowsley MBC’s Housing Land Supply Summary.

### Table 4.1: Housing Land Supply at 1 April 2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>1 to 5 Year</th>
<th>6 to 10 Year</th>
<th>11 to 15 Year</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SHLAA Large Sites</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>768</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1,048</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SHLAA Small Site Allowance</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allocated Sites</td>
<td>572</td>
<td>520</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>1,167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action Areas</td>
<td>1,510</td>
<td>780</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>2,456</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extant Planning Permissions</td>
<td>847</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>847</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>3,319</td>
<td>2,068</td>
<td>241</td>
<td>5,628</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RSS Requirement*</td>
<td>2,250</td>
<td>2,987</td>
<td>2,802</td>
<td>8,039</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Potential Over Supply</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,069</strong></td>
<td><strong>-919</strong></td>
<td><strong>-2,561</strong></td>
<td><strong>-2,411</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Adjusted RSS housing requirement taking account of the shortfall identified in paragraphs 4.04 and 4.06 above.

4.09 The 280 large site dwelling yield for the five year supply is comprised of identified sites with no, or very few, known constraints which represent achievable and available development opportunities. The 768 large site dwelling yield for the 6 to 10 year supply is comprised of sites which have constraints – whether the relate to planning policy, market demand or the physical character of the site – which, realistically, would delay development for residential use in the short term.
4.10 The 10% sample of small sites has revealed a likely yield of approximately 11 dwellings, all of which are considered likely to be realised as part of the five year supply. Accordingly, this figure has been multiplied by a factor of ten in order to create a credible small site allowance which has been tested through site survey work and the same appraisal exercise that has informed the assessment of larger sites.

4.11 It must also be noted that, as is evident from the table above, the Council’s Action Areas make a major contribution to housing land supply. The trajectory for the delivery of housing in these areas has been incorporated into the table above, and shows that the five year land supply is heavily reliant on continuing progress with completions.

4.12 In terms of the allocated sites, these are sites that have been identified in the UDP as being suitable for housing and the potential numbers and the trajectory for delivery on these sites has also been accounted for following discussions with the Council. Details of committed housing sites are provided at Appendix 6.

4.13 In total, the assessment indicates that Knowsley has a more than sufficient five year supply to meet its target, with almost 90% of the identified supply being already committed as extant planning permission, allocations and Action Area development. There is an identified effective over-supply in the first five year period of 1,069 dwellings.

4.14 In the 6 to 10 year housing supply, there is an under-supply of housing below RSS requirements of -919 dwellings. Again, a significant contribution to the supply (1,300 dwellings) within this timeframe is made by sites which are allocated for residential development or have been identified as part of Action Area designations.

4.15 In addition to the sites contributing to the housing supply identified by this SHLAA, there are other sites which may well offer residential development potential in the future, but are currently the subject of competing land use pressures (particularly employment) which will be more appropriately considered through the LDF process. One such site is the South Prescot Action Area site8, which is

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8 SHLAA site reference K0369.
identified in the Knowsley Core Strategy Issues and Options Paper\(^9\) as possibly being suited for redevelopment for employment or for mixed-use purposes. It is likely that housing would be one of the mix of uses, if such development was considered to be appropriate.

4.16 However, due to the existing use of the site, its allocation in the current Replacement UDP for B1, B2 and B8 uses, and its identification within the Core Strategy Issue and Options paper, WYG does not believe that it can yet be considered, with the required degree of confidence, to be a housing site. Accordingly, although the site is excluded from the housing supply identified by this SHLAA, it may well make a significant contribution to Knowsley’s housing requirement at some point in the future.

**SHLAA Housing Supply by Opportunity Type**

4.17 The total housing yield identified through the survey of SHLAA sites is 1,158 dwellings. Table 4.2, overleaf, provides a breakdown of yield by opportunity type.

4.18 The table indicates that previously-developed sites make a proportionally greater contribution to the housing supply in the short term. This is because the development of some greenfield sites may currently be restricted in policy terms and it may take longer for such sites to come forward for development.

4.19 The RSS sets a target for Knowsley for 65% of housing development to take place through the redevelopment of previously developed land and buildings. In the five year housing supply derived from surveyed sites, around 80.3% of the housing yield identified is forecast to take place on previously developed land, decreasing to 52.7% between years 6 to 10. Of the 1,150 dwelling yield identified by the site survey exercise, it is estimated that a total of 62.1% could be achieved on previously developed land.

\(^9\) Placed on consultation between 27 November 2009 and 22 January 2010.
Table 4.2: Housing Land Supply at 1 April 2008 by Opportunity Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>1-5 Year</th>
<th>6-10 Year</th>
<th>11-15 Year</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Total Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Urban Brownfield (Large)</td>
<td>263</td>
<td>405</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>668</td>
<td>57.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Brownfield (Small)</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Greenfield (Large)</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>363</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>380</td>
<td>32.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Greenfield (Small)</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>390</strong></td>
<td><strong>768</strong></td>
<td><strong>0</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,158</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.20 Further information on identified commitments would be required to provide additional analysis of the overall ratio of brownfield to greenfield development throughout the 15 year period from 2008.

**SHLAA Housing Supply by Settlement**

4.21 Table 4.3, below, provides a breakdown of the surveyed sources of supply by settlement. In addition, Appendix 7 provides a map illustrating the geographic spread of SHLAA sites which contribute to the identified housing supply.

Table 4.3: Housing Supply at 1 April 2008 by Settlement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Settlement</th>
<th>1-5 Year</th>
<th>6-10 Year</th>
<th>11-15 Year</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Total Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Halewood</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huyton</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>17.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kirkby</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>14.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowsley Village</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northwood</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prescot</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>16.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roby</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southdene</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stockbridge</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>303</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>324</td>
<td>28.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Westvale</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whiston</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>390</strong></td>
<td><strong>768</strong></td>
<td><strong>0</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,158</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.22 Table 4.3 indicates that the majority of housing supply identified by the SHLAA is in the settlements of Huyton, Kirkby, Prescot and Stockbridge. These four settlements account for 76.4% of the identified housing supply, with Stockbridge alone accounting for 28.0% of the supply.

4.23 Stockbridge is a particular focus for housing development due, principally, to the emergence of the former Stockbridge Comprehensive site (site reference K0201) which is considered appropriate for residential development in the short term.

4.24 Unsurprisingly, given the size of the settlements and their importance to the Borough, Huyton, Kirkby and Prescot are the subject of a relatively high number of identified sites, but many of these are quite small and are likely to provide, on an individual basis, only limited housing numbers. Indeed, there are just two sites identified in these three settlements which are greater than 1 hectare in size, these being the Former School site at Mirfield Close, Halewood (site reference K0080) and Land to the South West of Wilson Road, Huyton (site reference K0350), both of which are identified as part of the 6 to 10 year supply.

4.25 The fact that a number of sites are relatively small in size can be attributed in part two circumstances. Firstly, the Borough’s more concentrated periods of growth – in particular, in the years after the Second World War when large areas of Council housing were built to provide homes for Liverpool’s overspill – resulted in the development of large areas of relatively low density housing where small corner sites and backland areas remain undeveloped. Kirkby is one such example in this regard and is subject to a relatively high number of sites between 0.1 hectares and 0.2 hectares in size. In addition to these leftover parcels of land, many sites included in the SHLAA are sites where poor quality housing has been demolished. As noted earlier, for the purposes of this study, these have been classified as brownfield.

**Green Belt**

4.26 As set out at paragraph 3.45, it is considered premature at this stage to consider specific sites in the Green Belt for residential development in advance of a comprehensive review of appropriate locations for future growth. The three authorities of Sefton, Knowsley and West Lancashire are in process of commissioning such a review, which will consider the Green Belt boundary in its entirety, rather than being limited to those sites submitted for consideration in the SHLAA.
4.27 Individual sites in the Green Belt which have been submitted as part of the 'call for sites' exercise have been visited and have been the subject of an initial assessment, but have not been included in the identified housing supply. The Green Belt sites submitted range from small sites adjacent to the urban area to large areas of land in agricultural use, some of which have no means of access unless neighbouring land is developed comprehensively. Although the majority of sites outside the urban area are greenfield, land at the former Cronton Colliery (which encompasses land to both the north and south of the M62) might be regarded as previously developed.

4.28 Other Green Belt sites put forward for consideration in the south of the Borough include land north of Halewood, land between Cronton and the M62, and sites at Whiston and Netherley. In the north of the Borough, the Green Belt sites submitted for consideration are generally situated to the east of Kirkby or are located around Knowsley Village.
5.0 RISK ASSESSED SUPPLY

5.01 The Government good practice guidance on the undertaking of SHLAAs indicates that, when the potential of all sites is collected to produce an indicative housing trajectory, then this should be subjected to a ‘risk assessment’ to allow for sites that do not come forward for residential development as anticipated. Whilst WYG consider that all sites that have been identified in this study are likely to come forward for residential development within the period specified, there are clearly a number of reasons why this may not occur. Such reasons include the inability of a developer to acquire/assemble a site, the possibility that a site may be developed for a use other than housing and the fact that a developer may ‘landbank’ sites until the housing market recovers sufficiently to ensure the development is viable.

5.02 Given this, WYG believe that it is prudent to apply a ‘risk assessment’ to the identified housing supply in order to provide a cautious, but realisable assessment of supply. However, as this risk assessment will apply to the housing trajectory, it is evident that a similar assessment of risk should also be applied to current planning permissions which, in the past, have been assumed (albeit in a much stronger housing market) to be suitable, available and achievable. The need to undertake this exercise has been further emphasised during WYG’s discussions with the Council, which have highlighted its belief that there are a limited number of development schemes subject to extant permissions that may never be built out in accordance with that permission as they do not provide the type of housing currently demanded by the market. In particular, developers are currently reluctant to build out certain developments that have planning permission but which include a significant amount of apartments for which there is limited market demand. However, it should be noted that in Knowsley, even in recent past, such housing does not dominate the character of the development proposed by current extant planning permissions.

5.03 Nevertheless, it is accepted that as a result of developers and house builders reviewing schemes in order to provide development which better meets current demand, there are likely to be greater numbers of family houses achieved at schemes where apartments may previously have been a component of supply. A clear consequence of this is that the number of dwelling completions achieved on a site will reduce. Therefore, it is evident that there is a clear risk associated with the assumption that all current planning permissions will be implemented and the total number of dwellings consented will be completed.
5.04 In seeking to apply an appropriate ‘risk assessment’ to the identified supply, WYG has reviewed the good practice guide produced by the Government. Unfortunately, the guidance fails to be explicit in terms of the form any risk assessment should take.

5.05 However, WYG’s view is that the ‘risk assessment’ referred to in Stage 8 of the guidance (paragraph 43) is a form of discounting akin to that recommended by previous urban housing capacity guidance, such as Tapping the Potential. Although the need for any discounting is, to a certain extent, negated by the fact that the methodology employed in this study seeks to assess the suitability, availability and achievability of every site, it is inevitable that certain sites assessed may not come forward or current permissions will not be implemented in the period anticipated at this stage. Although the annual monitoring undertaken by the Council will highlight any issues that may arise with certain sites or permissions, WYG believes that it is prudent at this stage to arrive at a ‘risk assessed’ supply which allows for a proportion of the sites and commitments not being delivered as anticipated.

5.06 Following discussions with the Council, and after reviewing representations made by interested parties at Draft Report stage, WYG considers that it is appropriate and robust for the ‘risk assessment’ to reduce the housing supply provided by sites with planning permission and those identified by the SHLAA by a factor of 20%. Put simply, this assumes that (on average) one in five of the sites assessed will not be delivered as anticipated and that 20 out of every 100 dwellings currently permitted will not be completed. The implications of applying this risk assessment at this stage are set out in Table 5.1 below.

5.07 In determining the size of the discount applied, two important considerations have been at the forefront of the study team’s deliberations. Firstly, as has been clearly set out throughout this report, an essentially cautious position has been maintained when assessing each SHLAA site’s suitability for housing and the likelihood of it coming forward for development in the current housing market. Secondly, the yield applied to each site has been tempered with a strong degree of commercial realism in terms of the type of housing likely to sell in current and forthcoming housing markets. Accordingly, the average net development density applied to sites (33.5 dwellings per hectare) is considered to be cautious.

5.08 The figure of 20% therefore principally accounts for sites which, despite offering clear and definite residential development, will not be developed for such a use within the timeframe of the study. Such sites may remain in their current use, may continue to lie derelict or may be developed for other uses. Whilst clearly not an ‘exact science’, the figure of 20% is considered realistic and reasonable based on
WYG’s discussion with landowners, developers, commercial property agents and Knowsley Council through the course of this study and during consultation events. The figure is less than has been suggested by some parties, but it should be reiterated that each site included in the study is considered likely to be developed for housing rather than simply being considered to offer ‘potential’.

Table 5.1: Risk Assessed Housing Supply at 1 April 2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>1-5 Year</th>
<th>6-10 Year</th>
<th>11-15 Year</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SHLAA Large Sites</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>614</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>838</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SHLAA Small Site Allowance</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allocated Sites</td>
<td>458</td>
<td>416</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>934</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action Areas</td>
<td>1,208</td>
<td>624</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>1,965</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning Permissions</td>
<td>678</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>678</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2,655</td>
<td>1,654</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>4,502</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RSS Requirement¹</td>
<td>2,250</td>
<td>2,987</td>
<td>2,802</td>
<td>8,039</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potential Over Supply</td>
<td>405</td>
<td>-1,332</td>
<td>-2,610</td>
<td>-3,537</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹Adjusted RSS housing requirement taking account of the shortfall identified in paragraphs 4.04 and 4.06 of this report.

5.09 The risk assessed supply set out by Table 5.1 shows a potential over-supply of 405 dwellings above RSS requirements over the five year supply and an under-supply of -1,332 dwellings over years 6 to 10. Overall, there is a total housing supply of 4,309 dwellings over the 10 years from 1 April 2008, which, when compared to the RSS requirement of 5,237 dwellings, equates to around an eight year ‘risk assessed’ housing supply.
6.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

6.01 The SHLAA is an important part of the evidence base for Knowsley’s emerging LDF and will assist the Council in delivering the level of residential development required by the RSS. The study has been undertaken in accordance with Government good practice guidance and provides an indication of the land available for housing development over a 15 year period.

6.02 The Council’s 2008 Annual Monitoring Report indicates that Knowsley currently has a deficit of 1,289 dwellings over the RSS period from 2003 to 2008, when compared with RSS requirements. After making provision in the housing supply for this existing deficit, the SHLAA identifies a ‘risk assessed’ over-supply of 405 dwellings in the five year period from 1 April 2008, and an under-supply of -1,332 dwellings in years 6 to 10. Across the 10 year period from 1 April 2008, there is a net under-supply of -927 dwellings, when compared with RSS requirements.

6.03 Accordingly, the SHLAA therefore identifies a less than ten year ‘risk assessed’ housing supply.

6.04 PPS3: Housing sets out a requirement for local planning authorities to identify specific, developable sites to provide a ten year supply of housing and, where possible, a 15 year supply. Where it is not possible to identify specific sites for years 11 to 15, broad locations for future growth should be indicated.

6.05 Given that this SHLAA has demonstrated that there are insufficient housing sites in Knowsley to provide a ten year housing supply, there is a clear need for a separate study to be undertaken in order to consider the existing Green Belt boundary and identify broad locations where future housing growth could be accommodated. Such broad locations will often adjoin existing settlements, but could theoretically be located wholly outside the existing urban area. Any such assessment is outside the agreed scope of this commission, but it will need to consider Green Belt sites which have been excluded from the quantification of housing supply in the SHLAA. WYG is aware that Knowsley and Sefton Councils are currently in the process of appointing consultants to assist in the preparation of such a study, which will also consider the need to provide employment land, and will report in summer 2010.