

Thurrock Housing Land Availability Assessment

October 2025

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Housing Land Availability Assessment (HLAA) is a technical evidence-based document which Local Plan-Making Authorities are required to produce to provide a clear understanding of the land available within their area for housing, as outlined in paragraph 72 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (Dec 2024).
- 1.2 The HLAA identifies a future supply of land which is assessed as being suitable, available, and achievable for housing development over the plan period. The primary function of the HLAA is to identify that there is sufficient land across Thurrock to meet the housing target identified in the Local Plan and to provide an evidence base for the policy decisions and the site selection process that is being undertaken as part of the preparation of the Plan.
- 1.3 The HLAA has been prepared in accordance with the methodology set out in the Government's Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) and our own HLAA methodology which can be viewed at Appendix 1. To this end the assessment:
 - Identifies sites and broad locations with potential for development;
 - Assesses their suitability for development and the likelihood of development coming forward (the availability and achievability); and
 - Assesses their development potential.
- 1.4 The outputs of the HLAA, as presented here, will assist the Council in identifying the choices available to meet the need and demand for more housing and provide a basis for making decisions about how to shape places in the future.
- 1.5 The HLAA itself is not policy and it is not the role of the HLAA to determine whether a site should, or should not, be allocated for development.
- 1.6 It should be noted that the inclusion of a site in the HLAA does not guarantee the site will be allocated for development in the Local Plan or that planning permission will be granted. Similarly, exclusion of a site from the HLAA does not preclude a site from future permission for development. For a site to be determined as suitable for housing development, it will need to be considered through the normal planning process which includes the preparation of the Thurrock Local Plan and/or determination of planning applications. This HLAA report is simply a technical piece of work that forms part of the plan making evidence base. Any sites identified should be seen as part of a list of land that could form part of the

housing land supply if Thurrock over the Local Plan period. Conversely, sites not seen as being suitable for housing development in the HLAA could still be considered for allocation in the Local Plan or be granted planning consent for development if it were deemed suitable after more detailed consideration.

2. Assessment Outcomes

Sites Assessed

- 2.1 After sites that fell under the site size threshold (Stage 1 of the assessment) and duplicated sites were discounted (sites that had been submitted to the Call for Sites multiple times or sites that had been identified through different site sources), a total of 238 sites were assessed through the HLAA. These included sites that were submitted during the Call for Sites periods, sites that had been identified through the Development Management process and other sites identified by Thurrock planning officers.

Potential Sites

- 2.2 The 238 sites were taken forward to Stage 2 of the assessment for an assessment of their suitability to be carried out. Of these 238 potential sites, 63 were found to be unsuitable for development. The three overarching reasons were:
- Site being subject to a severe constraint that makes the entirety of the site unsuitable for development (clip exclusion);
 - Site being subject to multiple less severe constraints that cumulatively make the site unsuitable for development (balance score less than 25); and:
 - Site not being adjacent to an existing settlement or being of a size capable of delivering a new settlement (proximity to settlement).
- 2.3 Sites that were found unsuitable are set out in Appendices 2 & 3, along with the justification.
- 2.4 Sites were then assessed on their availability and achievability. Of the remaining 175 suitable sites 144 sites that have been assessed to be suitable, available and achievable during the Local Plan period. The other 32 sites were found to be unavailable and/or unachievable. The assessment justifications are set out in Appendix 4.
- 2.5 It should be noted that a proportion of the sites identified in Appendix 4 do have existing policy constraints (such as an existing designation of Green Belt or open space) which would need to be overcome through further consideration of the sites as part of a site allocations process in the preparation of the Local Plan. It is

not the role of the HLAA to suggest policy changes and, any such decisions would need to be made through the plan making process following further, more detailed site assessments and consultation.

- 2.6 In addition, whilst general constraints to development have been assessed and noted, if allocations and subsequent development were to be actively pursued, more detailed assessments, which are outside the scope of the HLAA, may need to be carried out to assess their suitability. Such studies may provide additional detail that would render a site(s) unsuitable for development or reduce the suitable area of a site. Furthermore, the HLAA does not compare the relative suitability of sites against each other; therefore whilst a site may be deemed generally suitable, there could be several other suitable sites which would be preferred for allocation.
- 2.7 The HLAA identified two potential standalone settlements. These were deemed to form standalone settlements due to the scale of development proposed, alongside the lack of a shared boundary with an existing settlement or, where there was a shared boundary, the scale of development proposed far surpasses the size of the existing settlement. Again, whilst these sites have been assessed as being suitable, available and achievable at this stage, further detailed assessments will need to be carried out to support a future allocation.

3. Conclusions & Next Steps

- 3.1 Overall, the HLAA has identified that there are a sufficient number of suitable, available and achievable sites for meeting the housing need required by the Government's standard method calculation. The HLAA assessment has identified a potential housing capacity of 50,128 dwellings from sites that have been identified as being suitable, available and achievable, without having to rely on sites that the HLAA has deemed to be unsuitable for development.
- 3.2 The HLAA will continue to be updated through the plan preparation process to take account of new information, including the findings of further technical evidence that is currently under preparation. Sites will be reassessed based on this additional information and the development potential of sites will be refined to inform the final site allocations and housing trajectory in the Local Plan.

Appendix 1: HLAA Methodology

Published separately

Appendix 2: Unsuitable Sites - Absolute Constraints

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