Southend on Sea Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment

2026 Update

Southend-on-Sea City Council

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LICHFIELDS

Southend·on·Sea City Council

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Executive Summary

Purpose and Scope

This Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment ('HELAA') 2026 Update is prepared by Southend-on-Sea City Council and Lichfields. It updates (and supersedes for Southend) an earlier HELAA study prepared jointly for Southend and Rochford by Lichfields in 2020. This HELAA Update only looks at Southend-on-Sea.

The purpose of the Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment is to identify a future supply of land which is potentially suitable, available and achievable for housing and employment development over the Local Plan period. This report will be used as evidence by the Council in preparing its Local Plan, but it does not allocate land for development, set specific policies or provide an indication that the Council would be supportive of a specific development on any given site; it merely highlights the potential of land for development against a set of criteria at the current point in time.

This report draws upon site assessments undertaken by Southend-on-Sea City Council. Those assessments have been undertaken by the Council both for newly included sites as well as updating assessments for previously assessed HELAA sites. 249 sites (or clusters of sites) have been assessed in this Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment update. Each assessment looks at the site's 'suitability' for development, the in-principle acceptability and appropriateness of the site to accommodate development given constraints, the site's 'availability', if and when it could come forward for development, and the site's 'achievability', whether it is viable to develop. This also informs whether a site is 'deliverable' and could come forward in the first five years or is 'developable' and could come forward later. The methodology applied for assessing sites in this report has been developed so that it works alongside the Council's other studies on housing and employment land supply.

Housing Land Availability

In considering housing land availability, new sites through an ongoing call for sites exercise have been added to a review of other sources of potential site supply, including considering any changes in circumstance to sites identified in the previous HELAA study, to arrive at an overall view of the land availability and capacity for housing development within the Council area. 226 sites are assessed for residential development in total within this HELAA iteration.

The findings of this report are summarised in Table ES.1. It shows that there is an existing capacity for 9,407 homes (of which 3,000 homes relate to a realistic windfall allowance) on sites that could come forward within the existing planning policies (for example urban regeneration sites and underutilised brownfield land). A further 7,325 homes could come forward, if the Council chose to amend policy and existing protections to release them through a new local plan for wholly housing development; albeit this includes some sites currently designated as Green Belt and employment land (though excludes a three existing/potential employment sites where housing might be suitable, but may equally be retained for commercial use, and so for the purposes of the assessment are excluded from total capacity). Therefore, the **total land availability is concluded as 16,732 homes**. These sites have also been placed into a trajectory, based on when it is anticipated that sites could come forward and how quickly they might build-out. This trajectory indicates that there is a **total land availability of 14,724 homes over the plan-period 2025-2045**.

Only 4 sites in this update assessment have been found to be unsuitable for housing development. Albeit a further 109 sites are considered to not be deliverable or developable, primarily due to information around reasonable availability. Appendix 2 to this report provides a single page pro-forma assessment for every site prepared by Southend-on-Sea City Council, identifying what constraints and factors affect the site and explaining how conclusions have been arrived at for that site.

An assessment of housing land availability provides only an initial starting point. Not all sites and locations identified in such assessments will necessarily be allocated for development. The Council will have taken into consideration a much wider range of factors (such as the relative sustainability of a site or the choices and trade-offs involved in development on different types of sites), including considering the results of public consultation, in formally identifying any site for development in the Local Plan.

Table ES.1 HELAA - Overall Summary Table

Category	Housing		Employment	Total
	No. of Sites/Clusters	No. of Homes	No. of Sites/Clusters	No. of Sites/Clusters
A. Deliverable	184	3,028	2	186
Planning permissions - Non-HELAA sites	153	399		153
HELAA sites	31	2,629	2	33
B. Deliverable (subject to policy)	0	0	0	0
HELAA sites	0	0	0	0
C. Developable	29	3,379	18	47
HELAA sites - available in future	27	3,313		27
HELAA sites - availability unknown	2	66		2
Existing/potential employment areas	0	0	18	18
D. Developable (subject to policy)	13	7,337	0	13
HELAA sites - available	8	6,815		8
HELAA sites (potential employment release) - availability unknown	2	510		2
Existing/potential employment areas*	3	12		3
E. Not deliverable or developable	113	0	3	116
Not suitable	4	N/A		4
Availability unknown (considered via UCS)	45	N/A		45
Not available (considered via UCS)	44	N/A		44
Other rejected sites (not available)	20	N/A	3	23
F. Other sources	0	3,000	0	0
Windfall allowance		3,000		
Total HELAA Estimate of current capacity (within current policy) A + C + F	213	9,407	20	233
Total HELAA Estimate of current capacity (subject to policy - excl. existing employment areas*) A + B + C + D + F	223	16,732	20	243
Total HELAA Estimate of current capacity (subject to policy) A + B + C + D + F	226	16,744	20	249
Previous HELAA Sites Removed:			Completed	63
			Superseded	59

Employment Land Availability

As well as the above sites for housing, 23 sites were specifically assessed for the suitability and availability for employment development. **Of these 20 sites were assessed as suitable for employment development**.

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Glossary

Suitability

The in-principle acceptability and appropriateness of the site, in planning terms, to accommodate development considering constraints and the ability to minimise adverse impacts.

Availability

The extent to which there are legal, ownership, land interests which could prevent development from occurring at the point envisaged.

Achievability

The degree to which there is a reasonable prospect that development on a site is economically viable at a given point in time can be completed.

Deliverable

Where a potential site for housing is available now, offers a suitable location for development, and is achievable with a realistic prospect that development will be delivered on the site within five years.

Developable

Where a potential site or location for housing is in a suitable location with a reasonable prospect that the site is available and could be viably developed at the point envisaged.

Windfall

Any site that is developed and has not specifically been identified for that development in the Development Plan (e.g. is not allocated within the Local Plan).

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Southend-on-Sea City Council (SCC) and Lichfields have prepared this Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) update report. The HELAA forms a key part of the emerging Local Plan evidence base, helping the authority to understand and evidence what availability of land there is for a variety of forms of development over the plan period (2025-2045).

Purpose and Background

1.2 The purpose of this HELAA is to assess the suitability, availability and achievability of land in the area to meet potential future development needs. The HELAA does not allocate land for development, set specific policies or indicate that the Council would support its development. It merely highlights the potential of land for development against agreed criteria.

1.3 This HELAA is one in a series of land availability assessments produced for SCC. Assessments already undertaken as part of earlier HELAA exercises include:

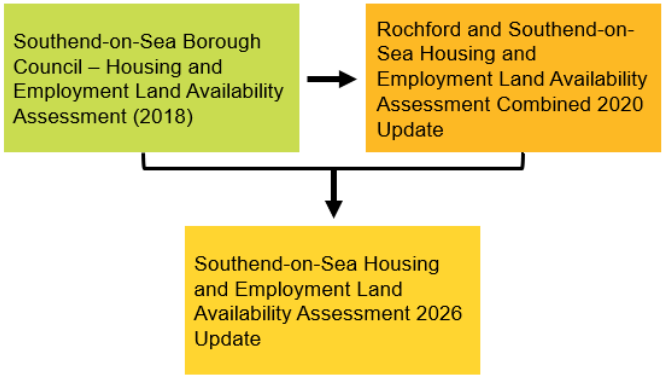
- Southend Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessments 2018 undertaken by DLP (and accompanying viability evidence); and
- Rochford and Southend-on-Sea Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment Combined 2020 Update, undertaken by Lichfields.

1.4 This 2026 HELAA provides an update to the position within the 2020 Joint HELAA Update reporting on updated HELAA site assessments undertaken by SCC and which includes assessment of identified new sites.

Scope of the Report

1.5 This HELAA presents overall findings on the potential available land for development across the SCC authority area. It supersedes the 2020 Joint HELAA Update (for Southend). Whilst it draws upon the work undertaken to inform previous HELAA assessments, and supplements them with new information based on updated site assessments, it provides a single updated position for the Council's area. Changes in circumstances for previously-reviewed sites have sought to be identified by the Council (e.g. if a site now has planning permission) and is reflected in new site appraisals undertaken by SCC. Notwithstanding, the approach is broadly the same as the previous HELAA exercises, and this report can be viewed alongside the previous assessments undertaken in 2018 and 2020, to provide a comprehensive picture of how matters have evolved. This is illustrated in Figure 1.1 below.

Figure 1.1 Southend-on-Sea HELAA Evidence



1.6 As an evidence base document, the HELAA is only one input into the Local Plan process and will sit alongside other evidence base documents, including further site assessments and technical reports on themes such as Green Belt, which will allow the Council to make informed policy decisions. In particular the HELAA sits alongside and forms an input to other studies and papers on the housing and employment supply position.

Structure

1.7 This HELAA update report is structured as follows:

- **Section 2.0: HELAA Methodology** – sets out the HELAA methodology in line with national policy and guidance;
- **Section 3.0: Site and Broad Location Assessment** – summarises the findings of the site assessments by broad categorises based around suitability, availability and achievability;
- **Section 4.0: Windfall Assessment** – reviews the Council's approach to windfall allowance, sets out trend data on windfall developments in the authority and considers what a realistic, evidence-based windfall allowance could be for future trajectories; and
- **Section 5.0: Findings and Trajectory** – concludes on the quantum of sites available for development over the plan period, including when they could come forward in a trajectory.

2.0 HELAA Methodology

2.1 The methodology used for this HELAA reflects National Policy and Guidance, and follows that undertaken for the 2020 Joint HELAA Update (so is not fully repeated here).

2.2 The guidance sets out that the assessment should be thorough, but proportionate, and build on existing information. A method flowchart, setting out a stepped approach, is provided by the PPG and is summarised as follows:

1 Stage 1 – Site and broad location identification, including
   a Assessment area and site size including a recommended site size threshold for housing sites of 5+ dwellings or for economic development sites of 0.25ha+;
   b Initial steps for how LPAs should go about identifying sites; and
   c An initial survey comprising an initial desk-based step acting as a first filter to remove obviously unsuitable sites from further detailed assessment taking into account *"national policy and designations";*
2 Stage 2 – Site and broad location assessment including the assessment of suitability, availability and achievability;
3 Stage 3 – Windfall assessment
4 Stage 4 – Assessment review including the identification of a draft trajectory, drawing upon the timing for potential delivery of sites identified through the assessment
5 Stage 5 – Final evidence base including mapping and individual site assessments.

2.3 Another key factor in policy which shapes the methodology is the definitions in the Annex 2: Glossary of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2024) which states:

1 *'Deliverable' - To be considered deliverable, sites for housing should be available now, offer a suitable location for development now, and be achievable with a realistic prospect that housing will be delivered on the site within 5 years. In particular:*
   a *sites which do not involve major development and have planning permission, and all sites with detailed planning permission should be considered deliverable until permission expires, unless there is clear evidence that homes will not be delivered within 5 years…*
   b *where a site has outline planning permission for major development, has been allocated in a development plan, has a grant of permission in principle, or is identified on a brownfield register, it should only be considered deliverable where there is clear evidence that housing completions will begin on site within five years.*
2 *'Developable' - To be considered developable, sites should be in a suitable location for housing development with a reasonable prospect that they will be available and could be viably developed at the point envisaged.*

Approach Adopted for the 2026 HELAA

2.4 A total of 362 sites have been identified by the Council for inclusion in the HELAA; 209 sites where a HELAA reference is assigned and where sites have undergone assessment; and 153 sites which benefit from existing standalone planning permissions and fall within the capacity and supply for the area (which have not been assessed – the majority falling below the five unit site size threshold – but are included for comprehensiveness). The

HELAA follows an assessment methodology consisting of the five stages which are based on the processes set out in PPG as referenced above.

2.5 Lichfields and SCC have also jointly produced an Urban Capacity Study concurrently with this HELAA update to consider the potential for urban intensification and greater levels of growth in certain areas through a range of measures. Whilst an assessment of the areas/locations/opportunities considered in the capacity study has not been conducted as part of this HELAA, any quantified uplift arising from the urban capacity study might appropriately be added to the conclusion of this HELAA in analysing the area's overall capacity for growth (taking care to not double count any potential element of supply).

Stage 2 – Site Assessment

2.6 The 209 sites identified for assessment in the HELAA have been subject to the full site assessment in line with the previous methodology, apart from any sites which have existing planning permission where, in line with national policy and for the purposes of assessment, they are assumed to be deliverable unless there is clear evidence a site will not come forward within five years.

Suitability

2.7 The suitability of a site is influenced by national planning policy, local planning policy (where policy is up to date and consistent with the NPPF) and other factors including physical constraints affecting the site, the impacts of the development of the site, the nature of the sites proposed use and location and the impacts on amenity and environment of neighbouring areas. SCC has undertaken site suitability assessments against these strategic and local, policy and site constraints.

Green Belt and Existing Policy Constraints

2.8 All Green Belt sites, and any other sites subject to a given policy constraint or use designation that could be reviewed (e.g. relating to those factors that are not intrinsic to the site, but come from a policy control), that are in all other respects in-principle suitable, should be nominally considered as "potentially suitable".

Site Capacity

2.9 SCC has applied site capacity in line with the previous methodology, drawing from planning applications, masterplan exercises, and density assumptions to reflect the site's location and typology. This ranged between 35 dph at greenfield sites to 200 dph at central sites where flatted development is likely to be appropriate.

Availability

2.10 SCC has ascertained the availability of the site by drawing on the Call for Sites exercise, relevant planning application documentation and other contact with landowners and developers.

2.11 Where no indication has been provided in terms of the availability and timescale for development, the site is classified as having unknown availability and judgement has been exercised as to whether – based on best available information – the site has a reasonable prospect of becoming available at a point in the future and can be considered developable in the longer term, subject to satisfactory assessment against the suitability and achievability criteria.

Achievability

2.12 A site is considered achievable when, in line with the PPG, there is a reasonable prospect that the site can be developed at a particular point in time. This is essentially judgement to be made about the viability of the site which will be influenced by market attractiveness, its location in respect of property markets and any known likely abnormal costs associated with the site.

2.13 SCC has assessed the achievability of the site in line with the previous methodology, and with reference to the HELAA 2020 viability assessments. It will also further consider viability as part of Whole Plan Viability evidence which is being prepared to support the Local Plan.

Stage 3 – Windfall Assessment

2.14 Windfall sites are sites which have not been specifically identified as part of the Local Plan process. They have unexpectedly become available and may include sites such as a factory closing down, offices converting to residential or the sub-division of larger properties. As set out in the National Planning Policy Framework, local authorities may make allowance for windfall in the land supply assessment where there is compelling evidence that sites have consistently become available and will continue to provide a reliable source of supply.

2.15 We have undertaken a review of the Council's evidence on windfall, based on monitoring data. This aligns with the most recent definition of windfall in the NPPF, following updates made in 2019 to the consideration of garden land.

Stages 4 & 5 – Overall conclusion and informing a trajectory

2.16 The final HELAA capacity includes sites assessed as 'suitable' or 'potentially suitable' where they are also available and achievable, as assessed by SCC. Sites defined as not available or with 'unknown' availability (and where SCC has not identified a reason why they might reasonably be assumed come forward in the future, and justified for inclusion in the HELAA) are assessed further in the separate UCS.

2.17 Once established whether the site is suitable, available and achievable, the assessment calculates the quantum of units that could be delivered, and when, over the plan period it could be delivered. SCC has applied appropriate build out rates to inform the trajectory. Appropriate build out rates have been based on assumptions about delivery that could be achieved.

3.0 Site and Broad Location Assessment

3.1 This section provides an overview of the assessment of suitability, availability and achievability findings for the sites assessed in this HELAA update.

HELAA Sites

3.2 A total of 362 sites are included as part of this HELAA. This follows a process of reviewing the sites contained within the previous 2020 HELAA update, where 350 sites were assessed. In broad terms:

- 63 sites assigned previous HELAA references are complete for the development envisaged, and therefore have been removed from the HELAA process (n.b. some of these sites had already been removed as at the previous 2020 HELAA update);
- 59 sites previously assigned a HELAA reference and assessed have been superseded/subsumed or clustered into new sites or areas for assessment (n.b. again some of these had already been superseded as at the previous 2020 HELAA update); and
- In the previous 2020 HELAA there were 212 sites with planning permission which were non-HELAA sites (i.e. were included within the supply, but not assessed as a HELAA pro-forma, including all sites with fewer than five homes capacity). In this HELAA update the equivalent figure is 149 sites.
- Where received and identified, sites submitted through SCC's ongoing and open call for sites process have been added into the assessment.

3.3 Of these 362 sites, 209 are included as HELAA sites (with an associated pro-forma assessment completed) whilst 153 sites are included based on an existing standalone planning permission (as at 31st March 2025 monitoring year-end).

Suitability Overview

3.4 All 209 HELAA sites have been assessed for their suitability within this update. A summary of the overall conclusions is shown below. Of these, **205 sites** were considered suitable (174) or potentially suitable (31) for the primary use for which they were assessed (housing or employment).

Table 3.1 Site Suitability Summary – Sites (HELAA) (Refer to pro-formas for uses assessed for each site)

Suitable (for use assessed)	Potentially Suitable (Subject to Policy)			Not Suitable
	Green Belt	Existing Use Designation	Other Policy Constraint	
174	6	15	10	4

Suitability of sites assessed for employment

3.5 Of these 28 sites were looked at as existing or prospective employment areas and assessed for either housing or employment purposes, or for both. Two were assessed as for their suitability for employment release, three assessed under potential use as either or both,

with the remaining 23 where SCC has only assessed these sites in terms of employment suitability.[1]

Unsuitable sites

3.6 SCC's site assessments identify that four sites are not suitable. Two are unsuitable due to proximity to the airport and one is protected green space amongst other constraints. The other site is Southend Pier and is not considered suitable for housing (but is highlighted for its potential leisure development potential).

3.7 The majority of assessed sites are therefore considered either suitable or potentially suitable.

Availability Overview

3.8 The 205 sites/land parcels considered suitable were then subsequently assessed on their availability which is shown in the table below. This helped to determine which sites are included in the HELAA trajectory, and which are considered further for their potential contribution to capacity in the UCS.

3.9 Sites considered to be unavailable or with definitively unknown availability are considered to not be deliverable or developable and excluded from the HELAA trajectory, with some (depending on typology and reasons for unavailability) going on to be considered further in the UCS. This is set out in the table below.

Table 3.2 Site Availability Summary – Suitable/Potentially Suitable Housing Sites – not available / unknown availability, excluded from the HELAA

Unknown Availability (considered in UCS)	Not available (considered in UCS)	Not available and excluded from further review
45	44	23

3.10 Available sites and some unknown sites were identified as shown in the table below. Some sites are available in the future and delivering after 5 years. In total **93 sites** previously assessed as suitable were also considered to be sufficiently likely to be available over the plan period.

Table 3.3 Site Availability Summary – Suitable/Potentially Suitable Sites (HELAA)

Available within 5 years	Available in future (or phased beyond 5 years)	Unknown Availability (but reasonable prospect)	Employment sites - Untested availability
31	35	4	23

3.11 There is a similar distribution of sites available in the short term and long term. Four sites have unknown availability, but circumstances have led to SCC considering that there is sufficient information and context to indicate that there is reasonable prospect they could be available over the Local Plan period (as detailed within individual site pro-formas). 23 sites have untested availability owing to the method of assessment (employment focus) as set out above. These sites are assumed to have unknown availability, but with a reasonable

[1] These are site references: These are site references: 'CA004' 'CA010' 'EA019' 'HEA085; EA030' 'EA051' 'EA004' 'EA009' 'EA010' 'EA011' 'EA033' 'HEA270; EA013' 'HEA271; EA014 (including HEA164 and HEA165)' 'EA001' 'EA007' 'EA012; HEA206' 'HEA268; EA003' 'EA002' 'EA005' 'EA008' and 'EA035' 'EA041 (for leisure)'

prospect as existing employment land that they would be available for such (re)development of employment/commercial floorspace.

Achievability Overview

3.12 The 93 sites/land parcels considered suitable and available were assessed for achievability. The overall summary is shown in Table 3.4.

Table 3.4 Site Achievability Summary - Suitable/Potentially Suitable Housing Sites

Achievable	Marginal: Potentially Achievable	Unknown: Potential Achievability	Employment sites - Unknown: Potential Achievability
65	1	4	23

3.13 As identified above, of the 93 suitable and available sites, the majority are considered achievable, one is considered potentially achievable four sites have unknown achievability due to potential issues of economic viability identified through the previous HELAA viability assessment or site constraints such as contamination incurring potential remediation costs.

3.14 These unknown sites are still assessed as having potential achievability as there may be ways of bringing forward such sites using bespoke delivery approaches. No sites have been assessed as being outright not achievable over the horizon of the HELAA, albeit clearly some sites face greater economic viability challenges than others. Notwithstanding, SCC is satisfied that there is a reasonable prospect that sites could be viably delivered at the point envisaged and this will be further examined through the Whole Plan Viability assessment which supports the Local Plan.

Potential Employment Sites

3.15 In addition to the above assessments for housing deliverability, sites where there could be a component of employment development, or the whole site could come forward for employment, have also been assessed. This generally relate to sites within existing town centres, employment areas, or where the landowner has put the site forward specifically to be considered for commercial or employment uses (either specifically or in most cases as another option to housing). 28 sites have been assessed for their suitability, availability and achievability for employment development (23 just for employment, a further 5 where housing is considered); and these findings are set out within the above analysis and through the conclusions.

4.0 Windfall Assessment

4.1 This section reviews the evidence on windfalls for the two Council areas to determine the housing potential on windfall sites and come to a justified position on whether an allowance can and should be made, and at what rate.

Defining windfalls

4.2 Windfall sites are sites which have not been specifically identified in the Development Plan (Annex 2, NPPF 2024). This definition encompasses all sites that have not been previously allocated or identified through a plan-making process (e.g. a Local Plan or a Neighbourhood Plan). These are often sites that have unexpectedly become available and may include sites such as a factory closing down, offices converting to residential, the sub-division of larger properties small infill development or other suitable sites that come forward without having an allocation. As set out in the NPPF (2024):

"Where an allowance is to be made for windfall sites as part of anticipated supply, there should be compelling evidence that they will provide a reliable source of supply. Any allowance should be realistic having regard to the strategic housing land availability assessment, historic windfall delivery rates and expected future trends. Plans should consider the case for setting out policies to resist inappropriate development of residential gardens, for example where development would cause harm to the local area." (emphasis added) (Paragraph 75)

4.3 It should be noted that this is different from the earlier versions of the NPPF (e.g. the 2012 NPPF), which explicitly excluded residential gardens from being part of any windfall allowance made; no such qualification or restriction is placed on the definition (as updated in 2019), but clearly allowances must be reflective of any policy position taken on the development of residential gardens. The PPG provides additional guidance in relation to windfalls, detailing that:

"A windfall allowance may be justified in the anticipated supply if a local planning authority has compelling evidence… Local planning authorities have the ability to identify broad locations in years 6-15, which could include a windfall allowance (using the same criteria as set out in paragraph 70 of the National Planning Policy Framework)." (ID: 3-023)

4.4 What windfall sites are and how an allowance should be calculated and applied has been considered as part of appeal decisions. In a Secretary of State ('SoS') appeal decision at 'Land at Site of Former North Worcestershire Golf Club Ltd' (ref. 3192918) issued in July 2019, the Inspector explored the *'meaning of "windfall Sites"'* (IR14.8 to 14.18 and 14.54 to 14.56) which the SoS confirms his agreement with (DL17). In summary that concluded that:

1 Windfall allowances are not limited to specific years in a trajectory or 5-year land supply: *"I see no justification for [a] suggestion that a windfall allowance should only be included for years 4 and 5 of the 5YHLS. Windfall sites may come in a variety of forms and sizes and some will be capable of being delivered more quickly than others…"*

2 Windfall allowances can be on large or small sites: *"Similarly, I see little merit in the argument that a reduction should be made to the allowance to discount large site windfalls. By definition the details the potential sites that might deliver those completions are unknown and the only logical basis for determining the allowance is*

by reference to past completions on windfall sites. Given my conclusion that the NPPF definition of windfall sites does not set any size threshold I see no reason to adjust the allowance as the appellant suggests." and

3 Windfall allowances can include sites previously identified in SHLAAs provided they still meet the definition of a windfall; *"… the… SHLAA includes its own definition of a windfall site as one that has not previously been identified through the local plan process or included in the SHLAA at the point at which detailed planning permission is granted… However, the SHLAA makes it clear that this definition is adopted for the purposes of the Windfall Assumptions Paper and the windfall allowance in the SHLAA. It does not purport to and cannot change the NPPF definition of windfall sites."*

4.5 Bringing the above together, the NPPF (2024) provides an expansive definition of windfall sites. There is no size limitation nor a restriction of the types of sites that could be defined as a windfall. The key is that there must be 'compelling evidence' to support any allowance advanced in order for it to be justified. Part of this exercise should also include steps to avoid double counting or mis-estimating supply.

Windfall Analysis

Overview of Previous Windfall analysis and methodology

4.6 The Council has assessed windfalls in previous versions of the HELAA. The 'Southend-on-Sea HELAA' (Part 1) (2018)[2] adopted an average windfall based on historical trends (excluding development on allocation sites, SHLAA sites, and those on garden land) of 239dpa. However, it was prepared prior to the change in definitions on windfall within the 2019 NPPF and more recent guidance. As context, that HELAA noted that from 2001 to 2017 75% of all completions in the district were windfalls. This reflects the urban nature of the district where a constant churn in the use of land brings about windfall development.

4.7 The 2020 Joint HELAA Update calculated an updated windfall allowance of 219dpa, reflecting then new definition of a windfall site. The 2020 Joint Update considered the total windfall delivery on any non-allocated sites (including garden land and SHLAA/HELAA sites). To this figure, and in line with the Council's preferred approach, the following adjustments were made:

1 Consistent with the previous methodology garden land had nominally been removed, reflecting the potential for policy approaches around Garden Land (as referenced in NPPF Paragraph 75 (2024)). It was noted that this could be revisited depending on how Council approaches policy around such sites in future local plan policies. If the status quo was to be maintained in policy terms, one would expect the status quo to be maintained in terms of trends from this source; and

2 Consistent with the previous methodology sites previously identified in the HELAA were removed. This was originally intended as a notional indication of sites that could be future allocations and the impact that may have on windfalls (and as such to avoid a double count), but it was noted that as HELAAs will tend to be updated more frequently than a Local Plan, particularly one that looks over a long period, over any long-term plan period it is inevitable HELAA windfall sites will come forward.

4.8 This provided a 'discounted windfall' figure that was conservative and likely to be a minimum; but remained consistent with the way the Council had previously calculated its

[2] Section 4.0 of the report

windfall allowance. The 2020 HELAA noted that a strict definition of a windfall does not require the discounting of HELAA sites and even if restrictive garden land policies are put in place, there is still likely potential for some delivery from that source.

An updated 2026 windfall allowance

4.9 The Council has re-assessed trends in windfalls using the most recent data (as below) but in concluding on an appropriate windfall has considered whether the above 'discounting adjustments' remain appropriate and has also reappraised the way it applies a windfall figure across the housing trajectory in the context of ensuring there is no double counting with existing windfall permissions.

Past windfall trends

4.10 Table 4.1 below details an updated analysis of past windfall trends in Southend. It shows that Windfalls (i.e. non-allocated sites) have consistently made up a significant proportion of delivery in Southend: some 78% since 2001/02.

4.11 Looking at the various averages (and inclusions/exclusions as to what is used with the calculation of windfall) over the period since the base date of the previous Core Strategy (2001/02) shows that there has consistently been delivery on windfall sites within Southend. Over the long term (24-year and 18-year averages) delivery from all windfall sources averaged around 300 dpa, albeit if discounting sites identified within the SHLAAs/HELAAs over time (and as might have otherwise been allocated through a Local Plan), this falls to 180dpa over 24-years or 130dpa over 18-years. More recently, a 5-year average since 2020/21, reflecting the most recent trends and policy position, has seen marginally lower windfall rates at c.280dpa overall.

4.12 Development on residential garden land only represents a small component of windfall supply in Southend, equivalent to an average of c.7 dpa over the 24-year period, and therefore most of the difference in approach depends on how many homes might reasonably come forward as windfall on HELAA identified sites that are not allocated in the Local Plan.

Table 4.1 Past Windfall Development in Southend-on-Sea

Year	Total Completions (including SHLAA/HELAA sites, BLP allocation sites, and Gardens)			All Windfall development (excluding only allocations)			'Discounted Windfall' (Excluding applications on SHLAA/HELAA sites, allocations, and Gardens)		
	Small	Large	Total	Small	Large	Total	Small	Large	Total
2001-02	108	242	350	105	222	327	105	222	327
2002-03	85	299	384	85	259	344	85	259	344
2003-04	81	226	307	81	136	217	81	136	217
2004-05	120	361	481	120	253	373	120	253	373
2005-06	120	490	610	120	275	395	120	275	395
2006-07	92	351	443	92	343	435	92	343	435
2007-08	80	154	234	80	154	234	80	149	229
2008-09	70	245	315	66	223	289	66	186	252
2009-10	51	93	144	51	93	144	51	63	114
2010-11	70	113	183	70	113	183	70	89	159
2011-12	33	295	328	33	295	328	33	185	218
2012-13	91	163	254	88	147	235	88	104	192
2013-14	95	109	204	95	109	204	94	59	153
2014-15	70	252	322	63	252	315	55	104	159
2015-16	27	195	222	25	190	215	25	159	184
2016-17	69	411	480	69	406	475	64	150	214
2017-18	49	472	521	48	464	512	38	0	38
2018-19	87	405	492	87	405	492	79	5	84
2019-20	25	193	218	25	193	218	21	0	21
2020-21	71	166	237	71	166	237	58	18	76
2021-22	81	408	489	81	408	489	68	61	129
2022-23	43	298	341	43	288	331	33	29	62
2023-24	50	123	173	50	123	173	48	83	131
2024-25	35	149	184	35	137	172	35	37	72
Totals	**1,652**	**6,264**	**7,916**	**1,426**	**4,749**	**6,175**	**1,259**	**2,617**	**3,876**
Average p.a. since 01/02 (24-year)	69	261	330	68	238	306	60	118	178
Average p.a. since 07/08 (18-year)	59	238	297	58	233	292	51	79	130
Average p.a. since 20/21 (5-year)	56	229	285	56	224	280	48	46	94

Source: Southend-on-Sea City Council / Lichfields analysis

Future trends

4.13 In considering a future windfall allowance, the following has informed the Council's judgement on an appropriate rate to apply.

4.14 Firstly, there is a risk that as new allocations are adopted (i.e. within the new Local Plan), these replace past windfall trends. It is clear from the data that windfall rates were lower for a period after the adoption of the Core Strategy in 2007 – albeit, they still provided a reliable source of supply. It would therefore be reasonable to assume that upon adoption of a new Local Plan in Southend windfalls will still continue to provide a reliable source of supply into the future, though might be discounted from that which includes 'all windfall' sources (e.g. as HELAA sites become new allocations).

4.15 Secondly, windfall completions through permitted development rights are expected to continue into the future. Existing rights – such as those to convert office buildings to residential dwellings – remain in force and opportunities remain in Southend for such conversions. New permitted development rights are also set to come in to force; including from the 1st August 2020 the right to add up to two storeys on purpose-built blocks of flats (Part 20, Class A). At this stage it is unclear what impact the new permitted development rights may have on future windfall completions. However it can reasonably be expected that there will be uptake and that there will be a contribution from this new source of supply. Ultimately, there is no evidence of a future decline in permitted development right conversions which are only being expanded.

4.16 Thirdly, on garden land, within the Southend New Local Plan Preferred Approach consultation, proposed Policy DM7.2 Efficient and Effective Use of Land sets out a generally permissive approach to development on backland and/or infill sites, including garden sites, subject to consideration on a site-by-site basis (and factors such as amenity, character and design). Such a policy approach would justify including garden land as a potential source within a windfall allowance, albeit noting that the actual rates of development on Garden Land coming through within Southend is a relatively small component.

4.17 Lastly, the windfall figure has been reviewed in the context of the findings of the accompanying Urban Capacity Study (UCS) analysis that has been progressed in parallel with the HELAA. For HELAA sites which have not been concluded as deliverable/developable within this HELAA, a sub-set of them have been further considered via the UCS as to the degree to which they could still contribute to the residential development capacity of Southend. In essence the UCS provides a further reference point for the appropriate windfall figure, and particularly what delivery might reasonably be achieved on existing HELAA sites as windfall (outside of those to be allocated in the Local Plan). Many of these sites are ones where, in particular, availability is not currently established (including Council-owned sites where, despite ownership being clear, there are no current plans to displace/redevelop existing uses). The UCS suggests that not all HELAA identified sites would likely come forward as urban capacity via windfall over the plan period, suggesting a conservative approach to a windfall rate on such a component would be appropriate.

4.18 Overall, there is evidence to suggest windfalls in Southend will continue to make up a reliable source of supply going forward, with SCC exercising a reasonable and balanced judgement as to what that rate of windfall delivery could reasonably be.

Concluded windfall allowance

4.19 On the above basis, SCC apply a windfall rate of 200dpa. This sits broadly half-way between the average trend rates for 'all windfall development' and the 'discounted windfall' rate which excludes previously identified HELAA sites from the trend analysis. This reflects that some HELAA sites may still come forward via windfall (as further supported by analysis in

the Urban Capacity Study) in the future, but with the adoption of the new Local Plan, most HELAA sites deemed deliverable/developable within Southend are likely to form allocations (diminishing the 'unallocated HELAA site windfall' component as a future source of supply). SCC consider this is a balanced approach.

4.20 This 200dpa rate is applied from year 6 of the trajectory onwards. This ensures that there is no element of double counting with the existing stock of planning permissions already identified (which will form the windfall rate over the short term). Whilst in the previous HELAA, the windfall rate was blended into the trajectory alongside the existing permissions component within the first five years of the trajectory (the blending in effect being an approach to avoid double counting), the current HELAA assumption is that applying it from year 6 is a clear and more justified approach. Over those 15-years of the plan, a windfall allowance would total 3,000 homes.

5.0 Findings and Trajectory

5.1 The above site and broad location assessments (Section 3.0) and windfall assessment (Section 4.0) have been brought together and supplemented with known information on small (non-HELAA) sites with existing planning permission from SCC monitoring data (as at 1st April 2025). This presents an overall position on land availability within the City.

Housing Land Availability Assessment

5.2 Table 5.1 provides a summary of the overall HELAA findings.

Table 5.1 HELAA - Overall Summary Table

Category	Housing		Employment	Total
	No. of Sites/Clusters	No. of Homes	No. of Sites/Clusters	No. of Sites/Clusters
A. Deliverable	184	3,028	2	186
Planning permissions - Non-HELAA sites	153	399		153
HELAA sites (with/without permission)	31	2,629	2	33
B. Deliverable (subject to policy)	0	0	0	0
HELAA sites	0	0	0	0
C. Developable	29	3,379	18	47
HELAA sites - available in future	27	3,313		27
HELAA sites - availability unknown	2	66		2
Existing/potential employment areas	0	0	18	18
D. Developable (subject to policy)	13	7,337	0	13
HELAA sites - available	8	6,815		8
HELAA sites (potential employment release) - availability unknown	2	510		2
Existing/potential employment areas*	3	12		3
E. Not deliverable or developable	113	0	3	116
Not suitable	4	N/A		4
Availability unknown (considered via UCS)	45	N/A		45
Not available (considered via UCS)	44	N/A		44
Other rejected sites (not available)	20	N/A	3	23
F. Other sources	0	3,000	0	0
Windfall allowance		3,000		
Total HELAA Estimate of current capacity (within current policy) A + C + F	213	9,407	20	233
Total HELAA Estimate of current capacity (subject to policy - excl. existing employment areas*) A + B + C + D + F	223	16,732	20	243
Total HELAA Estimate of current capacity (subject to policy) A + B + C + D + F	226	16,744	20	249
Previous HELAA Sites Removed:			Completed	63
			Superseded	59

Notes: This table presents a snapshot in time analysis, as of April 2026 and with a base date (i.e. starting monitoring year) of April 2025. Monitoring will continually update this position. Figures for Previous HELAA sites may not match those within the earlier HELAA reports as they have been updated to reflect changing circumstances and the reappraisal of some sites, superseding earlier assessments. Figures for the total number of homes relates to the site capacity by headline status of the overall site (rather than by the trajectory for when those homes will come forward - see separate trajectory table). For example, some capacity on sites assessed as 'deliverable' may still come forward beyond the first five years, as reflected in the trajectory. In total, 3,988 homes within the above benefit from extant planning permission, but these are split across deliverable and developable sites and different site categories, based on their individual circumstances. The total above looks at the total amount of housing land available and does not account for other land uses that may notionally come forward on suitable sites.

*For existing/potential employment areas; these may be developable for either housing and/or employment, with a policy decision to be made as to how they are addressed within the Local Plan. Not all employment areas have been assigned a housing capacity figure on this basis.

5.3 The findings are split into categories as follows:

a Sites which are currently deliverable (i.e. there is a realistic prospect housing will be delivered on the site within five years);

b Sites which could be considered deliverable if there were a change in policy within the Local Plan (for example, were the site to be allocated);

c Sites which are currently developable (i.e. there is a reasonable prospect housing could be delivered on the site at a particular point in the future);

d Sites which could be considered developable if there were a change in policy within the Local Plan;

e Sites which are not deliverable or developable (e.g. because they are not considered suitable for housing development due to constraints, or where they may be suitable but are not available or achievable)

f Other components of supply which are not derived from specific identified sites within this HELAA, but drawn from a windfall assessment (those small and other sites which come forward without being specifically identified in the Development Plan) y.

5.4 Overall, this identifies an estimated current existing housing land availability for Southend-on-Sea. This is the sum of those sites and elements of supply which could come forward within the existing confines of planning policy. This is estimated as 9,407 homes currently (of which 3,000 are windfalls). SCC needs to find further sources of housing land in order to address as much of their local housing needs as possible within the new Local Plan and the HELAA identifies a further pool of many suitable, deliverable and developable sites which, subject to making policy changes through the new Local Plan, the Council could choose to allocate for development. In total, a housing and availability for 16,732 homes has been identified via this HELAA, with many sites providing potential allocations for a new Local Plan. However, this HELAA only provides one part of the evidence base and the Council will take into consideration a wide range of factors, including through separate site appraisal process (such as the relative sustainability of a site or the choices and trade-offs involved in growth in different areas), in identifying any proposed allocations for the new Local Plan.

Housing Trajectory

5.5 A housing trajectory for Southend is shown in Table 5.2. This has been developed by SCC, applying a notional start date and period of build out to each individual site, providing an illustration for how the housing potential identified could come forward across the different 5-year tranches of a Local Plan period.[3]

5.6 It illustrates that existing capacity will continue to be phased-in over the first three five-year tranches, as suitable sites become available for development. In particular, allowing for the lead-in times associated with the larger potential 'green belt release' sites means delivery within the trajectory is likely to be comparatively higher in the second half of the plan-period, than in the first; though supply is identified to continually come forward throughout the plan-period. **A total of 14,724 homes are identified within the plan-period**.

[3] Note: this trajectory considers the 5-year tranches for the purposes of a Local Plan, it is not intended to replicate or replace the assessments of 5-year land supply undertaken by the Council.

This includes a number of sites where delivery will be subject to policy, including those within the green belt which will need to meet relevant policy requirements. Some c.2,000 homes of capacity identified as suitable within this HELAA are considered to likely be only available, or to come forward for delivery, beyond the end of the plan-period post-2045.

Table 5.2 Summary Trajectory

Planning Permission		5 year supply	6-10 year supply	11-15 year supply	16-20 year supply	Total 2025-2045	Post 2045	Total trajectory
Permissions and Deliverable	**Planning Permission - non-HELAA sites**	374	25	0	0	**399**	0	399
	HELAA Sites (with/without planning permission)	1,820	76	171	417	**2,484**	145	2,629
Developable	**Available**	0	596	810	1,114	**2,520**	793	3,313
	Potentially available	0	0	6	60	**66**	0	66
Windfall		0	1,000	1,000	1,000	**3,000**	n/a	3,000
Capacity sub-total		2,194	1,697	1,987	2,591	**8,469**	1,938	**9,407**
Subject to policy	**HELAA Sites: Green Belt**	0	1,566	2,350	1,950	**5,866**	900	6,766
	HELAA Sites: Other Policy	0	0	26	0	**26**	0	26
	HELAA Sites: Existing Use Designation	0	0	23	0	**23**	0	23
	HELAA Sites (potential employment release) - availability unknown	0	0	0	340	**340**	170	510
Total (Excluding windfall)		2,194	2,263	3,386	3,881	**11,724**	2,008	**13,732**
Overall total		2,194	3,263	4,386	4,881	**14,724**	2,008	**16,732**

Source: Lichfields / Southend-on-Sea City Council

Employment Land Availability Assessment

5.7 Overall, 28 sites were assessed for their suitability and availability for new employment development within the HELAA update, where they were either put forward for assessment for that use or they are in an area suitable for employment development (e.g. existing employment areas or town centres). Table 5.3 sets out the headline findings, where across the city two sites are deliverable, 23 sites are developable in the future, and three are considered not deliverable or developable associated with availability.

Table 5.3 Employment Land Availability (sites)

Deliverable	Deliverable (Subject to Policy)	Developable	Developable (Subject to Policy)	Not Deliverable or Developable
2	0	18 (+ 5)*	0	3

*Five existing/potential employment/commercial sites are assessed as suitable for employment, but also assessed for housing purposes and included in the total number of sites under the housing component of the HELAA. These could be suitable for either use.

5.8 Although these sites have been specifically assessed as being suitable for employment, in general sites assessed as suitable for housing may be equally suitable for some employment generating development, either as part of mixed-use developments or as stand-alone employment areas (provided that the nature of any employment uses would not create amenity conflicts with surrounding uses).

5.9 The Council is preparing separate evidence on employment land supply, which specifically considers the employment capacity of these sites and areas, and the trajectory for new employment space.