

1. Introduction

Purpose of the study

- 1.1 The purpose of the study is to assess the availability of further land for housing in Spelthorne from 2008 (the anticipated adoption date of the Local Development Framework) to 2026 (the anticipated end date of the forthcoming South East Plan).
- 1.2 The study will inform the emerging Spelthorne Local Development Framework (LDF) and enable an assessment of Spelthorne's ability to meet the Draft South East Plan housing allocation.

2. Background and Scope of the Assessment

Draft guidance on Housing Land Availability Assessment

- 2.1 A Draft practice guidance on carrying out Housing Land Availability Assessments (HLAA) was published by the Government in December 2005. The guidance states that it is not the final word on the subject, nor does it attempt to prescribe how assessments should be carried out. It is designed to highlight the issues likely to be encountered in undertaking assessments and to act as a checklist for the process of identifying land for housing development (para 3 of the guidance).
- 2.2 The guidance is based on previous guidance to assess housing land availability and urban capacity which was used in carrying out Spelthorne's Housing Capacity Studies in 2003 and 2005. The approach to build on good parts of previous practice, including urban capacity studies, is encouraged by the Draft guidance (see section 2, p6 of the guidance).
- 2.3 Therefore this assessment follows a pragmatic approach of using the extensive survey of capacity that has been carried out in previous years and at the same time following the current Draft guidance where possible. The key points from the draft practice guidance where this assessment somewhat differs from the preferred approach are set out below.
 - 1) Identifying the study area – A sub-regional partnership is the preferred approach in carrying out assessments. The guidance does not preclude an individual authority undertaking the assessment. It does emphasise that a common methodology should be used within the sub-regional market area. The sub-regional approach is also intended to apply to Housing Market Assessments. South East England Regional Assembly (SEERA) has undertaken pilot studies in what these areas should be for the South East but the work has not been concluded. PPS3 (footnote page 7) indicates the Government intends to publish guidance on Identifying Sub-regional Housing Market Areas. At the time of preparing this study the advice was still awaited. PPS3 advises that regard should be had to the guidance in PPS3 whilst maintaining plan-making programmes (para 6). The Council has proceeded with this study in order to maintain its plan making programme.

- 2) PPS3 requires local planning authorities (LPAs) to identify sufficient specific deliverable sites in the first five years of the plan period. It also requires identification of a further supply of specific developable sites for years 6-10 and where possible for year 11-15 (see para 53-55, PPS3). Allowances for windfalls should not be included in the first 10 years of land supply unless LPAs can provide robust evidence of genuine local circumstances that prevent specific sites being identified (para 50 PPS3). The Draft practice guidance on HLAA recognises that some local authorities will not be able to so readily identify sites in advance e.g. metropolitan authorities and so will need to make a realistic allowance for windfall in their development plan documents (DPDs) (para 59, Draft practice guidance).

Genuine local circumstances exist in Spelthorne because of its compact, dense and heavily constrained character to justify a proportion of windfall. Spelthorne is a densely populated Borough with an area of 5118Ha and a population of 90,390. It is heavily constrained by the Green Belt (65% of the Borough) and 20.3% of the remaining urban area is at flood risk (SFRA - 1 in 100). A large proportion of new housing supply in Spelthorne comprises small sites. Completions from the last five years show a high proportion of small sites (see Table 1 below). However, small sites are difficult to identify on the ground with accuracy. Further for identified small sites there is a degree of uncertainty of sites coming forward as development depends on non-physical factors such as owner's aspirations rather than policy. Therefore an element of windfall is justified in the assessment.

Table 1 Actual completions on small and large sites 2001-2006

Year	Small Sites (<0.4Ha)	Large Sites (>0.4Ha)¹	Total Net Completions	Percentage of completions on small sites (<0.4Ha) (%)	Percentage of completions on large sites (>0.4Ha) (%)
2001-02	116	133	249	46.6	53.4
2002-03	96	68	164	58.5	41.5
2003-04	142	331	473	30.0	70.0
2004-05	237	35	272	87.1	12.9
2005-06	133	1	134	99.3	0.7

Note: Completions of large sites in 2001-02 and 2003-04 were largely due to just two schemes which were respectively land at Ashford Hospital (106 dwellings) and International Way, Sunbury (260 dwellings)

- 3) The guidance suggests identifying an 'unconstrained' capacity and the assessment of constraints which the guidance refers to as 'inherently judgemental' should only be done afterwards. A distinction here needs to be drawn between such constraints where the Council cannot apply its judgement and those where it can. National policy on Green Belt, areas at risk of flooding, SSSIs, SPAs and open space is extremely restrictive and precludes residential development within these areas. It would therefore be unproductive to include such areas in the assessment. Other policies such as conservation areas, land in commercial use etc where the Council can apply a judgement on developability are included in the study. The assessment includes all settlements within Spelthorne as suggested by the guidance (para 9).

Previous Housing Capacity Studies

- 2.4 A housing capacity study was carried out in 2003 to provide an input into the Surrey Structure Plan review. It provided an informed assessment of capacity for further housing in Spelthorne during the Structure Plan period 2001 – 2016.
- 2.5 This study was based on a comprehensive survey of the search area identified in the Borough and followed 'Tapping the Potential', a government guide to best practice in housing capacity studies. The basic principles of assessing capacity using surveys and including various sources of supply have been carried through in the current draft guidance. The methodology for the 2003 study was also developed within the broad framework of the "Common Methodology for the Assessment of Housing Capacity" agreed by the Surrey local planning authorities in May 2002.
- 2.6 Following the 2003 study the Council commenced preparing its Local Development Framework (LDF) under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and is due to 'submit' its 'Strategy and Policies Development Plan Document (DPD)' and Proposals DPD for examination in 2007. The LDF will replace the Adopted Local Plan of April 2001. The September 2003 study was updated in April 2005 to inform the emerging LDF and its ability to meet the Draft South East Plan housing allocation.
- 2.7 The 2005 study followed the same methodology as the previous study but included a new element which was 'market testing' to examine the viability of large sites by consultants Campsies. These sites have also been subject to the 'sustainability appraisal' process as part of LDF process for sites to be included as 'Proposals'.

Scope of this assessment

- 2.8 The base date for this assessment is 1 April 2006. However, the report was held back to January 2007 to take account of the findings of Spelthorne's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) on housing land availability. This also enabled having regard to more recent government guidance produced after the base date.
- 2.9 At the time of the April 2005 Housing Capacity Study LDFs were expected to have a ten year plan period. Spelthorne's LDF was expected to be adopted in 2008, therefore the housing capacity was assessed to 2018.
- 2.10 However, Planning Policy Statement 3 (PPS3) published in November 2006 now requires Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) to plan for housing over a period of at least 15 years. Further, PPS12 states "core strategy should aim to look ahead to any longer-term horizon which is set out in the relevant regional spatial strategy." In Spelthorne's case the relevant regional plan is the South East Plan which is currently in a Draft form and is expected to have an end date of 2026. Therefore this study assesses housing land availability from the expected adoption date of the LDF in 2008 to the 'longer-term horizon' of the expected end date of the South East Plan in 2026.
- 2.11 Until the adoption of the South East Plan, expected in early 2008, the housing allocation in the current Surrey Structure Plan formally applies to Spelthorne. The Annual Monitoring Report produced in December 2006 demonstrates that Spelthorne is on target in meeting Surrey's housing allocation.
- 2.12 In assessing capacity the study seeks to take account of relevant Government planning policy guidance and statements, existing Spelthorne Borough Local Plan policies,

policies in the Surrey Structure Plan, emerging government policies and emerging policies in the LDF. The intention is to ensure so far as possible that it is prepared in an up to date policy context.

- 2.13 The Housing Land Availability Assessment is a technical document and not a statement of Council policy. While the study involves assessing the development potential of sites for housing the inclusion of a site in the study does not constitute a decision by the Council on the acceptability of any particular development on the site.

Policy background

- 2.14 PPS3 stipulates an 'evidence based policy approach' which requires Local Development Documents (LDDs) to be informed by a robust, shared evidence base, of housing land availability, through a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment. PPS3 reflects the principles of a 'plan, monitor and manage' approach and requires LPAs to demonstrate in their LDDs a continuous delivery of housing for at least 15 years from the date of adoption. Information from the HLAA will be drawn upon to demonstrate how this will be done.
- 2.15 The Draft South East Plan currently subject to Examination makes an allocation of 151 dwellings per annum for Spelthorne between 2006 and 2026. Spelthorne's LDF will need to ensure that sufficient land is available to meet the requirements of the South East Plan.
- 2.16 The existing Surrey Structure Plan was adopted in 2004 and made provision for a total of 2,580 dwellings in Spelthorne between 2001 and 2016. This provision was based on the results of the 2003 Spelthorne Housing Capacity Study.
- 2.17 Between 1 April 2001 and 31 March 2006 a total of 1,292 dwellings (net) had been completed in Spelthorne. In addition at 1 April 2006 there were 214 dwellings under construction and outstanding planning permissions for a further 423 dwellings. Deducting just the completions from the total requirement of 2,580 leaves an outstanding requirement to deliver 1,288 dwellings to 2016. This equates to about 129 dwellings per annum. This is significantly less than the South East Plan requirement of 151 dwellings per annum. Therefore if Spelthorne can deliver the South East Plan allocation, it inherently has the ability to deliver the outstanding Structure Plan requirements.

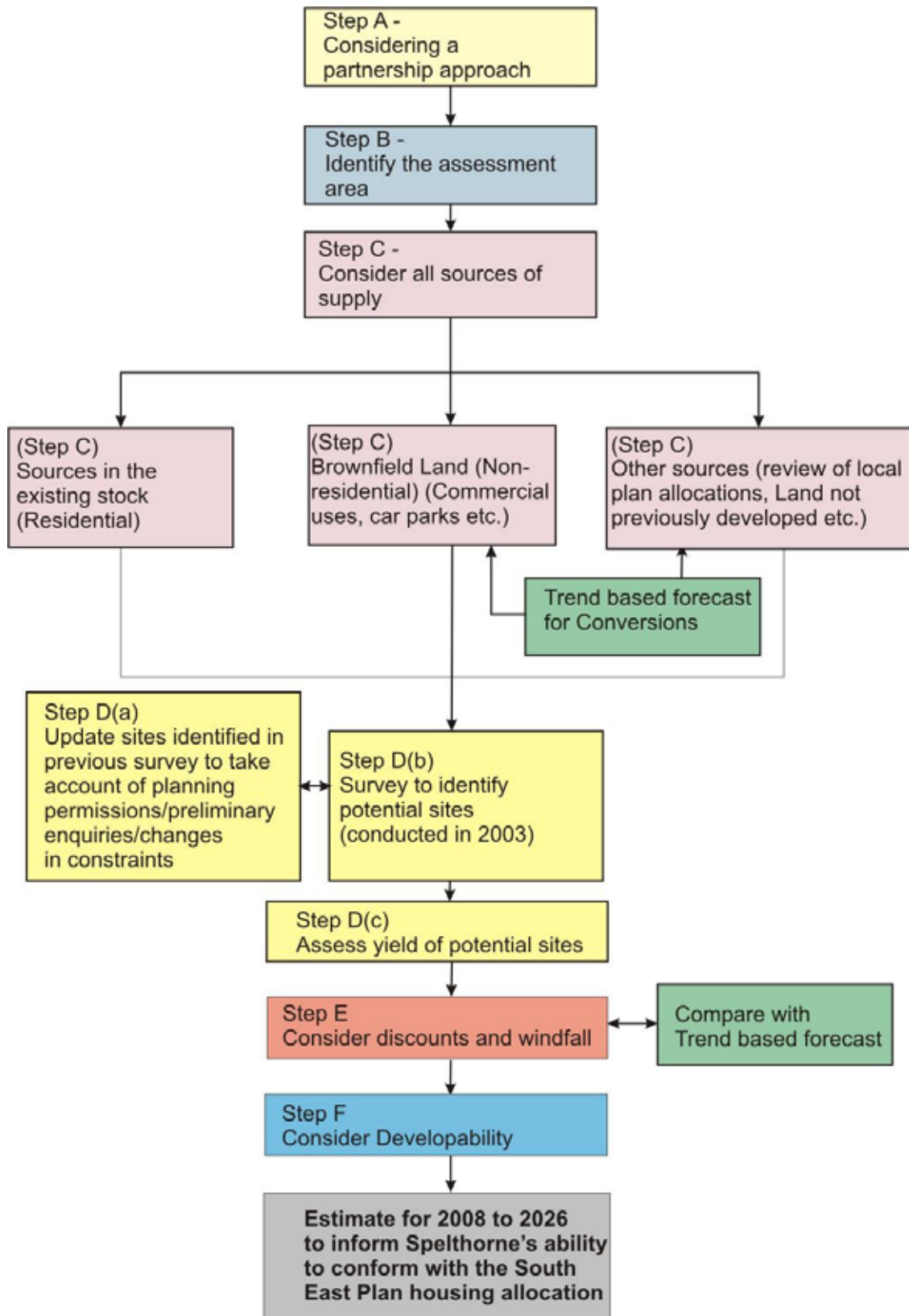
3. Methodology

Outline Methodology

- 3.1 The methodology for this assessment takes account of Government's draft practice guidance 'Housing Land Availability Assessments: Identifying appropriate land for housing development'. The key stages in the assessment process are summarised below (also see Figure 1) and described in more detail in later sections of this report. The steps relate to the methodology outlined in the draft guidance.
- a) **Step A – Consider a sub-regional market partnership approach:** For reasons stated in para 2.3 (1) a sub-regional market area has not been established and therefore the study was carried out at Spelthorne level.

- b) **Step B – Identifying the assessment area:** The first stage was to identify those parts of the Borough in which new housing may be acceptable. Areas where there are high level policies over which the Council does not have effective discretion or physical constraints that would render new housing unacceptable in the future were ruled out at this stage.
- c) **Step C - Consider all sources of supply:** All possible sources of supply outlined in the current government guidance were considered in the study.
- d) **Step D (b) – Survey the area of search to identify sites that could be developed for housing:** In identifying sites account was taken of whether residential development could take place in an acceptable manner, whether there were any policy objections to residential (particularly relevant where the site was in another use), whether there were potential ownership problems and whether there was known developer interest in the site. .
- e) **Step D (a) – Update sites identified in the survey:** Sites identified in the survey had to be reconciled with planning permissions granted since the survey. Further potential sites known through developer interest were included. Sites with outstanding planning permission were assumed to be developed in accordance with the permission prior to 31 March 2008 and were not assessed as part of the study.
- f) **Step D (c) – Assess the likely yield:** For each site identified an assessment was made of the number of housing units that could be provided taking account of the character of the area, including other recently completed and permitted development, Local Plan design and other relevant policies and consideration of any preliminary enquiries for development; all subject to a minimum density requirement of PPS3. An overall total was calculated with sub divisions by size and type of site.
- g) **Step E – Consider discounts and windfalls:** Consideration was given to whether a discount should be applied to the survey results either in total or for specific types of development, and whether an additional allowance should be made based on robust evidence for windfall sites that could not be identified through the survey process.
- h) **Step F – Consider developability:** In 2005 the Council commissioned Chartered Surveyors Campsies to test the viability of implementation of large sites above 0.4Ha based on current and anticipated property market trends. They also provided an overview of the local housing market. In addition the Council has the support of the owners of all the identified large sites. Sites included as ‘proposals’ in the emerging LDF have also been subject to a sustainability appraisal to establish their social, economic and environmental viability. Further Borough wide background research on employment land and public transport accessibility also support the developability of sites identified in this assessment.
- i) **Relationship to the Draft South East Plan allocation –** The LDF will need to demonstrate sufficient housing provision in conformity with the South East Plan from 2008 to the end of the South East Plan period in 2026. Therefore the results are presented for this time period.

Figure 1 HLA Methodology



Identifying the assessment area within Spelthorne

- 3.2 The first step in assessing housing land supply is to identify which places are to be considered in the study. As specified in the previous section of this report, at this stage it was not possible to establish a sub-regional housing market. Therefore the assessment was carried out at Borough level.
- 3.3 Within Spelthorne it was necessary to establish the area of search for new housing. There are no urban areas in Spelthorne that are so remote or inaccessible as to justify an “in principle” objection to further housing on grounds of sustainability. This is supported by the public transport accessibility work published in the Transport Statement in 2007. Nor are there any existing urban areas where lack of infrastructure or services would justify resisting further housing.
- 3.4 Spelthorne has no defined areas of residential character which might be considered for exclusion from the search for potential housing sites. The Borough’s Conservation Areas do have a special character but Conservation Area designation does not rule out the principle of new housing where it would preserve or enhance the character of the area. The special character of individual Conservation Area is taken into account in the assessment of potential sites.
- 3.5 However, there are significant parts of the Borough, including parts of the urban area, where there is an “in principle” objection to new housing development and where there is no scope for a discretionary policy judgement to be made (also see para 2.3 (3)). Such areas need to be excluded from the search for new housing sites. This approach ensures that the sites identified as part of this assessment are the most suitable and sustainable for development.
- 3.6 The areas excluded from the survey area are:
- a) **Land designated as Green Belt** – Government guidance in PPG2 is that Green Belts once established should be permanent and only varied in exceptional circumstances. Maintaining the regional role of the metropolitan Green Belt in containing London and retaining the identity of existing towns is a key driver for the London Fringe sub-region in the Draft South East Plan. This is also consistent with the Surrey Structure Plan. The current extent of the Green Belt in Spelthorne has been formally saved under government direction in [insert date – tbc by GOSE?]. Therefore there is no case for including any Green Belt land within the Capacity Study.
 - b) **Sites of National or International Interest for Nature Conservation** – Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Special Protection Areas and Ramsar sites are unacceptable for housing on nature conservation grounds, although in practice all such areas in Spelthorne are also excluded on the basis of Green Belt designation.
 - c) **Designated Common Land** – Common Land has statutory protection and is also safeguarded by Borough Plan policy. Nearly all the Borough’s Common Land is Green Belt but there are some small pockets in the urban area that are excluded from the capacity survey.
 - d) **Areas at risk of flooding** – Large parts of the Borough (48%), including significant parts of the urban area (49%), are liable to flood in a 1 in 1000 year event. Latest government guidance ‘PPS25 – Development and Flood Risk’ introduced a requirement for LPAs to carry out a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and requires a sequential approach directing development away

from flood risk areas. Spelthorne commissioned consultants Jacobs Babbie to carry out an SFRA in 2006. The SFRA has confirmed the magnitude of flood risk affecting Spelthorne. PPS25 classifies residential development as 'more vulnerable' and requires an exceptions test for such developments within a 1 in 100 or Zone 3a flood risk area. Given the significance of flooding in Spelthorne, current government guidance and findings of the SFRA, Zone 3a flood risk areas were precluded from this study. In the 2005 housing capacity study Environment Agency's 1 in 100 flood risk area published in April 2005 was also precluded from the area of search. The SFRA and associated flood maps are based on detailed modelling, and have been agreed by the EA. However, the resulting changes in the geographical spread of flood risk areas necessitated a few sites now within the flood risk area to be taken out. Further areas released from flood risk areas were researched to identify further potential sites for inclusion.

The only exception to the bar on sites within the 1 in 100 flood risk areas was to include large sites in the flood risk area where the owners had carried out a flood risk assessment confirming they were actually outside of Zone 3a or development was acceptable which had been approved by the EA.

- e) **Land designated as Protected Urban Open Space** – Government guidance in PPG17 is that valuable urban open space should be retained. The Local Plan designates areas of Protected Urban Open Space (PUOS) and Policy BE14 of the Plan safeguards such sites from development. This includes all public and private land used for open space sport or recreation. A study of open space, sport and recreation has confirmed the need to retain all such land. This designation and approach to protection will continue in the LDF and areas subject to PUOS designation are therefore excluded from the survey. About 10% of the urban area is subject to this designation but some urban open space is also liable to flood. The net effect is to exclude a further 8% of the urban area from the survey.
- f) **Land within the 66 Leq Aircraft Noise Contour** – Parts of the Borough are affected by aircraft noise from Heathrow. Government guidance in PPG24 is that new housing should not be permitted in areas within (i.e. exceeding) the 66 Leq noise contour. This is reflected in the Local Plan (Policy BE32 and Appendix 6). These areas are also assumed to offer no capacity for the purposes of this study. The areas affected are Stanwell Moor and the northern extreme of Stanwell. About 1.1% of the urban area is affected by this constraint.
- g) **Aircraft Public Safety Zones** – Part of Stanwell Moor lies within a Public Safety Zone for Heathrow airport, where new housing is ruled out on safety grounds. This area is also excluded on noise grounds.

- 3.7 The practical effect of these exclusions is to limit the survey area, first to the existing urban area of the Borough, and then to those parts of the urban area that are not at risk of flooding, not designated as Protected Urban Open Space or Common Land or not subject to excessive levels of aircraft noise or public safety constraint.

3.8 The impact of these designations on the total quantity and proportion of the urban area potentially available for residential development is shown in Table 2. The remaining survey area amounts to about 70% of the urban area of the Borough and is shown on Map 1.

Table 2 Identification of the assessment area

	2003 Total (in Hectares)	2003 As % of the Urban Area	2005 Total (in Hectares)	2005 As % of the Urban Area	2006 Total (in Hectares)	2006 As % of the Urban Area
Area of the Borough	5,118	NA	5,118	NA	5,118	NA
Total urban area	1,794	100	1,794	100	1,794	100
Constraint: Urban area at 1 in 100 flood risk	488	27	477	26.6	367	20.5
Constraint: Protected urban open space	177	10	177	10	177	10
Constraint: urban area within 66leq noise contour	29.6	1.6	23	1	23	1
Urban area subject to at least one constraint (1)	636	35	617	34.4	536	29.9
Remaining urban area free of all three constraints (2)	1,165	65	1,177	65.6	1,258	70.1

Notes:

1. Some land is subject to more than one constraint, for example it may be both liable to flood and protected urban open space. Consequently the area subject to at least one constraint is less than the sum of the three constrained areas.
2. The area free of constraint is the total urban area minus the area subject to at least one constraint.

Overview of sources of supply

3.9 Table 2 lists the potential sources of housing supply assessed in this study. This includes all those in Figure 4.2 of the Draft HLAA guidance.

Table 3 Sources of supply

Source	Primary means of assessment
Sources in the existing stock (Residential)	
Subdivision of existing housing	Trends
Flats over shops (1)	Trends
Empty homes	Council Tax
Intensification of existing areas	Site-based survey
Redevelopment of existing housing	Site-based survey
Brownfield Land (Non-residential)	

Previously developed vacant and derelict land and buildings (non-housing)	Site-based survey, Employment Land Study 2005
Redevelopment of car parks (2)	Assessment of potential capacity from Council owned car parks/site based survey
Conversion of commercial buildings	Trends
Other sources	
Unimplemented/outline planning permissions	Planning monitoring data
Review of existing housing allocations in plans	Sites identified in adopted Local Plan followed up by site-based survey
Review of other existing allocations in plans (3)	
Land not previously developed including Greenfield sites (4)	Site-based survey

Notes:

1. Figures from this source are included under conversion of commercial buildings.
2. This figure does not include redevelopment of garage courts and car parks within residential areas, which are included under intensification.
3. None of the 'other existing allocations' in the Local Plan were found suitable for residential use. Therefore, instead of this category the source used was 'redevelopment of other non – residential sites' (after exclusion of derelict commercial land and buildings and car parks)
4. In effect there are no 'greenfield' sites in Spelthorne.

Comprehensive survey of the assessment area

- 3.10 The Draft guidance on HLAA highlights (para 47) that “few previous studies have measured directly all supply within an area, the exception being small studies of individual towns”. However, in Spelthorne the entire urban area free of high level constraints (shown in Map 1) was originally surveyed by planning officers from the Council’s Planning Policy team between December 2002 and March 2003. Due to the changes in the flood plain boundary and in the 66 Leq noise contour, extra surveys were carried out in April – May 2005 to identify capacity in new areas free of these constraints.
- 3.11 For the original 2003 survey the urban area was divided into a number of survey areas. Following an initial pilot study the survey process began with an office-based appraisal using GIS and involving inspection of large-scale maps supported by information on relevant Borough Plan notations, development commitments, current applications and preliminary enquiries. This yielded an initial indication of potential development sites. The whole area was then visited and a full survey carried out “on the ground” to confirm potential sites and identify any that may not have been apparent from the maps. The assessment was completed back in the office and an initial decision made on whether the site should be identified and the capacity that should be assumed. Where sites were subject to developer interest their potential capacity was discussed with members of the Development Control team and, where relevant, with the Head of Development Control and the Head of Planning. To ensure consistency the preliminary results for each survey area were audited by a second senior team member before they were confirmed. This approach was also followed in the 2005 survey.
- 3.12 Details of each site identified were recorded on a standard form. This information has been maintained on an excel spreadsheet in a manner that allows for easy updates.

The sites were also plotted on GIS with comprehensive survey information tables attached. The information recorded is shown in Table 4 below.

Table 4 Information Recorded on Identified Housing Capacity Sites

Information	Comment (where relevant)
Reference Number	Each site was given a unique reference no.
Survey Area	The Borough was divided into 38 survey areas.
Surveyor	The person who carried out the survey for this site.
Full postal address	
Current site use	
Type of existing building	Relevant if there are existing dwellings on the site.
Proposed residential units on the site.	
Existing residential units on the site.	
Net additional residential units on the site.	Proposed minus existing.
Site Area (Ha)	
Density	
Type of development	Houses or flats or a mixture.
Category of development	Distinguishing infill from redevelopment schemes.
Discussion site	Sites raising more complex issues were discussed by the whole team before a final decision was made.
Notes	This section was used to identify site or locality based factors affecting the scope for development (eg characteristics of adjoining property, trees on the site, access problems). Relevant planning history and current preliminary enquiries or applications were also identified where relevant.

Update sites identified in the survey

- 3.13 As suggested by the guidance the data from the previous studies formed the baseline for the current assessment. A significant change since the last survey has been that detailed and more accurate information on the extent of flood risk was available from the SFRA. Consequently there has been a change in the flood plain boundary. As a percentage of the overall urban area this is a reduction in the area at risk from flooding. However, changes in geographical spread meant that some previously identified sites were now in the flood plain. These sites were removed from the survey database.
- 3.14 Areas released from the flood plain, were assessed for their potential. The study also updates information on outstanding permissions and capacity sites that have come

forward as planning proposals and records completions since 2003. Based upon this information the sites identified in the previous study could be updated and a revised estimate of land availability made.

Assessing the likely yield

- 3.15 Account was taken of practical factors affecting the likelihood of development, including complexity of ownership, likely viability of existing uses and indications of developer interest.
- 3.16 The specific criteria applied is set out in Tables 4 and 5 and for clarity of explanation is grouped by sites currently in residential or non-residential use.

Sites in residential use

Table 5 Factors in the Assessment of Sites in Residential Use

Criterion	Comment
Residential development was acceptable in principle	In accordance with Local Plan, Structure Plan and PPS3 Guidance to make efficient use of residential land.
A minimum density of 30 dwellings per hectare was required with a minimum of 50 dwellings per hectare in and adjoining town centres.	Consistent with PPS3 Guidance.
Higher densities were not ruled out where there was no harm to the character of the area and adjoining properties were not adversely affected.	Consistent with Government guidance PPS3 on making efficient use of urban land.
Redevelopment for flats was normally acceptable in and adjoining town centres and in other areas where flats were a feature of the street scene.	To respond to the identified Borough need for smaller units where they can be provided in an acceptable way and to make the most efficient use of urban land in accordance with PPS3.
Development schemes should accord with the Council's SPG on the Design of Residential Development. This includes minimum back-to-back and back to flank distances and criteria regarding overlooking and loss of light.	To ensure compliance with appropriate design standards.
An additional minimum width of 7.5 m was assumed for single dwelling plots.	The Council's SPG has no specific standard for the minimum width of residential plots. The criterion provides some certainty for surveyors. Wider plots may still be ruled out on other considerations.
Regard was had to the scale and character of other development in the locality including recently completed schemes.	To take account of the character of the surrounding area and also what had been permitted more recently.

Criterion	Comment
Trees of amenity value were assumed to be retained.	In accordance with Borough Plan policy on tree protection.
Account was taken of the Council's Parking Standards, allowing for provision below the maximum in areas with good public transport.	The Council's maximum parking standards take account of current Government guidance in PPG13.
Garage courts and communal parking areas were considered for development where there was evidence of under use.	Some garage courts have been redeveloped in recent years. They can be under used particularly where they are poorly related to the properties they are intended to serve.
Where there was developer interest in the form of a preliminary enquiry or current planning application advice was sought from the Development Control case officers on the scale of development likely to be acceptable.	To ensure the study took account of all available information on potential development.
Small sites (less than 0.4 Ha) were normally only considered for development if no more than three ownerships were involved. An exception was where a developer was known to have assembled a large number of plots.	More ownerships add complexity and make development less likely. Small sites with many owners were therefore ruled out from consideration in this study unless there was evidence to suggest a development proposal was being brought forward.
Households selling plots were assumed to want to retain a rear garden at least 15m deep.	This is a stricter criterion than in the Council's Design SPG and is intended to reflect likely owner intentions when they are selling off part of their property.
Redevelopment schemes involving loss of existing housing were only allowed where the number of units created was at least double the number lost. Two for one developments were only allowed where the existing dwelling was relatively small or in poor condition.	Redevelopment schemes need to offer a significant net gain if they are to be sufficiently viable to cover the cost of acquiring existing dwellings.
In Conservation Areas regard was had to the special character of the area, including relevant Enhancement Plans.	In accordance with legislative requirements. Government guidance and Council policy.
Buildings on the Statutory and Local Lists were assumed to remain. Development in the vicinity of listed buildings was assessed in the light of its impact on the character and setting of the building.	In accordance with national and local policy on listed buildings.

Sites in non-residential use

- 3.17 For sites in non-residential use the presumption in favour of residential development does not automatically apply. The first consideration in assessing such sites,

therefore, was to establish whether residential development was acceptable in principle. Background research – Economy and Employment land study published in May 2006 provides an assessment of suitability of such sites and the assessment has had regard to the findings of that study. The Employment Study has identified larger and appropriately sited employment areas for protection. A range of Local Plan and Structure Plan policies regarding the existing use were also applied in the original 2003 survey. In some instances policies would allow mixed use development where only part of the site is developed for residential.

- 3.18 In addition to the acceptability of residential there are also viability and ownership issues to consider in determining whether proposals for residential development will actually come forward.
- 3.19 Where a site was considered appropriate for residential development in whole or part, then the factors in Table 5 were relevant to assessing the potential yield. Table 6 sets out the additional factors relevant to the assessment of different types of non-residential site.

Table 6 Additional Factors in the Assessment of Non-Residential Sites

Existing Use	Assessment Issues
Vacant land	Vacant land not designated as Protected Urban Open Space or Common Land (see para 2.7) was considered suitable for residential development unless other policy constraints apply, e.g. flooding. (All statutory allotments in the Borough are either Protected Urban Open Space or Green Belt and thus already ruled out as unsuitable for residential development).
Commercial Sites (Industry, offices and warehousing)	In accordance with Local Plan and Structure Plan policy, well located commercial areas where the continuation of the commercial use was environmentally acceptable were not considered suitable for residential. Account was also taken of the technical work on Employment Land study published in May 2006. Peripheral sites adjoining residential areas particularly where such sites were occupied by older buildings and/or there was evidence of harmful impact on adjoining housing were considered potentially suitable for housing. Small sites in primarily residential areas and industrial estates that are poorly located, particularly where access is through residential areas were considered suitable in principle for residential. To take account of viability and ownership consideration, such sites were excluded where there was evidence of recent investment in the continuation of the commercial use as measured either by the presence of modern (less than 20 years old) buildings or recently refurbished buildings, both of which suggest the existing use is likely to continue. This latter consideration was not applied to commercial sites where there was known developer interest for residential.

Existing Use	Assessment Issues
Town Centres	Existing shopping floorspace and modern commercial premises were assumed to remain together with other uses that contribute to town centre vitality and viability eg pubs and restaurants. Other commercial sites were considered for residential in the light of Policies EM5 and EM6 of the Local Plan with the option considered of a mixed development including residential.
Car Parks	Potential capacity from Council-owned car parks was examined in the study. Private non-residential car parks were considered for residential if there appeared to be under-use or there was scope for rationalisation of provision.
Social and Community Facilities	These include community halls, health facilities, churches, schools, public services, arts and entertainment and pubs. Local Plan and Structure Plan policy seek to retain such facilities where they are needed. They were assumed to remain unless there was evidence of duplication of provision (which may be particularly relevant for pubs) or lack of need. Surplus sites were considered for residential. In some instances, for example where sites appeared to be under-used, the possibility of redevelopment or partial redevelopment to provide an element of residential was considered.
Shopping Parades and Individual Shops	Shopping parades were assumed to remain. Individual shops and related uses were considered suitable for residential unless they met a local need (eg convenience shops or post offices) or there was evidence of recent investment suggesting the existing use will continue.

Review of Local Plan Housing Proposals

3.20 A review of unimplemented Borough Plan proposals revealed three such sites, two of which have been implemented in part. These are:

- Proposal P8: 582-604 London Road, Ashford. Original proposed for 30 dwellings. Part of site development for 23 dwellings (increase from 7 to 24).
- Proposal P11: Former Staines West Station goods yard, timber yard and adjoining land, Moor Lane, Staines. Original proposal for 60 dwellings. Part of site developed for 65 dwellings (for 30).
- Proposal P12: Depot at 28-44 Feltham Road, Ashford. Original proposal for 23 dwellings. No permission granted (No change).

Further details of the latter two sites are also provided in Appendix A as part of the information on large sites over 0.4 Ha.

In principle the methodology also involved reviewing unimplemented Borough Plan proposals for non-residential development. In practice there proved to be no such proposals that were free of constraints listed in para 3.6.

- 3.21 Outstanding planning permissions were not re-assessed. These were assumed to be implemented as proposed and the capacity assessment excludes sites with outstanding permission.

Empty Homes

- 3.22 Draft practice guidance on HLAA's suggests that empty homes should be considered as a potential source of housing supply. Census 2001 reports that compared to the national average of 3.2% Spelthorne has a lower than average proportion of empty homes (2%). The Council is committed through its Housing Strategy to reduce the number of empty homes and recent Council Tax records show a reduction in the number of empty homes to 1.4%.
- 3.23 In considering how to treat empty homes in this study regard must be had to the study purpose which is to assist in determining the appropriate provision for new housing development in the Borough. In recognition of this and the already low proportion of empty homes in the Borough no further allowance is made in this study for reducing the proportion of empty homes.

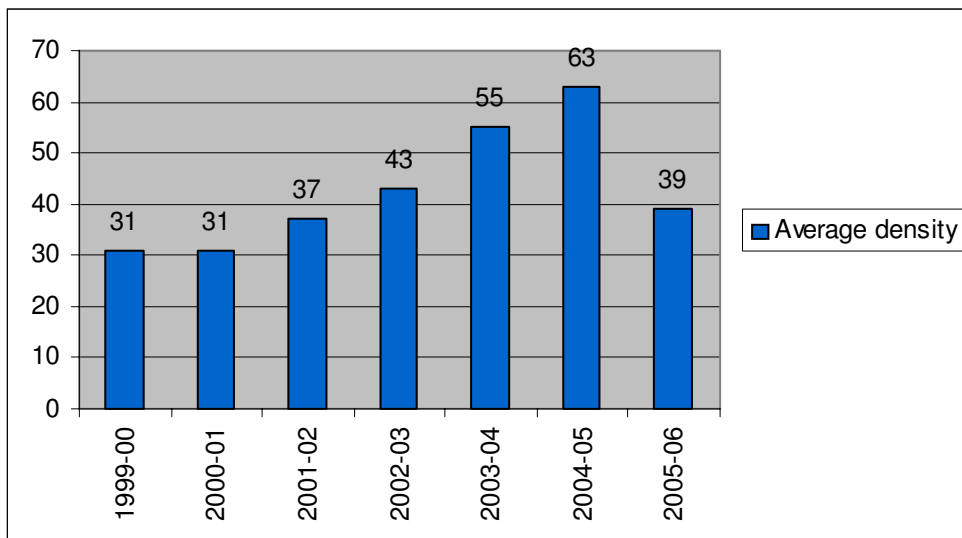
Trend based forecasts

- 3.24 Trend-based forecasts were carried out in parallel with the capacity survey. They helped in understanding how the market has been performing in recent years and offered an alternative approach to assessing future housing development based on the actual rate of development. In particular they helped in establishing the extent to which site based capacity assessment could identify all very small sites. As such they formed a helpful tool in evaluating the survey results and making a decision on applying a discount or a windfall to the identified sites. Results based both on survey and trends are presented in the following section and further discussion provided on their comparison. The following paragraphs detail the methodology used in the trend based forecasts.
- a) **Identify the time period over which the past trend will be established.** A balance has to be struck between the benefits of a long time series, in which peaks and troughs in development rates can be smoothed out to give a reliable average, and the need to avoid going back too far to avoid including developments permitted in circumstances that no longer apply today. Spelthorne has until now used a seven year trend for forecasting the development of small residential sites. This has proved a robust approach balancing a significant time series with keeping reasonably up to date.
 - b) **Consider eliminating any developments that would not now be permitted.** The forecasts must be based on the application of up to date policy. In Spelthorne the biggest policy change affecting the principle of residential development are changes in the flood plain and the tightening of policy within flood plain areas (see para 3.6(d)). In the 2005 study the data on past trends was adjusted to exclude all past housing developments in the flood plain as defined in April 2005. This was done because at the time there was an extension on the previous flood plain boundary. However the SFRA flood boundary results in a reduction in the overall urban area at risk of flooding in a 1 in 100 year event. Further the rate of development in the Borough does not show a reduction linked with changes in flood plain boundaries over the years.

Therefore this assessment does not make any deduction to past trends based on changes in flood plain boundary.

- c) **Calculate the annual average past rate of development.** This is based on past completions of sites and not actual completions in a year.
- d) **Looking into the future consider whether any uplift or reduction in the past rate of development is justified.** An uplift could be justified by increasing application of PPG3/PPS3–based policies on efficient use of housing land, which could result in higher density housing developments and sites coming forward for development that might not have been considered economic in the past. However, an examination of average densities in the past seven years shows that in Spelthorne historically densities have been above the minimum 30dph (fig 2). While there is a trend of generally increasing densities since 1999, there is currently insufficient trend based evidence to confidently predict a further increase on already high densities based on the information available. A fuller discussion on discounts and windfalls is provided in paras 3.33-3.38.

Figure 2 Average density of completed sites



Note: In 2005-06 completions were generally low with very little on large sites

- e) **Project the trend with any adjustment into the future.** In this instance to 2026.

3.25 Separate forecasts were produced for different sizes of development (sites of less than 0.4 ha, and sites over 0.4 ha) and different types of development (residential infill and residential redevelopment and development of non-residential sites).

3.26 A particular issue in the trend-based forecasts and their comparison with the survey is the treatment of outstanding planning permissions. These are treated as commitments and excluded from the capacity survey, so for proper comparison they also need to be excluded from the trend forecasts.

Commitments

- 3.27 To isolate outstanding permissions an assumption was made that all permissions outstanding on 1 April 2006 would be completed in the next two years and that any development without planning permission at present will not be completed until after the next two years. This assumption is based on analysis of the Council's monitoring information, which shows that on average developments take two years to pass from permission being granted to completion. (It is supported by the work of Baker Associates for West Sussex County Council).
- 3.28 Thus the assumption is that development in the next two years (2006-08) will consist solely of the implementation of outstanding planning permissions. This approach is illustrated by the housing trajectory later on in the report. The trend-based forecast is then applied to the eighteen years (2008-26) and the capacity survey sites are also assumed to be developed in this period. This is shown in Table 7.

Table 7 Forecast of Housing Supply using Trend-Based Forecasts and Capacity Survey

Year	No. of Years	Capacity Survey	Trend-Based Forecasts
1999/00 – 2005/06	7	Not relevant	Establish past trend
2006/07 – 2007/08	2	Implement Outstanding Permissions	Implement Outstanding Permissions.
2008/09 – 2025/26 (for LDF to meet SE Plan allocation)	18	Develop capacity sites.	Apply trend-based forecast.

Conversions

- 3.29 Trend-based forecasts were used as the primary forecasting tool for conversions. The Pilot Study survey showed that the potential supply of buildings, particularly large dwellings and under-used space above shops suitable for conversion, substantially exceeded past trends, indicating that the supply of suitable buildings was unlikely to constrain future supply. Economic factors affecting the viability of conversion were more likely to be a determining consideration. In these circumstances a capacity-based approach to assessing future development is only of limited value. A trend-based approach was therefore adopted.
- 3.30 Conversions in the last two year are the highest since 1999 (Fig 3). However it would be premature at this stage to consider a further uplift in the conversions figure based on just the previous two years figure. Therefore this study assumes a cautionary approach and projects the past seven year trend on conversions to 2026 rather than five years (Table 8) (thereby reducing the statistical impact of the last two years figures).

Figure 3 Trends on conversions

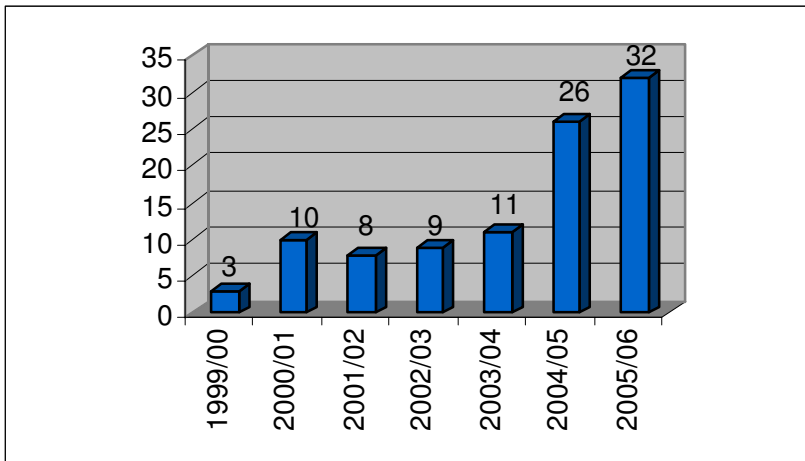


Table 8 Conversion Trends

	Conversions from residential	Conversions from non-residential	Conversion from residential forecast 2008-2026	Conversion from non-residential forecast 2008-2026	Total
Based on 7 year trends	4	10	72	180	252
Based on 5 year trends	5	12	90	216	306

Identification of large and small sites

3.31 The site size threshold for inclusion of sites as an allocation in the emerging LDF is 0.4Ha. All the sites included as proposals in the emerging LDF were identified in the previous Housing Capacity Studies and are included in this assessment. Extensive consultation has been carried out with the owners and stakeholders of these sites. Their responses give certainty as to owner intentions and the likelihood of development and time scales. Other large sites have emerged as planning applications or preliminary enquiries where discussions with the applicants have established owner's intention and confirmed that development is imminent.

3.32 Sites smaller than 0.4Ha have been identified in the survey but it is not easy to predict with certainty or the time scale within which development will take place on these sites.

Discounting and Windfall

3.33 A comparison of the survey results with the trend-based forecasts (see 3.24-3.30) is a logical starting point for considering both the application of a discount or windfall to the raw survey results. Tables 9 and 10 present the site survey figures and corresponding trend-based forecasts by site size (conversions are excluded at this stage).

Table 9 Comparison of identified capacity with seven-year trends by site size

Size of Development (net gain)	2006 identified capacity Total (1)	Trend-Based Forecast to 2008-26 (2)	Difference (identified capacity minus trend) (1)-(2)
Less than 0.4Ha	968	1466	-498
Greater than 0.4Ha	1019	2006	-987
Total	1987	3472	-1485

Table 10 Comparison of identified capacity results with five-year trends by site size

Size of Development (net gain)	2006 identified capacity Total (1)	Trend-Based Forecast to 2008-26 (2)	Difference (capacity minus trend) (1)-(2)
Less than 0.4Ha	968	1808	-840
Greater than 0.4Ha	1019	2495	-1476
Total	2077	4303	-2316

- 3.34 Tables 9 and 10 show that significantly different figures emerge when comparing trends with site survey results and also between using housing completions data from the last seven or five years. Using either scenario, the figures show that trend based forecasts greatly exceed the survey results in both the small and large site categories. The higher figures using the five year trend is attributed to the impact of the local plan policy requiring a greater proportion of smaller units to meet the identified need for such housing combined with the Government housing policy promoting higher densities. For the sake of caution a seven year trend is considered more prudent to use at the current time given the limited number of years over which recent planning policies are applied.
- 3.35 The purpose of this study is to provide a robust assessment of likely future supply of housing. It is evident from the above findings that actual recent completion trends project a higher rate of completions than the capacity identified. It is recognised that housing potential is not just dependent on the observable physical attributes of a site (which can be identified in surveys) but also non-physical factors such as owner aspirations, completion of lease periods, particular market interest and detailed site specific financial viability. This may explain the differences in the figures.
- 3.36 **Consideration for large sites** – There is a requirement for LDFs to try and identify actual sites where possible to increase the certainty of supply. For this reason, and given the discussions with owners of large sites, it is judged appropriate in the case of large sites to rely on identified sites rather than trends. Nevertheless, the trend based evidence and further sites that have emerged since the 2003 study suggest windfalls of large sites in addition to identified sites may occur during the plan period. However, at this stage it is considered prudent not to attempt to put a figure on what that windfall element might be. But the issue should be kept under review and assessed in future studies.
- 3.37 **Consideration for small sites** – In the case of small sites it is acknowledged these are difficult to identify on the ground with accuracy. Trends show a continuing supply. It is considered that without detailed information of owners intentions on identified small sites a trend based approach would be more appropriate. The extent to which trends

are maintained needs to be monitored and, at this stage a cautionary 5% discount is applied to allow for a small reduction in the trends.

- 3.38 Given the above it is therefore concluded that for large sites identified capacity is used and for small sites the trend based projections with a 5% discount applied. This results in the figures presented in Table 11 below.

Table 11 Capacity from small (excluding conversions) and large sites in the period 2008-26

Size of Development (net gain)	Capacity from small and large sites 2008-26
Less than 0.4Ha (based on 7 year trends with a 5% discount)	1393
Greater than 0.4Ha (based on identified sites)	1019
Total	2312

Considering developability

- 3.39 The Draft practice guidance on HLAAs suggests that once an ‘unconstrained’ supply of sites are identified, their developability should be considered using three criteria – whether the site is available, suitable and viable. The following paragraphs explain that a number of factors and studies at the Borough level ensure that sites identified are ‘available’, ‘suitable’ and ‘viable’.
- 3.40 Sites to be included as ‘proposals’ in the LDF, have been subject to a **Sustainability Appraisal** on a site by site basis to assess their social, economic and environmental viability.
- 3.41 The ‘Proposals’ Development Plan Document has been through the ‘Issues and Options’ and the ‘Preferred Options’ stages of consultation. The responses from the owners further establish the availability of these sites and also give an indication of the timescales within which these sites will be developed.
- 3.42 These ‘Proposals’ sites were identified from the 2003 and 2005 Housing Capacity Studies. As part of the 2005 Housing Capacity Study, the Council commissioned consultants Campsies to test the viability of large sites based on current and anticipated property market trends. They also provided an overview of the local housing market. Sites were only included in the Housing Capacity Study and as proposals if this ‘marketing testing’ exercise revealed they were economically viable. Details of each large site identified in this assessment along with the site plan are presented in Appendix A.
- 3.43 The viability of other large sites that have emerged since is also established based on discussions with owners/developers and since many are emerging as planning applications. Therefore these sites are considered economically viable and were not subject to further market testing
- 3.44 As explained in para 2.3(3) and 3.4-3.7 of this report, Spelthorne is characterised by a number of higher level constraints over which the Council does not have discretion. Therefore this assessment has considered only those sites which would be acceptable

in planning policy and local environmental terms. As a result all identified sites are considered 'suitable' for residential development.

- 3.45 No sites in this assessment were ruled out on grounds of accessibility by public transport. An assessment of public transport accessibility was carried out for Spelthorne in 2006 and the findings are published in the 'Transport Statement'. This study concluded that Spelthorne has a relatively high level of accessibility to public transport from most of the urban areas to a range of destinations including key facilities.
- 3.46 The assessment assumes the redevelopment of some non-residential sites for residential purposes. The sites identified are consistent with the Economy and Employment Land Study published in May 2006. The Employment Land study among other things examined on a site by site basis whether a site is suitably located for continuing employment use. It took into account the character of the area, evidence of harmful impact on adjoining residential areas, access arrangements to sites - particularly if through residential areas, accessibility of the location through alternative modes of transport and market factors as measured by evidence of recent or proposed investment in continued commercial use, or conversely evidence of developer interest in residential use.
- 3.47 The Employment Land Study identified a number of generally small sites as unsuitable for continued commercial use. These are mostly isolated commercial premises in residential areas, together with some smaller and older industrial estates adjoining or accessed through commercial areas. It was also noted that much of the floorspace of such sites is poor in qualitative terms due to a combination of age and site size restrictions limiting scope to redevelop to meet modern needs.
- 3.48 The loss of floorspace of the commercial sites identified for residential use in line with the Employment Land Study amounts to 56,475 sq m which is 6.8% of the Borough's total employment floorspace (Table 10).

Table 12 Impact of HLAA on the stock of employment floorspace

Size of Development (net gain)	Floorspace (sqm)	%
Existing employment floorspace in the Borough as a whole (1)	833,435	100
Employment floorspace assumed to be lost to residential under the capacity study	56,475	6.8
Employment floorspace assumed to be retained in employment use under the capacity study (2)	776,960	93.2

Note:

- (1) This is the total commercial floorspace in the Borough, based on Inland Revenue Floorspace Statistics
- (2) Existing floorspace minus that assumed to be lost.

4. Presentation of results

- 4.1 The results of the site survey work are firstly presented by origin of development. Subsequently the survey results are adjusted to take account of trends for small sites

and conversions. The figures from the assessment are also used to develop the housing trajectory presented later in this report.

- 4.2 Table 13 classifies the results by sources listed in HLAA – Draft practice guidance and tables 14 and 15 provide a comparison of survey results with the trends by development origin.

Table 13 Summary of identified capacity by origin of development based on Draft Practice Guidance on HLAAs

Source	2006 Identified Capacity
Sources in the existing stock (Residential)	
Subdivision of existing housing	*
Flats over shops (1)	*
Empty homes	-
Intensification of existing areas	268
Redevelopment of existing housing	506
Brownfield Land (Non-residential)	
Previously developed vacant and derelict land and buildings (non-housing)	98
Redevelopment of car parks (2)	135
Conversion of commercial buildings	*
Redevelopment of other non-residential sites	880
Other sources	
Unimplemented/outline planning permissions	+
Review of existing housing allocations in plans (3)	77
Review of other existing allocations in plans (4)	-
Land not previously developed including Greenfield sites (5)	23
Total	1987

Notes:

1. Figures from this source are included under conversion of commercial buildings.
 2. This figure does not include redevelopment of garage courts and car parks within residential areas, which are included under intensification. The figure comprises three sites – Bridge Street Car Park, Staines (75 units), Kingston Road Car Park, Staines (50 units) and Car Park adjacent Gleneagles Close, Stanwell (10 units)
 3. The figure is the revised total yield from unimplemented Local Plan housing proposals. It represents a net increase of 35 on the existing remaining Local Plan total.
 4. None of the 'other existing allocations' in the Local Plan were found suitable for residential use. Therefore, instead of this category the source used was "redevelopment of other non –residential sites' (after exclusion of derelict commercial land and buildings and car parks)
 5. In effect there are no 'greenfield' sites in Spelthorne.
- * Land availability from these sources has been assessed using trends
- + Outstanding planning permissions are considered to be completed by 2008 and are therefore not included in this assessment. Historically there have been very few unimplemented planning permissions for housing development in Spelthorne. Therefore no capacity could be identified from this source in the assessment.

Table 14 Summary of identified capacity by site origin compared to a seven year trend

Size of Development (net gain)	2006 Identified Capacity	Trend-Based Forecast to 2008-26	Difference (capacity minus trend)
Residential Infill (1)	296	293	3
Residential redevelopment (2)	506	661	-155
Redevelopment of commercial sites (3)	745		
Redevelopment of other non-residential sites (4)	440	2517	-1332
Total	1987	3471	-1484

Table 15 Summary of identified capacity by site origin compared to a five year trend

Size of Development (net gain)	2006 Identified Capacity	Trend-Based Forecast to 2008-26	Difference (capacity minus trend)
Residential Infill (1)	296	313	-17
Residential redevelopment (2)	506	644	-138
Redevelopment of commercial sites (3)	745		
Redevelopment of other non-residential sites (4)	440	3344	-2159
Total	1987	4303*	-2314

Notes:

1. Residential infill is development of land in residential use with no units lost.
2. Residential redevelopment is development of land in residential use involving loss of one or more dwellings.
3. Redevelopment of commercial sites is development involving loss of land or premises in industry, offices or warehousing use.
4. Redevelopment of other non-residential sites is development involving loss of land or premises in non-residential use other than industry, offices or warehousing.

* Totals do not add up due to rounding.

- 4.3 Tables 14 and 15 show a higher trend of redevelopment of commercial and other non-residential sites to residential.

Applying trend based forecast to the survey results

- 4.4 Table 16 presents the final assessment of results based on the identified capacity results for large sites and the trend based figures for small sites. The reasons for this approach were explained in 3.33-3.38. For reasons explained in paras 3.24(a) and 3.34 a seven year trend and with a 5% discount is considered to be more reliable at the present time for this assessment. The tables also include trend based figures for conversions presented in Table 8.

Table 16 Study results and relationship to the Draft South East Plan allocation

Size of Development (net gain)	Net Units 2006-2026 (SEP Period)	Net units 2008-2026 (LDF Period)
Less than 0.4Ha (based on 7 year trends with a 5% discount)	1393	1393
Greater than 0.4Ha (based on identified sites)	1019	1019
Conversions (1)	252	252
Commitments at 1 April 2006 (2)	637	-
Total	3,301	2,664
Draft South East Plan Outstanding Requirement	3,020	2,383*

Notes:

1. Based on trends (for detailed explanation see 3.24, 3.33-3.38 and Table 7)
 2. Commitments at 1 April 2006 are assumed to be complete in two years from 2006-2008.
- * Deducting the commitments (637) which are assumed to be completed in the period 2006-2008 from the SEP overall requirement of 3,020 dwellings.

Relationship to the Draft South East Plan allocation

- 4.5 The Draft South East Plan requires Spelthorne to provide 3,020 dwellings during 2006-2026. This equates to 151 dwellings per annum. The purpose of this assessment is to show the land availability in Spelthorne from the beginning of its LDF expected in 2008 to the end date of the Draft South East Plan in 2026. The requirement of 302 units in the two year gap between the start of the LDF (2008) and the requirement in Draft South East Plan (2006) is considered to be met by current outstanding planning permissions. At 1 April 2006 there were total commitments for 637 units of which 214 units were under construction and outstanding planning permissions for a further 423.
- 4.6 The trend based figure of 2,664 is the best estimate of total development between 2008-26 at this time.
- 4.7 The study shows a mathematical surplus of approximately 9% over the South East Plan overall requirement of 3,020 dwellings in the period 2006-26. This needs to be treated with some caution. Whilst on one hand it suggests a sufficient margin to enable delivery of the Draft South East Plan requirement with some degree of confidence, it would be imprudent to suggest at this stage the Council is certain to exceed its allocation. Future updates of capacity will allow actual completions from 2006 to be monitored and trends to be updated accordingly. This may then allow more robust conclusions to be drawn.
- 4.8 The strategy of the South East Plan for Spelthorne is that residential provision should be limited to the capacity that can be accommodated in an acceptable way within the existing urban area. The small mathematical surplus over a long time span allows the capacity identified in this assessment to remain consistent with the South East Plan approach.

Interpreting the HLAA results

- 4.9 A comparison can be made between the average density of capacity study sites and actual densities of development as shown by past trends and outstanding permissions. Table 17 shows the results.
- 4.10 It can be seen that the average density of capacity study sites is greater than the average for the past seven years but is lower than the average for outstanding permissions.

Table 17 Average Density of Development of Capacity Study Sites Compared with Past Trends and Outstanding Permissions

Type of Development	Average Density in dwellings per hectare (1)
Developments completed in last 7 years	42.7
Outstanding planning permissions	59.5
Capacity study sites*	50.1

1. Average density is calculated by dividing the total number of gross units by the total area of sites.

* Average density does not include two large sites because the schemes are mixed use and the net area that will be used for the residential element is uncertain at this point.

- 4.11 This may be attributed to a high proportion of 1 and 2 bed units completed in recent years through the introduction of new Local Plan policy H5. This policy requires 80% of new dwellings on schemes of three or more units to be two bedroom or less. This was in response to the Borough-wide Housing Needs Assessment, which showed a need for a greater proportion of small dwellings. This is reconfirmed by a recent update of the Needs Assessment and policy is proposed to be continued in the LDF. The approach of this assessment was to seek opportunities for smaller units where they could be provided in an acceptable way but not to aim for a specific proportion of small units.
- 4.12 The approach adopted in this study was to assess whether sites would be suitable for flats or houses or a combination. While there were no specific assumptions about bedroom size all flats can be expected to be two bedroom or less.
- 4.13 The results show a split of 76% flats to 24% houses on sites with a capacity of three or more units. Assuming all flats are two bedroom or less and a proportion of houses are two bedroom or less then the average size of development would appear to be broadly consistent with the Council's policy on dwelling size. In reality the Council is delivering this policy effectively as shown in Table 18 below although the actual percentage will vary depending on the mix of sites in any particular year.

Table 18 Percentage of 1 and 2 bed units on identified sites with three or more dwellings compared with actual provision from planning permissions granted since 2004

	Percentage of 1 and 2 bed dwellings
2004-05	91%
2005-06	96%
Identified sites	76%

Housing Trajectory

4.14 The housing trajectory presents the results of the HLAA based on the best estimate of large sites coming forward for development during 2008-2026. The trajectory also includes the trend based forecast for small sites and conversions presented earlier in Table 16 of this report. The estimated timescales for large sites are presented in Table 18 and were based on the following assumptions –

- 1) The timescales indicated by the owners of the site when the site will become available for residential development at the 'Issues and Options' and 'Preferred Options' stage in the LDF process are assumed to be correct.
- 2) Sites where owners agreed to the principle of residential development or supported the proposal but did not indicate a timescale – it was assumed that the sites would have a five year lead-in from 2006.
- 3) Sites where consultation revealed complicated ownership/lease issues impacting on land assembly – such sites were assumed to start with at least a five year lead-in from start of the plan period in 2008.
- 4) Sites which are imminently coming forward as planning applications – these were assumed to have a lead-in of two year from 2006 and start in 2008.
- 5) Sites which will come forward as planning applications but because of complex issues like the possibility of compulsory purchase orders or scale of development are likely to have a longer lead-in period of three years from 2006 and therefore start in 2009.

4.15 All sites are assumed to be completed over a five year period. The only exceptions are sites which are imminently coming forward as planning applications' (para 4.14 (4) above) – these were assumed to be completed over a three year period.

Table 19 Large sites – estimated timescales for housing delivery

Ref No.	Address	Net Gain	Owners Response/Officer Knowledge	Assume start in
SA32B/006	Thames Water Depot, Charlton Road, Charlton	35	Refused planning application. Subject to appeal. It is assumed that permission will be granted sometime in the next two years for an appropriate scheme with works to commence in 2008.	2008-11
SA20/004	Land adjoining Feltham Hill Road and Poplar Road, Ashford (P/011/H)	70	Major part of site is vacant. Early indications from the owners support the proposals. However, owners are seeking retention of the site in various commercial uses for	2018-23

Ref No.	Address	Net Gain	Owners Response/Officer Knowledge	Assume start in
			a temporary period of 10 years.	
SA20/002	158-166 Feltham Road, Ashford	60	Owners support the proposal. Site will be genuinely available in early LDF period	2008-13
SA19/011	28-44 Feltham Road, Ashford	23	Owner of 36-40 – No intention of releasing site in the near future. 28-34 – no objection in principle (unlikely to become available in early plan period)	2011-16
SA05C/002	Works adj Harrow Road, Ashford	36	Owners agree to principle. No indication of timescale	2011-16
SA15/006	West Wing at Ashford Hospital, London Road, Ashford	75	Being promoted by the NHS Trust for redevelopment. An application is considered imminent.	2008-11
SA19/014	St Michael's Road, Ashford	25	Comprehensive redevelopment of RSL owned housing. Decanting has started although may involve complex issues like CPOs.	2009-14
SA11/002	Bridge Street Car Park, Bridge Street, Staines	75	Council owned car park has been sold to developers Wimpy's. A planning application is considered imminent.	2008-11
SA12/001	The Elmsleigh Centre and adjoining land, Staines (Phase 3 and 4)	95	Part of major refurbishment of Staines town centre. Development will	2008-11 (Ph 3) 2011-14 (Ph 4)

Ref No.	Address	Net Gain	Owners Response/Officer Knowledge	Assume start in
			take place in two phases. Phase 3 involves 30 residential units. Phase 4 – 65 units however major retail development is part of this mixed use scheme. Therefore a longer lead-in for phase 4 is assumed.	
SA09/004	Centrica Site, Fairfield Avenue, Staines* (Phase 2)	40	Redevelopment is intended by the site owner (Clerical Medical) to be in two phases. The 1 st phase does not have a residential element but it may be at least five years before it is finished (subject to planning permission) and the 2 nd phase with the residential development can begin. Assume five years from start of the LDF period.	2013-18
SA13/008	Steel Works and Builders Merchant (Jewsons), Gresham Road, Staines	100	No objection by the main owners – Network Rail but no indication of time scales. There is a 12 month break clause lease on site which makes it easier for the site to be made available. However Railway Regulator will have to assess the site for public transport purposes before it can be released for other uses. Therefore it is unlikely to be available in early plan period.	2011-16
SA09/003	Kingston Road Car Park	50	Site is owned by	2008-13

Ref No.	Address	Net Gain	Owners Response/Officer Knowledge	Assume start in
	and land adjacent, Kingston Road, Staines		Surrey County Council (SCC). It is understood that SCC wish to relocate the adult education facility on site. Site includes a listed building.	
SA11/001	Builders Merchants, Moor Lane, Staines	30	Owners support the proposal. (no indication of timescales)	2011-16
SA37/010	Rodd Estate and the Lodge, Govett Avenue, Shepperton	85	There have been a series of planning applications on this site with an appeal currently lodged. Development is considered acceptable in principle and could start within two years.	2008-11
SA15/007	Holywell Way, Stanwell	170	Comprehensive redevelopment of dated RSL owned housing. Large scale complex development involving phased development.	2009-14
SA29/002	Riverside Works, Fordbridge Road, Sunbury	50	Site owned by the Environment Agency (EA) and currently on the market. EA have produced a brief for the site.	2008-13

4.16 Based on the above information, outstanding planning permissions and sites under construction at 1 April 2006, and the trend based analysis presented in Table 16 the following information formed the basic data to input into the housing trajectory (Tables 20 and 21).

Table 20 Data on large sites identified in HLAA, and trend based data on small sites used in the housing trajectory

	Totals	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26		
Large sites identified in HLAA																												
28-44 Feltham Road, Ashford (SA19/001)	23											5	5	5	5	5												
158-166 Feltham Road, Ashford (SA20/002)	60							12	12	12	12	12	12															
Land adj. Feltham Hill Rd & Poplar Rd (SA20/004)	70																	14	14	14	14	14						
Works adj. Harrow Road, Ashford (SA05C/002)	36											7.2	7.2	7.2	7.2	7.2												
Gresham Road, Staines (SA13/008)	100											20	20	20	20	20												
Moor Lane, Staines (SA11/001)	30											6	6	6	6	6												
Riverside Works, Fordbridge Rd, Sunbury (SA29/002)	50							10	10	10	10	10	10															
Bridge Street Car Park, Staines (SA11/002)	75							25	25	25																		
The Eimsleigh Centre, Staines (Ph 4) (SA12/001)	30							10	10	10																		
The Eimsleigh Centre, Staines (Ph 5) (SA12/001)	65											21.7	21.7	21.7	21.7													
Thames Water Depot, Charlton Road, Charlton (SA32B/006)	35							11.7	11.7	11.7																		
Ashford Hospital, Ashford (SA15/006)	75							25	25	25																		
St Michaels Road, Ashford (SA19/014)	25									5	5	5	5	5	5	5												
Centrica Site, Fairfield Avenue, Staines (SA19/004)	40														8	8	8	8	8									
Kingston Road Car Park, Staines (SA09/003)	50							10	10	10	10	10	10															
Rodd Estate, Shepperton (SA37/001)	85							28.3	28.3	28.3	28.3	28.3	28.3															
Holywell Way, Stanwell (SA15/007)	170							34	34	34	34	34	34	34														

Table 21 Housing Trajectory Data

	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
Actual conversions/change of use	17	8	9	26	34																				
Actual completions small sites <0.4Ha (less conversions)	99	88	133	211	99																				
Actual completions large sites >0.4Ha	133	68	351	35	1																				
Cumulative completions						319	637	860	1118	1380	1602	1824	2014	2156	2293	2392	2492	2605	2711	2816	2921	3027	3118	3210	3301
Projected conversions/change of use (completed estimated for 2006-08 based on commitments at 1 April 2006 and Trend based 2008 onwards)						42	42	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14
Projected small sites <0.4Ha (completions estimated for 2006-08 based on commitments at 1 April 2006 and Trend based 2008 onwards) (less conversions)						184	184	77	77	77	77	77	77	77	77	77	77	77	77	77	77	77	77	77	77
Projected large sites >0.4Ha (completions estimated for 2006-08 based on commitments at 1 April 2006 and identified sites from HLAA 2008 onwards)						94	94	132	166	171	130	130	98	51	-46	8	8	22	14	14	14	14	0	0	0
PLAN - South East Plan annualised over 20 years						151	151	151	151	151	151	151	151	151	151	151	151	151	151	151	151	151	151	151	151
MONITOR above or below cumulative annualised completions						168	335	407	514	625	696	767	806	797	783	731	680	642	597	551	505	460	400	341	281
MANAGE Annual requirement taking account of past projected completions						151	142	132	127	119	109	101	92	84	79	73	70	66	59	52	41	25	-2	-49	-190

Notes:

Actual completions

Net completions for the previous five years.

Projected completions

The figures for 2006-08 are based on current levels of sites under construction and outstanding planning permissions. The figures for subsequent years are based on the trend based forecast for small sites and conversions (includes change of use). The large site figures are based on identified sites presented in Table 18.

Draft South East Plan annualised allocation over 20 years

This row illustrates how many dwellings have been, or are projected to be, completed above or below the planned rate at any particular time. The figure illustrate either an under or oversupply.

The figure in this row represent the number of completions needed to meet the South East Plan allocation taking

Plan

Monitor

Manage

Figure 4 Housing Trajectory

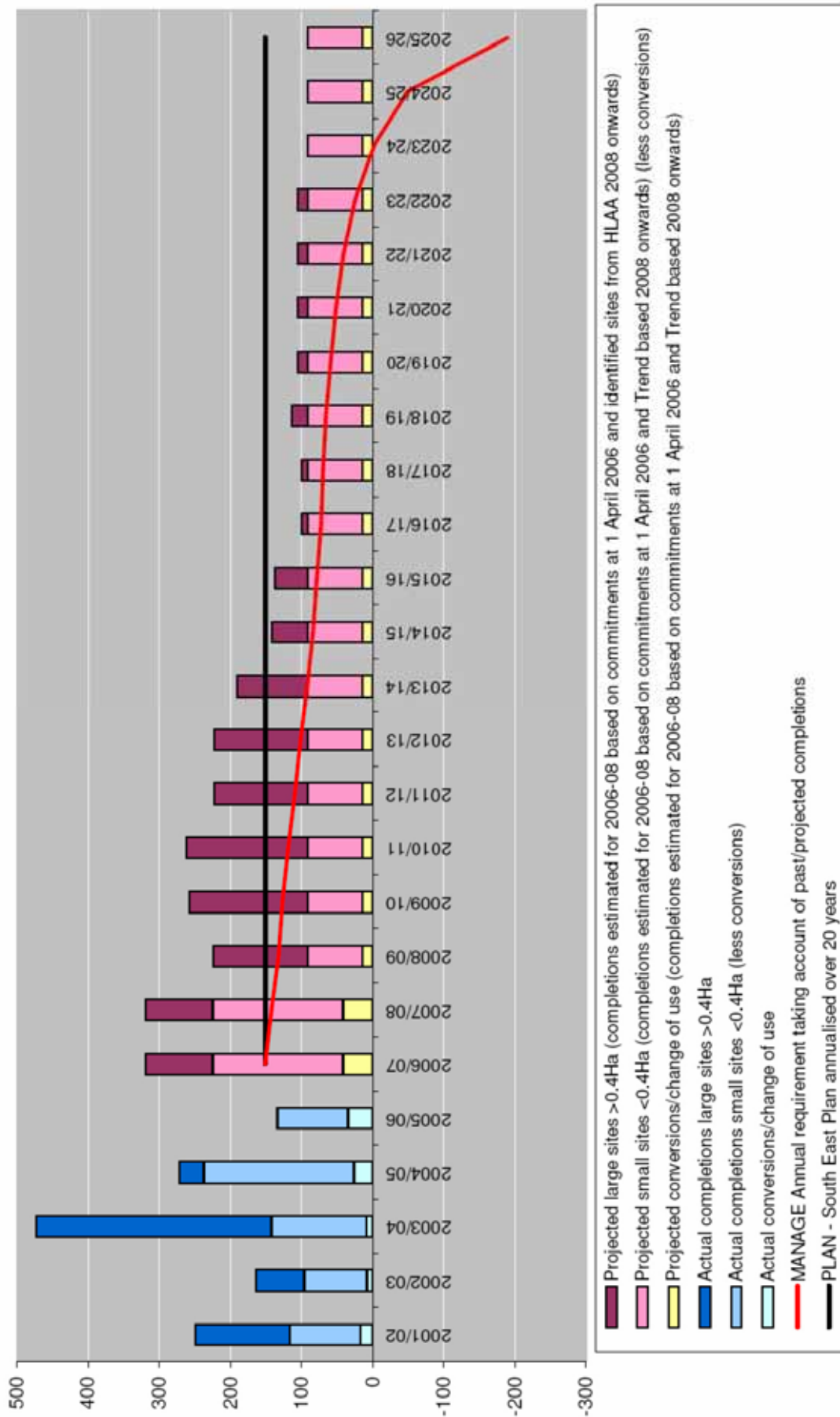
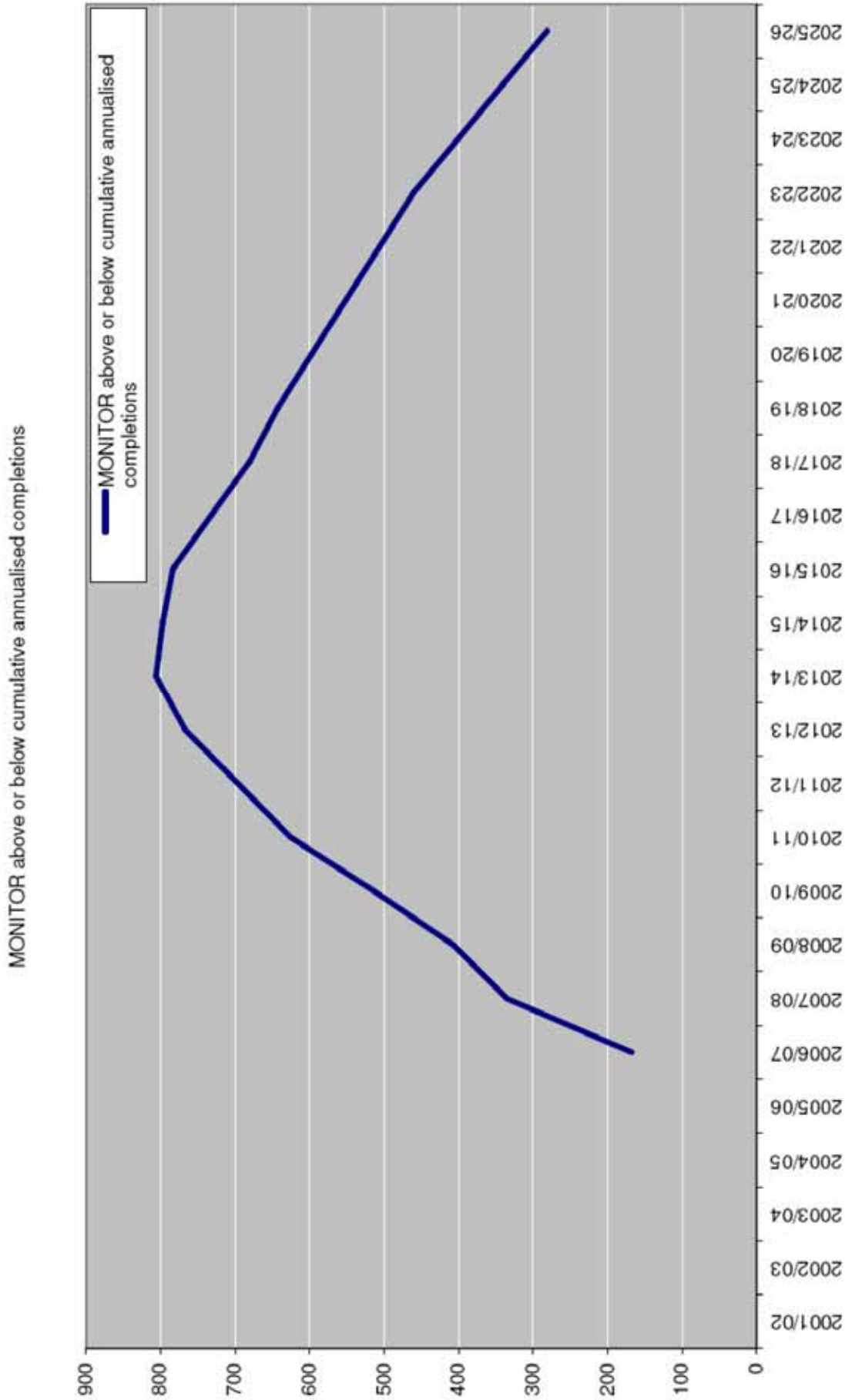


Figure 5 Monitor above or below cumulative annualised completions



Spatial distribution of all sites identified in the HLAA

4.17 The main towns in Spelthorne are Ashford, Staines, Shepperton, Stanwell and Sunbury with Staines being the main commercial centre. Other smaller settlements are Laleham, Stanwell Moor, Upper and Lower Halliford. Table 22 presents the sites identified in the HLAA spatially across the Borough. The town boundaries for this purpose were defined using Census 2001 output areas. This method has also been used by Surrey County Council to produce town profiles for Surrey including Spelthorne. These areas are of widely differing sizes and it should be noted that the figures are only an indication of possible distribution between areas as a large proportion of completions are likely to be on smaller sites which are difficult to predict on a site by site basis.

Table 22 Spatial distribution of sites identified in the HLAA

Town	Existing Household numbers	Net units from Large Sites >0.4Ha	Total Area of large sites (>0.4Ha)	Net units from Small Sites	Total Net Gain
Ashford	10,467	289	6.70	460	749
Shepperton (including Charlton and Upper Halliford)	6,056	120	1.70	99	219
Staines (including Laleham)	10,979	390	11.51	100	490
Stanwell (including Stanwell Moor)	4,740	170	8.63	100	270
Sunbury	7,634	50	1.57	209	259
Total	39,876	1019	30.11	968	1987

4.18 The table shows a higher concentration of sites in Ashford and Staines but these are the biggest urban areas as evident from the household numbers. The number of units in each town reflect the size of urban areas free of constraints within the town as can be seen on Map 2. They also reflect the hierarchy of the town centres with Staines being the main centre with a catchment area extending beyond Spelthorne. Staines is the main public transport hub with a wide network of rail services including frequent connections to London. However, Staines is heavily constrained by the areas at risk of flooding. It has the largest proportion of units from large sites, these have had an FRA approved by the EA. Of all the towns Ashford has the largest capacity which is mostly from small sites.

4.19 Map 2 shows the spatial distribution of sites in the context of two of the biggest constraints to housing development in Spelthorne; the Green Belt and flood risk areas.

5. Conclusion

- 5.1 The HLAA demonstrates that there is enough capacity within Spelthorne's urban area to meet the Draft South East Plan allocation to 2026. The study shows a mathematical surplus (about 9%) over the South East Plan requirement from 2006-26 which needs to be treated with caution as this capacity is in part based on trend based forecasts. Small sites including conversions form the trend based element of the study and large sites (over 0.4 Ha) have been identified. While the study follows a cautionary approach of using seven years trends in forecasting the potential yield from small sites, with a 5% discount. This element of the study needs to be monitored carefully and appropriate adjustments taking account of actual completions made in future reviews. The HLAA will be updated to a base date of 1 April 2007.