



Urban Capacity Study

Rochford District New Local Plan

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1. Purpose of the Urban Capacity Study

- 1.1 The overarching purpose of this Urban Capacity Study (UCS) is to provide an assessment of the capacity of urban land in Rochford District to deliver additional housing in future years.
- 1.2 The UCS will sit within a wider suite of technical evidence that, together, will inform and shape the strategy of the Council's new Local Plan. Specifically, the UCS will provide a source of evidence to inform the direction and detail of the new Local Plan's housing strategy by providing an understanding of the capacity of land within the urban area to meet identified housing needs.
- 1.3 The UCS has been structured to provide an assessment of the potential capacity of different types of urban site, labelled in this document as 'sources'. This approach will allow decisions relating to the new Local Plan's housing strategy to be informed by a detailed and relative understanding of the capacity of different types of urban site to provide housing.
- 1.4 The specific outputs that the UCS will seek to provide are:
 - An accurate indication of the capacity of the urban land in the District to deliver housing in future years and to what degree of certainty this capacity exists
 - Identification of sites (and broad locations) within the urban area which are potentially available for housing which can then inform planned Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessments (HELAAAs)
 - Analysis of trends in windfall housing delivery including whether an uplift to any windfall allowance might be justified (i.e. on the basis that we expect urban housing delivery to exceed previous trends)
 - Identification of the key implications of identified urban capacity on the Council's emerging Local Plan, including consideration of how urban capacity can best be sustainably maximised through the Local Plan, including how current planning policies are likely to be enabling and/or restricting the delivery of urban sites

2. District Characteristics

- 2.1 Rochford is a mostly rural district located on a peninsula in the south-east of Essex. It is bordered by the River Crouch to the north, the North Sea to the east and the highly urbanised area of Southend-on-Sea to the south.
- 2.2 The settlement pattern across the District is highly diverse, with population concentrated in a small number of market towns and villages. Beyond these towns and villages, a significant area of the District (around 90%) is rural and undeveloped interspersed with small areas of ribbon development, farm estates and plotland areas.
- 2.3 The District falls within the eastern extent of the Metropolitan Green Belt (MGB). The MGB covers the vast majority of the undeveloped land in the District including almost all areas outside of recognised settlements. In accordance with national policy, the areas of the District covered by the MGB are protected from inappropriate development, which typically precludes new housing or economic development, save for a small number of exceptions. The only large area of undeveloped land not included within the MGB is Foulness Island, however this too is protected from new development by virtue of being an active Ministry of Defence site and being covered by various national and international environmental designations.
- 2.4 Given the District's mostly rural nature and the protection afforded to its rural areas through Green Belt policies, there has historically been significant pressure placed on urban land to deliver housing. Over many years, the Council has sought to make good use of urban land to meet its need for housing with some historic local plans requiring very little greenfield development at all. However, in recent years it has become evident that the remaining capacity of urban land is unlikely to be sufficient to meet future development needs. This has necessitated an approach in the current development plan¹ which releases several large strategic greenfield sites from the Green Belt. There are a number of reasons for this change in strategy, particularly:
- Land, and therefore urban capacity, is a finite resource and has been incrementally used up over time (as relatively few new urban areas have been created)
 - The availability and deliverability of urban sites can be difficult to predict, particularly as they are generally less viable than non-urban greenfield sites and given strategic sites often become available unexpectedly (e.g. a large scale factory closure)
 - The scale of housing need now being planned for is significantly greater than historic levels
- 2.5 Whilst national policy highlights the importance of maximising the capacity of urban land (as detailed in later sections), such an approach can be challenging for a semi-rural district like Rochford. In addition to the relatively modest amount of urban land within which to

¹ Core Strategy (2011) and Allocations Plan (2014)

identify sites², many of the District's town centres have historic street patterns and are covered by conservation areas, making high-density developments difficult to achieve in terms of plot size, provision of adequate parking, viability and design. Furthermore, intensification in settlement suburbs has historically been of local concern where it can be deemed 'town cramming' and/or 'garden grabbing'. These patterns of development have to be carefully managed to avoid developments with substandard layouts, infrastructure capacity and parking provision.

2.6 It is important therefore that the Council's plan-making is informed by an up-to-date and robust understanding of the capacity of urban land to provide housing, so as to enable informed decisions to be made about the Council's strategy moving forward. Reflecting the concerns highlighted above and the policy requirements set out in later sections, this strategy will need to effectively mediate between the need to maximise the capacity of urban land and the need to encourage sustainable, well-designed and safe patterns of development.

² Relative to more urban authority areas, such as those containing cities and large towns

3. Why is understanding the capacity of urban land important?

3.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) makes clear that it is the Government's objective to significantly boost the supply of homes nationally. Local planning authorities are expected to make sure a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed. To enable this to happen, local planning authorities are expected to have a clear understanding of the land available in their area and should, through their policies, identify a sufficient supply and mix of sites, taking into account their availability, suitability and likely economic viability (Paragraph 67).

3.2 Planning policies are expected to promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions. Strategies to meet housing needs are expected to make as much use as possible of previously developed land (Paragraph 117).

3.3 Local planning authorities are expected to take a proactive role in identifying and helping to bring forward land that may be suitable for meeting development needs, including suitable sites on brownfield registers or held in public ownership, using the full range of powers available to them (Paragraph 119).

3.4 Of particular relevance to urban capacity are the provisions of Paragraph 118 which, inter alia, expect planning policies to:

- Encourage multiple benefits from both urban and rural land;
- Give substantial weight to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes and other identified needs, and support appropriate opportunities to remediate despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated or unstable land;
- Promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings, especially if this would help to meet identified needs for housing where land supply is constrained and available sites could be used more effectively (for example converting space above shops, and building on or above service yards, car parks, lock-ups and railway infrastructure); and
- Support opportunities to use the airspace above existing residential and commercial premises for new homes

3.5 As much of the undeveloped land in the District is designated as part of the Metropolitan Green Belt, the NPPF expects a sequential approach to be taken to site identification. Specifically, Paragraph 137 states that before concluding that exceptional circumstances exist to justify changes to Green Belt boundaries, the local planning authority should be able to demonstrate that it has examined fully all other reasonable options for meeting its identified need for development. This will be assessed through the examination of its strategic policies, [...] and whether the strategy:

a) makes as much use as possible of suitable brownfield sites and underutilised land;

b) optimises the density of development in line with the policies in chapter 11 of the NPPF including whether policies promote a significant uplift in minimum density standards in town and city centres and other locations well served by public transport; and

c) has been informed by discussions with neighbouring authorities about whether they could accommodate some of the identified need for development, as demonstrated through the statement of common ground.

3.6 Read as a whole, it is clear that the NPPF expects local plans to prioritise urban and brownfield land and to maximise opportunities to meet housing needs within such sites, including maximising densities where appropriate and taking a pro-active approach to overcoming delivery constraints on these sites. It is implied that only when urban and brownfield capacity has been maximised should local plans consider allocating non-urban greenfield sites, particularly where these would fall within the Green Belt.

3.7 These requirements create an obligation on local planning authorities to prepare and maintain evidence on land availability, including evidence that considers, explores and tests the ability for urban and brownfield land to meet housing needs. This UCS, along with other evidence detailed in Section 4, has been prepared for this purpose.

4. How will the UCS support plan-making?

4.1 The Council is currently in the process of preparing a new Local Plan for the District. The Rochford new Local Plan (RNLP) will provide a strategy for the growth and prosperity of the District beyond the end of the current plan period in 2025.

4.2 In addition to the RNLP, the Council is also in the early stages of preparing a joint strategic plan across South Essex³ ('the South Essex Plan'). The South Essex Plan will provide a high-level growth framework that addresses key cross-boundary challenges and opportunities. The South Essex Plan is likely to contain a small number of housing and/or spatial policies that respond positively to a joint vision for South Essex. The South Essex Plan will not, however, contain detailed allocations or development management policies which will instead be delivered through local plans, including the RNLP.

4.3 Both the RNLP and the South Essex Plan will need to provide a sound and legally compliant strategy which responds positively to local opportunities and priorities, but which also accords with the requirements of the NPPF and planning legislation.

4.4 The tests of soundness for these plans require them to be:

a) Positively prepared – providing a strategy which, as a minimum, seeks to meet the area's objectively assessed needs; and is informed by agreements with other authorities, so that unmet need from neighbouring areas is accommodated where it is practical to do so and is consistent with achieving sustainable development;

b) Justified – an appropriate strategy, taking into account the reasonable alternatives, and based on proportionate evidence;

c) Effective – deliverable over the plan period, and based on effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic matters that have been dealt with rather than deferred, as evidenced by the statement of common ground; and

d) Consistent with national policy – enabling the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the policies in this Framework.

4.5 As has been set out in Section 3, the NPPF expects Plans to identify a sufficient supply and mix of sites that is informed by an up-to-date understanding of the availability, suitability and likely economic viability of sites in the area. The NPPF is clear that urban and brownfield land should be considered sequentially preferable to other land, particularly where that other land falls within the Metropolitan Green Belt. Only where it is clear that the capacity of urban and brownfield land is insufficient to meet needs is it conceivable that the exceptional circumstances required to release land from the Green Belt will be satisfied.

³ Together with Basildon, Brentwood, Castle Point, Southend and Thurrock Councils

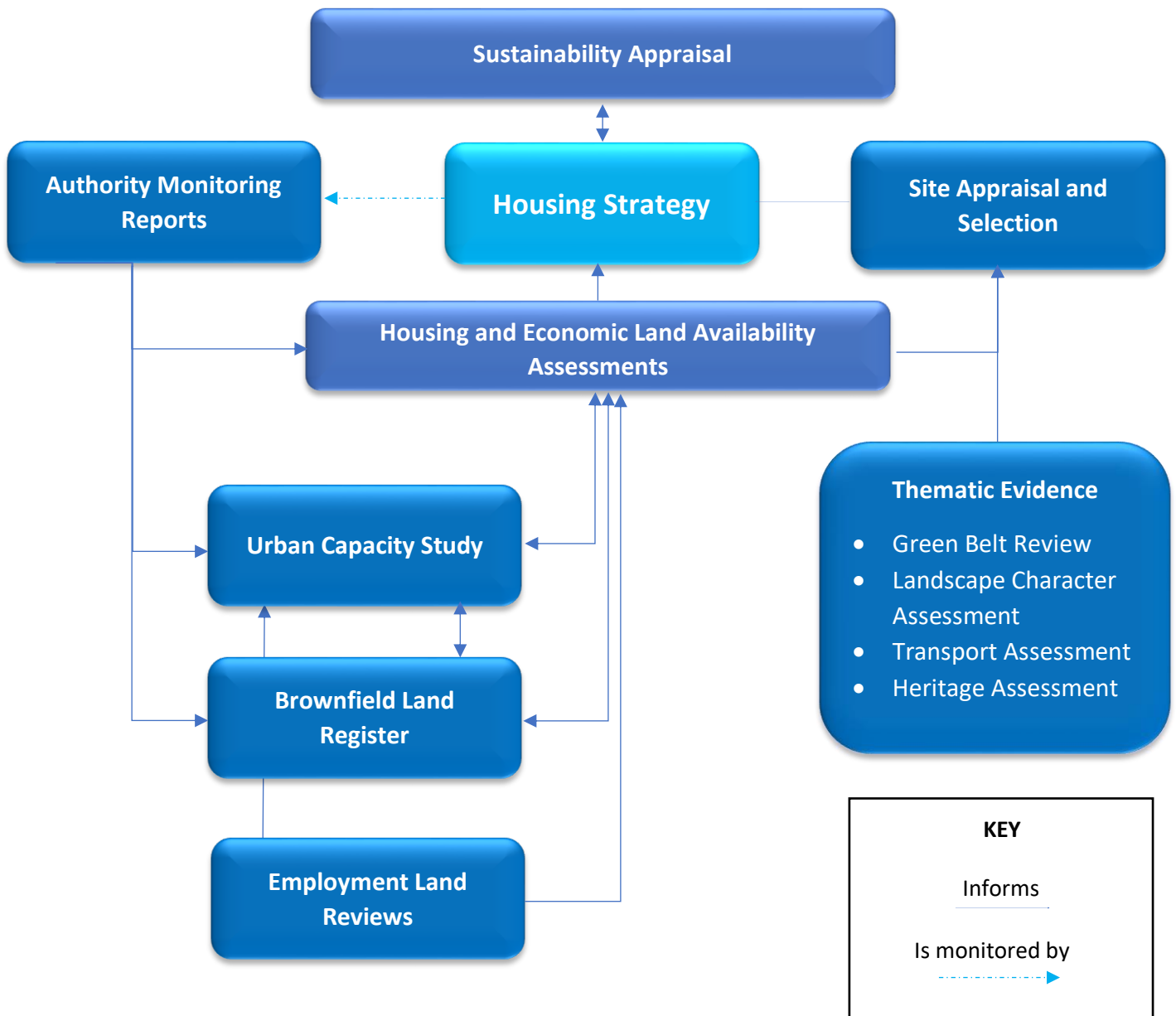
- 4.6 In light of the expectations detailed above and in Section 3, this UCS has been prepared to provide the Council with a robust and up-to-date source of evidence on the capacity of urban land to meet identified housing needs. This evidence will sit within a wider suite of evidence on land availability which, together, will be used to inform the development of a sound housing trajectory that reflects the specific requirements of the NPPF.
- 4.7 It is expected that this UCS will primarily provide a source of technical evidence to inform the development of the Rochford new Local Plan. The RNLP is likely to contain the detailed housing policies and allocations which themselves will need to be informed by an up-to-date understanding of the availability, suitability and likely economic viability of land in the District. This understanding will be provided by the UCS, along with a number of other key evidence base documents as detailed further in Section 4.
- 4.8 Whilst the UCS is likely to more directly inform the development of the RNLP, the UCS (and similar studies undertaken by the other South Essex authorities) will provide a valuable source of evidence for the South Essex Plan, including by providing a comprehensive understanding of the urban capacity of South Essex as a whole from which a comprehensive and sound strategy can be developed.

5. How does the UCS relate to other evidence on land availability?

5.1 The RNLP and South Essex Plan will be informed by a large suite of technical evidence documents relating to a number of key thematic issues. To support the preparation of these plans, a number of technical evidence documents have been prepared specifically relating to identifying the availability and suitability of land for development. A summary of these documents and their purpose is listed below:

5.2 Figure 1 below illustrates the relationship between different documents in the Council's evidence base. This is not intended to be exhaustive but to highlight the key interdependencies between documents in the Council's evidence base relating to land availability. Some of the documents cited have not yet been prepared.

Relationship map between key land availability evidence and the RNLP



5.3 The Council has previously prepared similar urban capacity studies in 2000 and 2007. The purpose of these studies was to calculate the unconstrained capacity of urban land in the District at a point in time, through an analysis of trends and projections relating to different sources of supply.

5.4 Since the publication of the last urban capacity study in 2007, the emphasis in national planning guidance has shifted towards preparing more comprehensive Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessments (HELAAAs). The core purpose of a HELAA is very similar to an urban capacity study, but seeks instead to identify a supply of suitable, available and viable sites from all sources (i.e. including non-urban deliverable sites).

5.5 The Council has published three HELAAAs (previously called SHLAAAs), the most recent of which was in 2017. A HELAA update is also being progressed alongside this UCS.

5.6 All of these HELAAAs have been prepared in accordance with the relevant sections of the Planning Practice Guidance. This guidance sets out a prescribed five-stage methodology that every HELAA is expected to follow and a number of key outputs that every HELAA is expected to produce. More information on this methodology and outputs can be found in the [Planning Practice Guidance](#).

5.7 In addition to urban capacity studies and HELAAAs, the Council has also prepared other pieces of evidence relating to land availability. A summary of this evidence is set out below.

[Brownfield Land Register \(March 2020 update\)](#)

The Council is legally required to publish a brownfield land register on at least an annual basis. These registers provide information on brownfield sites that local authorities consider to be appropriate for residential development. Brownfield registers are required to be published in a standard tabular format and are subject to regulations setting out eligibility criteria. The identification of sites to be included on the register is typically informed by a number of sources, including the HELAA and Authority Monitoring Report (AMR). The Council's last Brownfield Register update was published in March 2020.

[Authority Monitoring Report \(AMR\)](#)

The Council is legally required to publish a report monitoring the performance of its planning policies over a certain period. This AMR includes sections that record the delivery of housing delivery on a site-by-site basis, including monitoring new planning permissions, the build-out of sites under construction and recording the actual and projected number of housing completions on sites. The AMR therefore forms an important source of information for other evidence on land availability through both identifying available sites and projecting the ability for those sites to meet the District's housing needs into the future.

[Employment Land Studies](#)

Many local authorities prepare employment land studies to consider the case for re-development of existing employment sites for housing. These studies typically consider

both the projected need for employment sites in the future (e.g. to identify how economic and working trends are likely to change), and the quality of existing employment sites (e.g. to identify sites which are not effectively meeting business needs) . Through this analysis, it may be possible to identify areas of land that are currently in commercial or industrial use which could be redeveloped for housing, potentially reducing the need for that housing to be accommodated on greenfield land. The Council has published an Employment Land Study in 2014 and was part of the South Essex Economic Development Needs Assessment (EDNA) in 2017.

5.8 In addition to the studies listed above, there are a number of other studies which are either underway or are planned which will provide additional evidence on the availability of land for development. These include an update to the Council's HELAA which is currently underway. This HELAA update will both inform and be informed by this UCS, particularly in relation to site identification and testing of deliverability. Other evidence base studies being prepared at the sub-regional level include the South Essex Urban Capacity Study and South Essex Strategic Growth Locations Study (SGLS). These studies will be informed by the outcomes of this UCS, along with the other evidence listed above, helping to create a consistent evidence base on urban capacity across South Essex. These studies will help in the development of a sound spatial strategy for the South Essex Plan but are unlikely to identify further sources of urban capacity to that which has been identified in local studies. The SGLS will, however, explore the unconstrained capacity of all urban land across South Essex which can then be used to inform future plan-making.

5.9 It is recognised that there is a significant overlap in scope between many of these evidence documents, particularly between a traditional UCS and a HELAA. In particular, the site-level analysis that previously fell within many urban capacity studies now forms a core component of HELAAs. It is therefore not the purpose of this UCS to duplicate elements of the HELAA but to provide a more focused source of evidence that specifically explores the capacity of urban land in the District to meet identified housing needs. The co-production of the UCS and HELAA update provides a useful opportunity for both these studies to inform one another including in relation to identifying and testing the deliverability of urban sites. It is strongly recommended that these two studies are read together for a comprehensive picture of the capacity of land for housing across the District.

6. Methodology

- 6.1 Unlike for some other technical studies, there is no specific methodology set out in national guidance for the undertaking of urban capacity studies. The guidance prepared by URBED for the Department for Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR) (*Tapping the Potential*) is still considered to be the pre-eminent guide to assessing urban capacity within the context of the British planning system. This guide has informed the approach taken in this UCS, however it is recognised that given it was prepared under a different policy regime that it is of limited value to a UCS being prepared now.
- 6.2 It is recognised that national guidance does prescribe a standard methodology that it expects to be used by local planning authorities when undertaking HELAAs for their area. This section of the PPG also provides guidance on how to consider whether a site is suitable, available and/or whether development on that site is achievable. Whilst it is not proposed that the UCS follows this methodology strictly, it is recognised that there are advantages to creating areas of commonality between the methodology for the Council's HELAAs and the methodology for this UCS.
- 6.3 This is particularly important to note given that the Council is simultaneously progressing a HELAA update. As the UCS and HELAA are intended to form complementary pieces of evidence, certain stages in the preparation of this UCS will be aligned with similar stages of the HELAA with the findings of both studies being used to inform each other. Examples of this alignment are in the identification of candidate sites and in the assessing the deliverability of those sites.
- 6.4 In preparing this UCS, the Council has applied a bespoke methodology but one which reflects elements of the URBED guidance and current PPG guidance on HELAAs. Broadly speaking, the methodology followed consists of:
- Stage 1: Defining the Study Area and Thresholds
 - Stage 2: Identifying Potential Urban Sources of Supply
 - Stage 3: Surveying the Capacity
 - Stage 4: Concluding on the Capacity
 - Stage 5: Implications for the new Local Plan

7. Assessing the Urban Capacity

Defining the Study Area and Site Thresholds

- 7.1 As set out above, the overarching purpose of this UCS is to assess the capacity of urban land across Rochford District. It will seek to identify the capacity of sites across all of the District's urban settlements to deliver housing.
- 7.2 To enable an accurate and consistent assessment of the capacity of urban land to be captured, it is important to firstly define what is meant by urban in the context of this UCS. For the purposes of the Study, urban land has been defined as:

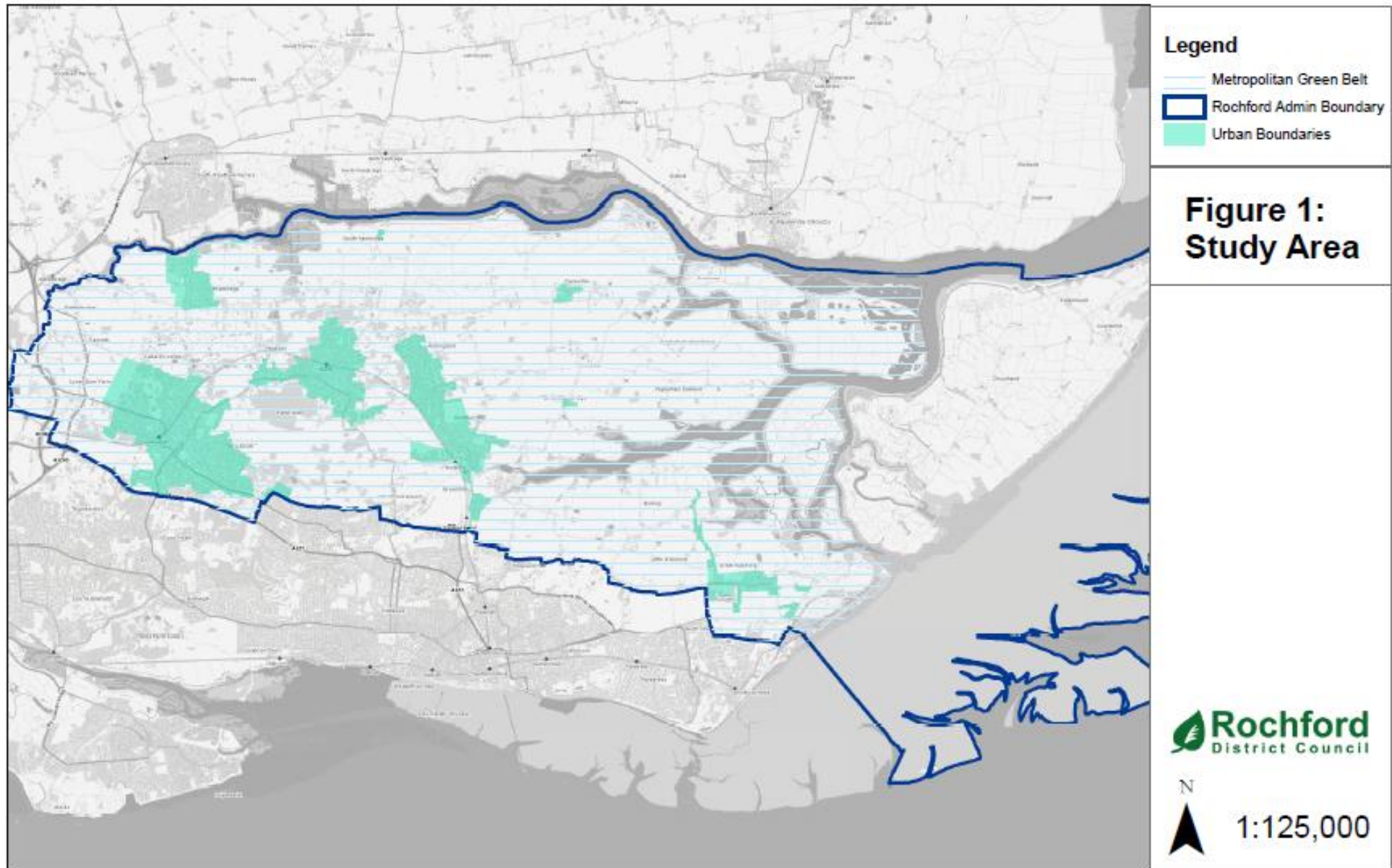
"Land which falls within the boundaries of existing urban settlements"

- 7.3 Whilst the boundaries of urban settlements are not explicitly defined in existing planning policies, the boundaries to the Metropolitan Green Belt is considered to provide a practical basis for the identification of settlement boundaries that mirrors the sequential approach taken in the NPPF.
- 7.4 It is recognised that this definition may exclude pieces of land that are generally urban in character but which fall within the extent the Metropolitan Green Belt. This could be the case for land within smaller villages and hamlets that are washed over by the Green Belt or areas of land on the periphery of larger settlements which are semi-urban but fall within the Green Belt. The exclusion of this land from the definition is considered appropriate, however, on the basis that such pieces of land are unlikely to be suitable for development without a change in policy⁴, e.g. their release from the Green Belt. The ability for these sites to contribute to the District's housing strategy will nevertheless be considered separately in the new Local Plan evidence base.
- 7.5 For the purposes of the UCS, the following settlements are considered to be urban:
- Rayleigh
 - Hockley and Hawkwell
 - Rochford and Ashingdon
 - Great Wakering, Little Wakering and Barling
 - Hullbridge
 - Canewdon
 - Great Stambridge
- 7.6 The remaining areas of the District do not fall within the scope of the UCS. This includes rural villages that are washed over by Green Belt where it is considered unlikely that land

⁴ It is recognised that some of these sites may fit the definition of previously developed and may therefore be suitable for development without a change in policy. These sites will be identified separately through the evidence base, including through the Brownfield Register.

will be suitable for development without a change in policy, e.g. their removal from the Green Belt. This also includes the small settlements on Foulness Island which, despite not being in the Green Belt, are located on MOD land where additional housing development is considered inappropriate and unsustainable.








- 7.7 Figure 1 illustrates the settlements that have been considered in the UCS. The areas washed in green are the urban areas that have been considered in this assessment. The remaining areas are not within the scope of this study.
- 7.8 Identification of urban sites has been limited to sites that are more than 0.25 hectares in size, or which evidence suggests could accommodate 5 or more dwellings. This approach aligns with the recommendations of the PPG. Whilst it is acknowledged that sites smaller than 0.25 hectares or which would yield fewer than 5 dwellings have historically been important to housing delivery in Rochford, the contribution that these sites could make to housing delivery can be considered through further evidence and, if appropriate, could comprise part of any windfall allowance applied within the Council's housing land trajectory.







Identifying potential urban sources of supply

- 7.9 The Council has sought to identify the contribution that could be made to housing supply from a large number of urban sources. These sources, and potential sources of information, were informed by both the URBED 1999 guidance and the current PPG guidance on HELAAs.
- 7.10 For the purposes of this UCS, potential sources of supply have been categorised on the basis of being either a specific source or a component of windfall. This method of categorisation allows us to assess the capacity of 'known' sites which could be available for housing development and to make general assumptions about the amount of development we might expect on 'unknown' sites over a period of time.
- 7.11 Windfall development is defined by the NPPF as being development taking place on sites not identified in the development plan, i.e. those 'that have become available unexpectedly.' Given that the length of a plan period usually exceeds the time it takes to implement a planning permission, it is expected that a significant amount of housing will be delivered during the plan period on sites that were not known about when the plan was prepared.
- 7.12 Whilst it is recognised that the definition of windfall used in national policy has shifted over time (previously excluding garden land, for example), for the purposes of this UCS, windfall sites are considered to be any sites not identified at the time of a plan being prepared. This means sites that were not allocated in the plan, nor were otherwise included in the housing trajectory of the plan (including as a planning permission or a deliverable or developable site identified through the evidence base). By definition, if a site is identified as a specific source in this UCS, it could not also be a component of windfall.
- 7.13 This approach is considered effective as it allows individual sites to be identified that can make a meaningful contribution to housing delivery in future years, and which can be further assessed and supported through the plan-making process, as well as allowing the Council to consider the amount of windfall development likely to come forward over the plan period and whether an allowance for this development in its trajectory is justified. Whilst relevant, it is not for this UCS to consider whether a windfall allowance should be included in the Council's trajectory, as such analysis is reserved for the HELAA.

7.14 The sources of supply considered in this UCS are set out below:

Icon	Category	Definition
Specific Sources		
	Review of Expired, Withdrawn and Refused Planning Applications for Housing Development	This category identifies urban sites that have a recently withdrawn or refused planning application for housing development or an expired permission for housing development
	Review of Extant Planning Permissions	This category identifies urban sites that benefit from a planning permission for housing development that remains implementable
	Review of Existing Housing Allocations in Plans	This category identifies areas of land in the urban area or contiguous with the urban area that are allocated for housing development in the local development plan
	Review of Other Existing Allocations in Plans	This category identifies areas of land in the urban area or contiguous with the urban area that are allocated for non-housing development in the local development plan
	Redevelopment of Council and other publicly owned land	This category identifies areas of land in the urban area that are in Council or other public ownership that could be made available for housing development
	Review of Other Known Urban Sites	This category identifies any other sites in the urban area that could reasonably be available or suitable for housing development
Components of Windfall		
	Sub-division of Existing Housing	This category identifies the potential contribution that subdividing existing housing could make in the future

	<p>Flats Over Shops</p>	<p>This category identifies the potential contribution that flats above shops could make to housing delivery in the future</p>
	<p>Empty Homes</p>	<p>This category identifies the potential contribution that occupying empty homes could make to housing delivery in the future</p>
	<p>Densification of Existing Areas</p>	<p>This category identifies the potential contribution that increasing the density of existing housing areas could make to housing delivery in the future</p>
	<p>Conversions from Commercial or Other Uses</p>	<p>This category identifies the potential contribution that the re-development or conversion of commercial or other premises could make to housing delivery in the future</p>

7.15 Sources of information used to identify sites falling within these categories include:

- Rochford District Council Allocations Plan 2014
- Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) 2017
- Authority Monitoring Reports (AMR) from 2010-2019
- Submissions to Call for Sites exercises from 2015-2019
- Brownfield Land Register (February 2020 Update)
- Employment Land Study 2014
- South Essex Economic Development Needs Assessment 2017
- Aerial mapping and site surveying
- Other Council monitoring data
- ONS and other Government data,

Surveying the Capacity

Specific Sources of Housing Supply

- 7.16 This section focusses on assessing the capacity of specific sources of urban housing supply. In short, analysis of these sources is able to lead to the identification of specific 'candidate sites' which could provide urban capacity. These are distinguished from the components of windfall assessed later in this Study within which assessment can lead to identification of broad assumptions about future capacity but not the identification of individual sites.
- 7.17 The identification of potential sources of housing supply falling within this section has had regard to the relevant sections of the Planning Practice Guidance.

REVIEW OF EXPIRED, WITHDRAWN AND REFUSED PLANNING APPLICATIONS

- 7.18 The presence of an expired, withdrawn or refused planning application (or permission) can be a useful indicator of the availability of land to be developed. An expired planning permission, in particular, provides evidence that the suitability of land for development has already been established through the planning process.
- 7.19 It is recognised, however, that the presence of an expired, withdrawn or refused planning application cannot be considered absolute proof that a site is available, suitable or viable. The fact that an application has been withdrawn, or a permission may have expired, may even be indicative of external factors preventing the delivery of the site. Furthermore, a refused planning application may be indicative of fundamental issues relating to the suitability of the site for development. These factors require some scrutiny to determine whether these sites are or remain available, suitable and viable for development; or conversely whether these factors justify the discounting of any likelihood of the site being delivered. As a result, where sites from these sources have been identified, their suitability and deliverability has been assessed through the HELAA.
- 7.20 Expired planning permissions are those which can no longer be lawfully implemented. This typically occurs where 3 years passes from the permission date without the development being started. The exact period of time between permission and expiry is based on the wording of a condition and may differ from 3 years in some cases, particularly older permissions.
- 7.21 Withdrawn planning applications are those which were withdrawn by the applicant prior to the application being determined. The applicant may do this at any time and does not have to provide reasons, therefore the local planning authority will often not be aware of the circumstances around its withdrawal.
- 7.22 Refused planning applications are those which were refused planning permission by the Council. The reasons for refusal will differ from application to application and may relate to the principle of development, such as its location, or the specifics of the proposal, such as poor design or inadequate parking.
- 7.23 The identification of expired, withdrawn and refused planning applications has been informed by the Council's planning application monitoring system and its Authority Monitoring Reports (AMR).
- 7.24 Tables A1, A2 and A3 in Appendix A lists all planning applications for housing-led developments (over 5 dwellings) that have been withdrawn, expired and refused respectively within the last ten years. These tables also indicate whether these applications or permissions have been superseded by an extant or implemented permission. Where this is the case, the site will not be taken forward in this UCS on the

basis that the contribution of the site has either already been realised or is already reflected in the housing trajectory as an extant permission.

- 7.72 It is recognised that if one was to include expired, withdrawn and refused permissions from schemes smaller than five dwellings, the potential capacity would be significantly greater. Nonetheless, the use of this threshold is considered appropriate to ensure consistency and proportionality; the contribution made by these smaller sites can be picked up through new permissions or provided for in any windfall allowance.
- 7.73 Table 1 lists the seven candidate sites identified from this source.
- 7.74 If all of these were to be delivered at an appropriate density, these sites could deliver at least 67 dwellings. It is recognised however that whilst some of these sites are the subject of recently refused or currently pending planning applications, a couple of these sites have not been the subject of a planning application for several years. Based on the findings of the HELAA, six of these sites are considered to be deliverable with a possible capacity of 61 dwellings. The remaining site is considered to be developable with a possible capacity of 6 dwellings.

Table 1 – List of Candidate Sites from Withdrawn/Expired/Refused Category

Site	Capacity (Density Assumed)	Suitable? ⁵	Deliverable? ⁵
61 High Street Great Wakering	5 (80 dph)	Yes	Yes
66 North Street Rochford	7 (80dph)	Yes	Yes
Land Opposite 100 Windermere Avenue Hullbridge	13 (30dph)	Yes	Yes
299 Ferry Road Hullbridge	6 (50dph)	Yes	No - developable
156 High Street Rayleigh	6 (80dph)	Yes	Yes
Site Of 31 And 33 White Hart Lane, Hawkwell	9 (30dph)	Yes	Yes
Former Dairy Crest, Site of 98 to 128 High Street, Rayleigh	20 (80dph)	Yes	Yes

⁵ Based on 2017 and 2020 HELAAs

Table 2 – Summary of Capacity Scenarios from Expired, Withdrawn and Refused Planning Applications

Scenario		Capacity
Deliverable Supply	Years 1 – 5	61
Developable Supply	Years 6 – 10	6
Theoretical Supply	Not currently deliverable or developable	0

REVIEW OF EXTANT PLANNING PERMISSIONS

- 7.74 The single largest source of urban capacity considered in this study is extant planning permissions. These are sites where planning permission has been granted for a development involving a housing element which are either being implemented or are still capable of being implemented, i.e. they have not expired.
- 7.75 Identification of candidate sites in this category has been informed by the Council's monitoring of housing permissions, including its Authority Monitoring Reports (AMR).
- 7.76 It is not considered proportionate or appropriate to review the capacity and/or deliverability of every site with an extant planning permission. In line with the NPPF definition of 'deliverable⁶', it is considered justified to assume that smaller sites (<10 dwellings) with full or outline planning permission are likely to be delivered in most cases. Furthermore, large sites with detailed planning permissions, or which benefit from reserved matters consent (in the case of those following the outline planning permission approach) are also considered likely to be delivered in most cases.
- 7.77 Instead the purpose of reviewing extant planning permissions is to identify housing sites which are either at risk of not being delivered or where a level of doubt exists about the timescales for their delivery (e.g. whether they should be considered deliverable or developable). It is noted that whilst a development must generally be started within a certain period to avoid expiring (typically 3 years), once a development has started there is no obligation to complete the development in a certain time period. These circumstances can lead to sites being 'mothballed' where a permission remains extant and the site continues to hold urban capacity but where the delivery of homes is not taking place.
- 7.78 There are a number of sites fitting this definition which are either allocated in the development plan or on publicly owned land. As these sites will be considered separately in later chapters of this report, it is not considered appropriate to review the capacity or deliverability of these sites within this section. As a consequence, the sites identified in this section will generally be limited to windfall sites on private land.

⁶ 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 five 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 five years (for example because they are no longer viable, there is no longer a demand for the type of units or sites have long term phasing plans). 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.

7.79 Table 3 reviews the potential capacity of extant permissions meeting the above definitions as at 1 April 2019⁷ (the last complete monitoring period).

Table 3 – Review of Extant Urban Permissions (1 April 2019 base)

Planning Reference	Site	Capacity Remaining	Deliverable? ⁸
ROC/048/79	Land Opposite Rayleigh Cemetery Hockley Road Rayleigh	44	Yes, based on correspondence with developer. Around 12 dwellings are substantially complete and expected to be completed in the 2020/21 fiscal period, with nine to follow either in the 2020/21 period or 2021/22 period.
15/00526/FUL	Scout Hall Adjacent 11 Love Lane Rayleigh	5	Yes, based on NPPF definition
16/00037/FUL	1 Woodlands Road Hockley	7	Yes, based on NPPF definition
16/01065/FUL	Land South Of Windfield Church Road Hockley	5	Yes, based on NPPF definition
16/00939/FUL	Garage Block The Evergreens Kimberley Road	6	Yes, based on NPPF definition
18/00120/FUL	69 High Street Great Wakering SS3 0ED	8	Yes, based on NPPF definition
18/01144/OUT	41 Crown Hill Rayleigh SS6 7HQ	5	Yes, based on NPPF definition
18/00835/FUL	1 Malyons Lane Hullbridge Essex	6	Yes, based on NPPF definition
Other urban permissions (excl. allocations and public land)		68	Yes, based on NPPF definition

7.80 As can be seen from Table 3, the Land Opposite Rayleigh Cemetery (LoRC) site is a source of significant urban capacity. However, scrutiny of the Council's monitoring records shows that the build out rate of the development falls far below that which is typically expected on sites of a similar size. The planning permission itself is close to 40

⁷ This base date has been chosen to align with other evidence on land availability. However, in the interests of completeness efforts have been made to capture any sites that were subject to pending planning applications at that time, in the 'Review of Other Known Urban Sites' section

years old and completions in any given year have rarely exceeded 3 dwellings. Whilst a significant number of dwellings have been commenced, the length of time that has elapsed since commencement (over 3 years in some cases) suggests that they are not being actively built out to a typical timescale.

- 7.81 To support the UCS, the Council sought to engage with the developer of LoRC who advised that around 12 dwellings were substantially complete and expected to be completed in the 2020/21 fiscal period, with nine to follow either in the 2020/21 period or 2021/22 period. The timescales for delivering the 23 dwellings that have not commenced are not yet known.
- 7.82 The area of the site is around 2.4 hectares in size. Due to its location on a major arterial route, and public transport corridor, a density assumption of 50 dwellings per hectare has been applied to establish a theoretical capacity for 120 dwellings. Discounting this by 25% to allow for supporting uses leaves a realistic capacity for 90 dwellings, 27 dwellings greater than the 63 that have been permissioned.
- 7.83 However, harnessing this additional capacity is unlikely to be feasible without significant intervention. The site is in private ownership and benefits from a historic planning permission. This historic planning permission does not carry obligations on the developer in terms of contributing to local infrastructure, nor does it secure a proportion of the homes as affordable. These obligations would be imposed on any new permission, however, which means that re-submission for a slightly higher number of dwellings is unlikely to be a financially favourable proposition to the developer. As a result, it is considered appropriate to assume the harnessable capacity of the site will remain that which is permissioned.
- 7.84 In addition to LoRC, Table 3 identifies a further urban capacity for around 110 homes. This figure excludes permissions related to allocated or Council-owned sites (which are instead covered in a later chapter) and permissions on non-urban land. Whilst non-urban permissions are not within the scope of this Study, they are not a negligible source of supply and it is recognised that some developments outside of the urban area can be urban in character. One example of this is the redevelopment of Bullwood Hall Prison which is a 72 home development on previously developed land in the Green Belt. Given the rarity of these exceptions, it is not considered proportionate to address them in this Study, but nevertheless the contribution made by non-urban sites can be picked up in any housing trajectory noting permissions, the windfall allowance and other evidence such as the Brownfield Land Register.
- 7.85 Whilst a degree of caution should be applied in automatically assuming the deliverability of all planning permissions, the approach taken in this UCS, and HELAAs referred to, conforms with the NPPF and PPG with respect to the interpretation of deliverability. Any degree of caution is compounded by current economic uncertainty surrounding the impact of COVID-19 on local housing markets and the housebuilding

industry as a whole. Any sustained economic downturn is likely to impact on the delivery of homes and may lead to a greater number of unimplemented permissions. It is recognised, however, that housebuilding has typically been seen as a great economic driver and therefore any such short-term downturn is likely to result in medium-term incentives to boost delivery.

Table 4 – Summary of Capacity Scenarios from Extant Permissions⁹

Scenario		Capacity
Deliverable Supply	Years 1 – 5	154
Developable Supply	Years 6 – 10	0
Theoretical Supply	Not currently deliverable or developable	27

⁹ Excluding those on allocated sites and publicly-owned sites

REVIEW OF EXISTING HOUSING ALLOCATIONS IN PLANS

- 7.86 The Council's current development plan was prepared under the previous local development framework (LDF) structure. As a result, it comprises of a suite of documents which together form the Rochford District Local Development Framework.
- 7.87 The Core Strategy (2011) sets out the overall strategy with respect to how housing needs would be met over a period to 2025. It is supported by the Allocations Plan (2014) which allocated specific areas of land to meet those development needs.
- 7.88 In total, 14 areas of land were allocated for housing-led development. These were:
- Policy SER1 – North of London Road, Rayleigh
 - Policy SER2 – West Rochford
 - Policy SER3 – West Hockley
 - Policy SER4 – South Hawkwell
 - Policy SER5 – East Ashingdon
 - Policy SER6 – South West Hullbridge
 - Policy SER7 – South Canewdon
 - Policy SER8 – South East Ashingdon
 - Policy SER9a and 9b – West Great Wakering
 - Policy BFR1 – Star Lane Industrial Estate, Great Wakering
 - Policy BFR2 – Eldon Way/Foundry Industrial Estate, Hockley
 - Policy BFR3 – Stambridge Mills, Rochford
 - Policy BFR4 – Rawreth Industrial Estate, Rochford
- 7.89 Table A4 in Appendix A reports on the current status of each of these allocations as at April 2020.
- 7.90 Identification of allocated sites to review within this category has focused on sites where either there are perceived threats to capturing their capacity (e.g. delivery issues) or where it is conceivable that the site could be delivered at a greater capacity than that envisaged in the development plan.
- 7.91 It is not considered appropriate or proportionate to review the status of every allocated site, particularly those that are either already complete or which are in the process of implementing a full permission, given that the opportunity to develop these sites at a greater density has passed (and any opportunity may now constitute the densification of an existing area, which is considered separately in this study). Instead, this section will review allocated sites that either benefit from no planning permission or which benefit from an outline planning permission only. These are:
- Land north of London Road, Rayleigh (Policy SER1)¹⁰
 - South East Ashingdon (Policy SER8)

¹⁰ Approximately a third of this site has received reserved matters consent and is under construction

- Star Lane Industrial Estate, Great Wakering (Policy BFR1)¹¹
- Eldon Way/Foundry Industrial Estate, Hockley (Policy BFR2)
- Stambridge Mills, Rochford (Policy BFR3)
- Rawreth Industrial Estate, Rayleigh (Policy BFR4)

- 7.92 Table 6 sets out a review of these sites with respect to their planning status, deliverability and possible capacity uplift scenarios. This review has identified a small number of allocations where uplifted capacities are likely to be acceptable and achievable in the short-term.
- 7.93 Firstly, the capacity of Policy SER1 (Land north of London Road, Rayleigh) stated in the Allocations Plan (2014) is a minimum of 550 dwellings. Application of a standard 30 dwellings per hectare, and 75% gross to net ratio, suggests this site (46.5 hectares in total) is likely to be sufficient in size to deliver over 1,000 dwellings. It is recognised, however, that some of this land is already the subject to full or reserved matters consents at a lower density. Nonetheless, it is still considered justified to assume that the site could deliver around 800 dwellings over the next ten years subject to revised or new planning permissions.
- 7.94 Secondly, the capacity of Policy SER8 (South East Ashingdon) stated in the Allocations Plan (2014) is a minimum of 500 dwellings. Application of a standard 30 dwellings per hectare, and an 80% gross to net ratio (nb: this differs from above due to less land intensive infrastructure requirements) suggests this site (23.5 hectares) is likely to be sufficient in size to deliver around 600 dwellings.
- 7.95 Together, these two sites offer a potential capacity gain of 350 dwellings relative to the minimum capacities identified in the Allocations Plan. An element of caution has been applied to automatically assuming that this capacity can be unlocked, however, given that the sites are in private ownership and are the subject of existing options and permissions. As a result, the Council cannot oblige the respective landowners and/or developers to build out at an uplifted capacity. Furthermore, this theoretical uplift has been based on broad assumptions and not on any detailed analysis of how this may affect the overall function or sustainability of a site. In particular, there is an evident relationship between density, design and layout; and between the amount of infrastructure delivered on a site and the amount of land remaining on which to build houses, which means that there is a threshold for any site beyond which any additional uplift in the capacity of the site generates greater costs than benefits. The identification of uplift scenarios in this UCS has therefore sought to be realistic but offers no definitive view on the acceptability of the uplift in terms of the development 'as a whole.'
- 7.96 Whilst this section has focused on reviewing allocations without planning permission, or which only have outline permission, it is recognised that it is possible for other part-

¹¹ Part of this site has already been delivered for housing (Star Lane Brickworks)

implemented allocations to be revised to allow for a higher density. In some cases, this has already been achieved (e.g. Policies SER2, SER3, SER9a and SER9b all received permission for a greater number of units to which they were allocated). In other cases, such as Policy SER6, it is likely that an uplifted capacity would be acceptable should a revised application be received. Given these capacities are already somewhat 'set' through part-implemented permissions, it is not considered appropriate to calculate an uplifted capacity in this UCS. Should any revised applications be subsequently received and approved, these will contribute to uplifted supply figures in any trajectory.

- 7.97 In addition to the sites detailed above, the review also considered the ability to uplift capacities of other unimplemented allocations, specifically the Brownfield Residential Land allocations. This review considered that it was not appropriate to uplift the capacity beyond that which is identified in the Allocations Plan on the basis that the capacities identified are already based on a relatively high density scenarios (50+ dwellings per hectare). The only exception to this is the Star Lane Industrial Estate (Policy BFR1) site, where part of the site was previously developed for 116 dwellings, leaving around 2.4 hectares in active employment use. Should the remainder of this allocation come forward for development a possible capacity of 110 dwellings has been identified, resulting in a significant uplift relative to the capacity identified in the Allocations Plan (226 compared to 131 dwellings).
- 7.98 Despite concluding it was not appropriate to calculate uplifted capacities for these allocations, the review did identify deliverability issues relating to each of the four Brownfield Residential Land allocations. In the cases of Policies BFR1, BFR2 and BFR4, there are known issues relating to the availability of the land for re-development. This is primarily due to their continued use for employment purposes and high number of landowners and tenants on each site. At this time, there is little evidence that these landowners, or the market in general, is looking to bring forward a housing development on any of these sites. Furthermore, whilst Policy BFR3 is known to be available for development, its delivery is being affected by poor viability which was identified through the 2017 SHELAA. Each of the other three sites is also known to have marginal or poor viability, as identified in the 2017 SHELAA.
- 7.99 These delivery issues have implications for the extent to which we can consider these allocations to offer capacity for supply. At this time, it is not considered likely that any of these sites will be delivered in the next five years without significant intervention. It will be for the plan-making process to review the ability for these sites to contribute to housing delivery in the long-term and take appropriate action. For the purposes of this UCS, the capacity of these sites will be recognised in the developable supply category.
- 7.100 The Council is considering actions that can be taken to unlock these difficult sites through both its Housing Delivery Test Action Plan (HDT) and its emerging partnership with Homes England through ASELA. Whilst these actions may be able to unlock the

capacity of these four sites sooner than may otherwise have been possible, it would be premature to consider how or when this may be possible.

- 7.101 Based on the analysis in this section, Table 5 identifies the following capacity scenarios. These can subsequently inform the trajectory and the Council's wider housing strategy.

Table 5 – Summary of Capacity Scenarios from Unimplemented Allocations

Scenario		Capacity
Deliverable Supply	Years 1 – 5	2,423
Developable Supply	Years 6 – 10	436
Theoretical Supply	Potential uplifts not benefitting from permission	350

Table 6 – Review of Unimplemented Allocations

Site	Planning Status	Deliverable?	Allocated Capacity	Permissioned Capacity	Uplifted Capacity	Recommended Capacity
SER1 Land north of London Road, Rayleigh	Site is being brought forward in three main sections: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outline permission granted for 500 homes (15/00362/OUT) of which 192 have reserved matters consent (17/00578/REM) Full application pending decision for 83 homes (16/00899/FUL) Full permission granted for 47 homes (15/00736/FUL) 	Yes, no information to suggest that the site has any significant delivery issues	550	630	1,000	800*
SER8 South East Ashingdon	No planning permission in place, however planning application currently pending consideration for 665 homes (20/00363/OUT).	Yes, no information to suggest that the site has any significant delivery issues	500	N/A	600	600
BFR1 Star Lane Industrial Estate	Part of the site delivered under permission for 116 dwellings (12/00252/FUL). Remainder of site in active employment use.	Developable, part of the site has already been delivered under a previous permission. 2017 SHELAA concluded that the delivery of the remaining site was constrained by availability and poor viability. Delivery of the site in next five years is currently considered unlikely without intervention.	131	116	226	110**
BFR2 Eldon Way/Foundry Industrial Estate, Hockley	No planning permission in place. A planning application was received for a mixed development including 20 flats (15/00144/OUT), however this application was withdrawn.	Developable, 2017 SHELAA found the delivery of the site was constrained by availability and marginal viability. Delivery of the site in next five years is currently considered unlikely without intervention.	100	N/A	N/A	100
BFR3 Stambridge Mills, Rochford	No planning permission received to date. Previous application for 96 homes withdrawn (11/00494/FUL).	Developable, 2017 SHELAA found the delivery of the site was constrained by poor viability. Delivery of the site in next five years is considered unlikely without intervention.	98	N/A	N/A	98
BFR4 Rawreth Industrial Estate, Rayleigh	No planning permission in place.	Developable, 2017 SHELAA found the delivery of the site was constrained by availability and marginal viability. Delivery of site in next five years is currently considered unlikely without intervention.	222	N/A	N/A	222

*At 30 dwellings per hectare and 75% gross-to-net ratio, the entire allocation could accommodate over 1,000 homes. However, a reduction to 800 is considered appropriate to account for the parts of the site already subject to full or reserved matters permissions. **At 50 dwellings per hectare, the entire site could have accommodated 216 dwellings, however 116 have already been completed leaving capacity for around 110 dwellings.

REVIEW OF OTHER EXISTING ALLOCATIONS IN PLANS

- 7.102 As set out in the previous section, the Council's Core Strategy and Allocations Plan provide a strategy for the growth and prosperity of the District over a plan period to 2025. Together, they identify and allocate areas of land for different uses in order to deliver this strategy.
- 7.103 The previous section focused on assessing the capacity and deliverability of areas of land specifically allocated for housing-led developments by these documents. This section instead considers the capacity of areas of land allocated for other uses to be re-developed or re-allocated for housing development from an alternative use.
- 7.104 In practice, this section will only review areas of land allocated for employment uses (both existing and proposed). Whilst the Allocations Plan also allocates areas of land for other uses, namely schools and open spaces, it is not considered appropriate to assess these in this section.
- 7.105 Of relevance to this section is Paragraph 20 of the NPPF, which states that planning policies and decisions (should) reflect changes in the demand for land. It continues to say that these should be informed by regular reviews of both the land allocated for development in plans, and of land availability. Where the local planning authority considers there to be no reasonable prospect of an application coming forward for the use allocated in a plan they should, as part of plan updates, reallocate the land for a more deliverable use that can help to address identified needs (or, if appropriate, deallocate a site which is undeveloped).
- 7.106 It is recognised that if the Council were to release of any significant amount of employment land for housing, any decision will need to weigh up the relative needs of retaining that employment land and re-developing it for housing. It is unlikely to be appropriate to re-develop valuable employment land for housing where doing so would have a demonstrably negative impact on the local economy.
- 7.107 As a result, any strategy seeking to re-develop employment land would likely need to target land which is least performing, both in qualitative and quantitative terms, or land allocated for new employment sites which, as a result of macro- and micro-economic circumstances, is now unlikely to come forward for employment development. This is considered particularly important given the ongoing impacts of the COVID-19 crisis and the potential for long-term structural changes to the local economy which are likely to have profound impacts on the long-term need for employment space in both a qualitative and quantitative sense.
- 7.108 In light of this uncertainty, the findings of this section are not presented as a conclusive position on whether any land allocated for employment uses, either existing or proposed should be re-allocated or re-developed for housing. It is instead suggested that any detailed 'case for re-development' would best be considered in a dedicated employment land review (or similar) which is able to weigh up the continuing 'need' for that employment land, the macro- and micro-economic impacts of its re-development,

and the likelihood of it coming forward for housing development if re-allocated. Given the current COVID-19 crisis, this review would best take place once more certainty on the long-term economic outlook is available and may need to coincide with updates to evidence on the need for employment land.

- 7.109 Two main sources of evidence have informed the review of employment allocations; these are:
- Rochford District Employment Land Study (ELS) Update 2014
 - South Essex Economic Development Needs Assessment (EDNA) 2017
- 7.110 The 2014 ELS reviewed the supply of employment land and premises in the District and made projections around the level of demand for employment land and premises into the future. In reviewing the supply of employment land, it recommended that all areas of land allocated for employment land at that time (both existing and proposed) should be retained for employment uses.
- 7.111 The 2017 EDNA undertook a similar review, but this time formed a sub-regional assessment providing outputs and recommendations for each of the individual local authorities across South Essex. In reviewing the supply of employment land for Rochford, it recommended that all but one allocation should be subject to a “protect and maintain” approach. The only exception was *Rochford Business Park*, an area of land primarily used for car sales, which was given a “monitor and manage” recommendation.
- 7.112 In light of the above, it is not considered appropriate to review every employment land allocation in the District within this UCS. The vast majority of these areas are highly occupied and productive employment areas which are assets to the local economy. Instead, the review will focus on employment land allocations with more realistic likelihood of being available for residential development. This includes the ‘new’ employment land allocations (Policies NEL1-3) which are yet to be delivered; and Rochford Business Park, which is recommended for a ‘monitor and manage’ approach in the 2017 EDNA.

Table 7 – Review of Other Existing Allocations in Plans

Site	Available?	Suitable?	Theoretical Capacity ¹²
NEL1 West of A1245, Rayleigh	Site has an application pending decision for a business park (18/01022/OUT). No suggestion that the site would be available for development for an alternative (e.g. residential) use	Located in far west of the District away from any recognised settlement. Even if not required for employment land, the ability to secure an acceptable level of sustainability for residential development would be challenging	224
NEL2 South of Great Wakering	No planning application has been received on this land to date, therefore there is no information available on whether the site would be available for development for a residential use	Located on edge of Great Wakering. if not required for employment land, it would likely be suitable for residential development based on location.	82
NEL3 North of London Southend Airport	The land is subject to a number of planning permissions, including outline permissions for different parts of the site relating to employment uses (17/00850/OUT and 15/00781/OUT) respectively. Small parts of the site have since been developed including for a nursery (17/00710/FUL) and the first phase of a business park (18/00584/REM). Part of the site has been the subject of a refused planning application relating to a residential 'retirement village' (17/00877/OUT) which has subsequently been appealed. On this basis, it is considered that part of the site is likely to be available for residential uses; however there is no information available on whether the remainder of the site would also be.	The site is located outside of any recognised settlement within the District. Even if not required for employment land, the ability to secure an acceptable level of sustainability for residential development would be challenging	400
EEL1(RBP) Rochford Business Park	Site is in active use in a variety of uses, including A1, A3/A5 and B2. There is no information to suggest that the owner(s) of the land wish to re-develop the land for residential uses	Whilst not located within any recognised settlement of Rochford, the area is contiguous with the urban area of Southend and would likely be suitable for residential development if no longer required for employment land	296

7.113 This review identifies a theoretical capacity of around 1,000 homes which could be delivered if all four of these sites were to be developed/re-developed for housing.

7.114 However, this review has not sought to assess the availability or suitability of any of these allocations in detail. It is recognised that some of these sites are subject to planning applications and permissions relating to their allocated uses and, even if they were to be made available for housing, are not always located in the most sustainable locations. Furthermore, as detailed earlier in this section, any decision to re-allocate or re-develop employment land for housing must be informed by a robust understanding of the continued need for that employment land and its importance to the local economy. The Council intends to prepare further evidence on the local economy,

¹² Assumed density of 85% gross to net developable area and 30 dwellings per hectare

including a potential employment land review (or similar). This evidence will comprehensively assess the future need for employment land, in both qualitative and quantitative terms, and consider more robustly whether any of the areas of land currently allocated for employment land should be re-allocated or re-developed for housing. This is recognised as a particularly important exercise given the severe macro-economic implications of the COVID-19 crisis, and the potential re-structuring of the local economy it has accelerated, including greater remote working and a potential reduction in the need for ‘bricks and mortar’ employment premises.

- 7.115 At this stage, therefore, the theoretical capacity of 1,002 homes has been noted but it is not recommended that it be considered a realistic or deliverable source of supply.

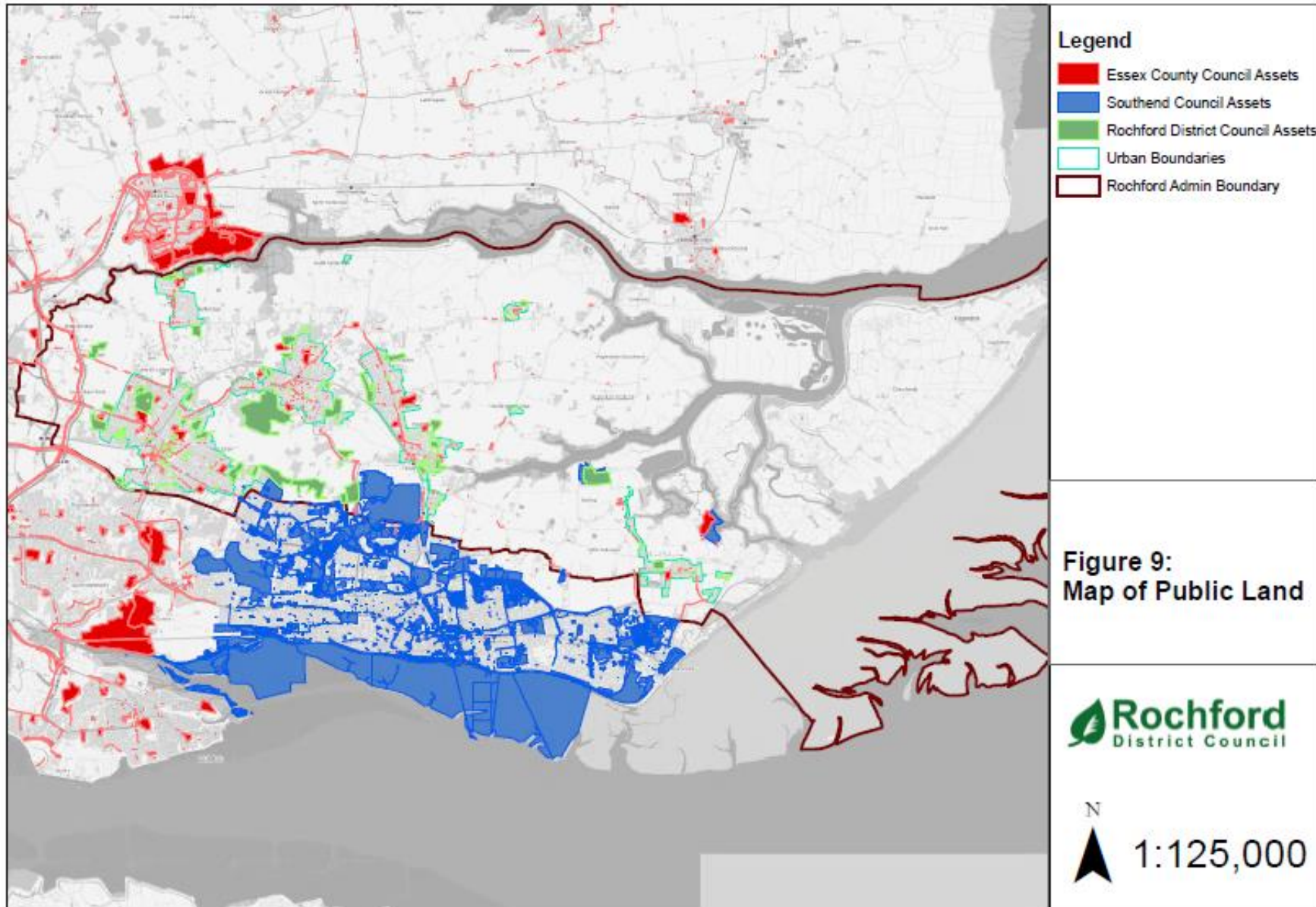
Table 8 – Summary of Capacity Scenarios from Employment Allocations

Scenario		Capacity
Deliverable Supply	Years 1 – 5	0
Developable Supply	Years 6 – 10	0
Theoretical Supply	Not currently deliverable or developable	1,002

REDEVELOPMENT OF COUNCIL AND OTHER PUBLICLY OWNED LAND

- 7.116 Land within the urban area is in a multitude of fragmented ownerships. The majority of urban land is in single private ownership, reflecting the high level of owner occupation across the District.
- 7.117 Outside of the residential areas, however, a significant amount of land is held in some form of public ownership. Much of this land is owned by the Council, including its offices, open spaces (parks) and car parks. Large areas of land are also owned by other public bodies, including Essex County Council, the Ministry of Defence and neighbouring Southend-on-Sea Borough Council.
- 7.118 Figure 9 shows the extent of publicly owned land in the District.

Figure 9 – Map of Public Land in Rochford District



- 7.119 The re-development of public land has historically played an important role in the delivery of housing in the District. For example, the re-development of the Park School site and part of the Rochford Hospital site together resulted in several hundred homes being delivered. Whilst the size and therefore capacity of the public estate is finite, this trend of public land becoming available for development is expected to continue with many public bodies seeing their surplus landholdings as potential income sources. An example of which is the site of the former Bullwood Hall Prison which has become available in recent years and subsequently disposed of by the Ministry of Justice to a developer.
- 7.120 If it were all able to come forward for housing, the cumulative quantity of public land in the District has capacity to deliver a potentially huge amount of housing. It is recognised, however, that a significant proportion of this land holds a social, environmental or economic purpose the continuation of which may outweigh any benefits presented by its potential re-development for housing. This may include the vast areas of public land upon which roads, schools and other forms of education, public open spaces, community facilities (e.g. libraries and leisure centres) and council offices are sited.
- 7.121 In light of the above, it is not considered proportionate or appropriate to calculate the capacity of all public land for housing, particularly where there is no likely prospect of this land being made available for development within the new Local Plan period. Instead, this section has focused on identifying any publicly-owned sites that have a reasonable prospect of becoming available for development in the new Local Plan period. This includes sites that:
- Are already subject to planning applications or permissions;
 - Are part of a strategy that recommends their re-development or disposal;
 - Are otherwise known to be vacant or surplus; or
 - Are in a use that could realistically be rationalised or re-located as part of a wider strategy, such as public car parks.
- 7.122 Areas of public land excluded from this assessment include the land upon which London Southend Airport and its environs are sited (owned by Southend-on-Sea Borough Council) and the land at Foulness Island (owned by the Ministry of Defence). As neither area of land is within the urban area, they have not been considered within this UCS.
- 7.123 Furthermore, all school and healthcare sites have been excluded from this UCS on the basis that there is no realistic prospect of them being made available for development. If circumstances did arise such that a school or healthcare site was made available for re-development, this would likely require the re-provision of its services on other urban land, meaning there is unlikely to be net contribution to urban capacity.

- 7.124 The process of site identification has been informed by the Council's monitoring information (including the AMR), the findings of the 2017 SHELAA, and the contents of the Council's updated Assets Strategy 2018-2028. The Cabinet Office's Register of Surplus Public Sector Land¹³, and of NHS Surplus Land¹⁴, were also consulted but identified no sites within the District.
- 7.125 Consideration of whether a site is likely to be available for development has largely been informed by the Council's updated Assets Strategy (2018-2028). This Strategy sets out the Council's priorities for its asset portfolio, taking into account the Council's strategic objectives. The Strategy recognises that the efficient use of public assets can bring forward new homes, drive economic growth and regeneration and assist in the delivery of more efficient and improved public services.
- 7.126 The Assets Strategy, and the programme attached to it, has earmarked six key sites within the Council's asset portfolio for re-development. These are:
- Freight House, Rochford – the proposal is to refurbish and extend this heritage asset to give it a new lease of life; creating improved flexible spaces for civic and community use which can also be used for commercial hire;
 - Mill Arts & Events Centre, Rayleigh - to re-develop the whole of this site to provide new community and civic spaces alongside commercial and/or residential use which will raise the profile of the neighbouring heritage assets;
 - Civic Suite, Rayleigh - to re-develop the whole of this site for commercial and/or residential use; and
 - Numbers 3 – 15 South Street, Rochford (current Council offices) and Numbers 19 and 57 South Street - the proposal is to re-develop for residential use.
- 7.127 As can be seen from the descriptions above, not all of these sites have been earmarked for housing development. Even where they are earmarked for housing, it is often part of a mixed-use development with no directly assigned housing capacity associated with these sites.
- 7.128 As a result, the assumptions used within this section are without prejudice to the programme through which these sites will come forward for re-development, nor any planning applications associated with this programme. The eventual capacity of these sites will instead be picked up through the Council's housing land trajectory when known.
- 7.129 Table 10 below lists the public land that has been reviewed within this section, providing an overview of the potential capacity of the land and whether it is likely to be available

¹³ <https://data.gov.uk/dataset/49b15726-1603-4618-b7bb-38af6ed111e8/register-of-surplus-land>

¹⁴ <https://data.gov.uk/dataset/ff8eb10e-656f-4c77-8657-2e5ac20bdf95/nhs-surplus-land>

for development. This does not include land in use as public open space, which are considered separately in this section.

Table 10 – Review of Public Land

Site	Existing use	Capacity (Assumed Density)	Suitable? ¹⁵	Deliverable? ¹⁵
Rochford District Council Depot, South Street, Rochford, SS4 1GR	Council depot	48 (50dph)	Yes, if no longer required the site would likely be suitable for housing	No, the site is not part of the Council's current asset strategy but could become available long-term
The Freight House, Bradley Way, Rochford, SS4 1BU	Hall and car park	21 (50dph)	Yes, if no longer required the site would likely be suitable for housing	No, the site is part of the Council's current asset strategy but is earmarked for office/community use, and therefore would not be available for housing
Council Offices, South Street, Rochford	Council Offices	23 (50dph)	Yes, if no longer required the site would likely be suitable for housing	Yes, the site is part of the Council's current asset strategy and is earmarked for housing use
Public Car Park, Southend Road, Hockley, SS5 4PZ	Public Car Park	9 (30dph)	Yes, if no longer required the site would likely be suitable for housing	No, the site is not part of the Council's current asset strategy but could become available long-term
Back Lane Car Park, Rochford, SS4 1AY	Public Car Park	23 (30dph)	Yes, if no longer required the site would likely be suitable for housing	No, the site is not part of the Council's current asset strategy but could become available long-term
Freight House Car Park, Rochford, SS4 1BU	Public Car Park	14 (30dph)	Yes, if no longer required the site would likely be suitable for housing	No, the site is part of the Council's current asset strategy but is earmarked for office/community use, and therefore would not be available for housing
Public Car Park, Websters Way, Rayleigh, SS6 8J	Public Car Park	29 (30dph)	Yes, if no longer required the site would likely be suitable for housing	No, the site is not part of the Council's current asset strategy but could become available long-term
Public Car Park, The Market, Hockley Road, Rayleigh	Public Car Park	9 (30dph)	Yes, if no longer required the site would likely be suitable for housing	No, the site is not part of the Council's current asset strategy but could become available long-term
Public Car Park, Castle Road, Rayleigh	Public Car Park	15 (30dph)	Yes, if no longer required the site would likely be suitable for housing	No, the site is not part of the Council's current asset strategy but could become available long-term

¹⁵ Based on HELAA

Rochford District Council Urban Capacity Study 2020

Civic Suite, Hockley Road, Rayleigh	Council Offices	19 (50dph)	Yes, if no longer required the site would likely be suitable for housing	Yes, the site is part of the Council's current asset strategy and is earmarked for housing use
The Mill Arts and Events Centre, Bellingham Lane, Rayleigh	Hall and car park	25 (50dph)	Yes, if no longer required the site would likely be suitable for housing	Yes, the site is part of the Council's current asset strategy and is earmarked for a mixed use including for housing
Former Adult Community College, Rocheway, Rochford (ECC site)	Vacant Former Adult Community College Site	74 (from permission)	Yes, if no longer required the site would likely be suitable for housing	Yes, the site has planning permission for a 74 unit residential scheme (17/00102/FUL)
Castle Road Recycling Centre, Castle Road, Rayleigh (ECC site)	Recycling Centre	9 (30dph)	Yes, if no longer required the site would likely be suitable for housing	No, the site continues to be a candidate for re-development but would require re-provision elsewhere

7.130 If all of the sites identified in Table 10 were to be made available for development, a potential yield of 318 dwellings could be expected based on an average density of between 30 and 50 dwellings per hectare.

7.131 However, many of these sites are not expected to become available for development in the short-term, if at all, particularly where they continue to provide an important social function or where their loss would likely require planned re-provision elsewhere (such as in the case of public car parks or recycling centres). Removing sites that are not known to be available for residential development now leaves a potential deliverable supply of around 141 dwellings.

7.132 An element of caution should be applied to this figure, however, given that some of these sites have been earmarked for mixed-use developments with the proportion of non-residential uses still to be determined. As a consequence, this figure of 141 dwellings should be considered an estimate with a relatively large margin for error. The actual capacities of these sites will be determined when elements of the Council's asset programme progress to the planning application stage, at which time the Council's housing land trajectory can be updated accordingly.

7.133 Furthermore, it is recognised that public bodies, including the Council, own a range of smaller sites in the urban area, including areas around road junctions, grass verges and undeveloped 'infill' plots that have fallen into public ownership. These smaller sites have not been identified in this UCS, given they fall below the five dwelling threshold set out in the methodology, but are nonetheless recognised as being a potential source of significant cumulative urban capacity that could be brought forward for development by the Council (or other public body).

- 7.134 The figures above also do not consider the potential capacity of public open spaces to deliver housing. As part of its new Local Plan evidence base, the Council has commenced an Open Spaces Study to assess the qualitative and quantitative performance of local open spaces against objective criteria. One aspect of this study may be the identification of open spaces which could be re-developed for housing, particularly where they do not perform a strong social or environmental function or where re-provision or rationalization may be preferential in spatial planning terms.
- 7.135 At this time, the findings of this Open Spaces Study are not known and have therefore not factored into the UCS. It is considered unlikely at this time that the Open Spaces Study will recommend that many, if any, sites should be re-developed for housing, but nonetheless it is recommended that the Open Spaces Study, when finished, is read alongside this UCS to understand the ultimate position with regards to urban capacity from public land.
- 7.136 Table 11 below sets out the potential urban capacity of public land known to be available now, and that which could become available in the longer term.

Table 11 – Summary of Capacity Scenarios from Public Land

Scenario		Capacity
Deliverable Supply	Years 1 – 5	141
Developable Supply	Years 6-10	0
Theoretical Supply	Not currently deliverable or developable	318

REVIEW OF OTHER KNOWN URBAN SITES

- 7.137 The final category of site considered within this section relates to any other known urban sites capable of delivering 5 or more dwellings.
- 7.138 To fall within this category, a site must be known to have some development potential (such as inclusion in previous HELAAs or historic planning permissions) but not be publicly owned, allocated, or the subject of a recent extant, withdrawn, expired or refused planning application or permission.
- 7.139 Identification of sites within this category has been informed by past (S)HELAAAs, including the 2012 SHLAA and 2017 SHELAA, along with the Council's Brownfield Land Registers and monitoring information.
- 7.140 In practice, sites in this category are mostly vacant or underutilised areas of land in the urban area which have been put forward through the 'Call for Sites', included in past HELAAAs or which were subject to a pending planning application at April 2019¹⁶.

¹⁶ It is recognised that many of these sites have subsequently been granted planning permission and/or have been placed in a version of the Brownfield Land Register published after 1 April 2019. The determination of deliverability may therefore be based in these cases on events that happened after the 1 April 2019 base date.

Table 12 – Review of Other Known Urban Sites

Site	Capacity (Density Assumed)	Suitable? ¹⁷	Deliverable? ¹⁸
Former Rochford Police Station, 43-45 South Street, Rochford	14 (80dph)	Yes	Yes
247 London Road, Rayleigh	10 (50dph)	Yes	Yes
162-168 High Street, Rayleigh	14 (80dph)	Yes	Yes
68-72 West Street, Rochford	10 (50 dph)	Yes	Yes
Sangster Court Church Road Rayleigh SS6 8PZ	9 (30dph)	Yes, if no longer required	No – developable
Lime Court and Poplar Court Greensward Lane Hockley SS5 5HB	18 (30dph)	Yes, if no longer required	No – developable
Land North of Hockley Station	11 (30dph)	Yes	No - developable
87 Canewdon View Road, Ashingdon	5	Yes	Yes
9 East Street, Rochford	9	Yes	Yes
Land Rear of 12 To 26 Eastwood Road Rayleigh SS6 7JQ	41	Yes	Yes
22 Main Road, Hockley	10	Yes	Yes
Land Rear Of 3 To 45 Alexandra Road Great Wakering	25	Yes	Yes

¹⁷ Established through HELAA or positive pre-app response

¹⁸ Established through HELAA, pre-app or pending planning application

- 7.141 Table 12 above forms a review of other known urban sites which are considered to be capable of delivering 5 or more dwellings.
- 7.142 If all of the sites identified in Table 12 were to be delivered, around 186 homes could be built. However, some of these sites are historic sites with less certain deliverability. A common reason for this uncertainty is a lack of information relating to their continued availability for development. When removing sites that are not known to be available now for development, sites falling within this category are capable of delivering around 148 dwellings.

Table 13 – Summary of Capacity Scenarios from Other Known Urban Sites

Scenario		Capacity
Deliverable Supply	Years 1 – 5	148
Developable Supply	Years 6-10	38
Theoretical Supply	Not currently deliverable or developable	0

Components of Windfall Delivery

- 7.143 The following section focusses on assessing the capacity of components of windfall urban housing supply.
- 7.144 Unlike with the previous section, analysis of sources within this section is not intended to identify specific sites where five or more dwellings could be delivered, but instead to allow us to develop a realistic idea about the number of homes that can be delivered over the next 20 years from sites that are either not yet known and/or which are smaller than the five dwelling threshold applied in the previous section.
- 7.145 In particular, these general sources will allow us to identify how different types of windfall development might contribute to future housing delivery, and therefore help to underpin an evidenced windfall allowance in any trajectory.

SUB-DIVISION OF EXISTING HOUSING

Definition

- 7.146 One way in which new homes are built in an urban area is through the sub-division of existing housing. For the purposes of this exercise, and in alignment with the previous definition used for the purposes of Government monitoring, sub-division is defined as occurring where an existing dwelling is physically divided to provide a greater number of independent dwellings.
- 7.147 Whilst the above definition might include some element of extension to the existing building, the complete demolition of a dwelling and its replacement with one or more dwelling(s) is not captured under this definition. Furthermore, the conversion of a building in a different use to a dwelling is not within this definition. These sources of supply are assessed separately in this study.
- 7.148 In addition, sub-division is only considered to have occurred where the division creates a functionally independent dwelling. Scenarios where a dwelling is partially divided but continues to be occupied by members of the same household and/or by persons who use some shared facilities, or the temporary use of a part of the dwelling by a lodger, is not likely to be considered sub-division.
- 7.149 It is recognised that the theoretical capacity of sub-division to deliver housing is very high. The District has a significant number of larger owner-occupied homes which could theoretically be sub-divided into two or more smaller dwellings. However, it must be acknowledged that the actual delivery of homes through sub-division is highly dependent on market forces. Homeowners cannot be compelled to sub-divide their homes and in most circumstances are likely to have bought an appropriately sized home that meets their immediate and/or long-term needs. The sub-section of homeowners who occupy a larger home that they would be willing to sub-divide is

comparatively small and the willingness of developers to acquire and sub-divide existing homes appears to be limited (particularly relative to demolish and re-builds).

Past Delivery

7.150 The 2007 Urban Capacity Study determined that an annual rate of between 25 and 30 homes to be delivered from sub-divisions could be a realistic allowance. This reflected an unconstrained capacity based on the number of larger homes in the District with a discount rate recommended by the URBED guidance. When compared to the actual delivery rates seen in Table 14, it is clear that this figure significantly overestimated actual delivery, which has average 2 dwellings per year over the last eight years.

Table 14 – Homes delivered through sub-division (by year)

Year	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	Mean (2011-19)
Total (net)	0	4	-3	2	0	2	0	10	2
Of Which Windfall	0	3	-3	2	0	2	0	10	2

Future Trends and Maximising Delivery

7.151 As at April 2019, the Council’s housing trajectory included planning permissions sufficient to deliver 8 dwellings through sub-divisions over the next five years, of which 5 were in urban areas.

7.152 In light of the relatively small contribution that sub-divisions make to annual housing delivery (an average of 2 a year), and its heavy reliance on market forces, it is considered unlikely that sub-divisions will make a markedly more substantial contribution to housing delivery in the future. It is recognised that the last year had markedly more completions than any other year, however the limited number of sub-divisions in the housing trajectory suggests this year was anomalous.

7.153 Furthermore, despite the theoretical capacity of sub-division being very high, there are realistically limited options open to the Council to unlock this additional capacity through the planning system. These options are limited by a number of factors, including the vast majority of homes in the District being privately owned, the low level of delivery suggesting there is no great appetite for sub-division amongst homeowners, and the absence of any mechanism through which to realistically incentivize or compel homeowners to sub-divide their homes. Moreover, in any case, a strategy that relied heavily on sub-divisions may not be appropriate when weighed against other planning considerations, including the impact that widespread sub-division would have on a

neighbourhood in terms of design, character and parking, the ability for community infrastructure to support the cumulative impacts of mass sub-divisions and the likely market attractiveness of such homes in terms of space and garden sizes.

- 7.154 It is therefore considered appropriate to conclude that the capacity of sub-divisions to deliver future housing will continue to be low. Any windfall allowance made by the Council can, however, acknowledge the contribution that sub-divisions may make to housing delivery if they were to continue at trend.

FLATS OVER SHOPS

Definition

7.155 Another source of potential urban housing supply recommended by the URBED guidance are flats over shops. These are smaller residential units located within, or typically above, retail and other commercial premises.

Past Trends

7.156 Flats over shops often do not require planning permission. Their contribution to housing delivery is therefore difficult to monitor.

7.157 That said, recent town centre surveying suggests that the majority of upper floors above shops are already occupied, often either by flats, offices or storage associated with the ground floor use.

Future Trends and Maximising Delivery

7.158 The Council is not aware of a significant number of existing shop units with unoccupied upper floors, and the number of new shops being built each year in the District is negligible. Where commercial units are redeveloped to incorporate an element of housing, these are not considered to be 'flats over shops'.

7.159 Overall, given a lack of known suitable sites, and little evidence of significant past delivery, it is considered unlikely that flats over shops will provide a significant, measurable contribution to housing delivery in the future. For the purposes of this UCS, the urban capacity of flats over shops is therefore considered to be zero.

EMPTY HOMES

Definition

7.160 The NPPF highlights the importance of supporting the development of underutilised land and buildings, especially if this would help to meet identified needs for housing. It cites bringing empty homes back into residential use as one way this should be achieved.

Past Trends

7.161 As of October 2019, there were 277 long-term empty homes in the District. This comprises around 0.77% of the total dwelling stock in the District.

7.162 A long-term empty home is defined as a home which has been unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for over six months.

7.163 Table 15 shows how the number of long-term empty homes has changed over the last ten years. As can be seen from this table, the number of empty homes is currently relatively low compared to some instances in the last ten years, however there appears to be a trend increase from a low in 2014.

Table 15 – Number of Empty Homes in Rochford District

Year	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Number	452	395	338	271	257	174	189	181	223	266	277

Source: MHCLG (2020)

7.164 It is recognised that there is always likely to be some degree of vacancy within the housing stock of an area. This vacancy may arise due to natural factors such as the undertaking of long-term renovation projects or instances of probate. By comparison to the national average (0.93%), the proportion of empty homes in the District is relatively low and it is considered unlikely that the number of empty homes in the District can be decreased substantially when allowing for a constant level of vacancy for circumstances such as renovation and probate.

Future Trends and Maximising Delivery

7.165 This being the case, it is considered appropriate to apply the upper end of the discount rate recommended by the URBED guidance. This suggests that 55 homes could realistically be considered urban capacity.

7.166 More generally, it may be appropriate for the Council's Local Plan to take a supportive position towards getting empty homes re-occupied. Furthermore, existing Council programmes such as the [Well Homes Empty Property Grant](#) will continue to provide

incentives to the owners of empty homes to get them back into use and helping to increase the amount of housing stock occupied at any one time.

DENSIFICATION OF EXISTING AREAS

Definition

- 7.167 The NPPF is clear that local planning authorities should seek to make efficient use of land, including avoiding developing at low densities, especially where there is an identified shortage of land available to meet development needs.
- 7.168 In light of this expectation, this section of the UCS will seek to explore the capacity of existing urban areas to deliver additional housing through densification.
- 7.169 By definition, densification does not include developments which would not result in an overall net contribution to housing delivery. In fact, where regeneration or demolition of dwellings results in an overall net reduction in the housing stock this would result in de-densification which is unlikely to be desirable, except where the outcome of that de-densification results in an overall public benefit, e.g. the replacement of dwellings with an alternative use that there is also an identified need for, such as commercial development, transport infrastructure or community infrastructure.
- 7.170 For the purposes of this UCS, it is also important to distinguish between densification and other sources of urban supply, such as sub-divisions, changes of use and the re-development of commercial/industrial land. Whilst all of these sources of urban supply can be considered forms of densification, in the sense that they result in a higher density of residential uses in an area, they have been separated for the purposes of this UCS. The primary reason for this separation is to allow the possible contribution of these categories to be identified separately, acknowledging that the size of developments falling within these categories tends to be different and the capacity of these sources is affected by different factors. Attention has been given, however, to ensuring the statistics provided in this UCS avoid double counting between these categories.

Past Trends

- 7.171 Table 16 below sets out the number of homes delivered from urban densification since 2010. For the purposes of identifying the contribution sites falling within this category have made to housing delivery, densification has been interpreted as being where a net increase in residential units has occurred as a result of development in the urban area (but excluding those developments which fall within another category, such as sub-divisions, changes of use and re-development of commercial/industrial land). In practice, the vast majority of developments falling within this category are infill developments (e.g. development of vacant land within the urban area), 'backland'

developments (e.g. sub-division of a plot and construction of a dwelling in land that previously formed part of a garden) or developments involving the demolition of one or more existing dwellings and its/their replacement with a greater number of dwellings.

- 7.172 As is shown in Table 16, the contribution that urban densification makes to housing delivery in the District is relatively significant averaging at 32 homes per year over the last nine years. Relative to the Core Strategy housing target of 250 homes per year, around 13% of this target could have been met from urban densification alone. Of these around 17 homes per year came from windfall sites.

Table 16 – Homes delivered through densification (by year)

Year	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	Mean (2011-19)
Delivery (net)	39	9	57	24	37	28	22	38	32
Of Which Windfall	11	-11	45	8	19	20	15	26	17

Future Trends and Maximising Delivery

- 7.173 As at 1 April 2019, there were planning permissions sufficient to deliver 140 dwellings through residential densification over the next five years, of which 135 would be in the urban area.
- 7.174 In terms of calculating the capacity of urban land to deliver houses through densification, the steady contribution that this source of supply has made to housing delivery over the last nine years makes it probable that densification will continue to make significant contributions to housing delivery into the future.
- 7.175 It is recognised that the theoretical capacity of densification is very high in the sense that almost all residential areas could theoretically be re-developed at a higher density. However, as with similar categories, the ability for this theoretical capacity to be harnessed is limited by the fact that the vast majority of homes in the District are owner-occupied. This means that the delivery of homes through this source is highly dependent on the market and the willingness of landowners to bring forward developments in this way. As is expanded upon later in this section, the appropriateness of individual densification schemes is also often contentious, and the impact of densification on the character, function and sustainability of an area must be weighed against the benefit of the homes that would delivered.
- 7.176 Any attempt to assess the theoretical capacity of land to deliver housing must ultimately be weighed against the likelihood of that housing being delivered. In this regard, the ability for large sections of the urban area to be redeveloped for a greater number of

homes is considered to be highly limited within Rochford. Where such large-scale regeneration projects are taking place across the country, they typically rely heavily on land owned or acquired by public sector bodies or social housing providers, including areas with high vacancy rates. Furthermore, they are typically led by regeneration needs that extend beyond simply seeking to increase the number of houses, most usually an attempt to redress poor quality housing stock and promote economic growth within a more deprived area.

- 7.177 By comparison, the Council does not own any housing stock, with the District having one of the highest owner-occupation rates in the entire country. Furthermore, house prices are amongst the highest in the country outside of London and there are no known 'macro' issues within the quality of the housing stock. In terms of past trends, estate regeneration and similar scale projects have not played a significant role in housing delivery in previous local plan cycles, and there is no evidence before the Council that the market is actively seeking to deliver such larger scale regeneration projects in Rochford District in the future.
- 7.178 Given the factors listed above, the ability for a strategy to viably deliver large-scale densification projects, such as estate regeneration, in the District is considered to be highly improbable. Past urban capacity studies, including the 2007 UCS acknowledged that previous estimations of the capacity of densification failed to acknowledge the disconnect between the theoretical capacity of densification and the willingness of the market to deliver that densification. As a result, capacity estimations grossly exceeded actual delivery rates. For this reason, it is not considered appropriate to seek to translate the theoretical capacity of large-scale densification into an actual delivery figure. However, it is considered right and proper that the Council's plan-making process continues to explore the capacity for large scale densification projects to contribute towards housing delivery should these circumstances change.
- 7.179 Despite the likely capacity of large-scale densification projects being limited, it is recognised that smaller-scale incremental densification projects, such as the development of infill or backland sites within residential areas and the replacement of a dwelling with a greater number of dwellings, are very common in Rochford District.
- 7.180 This capacity will almost certainly continue to be fulfilled by small-scale infill, backland and replacement schemes. For the reasons stated earlier in this section, the capacity of large-scale densification projects to deliver homes in the District, such as estate regeneration programmes, is considered to be highly limited.
- 7.181 In terms of considering how the Council could harness even greater capacity from this source, many of the same limitations that exist with other categories also apply here. The theoretical capacity of urban land to deliver housing through densification is very high, in the sense that almost all residential areas within the District could theoretically be re-developed at a higher density. However, in determining the realistic capacity of

densification, it must be recognised that the vast majority of existing dwellings are owner-occupied and therefore the delivery of homes through densification is highly dependent on the market and the willingness of landowners to come forward with schemes. It is also recognised that, as with sub-divisions, the appropriateness of specific urban densification schemes is dependent on a number of other considerations. NPPF (Para 70) makes it clear that local authorities may wish to resist the development of garden land which is characteristic of many small-scale densification schemes on the presumption that it may cause harm to the local area. Densifying developments within residential areas often have a poor reputation for negatively affecting the character of an area and worsening local issues such as parking provision. Furthermore, a strategy which sought a high degree of urban densification would need to be weighed against the wider sustainability implications of promoting this pattern of development, including the ability for local infrastructure, particularly community infrastructure such as schools and healthcare facilities, to support the incremental increase in population. This is primarily an issue of scale with most urban densification schemes currently underway in the District being too small to attract developer contributions towards infrastructure.

- 7.182 This being the case, the contribution that urban densification can make to future housing delivery will continue to be reflected in the large number of active permissions within the Council's housing trajectory. Furthermore, when determining whether to incorporate a windfall allowance into this trajectory, a significant proportion of this allowance could be made up of theoretical urban densification schemes based on a continuation of past trends.

CONVERSION FROM COMMERCIAL AND OTHER USES

- 7.183 The NPPF makes provision for buildings and land to be repurposed for housing, particularly where these are under-utilised and/or no longer needed for the original use (based on identified changes in the demand for land). The NPPF specifically makes provision for the re-development of employment and retail land for homes provided this would not undermine key economic sectors or the vitality or viability of town centres.
- 7.184 A significant number of homes are delivered each year in the District as a result of the conversion of buildings or land to housing from an alternative use. This includes developments falling within two main distinct categories, which are detailed below:
- The change of use of a building from a non-residential use to a residential use;
 - The change of use of a building from a non-residential use to a residential use, specifically as a result of permitted development rights, including Classes M, O, P or PA of the General Permitted Development Order
 - The partial or complete re-development of land in a non-residential use into a residential development, such as the re-development of a former factory into a residential development.

Changes of Use and Permitted Development Rights

Definition

- 7.185 A change of use is taken to have occurred when a building in a non-residential use is converted into a residential use. This conversion may involve some element of demolition and construction but the fabric of the building is likely to mostly remain. Developments involving the complete demolition of the non-residential buildings and/or the construction of new buildings to provide the residential use instead fall within the '*Re-development of non-residential land*' category below.
- 7.186 Changes of Use have typically constituted development and have therefore required planning permission. Common changes of use seen are from commercial and industrial uses, which are no longer required for that use, being converted into residential uses.
- 7.187 Whilst many changes of use require planning permission, the Government has made specific provisions for the conversion of some uses into residential uses through a process known as prior approval. The conditions attached to these provisions are set out in the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 ("GPDO").
- 7.188 The changes of use permissible under the GPDO include:
- Class M: The conversion of retail, takeaways and specified sui generis uses to dwellinghouses

- Class N: The conversion of casinos or amusement arcades to dwellinghouses
- Class O: The conversion of offices to dwellinghouses
- Class P: The conversion of storage or distribution centres to dwellinghouses
- Class PA: The conversion of light industrial uses to dwellinghouses
- Class Q: The conversion of agricultural buildings to dwellinghouses

7.189 Whilst these permitted development rights have been said to have helped unlock urban capacity to deliver housing by making the process of receiving permission much simpler, it must be recognised that the quality of housing being delivered through permitted development has come under considerable national scrutiny. Whilst not applicable to every case, there are a number of high-profile examples where changes of use permitted under the GPDO have resulted in a large number of residential units which fall below the national recommended space standards and which lack basic amenities such as a private garden.

7.190 Furthermore, the GPDO only permits local authorities to take a limited number of criteria into account when considering whether the change of use should be permitted. These limited criteria have been extensively criticized for being both insufficient in number (e.g. the lack of criteria relating to design, space standards, amenity space and sustainability of location) and weight (e.g. by setting a threshold of acceptability far below that which would be applied through a planning application). Moreover, on larger permitted development schemes their exemption from developer contributions has directly resulted in a loss of affordable housing and local infrastructure improvements relative to what would have been required had the development required full planning permission.

7.191 In spite of the above reservations, it remains the case for now that permitted development rights concerning the conversion of buildings to a residential use remain. As the Government seeks to significantly boost the supply of housing nationally, it may even be that permitted development rights such as those listed are expanded.

Past Trends

7.192 Table 17 below sets out the number of homes delivered over the past nine years through changes of uses and permitted development conversions, averaging at 21 and 2 dwellings per year respectively.

Table 17 – Homes delivered through changes of use (by year)

Year	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	Mean (2011-19)
All Changes of Use (net)	22	11	18	21	13	1	20	6	21
Of Which Windfall (net)	16	11	18	9	13	1	20	6	12
Of which Permitted Development (net)	0	0	0	0	3	0	1	5	2*

*Average since 2015

Future Trends and Maximising Delivery

- 7.193 As at 1 April 2019, the housing trajectory included planning permissions sufficient to deliver 16 dwellings through changes of use over the next five years, of which 7 would be in the urban area. Of that 16, four would be delivered through prior approval (permitted development) of which 0 would be in the urban area.
- 7.194 Table 17 shows that changes of use have provided a steady supply of homes in the District over the last nine years. The specific contribution made by changes of use in any given year is, however, relatively volatile and is impacted significantly by a small number of larger developments. For example, years in which higher delivery has been seen have often benefitted from one or two larger permissions, typically involving the conversion of some larger spaces such as offices.
- 7.195 It is clear from Table 17 that the take-up of permitted development conversions remains very modest. Where they have been implemented, these have typically related to small scale office-to-resi conversions and a small number of agricultural conversions.
- 7.196 In estimating the future capacity of changes of use, it is clear from Table 4 that if delivery was to remain relatively steady, it is probable that changes of use will continue to deliver a small number of new homes every year. It therefore appears reasonable to conclude that changes of use will play a supporting role in the Council's future housing trajectory, including through the small number of extant planning permissions and by forming a component of any windfall allowance.
- 7.197 In considering how additional capacity could be harnessed from changes of use, it is necessary to consider the availability of convertible units. The theoretical capacity for changes of use is likely to be high when considering the number of non-residential buildings across the District. However, as explained earlier in this section, the

acceptability of individual changes of use involves the weighing up of the benefits and continuing need for the existing use against the relative benefits of its conversion into housing. In many cases, the need for housing is likely to outweigh the benefits of the existing use, however this is unlikely to be the case for uses that fulfil a clear economic and social role in communities, such as within employment sites, town centres and community infrastructure.

- 7.198 At this time, it is not considered appropriate to estimate a theoretical uplift capacity from changes of use. However it is recognised that the plan-making process will need to reflect upon the impact that restrictive use policies have on the ability for buildings to change use and ensure these are not unduly restrictive in instances where the public benefits of the existing use are not credible. It is conceivable that more permissive policies could allow a greater number of homes to be delivered from changes of use but this should be considered through the plan-making process and having regard to wider evidence, including that relating to the long-term land needs of employment uses and the identification of plan objectives (such as a drive to diversify uses in town centres).
- 7.199 It is further recognised that existing permitted development rights, and indeed any expansion of these rights, may in any case render restrictive policies moot. However, at this time it is not clear that the permitted development rights that do exist are attractive propositions to the market; or that the District has a sufficient stock of available, convertible uses to significant boost housing delivery through this method. As a result, it is not considered justified to seek to identify an uplifted capacity figure for permitted development schemes.

Re-development of non-residential land

Definition

- 7.200 A similar source of potential housing supply involves the partial or complete re-development of land in a non-residential use. This is largely differentiated from changes of use by the extent of demolition and construction that takes place. A change of use typically involves the conversion of existing buildings with limited physical development, whereas the re-development of non-residential land takes place where replacement buildings are constructed to house the residential use.
- 7.201 As with changes of use, the acceptability of re-developing non-residential land requires the weighing up the relative benefits of the existing use against the benefits of using the land for housing. Where it is identified that the existing use is no longer required, such as following the closure of a commercial or industrial enterprise and clear evidence being provided that this use is unlikely to attract another tenant, schemes of this nature have been able to deliver a significant number of homes in the District. Examples of where this has taken place including the redevelopment of a large E.ON office site at

190 London Road, Rayleigh and the re-development of a former factory at 90 Main Road, Hawkwell.

7.202 In some cases, however, the existing use will continue to provide an important social or economic purpose and may be subject to restrictive planning policies. This is most common on areas of land defined as employment sites or land within town centres.

Past Trends

7.203 Table 18 below shows the contribution that developments within this category have made to housing delivery over the last nine years, averaging at 30 dwellings per year.

Table 18: Housing delivered through re-development of non-residential sites (By year)

Year	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	Mean (2011-19)
Delivery (net)	8	18	88	29	17	12	58	11	30
Of Which Windfall	7	11	88	21	17	12	44	11	27

Future Trends and Maximising Delivery

7.204 As at April 2019, the Council's housing trajectory included planning permissions sufficient to deliver 174 dwellings through re-development of non-residential sites over the next five years, of which 88 would be in the urban area¹⁹.

7.205 It is clear from Table 18 above that whilst the number of homes delivered through the re-development of non-residential sites has been significant over the last nine years, it has also been highly volatile. This is largely to a two-tiered aspect to the nature of the sites being delivered. On the one hand, small scale re-development schemes (such as the demolition of a former shop and its replacement with a house) make a roughly consistent but small contribution to housing delivery in most years, large scale re-development schemes (such as the examples of 190 London Road and 90 Main Road given) make a much larger contribution to housing delivery but are far more infrequent.

7.206 In estimating the capacity for sites in this category to deliver housing into the future, it is considered likely that small-scale re-development sites will continue to make a modest contribution to housing delivery in any given year. However, the contribution that large-scale re-development sites could make is far harder to predict, given that these sites often become available unexpectedly. That said, through the Local Plan

¹⁹ This large difference can largely be attributed to one site, at Bullwood Hall Prison, which is to be developed for 72 dwellings but falls outside of the recognised settlement boundary of Hockley.

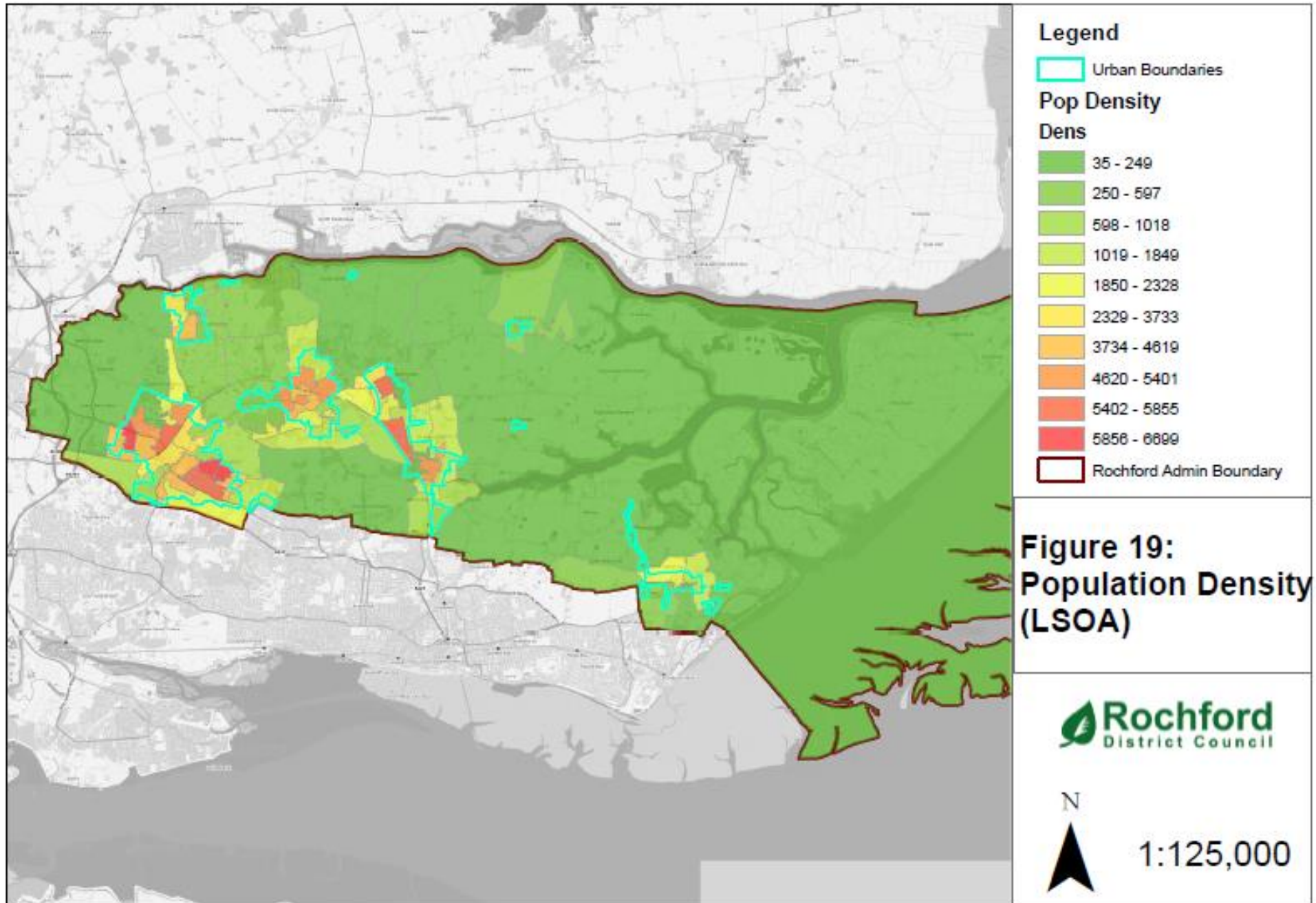
evidence base, including the HELAA, the Council has and continues to assess any candidate sites that the Council is aware of (or supports) the site coming forward for re-development. This could be informed by a planning application or application for pre-app advice, through correspondence from the landowner or tenant or awareness of the site having recently become vacant. In this way, the Council will be well placed to harness the capacity of suitable sites if and when they become available and, where the size of the site justifies it, can explore options to support the delivery of the site through the Local Plan, such as its specific allocation for housing.

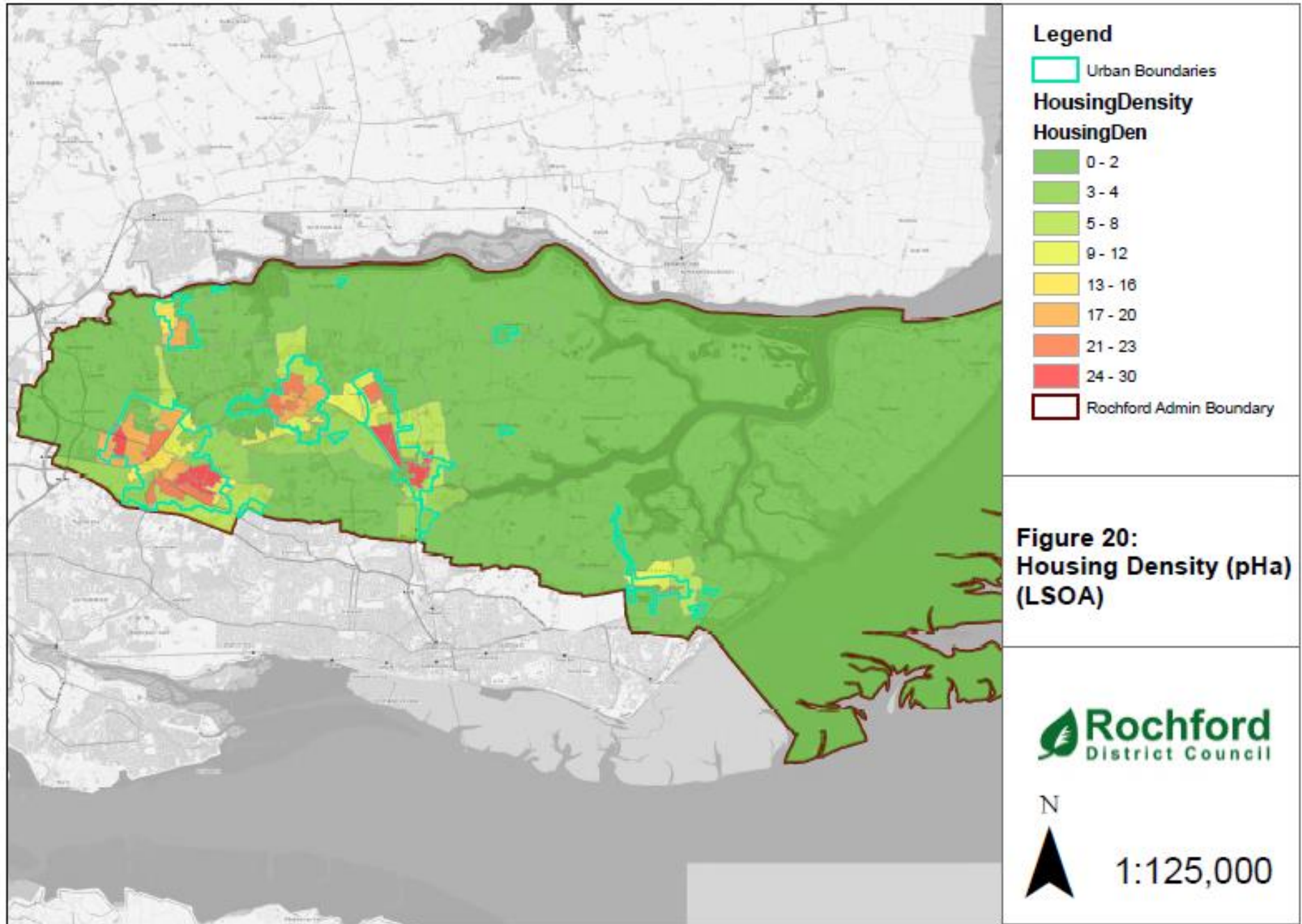
- 7.207 Irrespective of the size of site, the Council will need to weigh up the merits of re-development against the benefits of continuing the existing use. There are likely to be some instances when a site becomes unoccupied but where the re-occupation of the site by an alternative tenant (in the same use) is of greater public benefit than its re-development for housing. In the case of small sites these considerations will need to be weighed up through any planning application. In the case of larger sites, the Council may need to weigh up these considerations through the Local Plan process. In either case, the ability for such sites to come forward is undoubtedly related to the nature of relevant planning policies. It may be possible for the Council's new Local Plan to increase the capacity for housing to be delivered through re-development by taking a more permissive stance to the re-development of non-residential sites where it is clear that the benefits of re-development outweigh those of continuing the existing use. Again, this is unlikely to be appropriate in every case, particularly where the re-development would result in the loss of a use of significant social or economic benefit, such as land within employment sites or town centres.
- 7.208 For the purposes of this UCS, it is considered appropriate to conclude that the delivery of houses through the re-development of non-residential sites will play a role in the Council's future housing trajectory. This will be evident through the number of extant permissions and will form a component of any windfall allowance. Furthermore, through the wider evidence base, the Council can identify larger scale re-development sites and support their delivery through the Local Plan, including allocating these where appropriate. Sites falling within this category will be identified through the HELAA and later in the UCS (in the relevant sections of the attributable categories).
- 7.209 It is not considered appropriate at this stage to estimate an uplifted capacity for re-development sites. As can be seen in Table 18, the contribution made to housing delivery from these sites is highly volatile with no clear increasing or decreasing trend. This suggests any such estimation, in the absence of specific site identification, would likely be hard to substantiate. Furthermore it is recognised that the delivery of homes through re-development involves the weighing up of different priorities in that such re-development involve the loss of the existing use. In this regard, it is considered appropriate for such considerations to be based on identified sites considered through the plan-making process. This will enable consideration to be given to the wider

evidence base, including information relating to the specific need for those existing uses.

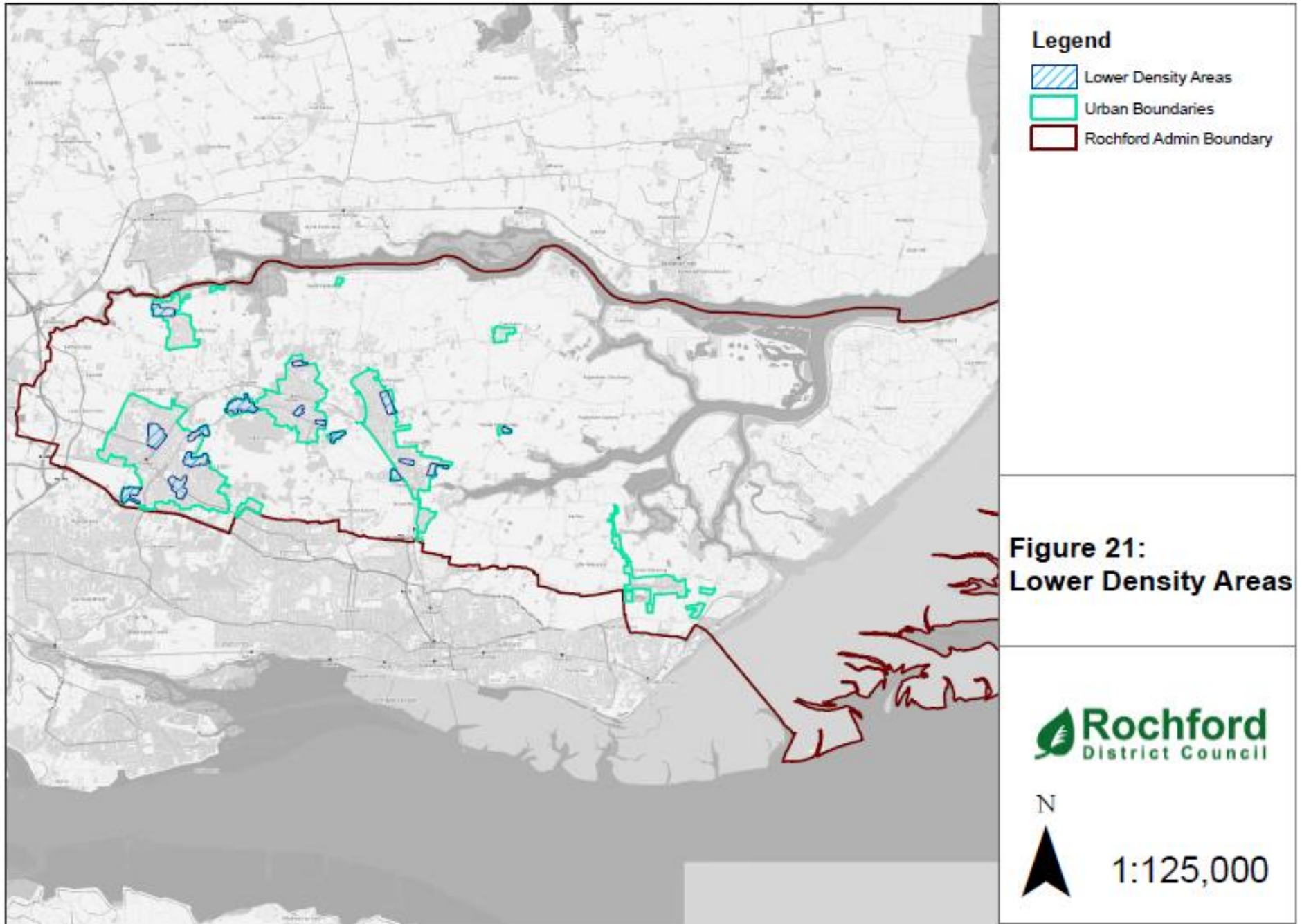
8. Broad Location Assessment

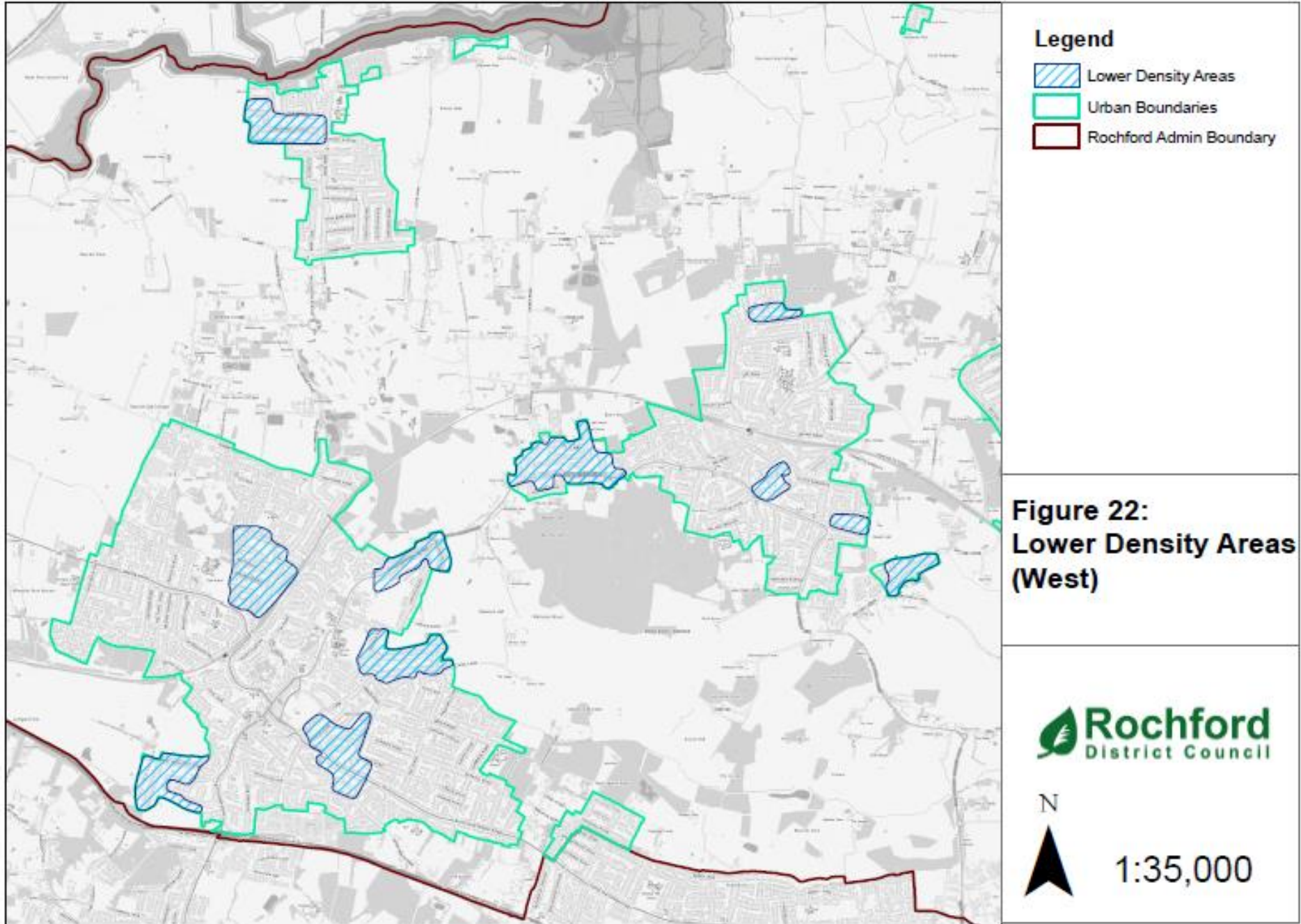
- 8.1 This section of the UCS seeks to identify broader opportunities to deliver housing in the urban area, by seeking to identify broad locations where development may be possible.
- 8.2 Unlike the previous chapter, it is not the purpose of this exercise to calculate the likely contribution that these areas can make to housing delivery, but rather to identify areas within the urban area where particular focus could be drawn when ensuring the new Local Plan makes as best use of urban land as is reasonably practicable.
- 8.3 Figures 19 and 20 show the average density of different areas in the District by both population and number of homes. Some caution should be applied when looking to interpret these maps, given they are based on average densities across lower-super output areas (LSOAs) which do not neatly correlate with the boundaries of urban areas. This results in some LSOAs which contain both urban and non-urban areas which produces an overall density that is lower than what truly exists in the urban parts of that LSOA. In light of this limitation, the use of this mapping to calculate absolute densities is to be avoided but the mapping is still considered to hold some value when considering the relative density of different areas of the District.





- 8.4 Through assessing the relative densities of different areas of the District it is possible to identify sections of the urban area that are comparatively low in density and which may therefore have the greatest capacity for densification. The Council's 2000 Urban Capacity Study mapped different sections of the urban area based on the likely capacity of those sections to be densified. Building from these maps, sense checking and expanding them using new aerial analysis, it has been possible to identify several sections of the urban area that are likely to have the greatest capacity for densification. The identification of these sections is not intended to exhaustively represent all sections of the urban area with capacity for densification but to provide an overview of the sections with the most obvious potential for densification at a larger scale (i.e. those characterised by a concentration of many low-density plots in a continuous area). These sections largely reflect lower density residential areas which have a concentration of larger gardens and/or plot sizes that are likely to far exceed minimum standards. These areas are highlighted in Figures 21 to 23.
- 8.5 Other examples of low-density residential areas include the several 'plotland' areas within the District, including those north of Rayleigh, Hockley and Ashingdon. It must be noted, however, that these plotland areas are near-exclusively within the Metropolitan Green Belt and therefore the opportunity to densify these areas is highly limited by planning policies which seek to maintain openness. For the purposes of this UCS, these plotland areas are not considered to fall within the urban area and therefore the theoretical capacity of these areas could not, in any case, be considered 'urban capacity.'
- 8.6 In addition to areas of low density, the areas which are likely to be able to support the greatest amount of housing are those with the best links to public transport. Figure 24 maps the District's town centres and an approximately walking radius (400m) around each of the District's main train station. As with the mapped low density areas, these areas may warrant further analysis through the plan-making process to consider opportunities to maximise densities in the most sustainable locations. Some of the sites identified in Chapter 7 fall within these areas.





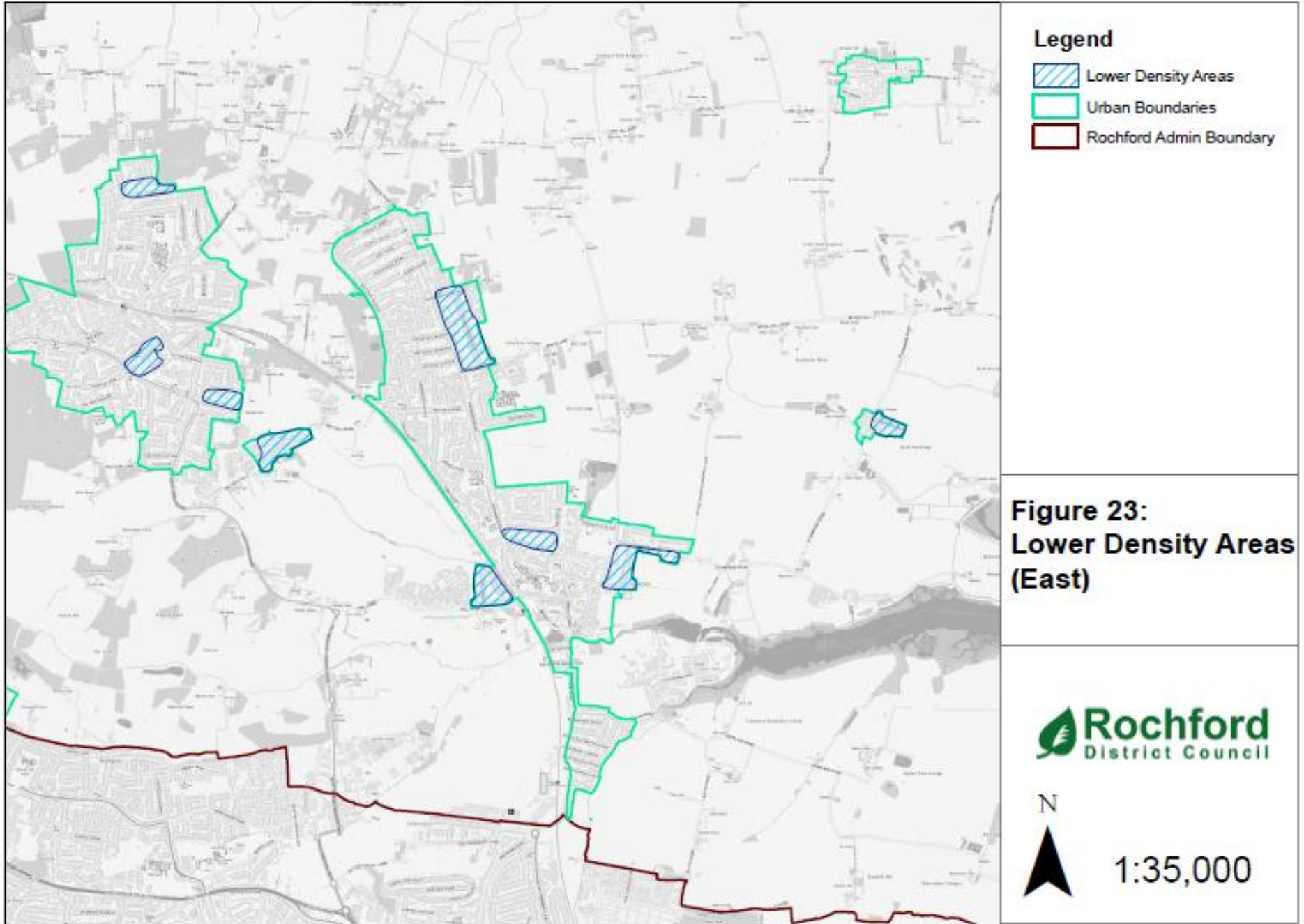
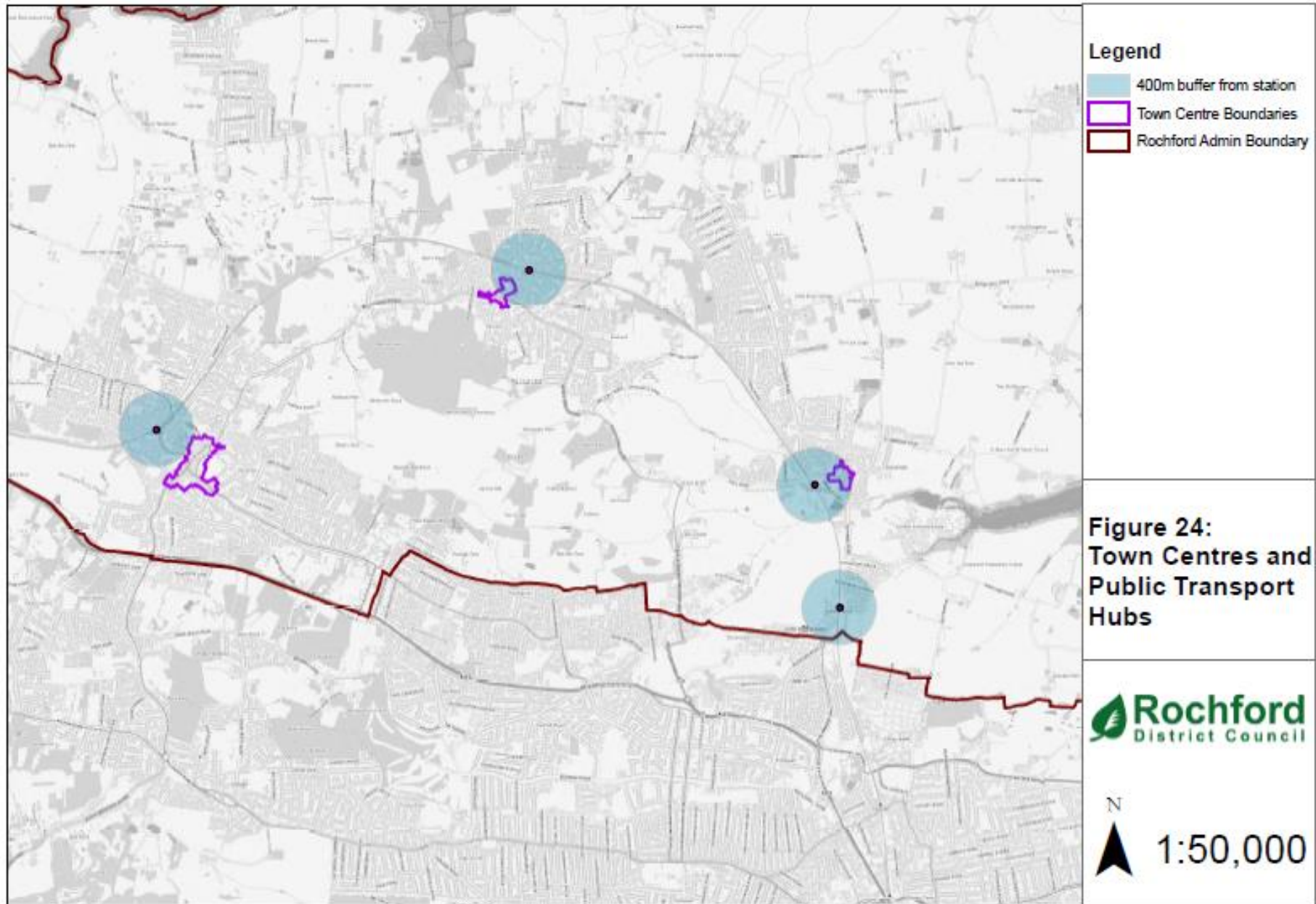


Figure 23:
Lower Density Areas
(East)

 **Rochford**
District Council



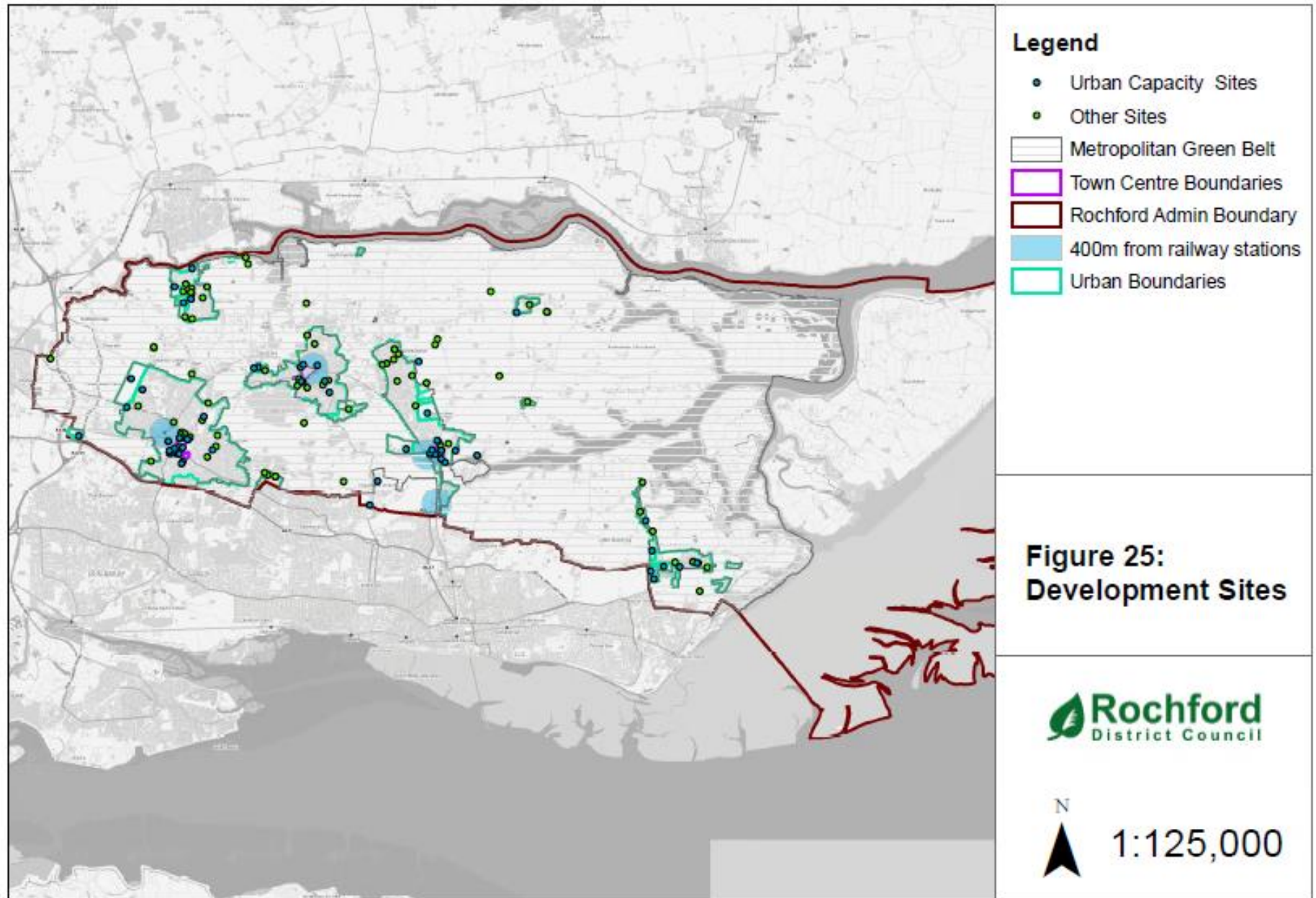
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9. Summary of Urban Capacity

Concluding on the Urban Supply from Specific Sources

- 9.1 This UCS has identified a deliverable supply of around 2,800 dwellings across a variety of urban sites within the study area. It has further identified sites capable of delivering around 480 dwellings which could come forward in the future (from 2025 onwards).
- 9.2 In addition to known deliverable and developable sites, this UCS has identified a theoretical urban supply of around 1,700 dwellings which could be captured from known sites under certain circumstances.
- 9.3 By far the biggest component of deliverable urban supply is existing housing allocations. In relative terms, non-allocated urban sites (above 5 dwellings) only hold capacity for around 560 dwellings, compared to over 2,400 dwellings from allocated housing sites.
- 9.4 Figure 25 overleaf shows the distribution of identified urban sites within this Study, along with other deliverable sites (including urban sites smaller than 5 dwellings and non-urban sites).
- 9.5 Table 26 below shows the possible contribution of known urban sites to the District's housing supply from each of the different sources assessed in this UCS and compares this to the total housing supply figures contained within the 2020 HELAA update.
- 9.6 This table shows that the majority of deliverable and developable housing supply coming forward in the District is likely to be contained on urban sites. This is clearly unsurprising given the priority given in both national and local policy to urban sites, and the policy protections given to non-urban areas when it comes to development (e.g. Green Belt). The small difference between the total urban supply and total housing supply figures likely represents the modest but important contribution made to the District's housing supply from previously developed sites in rural areas, such as the 72 home development on the site of the former Bullwood Hall Prison.
- 9.7 As set out earlier in this UCS, it was not the role of this Study to undertake the detailed assessment of availability, suitability or deliverability of each urban site identified. This assessment is instead reserved for the Council's HELAAs, including both its 2017 HELAA and its 2020 HELAA update. Where appropriate, sites identified in the preparation of this UCS have been included in the HELAA update with a recommended capacity based on their location so that a robust view can be reached on their availability, suitability and deliverability for housing development. It is strongly recommended, therefore, that this UCS is read alongside these HELAAs to ensure a comprehensive picture of land availability can be reached.



9.8 One key area of additionality over the HELAA, however, is that this UCS has sought to calculate the theoretical additional capacity of urban sites that could be captured under certain conditions. In summary, the UCS has identified capacity for around 1,700 homes on known urban sites that are not currently considered deliverable or developable, but which could be achieved under certain conditions, such as maximising densities on housing allocations, consolidating employment land and making more public land available. How these figures can inform the strategy of the new Local Plan is expanded upon in the next section, however it is important not to assume that the entirety of this theoretical capacity can be unlocked. This is largely because of a lack of evidence that this additional capacity can be unlocked or where the unlocking of this additional capacity may have negative implications that would need to be reconciled through the wider plan (such as loss of employment space that may require replacement).

Table 26 – Summary of Urban Housing Supply

Source	Deliverable Supply (Years 1-5)	Developable Supply (Years 6-10)	Theoretical Supply
Total Housing Supply ²⁰	3,052	503	N/A
Known Sources of Urban Supply			
Total Urban Supply	2,792	480	1,697
Review of Expired, Withdrawn and Refused Planning Applications for Housing Development	61	6	0
Review of Extant Planning Permissions	149	0	27
Review of Existing Housing Allocations in Plans	2,423	436	350
Review of Other Existing Allocations in Plans	0	0	1,002
Redevelopment of Council and other publicly owned land	141	0	318
Review of Other Known Urban Sites	148	38	0

²⁰ From HELAA 2020

Concluding on Urban Supply from Windfall Sources

- 10.1 This UCS has also sought to identify the contribution that different components of urban windfall development could make to the District's housing supply moving forward.
- 10.2 As is set out earlier in this report, the assessment of whether it is appropriate to incorporate a windfall allowance into the Council's housing trajectory is reserved in guidance for the HELAA. The HELAA prepared concurrently to this UCS therefore contains the detailed analysis and justification for the value of the windfall allowance being made in the Council's trajectory.
- 10.3 However, this UCS has formed an important source of information to inform that analysis, providing a detailed breakdown of the contribution made to the District's housing supply from several components of windfall over several years.
- 10.4 As is demonstrated in this UCS, and expanded upon in the HELAA, there is no evidence from recent trends to suggest that windfall supply is being 'exhausted' in the District. Whilst it is acknowledged that windfall delivery in any given year can be volatile and heavily affected by a single large development, it is clear from this report that windfall sites are likely to continue to provide a reliable source of urban housing supply into the future.
- 10.5 One of the stated purposes of this UCS is, however, to consider not simply whether windfalls are likely to continue to provide a reliable source of urban housing supply but whether there is a justification for assuming that windfall development is likely to increase in the future so as to justify an uplift to any windfall allowance.
- 10.6 However, as is detailed in the individual analysis for each of the components of windfall in this report, it has generally not been considered possible to calculate a theoretical uplift to the contribution that a particular windfall source could make to overall housing supply beyond its existing mean contribution. There are a number of reasons for this, detailed below.
- 10.7 Firstly, the District is semi-rural in nature with a comparatively small urban coverage. Whilst there is no evidence to suggest that windfall sites are being exhausted, there is equally little evidence to suggest that there is an abundance of such sites that could support a notable increase in windfall delivery into the future. It is noted, for example, that the expansion of permitted development could lead to an increase in new dwellings created via such routes but it remains to be seen whether these conversions would have taken place regardless via other routes to permission. This is not to say that a more proactive or permissive approach through national policy or the new Local Plan could not increase windfall delivery, but rather that there is a lack of clear and compelling evidence at this stage to qualify or quantify this impact.

- 10.8 Secondly, there is a need to be realistic and justified when calculating a windfall allowance to ensure that the Council's housing strategy is not overly ambitious and therefore at risk of under-delivering. Likewise, national policy is clear that the justification for a windfall allowance must be "clear and compelling". Any approach which sought to provide for a windfall allowance that exceeded past trends would require justification which, given the high levels of owner-occupation and limited appetite in the market for large-scale windfall developments, has not been substantiated in this UCS.
- 10.9 Thirdly, as is detailed throughout this report, windfall development is not always desirable from a planning perspective and in certain circumstances can lead to issues relating to amenity conflicts, lack of parking and pressures on local infrastructure. Whilst past windfall rates demonstrate how windfall development can be appropriate in many cases, and whilst the new Local Plan may wish to take a generally more permissive approach towards urban development, such that windfall rates could reasonably be expected to increase, to allow for a larger windfall allowance at this stage would be pre-determinative of the Council's strategy and is unlikely to be robust in the absence of assessment against the many competing factors that emerge through plan preparation.
- 10.10 In light of the above assessment, and its own assessment, the HELAA estimates that the mean annual contribution of windfall developments over the last 8 years is around 56 dwellings per year, with the median average around 46 dwellings per year.
- 10.11 The HELAA concludes that a windfall allowance of 45 dwellings per year would be appropriate and justified. This, whilst being modest in comparison to the mean average, provides an element of contingency against uncertainty in the economy and any potentially anomalous years, including the 'high year' in 2013/14.
- 10.12 Notwithstanding the fact that it is not considered justified to rely on a higher windfall allowance at this time, should the Council pursue a strategy that seeks to maximize urban capacity, by taking a permissive policy approach to urban densities for windfall sites, it is not unreasonable to assume that windfall delivery in excess of 45 dwellings per year could be achieved. A modest average increase of 20% in urban densities (to around 36 dwellings per hectare in suburbs and to around 100 dwellings per hectare in town centres) could see 54 dwellings per year delivered, whilst a more ambitious increase of 50% could deliver around 68 dwellings per year. Measures that could support higher rates of windfall delivery are expanded upon in the next section.

Table 26 – Summary of Annual Contributions of Windfall Components

Windfall Components		
Type	Mean Annual Completions 2011-19, (Net)	Of Which Windfall 2011-19, (Net)
Sub-division of Existing Housing	2	2
Flats Over Shops	N/A	N/A
Empty Homes	N/A	N/A
Densification of Existing Areas	32	17
Changes of Use	21	12
<i>Of which permitted development</i>	2	2
Re-development of non-residential land	30	27
Other Losses	-2	-2
Mean Annual Windfall Contribution		56

10. Unlocking theoretical urban capacity through the RNLP

Implications for housing trajectory and strategy

- 10.1 This UCS has identified a supply of deliverable urban sites from a number of sources and has estimated the capacity of these sites to deliver housing into the future. Where appropriate, the availability, suitability and deliverability of these sites has been assessed in detail in the accompanying HELAA update and factored into the Council's housing trajectory.
- 10.2 In summary, this UCS has identified capacity for between 3,300 and 5,000 homes on urban sites over the next 10-15 years, which are categorised on the basis of certainty (deliverable, developable, theoretical and windfall)
- 10.3 Given that national policy is clear that local authorities should make best possible use of urban and brownfield land before greenfield, and particularly Green Belt, land, this estimate provides a useful point-in-time understanding of the capacity of the District's urban land to accommodate future housing needs.
- 10.4 These figures are not intended to provide a definitive or permanent position on urban capacity in the District. Firstly, the upper end of this estimate assumes that a large amount of theoretical urban capacity can be harnessed, including release of sites that are not currently available or that are in other active uses for housing. It will be for the plan-making process to consider whether the release of such sites for housing is justified and sustainable in the context of a wider planning strategy. Secondly, it is recognised that this UCS reflects an assessment at 'a point in time'. Over time some urban sites will be developed and others will become available. It is important therefore that housing supply continues to be monitored as part of the Authority Monitoring Report and that the new Local Plan is always informed by an up to date understanding of the availability of urban land for housing.
- 10.5 In addition to the above supply, this UCS has considered the contribution that various forms of windfall development have made to historic housing delivery rates. In combination with the HELAA, it is considered that a windfall allowance of around 45 homes per year could be justified based on past trends. The case for setting a higher windfall allowance was considered in this Study, however it was determined that even with a more permissive policy approach, it is unlikely that we could achieve sufficient certainty to justify a higher windfall allowance. Nevertheless, higher than expected windfall completions would make the Council's housing supply position more robust.
- 10.6 The Council intends to publish a paper on emerging strategy and site options in Winter 2020. The estimates of urban capacity within this report, alongside other key evidence

documents currently being prepared, will provide a useful understanding of the capacity of urban land to meet development needs in the context of a wider planning strategy.

Implications for short and long-term policy decisions

- 10.7 This UCS has sought to provide a realistic understanding of urban land availability as shaped by national and local policy as it exists now. However, if the Council wishes (in the context of national policy) to harness as much urban capacity as sustainably possible, such as to safeguard greenfield and particularly Green Belt land, it may need to take a more positive and pro-active position on urban housing developments through both short- and long-term policy decisions.
- 10.8 Policy H1 prioritises the use of previously developed land, including urban land, and sets out that limited infilling in residential areas will be acceptable in certain circumstances. Policy H1 also sets out that higher densities will be acceptable in town centres. Policies DM1 and DM3 sets out minimum design standards for residential developments, including those in urban areas, which include adherence to technical standards with a bearing on density (including minimum standards on parking and amenity space). Policy DM2 sets out the importance of making efficient use of land and requires residential developments to be built at a minimum density of 30 dwellings per hectare, except where exceptional circumstances can be justified.
- 10.9 In general, the policy approaches detailed above are considered to provide a reasonable basis for making good use of urban land that continue to generally accord with the principles of the NPPF. Furthermore, whilst they set tests and standards for determining when and where urban development should take place and at what density, these are not considered to be overly restrictive or unreasonable.
- 10.10 In preparing its new Local Plan, however, a review of these policies and standards could seek to give greater weight to the importance of harnessing urban capacity. There are several policy areas that could be reviewed in advance of during the preparation of the new Local Plan, including:
- Whether it is appropriate to target a higher minimum density in residential developments beyond the current minimum of 30 dwellings per hectare in residential areas
 - Whether it is appropriate to take a more permissive approach to higher-density housing developments within walking distance of sustainable transport infrastructure, such as bus and railway stations
 - Whether it is appropriate to take a more permissive approach to the density of unbuilt housing allocations, including to allow higher densities where the development would still achieve all policy objectives

- Whether it is appropriate to take a more permissive approach to housing within the primary and secondary frontages of town centres where doing so would help to safeguard the long-term vitality of those town centres
- Whether it is appropriate to lessen or take a more flexible approach to the application of space-intensive policy requirements, such as parking standards and garden sizes, in certain circumstances where the development as a whole would still achieve a suitable standard of sustainability
- Whether it is appropriate to take a more permissive approach towards infill and backland development in certain circumstances beyond that set out in Policy DM3
- Seeking opportunities to utilise public sector assets, including the Council's own land, to deliver housing in sustainable locations
- Whether it is appropriate to pay particular focus to promoting densifying housing development in areas identified in this Study as being low density or sustainably located

10.11 Whilst it is not the role of this UCS to consider the implications of the above policy decisions in detail, the analysis contained within this Study is likely to be relevant to consider the optimal strategy.

Implications of emerging national policy changes

10.12 It is recognised that this study has been prepared at a time of significant planning reform. *Planning for the Future*, a Government White Paper, was published in August 2020 and contains substantial proposed reforms to the English planning system, including to the content and processes associated with Local Plan preparation.

10.13 Given that the proposed reforms are, at this time, simply out to consultation, and are therefore not guaranteed to become policy, it has not been possible to fully accommodate their implications into the methodology or approach in this report. Nonetheless, this study is still considered to be robust and valuable, even if these reforms are introduced in full, given that greenfield and particularly Green Belt land will continue to be protected and therefore the sequential preference given to developing urban and brownfield land is likely to remain a central component of national policy.

10.14 Whilst the proposed reforms have not been factored into this Study, it is recognised that some of the measures contained within the proposals have the potential to increase the delivery of housing in urban areas. In particular, a common phrase used throughout the document is "gentle densification" and it is considered likely that the

Government will introduce new measures to encourage design-led densification in urban areas. However the need to protect garden land from inappropriate development is acknowledged in the report which suggests some continued policy restraint against unsustainable densification. Furthermore, new routes to permission including expansion of permitted development rights for the re-development of commercial buildings, and 'fast track' permissions in urban renewal areas, may offer simpler and quicker paths to permission for certain urban housing developments. Moreover, these changes may mean that certain urban housing developments that would currently be considered inappropriate, for example due to their location, would now benefit from an implied or automatic permission for housing that facilitates their delivery in a way that is not possible in the current planning system.

- 10.15 At this time, it is not possible to qualify or quantify the impacts of these changes on the urban capacity of the District. It is conceivable however that a simpler or more permissive approach in national policy could mean that the amount of windfall development coming forward in the future could exceed past rates, and that certain large sites that are not currently known to be available could become available.
- 10.16 In light of this uncertainty, it will be important that the new Local Plan takes account of these policy changes when known and that the strategy and policy direction it sets, informed by the evidence base, continues to make as best use of urban land as possible and lays the policy foundations for sustainable growth in the urban area.
- 10.17 If appropriate, it may be necessary to prepare an update to this UCS prior to finalisation of the RNLN to ensure that policy and strategy decisions are made on the most up to date information available on the District's urban capacity, and an accurate understanding of national policy and legislative requirements the plan will need to satisfy.

Appendix A – Supporting Tables and Figures

Table A1 – List of Withdrawn Applications for Housing Development (5+ dwellings) since 2008

Reference	Address	Development	Date	Superseded?
19/01140/FUL	66 North Street Rochford	Demolish Public House and construct three storey building comprising 1no. one-bed and 10no. 2-bed flats with new access parking and amenity areas	March 2020	No
17/01019/FUL	Land Opposite 100 Windermere Avenue Hullbridge	Construct 6no. 4-bed Houses to Front and Form Access Road to 2no. 4-bed Chalets and 2no. 4-bed Bungalows With Garages and Parking (10 Dwellings in Total)	November 2018	No
17/0557/FUL	19 South Street Rochford	Change of use of no. 19 South Street to provide 8 no one bedroomed flats. Demolish wall and form new access onto South Street and construct three and four storey buildings comprising 20 no one bedroomed and 5 no two bedroomed flats with landscaping and parking	March 2018	Yes
17/00530/FUL	57 South Street Rochford	Demolish Existing Building and Construct Four Storey Building Comprising 11.no one bedroomed and 2no. Two Bedroomed Flats, Car Parking and Associated Landscaping	October 2019	No, however will be considered in review of Council-owned land section
15/00593/FUL	Timber Grove London Road Rayleigh	Demolition Of Existing Care Home And All Other Buildings, Erection Of 91 Dwellings Comprising 34no. Three Bed Houses, 24no. Four Bed Houses, 8no. Five Bed Houses, 7no. One Bed Flats, and 18no.Two Bed Flats, Construction Of Replacement Part Single and Part Two Storey 13 Bedroom Care Home, Associated Parking and Landscaping, Stopping Up Of Existing Access, and Improvement Of Existing Access Onto London Road.	January 2016	No, however will be considered in review of allocated land section
15/00457/FUL	Land rear of 12 to 26 Eastwood Road Rayleigh	Demolition of Existing Buildings and Construction of 36 No. Two Bed Flats With Ancillary Parking and Amenity	December 2015	Yes

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15/00228/OUT	Birch Lodge Anchor Lane Canewdon	Outline Application to Demolish Existing Dwelling and Construct 17 no Houses, Access Road, Garages And Parking Areas	December 2015	Yes
15/00144/OUT	27 – 29 Eldon Way Hockley	Outline Application to Demolish Warehouse Units 27, 28 and 29 and Construct Three Storey Building	October 2019	No, however will be considered in review of allocated land section
08/00329/FUL	Land Adjacent 63 Hawkwell Park Drive Hawkwell Hockley	Two Detached 3/4 Bedroomed Houses and Three Detached 2 Bedroomed Bungalows with Garages, Construct Private Drive with Access from Park Gardens and Re-route Existing Bridleway.	September 2008	Yes
09/00298/FUL	Site Of 125A To 125D High Road Rayleigh	Demolish Existing Building and Construct Three Storey Building to Provide 4 No. Two Bedroomed and 2 No. One Bedroomed Flats With Parking Area and External Storage Building/Cycle Store.	July 2009	Yes
16/00136/FUL	Land South Of Windfield Church Road Hockley	Construction of 6 no. detached houses with parking, hard and soft landscaping and associated works	June 2016	Yes
18/00190/FUL	1 Malyons Lane Hullbridge	Proposed Demolition of Existing Dwelling and Construct New Access Drive and 6 No. Detached 2 Bedroom Bungalows with Parking	June 2018	Yes
18/00359/FUL	61 High Street Great Wakering	Proposed part two and part three storey extension and conversion of existing building to provide 9 no. flats with associated car parking. Retain A1 shop to ground floor	July 2018	No

Table A2 – List of Expired Permissions for Housing Development (5+ dwellings) since 2008

Reference	Address	Development	Date of Expiry	Superseded?
05/00446/FUL	Land Rear Of 91 High Street Rayleigh	Redevelopment of the Site to Provide a New Four Storey Building Providing 15 Two Bed Flats with 18 Car Parking Spaces	May 2011	Yes
07/01030/OUT	1 Woodlands Road Hockley	Demolish Existing Dwelling and Construct Three Storey Building Containing 7 Flats with Access, Parking and Amenity Areas	April 2011	Yes
08/00287/FUL	Land at rear of 26 South Street, Rochford.	Two Storey Pitched Roofed Building With Rooms in the Roofspace Incorporating Pitched Roofed Dormers to Provide Nine Two Bedroomed Flats With Access off Locks Hill and Parking Area.	February 2012	Yes
08/00565/FUL	289 Ferry Road Hullbridge Hockley	Demolish Existing Dwelling and Construct Part Two Storey, Part Three Storey Building Containing 5 No. One Bedroomed and 12 No. Two Bedroomed Flats With Parking to Front and Revised Access.	September 2011	Yes
08/00576/FUL	299 Ferry Road Hullbridge Hockley	Demolish Existing Dwelling and Construct Two Storey Pitched Roofed Building to Provide 3 No. One Bedroomed and 5 No. Two Bedroomed Age Restricted Flats. Close Existing Access and Form New Access With Parking Areas and Bin Store to Front and Fence to Side.	July 2013	No
10/00820/OUT	Land 41 - 67 Lower Lambricks Rayleigh	Outline Application To Demolish Existing Building And Redevelop Site With 8 No. Detached And 2 No. Semi-Detached Houses.	March 2014	Yes
13/00469/FUL	22 Main Road Hockley	Construct New Roof to Outbuilding and Convert to 3 Bed Live Work Unit, Single Storey Front Extension and Three Storey Rear Extension and Additional Floor to Main Building to Provide Shop and Development of 8 No. One Bedroomed Flats and 2 No. Two Bedroomed Flats With Parking and Amenity Areas.	October 2016	Yes

Table A3 – List of Refused Applications for Housing Development (5+ dwellings)

Reference	Address	Development	Reasons for Refusal	Superseded?
11/00781/OUT	Land South Of Coombes Farm, Stambridge Road, Rochford	Outline Application for Residential Development of up to 251 Dwellings, Open Space Provision and Associated Access	Green Belt and non-compliance with development plan	No – remains Green Belt
14/00596/FUL	Land Rear Of 12 To 26 Eastwood Road Rayleigh	Demolish Existing Industrial Buildings and Construct 42 No. 2-Bed Flats in Two Blocks with Undercroft Parking to One Block, Parking and Amenity Space.	Impact on residential amenity, inadequate information on air quality impact, poor design	Yes
14/00627/OUT	Land North Of London Road And South Of Rawreth Lane And West Of Rawreth Industrial Estate Rawreth Lane Rayleigh	Outline Planning Application (with all Matters Reserved apart from Access) for the erection of Residential Development with associated Open Space, Landscaping, Parking, Servicing, Utilities, Footpath and Cycle Links, Drainage and Infrastructure Works, and Primary School. Provision of Non-Residential Floorspace to Part of Site, Uses including any of the following: Use Class A1(Retail), A3(Food and Drink), A4(Drinking Establishments), C2(Residential Institutions), D1a(Health or Medical Centre) or D1b(Crèche, Day Nursery or Day Centre).	Lack of information on infrastructure mitigation, and inadequate flood risk mitigation	Yes
16/00515/FUL	289 Ferry Road Hullbridge	Demolish Existing Dwelling and Construct Three Storey Building Comprising 14 no Two Bedroomed Flats	Poor Design	Yes
17/00431/OUT	Fairways Garden Centre Hullbridge Road Rayleigh	Outline Application to Demolish Commercial and Retail Units and Construct 4no. Two Bedroom, 8no. Three Bedroom Dwellings and 4no. Four Bedroom Dwellings (16 Dwellings in Total) With Access Onto Hullbridge Road.	Green Belt	Yes - appeal
17/01136/OUT	Rosedene Nurseries Barrow Hall Road	Outline Application to Demolish Existing Dwellings and Buildings and Proposed Twenty Four 3-bed Houses	Green Belt	No – Green Belt

	Barling Magna			
18/00307/OUT	72 Main Road Hawkwell	Site of 72 Main Road and land rear of 70 Main Road and land rear of Rawal Pindi Nursery: Proposed outline application (with all matters reserved) for the demolition of single dwelling and outbuildings and the development of the site for residential purposes	Green Belt and Biodiversity Impact	No – Green Belt
18/00482/FUL	22 Main Road Hockley	Conversion of commercial building to form 11 x 2no bedroom apartments	Loss of commercial units	Yes
18/00527/FUL	156 High Street Rayleigh	Demolition of existing building and construct A3 unit (ground floor), with 10 no. flats above and associated car parking to rear	Poor design and impact on residential amenity	No
19/00335/FUL	Land Rear Of 98 To 128 High Street Rayleigh	Proposed demolition of existing buildings. Redevelopment of the site to provide 2 No commercial units and 35 No residential apartments with associated landscaping.	Inadequate information on air quality impact, impact on residential amenity, inadequate car parking	No
17/00260/FUL	Site Of 31 And 33 White Hart Lane, Hawkwell	Demolish Existing Dwellings and Construct Development Of 3 No. Four Bedroomed Houses and 4 No. Three Bedroomed Bungalows	Inadequate information on flood impact	No

Table A4 – Status of Allocated Sites

Policy Reference	Location	Planning Status	Allocated Capacity	Capacity Remaining
SER1	Land north of London Road, Rayleigh	Site is being developed in three main chunks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outline permission granted for 500 homes (15/00362/OUT) of which 192 have reserved matters consent (17/00578/REM) Full application pending decision for 83 homes (16/00899/FUL) Full permission granted for 47 homes (15/00736/FUL) 	550+	550-800
SER2	West Rochford	Site is being developed as a whole: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outline permission granted for 600 homes (10/00234/OUT) of which all have reserved matters consent (13/00552/REM; 16/00183/REM) Amendments approved resulting in uplift of capacity by 20 homes (17/00582/FUL) 	500	464
SER3	West Hockley	Site was developed under permission for 70 homes (15/00599/FUL)	50	7
SER4	South Hawkwell	Site was developed under permission for 176 homes (12/00381/FUL)	175	0
SER5	East Ashingdon	Site was developed under permission for 100 homes (11/00315/OUT; 12/00398/REM)	100	0
SER6	South West Hullbridge	Site is being developed as a whole with permissions in place for 500 homes (14/00813/OUT; 18/00135/REM)	500	500
SER7	South Canewdon	Site is being developed in two main chunks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Full permission for 35 homes (16/00733/FUL) Full permission for 14 homes (17/00258/FUL) 	49	49
SER8	South East Ashingdon	No planning permission received to date	500	500-600
SER9a	West Great Wakering (Little Wakering Road)	Site being delivered as a whole. Outline permission granted for 120 homes (16/00731/OUT) with reserved matters consent also in place (18/01129/REM)	250 (with SER9b)	120
SER9b	West Great Wakering (South of High Street)	Site being delivered as a whole. Outline permission granted for 180 homes (16/00668/OUT) with reserved matters consent also in place (17/00862/REM)	250 (with SER9a)	320
BFR1	Star Lane Industrial Estate, Great Wakering	Part of the site delivered under permission for 116 dwellings (12/00252/FUL). Remainder of site in active employment use	131	110

BFR2	Eldon Way / Foundry Industrial Estate, Hockley	No planning permission received to date	100	100
BFR3	Stambridge Mills, Rochford	No planning permission received to date. Previous application for 96 homes withdrawn (11/00494/FUL).	98	98
BFR4	Rawreth Industrial Estate, Rayleigh	No planning permission received to date	222	222