

Augmenting the Evidence Base for the Examination in Public of the South East Plan

Briefing Note: Additional Land Take Assessment

The aim of the additional land take assessment was to arrive at a very rough estimate of the total area of greenfield land that might be required to meet different levels of housing growth. A very straightforward, two stage model was used, as illustrated on the attached diagram and as described as follows:

Stage 1: Establishing the urban capacity of each district. The starting point was an estimate of existing urban capacity for the period 2006 - 2026. Where possible we used the data prepared by the districts themselves for the South East Plan (SEP). Where this data was not given in the SEP, we used the only other wide ranging urban potential study, which were prepared for the Assembly by Roger Tym and Partners in March 2005.

Overall the data on existing urban capacity in the SEP is acknowledged (e.g. by GTZ) as rather variable. This is because all work involves researchers making a number of assumptions, especially with regard to the occurrence of future windfall sites and the need to roll forward existing trends for such a long time into the future. We have indicated in Appendix C of the report all of the data sources that we have used.

The Assembly's Annual Monitoring Report 2005 provides data on land supply by county in 2005 and identifies an eight year housing land supply. Our calculations suggest that the urban potential data equates to a 13 year urban potential supply. This difference is probably due to our study using a longer time horizon, thus including future windfalls up to 2026.

We have assumed for the purposes of our calculations that **all** potential brownfield and other housing land that has been identified in urban capacity studies and plan allocations and that they will be developed over the 20 years of the SEP. Any additional housing requirement therefore **must** be met through a greenfield land allocation.

Stage 2: Density Assumptions. In order to calculate future greenfield land take, we had to make assumptions with regard to housing densities. We took two alternative net density assumptions, a central forecast based on 40 dwellings per ha (dph), assumed to be the average density set out in the SEP, and 50 dph net. For illustrative purposes we then grossed up these two net density ranges on a generous but simple gross to net ratio of 50%, the most conservative end of DCLG recommended range of gross to net ratios. Should the higher gross to net ratio be achieved, then clearly less land would be required. Nevertheless for testing purposes we proceeded with a net density of 40 dph (gross density of 20 dph) and a net density 50 dph (gross density of 25 dph).

We noted that our forecasts for land requirements were lower than those achieved in the ODPM Sustainability Model (page 25 of our report). We assume that the difference is as a result of the ODPM model reflecting total additional land demand rather than just the additional residential land requirement that we measured.

Overall the SEP achieves 65% of all development on urban potential land, exceeding the Government target, but the higher growth options fall below this target. This is not an unexpected outcome if we are to assume, as we have, that urban capacity studies have been effective at identifying all spare urban capacity likely to arise over the next 20 years.