

REPORT TO: PLANNING
CABINET MEMBER – REGENERATION
CABINET

DATE: 10th MARCH 2010 – PLANNING
17th MARCH 2010 – CABINET MEMBER - REGENERATION
15th APRIL 2010 – CABINET

SUBJECT: JOINT STRATEGIC HOUSING LAND AVAILABILITY
ASSESSMENT STUDY 2008 – FINAL REPORT

**WARDS
AFFECTED:** All

REPORT OF: Andy Wallis – Planning and Economic Development Director

**CONTACT
OFFICER:** Alan Young
Strategic Planning and Information Manager
☎ 0151 934 3551

**EXEMPT/
CONFIDENTIAL:** No

PURPOSE/SUMMARY:

To report the key findings of the Joint Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment Study 2008, one of a number of key evidence gathering studies that are being undertaken to inform the Core Strategy process and to guide advice and decisions on individual housing proposals and planning applications.

REASON WHY DECISION REQUIRED:

To indicate Council support for key advice contained in the study document.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That:

- (i) Planning Committee and Cabinet Member – Regeneration note the key findings of the Joint Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment Study for Sefton and recommend that Cabinet endorses them to inform the emerging Core Strategy process;
- (ii) Subject to (iii) below, Planning Committee adopts the key findings of the study to inform the emerging Core Strategy process and use them to inform advice and decisions in relation to individual pre application proposals and planning applications which raise housing issues;
- (iii) Cabinet endorses the key findings of the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment Study to inform the emerging Core Strategy process.

KEY DECISION: Yes

FORWARD PLAN: Yes

IMPLEMENTATION DATE: Following expiry of call in period after Cabinet meeting on 15TH April 2010

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS:

None

IMPLICATIONS: None

Budget/Policy Framework: None

Financial:

| <u>CAPITAL EXPENDITURE</u> | 2009 2010 £ | 2010/ 2011 £ | 2011/ 2012 £ | 2012/ 2013 £ |
|--|----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Gross Increase in Capital Expenditure | £39,500* | | | |
| Funded by: | | | | |
| Sefton Capital Resources | | | | |
| Specific Capital Resources | | | | |
| <u>REVENUE IMPLICATIONS</u> | | | | |
| Gross Increase in Revenue Expenditure | | | | |
| Funded by: | | | | |
| Sefton funded Resources | | | | |
| Funded from External Resources | | | | |
| Does the External Funding have an expiry date? Y/N | When? | | | |
| How will the service be funded post expiry? | | | | |

* This is Sefton's share of the joint study cost (total cost £90,000) has/will be paid over 2008/2009 and 2009/2010

Legal: N/A

Risk Assessment: N/A

Asset Management:

N/A

CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN/VIEWS

N/A

CORPORATE OBJECTIVE MONITORING:

| <u>Corporate Objective</u> | | <u>Positive Impact</u> | <u>Neutral Impact</u> | <u>Negative Impact</u> |
|-----------------------------------|---|-------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1 | Creating a Learning Community | | ✓ | |
| 2 | Creating Safe Communities | | ✓ | |
| 3 | Jobs and Prosperity | ✓ | | |
| 4 | Improving Health and Well-Being | ✓ | | |
| 5 | Environmental Sustainability | ✓ | | |
| 6 | Creating Inclusive Communities | ✓ | | |
| 7 | Improving the Quality of Council Services and Strengthening local Democracy | | ✓ | |
| 8 | Children and Young People | | ✓ | |

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS RELIED UPON IN THE PREPARATION OF THIS REPORT

PPS3: Housing, CLG, November 2006

Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments: Practice Guidance, CLG, July 2007

JOINT STRATEGIC HOUSING LAND AVAILABILITY ASSESSMENT 2008 – FINAL REPORT

1.0 Background

- 1.1 Following a competitive tender selection process, the Council commissioned specialist consultants, White Young Green (now WYG), to undertake a Joint Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) Study on 7th April 2008. The study is a joint study commissioned on behalf of Knowsley, Sefton and West Lancashire local authorities respectively. The study has been led and tendered for by Sefton and funded by the three local authorities on a split cost basis, priced on an agreed formula based, in part on the number of sites to be assessed. Its principal purposes are to inform the preparation of the Council's Local Development Framework Core Strategy in relation to housing land supply matters and to guide advice on pre application proposals and planning applications which raise housing issues. The study is to be issued in three separate volumes relating to the individual local authorities. Sefton's study has now been completed and Knowsley and West Lancashire studies are almost complete at the time this report has been drafted.
- 1.2 The SHLAA study is regarded as one of the key evidence gathering studies (possibly the key study based on Core Strategy Inspectors' reports) and should be considered in parallel with the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) which was previously reported to Members (Planning Committee on 19th August 2009; Cabinet Member - Regeneration on 2nd September 2009 and Cabinet on 3rd September 2009). Specifically, in this regard, PPS3: Housing states at Annex C that:
- 'Strategic Housing Market Assessments and Strategic Land Availability Assessments are an important part of the policy process. They provide information on the level of need and demand for housing and the opportunities that exist to meet it.'*
- 1.3 In short the SHLAA study examines the supply of housing and the SHMA examines the need and demand for housing. Both studies are essential and complementary to each other.
- 1.4 The Joint SHLAA Study report follows the general advice contained in PPS3: Housing and the more specific advice contained in the subsequently published Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments Practice Guidance which was published in July 2007. In this regard, Practice Guidance in its introduction states that:
- 'Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments are a key component of the evidence base to support the delivery of sufficient land for housing to meet the community's need for more homes.'*
- 1.5 Planning Committee agreed to the undertaking of such a study on 13th February 2008 and that a further report should be received on the outcome of the study at a later date. This report addresses that commitment.
- 1.6 A copy of the Sefton's part of the Joint SHLAA Study (i.e. Sefton's volume) can be inspected on the Sefton website at www.sefton.gov.uk/shlaa
- 1.7 The study context and approach are set out in Section 2 of this report; the key elements of the study are set out in Section 3 and a summary of the key findings of the study are

highlighted in Section 4. Section 5 highlights some key caveats associated with the study findings and Section 6 sets out the Director's comments on the study. Notwithstanding this, because the study report (and its Appendices) is a long and detailed document, for the avoidance of doubt, this report simply summarises some of the key elements/findings of the study that may be of particular interest to Members, and does not purport to be comprehensive in considering all matters raised in the study report. The definitive position is set out the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment: Final Report, February 2010.

1.8 Importantly, the draft study version of the document has been subject to key stakeholder involvement and to a full public and stakeholder consultation that have resulted in detailed comments and criticisms being made. These, in turn, have all been taken into account and have informed the preparation of the final study report. This process and its implications are summarised later in the committee report at Section 2, paragraphs 2.2 and 2.5 below.

1.9 The base date for the Sefton SHLAA is 1st April 2008.

2.0 Study Context and Approach

(i) Study Context

2.1 The general approach to undertaking SHLAAs is now well documented with a significant number of such studies having been completed by local authorities throughout the country. In Greater Merseyside all local authorities have or are undertaking a SHLAA study, albeit in slightly different ways and to different timescales. Sefton did explore, some three years ago, the possibility of a comprehensive sub-regional SHLAA being undertaken but for various reasons it was not possible, including the reason that different local authorities were at different stages in the Core Strategy process at the time. Apart from the current joint study, St Helens and Halton and Warrington have completed a Mid Mersey SHLAA and Liverpool and Wirral are currently co-operating on a producing a joint Cross Mersey SHLAA.

2.2 The SHLAA good practice guidance recommends the production of the assessment should be informed by engagement with key local stakeholders throughout via a Housing Market Partnership. Such a partnership should include house builders, social landlords and local property agents, amongst others. Whilst no formal Housing Market Partnership was organised as part of the SHLAA, extensive consultation has been undertaken with key stakeholders at various stages of the study. The programme of consultation has included two formal stakeholder workshops, a comprehensive 'call for sites' exercise (where developers/landowners and others are invited to submit possible housing sites), and a comprehensive public consultation at the draft stage of the SHLAA report, to which key stakeholders and the public were invited to comment. Importantly, in this regard WYG, who carried out the study, have commented that this effectively amounts to a Housing Market Partnership as advised by the Practice Guidance, namely:

'It is WYG's view that this level of consultation and involvement effectively constitutes a Housing Market Partnership, even though this title was never formally conferred.'

2.3 It is important to be clear that the SHLAA is distinctly different from previous urban housing capacity studies prepared in the context of the now cancelled PPG3, including the Merseyside Sub-Region Urban Housing Capacity Study (including Sefton) that was completed in 2004. The key differences are:

- whereas urban housing capacity studies covered only existing urban areas, the SHLAA must cover all settlements with housing potential, both urban and rural, going beyond existing settlement boundaries;
- whereas urban housing capacity studies covered only previously developed sites, the SHLAA must cover both previously developed and greenfield land;
- whereas urban housing capacity studies were underpinned by a sequential approach to identifying supply, there is no such requirement in the SHLAA;
- whereas urban housing capacity studies were required to identify only sufficient land to meet any housing target, the SHLAA needs to identify enough land so that a Core Strategy can maintain a continuous delivery for at least 15 years from the adoption of such a plan. To achieve this it should investigate all potential sites and, if appropriate, broad locations with housing potential; and
- whereas urban housing capacity studies were required to include an allowance for windfall sites, the SHLAA is specifically precluded from including such an allowance, unless there is robust evidence of genuine local circumstances that prevent specific sites being identified through the SHLAA process.

(ii) Study Approach

- 2.4 The study approach closely follows the advice set out in the CLG Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment: Practice Guidance published in July 2007. It draws on preparatory work undertaken in 2007 and early 2008 by the three local authorities, which respectively collated information and produced comprehensive lists of potential housing sites to be reviewed through the SHLAA process. Following on from this WYG were asked to review the work completed by the three local authorities and take the study forward to completion, ensuring compliance with Government good practice guidance.
- 2.5 To give added weight to this study, the draft SHLAA Study has gone significantly beyond the advice in the CLG Practice Guidance. In this respect, the Council undertook two publicised 'call for sites' exercises in order to encourage landowners, developers, and members of the public to submit additional potential sites for consideration. The initial formal 'call for sites' stage lasted from 25 October 2007 to 13 December 2007, and was followed by a second 'call for sites' stage from 27 May 2008 to 18 July 2008. In combination, these exercises generated a total of 212 site submissions. Furthermore, the draft SHLAA Study has additionally been subject to a formal full public consultation in order to maximise the opportunity for stakeholders and others to comment on, and have a direct input to the study. These comments and WYG's responses are set out in Appendix 2 – Summary and Responses to Representations Received at Draft Report Stage of the full report. Among other things, this has enabled the draft findings of the study to be substantiated and tested against the practical experience of landowners, property professionals, and local community members/ the wider public and regional stakeholders. In this regard, the draft SHLAA Study was made available for public consultation between 20th August and 1st October 2009 (6 weeks). Subsequently, this consultation period was informally extended by a week until 8th October 2009. The public consultation generated 72 representations in respect of Sefton and a further 17 additional sites were submitted for consideration.
- 2.6 The SHLAA has identified a total of some 1632 sites to be considered including sites identified by Sefton and 'call for sites' process. Due to the large number of sites identified, it was decided that it was not cost-effective or methodologically advantageous to visit all sites less than 0.1 ha in size. Instead a 10% statistically representative sample of the smaller sites was assessed and the findings grossed up to represent the total population size. In total this meant that 804 sites were subject to detailed appraisal and

visited by the WYG survey team. For the avoidance of doubt all 'call for sites' sites irrespective of size were all visited and assessed. WYG then applied a very detailed 25 criteria appraisal process to all sites visited. Importantly, in order to be considered deliverable for housing sites have to satisfy each of the following criteria:

Be Available – i.e. the site is available now or in the time frame to which they relate;

Be Suitable – i.e. the site offers a suitable location for housing development and would contribute to the creation of sustainable communities; and

Be Achievable – i.e. there is a reasonable prospect that housing will be delivered on the site in the time frame proposed.

3.0 Key Elements of the Study

3.1 As part of the study WYG made an early decision to exclude three categories of site for the following reasons:

Allocated Employment Sites (including Primarily Industrial Areas)

Consistent with the emerging advice in the draft Employment Land and Premises Study, these were considered likely to remain in their existing use and were therefore excluded from the identified housing supply, except where there was a very strong presumption otherwise. In practice only one site in a Primarily Industrial Area has been included in the identified housing supply; that at Foul Lane, south of the railway line, in Southport. This vacant site was specifically identified as being unsuited to continuing employment use by the recently completed Employment Land and Premises Study report, which was reported to Members in the last committee cycle.

Green Belt Sites

Whilst the SHLAA Practice Guidance does not permit Green Belt sites to be automatically excluded from any study, WYG have taken the view that Green Belt sites should be excluded from the overall amount of land with potential for residential development as these sites will be assessed through a separate Study which will consider broad locations for future housing development. In this regard, WYG point out that such a Study is outside the scope of the current commission and, accordingly, the SHLAA simply provides an indication of the total amount of Green Belt land that has been assessed, but deliberately does not ascribe any dwelling yield (i.e. housing delivery numbers) to these sites. To reinforce this stance, WYG further point out that it would be premature to consider these sites at this time, as the suitability of releasing any land from Green Belt has not yet been determined. Only one Green Belt site, the Powerhouse Site in Formby, is recommended, in principle, for housing use. However, this site is identified in the UDP as a 'major developed site in the Green Belt' and therefore has a different status to the other sites submitted. This confirms the view of the recently published Employment Land and Premises Study.

Flood Zone 3 sites

WYG have taken the view that sites located wholly within Flood Zone 3 are not likely to be considered suitable for housing and should not contribute towards the identified housing supply. Where, however, a site is partially located in Flood Zone 3, this part of the site has been removed from its net developable area.

3.2 Furthermore, as part of the study process WYG have adopted the following approach in

terms of urban greenspaces and non allocated sites in existing employment use:

Urban Greenspace sites

As part of the study WYG made an early decision to take a very cautious view about sites that are designated as Urban Greenspace and other areas of open space that have policy protection. In this regard, a view was taken from Council Officers as to the quality and importance of urban green space prior to a site assessment being undertaken. Arising from this, Urban Greenspace sites have generally been considered to have very limited housing potential and therefore removed from potential supply where the Council has indicated that housing development would be likely to be resisted.

One exception to this is the Coffee House Bridge site in Bootle, subject of a Supplementary Planning Document, which clearly supports the principle of housing development on part of the site. A limited number of other sites have been considered partially suitable, with redevelopment potentially being acceptable on the footprint of existing buildings.

As a result of the Building Schools for the Future programme, it is probable that a number of school sites that are allocated as Urban Greenspace will become available for residential development in the future after public consultation on possible school amalgamations have taken place. These may add modestly to housing supply at a later date but the SHLAA study, because of prematurity, makes no assumption about any housing contribution from this source. Any contribution from this source would be picked up via subsequent monitoring or study updates.

Non allocated sites in existing employment use

In assessing 'non allocated sites in existing employment use' WYG have again taken a cautious approach, both in terms of the likelihood of such sites coming forward for redevelopment and with regard to whether the use for housing would be likely to be judged acceptable by the Council. In this regard, WYG's site specific assessments have been undertaken on the basis that the redevelopment for housing of sites currently used for employment purposes will generally only be permitted if the development of the site would not lead to an unacceptable loss of employment land supply in the locality. This is consistent with advice presented in the recent Employment Land & Premises Study.

4.0 A Summary of the Key Findings of the Study

4.1 Table 4.1, below, sets out a summary Sefton's housing supply position arising from the final SHLAA study.

Table 4.1 Risk Assessed Housing Supply at 1 April 2008

| Source | 1-5 Year | 6-10 Year | 11-15 Year | Total |
|------------------------------------|------------|-------------|---------------|---------------|
| SHLAA large sites | 1,017 | 1,384 | 231 | 2,632 |
| SHLAA small site allowance | 216 | 152 | 40 | 408 |
| Commitments | 2,014 | 341 | 0 | 2,355 |
| TOTAL | 3,247 | 1,877 | 271 | 5,395 |
| RSS Requirements ¹ | 2,660 | 2,660 | 2,596 | 7,916 |
| Potential over/under supply | 587 | -783 | -2,325 | -2,521 |

¹RSS requirement includes a shortfall of 415 dwellings between 2003 and 2008, in addition to annual requirement of 500 dwellings. The requirement has been apportioned equally (i.e. 32 dwellings per annum) over the RSS period to

4.2 The key findings from table 4.1 and the full study (from a 1st April 2008 study base date) may be summarised below:

- In total the assessment indicates that Sefton has a 'risk assessed' housing land supply of 9.6 years from the study base date of 1st April 2008, against the RSS target of 500 per annum (plus the notional 32 dwellings per annum shortfall – see the footnote to Table 4.1 above). The 'risk assessment' that has been used applies a 20% discount for potential non-delivery of sites based on such factors as currently unknown constraints, changing landowner and developer intentions etc, and is based on best practice elsewhere where these studies have been undertaken.
- Of this headline supply, the majority is considered appropriate to come forward within the first 5 years. As can be seen in the above table, 3,247 units are considered suitable in the 1-5 year period; when compared to a RSS requirement of 2,660 units, this gives a five-year over-supply of 587 units.
- In the 6 to 10 year period there is an identified supply of a further 1,877 units, which compared to a RSS requirement of 2,660 units, presents a shortfall of 783 units. Taken in total with the five-year over supply of 587 units however, there is a ten-year shortfall of 196 units, equating to an overall 9.6 years supply.
- Looking ahead to the 11 to 15 year period there is a modest additional supply of 271 units. When measured against the 11-15 year requirement of 2,596 units, this gives an 11 to 15 year shortfall of 2,325 units.
- Taking the 15-year period 2008 to 2023 as a whole, there is a housing shortfall of 2,521 units (i.e. 196 plus 2,325)
- Accordingly, the study identifies a just less than 10 year 'risk assessed' housing supply covering the period 2008 to 2018 and a modest additional post 10 year supply (arising principally from land at Town Lane, Southport) of 271 units. There is no supply identified for the post 15-year period.
- The study, consistent with PPS3 advice, notes that there is a requirement for local planning authorities to identify, specific, developable sites to provide a 10-year supply of housing and, where possible, a 15-year supply. Where it is not possible to identify specific sites for the 11 to 15 year period, broad locations for future growth should be identified. Given that the study has demonstrated that there is insufficient housing land in Sefton to provide a 15 year supply of housing, WYG advise that there is a clear need for a separate study to be undertaken by the Council:

'...in order to consider the existing Green Belt boundary and identify broad locations where future housing growth could be accommodated. Such broad locations will often adjoin existing settlements, but could theoretically be located wholly outside the existing urban area. Any such assessment is outside the agreed scope of this commission, but it will need to consider Green Belt sites which have been excluded from the quantification of housing supply in the SHLAA broad. WYG is aware that Sefton and Knowsley Councils are currently in the process of appointing consultants to assist in the preparation of such a study.....'

- Whilst not specifically addressed in the SHLAA report, it should be noted that the Core Strategy needs to cover the period 15 years from adoption in 2012. This further four year period (to 2027) would suggest the provision of an additional 2000 extra homes, based on an assumed rolling forward of the current RSS housing requirement of 500 dwellings each year to from 2023 to 2027. In total the housing shortfall to 2027 could therefore be of the order of 4,521 units (i.e. 2,521 units to 2023 and 2,000 units 2023-2027).

5.0 Key Caveats to be Attached to the Findings of this Study

5.1 The SHLAA Study at paragraph 1.04 is clear that it:

*'.... does not itself represent a statement of Council policy. Whilst it will inform the LDF process, it is for the LDF Core Strategy and Land Allocations documents to decide which sites should come forward for residential development and by what timescale. **The inclusion of sites within the study should not therefore be taken to imply that they will be allocated for development or that the Council will necessarily consider planning applications favourably.**'*

[NB, WYG's emphasis]

5.2 Furthermore, in support of the above the Council has received advice from Counsel that they should specifically add the following caveats to any approval of a SHLAA Study, namely:

(i) the study does not necessary cover all potential housing sites and others may emerge through the planning application or monitoring process;

(ii) in confirmation of WYG's cautionary comment above, the study is not meant to imply that that planning permission for housing development will be granted or is necessarily even likely to be granted for any particular site identified in the study; and

(iii) the study is a construct of broadly based evidence to support the development plan process and not a checklist of individual sites for s.78 planning appeals.

5.3 Given that above, whilst the SHLAA Study is intended to provide a robust and cautious view of overall future housing capacity in Sefton, it is not intended to imply that it is exhaustive in its assessment of supply (i.e. other sites may and are likely to emerge over time), nor that every site identified will necessarily be developed for housing. In this regard, it confirms that it is the best view of overall likely housing capacity at the base date of the study but it will need to be regularly monitored and updated.

6.0 Director's Comments

6.1 The Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment Study is one of a number of key evidence gathering studies which are being prepared and will be used to inform Sefton's emerging Core Strategy. The study will also be used to inform advice on individual development proposals and planning applications which involve the development of land proposed for housing use. However, bearing in mind the advice of Counsel at paragraph 5.2 above it is important to note that it will be used to provide general advice about the adequacy of housing supply vis-à-vis housing need and most definitely not as a site specific checklist of what is acceptable for housing development in planning terms.

- 6.2 It is generally accepted that the SHLAA Study is the pivotal evidence gathering study which underpins key elements of the Core Strategy process. In this regard its importance is reinforced by PPS3 which makes it clear that the Government attaches great weight to the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment Study process and its findings. Any local authority attempting to take forward a Development Plan Document without complying with the core requirements set out in the SHLAA Guidance would be at high risk of its plan being found unsound for a lack of robust evidence. In support of this it is apparent that Core Strategy Planning Inspectors very closely scrutinise the findings of such studies at the public examination stage of Core Strategies. It therefore must be robust and realistic.
- 6.3 The key message contained in the Study is that when measured against Sefton's RSS housing requirement of 500 dwellings per annum, the borough has an almost 10 year (actually 9.6 years) supply of housing land from a 2008 base date (i.e. 2008 to 2018), but little supply exists after this period. We also have robust 5 years supply base dated at 2008 (i.e. 2008-2013). Given that the Council has to look forward to at least 2027 as part of its Core Strategy (i.e. 15 years from a notional adoption date), we are likely to have a housing shortfall of about 4,600 units (i.e. slightly more than 9 years at 500 dwellings per annum). In this regard, under the heading 'Stage 9 – Housing Potential of Broad Locations' WYG make three key points at paras 3.69 to 3.71 of their report, namely:
- 3.69 The capacity identified by the study is compared with current RSS targets in order to quantify the number of years housing land supply that Sefton has. Should any SHLAA identify a future shortfall in housing land, this would be a matter for the emerging Core Strategy to consider, which provides an opportunity for local people, key stakeholders and the development industry to make detailed comments about the direction of future growth.*
- 3.70 Additional urban capacity may be found in the future through, for example, sites which are currently in active use becoming unexpectedly available, such as the closure of large employment sites which are not required for future business use. Capacity which comes forward from previously unidentified development sites will be recognised in future revisions of this study. Any additional capacity provided in this manner would ultimately reduce the need for, or delay the phasing of, extensions to the urban area.*
- 3.71 More substantial shortfalls in supply may require planned urban expansion. The form of any urban extension is for the LDF to consider, in the context provided by the findings of the forthcoming Green Belt study and taking into account factors such as sustainability, environmental impact on the surrounding area and existing infrastructure.*
- 6.4 In the context of the above, Members may be aware that the Council has already anticipated the medium to longer-term housing land shortfall suggested by the SHLAA Study and is in the process of commissioning the Green Belt study. This study will be critical to identifying 'broad locations' or 'areas of search' in the Green Belt, both of which are necessary to take forward our Core Strategy. And in this regard a report to Planning Committee on 16th December 2009 addressed the matter in detail. In particular, Members will be aware that this study is categorically not a review of Green Belt.
- 6.5 As a final point it is worth noting that the SHLAA Study and Employment Land and Premises Study (reported in the last Committee cycle) have been undertaken in tandem because they allow land availability to be assessed in terms of competing possible end uses. This is in compliance with best practice elsewhere and the advice in the SHLAA

Practice Guidance. In this regard, Members will be aware that one of the key findings of the Employment Land and Premises Study was the need, with very limited exceptional circumstances, to protect our existing employment land supply across the Borough. Given this, we do not expect it to be a future significant source of housing land supply. The final SHLAA acknowledges this sensitivity and makes only very modest assumptions about the potential transferability of land in employment use to future housing use.

6.6 To conclude, the completion of the SHLAA Study is timely and has confirmed much of what we were already knew, albeit anecdotally, about housing land supply in Sefton and especially the very tight medium to longer term housing land supply position that exists across the Borough. It does, however, now provide us with a robust evidence base to address the issues arising from these pressures; both in terms of informing advice on pre applications and planning applications and the further work that we have now embarked upon with regard to a Green Belt Study. It will also need to be closely monitored and updated as we move forward with the Core Strategy process.

7.0 Recommendations

7.1 That:

(i) Planning Committee and Cabinet Member – Regeneration note the key findings of the Joint Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment Study for Sefton and recommend that Cabinet endorses them to inform the emerging Core Strategy process;

(ii) Subject to (iii) below, Planning Committee adopts the key findings of the study to inform the emerging Core Strategy process and use them to inform advice and decisions in relation to individual pre application proposals and planning applications which raise housing issues;

(iii) Cabinet endorses the key findings of the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment Study to inform the emerging Core Strategy process.