Urban Capacity Study Update – as @ 30^{th} November 2005

This update needs to be read along with the original study, which outlines the methodology used in the Urban Capacity Study.

Site Availability

Large Capacity Sites (over 1 ha)

A total of 9 sites have been identified, amounting to some 22.24 hectares of land. Current trends show that large housing sites are being developed at densities of approximately 40 dph. This figure is based on all sites with extant permission, currently included within the housing land availability database. Assumptions have therefore been based upon a minimum density of 30 dph and maximum density of 50 dph (as set out in paragraph 50 of PPG3). Although the UDP refers to the fact that 40 dph is considered to be high-density development, PPG3 refers to densities of between 30-50 dph as being appropriate development standards, depending upon the nature of the area of development (ie, town, rural etc). The Urban Capacity Study takes the approach laid out in PPG3 that a density range of between 30-50 dph will provide housing development, which makes more efficient use of land. The Council will seek to provide greater intensity of development at places with good public transport accessibility, such as towns or local centres and around major nodes along good quality public transport corridors.

An assessment has been made on the housing potential for each site, having taken into account any obvious constraints on development. The approach taken was consistent with the guidance in “Tapping the Potential”, in that a density multiplier was applied to each site. The density multiplier used was dependant upon the site size: 1-2 ha 75-90%; and under 1 ha 100%. On larger sites there may be a need to take account of the provision of distributor roads, schools, open space serving a wider area and landscape strips, all of which reduce the developable area of a site.

This methodology has the benefit of being a practical way of dealing with sites and makes assessment more manageable because figures may be produced quickly and are consistent. The assessed capacity of this source amounts to between 500-850 units at a net density of 30dph and between 600-1000 units at a net density of 50 dph.

Not all large sites identified as suitable for housing are likely to be released and will be affected by factors such as willingness of owners to release land, infrastructure capacity, market viability and site amalgamation. They could also be affected by policy decisions such as compulsory purchase or revised parking standards.

Taking the assumption that such sites will be released in line with past trends. Large windfall sites are currently yielding an average of 45 dwellings per annum (based on data from the last 4 years). These sites have been single ownership sites that have been “easy” to develop. Only a small proportion of the urban capacity sites identified are single ownership, and it is felt that this will have an impact on the likelihood of the sites coming forward. Taking into consideration the multiple ownership issue, and assuming that the trend will continue, approximately 40% of assessed capacity is likely to come forward.

Using past trends the assessed capacity of this source amounts to between 200 and 400 units.

Windfall Sites (under 1 ha)

A total of just over 1300 sites were identified, covering some 216 hectares. The average site size was 0.15 ha. The study assumes that the majority of these sites will yield only 1 dwelling. Small windfall sites make up the largest proportion of capacity on the Island.

In particular, this could have implications for the provision of affordable housing units, which can only currently be negotiated on sites meeting threshold criteria (outlined in Policy H14 of the UDP and SPG on Affordable Housing).

Projected small site figures based upon the last five years data suggest that an average of 140 dwellings per annum could come forward. Whilst this figure is higher than that identified from the capacity survey, it is considered inappropriate to use this trend, because the supply of small sites will be declining over the years.

This gives a potential assessed capacity of 1000 units.

Vacant/Empty Properties

The scope for bringing a significant number of vacant dwellings back into use is considered to be limited. The vacancy rate on the Island is comparable with the national rate. For this reason the Housing Section target figures have been used to make assumptions about the number of dwellings likely to come back into use. The target figure for re-use of empty properties is 26 dwellings per annum, however, the Housing Section is actually achieving approximately 30 dwellings per annum. It is assumed that this rate will continue for the foreseeable future. Vacant properties are not included within the windfall capacity or large site capacity (paras 2.12-2.20), and are dealt with as an entirely separate source.

The assessed potential of this source amounts to 300 dwellings.

Conversions

These are usually small sites, providing between 1 and 9 units per site. Conversions of non-residential properties and conversions of residential properties are currently providing an average of 75 units per annum. This study assumes that this rate will continue.

The assessed potential of this source amounts to 750 units.

Other Potential Sources

These sources include existing employment uses, allocated employment sites and existing car park sites. Open spaces and other green sites within development envelopes have been excluded from this study. The amount of employment land currently used for car parking totals 86.35ha.

Car parks in particular are a sensitive subject, with PPG13 seeking less car parking and “Tapping the potential” advising that even well used car parks can yield capacity. On the other hand, local businesses and town centre users often call for more car parking.

Existing employment uses and employment allocations probably offer the only real opportunity for large brownfield sites to come forward. However, the UDP includes employment policies that seek to retain existing employment uses and promote the employment allocations. Whilst mixed use is also promoted on some sites, it is difficult to estimate the potential from such sources, therefore it has been assumed that a minimum of 7% of the total area of car parks and employment uses will become available for residential development, at an average net density of 40 dph.

The assessed potential of this source amounts to 240 units.

The table below illustrates the total assessed yield from capacity sources.

Capacity Source	Assessed Yield
Large Sites	200-400
Windfall sites	1000
Empty Properties	300
Conversions	750
Car Parks/Employment Sites	240
Total	2490 – 2690

Overview of Supply of Housing Land

Current completion rates are falling short of the minimum provision required by RPG9. This means that completion rates are below 520 per annum, but the total requirement from RPG9 could still be met, because of changes in the market over a longer time period.

The elements of urban capacity discussed above are all subject to potential variations. The overall picture of supply of housing land also involves the housing allocations and extant approvals, which combine to make up the residential land availability database (not including greenfield sites). Assumptions have been made that 70% of residential land availability will be developed during the UDP period (through until 2011. Housing allocations were revised as part of the UDP, on the basis of the principal of sustainability.

The overall picture is shown in the table below:

Capacity Source	Yield (2001/2011)
Residential Land availability small sites with extant permission	1417
Residential land availability large sites	3707
Large urban capacity sites	200-400

Windfall sites	1000
Empty properties	300
Conversions	750
Car parks/employment sites	240
Provision	7614 – 7814
RPG9 requirement to 2005 - 2011	3640
RSS @520 per annum 2012 - 2026	7800

The Council recognises that the potential identified on previously developed land through the urban capacity study may not be as great as some parties would wish, conversely it will be seen as an overestimate by others. The Council believes it is a realistic assessment.

Implications of the Urban Capacity Study for the LDF

The Urban capacity study cannot be seen in isolation. The results of the Urban Capacity Study will inevitably have implications in a number of areas, including the Council's development resources, bids to other agencies, land assembly requirements, decontamination and parking and density standards and more importantly the potential revision of housing allocations and new housing allocations to be identified through the Local Development Framework.

PPG3 provides guidance on a sequential approach to housing development, and the need to phase sites. The urban capacity study has illustrated that there is not enough brownfield land likely to become available to meet our housing need in the long-term.

Conclusion

Using the realistic capacity potential, the greenfield allocations contained within the UDP will still be required.