

SCHEDULE OF ACTIONS MATTER 1 (LEGAL AND PROCEDURAL MATTERS)
(Action 1.2)

ASSESSMENT OF REASONABLE ALTERNATIVE SITES

1.2	Assessment of reasonable alternative sites – Sustainability Appraisal (SA): To produce a note explaining difference between the 230 SHLAA sites which were considered to be reasonable alternatives (identified in para 3.2.3 Housing Topic Paper) and the figure of 228 sites as assessed in the SA Addendum.
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1 Introduction

1.1 This note has been prepared by Rossendale Borough Council (RBC) in partnership with Lepus Consulting, in response to the Inspectors’ request for clarification about the identification of reasonable alternative sites in the plan making process.

2 Identification of reasonable alternative sites

2.1 The reasonable alternative sites were assessed in the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) for the Regulation 18 version of the Local Plan, dated May 2017 [[SD037](#)]. This includes 137 of sites that had been previously assessed in the SA for the Local Plan Part 2 and previously consulted on in July 2015. The Local Plan Part 2 Development Plan Document was withdrawn 24 February 2016.

2.2 In addition to those 137 sites, an additional 57 sites were selected from:

- the 2015 Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) sites;
- the 2016 Call for Development Sites and;
- sites proposed by Registered Providers as well as officers from the Planning and Property Services. Teams at Rossendale Borough Council

2.3 These additional sites were selected based on:

- their size (e.g. sites under 0.25ha were excluded);
- their likelihood to come forward (e.g. information about landownership or interest received from developers);
- the exclusion of sites with planning permission or under construction;
- the exclusion of sites with active playing pitches;
- the exclusion of sites situated in the Green Belt and not adjoining the Urban Boundary;

2.4 Later in the Plan process, in April 2017, an additional 14 sites emerged as reasonable alternatives and were included in the appraisal, leading to a total of 208 sites.

2.5 All sites that were identified as reasonable alternatives for housing, employment or other land uses (e.g. retail or transit site for Gypsy and Traveller) were assessed through the SA process. The findings were presented in the Regulation 18 SA report, dated May 2017. A total of 228 site assessments were made (208 sites were assessed for one or more land use, which generated 228 individual site assessments).

Relationship with the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment

2.6 The Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) [EB005] was undertaken in parallel with the Sustainability Appraisal of the reasonable alternatives and published in May 2017.

2.7 Following the Regulation 18 consultation, which took place between July and October 2017, an additional 16 sites were proposed for development by landowners and developers. As a result, these sites were added to the SHLAA and the up-dated version was published in August 2018 [EB004] to inform the Publication (Regulation 19) version of the Local Plan.

2.8 The Housing Topic Paper 2019 [EB006] explains how the housing need for the Borough has been evidenced and the reasoning behind the proposed housing site allocations. The Topic Paper refers in paragraph 3.2.3 to the identification of 92 "deliverable¹" sites and 138 "developable²" sites in the SHLAA 2018. It is to be noted that those 230 sites (including sites with planning permission at the time of the study) were identified in August 2018, therefore a year after the publication of the SA on the reasonable alternatives (May 2017).

3. Site allocations or SA 'Preferred options'

3.1 In order to inform the Publication version of the Local Plan, a short list of housing sites (known as the preferred options) was derived through analysis of the SA performance of each reasonable alternative, the findings of other Evidence Base studies (e.g. SHLAA, Employment Land Review, Green Belt Review, Landscape Study, Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, Heritage Impact

¹ 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 (NPPF definition)

² To be considered developable, sites should be in a suitable location for housing development with a reasonable prospect that they will be available and could be viably developed at the point envisaged (NPPF definition)

Assessment) and information from various consultees within or outside public consultation. This list included the addition of sites that had arisen after the 2017 SA assessment of reasonable alternatives. Such sites had been submitted through the Regulation 18 consultation process that took place after May 2017. A total of 92 site assessments were made as part of the Regulation 19 SA report.

3.2 Following the discussions held during the Examination of the Local Plan, the Council is now undertaking to prepare an SA for all sites that could also be considered as reasonable alternatives but which have not been included in the previous SA reports. This include sites identified in the 2018 SHLAA, potential Green Belt releases identified in the Green Belt Review and sites that arose during the Regulation 19 consultation on the Publication version of the Local Plan (August, 2018). In total, an additional 46 sites will be further assessed.

4. Conclusion

4.1 The Council will undertake a further assessment of 46 reasonable alternative sites. An SA addendum will be published in spring 2020 to present the assessment findings (please see action 1.3). The SA Addendum will also include information about the site selection and rejection process and the assessment of reasonable alternative policies.