



Value My Land

Maximising Returns for Landowners

What Is the Housing Delivery Test?

A Practical Guide for Landowners

How past housing delivery can affect planning policy, five-year housing land supply and development opportunities.



Value My Land

13 Ensign Business Centre | Westwood Way | Coventry | CV4 8JA

Email: info@valuemyland.com | Telephone: 0800 061 4006 | www.valuemyland.com

What Is the Housing Delivery Test?

The Housing Delivery Test is an annual national measurement that compares the net number of homes delivered in a relevant plan-making authority area with the number of homes required over the same rolling three-year period.

For landowners, the result can affect five-year housing land supply, the weight given to housing policies, Local Plan strategy and the planning balance applied to suitable housing proposals. It must still be considered alongside the location, constraints and deliverability of the individual site.

The Housing Delivery Test measures completed homes, not the number of homes allocated, approved or expected to be built.

Why is housing delivery measured?

The Test looks beyond allocations and planning permissions to whether homes are actually being completed. This helps identify where the development pipeline is not producing housing at the required rate and where action may be needed to improve delivery.

- Measure completed housing against the applicable requirement
- Provide a consistent national indicator of delivery performance
- Trigger progressively stronger policy consequences at national thresholds
- Encourage councils to identify and address causes of under-delivery
- Inform five-year supply, planning decisions and Local Plan strategy

Where does it sit in the planning process?

Housing requirement + net homes delivered over three years → percentage result → policy consequence → action plan, five-year supply and planning decisions

[Read the Full Online Housing Delivery Test Guide](#)

Why Landowners Should Pay Attention

The Housing Delivery Test is backward-looking. It can reveal whether a council's allocations, permissions and infrastructure strategy are translating into completed homes or whether the existing development pipeline is delivering below expectations.

For landowners, under-delivery may create a stronger policy context for sites that are sustainably located, technically acceptable and capable of contributing homes within a realistic period. The percentage result alone, however, is never enough.

Under-delivery can change the planning balance

Where national thresholds are crossed, the authority may need to prepare an action plan, apply a 20% buffer to its five-year supply and, at the lowest threshold, apply the presumption in favour of sustainable development. These consequences can affect the weight given to housing policies and the way suitable applications are assessed.

The cause of under-delivery matters

If large strategic sites are delayed by infrastructure, land assembly or long lead-in periods, smaller or medium-sized sites capable of earlier delivery may become more important. The council's action plan and monitoring evidence should be reviewed to see whether a proposed site would genuinely diversify supply or accelerate completions.

A council-wide result is not a site assessment

A poor result does not overcome unsafe access, unacceptable flood risk, serious ecological or heritage harm, infrastructure problems or an unrealistic delivery programme. The land must still be suitable, available and achievable on its own merits, with a credible route from planning progress to construction and completed homes.

The result is most useful where the land is well located, technically acceptable and capable of delivering homes within a realistic period.

[Check Current Housing Delivery Test Results](#)

The 95%, 85% and 75% Thresholds

National policy applies progressively stronger consequences as delivery falls below the requirement. The consequences normally take effect the day after annual results are published and continue until they are superseded or recalculated.

95% or More The Housing Delivery Test itself does not trigger an action plan, 20% buffer or presumption consequence.	Below 95% - Action Plan The authority should assess the causes of under-delivery and identify measures intended to increase future housing delivery.
Below 85% - 20% Buffer A 20% buffer should be added to the identified supply of specific deliverable sites, in addition to preparing an action plan.	Below 75% - Presumption The presumption in favour of sustainable development applies, together with the action plan and 20% buffer consequences.
Consequences Are Cumulative An authority below 75% is subject to all three consequences, not only the presumption in favour of sustainable development.	Check the Reason for the Buffer From 1 July 2026, a 20% five-year supply buffer can also apply for a separate national policy reason, so its source should be verified.

What should a landowner check?

- The current formal result, publication date and threshold consequence
- Whether the result has been superseded or recalculated
- The authority's five-year supply and the buffer actually being applied
- The Housing Delivery Test action plan and identified causes of delay
- Local Plan age, review progress, housing trajectory and monitoring evidence
- Whether allocated or permissioned sites are stalled or delivering slowly
- Whether the land can contribute homes earlier or diversify the site pipeline

The thresholds do not make land acceptable by themselves. The strongest case combines a favourable policy context with a site that is suitable, available, achievable and capable of delivery.

What Makes a Strong Housing Delivery Case?

A strong housing delivery case does more than quote a low percentage. It identifies the current policy consequence, explains why delivery has fallen short and demonstrates how the land can address the actual problem within a credible planning and delivery strategy.

1. **Confirm the current result** - Check the formal Government result, its effective date, any recalculation and the consequences that presently apply.
2. **Review the wider housing evidence** - Read the five-year supply statement, authority monitoring report, housing trajectory, Local Plan and action plan.
3. **Diagnose the cause of under-delivery** - Identify whether delay arises from infrastructure, strategic sites, viability, planning processes, ownership or market conditions.
4. **Test the site on its own merits** - Assess settlement relationship, access, flood risk, drainage, ecology, landscape, heritage, utilities and planning policy.
5. **Demonstrate realistic delivery** - Explain ownership, availability, development capacity, infrastructure, likely lead-in periods, phasing and commercial achievability.
6. **Select the right planning route** - Decide whether an application, Call for Sites submission, HELAA promotion or Local Plan representation provides the strongest strategy.

A strong case explains how the land can address the actual delivery problem - it does not rely on the council-wide percentage alone.

Could Housing Under-Delivery Affect Your Land?

Evidence That Can Strengthen the Case

Evidence should be proportionate to the site and the stage reached. The objective is to understand the authority-wide delivery problem and then show whether the individual site can make a realistic, timely and technically acceptable contribution.

Official Housing Delivery Test Result Confirms the formal percentage, measurement period, effective date and national policy consequence for the authority.	Housing Delivery Action Plan Explains the authority's analysis of under-delivery, stalled sites, infrastructure problems and proposed corrective measures.
Five-Year Housing Land Supply Shows whether enough deliverable sites are identified for the next five years and which buffer has been applied.	Authority Monitoring Report Provides completion data, housing trajectories, allocation progress and evidence about delivery against the Local Plan.
Local Plan & Evidence Base Identifies the housing requirement, site strategy, emerging review, HELAA work and need for additional land.	Site Delivery Statement Sets out ownership, availability, capacity, lead-in periods, phasing, developer interest and the route to completed homes.
Technical Appraisals Access, drainage, ecology, landscape, heritage, utilities and other evidence demonstrate whether the site can be delivered.	Viability & Market Evidence Tests whether infrastructure, planning obligations, abnormal costs and market conditions allow a commercially realistic scheme.

The strongest evidence is joined-up: it connects the Housing Delivery Test result with the five-year supply position, Local Plan strategy, action plan and a demonstrably deliverable site.

How the Housing Delivery Test Is Calculated

The headline equation is straightforward, but the national measurement rule book governs the homes-required figure, delivery data, adjustments and treatment of particular authorities. The calculation commonly follows the stages below.

1. **Define the authority and period** - Identify the relevant plan-making authority and the rolling three financial years covered by the published measurement.
2. **Select the homes-required figure** - Apply the relevant strategic housing requirement or other figure required by the national rule book for each part of the period.
3. **Calculate net homes delivered** - Use the published net additional dwellings data for the same period, including qualifying conversions, changes of use and demolitions.
4. **Apply permitted adjustments** - Include the national adjustments for qualifying student and other communal accommodation where the rule book requires them.
5. **Calculate the percentage** - Divide total net homes delivered by total homes required and multiply the result by 100.
6. **Identify the policy consequence** - Compare the result with the 95%, 85% and 75% thresholds in current national policy.
7. **Apply the current result** - The consequence normally begins the day after publication and remains until a later result or recalculation supersedes it.

A result of 100% means that measured delivery matched the measured requirement. It does not show whether enough deliverable sites exist for the next five years.

[Read: What Is a Five-Year Housing Land Supply?](#)

[Read: Tilted Balance Planning Guide](#)

Why Permissions and Allocations Do Not Always Become Homes

A council can allocate substantial land and grant many planning permissions but still fail the Housing Delivery Test if schemes do not progress through conditions, infrastructure, construction and occupation to become completed homes.

Understanding the practical cause is important because different problems require different solutions. A site is most useful where it can respond to the type of delay or supply weakness identified in the council's evidence.

Common causes can include:

- Over-reliance on large strategic sites with long lead-in periods
- Delayed highways, utilities, drainage, education or other infrastructure
- Unresolved planning conditions, obligations or technical design matters
- Land assembly, title, ownership or third-party rights delaying delivery
- Viability, funding, market absorption or developer capacity constraints
- An insufficient range of small, medium and early-delivering housing sites

What should an action plan do?

A Housing Delivery Test action plan should review trajectories, permissions, allocations, completion rates and stalled sites, engage the parties affecting delivery and set targeted measures such as unlocking infrastructure, diversifying supply or improving post-permission processes.

The practical cause of under-delivery matters. A landowner's case is stronger where the proposed site can address the problem identified in the council's evidence.

How Can the Housing Delivery Test Affect Land Value?

A Housing Delivery Test result does not itself create development value. Its importance lies in changing the planning policy context and, in suitable cases, improving the prospect of securing an allocation or planning permission for housing.

Where the presumption in favour of sustainable development applies, or where a council needs additional deliverable sites, developers may attach greater weight to land capable of responding to that need. This remains subject to planning policy, technical constraints, infrastructure and timing.

The value outcome is site-specific

Development capacity, sales values, affordable housing, infrastructure, abnormal costs, market conditions, planning risk and the time needed to secure permission all affect value. A poor delivery result cannot overcome fundamental site constraints or make an unviable scheme achievable.

Understand the evidence before agreeing terms

Before selling, granting an option or entering into a promotion agreement, a landowner should understand the current result, five-year supply, Local Plan position and the site's actual delivery prospects. This avoids relying on a headline shortfall without testing the land itself.

The key question is not simply whether the authority has under-delivered, but whether the land can convert that policy context into a realistic and deliverable planning opportunity.

Find Out What Your Land May Be Worth

How Value My Land Can Help

Value My Land can review the Housing Delivery Test, five-year housing land supply, Local Plan, action plan and site-specific evidence affecting your land. The aim is to identify whether under-delivery creates a genuine planning opportunity and the most appropriate route for pursuing it.

Housing Delivery Test Review We confirm the current result, threshold consequence, effective date and any later recalculation affecting the authority.	Five-Year Supply Review We assess the forward supply position, appropriate buffer and relationship between past delivery and future deliverable sites.
Local Plan & Action Plan Analysis We review the housing requirement, Local Plan progress, action plan, monitoring evidence and causes of under-delivery.	Site Deliverability Assessment We examine location, access, constraints, infrastructure, capacity, ownership, viability and realistic housing delivery timing.
Planning & Promotion Strategy We identify whether a planning application, Call for Sites, HELAA submission or Local Plan representation offers the strongest route.	Landowner-Focused Approach The strategy is proportionate to the evidence, the site's realistic prospects and the landowner's objectives and timescale.

Promotion Agreements

Where we enter into a Promotion Agreement, we fund and manage the agreed planning and promotion process at our own cost and risk. This can include housing evidence review, Local Plan representations, technical appraisals, masterplanning and, where appropriate, a planning application.

The landowner retains ownership and control of the land throughout the promotion process. Our remuneration is linked to the sale proceeds, aligning our objective with securing the strongest deliverable planning position and maximising the value achieved for the land.

[Request a Free Housing Delivery Review](#)



Could Housing Under-Delivery Improve the Prospects of Your Land?

If you own land and would like to understand whether the current Housing Delivery Test, five-year supply or Local Plan position may affect its development potential, contact Value My Land for a free, no-obligation initial assessment.

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Email: info@valuemyland.com
www.valuemyland.com



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Delivering Sustainable Development

Further reading: [Housing Delivery Test Guide](#) | [Five-Year Housing Land Supply Guide](#) | [Tilted Balance Guide](#) | [Planning Policy Guide](#)

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