



# Value My Land

**Maximising Returns for Landowners**

## **How Does Land Get Allocated in a Local Plan?**

**A Practical Guide for Landowners**

How councils select development sites, consult on draft allocations and take policies through examination and adoption.



**Value My Land**

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# How Does Land Get Allocated in a Local Plan?

A Local Plan allocation identifies land that a planning authority intends to support for a defined use and scale of development. It normally appears in the plan and policies map, with requirements that guide a later planning application.

Sites are not allocated simply because they were submitted through a Call for Sites or assessed positively in a HELAA or SHLAA. The authority must compare alternatives, choose a spatial strategy, consider infrastructure and environmental effects, consult the public and demonstrate that the plan is justified and deliverable.

**A Local Plan allocation provides policy support for development. It does not, by itself, grant planning permission.**

## Why do councils allocate sites?

Councils allocate land so that identified development needs can be met through a planned, sustainable and deliverable strategy rather than a series of unrelated decisions.

- Meet housing, employment, community and infrastructure needs
- Direct growth towards sustainable settlements and locations
- Compare reasonable alternatives using a consistent evidence base
- Coordinate access, schools, drainage, utilities and green infrastructure
- Give communities, landowners and developers greater planning certainty

## Where does it sit in the planning process?

Call for Sites → HELAA / SHLAA assessment → spatial strategy and site selection → draft allocation and consultation → examination and adoption → planning application

[Read the full online Local Plan Allocation Guide](#)

# Why Landowners Should Follow Every Plan Stage

The allocation process can change a site boundary, proposed capacity, access assumptions, infrastructure requirements, policy wording and delivery period. Each change can affect both planning prospects and commercial value.

Landowners should therefore monitor the plan, published evidence and consultation timetable rather than relying on an early submission or a favourable site-assessment entry.

## A positive assessment is only the starting point

A site can appear suitable, available and achievable but still be omitted because it does not fit the chosen spatial strategy, creates cumulative infrastructure pressure or compares less favourably with alternatives.

## The boundary and policy wording matter

The mapped area, stated capacity, access principles, phasing and required mitigation can determine whether the allocation supports a realistic and viable planning application.

## Draft allocations can still change

Representations, updated evidence, infrastructure problems or examination findings can lead to an allocation being amended, reduced, replaced or removed before adoption.

**Do not rely on a coloured area on the policies map: review the boundary, capacity, requirements, evidence and delivery assumptions together.**

**Track Local Plan Progress in England**

# Legacy and New Plan-Making Routes

Councils may be progressing plans under different procedural routes during the transition. The authority's published timetable and consultation material should be used to identify the stage, deadline and question being decided.

|                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                         |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Evidence &amp; Options</b><br>Potential sites, growth choices and supporting evidence are gathered and tested before the preferred strategy is fixed. | <b>Regulation 18</b><br>Under the legacy route, consultation can cover issues, options, preferred sites or a draft plan. The scope varies by authority. |
| <b>Regulation 19</b><br>The publication plan is presented as ready for examination. Representations focus on legal compliance and soundness.             | <b>Identify &amp; Assess Sites</b><br>Under the newer route, potential sites are identified and assessed before draft allocations are determined.       |
| <b>Draft Allocations</b><br>Selected sites, boundaries and policy requirements are published for engagement, evidence review and refinement.             | <b>Examination &amp; Adoption</b><br>An independent examination tests the plan. Modifications may be required before the authority adopts it.           |

## What will the council assess?

- Fit with the spatial strategy, settlement hierarchy and development needs
- Sustainable access to services, employment and public transport
- Suitability, availability, achievability and realistic capacity
- Infrastructure requirements, phasing and cumulative effects
- Flood risk, landscape, ecology, heritage and agricultural land
- Ownership, access control, viability and landowner commitment
- Comparison with reasonable alternatives and sustainability evidence

A technically capable site is not allocated in isolation. The council must show why the selected site and strategy are preferable, sustainable and capable of delivery.

# The Main Stages From Site Identification to Allocation

Each stage answers a different planning question. A site can perform positively at assessment but still fail to appear in the adopted plan if it does not support the final strategy or delivery assumptions.

1. **Identify potential sites** - The authority gathers land from Calls for Sites, previous evidence, brownfield records, public ownership and other sources. Identification confirms only that land may warrant assessment.
2. **Assess the site** - Officers consider suitability, availability, achievability, capacity, constraints, infrastructure and delivery using the authority's published methodology.
3. **Set the spatial strategy** - The council decides where growth should be directed, how needs will be distributed and which settlements or broad locations can support development.
4. **Select draft allocations** - Sites that meet needs and align with the strategy are chosen for consultation. Boundaries, capacities and policy requirements may be revised.
5. **Consult and refine** - Communities, statutory bodies, landowners and developers make representations. The authority may retain, amend, replace or remove sites.
6. **Examine and adopt** - An independent examination tests the plan against the applicable legal and policy requirements. Modifications may be necessary before adoption.

**A site can perform well at assessment but still be omitted if it does not fit the chosen strategy or cannot be delivered within the plan period.**

**Read: Planning Policy and Development Land**

# Evidence That Can Support a Site Allocation

Evidence should evolve with the plan. The objective is to demonstrate that the proposed boundary, capacity, infrastructure and policy requirements are realistic without preparing a complete planning application too early.

|                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Planning &amp; Spatial Strategy</b><br>Explain how the site supports the settlement role, identified needs and chosen pattern of growth.          | <b>Boundary &amp; Ownership</b><br>Provide an accurate red-line plan, title information and control of any access or infrastructure land.      |
| <b>Constraints &amp; Opportunities</b><br>Map flood risk, trees, habitats, heritage, utilities and landscape to define a realistic development area. | <b>Access &amp; Movement</b><br>Show that safe access, walking, cycling and any necessary off-site improvements can be achieved.               |
| <b>Drainage &amp; Environment</b><br>Address drainage, ecology, biodiversity, landscape and heritage issues in proportion to the plan stage.         | <b>Infrastructure &amp; Utilities</b><br>Identify schools, transport, utilities, community facilities and strategic works that affect phasing. |
| <b>Delivery &amp; Viability</b><br>Explain obligations, abnormal costs, market demand, phasing and a realistic development programme.                | <b>Indicative Masterplan</b><br>Test capacity, green infrastructure and delivery without fixing a detailed scheme unnecessarily early.         |

The strongest evidence demonstrates a realistic boundary, clear requirements and a credible route from policy to permission and delivery.

# What Does Local Plan Allocation Mean?

Allocation materially strengthens the policy position of a site, but its effect depends on the plan stage, mapped boundary, policy wording, infrastructure requirements and remaining technical work.

1. **Site selected** - The authority identifies the land as part of its preferred strategy for a defined use or combination of uses.
2. **Policy framework set** - The plan may state capacity, access principles, infrastructure, mitigation, phasing and masterplanning expectations.
3. **Planning support increased** - An adopted allocation forms part of the development plan; a draft allocation may gain weight as the plan progresses.
4. **Boundary and capacity remain important** - Infrastructure, green space and mitigation land may reduce the net developable area and land receipt.
5. **Examination can change the position** - An Inspector may require modifications to the boundary, capacity, policy requirements or delivery assumptions.
6. **Planning permission remains necessary** - A later application must address design, technical evidence, obligations and the rest of the development plan.
7. **Delivery work continues** - Legal agreements, conditions, infrastructure, reserved matters, market timing and phasing remain relevant after allocation.

**Local Plan allocation is policy support - not planning consent, a guaranteed capacity or an automatic land value.**

**[Read: Call for Sites Guide](#)**

**[Read: HELAA / SHLAA Guide](#)**

## What If the Site Is Reduced, Omitted or Removed?

A site may be reduced or omitted because of the chosen spatial strategy, access or infrastructure concerns, environmental effects, uncertain ownership, delivery timing, viability or stronger competing alternatives.

The first step is to identify whether the issue is a factual error, an evidence gap, a technical judgement or a wider policy choice. The response should address that precise reason rather than repeat the original submission.

### A focused response can include:

- Reviewing the site assessment, sustainability appraisal and strategy
- Correcting the mapped boundary, ownership or availability position
- Commissioning targeted evidence on the stated concern
- Revising capacity, access, infrastructure or the development concept
- Submitting a stage-specific Local Plan representation
- Monitoring plan delivery, new needs and the next review opportunity

### Continued promotion matters

A site may become more important if development needs rise, selected allocations prove undeliverable, infrastructure is funded or new evidence addresses an earlier concern. Any renewed case should explain what has materially changed.

**An omission should be analysed against the council's evidence and strategy - not answered by simply repeating the original submission.**

# How Can Allocation Affect Planning Prospects and Land Value?

Allocation can materially reduce policy risk and attract developer interest, but it does not itself create consented development value. The commercial effect depends on the stage reached and what the policy actually permits.

A draft allocation remains exposed to consultation, examination and modification. An adopted allocation is stronger, but access, infrastructure, affordable housing, abnormal costs, design and market timing still affect value.

## The policy details shape value

The boundary, net developable area, capacity, phasing and obligations for schools, transport, drainage, green space and biodiversity can materially change the residual value available for the land.

## Understand the obligations before selling

A landowner should distinguish existing-use value, hope value, draft-allocation value, adopted-allocation value and consented value before agreeing terms. Independent legal and valuation advice is important where an option, promotion agreement or sale is proposed.

**The important question is not simply whether the site is allocated, but what the policy supports, what delivery costs remain and how close the land is to permission.**

**Find Out What Your Land May Be Worth**

# How Value My Land Can Help

Value My Land can review the site's position within the Local Plan, the council's evidence and the practical characteristics of the land. The aim is to identify the strongest proportionate step for protecting or improving its allocation prospects.

|                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                              |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Plan Stage &amp; Evidence</b><br>We identify the plan route, next consultation, published assessment and status of any draft allocation.      | <b>Site Selection Review</b><br>We examine the strategy, sustainability evidence and reasons for selecting, reducing or omitting the site.   |
| <b>Boundary &amp; Capacity</b><br>We review whether the mapped boundary, capacity, access and infrastructure assumptions are realistic.          | <b>Technical Evidence Strategy</b><br>We identify targeted work on highways, drainage, ecology, landscape, heritage, utilities or viability. |
| <b>Local Plan Representations</b><br>We can prepare focused representations supporting an allocation or addressing the council's stated concern. | <b>Promotion Strategy</b><br>Where appropriate, we plan and manage the route from site selection through allocation, permission and sale.    |

## Promotion Agreements

Where we enter into a Promotion Agreement, we fund and manage the agreed planning process at our own cost and risk. If planning permission is not secured, the agreed promotion costs are written off. Our remuneration is based on a pre-agreed share of the sale proceeds and becomes payable when the land is sold in accordance with the agreement.

The landowner retains ownership and control of the land throughout the promotion process. Because our return is linked to the sale proceeds, our objective is aligned with maximising the value achieved for the land.

[Request a Free Local Plan Allocation Review](#)



# Should Your Site Be Promoted for Allocation?

If your land has been submitted, assessed, omitted, reduced or identified as a draft allocation, contact Value My Land for a free initial review of the plan stage and next steps.

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**[www.valuemyland.com](http://www.valuemyland.com)**



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## Delivering Sustainable Development

Further reading: [Local Plan Allocation Guide](#) | [England Local Plan Tracker](#) | [Call for Sites Guide](#) | [HELAA / SHLAA Guide](#)  
[valuemyland.com/local-plan-allocation-guide](http://valuemyland.com/local-plan-allocation-guide)

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