

Adopted Urban Capacity Study

Executive summary

Paragraph 24 of Planning Policy Guidance Note (PPG) 3 on Housing (March 2000) states that all local planning authorities should carry out urban capacity studies to establish how much additional housing could be accommodated within existing settlement boundaries and therefore reducing how much new greenfield land may need to be allocated for residential development. This study has been prepared in accordance with the Government's published guidance 'Tapping the Potential – Assessing urban housing capacity: towards better practice' (2000).

The South Norfolk study has a base date of 1st January 2005 and aims to provide an estimate of housing capacity in the District over the 17 year time period to 2021. The study looks at the potential capacity within all settlements that have defined Development Limits and Village Boundaries in the adopted South Norfolk Local Plan (March 2003). The study concentrates only on land within existing settlement boundaries and does not seek to identify sites in the open countryside, as these sites will be subject to thorough assessment and consideration as part of the Local Development Framework (LDF) process.

The study uses a combination of site visits and desktop study/statistical assumption to assess the potential capacity to 2021 of the following sources:

- Subdivision of existing housing
- Flats over shops
- Empty homes
- Previously developed vacant and derelict land and buildings
- Intensification of existing areas (garden and non garden plots)
- Redevelopment of existing housing
- Redevelopment of car parks
- Review of existing housing allocations in plans
- Review of other existing allocations in plans
- Vacant land not previously developed, including Council owned land
- Density increases in outline planning permissions
- Sites in use with potential

The results of the study estimate a potential constrained capacity of 1715 units in the period 2005-2021. Part of this figure could be delivered by allocating specific sites for housing in the forthcoming LDF, whilst the remainder is likely to come forward as windfall development.

The results of the urban capacity study will feed into the LDF process and inform preparation of the Core Strategy and Site Specific policies. The study will be kept under regular review and on going monitoring of the methodology and assumptions used in this study will help to improve the robustness of figures used in future studies.

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Paragraph 24 of Planning Policy Guidance Note (PPG) 3 on Housing (March 2000) states that all local planning authorities should carry out urban capacity studies. This should establish how much additional housing could be accommodated within existing settlement boundaries therefore reducing how much new greenfield land outside boundaries may need to be allocated. The underlying principle of undertaking an assessment of urban capacity stems from the 'plan, monitor and manage' approach advocated in PPG 3 and the government's commitment to maximising the use of previously developed land.
- 1.2 Urban capacity studies are intended to be the focus of planning for new housing and should be undertaken or reviewed in line with the preparation of Local Development Frameworks (LDFs). The information from urban capacity studies will be a major consideration when allocating sites for housing and in planning their managed release, as well as in the calculation of windfall supply. They are particularly important in identifying potential previously developed sites suitable for development and justifying the need to allocate greenfield land. The findings from this study will feed into the new South Norfolk LDF and will help to guide development in the District to 2021.
- 1.3 The national target set by the government requires that 60% of new homes should be built on previously developed land by 2008. The target set in the Regional Planning Guidance for East Anglia (RPG 6) is 50% whereas the draft Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) reflects the national target of 60%. The draft RSS policy states that LDFs will identify and allocate suitable previously developed land and buildings for new development with a view to contributing to the 60% target. The current South Norfolk target is 38%, reflecting the rural nature of the district. Due to the small supply of sustainably located brownfield sites available for development it has been a continuing challenge to achieve 38%.
- 1.4 In December 2000 the DETR published a guide entitled 'Tapping the Potential – Assessing urban housing capacity: towards better practice'. This guide identifies the main stages in the preparation of urban capacity studies and suggests possible methodologies. South Norfolk Council has adopted the basic principles outlined in this guidance. The South Norfolk methodology is also broadly similar to other district councils in Norfolk as Norfolk County Council have co-ordinated a joint approach to urban capacity across the County.

- 1.5 The South Norfolk urban capacity study consists of five main sections:
- **Introduction:** sets the scene for the study in the context of government guidance and the South Norfolk LDF.
 - **Methodology:** looks at the timescale of the study, the geographic area to be covered and the sources of capacity to be considered. Also looks at the methods used to survey capacity and how 'unconstrained' and 'constrained' capacity figures were developed.
 - **Results by capacity source:** lists the 'unconstrained' and 'constrained' capacity figures for each capacity source with an explanation of how the figures were produced.
 - **Results summary:** presents a summary of the results split by capacity source, individual settlements and Norwich/Rural Policy area.
 - **Conclusion:** concludes the study in the context of the forthcoming LDF and discusses the need for future testing and monitoring.
- 1.6 A draft version of the urban capacity study went out for a 6 week period of public consultation between July and August 2005. Letters were sent to all elected Members, Town and Parish Council's, nearby Local Authorities, Norfolk County Council, local agents and consultants, housebuilders and local/national organisations (including all statutory consultees listed in the Councils Statement of Community Involvement). The draft study was published on the Councils website and paper copies were available upon request. Responses were received from 34 individuals or organisations and where appropriate their comments have been taken into account in this final version of the study. A list of the comments received to the consultation and the Council's response to those comments is available on request.

2. Methodology

2.1 Timescale

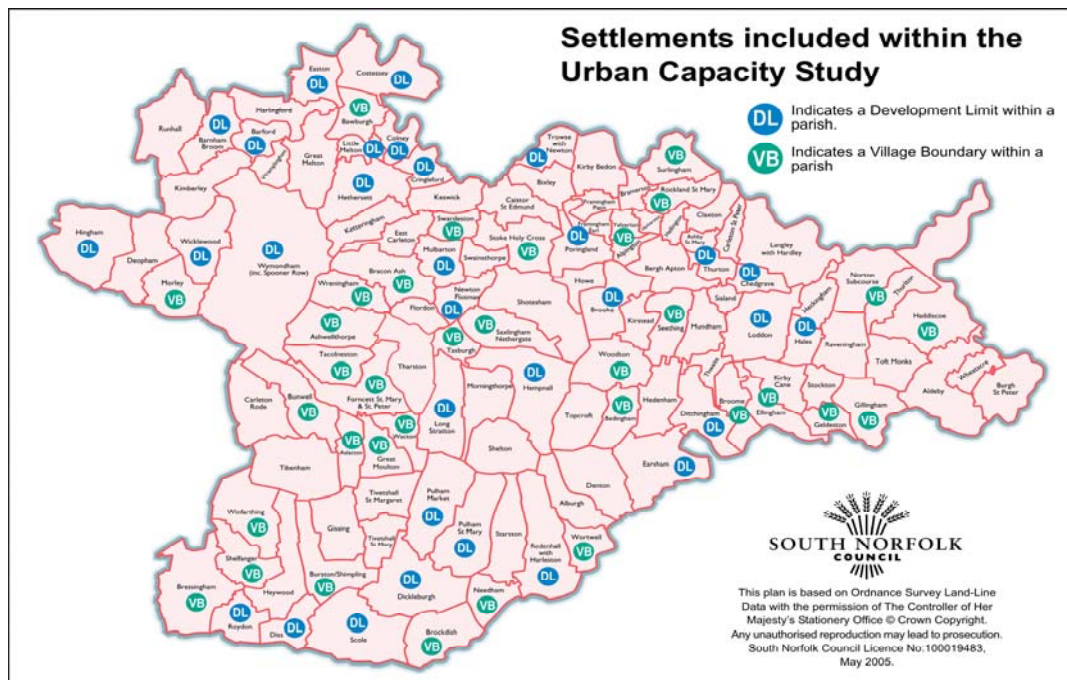
2.1.1 The base date of the study is 1st January 2005 and the purpose is to provide an estimate of urban housing capacity in the South Norfolk district over the 17-year period to 2021. This time frame has been chosen to reflect the time period covered by the draft RSS.

2.2 The geographic area to be covered

2.2.1 The first step in an urban capacity study is to identify which places to include under the scope of the study. 'Tapping the Potential' states that a useful rule of thumb is to include all settlements that may be considered suitable for housing development. The guidance also states that settlement 'envelopes' should be drawn to avoid including significant tracts of open countryside.

2.2.2 The South Norfolk study adopts this principle and all settlements that have a defined Development Limit or Village Boundary in the adopted South Norfolk Local Plan (SNLP) (March 2003) have been included in the study. This gives an ambitious list of settlements to investigate but it was considered that this would give the most comprehensive overview of housing capacity in the District. The study concentrates only on land within existing settlement boundaries and does not seek to identify sites in the open countryside, as these will be subject to thorough assessment and consideration as part of the LDF process.

2.2.3 The full list of settlements surveyed for the South Norfolk study is as follows (reflects the designation under policy ENV 7 of the adopted SNLP):



Settlements included in the urban capacity study (from SNLP policy ENV 7)

Development Limits	Village Boundaries
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ashby St Mary & Thurton • Barford • Barnham Broom • Brooke • Chedgrave • Colney • Costessey • Cringleford • Dickleburgh/Rushall • Diss • Ditchingham • Easton • Earsham • Framingham Earl & Poringland • Hales/Heckingham • Harleston • Hempnall • Hethersett • Hingham • Little Melton • Loddon • Long Stratton • Mulbarton • Newton Flotman • Pulham Market • Pulham St Mary • Roydon • Scole • Trowse with Newton • Wicklewood • Wymondham (inc. Spooner Row) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alpington & Yelverton • Ashwellthorpe • Aslacton • Bawburgh • Bedingham • Bracon Ash • Bressingham • Brockdish • Broome • Bunwell • Burston/Shimpling • Forncett (St Mary & St Peter) • Geldeston • Gillingham • Great Moulton • Haddiscoe • Kirby Cane/Ellingham • Morley • Norton Subcourse & Thurlton • Needham • Rockland St Mary • Saxlingham Nethergate • Seething • Shelfanger • Stoke Holy Cross • Surlingham • Swardeston • Tacolneston • Tasburgh • Wacton • Winfarthing • Woodton • Wortwell • Wreningham

2.3 Sources of capacity to be considered

2.3.1 The next step is to identify the sources of capacity to be investigated. 'Tapping the Potential' states that to make a full assessment of urban capacity it is important to ensure that all potential sources are considered, however unlikely some may seem. It was therefore decided to include the following sources:

- 2.3.2 Sources identified in the 'Tapping the Potential' document:
- Subdivision of existing housing
 - Flats over shops
 - Empty homes
 - Previously developed vacant and derelict land & buildings
 - Intensification of existing areas (garden and non-garden plots)
 - Redevelopment of existing housing
 - Redevelopment of car parks
 - Review of existing housing allocations in plans

- Review of other existing allocations in plans
- Vacant land not previously developed, including Council owned land

2.3.3 Also included in the South Norfolk study:

- Density increases in existing outline planning permissions
- Sites in use with potential

2.3.4 Sources excluded from the South Norfolk study:

- Sites with detail/full planning permission at the base date of the study (it has been presumed that these will be developed in accordance with the approved planning consent)
- Open space designations in the adopted SNLP
- Areas of nature conservation value
- Sports pitches/sports facilities/school playing fields/allotments
(These sources have been excluded as current policy seeks to preserve such areas from development. An open space study of the District will be carried out as part of the LDF and if a surplus is demonstrated then these sources of capacity may be revisited in future reviews of the urban capacity study).

2.4 Surveying the capacity

2.4.1 The most appropriate method of surveying capacity varies depending on the capacity source in question. To ensure that a full assessment of capacity takes place no site size threshold has been applied. It was considered that a significant amount of capacity may come forward from small sites of less than 0.15 hectares and that using an estimation method to quantify these small sites would not be robust. This approach is supported by 'Tapping the Potential', which states that 'it is preferable for a full survey of site potential to be conducted, including within its scope small vacant and derelict sites'.

2.5 Site survey

2.5.1 For some capacity sources it was possible to undertake site visits and detailed surveys of settlements to identify specific sites. The National Land Use Database (NLUD), SNLP maps, local knowledge and Planning/Building Control records all assisted with the survey process.

2.5.2 The following sources of capacity were investigated by undertaking site visits:

- Previously developed vacant and derelict land and buildings
- Intensification of existing areas – non garden plots
- Vacant land, not previously developed, including Council owned land
- Sites in use with potential

- 2.5.3 Letters were sent out at an initial stage to various local agents, Utilities companies, Housing Associations and the House Builders Federation (who forwarded it on to various national housebuilders) to ask them to put forward any potential sites for inclusion in the urban capacity study. The response rate was low; only 18 responses were received from the 69 letters sent out (26%). Some sites were suggested, the majority of which were large tracts of agricultural/greenfield land outside settlement boundaries. Sites were included in the urban capacity study where appropriate (i.e. where they were inside Development Limits or Village Boundaries) and all other sites were carried forward to be included in later stages of the LDF process. (See appendix 1 for a list of people consulted and those that responded).
- 2.5.4 The Council conducted a consultation in Autumn 2003 entitled 'UP2U2'. A questionnaire was sent to all households in the District and one of the questions asked people to identify any brownfield sites that they were aware of in their local community. Any sites identified from the questionnaire responses have also been taken into account as part of this study.

2.6 Desktop study/statistical assumption

- 2.6.1 Other sources of capacity were difficult to quantify by identifying sites on the ground and in such cases it was necessary to establish capacity based on desktop study and statistical assumption to look at previous trends in development.
- 2.6.2 The following sources of capacity were assessed through desktop study/statistical assumption:
- Subdivision of existing housing
 - Flats over shops
 - Empty homes
 - Intensification of existing areas – garden plots
 - Redevelopment of existing housing
 - Redevelopment of car parks
 - Review of existing housing allocations
 - Review of other existing allocations
 - Density increases in existing outline planning permissions

2.7 Assessing the maximum yield (Producing the 'unconstrained capacity' figure)

- 2.7.1 Having identified the best method to use to survey capacity the next stage is to assess the maximum yield or 'unconstrained capacity' from each source. This is the process of assessing the number of houses that could be built if each identified site or source of capacity were to be developed optimally, taking no account of constraints to development.

- 2.7.2 The importance of this stage is stressed in ‘Tapping the Potential’, which states that ‘urban housing capacity studies should be about more than just a mechanical process of identifying more land and buildings for housing’. It suggests that assessing ‘unconstrained capacity’ goes beyond simple identification of sites and should involve an appraisal of their potential (possibly with several different options being considered), to ensure that land is utilised efficiently.
- 2.7.3 The best way to assess ‘unconstrained capacity’ varies depending on the capacity source in question. Sources of capacity based on site survey have been assessed by using a ‘density multiplier’ approach (described in detail below) whereas desktop study/statistical assumption sources have been assessed mainly by using a future projection of previous trends.

2.8 The density multiplier approach

2.8.1 A density multiplier approach has been used to assess the ‘unconstrained capacity’ from mainly site survey based sources. Each identified site has been assessed against a sustainability matrix (see below); to establish different density assumptions for different types of locations. This approach reflects the objectives of PPG3 to promote sustainable patterns of development. It encourages the efficient use of land by seeking higher development densities in the most sustainable and accessible locations and ranks settlements in terms of accessibility to employment and services by modes other than the private car. It is recognised that sustainability is about more than just accessibility and the ENV 7 ranking (at Stage 1) took account of the services and facilities in towns and villages when it was devised. This ranking will be reviewed as part of the LDF process and any changes will be included in future reviews of the urban capacity study.

a) Stage 1 – ENV 7 ranking

2.8.2 Firstly all the settlements within the scope of the urban capacity study were ranked according to the settlement hierarchy in SNLP policy ENV 7, this reflects levels of services and facilities.

Score	Category	Settlements
1	Close to Norwich/ Location in rural area adjacent to strategic routes	Colney, Costessey, Cringleford, Trowse, Diss, Roydon
2	Good communications to city/ settlements that function as local employment centres	Easton, Hethersett, Little Melton, Long Stratton, Mulbarton, Newton Flotman, Poringland, Framingham Earl, Wymondham, Harleston, Loddon, Chedgrave
3	Selected Villages well related to transport network with a range of facilities	Barford, Barnham Broom, Brooke, Dickleburgh, Ditchingham, Earsham, Hales/Heckingham, Hempnall, Hingham, The Pulhams, Scole, Thurton/Ashby St Mary, Wicklewood.
4	Limited rural growth villages	Settlements with village boundaries under ENV 7.

b) Stage 2 – Accessibility ranking

2.8.3 Each settlement was then further categorised in terms of accessibility, based on information given in an advice note published by the East of England Local Government Conference (December 2002). Accessibility zones were primarily defined based on an assessment of public transport journeys per hour to local employment/commercial centres (both bus and rail). In addition to this if a settlement has a defined Central Business Area in the adopted SNLP or is considered to be within walking distance of a settlement with a Central Business Area it was automatically considered to have good accessibility. Norfolk County Council is currently undertaking further work on accessibility and this will be incorporated into future reviews of the urban capacity study.

Score	Category	Settlements
1	Settlements that act as local employment/commercial centres or are highly accessible by public transport e.g. more than 2 journeys per hr Mon-Fri	Wymondham, Hethersett, Chedgrave, Cringleford, Costessey, Colney, Ditchingham, Harleston, Diss, Framingham Earl/Poringland, Loddon, Hethersett, Long Stratton, Hingham, Trowse, Roydon,
2	1-2 public transport journeys per hr Mon-Fri to settlements that act as local employment/commercial centres	Ashby St Mary/Thurton, Brooke, Easton, Hales/Heckingham, Mulbarton, Newton Flotman, Gillingham, Stoke Holy Cross, Swardeston, Tasburgh, Woodton
3	Less than 1 public transport journey an hour to/from local centres Mon-Fri or no public transport	Barford, Barnham Broom, Dickleburgh/Rushall, Earsham, Hempnall, Little Melton, Pulham Market, Pulham St Mary, Scole, Wicklewood, Spooner Row, Alington/Yelverton, Ashwellthorpe, Aslacton, Bawburgh, Bedingham, Bracon Ash, Bressingham, Brockdish, Broome, Bunwell, Burston, Forncett, Geldeston, Great Moulton, Haddiscoe, Kirby Cane/Ellingham, Morley, Norton Subcourse/Thurilton, Needham, Rockland St Mary, Saxlingham Nethergate, Seething, Shelfanger, Surlingham, Tacolneston, Wacton, Winfarthing, Wortwell, Wreningham

c) Stage 3 – Density multipliers

2.8.4 The combination of stages 1 and 2 gives an indication of the relative sustainability of each settlement in the study. A density multiplier was applied to each settlement depending on the sum of the score it achieved from the two tables above. It is assumed that the most sustainable locations should seek to accommodate the greatest proportions of housing and this is reflected in the density multipliers used. A density of 40 dwellings per hectare was applied to sites in settlements that scored most highly against the sustainability matrix, although if a site was located within a Central Business Area as defined in the adopted SNLP an even higher density of 50 dwellings per hectare was used to reflect the fact that the highest development densities should be sought in town centres. A density of 30 dwellings per hectare was applied to sites in settlements that scored less well against the matrix, reflecting the minimum density advocated by PPG3.

Overall Score Stages 1 + 2	Sustainability	Density
2-3 (A)	Good	40 dwellings per hectare (Chedgrave, Colney, Costessey, Cringleford, Diss, Framingham Earl/Poringland, Harleston, Hethersett, Loddon, Long Stratton, Trowse, Wymondham, Roydon) (Or 50 dwellings per hectare if site located within Central Business Area as defined in SNLP)
4-5 (B)	Medium	35 dwellings per hectare (Ashby St Mary/Thurton, Brooke, Ditchingham, Easton, Hales/Heckingham, Hingham, Little Melton, Mulbarton, Newton Flotman, Spooner Row)
6-7 (C)	Basic	30 dwellings per hectare (Barford, Barnham Broom, Dickleburgh/Rushall, Earsham, Hempnall, The Pulhams, Scole, Wicklewood, Alington/Yelverton, Ashwellthorpe, Aslacton, Bawburgh, Bedingham, Bracon Ash, Bressingham, Brockdish, Broome, Bunwell, Burston/Shimpling, Forncett, Geldeston, Gillingham, Great Moulton, Haddiscoe, Kirby Cane/Ellingham, Morley, Norton Subcourse/Thurlton, Needham, Rockland St Mary, Saxlingham Nethergate, Seething, Shelfanger, Stoke Holy Cross, Surlingham, Swardeston, Tacolneston, Tasburgh, Wacton, Winfarthing, Woodton, Wortwell, Wreningham)

2.9 Investigating the design led approach

- 2.9.1 Following consultation on the draft urban capacity study some respondents criticised the density multiplier approach for being too simplistic. This approach was originally chosen as a useful method to enable the assessment of a large number of sites in a relatively quick and manageable way, however it is recognised that it does have some shortcomings particularly for larger sites as it does not make allowances for roads, open space or facilities such as schools or community centres.
- 2.9.2 Although the density multiplier approach is suggested as a method for assessing 'unconstrained capacity' in 'Tapping the Potential', the guidance does advocate the use of a design led approach if possible to ensure that a full assessment of potential capacity is carried out.
- 2.9.3 Following the comments received to the draft study the Design Officer in the Conservation team at South Norfolk Council has been investigating the feasibility of the design led approach. Due to the amount of staff time needed to look properly at this approach at this stage we have concentrated on looking at a design led scenario for one of the larger sites identified in the study only (this work is available as a separate document on request from the Planning Policy team). This work has shown that using the design led approach is likely to lead to a slight decrease in the number of units that could be accommodated on the site as compared to using the density multiplier approach. Based on these results it is intended to incorporate design led work into future reviews of the urban capacity study,

particularly for larger sites, to enable a more robust assessment of potential capacity to be made.

2.10 Discounting 'unconstrained capacity' **(Producing the 'constrained capacity' figure)**

- 2.10.1 The 'unconstrained capacity' figure is the theoretical number of units that could be developed based on all sources of capacity coming forward for development at the maximum yield. However the 'unconstrained capacity' figure does not take into account any constraints that may impact on the ability of an individual site to be developed, nor does it recognise that previous trends in development may not continue.
- 2.10.2 To produce a more realistic figure of how many dwellings are likely to come forward by 2021 the 'unconstrained capacity' figure needs to be discounted to produce what is known as a 'constrained capacity' figure. Discounting is a problematic and judgmental process and it is important that this only takes place once an 'unconstrained capacity' figure has been calculated.
- 2.10.3 The 'Tapping the Potential document' outlines 4 main principles that should be considered when discounting:
- **Developability.** The willingness of an owner to release the site for development, infrastructure capacity (including access) and physical constraints such as flood risk or contamination.
 - **Market Viability.** Influence of national and local planning policies or pressure for competing land uses
 - **Local Character.** Sensitive design, conservation area restrictions, appropriate densities and layouts, public attitude
 - **Planning Standards.** Parking standards, overlooking distances, density, open space standards
- 2.10.4 The above principles have been adapted and expanded to produce a discounting checklist (included as appendix 2). For the sources of capacity assessed through site visits Officers from the Planning Policy Team assessed each individual site against this checklist and used their professional judgment to formulate a realistic constrained capacity figure for each site. Norfolk County Council also gave advice regarding strategic policy, environmental and highways constraints for the larger sites.
- 2.10.5 For those sources of capacity assessed by statistical analysis/desktop study discounting was undertaken by looking at previous trends and the likelihood of these being replicated in the period up to 2021. Close regard was had to the discount rates suggested by 'Tapping the Potential'. It is proposed to monitor development trends over the coming years and the discount rates can then be altered and refined in future reviews of the urban capacity study to reflect what has actually happened.

3. Results by capacity source

3.1 Subdivision of existing housing

3.1.1 This category refers to the subdivision of an existing dwelling into 2 or more self-contained units (in accordance with the 2001 Census definition of a dwelling).

Unconstrained capacity:

3.1.2 Unconstrained capacity from this source was estimated by looking at the number of dwellings gained through subdivision between 1st January 2000 and the 31st December 2004. Information was obtained by using Residential Land Availability/Building Control records. The statistical study identified 7 dwelling completions generated from subdivisions between 1st January 2000 and 31st December 2004, averaging out at 1.4 dwellings per year. (See appendix 3 for details). Unconstrained capacity has been calculated by extrapolating this average figure over the 17 year period to 2021, resulting in an **unconstrained capacity figure of 24 units from subdivisions.**

Constrained capacity:

3.1.3 A simple extrapolation of previous trends needs to be used with caution, ultimately subdivisions are a finite source of capacity and therefore it is likely that there will be a declining supply coming forward over the next 17 years to 2021. 'Tapping the Potential' suggests a discounting rate of between 25% and 40% should be applied. To reflect the fact that at the moment recent trends have been quite stable it has been decided to use a higher discount rate of 40%. This results in a **constrained capacity figure of 10 units from subdivisions.** This discount rate will be monitored and reviewed in future urban capacity studies.

3.2 Flats over shops

3.2.1 This category looks at the potential for residential use in the upper floors above shops and businesses.

Unconstrained capacity:

3.2.2 Unconstrained capacity from this source was estimated by looking at the number of units completed between 1st January 2000 and the 31st December 2004. Information was obtained by using Residential Land Availability records. The statistical study identified 11 units completed between 1st January 2000 – 31st December 2004, averaging out to 2.2 units per annum (see appendix 4 for details). Unconstrained capacity has been calculated by extrapolating this average figure over the 17 year period to 2021, resulting in an **unconstrained capacity figure of 37 units from flats above shops.**

Constrained capacity:

- 3.2.3 A simple extrapolation of previous trends needs to be used with caution. The presence of available space above businesses in town centres does not necessarily mean that the owner is willing for it to be used for residential purposes. Historically flats above shops have yielded limited completions and this is unlikely to change significantly in the future without a great deal of intervention. 'Tapping the Potential' suggests a discounting rate of between 25% and 40% should be applied. To reflect the fact that at the moment recent trends have been quite stable it has been decided to use a higher discount rate of 40%. This results in a **constrained capacity figure of 15 units from flats above shops.**

As mentioned above a more proactive approach would need to be taken if the expected capacity from flats above shops were to be increased and a more in depth study of the situation is something to be considered when the urban capacity study is reviewed. There are benefits to encouraging shops and businesses to convert under utilised space into residential use. Such units could be marketed as affordable housing for younger people who want to live in a central location and there could also be a benefit to the historic environment through the renovation of run down listed and other historically important buildings. If such a study were to be carried out it is likely that the discount rate could be reviewed and maybe a higher constrained capacity could be assumed.

3.3 Empty homes

- 3.3.1 This category looks at the potential to bring empty homes back into use. It focuses particularly on unnecessary vacancies in the housing stock, as it is recognised that some vacancies are necessary to allow the normal operation of the housing market.

Unconstrained capacity:

- 3.3.2 In line with Best Value Performance Indicator (BVPI) 64 the Council sets a target for the number of private sector vacant dwellings that are returned to use or demolished as a direct result of action by the Local Authority. The target given in the Empty Homes Strategy (2005-2008) for the time period 2004/05 is 8 units. Unconstrained capacity has been calculated by extrapolating this figure over the 17 year period to 2021, resulting in an **unconstrained capacity figure of 136 units from empty homes.**

Constrained capacity:

- 3.3.3 Available figures for BVPI 64 monitoring show that over the last 2 years the target figure of 8 has been met (2003/04 = 8, 2004/05 = 9), however prior to this in 2002/03 the figure was only 3. It is difficult to establish a clear trend from these figures. 'Tapping the Potential' suggests a discount rate of between 40% and 80% and considering the BVPI target has been met for the past 2 years it has been decided to use the higher discount rate of 80%. This gives a **constrained capacity of 109 units from empty homes.** BVPI 64 will continue to be monitored and if a firm trend can be established then this discount rate can be revised in future reviews of the urban capacity study.

3.4 Previously developed vacant and derelict land & buildings

3.4.1 This category refers to sites that fit with the normal public perception of 'brownfield land' and includes such things as former industrial land and derelict buildings. The sites in this category were identified through site visits and the National Land Use Database (NLUD) also proved to be a useful source of information.

Unconstrained capacity:

3.4.2 Details of the sites identified are included at appendix 5. If all the sites were assessed using the density multiplier approach at section 2.8 then this results in an **unconstrained capacity figure of 275 units**.

Constrained capacity:

3.4.3 Discounting was undertaken by professional officers in the Planning Policy Team using the 'Discounting Checklist' at appendix 2, this resulted in a **constrained capacity figure of 150 units**. Please see appendix 5 for more details about the factors considered when discounting.

3.5 Intensification of existing areas – garden plots

3.5.1 Capacity exists to make more effective use of land currently utilised as domestic gardens. Site surveys identified a number of privately owned garden plots suitable for residential development but it was considered inappropriate to publish such detailed site specific information without the owners knowledge or consent. Instead it was decided to conduct a desktop assessment of garden plot completions.

Unconstrained capacity:

3.5.2 The desktop study showed that over the 5 year period 1st January 2000 to 31st December 2004 124 units were completed on garden plots (see appendix 6 for details), this averages out to 24.8 units per year. If this figure were to be extrapolated forward over the 17 year period to 2021 this gives an **unconstrained capacity figure of 422 units from garden plot development**.

Constrained capacity:

3.5.3 In discounting this unconstrained capacity figure there are various arguments to consider. One view might be that garden plots within existing Development Limits and Village Boundaries are a finite resource and therefore a declining supply of sites should be assumed in the period to 2021. This is supported through site visits which showed that although there were still a number of garden plots in certain locations, other settlements appeared to have more limited or minimal potential.

- 3.5.4 Another view might be that current trends in garden plot development will continue or even increase in the period to 2021. This is supported by an analysis of the figures in appendix 6 which shows that the number of garden plot completions per annum has been broadly similar in the period 2000 – 2004 and certainly demonstrates no decline in completions at the moment. Although individual garden plots may become more scarce there appears to be a trend towards complete demolition and rebuild of older houses with large gardens. This allows developers to make the most efficient use of land and to accommodate a larger number of houses onto a site.
- 3.5.5 The Council could also consider a more radical proactive approach to garden plot development. In some places across the District large areas of garden land in multiple ownership can be identified, which if developed could yield large numbers of units. This approach would need a radical change in Council policy and issues such as the impact on the character of an area and backland development would need to be carefully considered. This approach would have the advantage that developer contributions could be sought which currently cannot be realised by the existing piecemeal approach to garden plot development.
- 3.5.6 This is an area of study which needs further consideration and investigation to allow more informed figures to be presented in future reviews of the urban capacity study. However in order to try and balance the above arguments and present a realistic capacity figure in this study a discount rate of 70% has been assumed (in line with the 'Tapping the Potential' suggestion of between 70% and 85% for intensification) to give a **constrained capacity figure of 295 units from garden plot development.**
- 3.5.7 Following discussions with the Director of Operations of the South Norfolk Housing Partnership (now Saffron Housing Trust) further opportunity was identified to utilise large areas of underused garden land owned by the Partnership. Further investigation into this potential is currently underway and at present no sites have been formally identified but it is estimated that this source could yield an **unconstrained capacity of 70 units** in the period up to 2021. If a 70% discount rate is also applied to this figure this gives a potential **constrained capacity figure of 49 units.**
- 3.5.8 Therefore if the constrained capacity from privately owned garden plots is added to the potential intensification capacity identified by the South Norfolk Housing Partnership/Saffron Housing Trust this gives a **total constrained capacity of 344 units from the intensification of existing areas – garden plots.**

3.6 Intensification of existing areas – non garden plots

3.6.1 This category includes other types of intensification, in addition to garden plots, such as the development of garage courts and backland development. This category was assessed through undertaking site visits but has contributed minimal potential to this study, with only 2 sites being identified.

Unconstrained capacity:

3.6.2 The sites identified are shown in appendix 5 and if developed using the density multiplier approach at section 2.8 could yield a potential **unconstrained capacity figure of 14 units.**

Constrained capacity:

3.6.3 Planning Officers from the Planning Policy Team used their professional judgement and assessed each site against the Discounting Checklist at Appendix 2, this reduced the above figure to a more realistic **constrained capacity figure of 4 units.**

3.7 Redevelopment of existing housing

3.7.1 South Norfolk Housing Partnership (now Saffron Housing Trust) has plans to redevelop areas of existing prefabricated housing subject to planning agreement at the base date of the urban capacity study.

Unconstrained capacity:

3.7.2 One scheme at Lincoln Avenue in Hingham involves the demolition of 16 prefabs and redevelopment for a scheme of approximately 40 units. This would lead to a gain of 24 units. The second scheme is at Park Lane in Wymondham and involves the demolition of 10 prefabs and the possible replacement with up to 16 new dwellings, a potential gain of 6 units. This gives **an unconstrained capacity for the redevelopment of existing housing of 30 units.**

Constrained capacity:

3.7.3 In the period since the base date of this study both the above schemes have been given planning permission. The Hingham scheme was granted for 40 units as expected (a gain of 24 units), where as the Wymondham scheme was actually granted permission for 25 units (a gain of 15 units). Therefore the **constrained capacity from the redevelopment of existing housing in the period to 2021 is 39 units.**

3.8 Redevelopment of car parks

- 3.8.1 Car parks tend to occupy large areas of land in town centre locations and by their nature tend to be highly accessible and near to local facilities. Potentially such sites could have a high capacity for housing in a particularly sustainable location. However the use of such land for housing has to be considered against the need to provide access for those dependent on car travel and to maintain the vitality of town centres.

Unconstrained capacity:

- 3.8.2 The potential unconstrained capacity from this source was estimated by looking at the number of units that could be accommodated on existing car parks if the sites were to be developed in accordance with the density multiplier approach at section 2.8 above. Only Council owned car parks have been included in this assessment as information regarding usage and future development potential of private car parks was not known. Council owned car parks total an area of 3.89 hectares and if all were developed at the maximum density of 40 or 50 dwellings per hectare, depending on their location, could yield an **unconstrained capacity of 168 units** (see appendix 7 for details).

Constrained capacity:

- 3.8.3 Figures from the Council's car park survey (2000) show that Council owned car parks are well used at the moment and therefore there seems little justification to develop any of the sites for housing without further investigation into the potential impacts. Charging was introduced in Wymondham and increased in Diss after the date of the 2000 study so the effects of this are as yet unknown. There is evidence of increased pressure on car parking in locations such as Wymondham and a Car Parking Review due to be carried out by the Council in 2005 should give a clearer picture of the situation. Based on this information it was decided to discount the **constrained capacity from the redevelopment of car parks to zero.**
- 3.8.4 A radical approach would be needed if the redevelopment of Council owned car parks were to be considered. This could involve looking at innovative development schemes to make more efficient use of the sites by perhaps combining residential and car park uses. This kind of approach would have to be carefully considered against the impact that such schemes would have on the character of the surrounding area, although there may be instances where such ideas could have a positive impact on the townscape and help to better integrate car parking with the surrounding area.

3.9 Review of existing housing allocations

- 3.9.1 The remaining allocations from the adopted SNLP without the benefit of planning permission at the base date of the urban capacity study were reassessed to look at the number of additional units that could be provided if the land were to be developed at a higher density.

Unconstrained capacity:

- 3.9.2 The remaining allocations total 1514 units and were originally allocated in the SNLP to be developed at reasonably low densities, with a maximum of 30 dwellings per hectare. Current government guidance talks about making efficient use of land and recommends 30 dwellings to the hectare as a minimum development density. If all the remaining sites were to be developed at the densities dictated by the density multiplier approach at section 2.8, then a maximum of 2047 units could theoretically be provided. This gives an additional **unconstrained capacity of 533 units over and above the number already allocated** (see appendix 8 for details).

Constrained capacity:

- 3.9.3 In discounting this unconstrained capacity figure certain assumptions have been made, depending upon whether sites are subject to planning applications or on going negotiations (see appendix 8 for details). This situation will be monitored to allow more accurate discounting to take place in future urban capacity studies. Therefore the **constrained capacity from the review of existing housing allocations has been taken to be 412 units in addition to the number of units already allocated.**

3.10 Review of other existing allocations

- 3.10.1 Other allocations in the adopted SNLP (excluding those for recreation or public open space) were also reviewed to assess whether they could potentially accommodate housing. Sites were excluded from this review if they already had planning permission on all or part of the allocation at the base date of the study.

Unconstrained capacity:

- 3.10.2 If the remaining sites (predominantly allocated for employment use) were developed at the maximum densities indicated by the density multiplier approach at section 2.8 then the **unconstrained capacity figure could be as high as 3073 units** (see appendix 9 for details).

Constrained capacity:

- 3.10.3 However this figure does not realistically reflect the number of units that are likely to come forward from this source. Following discussion with the Council's Regeneration Manager it is important to maintain a good supply of employment land in the District and therefore this does not seem the appropriate place to commit currently allocated employment land for housing. A thorough review of existing employment allocations will be undertaken as part of the LDF in accordance with the published ODPM document on 'Employment Land Reviews'. In addition there is also an issue of maintaining the delicate balance between housing and jobs in a

settlement, this has been a particular concern in Harleston and has also been raised as an issue through the draft RSS. This issue will also need to be tackled through the LDF.

- 3.10.4 In discounting the unconstrained capacity figure only two sites were considered appropriate for housing at this time. These were the car park allocation in Hethersett, which could come forward for a maximum of 15 units at 50 dwellings per hectare (due to its location in a Central Business Area) and the employment allocation at Cemetery Lane in Wymondham. This site is currently subject to an undetermined outline application for mixed use development consisting primarily of housing. For the purposes of this study it has been assumed that the site will be developed at 40 dwellings per hectare, bringing forward approximately 48 units. However negotiations are on going and the site could ultimately be developed for up to 75 units. Based on this work a **constrained capacity figure of 63 units has been assumed for the review of other allocations.**

3.11 Vacant land, not previously developed, including Council owned land

- 3.11.1 This category includes land within existing Development Limits and Village Boundaries that has not been previously developed eg. greenfield sites or 'white land' that shows no annotation on an Ordnance Survey map. This source of capacity was assessed through site visits and proved to be a significant source of potential housing in South Norfolk with 30 individual sites being identified, although identifying land ownership could be a difficult issue. The development of these sites will be monitored in future reviews of the urban capacity study, to obtain more robust figures it may be appropriate to identify and write to the owners of these sites to try and ascertain what their future plans are.

Unconstrained capacity:

- 3.11.2 Details of the sites are shown at appendix 5 and if developed at the densities dictated by the density multiplier approach at section 2.8 the sites could yield a potential **unconstrained capacity figure of 279 units.**

Constrained capacity:

- 3.11.3 After discounting by Planning Officers in the Planning Policy Team using the 'Discounting Checklist' at appendix 2, this figure was reduced to a more realistic **constrained capacity figure of 173 units.** See appendix 5 for more details about the factors considered when discounting.

3.12 Density increases in existing outline planning permissions

- 3.12.1 Sites with outline planning permission at the base date of the urban capacity study were examined to assess the potential to increase the number of dwellings on site at the reserved matters stage. Background information on sites with outline planning permission was sourced from the Council's Residential Land Availability document (2004).

Unconstrained capacity:

3.12.2 At the end of 2004 there were 50 sites with outline planning permission, permitted in total for 2996 units. If the density on each site were increased at the reserved matters stage in accordance with the density multiplier approach at section 2.8 then potentially the same 50 sites could accommodate up to 3855 units, giving an estimated **unconstrained capacity of an additional 871 units over that already granted permission** (see appendix 10 for details). This figure looks high but it includes potential density increases on three large housing estates at Costessey, Cringleford and Wymondham that only had outline planning permission at the base date of the urban capacity study.

Constrained capacity:

3.12.3 However it is highly unlikely that such a high number of additional units will realistically come forward as not all outline permissions will progress to the reserved matters stage and experience has shown that few of those that do will be developed at the maximum densities indicated in appendix 10.

3.12.4 Discussion with colleagues in Development Control about the larger sites (20+ units) shown in appendix 10 revealed some scope for increase in the number of units at the reserved matters stage, but not as much as the 748 units suggested. The table below illustrates a more realistic constrained capacity figure of 171 units:

Site	Comments	Realistic Increase
Land north of the River Tud, Costessey	No known constraints to an increase in units at reserved matters stage (assume realistic development density of 35 dph)	153
Land north of A11, Cringleford	Density constrained by Highways Direction restricting development to 750 units	0
Land at Myrtle Road, Hethersett	Detail permission granted for 96 units after urban capacity study base date	0
Greenland Avenue, Wymondham	Negotiations on going on a reserved matters application for 375 units	0
Land at Mission Road/Sandy Lane, Diss	Detail permission granted for 177 units after urban capacity study base date	12
Hurst Road, Chedgrave	Negotiations on going on a reserved matters application for approximately 28 units	6
Former Harleston Foods Site, Harleston	Outline permitted at approximately 50 dwellings per hectare	0
TOTAL		171

3.12.5 To produce a more realistic constrained capacity figure for the smaller sites (less than 20 units) shown in appendix 10 a comparison study was conducted of reserved matters consents granted between 2001 – 2003 (see appendix 11). This work showed that although an additional 88 units could potentially have been provided at the reserved matters stage, in reality consent was actually granted for only 5 additional units. This means that only 4.4% of potential was actually realised. Therefore it has been decided for this study to apply a discounting rate of 5% to the small sites of 123 units shown in appendix 12 to give a constrained capacity figure of 6 units.

3.12.6 Therefore, if you add the realistic increase at reserved matters stage on the larger sites (171 units) to the constrained capacity figure of the smaller sites (6 units) this gives a more realistic **constrained capacity of 177 units from density increases in existing outline planning permissions.**

3.13 Sites in use with potential

3.13.1 The study also considered sites in use with potential. These sites were identified through undertaking site visits and all sites were also included on the National Land Use Database (NLUD). Sites were only included in this category if interest had been expressed in redevelopment either through submission of a planning application or as part of the Local Plan process.

Unconstrained capacity:

3.13.2 The sites identified are shown at appendix 5 and if all were assessed using the density multiplier approach at section 2.8 could yield an **unconstrained capacity figure of 246 units.**

Constrained capacity:

3.13.3 After discounting by officers in the Planning Policy Team, using the discounting checklist at appendix 2, this figure was actually increased to a more realistic **constrained capacity figure of 219 units.** Please see appendix 5 for more details about the factors considered when discounting.

4. Results summary

4.1 The study identified a total unconstrained capacity figure of 6178, broken down as follows:

Unconstrained capacity

Source	Unconstrained capacity
Subdivision of existing housing	24
Flats over shops	37
Empty homes	136
Previously developed vacant & derelict land & buildings	275
Intensification of existing areas – garden plots	492
Intensification of existing areas – non garden plots	14
Redevelopment of existing housing	30
Redevelopment of car parks	168
Review of existing housing allocations in plans	533
Review of other existing allocations	3073
Vacant land not previously developed, including Council owned land	279
Density increases in existing outline planning permissions	871
Sites in use with potential	246
Total unconstrained capacity	6178

4.2 After discounting the unconstrained capacity was reduced to produce a more realistic constrained capacity of 1715 units for the period 2005 to 2021. The breakdown of this figure is shown below:

Constrained capacity

Source	Constrained capacity
Subdivision of existing housing	10
Flats over shops	15
Empty homes	109
Previously developed vacant & derelict land & buildings	150
Intensification of existing areas – garden plots	344
Intensification of existing areas – non garden plots	4
Redevelopment of existing housing	39
Redevelopment of car parks	0
Review of existing housing allocations in plans	412
Review of other existing allocations	63
Vacant land not previously developed, including Council owned land	173
Density increases in existing outline planning permissions	177
Sites in use with potential	219
Total constrained capacity	1715

4.3 The following two tables break down the constrained capacity figure further. The first table distributes the constrained capacity figure between all the settlements with Development Limits and gives a summary figure for all settlements with Village Boundaries. The purpose of this table is to give a rough idea of the capacity of individual settlements in the period up to 2021. For some sources of capacity such as subdivisions, empty homes and garden plots it was difficult to enter exact figures against individual settlements so these figures have not been included in the table. Therefore the table only includes specific settlement figures for those sources of capacity where individual sites can be identified. The second table presents a rough split of potential capacity between the Norwich and Rural Policy areas, where sources of capacity have been estimated the constrained capacity figure has been split evenly between the total number of settlements to enable a rough Norwich/Rural Policy split to be calculated.

Potential constrained capacity by settlement

Settlement	Subdivision of existing Housing	Flats over shops	Empty homes	PD vacant/derelict land	Garden plots	Intensification of existing areas	Redevelopment of existing housing	Car parks	Review of housing allocations	Review of other allocations	Vacant land	Increases in outline permissions	Sites in use
Development Limit settlements													
Ashby St Mary/Thurton				0		0	0		0	0	0	0	0
Barford				0		0	0		0	0	5	0	0
Barnham Broom				0		0	0		0	0	10	0	0
Brooke				0		0	0		0	0	0	0	0
Chedgrave				0		0	0		0	0	0	6	0
Colney				0		0	0		0	0	0	0	0
Costessey				0		0	0		174	0	0	155	0
Cringleford				0		0	0		0	0	4	0	0
Dickleburgh/Rushall				0		0	0		0	0	0	0	0
Diss				21		0	0		25	0	0	14	10
Ditchingham				0		0	0		0	0	0	0	0
Easton				0		0	0		0	0	3	0	0
Earsham				0		0	0		0	0	0	0	0
Framingham Earl/Poringland				0		0	0		130	0	44	0	4
Hales/Heckingham				0		0	0		0	0	5	0	0
Harleston				120		0	0		52	0	3	0	124
Hempnall				0		0	0		0	0	0	0	0
Hethersett				0		0	0		0	15	0	0	0
Hingham				4		0	24		0	0	21	0	0
Little Melton				0		0	0		0	0	0	0	0
Loddon				0		0	0		0	0	0	0	0
Long Stratton				0		0	0		0	0	39	0	0
Mulbarton				0		0	0		0	0	0	0	0
Newton Flotman				0		0	0		0	0	0	0	0
Pulham Market				0		0	0		0	0	0	0	0
Pulham St Mary				0		0	0		0	0	0	0	0
Roydon				0		0	0		0	0	0	0	0
Scole				0		0	0		0	0	16	0	0
Trowse				0		0	0		0	0	0	0	0
Wicklewood				0		0	0		0	0	0	0	0
Wyndham				0		0	15		29	48	0	2	81
Village Boundary settlements (summary)				5		4	0		2	0	23	0	0
TOTALS	10	15	109	150	344	4	39	0	412	63	173	177	219

Potential constrained capacity by policy area

Source of capacity	Norwich Policy Area	Rural Policy Area	Total
Subdivision of existing housing	3	7	10
Flats over shops	4	11	15
Empty homes	29	80	109
Previously developed vacant & derelict land & buildings	0	150	150
Intensification of existing areas – garden plots	93	251	344
Intensification of existing areas – non garden plots	0	4	4
Redevelopment of existing housing	15	24	39
Redevelopment of car parks	0	0	0
Review of existing housing allocations in plans	333	79	412
Review of other existing allocations	63	0	63
Vacant land, not previously developed, including Council owned land	90	83	173
Density increases in existing outline planning permissions	157	20	177
Sites in use with potential	85	134	219
Total expected capacity	872	843	1715

5. Conclusion

- 5.1 This urban capacity study provides an estimate of how much new housing could be accommodated within the existing Development Limits and Village Boundaries of settlements in South Norfolk. It will feed into the LDF process and inform production of the Core Strategy and Site Specific policies.
- 5.2 The study concludes that in the period to 2021 the potential constrained capacity figure for the District is 1715 dwellings, roughly split between 872 units (51%) in the Norwich Policy Area and 843 (49%) in the Rural Policy Area.
- 5.3 The study will be kept under regular review and on going monitoring of the methodology and assumptions used will help to improve the robustness of figures included in future studies. In particular future monitoring will enable the discount rates used in this study to be refined to more realistically reflect actual development trends. The individual sites included in this study will be tracked to see if planning permission has been sought for development and if necessary individual site owners will be contacted to investigate what their future intentions for the sites are.
- 5.4 The Government has recently published new draft guidance on Housing (Planning Policy Statement 3). This guidance refers to draft practice guidance on housing land availability assessments, which looks likely to eventually replace the current 'Tapping the Potential' document. Regard will need to be paid to these documents when the urban capacity study is reviewed.
- 5.5 A separate paper will be available to examine how the urban capacity study fits within the context of the housing requirement for South Norfolk given in the draft RSS.