

## **Urban Capacity Study 2009**

### **1. Summary of findings**

- 18 settlements were included in the study
- 682 units were from potential new sites
- An additional 1691 units were calculated through the intensification of sites in the Housing Land Audit
- 32.3 hectares were identified as potential new land
- 64 sites were taken out since the previous audit due to development taking place
- The largest yields were found in Galashiels, Eyemouth & Peebles
- No new units were identified in Lauder, St Boswells and Tweedbank

## **2. Introduction**

The Scottish Government is keen to encourage the re-use of previously developed land and the conversion of non-residential buildings for housing, to encourage regeneration within urban areas and minimise the use of greenfield sites for redevelopment. This mirrors efforts within the English planning system to exploit the potential for housing in urban areas. In 2000, the DETR published guidance for English authorities on undertaking urban capacity studies. No equivalent document has been published by the Scottish Executive but the strategy is advised by *SPP 3 – Planning for Housing* and *PAN 38 – Housing Land*.

The purpose of Urban Capacity Study is to assess the potential for new development within the main urban settlements of the Scottish Borders Council. This will help facilitate the setting of brownfield targets for housing provision. The study should be viewed as a method for responding to local housing needs and an urban regeneration tool. It is not an isolated study but will contribute towards a network of information and strategies integral to the development plan process.

## **3. Policy context**

<b>Policy</b>	<b>Aim</b>
<i>SPP 3 – Planning for Housing</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Promotes the re-use of brownfield land.</li><li>• Advises planning authorities to assess the contribution that vacant land/buildings can make to the local housing supply.</li><li>• Recommends an urban capacity study to “set targets for housing on brownfield land” (paragraph 33).</li></ul>
<i>PAN 38 – Housing Land</i> (revised 2003)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Advocates assessment of opportunities for further development within settlement boundaries through use of previously developed land and renovation of existing buildings (paragraphs 35-36).</li><li>• Setting &amp; measurement of brownfield targets.</li><li>• Suggests undertaking an urban capacity study to help direct new housing to brownfield sites.</li></ul>
<i>Scottish Borders Structure Plan, Policy H3 – Housing Land Allocation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Encourages re-use of vacant, derelict, previously developed or contaminated brownfield sites.</li><li>• Suggests housing requirements are assessed against the scope for more productive use of under-utilised town centre property (page 60).</li></ul>
<i>Tapping the Potential: Assessing Urban Housing Capacity: Towards Better Practice</i> (DETR, 2000)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provides advice on how to approach an urban capacity study.</li><li>• Identifies four main areas: identifying capacity sources, surveying capacity, assessing yield and discounting potential.</li><li>• Recommends all settlements containing shops and services should be included in the study.</li></ul>

## **4. Objectives**

The objectives for this study were as follows:

- To identify opportunities for further development within settlement boundaries
- To establish the housing capacity for each site
- To use this data in assessing housing provision
- To promote brownfield development

## **5. Methodology**

The methodology was broken down into four main stages, as recommended in *Tapping the Potential: Assessing Urban Housing Capacity: Towards Better Practice* (DETR, 2000).

### **5.1 Stage one:**

#### **Identifying**

The study identified key settlements to be assessed for capacity. These were:

Chirnside	Kelso
Coldstream	Lauder
Duns	Melrose
Earlston	Newtown St Boswells
Eyemouth	Peebles
Galashiels	Selkirk
Hawick	St Boswells
Innerleithen	Tweedbank
Jedburgh	West Linton

The study also identified source categories. The main categories were:

- Vacant land and derelict land and buildings
- Reassessment of existing housing allocations in terms of development capacity
- Land allocated in plans for employment that could be allocated for housing

Other categories that provided other possible sources for housing development included:

- Conversion of commercial/retail premises
- Development of car parks

### **5.2 Stage two:**

#### **Surveying**

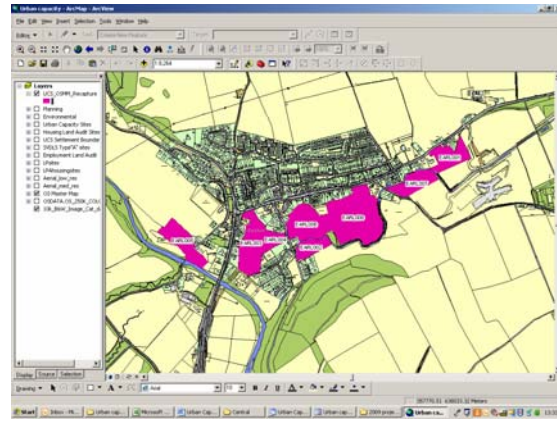
To survey the capacity of each key settlement, sites were identified in the following ways:

- Housing, mixed use, redevelopment & employment sites from the adopted Local Plan 2008
- Sites identified in the Vacant & Derelict Survey
- Housing Land Audit sites from 2008 within settlement boundary

- Car park information from the Council website

The sites were then surveyed gathering data from a desktop exercise and site visits. This information was the input into an Access database (see Fig.1). Sites were also plotted on the GIS and the unique reference number generated by the database was used to identify each individual site (see Fig.2).

**Fig 1: Example of database form**



**Fig 2: Example of map**

### 5.3 Stage three:

#### Assessing

The potential yield of the sites was then calculated using the GIS. For this calculation, a density of 30 units per hectare was used and 70% was assumed to be developable. This then automatically calculated the yield output for each site.

### 5.4 Stage four:

#### Discounting

To discount sites from the study, sites were allocated into the following categories:

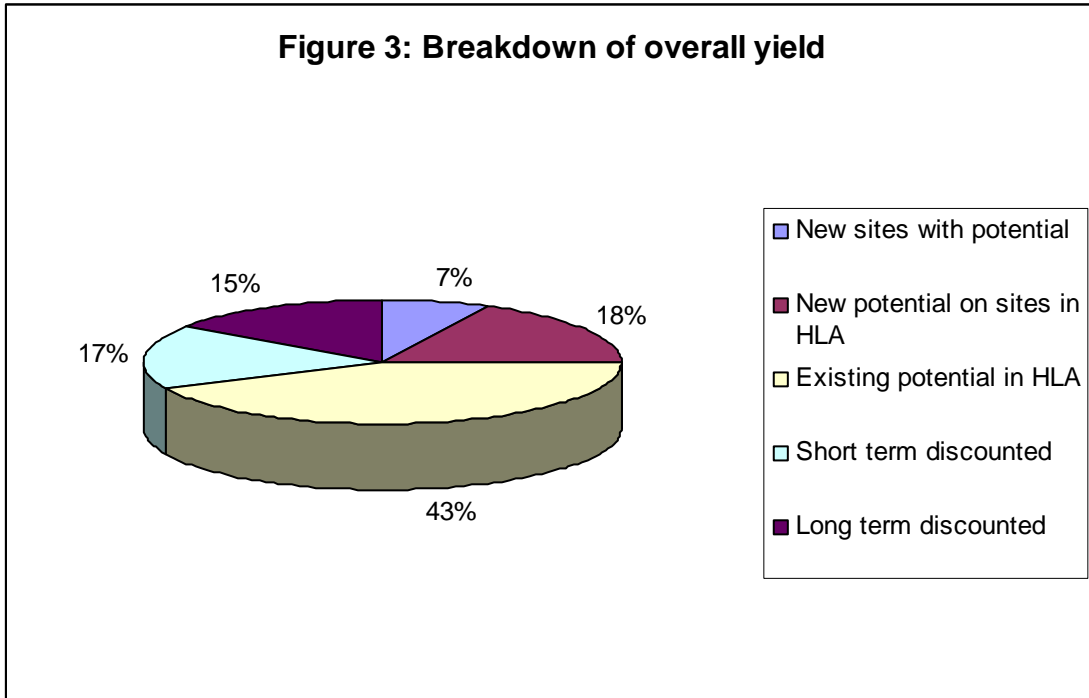
- New potential
- Potential in Housing Land Audit
- Short term discounted
- Long term discounted

Types C and D were then discounted. The study established whether sites had been identified in the Housing Land Audit and what yield had been allocated. This prevented any duplication of figures presented in the Housing Land Audit and ensured that only additional yield was calculated in the final statistics. Housing sites were then assessed for any units capacity over and above what had already been identified in the Housing Land Audit.

## 6. Analysis of findings

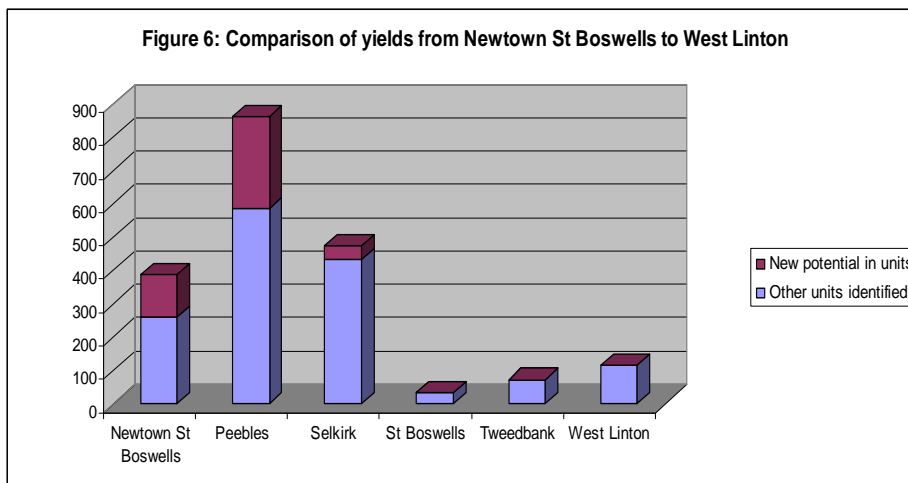
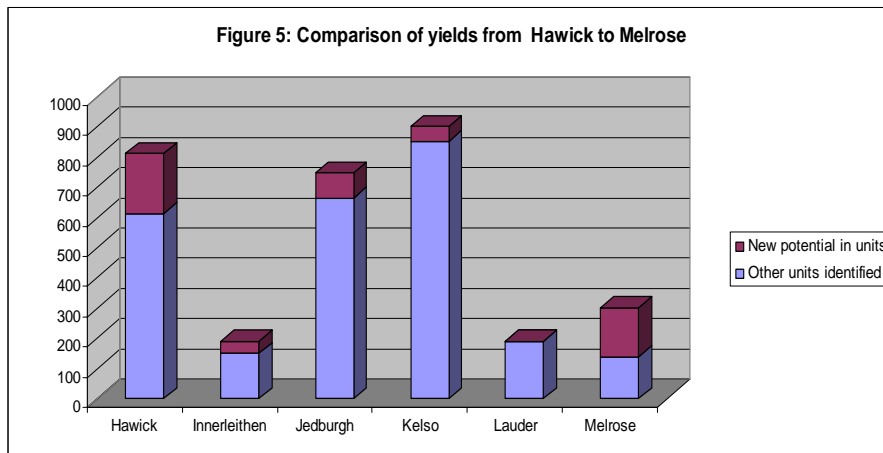
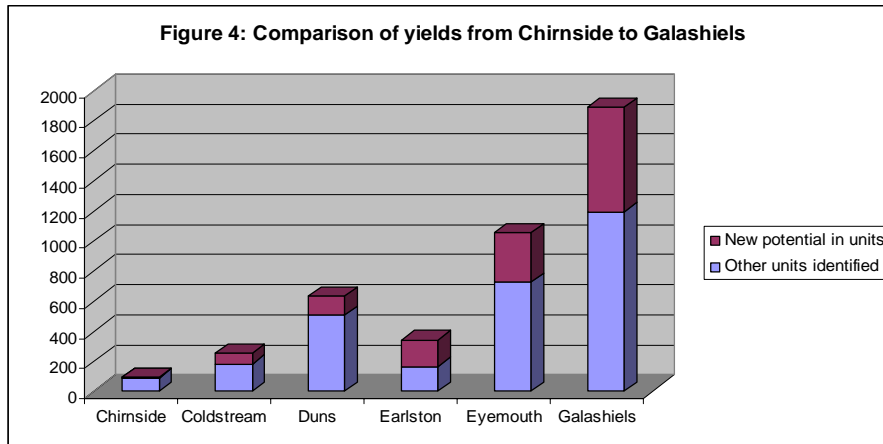
### 6.1 Comparison of overall yields

- 1691 new units were from sites already identified in the Housing Land Audit
- 682 new units were from new sites not previously identified in the Housing Land Audit
- 4002 units identified had already been counted into the Housing Land Audit
- 1547 units were considered to have a short term constraint on the site
- 1429 units were considered to have a long term constraint on the site



## 6.2 Settlement comparison

Eyemouth, Hawick & Selkirk were identified as having the highest number of new potential units within the 18 settlements surveyed. No new potential was found in Melrose, St Boswells & Tweedbank. Figures 4, 5 & 6 compare the number of units identified in each settlement.

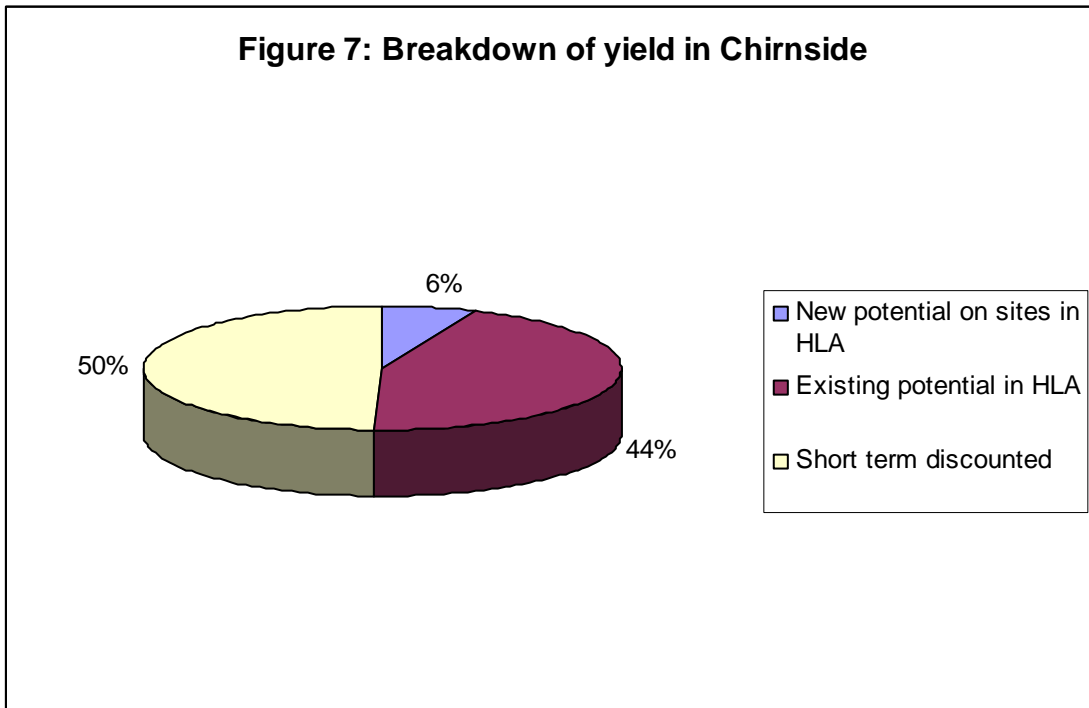


### 6.3 By site

Within each settlement, the number of new units and of new potential sites identified varied greatly. Maps 1 to 18 at the end of this document show the location and assessment type of sites within each settlement.

#### 6.3.1 Chirnside:

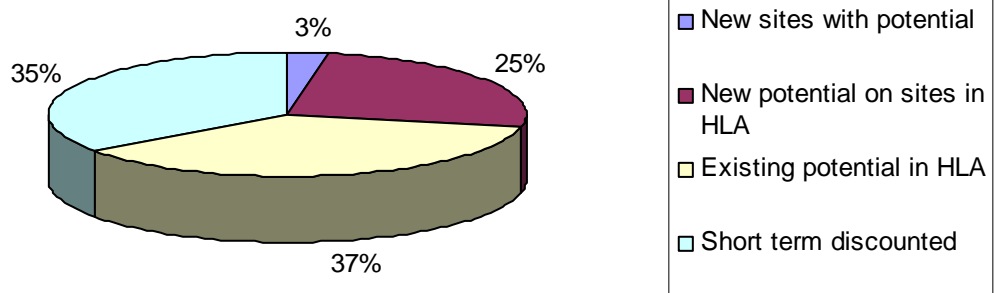
- 6 new units were from sites already identified in the Housing Land Audit
- No new sites were identified
- 42 units identified had already been counted into the Housing Land Audit
- 47 units were discounted due to constraints



**6.3.2 Coldstream:**

- 65 new units were from sites already identified in the Housing Land Audit
- 7 new units (0.3ha) were from new sites not previously identified in the Housing Land Audit
- 94 units identified had already been counted into the Housing Land Audit
- 89 units were discounted due to constraints

**Figure 8: Breakdown of yield in Coldstream**

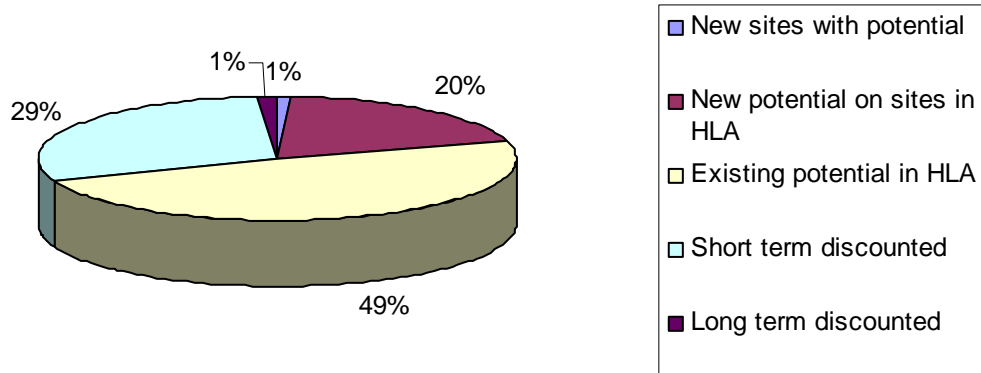




**6.3.3 Duns:**

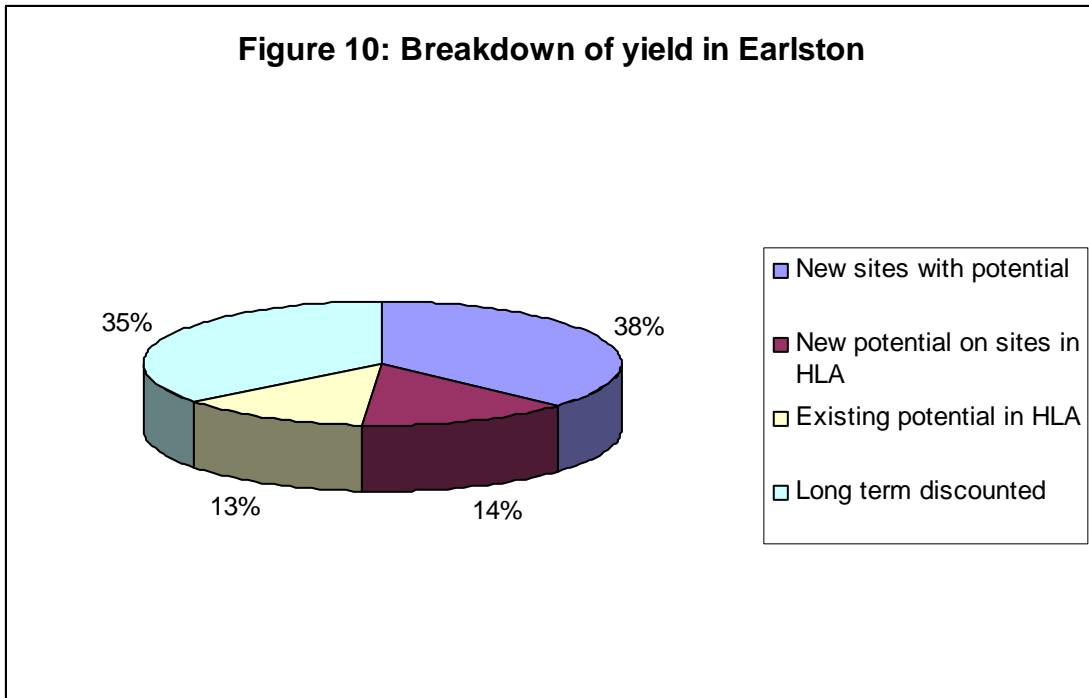
- 124 new units were from sites already identified in the Housing Land Audit
- 6 new units (0.2ha) were from new sites not previously identified in the Housing Land Audit
- 309 units identified had already been counted into the Housing Land Audit
- 196 units were discounted due to constraints

**Figure 9: Breakdown of yield in Duns**



**6.3.4 Earlston:**

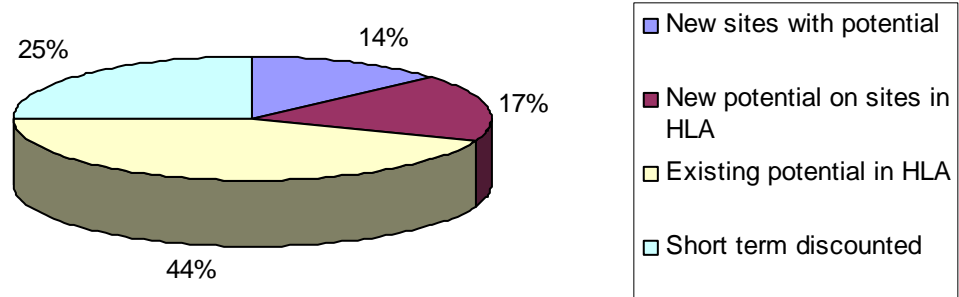
- 49 new units were from sites already identified in the Housing Land Audit
- 126 new units (5.9ha) were from new sites not previously identified in the Housing Land Audit
- 45 units identified had already been counted into the Housing Land Audit
- 121 units were discounted due to constraints



**6.3.5 Eyemouth:**

- 182 new units were from sites already identified in the Housing Land Audit
- 143 new units (6.8ha) were from new sites not previously identified in the Housing Land Audit
- 462 units identified had already been counted into the Housing Land Audit
- 266 units were discounted due to constraints

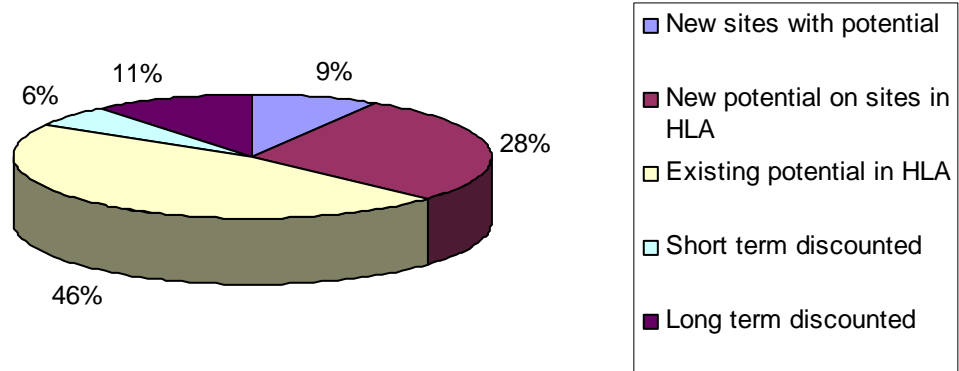
**Figure 11: Breakdown of yield in Eyemouth**



**6.3.6 Galashiels:**

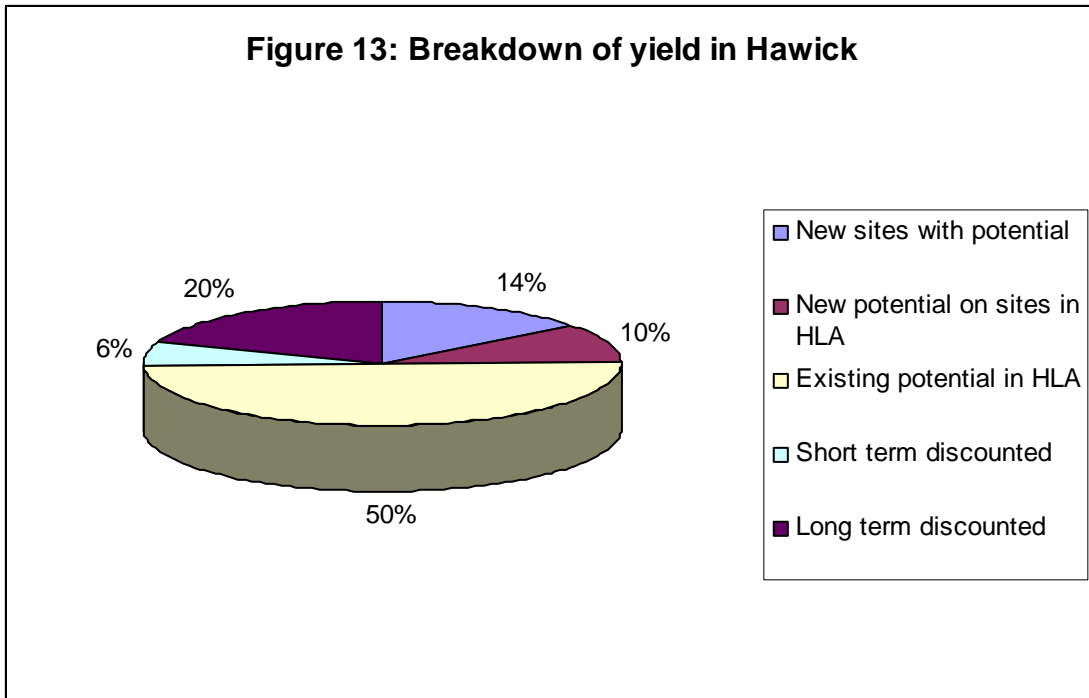
- 535 new units were identified from sites in the Housing Land Audit
- 161 new units (7.6ha) were from new sites not previously identified in the Housing Land Audit
- 881 units identified had already been counted into the Housing Land Audit
- 313 units were discounted due to constraints

**Figure 12: Breakdown of yield in Galashiels**



**6.3.7 Hawick:**

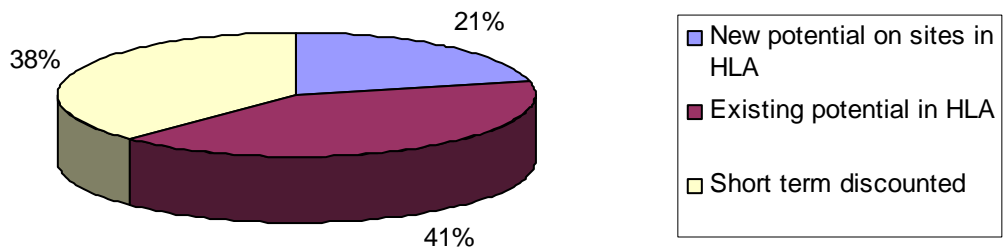
- 82 new units were from sites already identified in the Housing Land Audit
- 117 new units (5.5ha) were from new sites not previously identified in the Housing Land Audit
- 406 units identified had already been counted into the Housing Land Audit
- 207 units were discounted due to constraints



**6.3.8 Innerleithen:**

- 41 new units were from sites already identified in the Housing Land Audit
- No new sites were identified
- 78 units identified had already been counted into the Housing Land Audit
- 72 units were discounted due to constraints

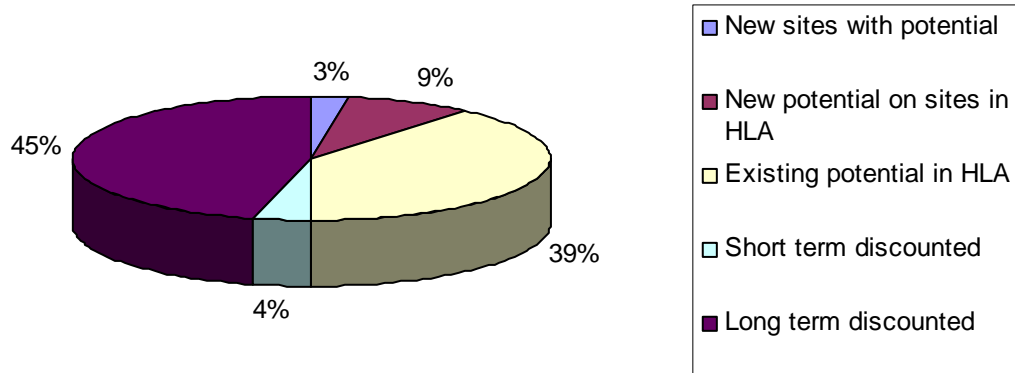
**Figure 14: Breakdown of yield in Innerleithen**



**6.3.9 Jedburgh:**

- 64 new units were from sites already identified in the Housing Land Audit
- 19 new units (0.9ha) were from new sites not previously identified in the Housing Land Audit
- 290 units identified had already been counted into the Housing Land Audit
- 375 units were discounted due to constraints

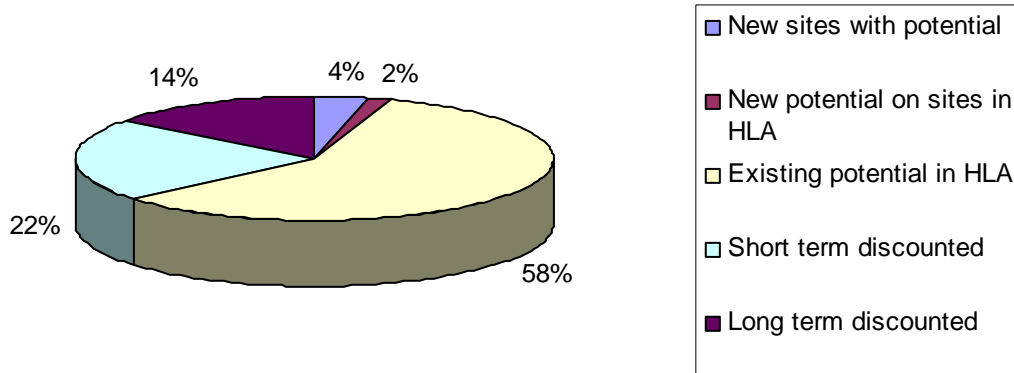
**Figure 15: Breakdown of yield in Jedburgh**



**6.3.10 Kelso:**

- 15 new units were from sites already identified in the Housing Land Audit
- 33 new units (1.6ha) were from new sites not previously identified in the Housing Land Audit
- 526 units identified had already been counted into the Housing Land Audit
- 328 units were discounted due to constraints

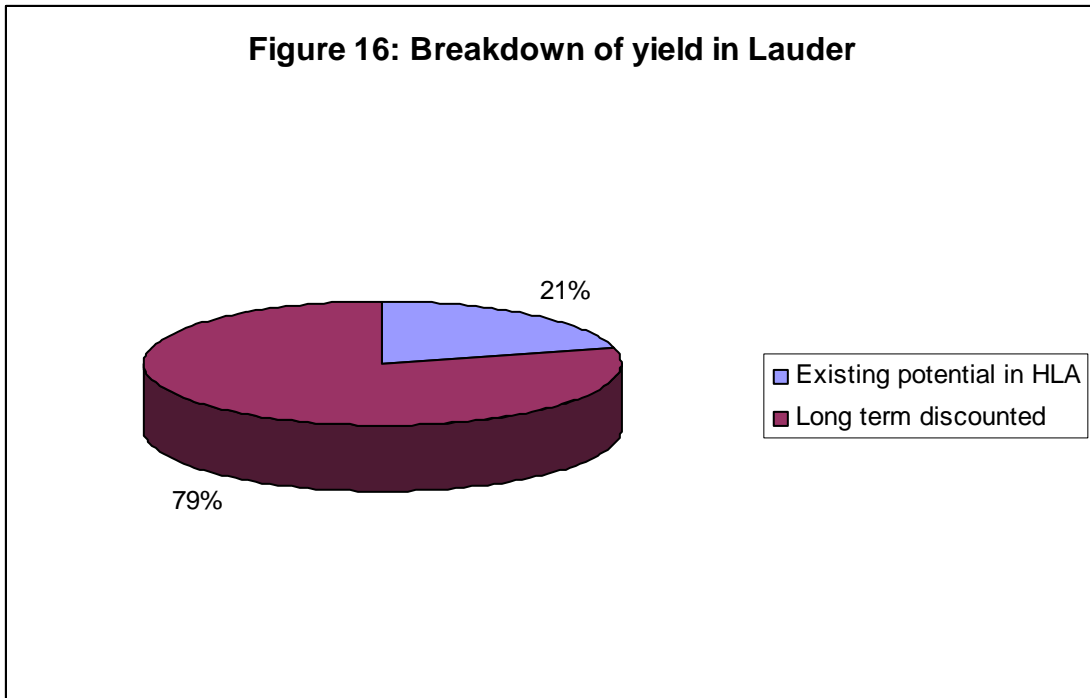
**Figure 16: Breakdown of yield in Kelso**





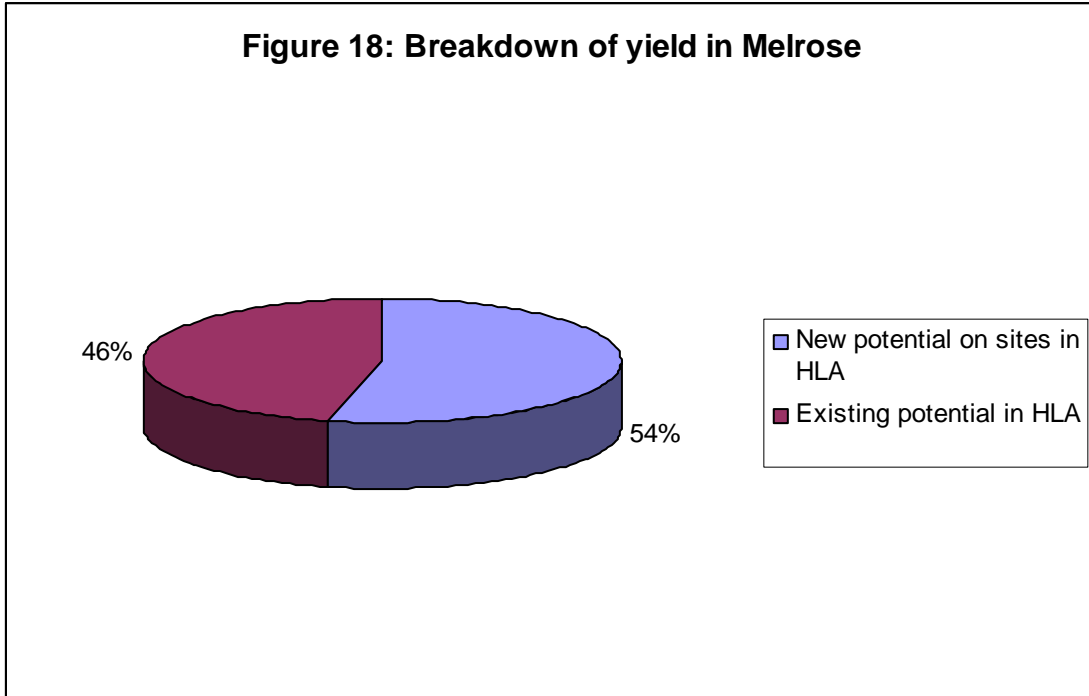
**6.3.11 Lauder:**

- No new units were identified from sites already identified in the Housing Land Audit
- No new sites were identified
- 40 units identified had already been counted into the Housing Land Audit
- 150 units were discounted due to constraints



**6.3.12 Melrose:**

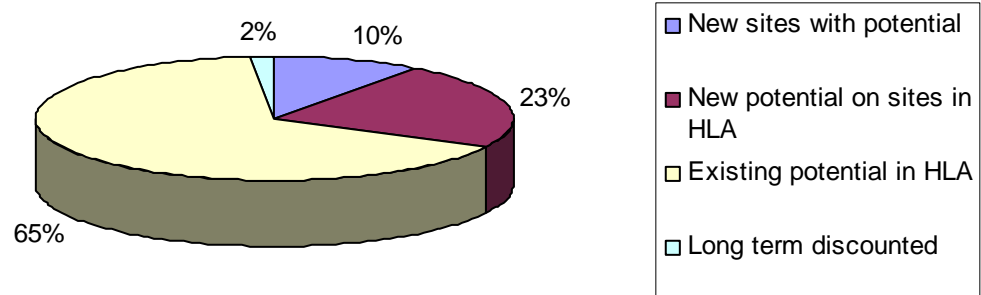
- 162 new units were identified from sites in the Housing Land Audit
- No new sites were identified
- 140 units identified had already been counted into the Housing Land Audit
- No units were discounted due to constraints



**6.3.13 Newtown:**

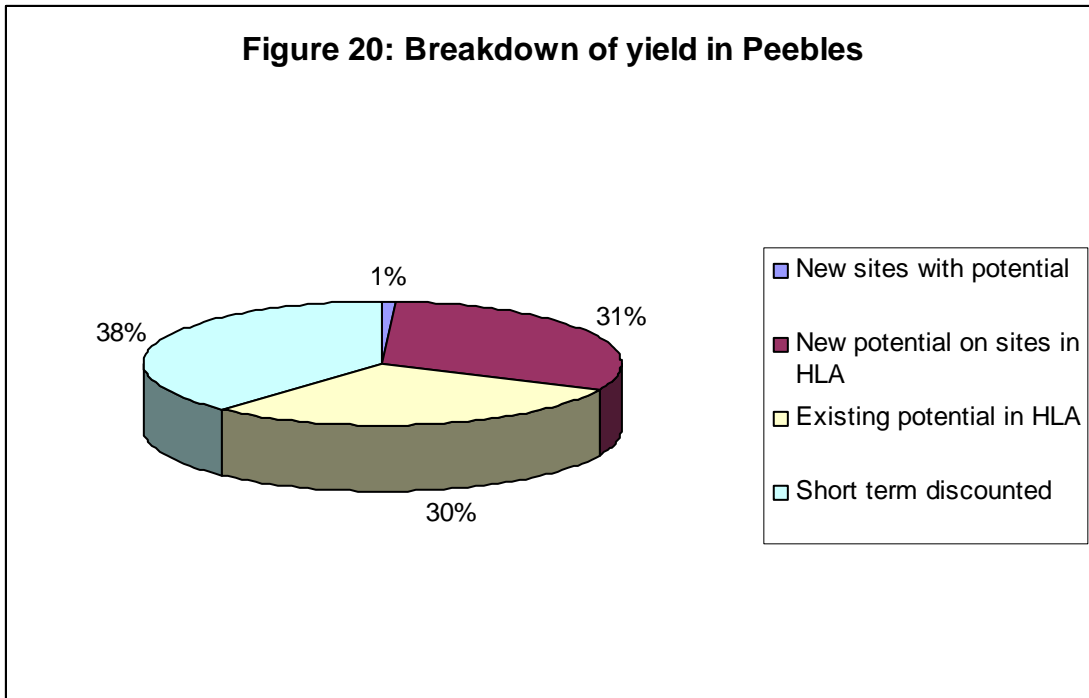
- 89 new units were from sites already identified in the Housing Land Audit
- 39 new units (1.8ha) were from sites not previously identified in the Housing Land Audit
- 254 units identified had already been counted into the Housing Land Audit
- 7 units were discounted due to constraints

**Figure 19: Breakdown of yield in Newtown St Boswells**



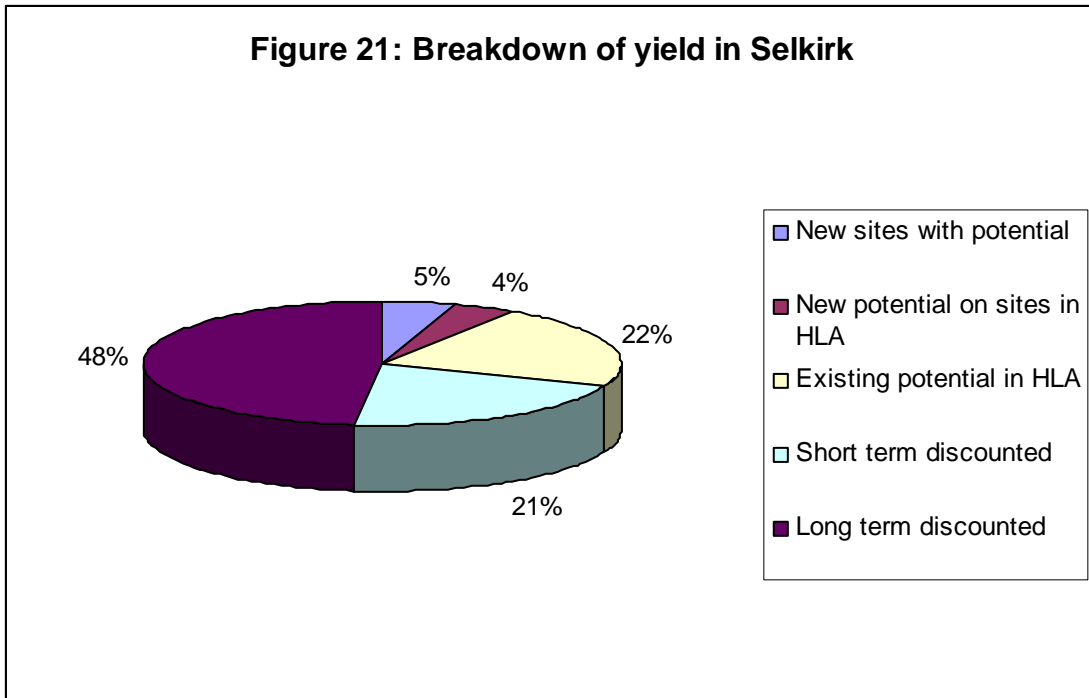
**6.3.14 Peebles:**

- 268 new units were from sites already identified in the Housing Land Audit
- 7 new units (0.3ha) were from new sites not previously identified in the Housing Land Audit
- 255 units identified had already been counted into the Housing Land Audit
- 331 units were discounted due to constraints



**6.3.15 Selkirk:**

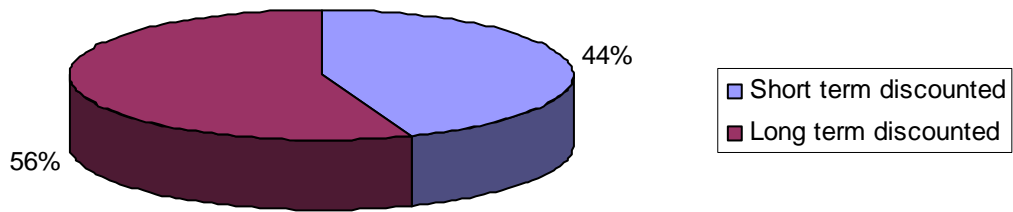
- 24 new units were from sites already identified in the Housing Land Audit
- 20 new units (1.1ha) were from new sites not previously identified in the Housing Land Audit
- 104 units identified had already been counted into the Housing Land Audit
- 328 units were discounted due to constraints



**6.3.16 St Boswells:**

- No sites were identified from the Housing Land Audit
- No new sites were identified
- 34 units were discounted due to constraints

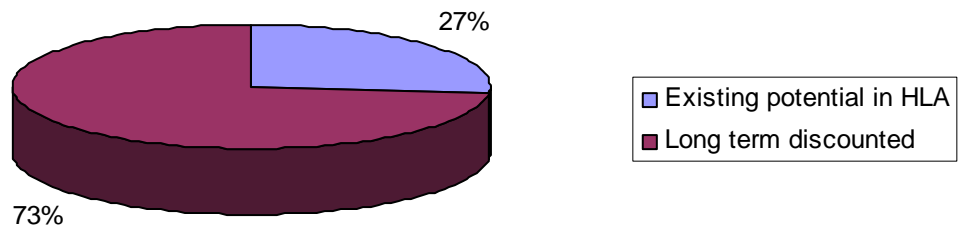
**Figure 22: Breakdown of yield in St Boswells**



**6.3.17 Tweedbank:**

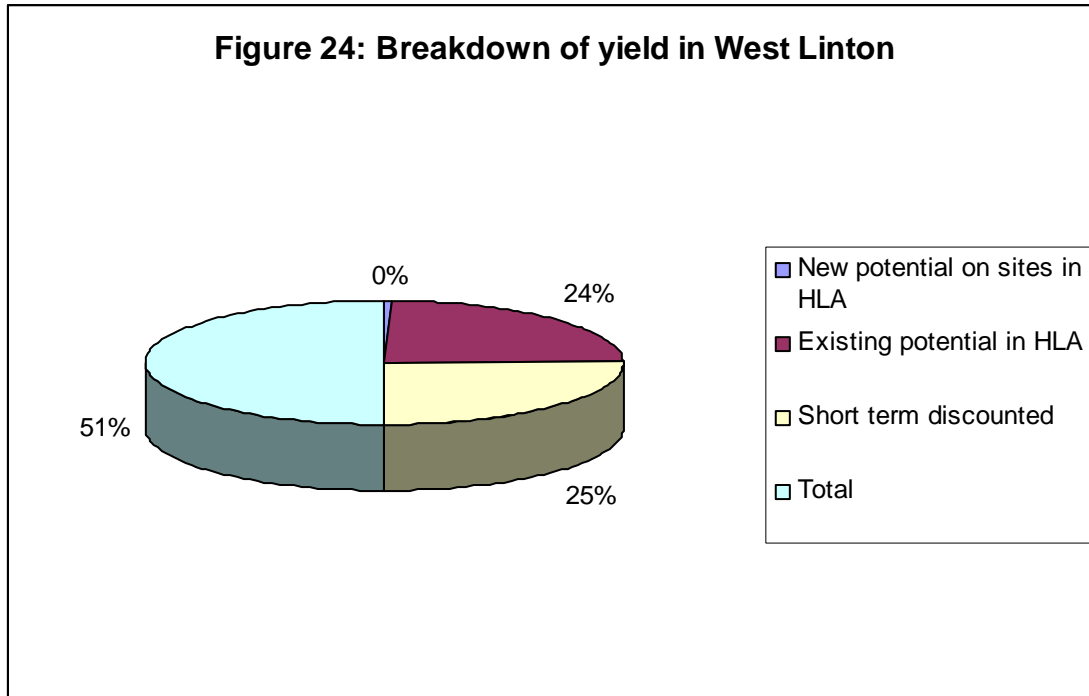
- No new units were identified from sites in the Housing Land Audit
- No new sites were identified
- 20 of the units identified had already been counted into the Housing Land Audit
- 55 units were discounted due to short term constraints

**Figure 23: Breakdown of yield for Tweedbank**



### 6.3.18 West Linton:

- 1 new unit was from a site already identified in the Housing Land Audit
- No new sites were identified
- 56 units identified had already been counted into the Housing Land Audit
- 59 units were discounted due to short term constraints



## **7. Conclusions**

The aim of the study was to investigate the potential for housing development within settlement boundaries, which would in turn encourage the re-use of brownfield land within central settlement locations. Sites identified as opportunities were plotted using GIS Mapping and surveyed to assess their yield potential. This information was then analysed to identify and discount sites that were found to have constraints.

The study found that there was some capacity for new development within the eighteen settlements surveyed. 25% of the overall yield identified was new potential – of this, 71% of the new potential was identified on land already allocated for housing. This demonstrates that this study has projected higher potential densities than current yields within the 2008 Housing Land Audit.

Overall, 32% of the potential yield had to be discounted due to a variety of constraints, including flood risk areas, employment allocations, marketability and infrastructure. Of this, 17% were identified as having short term constraints.

Those settlements with the highest yield of new potential units were spread over a wide area of the Scottish Borders region, including Galashiels, Eyemouth and Peebles. The smaller settlements of Lauder, St Boswells and Tweedbank had no new potential within their settlement boundaries.



## **8. Recommendations**

Based upon the results discussed above, the study recommends the following actions are taken:

- Further investigation of sites identified as new potential to evaluate allocations in future plans.
- Further investigation into the constraints on larger sites and the identification of possible solutions.
- The re-use of Vacant & Derelict Land where appropriate as an alternative to greenfield sites.
- Housing is directed away from constrained settlements.
- Information is gathered regarding flats above shops and open space within settlements to help identify further units/sites as potential.
- Consultation with landowners and developers over land use and allocations to be incorporated into the site appraisal process