

INTEGRATE

Assessing Development Needs
through an Integrated Evidence Base



Nathaniel Lichfield
& Partners
Planning. Design. Economics.



The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) confirms the importance of a plan-led system, and the task of defining growth ambitions now falls to Local Planning Authorities (LPAs). The NPPF requires Local Plans to identify objectively assessed development needs through their evidence base, and then seek to meet them. So the key question facing LPAs is this: How much development, where, and how does it all fit together?

“Every effort should be made objectively to identify and then meet the housing, business and other development needs of an area, and respond positively to wider opportunities for growth. Plans should... set out a clear strategy for allocating sufficient land which is suitable for development in their area, taking account of the needs of the residential and business communities”
(NPPF para 17)

Compared with Regional Strategies, localism brings greater opportunities for plan-making to define growth objectives, but it comes with greater scrutiny at a local level. Local plan targets for employment growth, housing development, retail and leisure capacity and the host of supporting infrastructure must meet the NPPF tests of soundness: positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national policy. It is imperative that LPAs clearly evidence the steps taken to identifying and meeting development needs in their area, and demonstrate that there is consistency between the assumptions adopted for different land use sectors.

The Taylor Review of planning guidance identifies the linkages between Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMAs), Strategic Land Availability Assessments (SLAAs) and Economic Needs Assessments and suggests combining approaches

as reflected in the National Planning Practice Guidance. This recognises the fact that there are common drivers of the need for jobs, homes, shops and services, including population change and economic growth.

Too often, the evidence in SHMAs, town centre and retail studies, employment land reviews and infrastructure assessments has not been considered together. Under localism, inconsistency is now a greater area of potential attack for objectors. Councils should therefore consider whether there is scope to bring the evidence base together or, at minimum, define a common set of underlying assumptions to guide its preparation.

INTEGRATE: Bringing the Evidence Together

NLP's INTEGRATE framework (see Figure 1) sets out a joined-up approach to objectively assessing development needs. It draws upon NLP's tried and tested methodologies for assessing the need for employment (WORKspace), housing (HEaDROOM), retail and leisure, and infrastructure. INTEGRATE provides a robust basis for developing a Local Plan where the underlying assumptions and scenarios for growth across all key land use sectors are consistent, whilst also delivering an efficient evidence base tailored to the core requirements of the NPPF and the National Planning Practice Guidance.

Why Join Up the Evidence?

- Ensures consistency across the evidence base.
- Minimises risks of contradiction between different studies.
- Full alignment of development needs across different uses and different scenarios.
- An integrated platform for decision-making within the Local Plan.
- Provides a succinct and proportionate evidence base.
- Can deliver cost savings on individual studies through joint commissioning and management.

Why INTEGRATE and NLP?

- Market leading insight and methodologies.
- Significant experience in joining up the evidence base (see our Case Studies).
- Tried and tested at Examination.
- Transparent presentation of inputs, analysis and outputs.
- In-house expertise across the breadth of housing, employment, retail and infrastructure evidence.
- Large team of planners, economists, demographers and urban designers.
- 5 offices serving the whole country and ensuring local knowledge.

Figure 1 : INTEGRATE framework

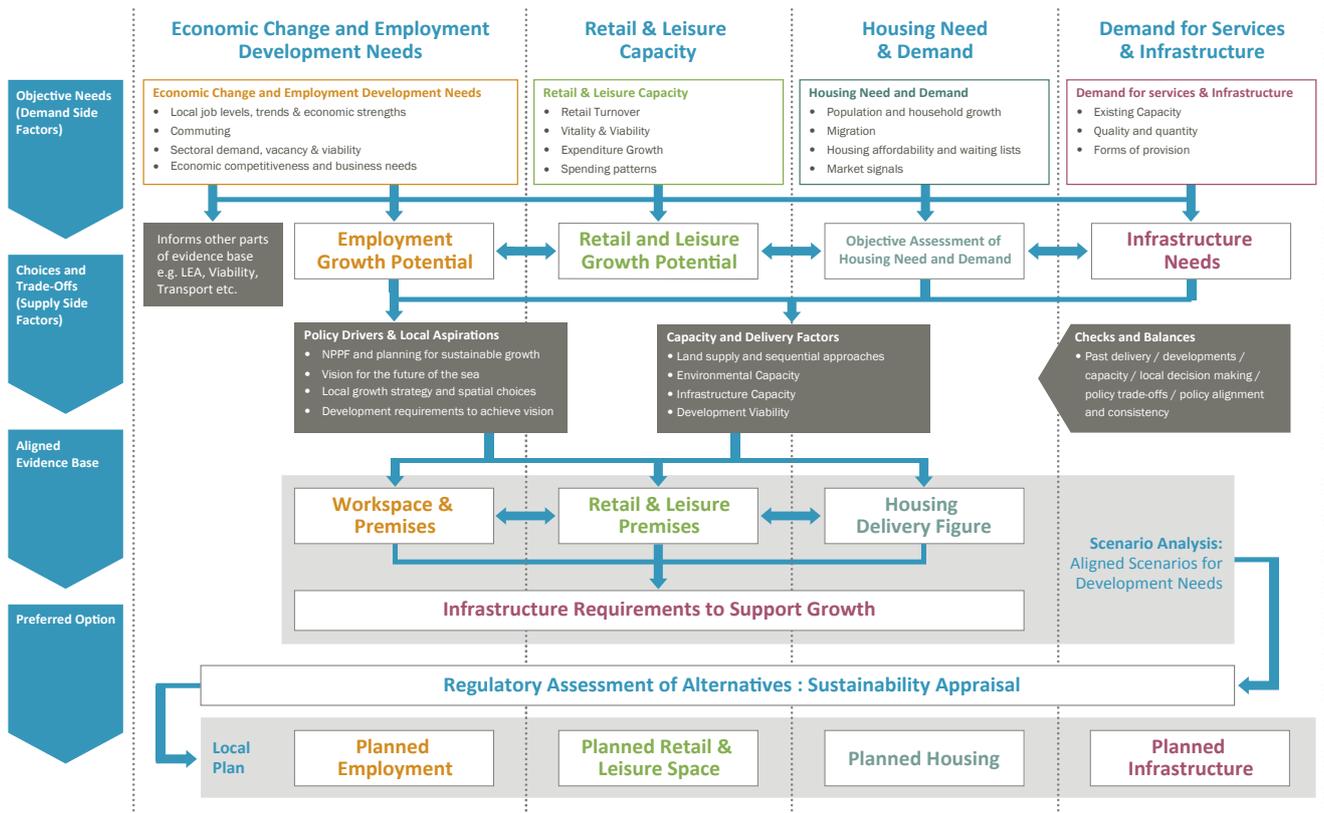
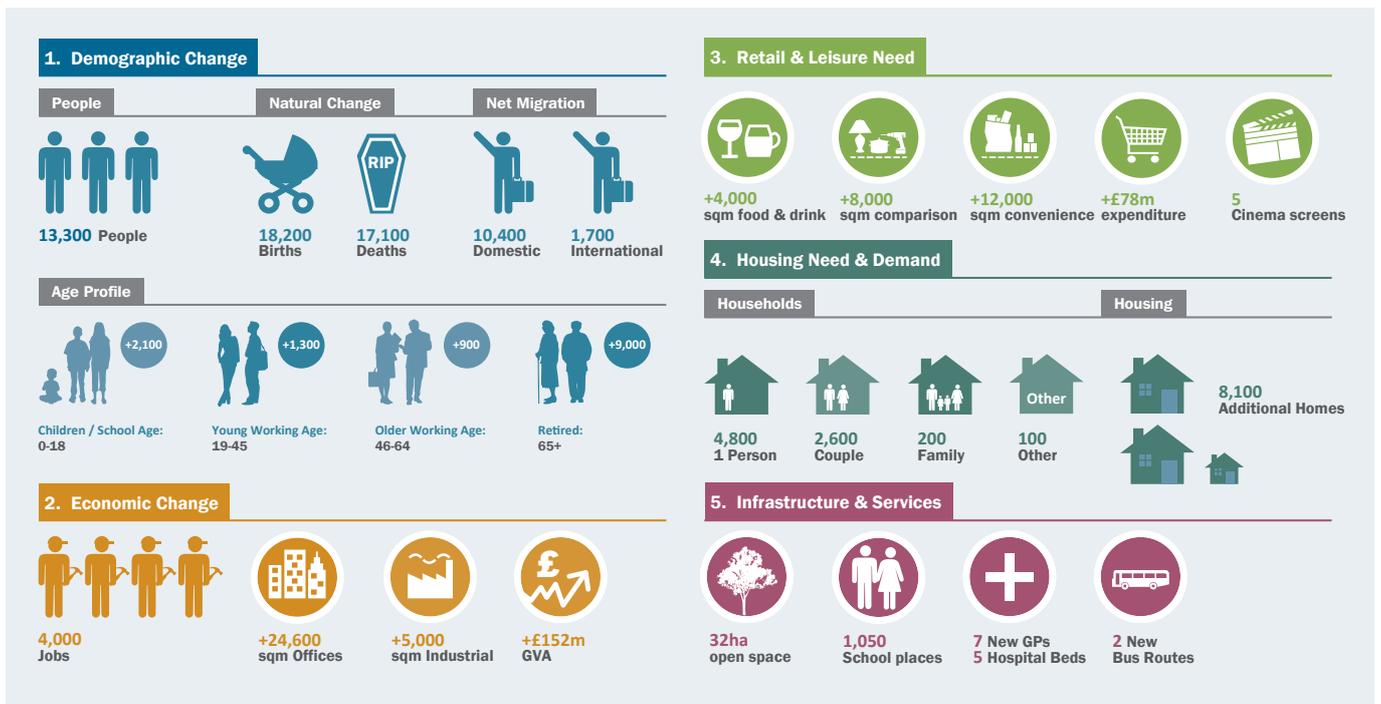


Figure 2 : Example Infographic Outputs - 'Growing Town Scenario'





**INTEGRATE
Case Studies**

Canterbury Integrated Development Requirements Study

Covering the need for housing, employment and community infrastructure across Canterbury District, the study combined demographic modelling with outputs from the Council's economic visioning study to consider scenarios for future growth. Illustrating the outcomes and policy performance of different options, NLP worked with Ipsos MORI to tailor the analysis to inform public opinion polling on the support for different levels of development.

Lewes SHLAA, ELR and Local Housing Needs Studies

NLP prepared a SHLAA and ELR for Lewes concurrently, thereby ensuring a comprehensive approach to housing and employment land supply. Subsequently NLP undertook a Local Housing Needs Study to help the Council establish a locally derived housing requirement. The three components formed a joined-up and coherent evidence base for the Council on housing and employment.

Swale SHMA and Employment Needs Study

Following a review of the Council's draft plan in terms of the requirements of the NPPF, NLP was commissioned to prepare an update to the evidence base for the plan, comprising a study that provide a SHMA update integrated with its economic assessment and employment land evidence.

Harrow ELR and Retail Study

NLP assessed the impacts of the recession on the Borough's economy and its platform for recovery. Assessing existing employment sites and looking at the capacity for retail development, one key issue considered was how former manufacturing sites could be recycled to provide new mixed-use developments including new employment/retail space.

Gloucester, Cheltenham and Tewkesbury ELR and Housing Requirement Study

To inform a Joint Core Strategy, NLP prepared an ELR and an assessment of future housing needs for this Gloucestershire sub-region. A key focus was ensuring alignment between future employment and housing growth, so that a balanced strategy could be achieved to realise economic potential. This included identification of land for employment premises and identifying the homes required to meet the needs of communities.

Gateshead Joint SHLAA, ELR and Office Capacity Study

NLP undertook a joint ELR and SHLAA for Gateshead Council providing evidence for policy-making in the Borough's Local Development Framework. As part of the work, NLP undertook an Office Capacity Study covering both Newcastle and Gateshead specifically looking at the demand and supply of land for B1 uses.

Castle Point Integrated ELR and Retail Study

NLP's integrated employment and retail study for this Essex District, looked at the implications of alternative growth levels on the requirement for retail, town centre and B-class space. Utilising demographic and housing projections to define a number of potential growth scenarios, the study looked at the retail and employment development requirements associated with each level of growth to ensure they aligned with potential housing growth.

Luton Evidence Base Alignment Study

As part of the commission to prepare an Economic and Employment Land Study for the Borough, NLP was appointed to carry out an alignment review of the evidence base studies for a number of different aspects of the Council's Plan, including retail, vacant offices, the airport, skills and employability, and hotel development.

Test Valley Retail and Local Housing Requirements Update Studies

Having undertaken separate Retail and Housing Requirement Studies, NLP was appointed to update both jointly as the Core Strategy approached submission. In refreshing both studies, regard was had to the proposed level of growth emerging in the Core Strategy, with NLP's demographic projections feeding into scenario sensitivity testing within the Retail Study update.

Burnley Housing, Employment and Retail Evidence Base

NLP was appointed to undertake two studies for Burnley Council; a Retail, Office and Leisure Assessment and a Housing and Employment Study. Between them they form a key part of the evidence base for the emerging Local Plan providing evidence on future dwelling and employment land requirements as well as future need and demand for town centre uses.

►
"By using NLP to undertake all three of these studies has meant that an integrated approach to developing the evidence base has been undertaken, particularly in terms of ensuring consistency of approach as well as the findings."

Lewes DC

►
"Both pieces of work were carried out to a high standard, with excellent communication between officers and NLP staff throughout. We believe that the work makes a significant contribution to a robust evidence base for Harrow's LDF"

LB Harrow

Contact Us

Cardiff

Gareth Williams
gwilliams@nlplanning.com
029 2043 5880

Leeds

Justin Gartland
jgartland@nlplanning.com
0113 397 1397

London

Matthew Spry
mspry@nlplanning.com
020 7837 4477

Manchester

Michael Watts
mwatts@nlplanning.com
0161 837 6130

Newcastle

Chris Harrison
charrison@nlplanning.com
0191 261 5685