

## CP13 – Housing Density



### Supporting Documents:

Sustainable Community Strategy - 2006  
 PPS3 Housing - 2006  
 Draft South East Plan - 2006  
 Urban Characterisation Study - 2007  
 Annual Monitoring Report -2007  
 Strategic Housing Market Assessment - 2008

### Introduction

**3.104** In order to make the most efficient use of land, Government policy in PPS3 on Housing (2006) requires local planning authorities to develop housing density policies. Density is a measure of the number of dwellings which can be accommodated on a site or in an area. In a compact city like Brighton & Hove, tightly constrained between the sea and the Downs, it will be particularly important to make the most efficient use of brownfield sites by maximising density levels where appropriate. Good design will be the key to successfully achieving this.

### Preferred Option – CP13 Housing Density

Residential development should be of a density that is appropriate to the identified positive character of the neighbourhood. Development will be permitted at higher densities than those typically found in the locality where it can be adequately demonstrated that the proposal:

1. Would be of high standard of design and would help to maintain or create a coherent townscape;
2. Would respect, reinforce or repair the character of the neighbourhood and contribute positively to its sense of place;
3. Would include a mix of dwelling types, tenures and sizes that reflects identified local needs;
4. Is easily accessible by sustainable transport or has the potential to be easily accessible;
5. Is well served by local services and community facilities; and
6. Provides for outdoor recreation space appropriate to the demand it would generate.

To make full and effective use of the land available, new residential development in Brighton & Hove will be expected to achieve a net density of at least 50 dwellings per hectare (dph), provided it contributes positively to creating or maintaining sustainable neighbourhoods and that all of the above criteria can be satisfactorily met.

Within the Development Areas covered by policies DA1 to DA7, the density of new residential development will be expected to achieve at least 100 dph on major development sites, provided that all of the above criteria can be satisfactorily met. Where any site-specific policy is in place for the site, the density level in the policy should be met.

Lower densities will be supported on sites where it can be adequately demonstrated that the development would reflect the neighbourhood's positive character, would meet the housing needs of a particular group or groups within the community and would better contribute towards creating a sustainable neighbourhood.

### Supporting Text

**3.105** PPS3 on Housing (2006) states that net dwelling density means only those site areas developed for housing and directly associated uses, including access roads within the site, private garden space, car parking areas, incidental open space and landscaping and children's play areas, where provided. PPS3 further states that 30 dwellings per hectare (dph) should be used as a national indicative minimum to guide policy development. The draft South East Plan sets an overall regional target of 40 dph.

**3.106** The council's Urban Characterisation Study (2007) has shown that the 19th century terraced development that typifies much of the existing urban core of the city now supports net density levels ranging between around 60 and over 200 dph. The upper range of these figures is comparable to some of the city's purpose built tall blocks of flats. Semi-detached dwellings in the urban core range between 25 and 80 dph, depending upon size and degree of conversion to flats. In some outer 20th century suburbs the figure falls below 20 dph.

**3.107** Over the two year period 2004 – 2006, 78% of new dwellings completed in the city (including conversions and change of use) were built at over 50 dph, with a further 13% built at between 30 – 50 dph and 9% at less than 30dph. Densities of at least 100 dph were frequently achieved in central areas of the city and over 300 dph in some cases.

**3.108** The purpose of this preferred option is to ensure that the city makes the most effective use of the limited land available whilst ensuring that sustainable neighbourhoods are achieved. The potential to provide high quality underground parking for example should be examined as a means of reducing the impact of car parking on the streetscape. The preferred option will assist in the implementation of Development Area proposals (DA1-7) and in creating and maintaining sustainable neighbourhoods (SN1). The council's preferred approach to achieving the appropriate mix of housing type, tenure and size is set out clearly in preferred option CP11 Housing Delivery.

**3.109** The Urban Characterisation Study provides a comprehensive understanding of the diversity, quality and sensitivity of the city's urban character to change and the development trends and pressures within the city. The study will be used to guide consideration of backland or infill developments and more detailed policies will be set out

in the Development Policies and Site Allocations DPD. Higher densities are unlikely to be achieved in those suburban and village neighbourhoods or localities where existing low density development contributes to a positive sense of place and/or where there is little potential to achieve greater accessibility to sustainable transport and/or local services or facilities.

### Implementation

**3.110** This proposed preferred option will be implemented through Area Action Plans; planning briefs and/or site-specific SPDs; Design Codes; and the development control process. Implementation will be informed and refined by the results of the updated Urban Capacity Study, the Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study and schemes agreed through the Local Transport Plan which serve to extend or enhance access to sustainable transport.

**3.111** Good design will be a fundamental consideration in achieving higher density housing and this preferred option will therefore be closely linked to proposed preferred option CP2 – Urban Design.