CP14 Housing Density

Residential development should be of a density that is appropriate to the identified positive character of the neighbourhood and be determined on a case by case basis. 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 a 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 reflect 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 and contributes towards the ‘green network’ where an identified gap exists.

To make full, efficient and sustainable use of the land available, new residential development in Brighton & Hove will be expected to achieve a minimum net density of 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 DA6 and DA8, the density of new residential development will be expected to achieve a minimum of 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 that policy should be met.

Where a proposed development is below 50dph, a lower density will be accepted where it can be adequately demonstrated that the development would reflect the neighbourhood’s positive characteristics, would meet the housing needs of a particular group or groups within the community and would better contribute towards creating a sustainable neighbourhood.
4.161 In order to boost significantly the supply of housing, national planning policy encourages local planning authorities to set out their own approach to housing density. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the city, which is compact and constrained, makes the most efficient use of the limited brownfield land available whilst ensuring that sustainable neighbourhoods are achieved.

4.162 Net dwelling density is calculated by including 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 these are provided. National statistics show that in 2010 new dwellings were built at an average density of 43 dwellings per hectare (dph), whilst on brownfield land this figure was 48 dph.

4.163 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 the degree of conversion to flats. In some outer 20th century suburbs the figure falls below 20 dph.

4.164 Over the three year period 2006 – 2009, 85 per cent of new dwellings completed in the city (including conversions and change of use) were built at over 50 dph, with a further 15 per cent built at between 30 – 50 dph. Densities of at least 100 dph were frequently achieved in central areas of the city and over 300 dph in some cases. The minimum density requirements set out in this policy are therefore considered to be realistic and achievable.

4.165 Successful higher density development will depend upon a ‘design-led’ approach that respects its local context and minimises impacts on its surroundings. Higher density housing should also include measures that enable residents to make more informed and sustainable choices on transport, as set out in Policy CP9 Sustainable Transport. The Urban Characterisation Study will be used to guide consideration of backland or infill developments until more detailed policies are set out in the City Wide Plan Part 2 and the Urban Design Framework SPD.

4.166 Higher densities may not be achievable in those parts of suburban and village neighbourhoods where existing low density development contributes to a positive sense of place and community. Density may also be constrained by

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215 Land Use Change Statistics (England) 2010 – provisional estimates (July 2011)
216 Calculations based on schemes of 10 or more dwellings.
the need to retain key heritage assets in their settings and/or important landscape features.

4.167 In the case of mixed use schemes, the residential site area should be calculated using total net site area apportioned between the various uses, on a pro rata basis (i.e. reducing the site area by the same ratio as that of the residential to non-residential floor space). However, in assessing density on mixed use sites, the council will be mindful of the overall benefits of the proposals.

4.168 This policy will also help to deliver against the local targets under the One Planet principles, which is a strategic approach to enabling the city to live within environmental limits (see Table 1 on page 26). This policy is complemented by city wide policy CP12 Urban Design and will assist in the implementation of Development Area policies (DA1 - 8) and in creating and maintaining sustainable neighbourhoods (SA6). The council’s approach to achieving an appropriate mix of housing type, tenure and size is set out in policy CP1 Housing Delivery and CP19 Housing Mix.