

Policy DP8: Efficient use of land

All new development proposals must demonstrate that they have made effective and efficient use of land. Proposals will be supported which:

- Enable the reuse and regeneration of previously developed land;
- Ensure that all parts of the site have a positive purpose; and
- Prioritise higher densities at more accessible locations such as town centres, local centres and transport hubs.

The minimum target density will be 40 dwellings per hectare, but this should be higher at accessible locations. In all cases density should respect and complement the character of the surrounding area.

Justification

Encouraging development on vacant and previously developed land has both a positive role in encouraging the recycling and regeneration of land and also reduces the pressure for development on greenfield sites. Redevelopment can also help increase the effectiveness of existing infrastructure.

The NPPF does not specify minimum density targets and considers that density levels should be set by local authorities to reflect local circumstances. Within North Somerset the minimum target net density will be 40 dwellings per hectare within the developable area. However, this is an average and the appropriate density will vary depending on local circumstances. Within accessible locations such as town and local centres and transport hubs there will be a presumption in favour of higher densities as this can help increase vitality and viability in these areas, support public transport and provide different types of accommodation.

There may be instances where encouraging increased density may compromise the character of the surrounding area or be constrained by other factors. In areas of low density housing, for example, a new development may appear incongruous. In such circumstances the design approach will be to make effective use of the land subject to no adverse impact on the surrounding area or the living conditions of residents. In many locations there will be a range of factors such as ecological, green infrastructure or heritage considerations which will influence the proposed density.

Design guidance and masterplans will be used to provide more detailed guidance for specific locations.

