Policy Title:

LP1 - Making Effective Use of Land in Urban and Town Hubs

Existing Policies Which adopted Core Strategy or Policies Sites and Places (PSP) policy would eventually be replaced	**NEW Policy to replace CS16 Housing Density**
Non-Strategic / Strategic	**Non-Strategic**

Purpose

There are parts of our existing urban areas and market towns around our town centres, public transport hubs and high streets, where a range of facilities, services and wider public transport connections are accessible by walking, cycling and wheeling. Making the most effective use of land in these sustainable locations will help us to meet our housing needs, support our changing high streets and reduce the need to develop greenfield land.

In line with national guidance on achieving appropriate densities, this policy seeks to make the most effective use of previously developed land by optimising density in the most sustainable locations. 'Optimisation' can be defined as developing land to the fullest amount consistent with all relevant planning objectives. Evidence in the South Gloucestershire Council Density and Character Study (January 2022) has informed a density range for each of the locations which is contextual, appropriate and optimises opportunities to deliver new homes and high quality placemaking.

This policy defines the areas where a range of higher densities in new development will be suitable. It also sets out the standards, planning and design considerations which will be required when development proposals seek to build at higher density, to ensure quality of life for new and existing residents.

Policy wording

1. Locations and Density Ranges for Urban and Town Hubs

Development proposals for new homes within the Urban and Town Hubs listed below, will be required to optimise the use of land by achieving net densities within the ranges shown in LP1 - Table 1. These areas are designated on the Policies Map.

LP1 - Table 1 – Urban and Town Hubs	Density range (D/ha)
Communities of the Bristol North Fringe	
Cribbs Causeway	110 – 160
Former Filton Airfield	105 – 160
Patchway Town Centre	80 – 120
Bradley Stoke Town Centre	65 – 100
Filton Town Centre	50 – 90
Parkway, Stoke Gifford to UWE Corridor	80 – 120
Communities of the Bristol East Fringe	
Kingswood Town Centre	60 – 120
Staple Hill Town Centre	65 – 120
Downend Town Centre	40 – 115
Emersons Green Town Centre and Science Park	45 – 70
Hanham Town Centre	50 – 90
Longwell Green Retail Area	100 – 130
Market Town Focus Areas	
Thornbury Town Centre	50 – 90
Yate Station and Town Centre	65 – 120
Chipping Sodbury Town Centre	45 – 90

2. Standards for Higher Density Development

Development proposals for new homes within the Urban and Town Hubs set out in LP1 - Table 1, will be supported if they achieve densities in the ranges set out in Part 1 and demonstrate the following:

a. As a minimum, room sizes for all types of new homes, which meet the requirement set out in the Nationally Described Space Standards and adopted policy; and

b. Minimum standards for private and communal amenity space as set out in adopted policy; and

c. An appropriate level of car parking supported by a Parking Assessment where reduced parking provision is sought which demonstrates the sustainability of the site, the ability to mitigate and control potential on-street parking issues and that the design facilitates active travel; and

d. Access to an appropriate level of public open space provision, high-quality public realm and green infrastructure; and

e. Proposals in flatted developments should make suitable provision for waste and recycling collection; and

f. There is no physical or visual harm to designated or locally valuable heritage, ecological, landscape areas and features, and amenity areas, within or surrounding the site; and

g. The character and quality of the area surrounding the site informs the design, placement, scale, appearance and density of the scheme; and

h. Major development proposals will be expected to be supported by a density and character appraisal which is specific to its site and context. This will need to clearly demonstrate and justify proposals if a density of development falls outside the density ranges set out in Table 1.

Supporting text

Density Ranges and Design

1. The density ranges in LP1 - Table 1, should be used as a guide to minimum density for the development of new homes within the named and designated Urban and Town Hubs.
2. The appropriate density for a site will always require consideration of the individual site, context and character of immediate surrounding townscape/landscape area and buildings, meeting the requirements of Policy LPS12 - Creating Well-Designed Places. Sites which are located towards the centre of the Urban and Hubs, for example in existing areas of higher density closest to shops, facilities, services, public transport hubs and public transport provision, it will be more appropriate to aim for densities towards the top of the density range. Proposals which are within the designated Urban and Town Hubs, but more removed, for example 400 to 800 metres from the town centre, transport hub, or where the existing character is of a much lower density, will be more suited towards density at the lower end of the range.
3. The South Gloucestershire Council Density and Character Study (2022) should be referred to as a starting point and baseline to understand the background to the density ranges and inform consideration of appropriate density within each of the Urban and Town Hubs. Proposals which suggest significantly higher or lower density of development in the locations set out in Table 1 will be required to support their proposals with additional robust information relating to the impact on the context and character of the surrounding area, amenity and justification for departure from the density guides that have been informed by the Density and Character study 2022.
4. Major development proposals of 10 or more homes, as part of residential or mixed-use development should use the Council's pre-application advice service. Major developments are also encouraged to utilise the 'design review panel' which is endorsed by the Council to help guide the design of the development and to ensure design quality and optimised density is achieved.
5. Proposals in flatted developments should make suitable provision for waste and recycling collection as set out in the Councils Waste & Recycling Collection: guidance for new developments SPD.
6. Information including; cross sections, wind impacts information relating to taller buildings, sunlight and shadowing assessments, 3D context visualisations, and heritage assessments (including archaeological investigations), may also be required to support planning applications, depending on the scale, height and sensitivity of the site location and characteristics.

Minimum Room Sizes

7. Achieving optimised and higher density must be balanced with achieving quality of life and flexibility for future residents. To ensure the health and wellbeing of future residents, new homes of all types in higher density developments should achieve at least the minimum room sizes to meet the requirements of Policy 18 - Internal Space and Accessibility Standards.

Private Amenity Space

8. Optimising density of development within the most sustainable parts of our urban areas and market towns may involve more 1 and 2-bedroom flats and houses. These new homes also require space and opportunity for private amenity and the activities people associate with their own defensible space. The policy requires a minimum standard of private outdoor amenity space such as gardens, roof terraces or balconies to be provided, taking account of overlooking and privacy. External communal amenity space is also required within developments where 2+ bedroom flats are provided. Standards for all scales of residential development are set out in Policy LP30 - Private and Communal Amenity Space Standards. The council will bring forward guidance and examples of different types of acceptable and high-quality private spaces at different scales and types of development.

Parking

9. To achieve densities at the higher end of the ranges in each Urban and Town Hub area, and because of the proximity to a range of amenities and public transport options, it may be appropriate to have a level of car parking provision which is lower than the district wide standard. Any reduction in car parking will need to be justified in accordance with Policy LP22 - Parking Requirements, Including Electric Vehicles, using the Parking Assessment Tool specified by that policy.

Public Open Space

10. Public open space should be provided in line with standards in retained policy CS24 Green Infrastructure, Sport and Recreation Standards and Appendix 5, or future updates to this policy. Public open space should be designed and enhanced to reflect increased use by more people and provide a wider range of activities.

Green Infrastructure and Environmental Considerations

11. Policy LPS12 - Creating Well Designed Places and Policy LPS11 - Strategic Green and Blue Infrastructure and the Natural Environment as well as retained policy PSP2 - Landscape include principles for local and community scale green infrastructure (GI) and criteria to ensure that existing and new green infrastructure is planned, delivered and managed. Development proposals should seek to deliver the aims of the Natural England Green Infrastructure Framework including the use of Urban Greening Factor and/or Building with Nature to demonstrate robust GI provision, as well as delivering the required level of Biodiversity Net Gain (Policy LP28 - Ecology and Biodiversity Net Gain). A key goal of urban greening and Biodiversity Net Gain is retaining and enhancing functionality and linkages as well as settings and character. The Council's Green Infrastructure SPD gives examples of appropriate interventions within an urban context.

Additions	
Key evidence	South Gloucestershire Density and Character Study 2022
Other relevant policies to cross-reference?	Policy LP18 - Internal Space and Accessibility Standards Policy LP30 - Private and Communal Amenity Space Standards Policy LP22 - Parking Requirements, Including Electric Vehicles Policy LPS11 - Strategic Green and Blue Infrastructure and the Natural Environment Policy LPS12 - Creating Well Designed Places Policy LP28 - Ecology and Biodiversity Net Gain **Saved policies** CS 24 - Green Infrastructure, Sport and Recreation Standards PSP2 - Landscape