

Policy 5 Effective and Efficient Use of Land

Land for development is a finite resource. Whilst it is acknowledged and accepted that some greenfield land must be used to meet development requirements, there remains a need for prudent re-use of previously developed (brownfield) land within the Borough which, has the potential to contribute towards meeting Redditch's development needs. Furthermore, the greenfield land that is allocated for development should be developed efficiently to maximise its potential.

Policy 5

Effective and efficient use of land must be sought in all new development schemes. With respect to residential development, this will be achieved in the following ways:

- i) the reuse and regeneration of Previously Developed Land (PDL) will be actively encouraged. Where the economic viability of a scheme on PDL is questionable, and can be fully demonstrated by the applicant, the Borough Council may negotiate a more appropriate level of infrastructure provision, or deferred payment scheme with the applicant, in order to secure beneficial reuse of a site;
- ii) densities of between 30 and 50 dwellings per hectare will be sought in Redditch Borough, and 70 dwellings per hectare will be sought on sites for residential development that are within or adjacent to Redditch Town Centre and the District Centres
- iii) higher densities will be sought in locations close to public transport interchanges; and
- iv) ~~iv-~~ higher densities will also be sought in other locations where it can be demonstrated that there will be no detrimental impact on the amenity, character and environmental quality of an area.

Applicants should refer to the most up to date Strategic Housing Market Assessment to determine the most appropriate types of dwellings required throughout the Borough. Lower densities will ~~only~~ be considered acceptable where ~~it has been demonstrated that the scheme reflects the Borough's housing needs, there are~~ ~~there are~~ site specific limitations which negate standard densities being met, or where there would be a detrimental impact on the amenity, character and environmental quality of an area if the standard densities were to be pursued on-site.

Lower density developments may be necessary on some smaller sites, self-build sites or when providing bungalows. In these situations the following approaches will apply:

- i. all new housing developments within the Borough on sites less than 0.16 hectares should be exempt from the Council's housing density requirements
- ii. all new self-build housing developments on sites larger than 0.16 hectares within the Borough should meet a minimum housing density requirement of 15 dwellings per hectare.

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iii. all new bungalow developments within the Borough on sites larger than 0.16 hectares should meet a minimum density requirement of 15 dwellings per hectare.

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Schemes for the development of private residential gardens will generally not be supported unless they lie within existing settlements, integrate fully into the neighbourhood, and can clearly demonstrate that there would be no detrimental impact on the current and future amenity, character and environmental quality of the neighbourhood. Development may be supported if there are substantial overriding environmental, social and economic benefits to justify the development.

With respect to non-residential development, schemes on PDL, which propose the re-development of tired or redundant sites, will be considered favourably.

There will be a presumption against development on PDL where it can be clearly demonstrated that over time, land has been afforded beneficial amenity value or where biodiversity issues would be compromised through redevelopment of the site.

Reasoned Justification

Encouraging development on previously developed land allows maximum use to be made of vacant and previously developed sites within the Borough; thus reducing the pressure for development on greenfield sites and maximising the use of existing infrastructure.

The National Planning Policy Framework removes the previous PPS3 requirement for a specific PDL target, allowing local authorities the flexibility to consider whether a local target would be appropriate. The Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) demonstrates that it is clearly not possible to deliver substantial levels of housing on PDL in Redditch. This is due to its tight administrative boundaries which are surrounded by Green Belt, and the nature of its previous New Town status, which limits the amount of development that may have reached the end of its natural life and is prime for redevelopment within the urban area. The Borough Council's previous brownfield development target, identified in the Worcestershire County Structure Plan 1996 – 2011, stipulated a target of 25% of all residential development on brownfield land. The Borough Council was able to more than double the brownfield delivery against this target during the period up to 2011. Therefore, exceeding previous brownfield development targets, limits the scope and potential during this Plan period. However, there is still a need to promote the reuse of PDL in the interest of Redditch's capacity limitations, and whilst it is not considered beneficial to set a PDL target, it would be prudent to actively encourage development on the areas of known PDL within the Borough. The SHLAA and Employment Land Review (ELR) identify PDL potential within the Borough. Therefore, the Borough Council considers it prudent to encourage regeneration and redevelopment of sites which may be tired or have remained vacant for a number of years, in order to revitalise these parts of the town, thereby encouraging future investment in Redditch and contributing towards the Borough's development targets.

There are some instances where redevelopment of brownfield land should be resisted, such as previously cleared sites which have, over time, become part of the open and green character of an area and value is placed on the contribution these areas make to the community or biodiversity. In these instances, the contribution these sites make to the

character of the area will be afforded careful attention before their redevelopment is considered.

The NPPF does not specify minimum density targets and considers that density levels should be set by local authorities to reflect local circumstances. Based upon past density rates achieved in Redditch, at a time when minimum density requirements were set, it is considered that continuation of these density ranges will continue to be achievable and in keeping with the character of existing development within the Borough. There may be instances when achieving minimum density targets will compromise ~~the e the~~ character of the surrounding area, ~~meeting particular identified housing needs -or if~~ there are physical limitations within the site boundary. In these circumstances, the character of the surrounding area, ~~the identified housing need, or and~~ the sites physical constraints will be afforded careful attention before higher density development is considered.

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Homes with large back gardens are common feature in some of the older districts in the Borough and previously a number of housing completions have come from developments on garden land. Although garden land was previously defined as brownfield land, it has now been removed from this definition. This does not mean that all development on garden land should be refused but rather that careful consideration should be given to any proposals and whether there are any mitigating factors. One of the most important considerations will be the retention of the existing character of residential areas. Development which significantly increases the proportion of ground coverage or the scale of proposed buildings is likely to be out of keeping with its surroundings and therefore is likely to be unacceptable and will be refused. Development of garden land will only be supported where it fully integrates into the neighbourhood and is in keeping the character and quality of the local environment, unless it can be demonstrated there are significant overriding mitigating circumstances.