

South Tyneside Density Study

(October 2018)



South Tyneside Council

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (July 2018) states that plans and decisions should support development that makes efficient use of land. Plans should contain policies to optimise the use of land in the area, including the use of minimum density standards.

1.2 The purpose of this report is to inform the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) and evidence policies on appropriate and achievable densities in the emerging Local Plan and should be read in conjunction with the SHLAA and Green Belt Review.

1.3 In July 2018, the revised NPPF introduced a new standard methodology for determining housing need in each authority. The standard method draws on the 2014 based Household Projections and median workplace-based affordability ratios, both published by the ONS. For the purposes of our emerging Local Plan, we have used the standard method to determine the minimum number of new homes. The minimum number of homes the Plan proposes to deliver over the period 2016-2036 is **7000**.

1.4 Once the other sources of supply have been taken into account (including provision for demolitions, existing planning consents, windfall allowances, etc), Table 1 shows that the residual number of homes the Plan would need to identify through new allocations is **4936**.

Table 1 Meeting the housing requirement

| | | |
|---|---|-------|
| A | Local Plan housing minimum requirement 2016 – 2036 | 7,000 |
| B | Completions (net) 1.4.2016 to 31.3.2019 | 1,102 |
| C | Commitments (gross) (homes with existing planning permission at 1.4.2019) | 904 |
| D | 10% lapse rate for commitments | 91 |
| E | Projected demolitions / losses | 138 |
| F | Small scale windfalls | 287 |
| G | Residual target to find = A – B – C + D + E – F = G | 4,936 |
| | Local Plan Allocations Supply | 5,425 |
| | Over Provision | 489 |
| | Over Provision (%) | 10% |

1.5 Through evidence gathered in the Strategic Land Review (2018) and the SHLAA we know there will be a need to utilise land currently in the Green Belt to meet our housing need therefore optimising

the use of land to meet the housing needs through density setting will be tested at the emerging Plan's inspection.

2. NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY

2.1 The density of a development should respond to the local context and character, and reflect the accessibility of the site by public transport, cycling and walking, and to public services, community facilities, and amenity and recreation provision. As set out in Paragraph 22 of the NPPF, the highest densities should be in the most accessible locations. Development should make efficient use of land taking into account the need for different house types, market conditions, the availability and capacity of infrastructure, the area's character and setting, and, the importance of well-designed places.

2.2 Paragraph 123 of the NPPF highlights the importance of avoiding homes being built at low densities where there is an anticipated shortage of land for meeting identified housing needs. Planning policies and decisions should avoid homes being built at low densities and ensure that developments make optimal use of the potential of each site.

2.3 Where there is an existing or anticipated shortage of land for meeting identified housing needs, plans should contain policies to optimise the use of land in their area and should include the use of minimum density standards in city and town centres and other areas well served by public transport. The NPPF makes clear this will be tested robustly at examination.

3. PREVIOUS NATIONAL AND LOCAL POLICY

3.1 Efficient use of land has also been a focus of national planning policy prior to the NPPF. Planning Policy Statement 3 (2006) set a national indicative minimum of 30 dwellings per hectare. Authorities were required to develop housing density policies having regard to the spatial vision and strategy for housing in their area, current and future infrastructure capacity as well the characteristics of the area and the desirability to achieve high quality, well designed housing.

3.2 The adopted Local Development Framework Core Strategy (June 2007) expands on the minimum 30 dwellings per hectare set out in PPS 3. Policy SC3 in the Core Strategy encourages higher densities in the most accessible locations in accordance with the following distances from town or other main shopping centres or Metro stations:

- Average 50 dwellings per hectare on sites within 400m;
- Average 40 dwellings per hectare on sites between 400 – 800m; and
- Average 30 dwellings per hectare on sites beyond

3.3 The National Planning Policy Framework published in 2012, which replaces PPS3, removed minimum density targets. The 2018 revision of the NPPF sets out a clear to avoid low densities in areas where there is an existing or anticipated shortage of land for meeting identified housing needs.

4. PROFILE OF THE BOROUGH OF SOUTH TYNESIDE

4.1 The Borough of South Tyneside is largely urbanised and compact, particularly in the north where the main settlements of South Shields, Jarrow and Hebburn have developed along the riverside. The

southern part of the Borough retains a more rural environment with the villages of Whitburn, Cleadon and the Boldons.

4.2 The northern urban parts of the Borough have typically higher densities than the more rural southern part of the Borough. The highest housing densities in the Borough are in the Inner South Shields area where average housing densities are 64 dwellings per hectare.

4.3 The lowest average densities are in the Boldons and Cleadon area with an average of 24 dwellings per hectare. Densities in Cleadon are particularly low, averaging 12 dwellings per hectare.

4.4 Boldon and Cleadon and Whitburn have the highest proportion of bungalows out of each of the character areas. Roughly 15% of the properties in each of the areas are bungalows.

4.5 Inner South Shields, where densities are the highest, has the highest proportion of flats in the Borough. Over 50% of the properties in Inner South Shields are flats, compared to just 10% in Boldon and Cleadon and 6% in Whitburn.

4.6 Generally, areas with higher densities have a higher proportion of flats than areas with lower densities. The urban fringe villages tend to have a higher proportion of bungalows than the urban areas.

Table 2 Dwelling types per area

| Dwelling Types (% of total dwellings in the area) | | | |
|---|--------|-----------|-------|
| Area | Houses | Bungalows | Flats |
| Boldon and Cleadon | 75 | 15 | 10 |
| Fellgate and Hedworth | 76 | 10 | 14 |
| Hebburn | 72 | 8 | 20 |
| Inner South Shields | 44 | 2 | 54 |
| Jarrow | 75 | 8 | 17 |
| Outer South Shields | 64 | 9 | 27 |
| Whitburn | 79 | 15 | 6 |

5. ASSESSMENT OF LOCAL DEVELOPMENTS

5.1 In order to establish an up to date understanding of densities that are currently being built in the borough a desk study was conducted which relies on GIS mapping, planning application files and monitoring data using a sample of 39 sites which received planning permission between 2009 – 2018. The 39 sites cover approximately 92 hectares of land and would deliver 3094 dwellings. The sites considered have planning permission and have progressed to various stages of development.

ASSESSMENT BY SITE SIZE (BY GROSS SITE AREA)

5.2 The gross site area is defined as the total land area as part of a development. The net site area is defined as the land that is the area of developable land. For larger sites the net area of housing will be smaller than the gross area, allowing for provision of greenspace, infrastructure and other community facilities such as schools.

Table 3 Gross to net ratios

| Site Size | Assumed Net Ratio |
|----------------|-------------------------|
| <0.4 Hectare | 100% gross to net ratio |
| 0.4-2 hectares | 90% gross to net ratio |
| >2 hectares | 75% gross to net ratio |

5.3 The sites assessed fall into one of the following five site area categories:

- Sites of less than 1 hectare;
- Sites between 1 and 1.99 hectares;
- Sites between 2 and 3.99 hectares;
- Sites between 4 and 6.99 hectares; and
- Sites in excess of 7 hectares

5.4 The assessment showed that the smallest sites, those less than 1 hectare, were more likely to have a higher density based on the net site area. The average density on sites below 1 hectare is 58 dwellings per hectare, this decreases significantly on sites above 1 hectare. Densities in all categories above 1 hectare were between 30 and 40 dwellings per hectare. The average densities per hectare do increase as site size decreases as table 4 shows.

Table 4 Assessment based on site size

| Category | Number of sites assessed | Average Density per Hectare (Net Site Area) |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <1 ha | 24 | 58 |
| 1-1.99 ha | 4 | 39 |
| 2-3.99 ha | 5 | 38 |
| 4-6.99 ha | 2 | 35 |
| >7 ha | 4 | 33 |
| Overall average density | 39 | 40 |

ASSESSMENT BY SITE YIELD

5.5 Most schemes will deliver a mix of dwellings types and sizes which have an impact on the amount of land required and, therefore, the density of the scheme. The sites were also grouped into five categories having regard to their yield. These were:

- Sites with fewer than 50 dwellings
- Sites between 50 and 99 dwellings
- Sites between 100 and 149 dwellings
- Sites between 150 and 249 dwellings
- Sites in excess of 250 dwellings

5.6 Densities by site yield show a similar trend to densities by site area. Generally, as site yield increases, density per hectare decreases. Sites less than 100 dwellings have an average density of 54 dwellings per hectare whereas sites with a yield of over 100 dwellings have an average density per hectare of 36 dwellings per hectare.

5.7 Larger sites require more infrastructure, open space and land for other requirements such as community facilities. Therefore, for larger sites, a smaller percentage of the site is used for housing than on smaller sites. Smaller sites can then achieve a higher density per hectare

Table 5 Assessment by site yield

| Category | Number of Sites Assessed | Average Site Yield | Average Density per Hectare (Net Site Area) |
|-------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|---|
| < 50 dwellings | 24 | 23 | 53 |
| 50-99 dwellings | 6 | 65 | 56 |
| 100-149 dwellings | 3 | 129 | 35 |
| 150-249 dwellings | 3 | 210 | 39 |
| >250 dwellings | 3 | 378 | 34 |

ASSESSMENT BY TYPE/MIX (PROPORTION OF HOUSES, APARTMENTS/FLATS AND BUNGALOWS)

5.9 In order to assess sites by type and mix of dwelling types all sites were again grouped in 5 categories:

- Sites comprising an element of less than 5% houses;
- Sites comprising an element of 5 to 35% houses;
- Sites comprising an element of 35 to 65% houses;
- Sites comprising an element of 65 to 95% houses; and
- Sites comprising an element of more than 95% houses

5.10 The majority of the sites assessed comprise more than 65% houses. Four of the sites assessed comprise solely of bungalows and five of the sites assessed comprise solely of apartments.

5.11 There is a clear correlation between the proportion of houses on a site and average net density. With the exception of the 35 – 65% category, which comprises one site, average densities increase as the proportion of houses on a site decreases. The site assessed with the highest density at 174 dwellings per hectare is a site solely comprising of apartments with the lowest density site at 23 dwellings per hectare comprising solely of houses.

Table 6 Assessment by type/mix

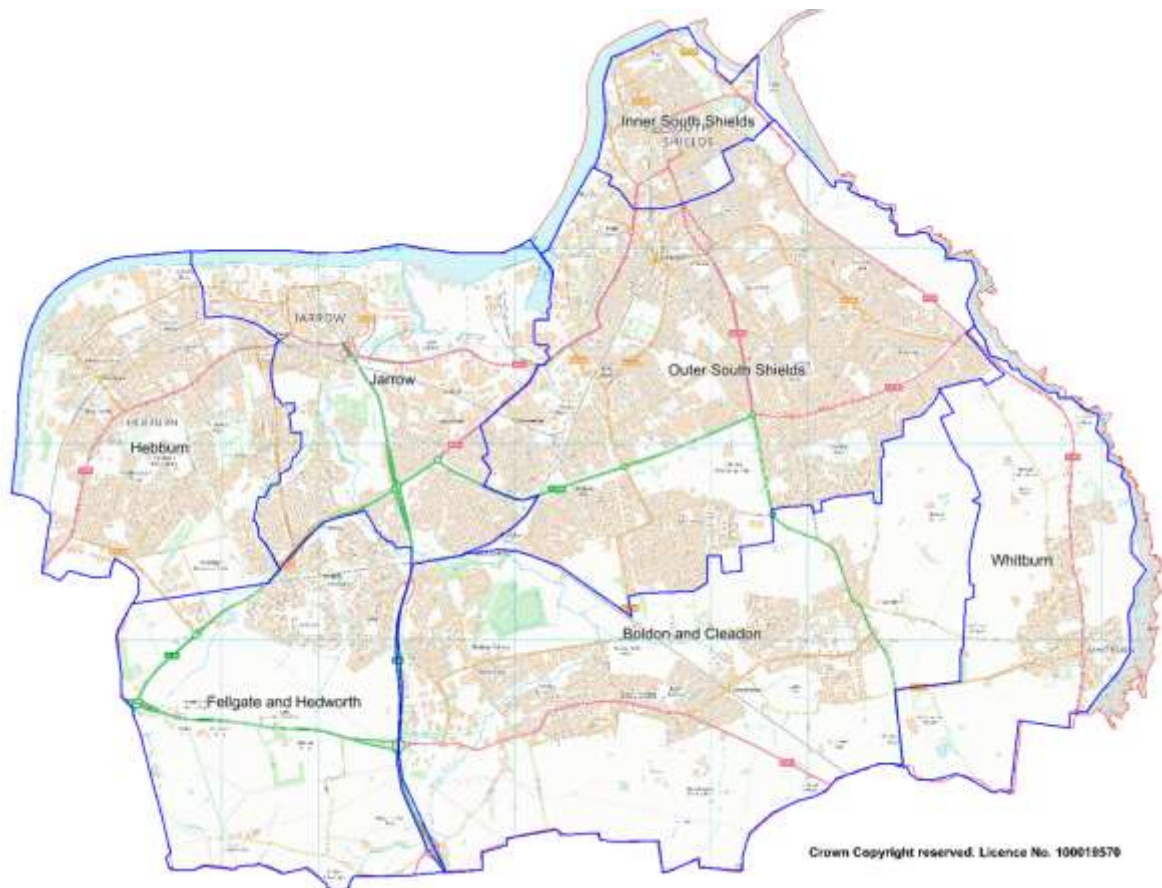
| Category | Number of Sites Assessed | Average Density per Hectare (Net Site Area) |
|------------------|--------------------------|---|
| < 5% houses | 11 | 74 |
| 5 to 35% houses | 2 | 51 |
| 35 to 65% houses | 1 | 29 |
| 65 to 95% houses | 11 | 42 |
| > 95% houses | 14 | 38 |

ASSESSMENT BY LOCATION

5.12 The sites assessed were categorised by character areas (as shown in Figure 1):

- Hebburn
- Jarrow
- Inner South Shields
- Outer South Shields
- Fellgate and Hedworth
- Boldon and Cleadon
- Whitburn

Figure 1 Assessment by area



5.13 Of the 39 sites assessed, no sites were identified in the Fellgate and Hedworth area and only one site was identified in Inner South Shields.

5.14 Densities are significantly higher in the South Shields and Jarrow areas than in the rest of the Borough. These areas also have a higher proportion of apartments than the rest of the Borough as well as a higher proportion of smaller sites.

Table 7 Assessment by location

| Category | Number of Sites Assessed | Average Density per Hectare (Net Site Area) |
|---------------------|--------------------------|---|
| Boldon and Cleadon | 4 | 34 |
| Hebburn | 11 | 35 |
| Inner South Shields | 1 | 103 |
| Outer South Shields | 13 | 53 |
| Jarrow | 6 | 80 |
| Whitburn | 4 | 34 |

ASSESSMENT BY VALUE AREA

5.15 The final assessment considered sites based on their location within different value areas in the Borough. This was based on information from the Housing Intelligence System by HomeTrack. From this information sites were grouped into five categories:

- Lower
- Low-Medium
- Medium
- Medium-High
- Higher

5.16 The highest average densities per hectare are found in the medium-high value areas with the lowest densities per hectare in the lower value areas. Average densities do not have a strong correlation with the Value Area.

Table 8 Assessment by value area

| Category | Number of Sites Assessed | Average Density per Hectare (Net Site Area) |
|-------------|--------------------------|---|
| Lower | 9 | 42 |
| Low-Medium | 19 | 50 |
| Medium | 6 | 45 |
| Medium-High | 3 | 68 |
| Higher | 2 | 47 |

ASSESSMENT BY PROXIMITY TO TRANSPORT HUBS/TOWN AND DISTRICT SHOPPING CENTRES

5.17 The sites were also assessed against the adopted Local Development Framework Core Strategy density buffers in accordance with the following distances from town or other main shopping centres or Metro stations:

- Average 50 dwellings per hectare on sites within 400m;
- Average 40 dwellings per hectare on sites between 400 – 800m; and
- Average 30 dwellings per hectare on sites beyond 800m

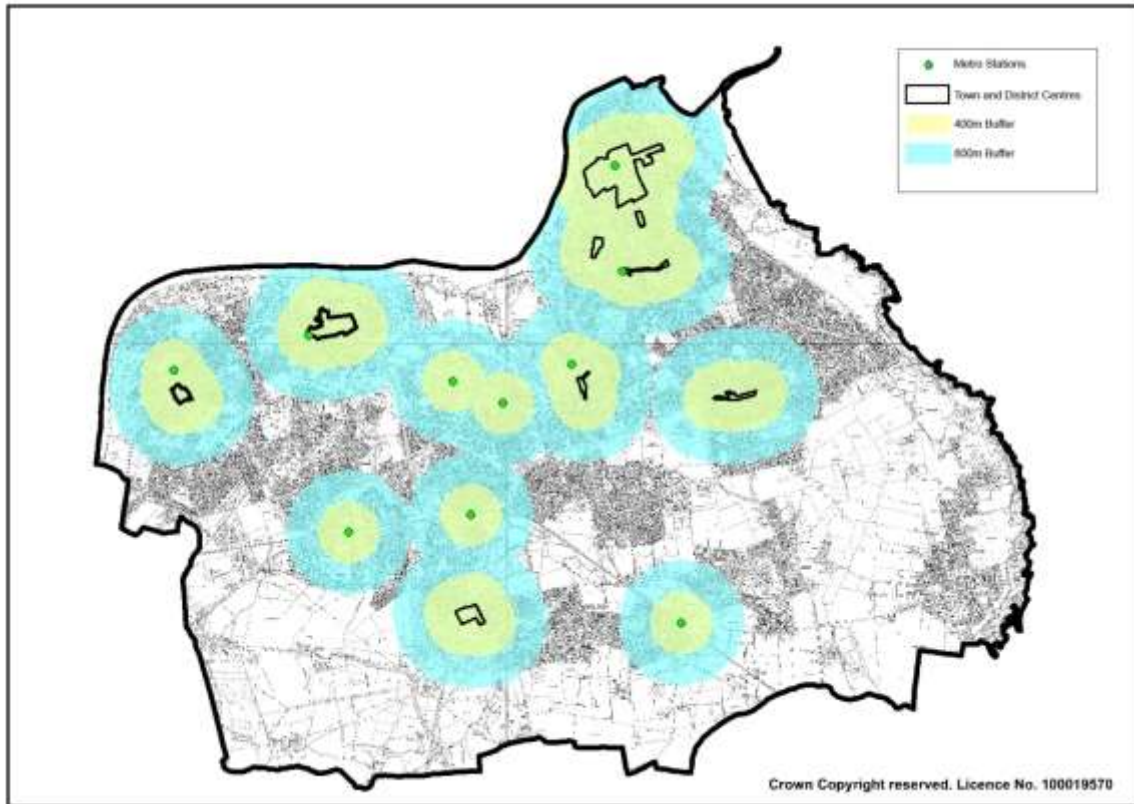
5.18 This assessment showed that on average higher densities were achieved across all three categories. The largest difference was on sites between 400-800m from a transport hub or town/district shopping centre. Densities were, on average, 30% higher than the adopted LDF density buffers.

Sites within 400m of a transport hub or town/district shopping centre achieved, on average, 10% higher densities and sites beyond 800m achieved, on average, 26% higher densities than the adopted density buffers.

Table 9 Assessment by proximity to services and metro stations

| Category | Number of Sites Assessed | Average Density per Hectare (Net Site Area) |
|--|--------------------------|---|
| 50 dph on sites within 400m of town/district centres and metro stations | 10 | 55 |
| 40 dph on sites between 400 – 800m of town/district centres and metro stations | 11 | 52 |
| 30 dph on sites beyond 800m of town/district centres and metro stations | 18 | 38 |

Figure 2 400 and 800m buffers around Metro Stations/ Town and District Centre



6. SUMMARY

6.1 Following the five assessments a number of conclusions can be drawn with regards to density patterns throughout South Tyneside. Since the Core Strategy was adopted in 2007:

- The average density of the sites assessed was 50 dwellings per hectare based on net site area.
- The assessments showed that density declined as both site area and site yield increased. Sites less than 1 hectare had a significantly higher density than sites over 1 hectare. Sites under 1 hectare had an average density per hectare of 58. Sites over 1 hectare had an average density per hectare of 37.
- Sites comprising solely of houses had typically lower densities (38 dph). Sites with a mix of houses, bungalows and apartments had an average density per hectare of 43. Sites consisting solely of apartments had an average density per hectare of 102.
- In general, sites in urban areas had higher average densities (78 dph) than those in the villages (34 dph). The exception to this is Hebburn which had an average density per hectare of 35 dph. This is in part because sites in Hebburn are, on average, much larger than sites in the rest of the Borough. The average site size in Hebburn is 4.8 ha compared to 1.5 in the other urban areas.
- Compared to the standard density buffers in Policy SC3 of the adopted LDF and the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment, sites, on average, achieved higher densities. Sites in the Inner South Shields and Jarrow Character Areas show the largest difference. On average,

housing sites in those character areas within the 400m buffer achieve 21 more dwellings per hectare compared to the standard density buffers. This increases to 55 when sites that comprise solely of apartments are included.

7. MOVING FORWARD

7.1 The NPPF does encourage efficient use of land and building at higher densities. However, it is important to note that this should not be at the expense of good design. Paragraph 122 of the NPPF highlights the importance of well-designed, attractive and healthy places to live. Policies should seek an uplift in densities whilst still maintaining the character and setting of an area or promoting regeneration.

7.2 As shown in the study, higher densities than those set out in the Local Development Framework Core Strategy can be achieved. However, this must also be a balance against a range of competing concerns such as good design, diversification of housing stock as constraints like biodiversity and flooding.

7.3 Lower density development may be appropriate to ensure the development is compatible with surrounding uses, provides sufficient mitigation against and any potential negative impacts of the development or to ensure particular house types are delivered to meet a particular need.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 Housing yield must ultimately be determined by design. However, for the purposes of estimating housing yield as part of the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment and Local Plan site selection process the following density calculations are recommended:

- Average 60 dwellings per hectare on sites within 400m in the Jarrow and Inner South Shields Character Areas;
- Average 55 dwellings per hectare on sites within 400m in the rest of the Borough;
- Average 45 dwellings per hectare on sites between 400 – 800m in the rest of the Borough; and
- Average 35 dwellings per hectare on sites beyond 800m in the rest of the Borough.

8.2 These densities will be used to estimate site capacities in the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment where other information (e.g planning applications, information from developers etc) is not available.

To find out more about the Local Plan, please contact:

Spatial Planning Team
Development Services
South Tyneside Council
Town Hall and Civic Offices, Westoe Road
South Shields, Tyne & Wear NE33 2RL

Telephone: **(0191) 424 7688**
E-mail: **local.plan@southtyneside.gov.uk**
Visit: **www.southtyneside.info/planning**

If you know someone who would like this information in a different format contact the communications team on (0191) 424 7385