

LDC LAA 2024 - Appendix 8

Density of Development in Lewes District

Introduction

1. Lewes District Council adopted a Joint Core Strategy in 2016. Core Policy CP2 of the Adopted Joint Core Strategy sets out housing densities appropriate to towns of 47 to 57 dwellings per hectare and rural areas of the district of 20 to 30 dwelling per hectare. In order to establish the effectiveness of the policy, a review of residential development has been undertaken to establish the density of homes granted permission in different parts of Lewes District outside of the South Downs National Park.

Parameters of the Study

2. The period from April 2016 has been investigated. This reflects the period under which Core Policy CP2 was effective for decision making. Prior to this, Policy RES3 of the Lewes Local Plan 2003 guided the density of development in accordance with Planning Policy Statement 3. Both the Planning Policy Statement and Policy Res 3 required that residential densities of less than 30dph would not be permitted.

3. The density has been established with reference to the site area and number of homes achieved on site as this is captured by application monitoring data. In order to establish the amount of land within the site that is attributable to residential development a density multiplier approach was used. This discounts an area of the site from the residential development to account for land needed for servicing the development including vehicle and pedestrian access, service areas and open space. The amount of land discounted varies dependent on the site size with increasing discount as the site size increases. The discounted areas are shown in Figure 1. Sites where the area was not recorded by the planning application have been excluded from the study.

Figure 1: Discounted Site Areas

Site Area (ha)	Discounted Site Area	Residential Area
0 to 0.49	10%	90%
0.5 to 0.19	20%	80%
2 to 10	25%	75%
10 plus	50%	50%

4. The assessment is divided into three categories: Permissions granted within the coastal towns of Newhaven, Peacehaven, Saltdean, Seaford and Telscombe; permissions granted within or adjacent to villages; and rural development where the proposal would not form contiguous development with an existing settlement.

5. Three types of residential development have been excluded from the study. These are developments consisting solely of specialist homes for older people, replacement dwellings and proposals closely related to the settlements of Burgess Hill and Haywards Heath.

6. Specialist homes for older people, including C2 care homes are generally delivered at much higher densities than general housing, with the accommodation on offer supplemented by shared on site facilities. Including this type of development would be likely to skew the results of the investigation towards a higher density than experienced in general housing.

7. Replacement dwellings have been excluded where there are no losses or gains to the total dwellings on the site. Since the number of homes provided on the site does not change as a result of implementing the permission, the density of development would not change. However, inclusion of these developments could skew the results of the investigation towards establishing the density of the existing built form of settlements, rather than the homes added through the operation of the Core Policy CP2.

8. Development closely within Lewes District that is closely related to the settlements of Burgess Hill and Haywards Heath are likely to skew the results of the investigation. Densities that are appropriate at these settlements are likely to be higher than those within the rest of the parish within which they are located. The inclusion of these proposals would be likely to inflate the density found within rural areas which are not closely related to settlements in Lewes District.

Development in the Coastal Towns

9. Development in the Coastal Towns of Newhaven, Peacehaven, Saltdean, Seaford and Telscombe were reviewed. Figure 1 sets out densities achieved by completions in the towns between 1st April 2016 and 31st March 2023. Average densities of 79.7 dph (dwellings per hectare) were achieved with a median density of 49.1 dph.

10. Figure 2 sets out densities anticipated by all permissions granted since the adoption of the Local Plan in 2016 to 31st March 2023. The permissions granted consent have an average density of 78.1dph (dwellings per hectare) with a median density of 49.9 dph.

11. While both consented schemes and completions are of similar densities at the towns, the densities achieved on medium and larger sized sites in the coastal towns is different for all consented schemes versus those that have been built. This is unlikely to be statistically significant due to the very small sample sized of medium and large sites.

Figure 1: Completions in the Coastal Towns

Location	No. of Sites	Total Dwellings	Min. Density dph	Max. Density dph	Average Density dph
Newhaven	30	278.0	0.0	777.8	124.2
Peacehaven	76	396.0	5.6	277.8	63.4
Seaford	53	204.0	2.5	396.7	90.1
Telscombe	27	54.0	13.9	137.8	49.2
Newhaven	30	278.0	0.0	777.8	124.2

Site Size	No. of Sites	Total Dwellings	Min. Density dph	Max. Density dph	Average Density dph
0 to 0.49 ha	181	562.0	0.0	777.8	79.9
0.5 to 1.99 ha	3	82.0	2.5	57.5	32.9
2 to 4.49ha	1	145.0	62.4	62.4	62.4
5ha plus	1	143.0	22.3	22.3	22.3

Figure 2: Consented schemes since 2016 in the Coastal Towns

Location	No. of Sites	Total Dwellings	Min. Density dph	Max. Density dph	Average Density dph
Newhaven	38	506.0	0.0	777.8	124.9
Peacehaven	108	1065.0	8.5	277.8	59.6
Saltdean	3	4.0	28.6	88.9	51.5
Seaford	82	592.0	5.7	555.6	80.1
Telscombe	30	65.0	13.3	755.1	82.5

Site Size	No. of Sites	Total Dwellings	Min. Density dph	Max. Density dph	Average Density dph
0 to 0.49ha	250	827	0.0	777.8	79.1
0.5 to 1.99ha	5	216	14.0	151.8	59.4
2 to 4.99 ha	4	556	31.2	62.7	47.9
5ha plus	2	633	37.3	70.3	53.8

Development at Villages

12. Development is monitored with reference to the parish in which the development occurs. For rural areas of the district in the Low Weald, the permissions in each parish have been examined to ensure that the development occurs within or adjacent to the settlement named. This is different to ascertaining whether the development falls within or outside adopted residential development boundaries. The permissions were then categorised to record whether the proposal would lead to contiguous development with the settlement or was in a more rural location. Figure 3 sets out densities achieved by completions at the villages between 1st April 2016 and 31st March 2023. Average densities of 41.8 dph (dwellings per hectare) were achieved with a median density of 24.7 dph.

13. Figure 4 sets out densities anticipated by permission granted since the adoption of the plan in 2016. The schemes granted permission have an average density of 37.1dph (dwellings per hectare) with a median density of 22.2dph.

14. The relatively small sample size of permissions granted at the villages mean that it is difficult to draw conclusions for individual settlements. However, it appears that

some larger sites of greater than 5 hectares have been consented and built at much lower densities than indicated by Core Policy CP2. This may reflect landscape sensitivity considerations at some of the villages.

Figure 3: Density of homes built within and closely related to villages

Location	No. of Sites	Total Net Dwellings	Min. Density dph	Max. Density dph	Average Density dph
Broyle Side	4	35	6.7	316.7	89.3
Cooksbridge	4	79	22.2	35.0	28.4
Newick	5	35	13.9	45.6	28.5
North Chailey	4	28	6.7	326.7	95.1
Plumpton Green	4	4	8.9	78.9	38.9
Ringmer	6	228	6.7	51.1	25.7
South Chailey	4	9	6.7	30.0	16.7
South Highton	1	1	11.1	11.1	11.1
Wivelsfield	2	15	10.1	112.2	61.2
Wivelsfield Green	3	79	5.6	18.7	13.6

Site Size (Dwellings)	No. of Sites	Total Net Dwellings	Min. Density dph	Max. Density dph	Average Density dph
0 to 0.49 ha	26	59	5.6	326.7	47.7
0.5 to 1.99 ha	7	143	14.7	35.0	25.4
2 to 4.49ha	3.0	236	25.3	51.1	35.7
5ha plus	1	75	18.7	18.7	18.7

Figure 4: Density of homes granted permission within and closely related to villages.

Location	No. of Sites	Total Net Dwellings	Min. Density dph	Max. Density dph	Average Density dph
Barcombe Cross	4	59	13.8	111.1	44.8
Broyle Side	5	17	11.9	316.7	77.2
Cooksbridge	4	91	20.3	35.0	25.7
Newick	12	116	4.8	36.6	20.4
North Chailey	9	48	1.5	326.7	61.4
Plumpton Green	9	182	8.9	37.0	20.8
Ringmer	18	359	2.1	231.1	45.3
South Chailey	9	29	7.8	50.5	23.3
South Highton	1	1	11.1	11.1	11.1
Wivelsfield	6	158	10.1	112.2	32.2
Wivelsfield Green	2	8	16.7	33.3	25.0

Site Size (dwellings)	No. of Sites	Total Net Dwellings	Min Density dph	Max Density dph	Average Density dph
0 to 0.49ha	50	137	4.8	326.7	46.4
0.5 to 1.99ha	22	367	1.5	36.6	19.4
2 to 4.99 ha	5	377	16.3	50.8	29.8
5ha plus	2	187	14.7	22.3	18.5

Density of Homes Delivered in Rural Areas

15. Development is monitored with reference to the parish in which the development occurs. The permissions in each parish have been examined to ensure that the development occurs within or adjacent to a settlement. The permissions were then categorised to record whether the proposal was in a rural location. Figure 5 sets out densities achieved by completions in rural areas between 1st April 2016 and 31st March 2023. Average densities of 20.6dph were achieved with a median density of 8.3dph.

16. Figure 6 sets out densities anticipated by permissions granted in rural areas since the adoption of the plan in 2016. The schemes granted permission have an average density of 21.3dph with a median density of 11.5dph.

17. The permissions granted in rural areas are dominated by residential conversions of existing buildings. The relatively high density of this type of development means that the densities for some schemes in rural areas are higher than that encountered at villages. Core Policy CP2 does not specify a density for development within rural areas but other policies in the plan which aim to conserve and enhance the landscape character of the district and restrict piecemeal residential development in the countryside, would suggest that higher density schemes on larger sites are being discouraged.

Figure 5: Density of homes built within rural areas

Location	No. of Sites	Total Net Dwellings	Min. Density dph	Max. Density dph	Average Density dph
Rural	42	78	0.2	198.9	20.6

Site Size	No. of Sites	Total Net Dwellings	Min Density dph	Max Density dph	Average Density dph
0 to 0.49 ha	29	33	3.3	198.9	28.0
0.5 to 1.99 ha	12	44	1.3	11.3	4.5
5ha plus	1	1	0.2	0.2	0.2

Figure 6: Density of Homes Granted Permission in Rural Areas

Location	No. of Sites	Total Net Dwellings	Min. Density dph	Max. Density dph	Average Density dph
Rural	56	121	1.3	198.9	21.3

Site Size	No. of Sites	Total Net Dwellings	Min Density dph	Max Density dph	Average Density dph
0 to 0.49ha	47	54	2.4	198.9	24.5
0.5 to 1.99ha	8	15	1.3	6.3	2.7
2 to 4.99 ha	1	52	23.6	23.6	23.6

Conclusion

18. Average densities achieved by development in both the Coastal Towns and the Villages are commensurate with the adopted policy. However, the minimum densities delivered in both the Coastal Towns and the Villages are lower than required by policy. There may be a need for the replacement local plan to review the approach to setting densities to ensure that densities in the range set out in the adopted policy are achieved.