

benefits of concentrating development in the existing urban areas. But, if Sheffield is to meet all of its own housing needs (and comply with national planning policies on housing), some development on Green Belt land is likely to be needed over the next 20 years.

URBED's report concludes that the measurable brownfield resource in urban areas is usually underestimated and more homes could be delivered if mechanisms were in place to redevelop such land for higher density, higher value housing uses. The Council is keen to explore with the Government possible changes to legislation, planning policy and financial powers and flexibilities which would enable this to happen. This could include greater powers to assemble and prioritise brownfield land for development and the ability to use more of the land value to pay for things like better public transport, new community facilities and affordable housing.

Option A: Urban Capacity

Continue with the current strategy of concentrating new development on brownfield sites within the existing urban areas and make an additional allowance for windfalls on larger sites. Develop sites at similar densities to those achieved in the past.

This option involves continuing with the current strategy of concentrating new development on brownfield sites within the existing urban areas. Greenfield development would be limited to sites already allocated in the current Local Plan or proposed by the Council in 2013 in the Pre-submission Draft City Policies and Sites document.

The URBED report has suggested that urban capacity studies undertaken by local authorities almost always underestimate urban capacity. They argue that urban capacity is not a finite resource but one which is constantly renewed through the process of urban change over time. URBED estimate that the capacity of brownfield sites in the Sheffield/Rotherham conurbation is about 32,000 homes (including 1,700 homes in Rotherham).

Under this option, new homes would be provided through:

- Redeveloping previously developed vacant and derelict land and buildings
- Conversion of commercial buildings
- Redeveloping existing housing areas
- Subdivision of existing housing
- Flats over shops
- Reducing the number of empty homes
- Redevelopment of car parks
- Redevelopment of vacant (greenfield) land



This option would mean:

- (a) No change to the adopted Green Belt boundary (other than to correct obvious anomalies).
- (b) Continuing to focus new development largely on brownfield sites within the existing main urban area of Sheffield and the Principal Towns of Stocksbridge and Chapeltown.
- (c) Only building on a limited number of greenfield sites (including those which we have previously consulted on).
- (d) Limited infill development within the larger villages (currently inset within the Green Belt) to meet local needs.
- (e) Developing new housing in accordance with the density guidelines in the adopted Core Strategy.

The main **advantages** of this option are:

- (a) No loss of Green Belt land
- (b) It makes use of existing infrastructure within the urban area

The main **disadvantages** of this option are:

- (a) It would not provide enough land for housing as a stand-alone option
- (b) Housing would be 'slotted in' and therefore may not necessarily be in the optimum locations
- (c) A significant number of the sites are not currently economically viable and may not be attractive to the market

- (d) Much of the housing that would be delivered through this option would be on small sites and it would be difficult to accurately forecast growth

In the current Core Strategy (policy CS26), different densities are required in different parts of the city according to their relative accessibility. So:

- Within or near to the City Centre – at least 70 homes per hectare
- Within or near to Meadowhall or a District Centre – 50-80 homes per hectare
- Near to Supertram stops and high frequency bus routes in the urban areas – 40-60 homes per hectare
- In the remaining parts of the urban area – 30-50 homes per hectare
- In rural areas – 30-40 homes per hectare

Densities outside these ranges are permitted where the development achieves good design, reflects the character of an area or protects a sensitive area. The SHLAA assumes that sites which do not currently have planning permission would be developed at densities at the bottom end of the ranges set out above. However, in practice, our latest monitoring shows that, whilst there are significant variations in the densities of individual housing schemes, overall the average density falls in the middle of the ranges for different locations specified in the current policy. Increasing required densities to the top end of the range would further boost the capacity of the urban area but could



have implications for current amenity and parking standards. This is discussed in more detail under Option B.

In the City Centre, the average density of new housing developments tends to be higher at around 300 homes per hectare.

As part of the work on the SHLAA, we have also agreed with representatives from the house building industry that 200 homes per year are likely to be built on small 'windfall' sites⁵⁷. This would amount to about 4,000 homes over the period 2014-2034.

The current SHLAA makes no allowance for windfalls on larger sites (those with capacity for 10 or more homes). However, the URBED report implies that just over 6,000 additional homes will come forward on larger windfall sites during the 20 year plan period (an average of 300 per year). Given the number of new sites which are identified and added to the SHLAA each year, we think that this is an overestimate and have concluded that there could be sufficient evidence to justify a windfall allowance of 100 homes per year on larger *brownfield* sites outside the City Centre and areas that could undergo 'remodelling' (these areas are excluded to avoid double counting with Options B and C below). This would amount to 2,000 homes

⁵⁷Windfall sites are sites which cannot be identified (and therefore allocated for development in the Plan) now but which will come forward for development during the period covered by the Plan. We define small sites as those with capacity for less than 10 dwellings.

over the period of the Plan. However, this figure could be higher if the Council is successful in securing Government support for the changes to financial and planning powers referred to on page 52.

We think Option A could deliver:

- 13,300 homes on land already identified in the SHLAA (excluding City Centre, Kelham and areas undergoing urban remodelling)
- 4,000 homes on small windfall sites
- 2,000 homes on larger windfall sites (excluding City Centre, Kelham and areas undergoing urban remodelling)

Consultation questions

Q24: (a) Do you agree with our estimate that 4,000 homes will come forward on *small* windfall sites over the period 2014-2034?
(b) If not, what is your evidence for suggesting a different figure?

Q25: (a) Do you agree with our estimate that 2,000 homes will come forward on *larger* windfall sites (excluding the City Centre, Kelham Island and other areas covered under Option C) over the period 2014-2034?
(b) If not, what is your evidence for suggesting a different figure?

