

Sheffield Plan: Responses to Questions submitted at, or following, the Public Webinar held on 23 September 2020

1. To what extent would the nature and type of new homes that would be built in the centre under the three options necessarily be different between them? i.e. would Option 1 (20,000 homes in the centre) have to major on (possibly smaller) apartments, whereas Option 3 might see different types of new home in the centre?

Answer:

The Capacity Study that has been produced as part of the Central Area Strategy is available to download [here](#). Option A is going to require a wider range of house types to be delivered if it's to meet our housing needs. Being able to deliver Option A is a key consideration as we finalise the Central Area Strategy and progress the next stage of the Sheffield Plan.

Taking forward Option A does not necessarily mean that homes in the Central Area would be smaller in order to maximise capacity in that area, but rather it would mean that we would need more sites to be able to deliver housing in the area over the plan period.

2. Given the levels of austerity which LPAs have experienced do you feel SCC will have the resources and skills available to it to manage the land assembly, master-planning, etc necessary to carry out the Central Area Strategy and large sites elsewhere?

Answer:

We are looking at how services within the Council are organised in order to support effective delivery of the delivery of the Central Area Strategy. The Strategy will be delivered over a significant period (the Local Plan period runs to 2038) so not all sites will need to be delivered at once. We intend to focus local authority skills and resources on a limited number of 'catalyst sites' in each of the 6 CAS sub-areas. Our aim is to demonstrate to the private sector that sufficient values can be achieved to support a viable self-sustaining residential market in the Central Area, with a wider mix of housing types and sizes. We expect the majority of sites to be brought forward by the private sector.

The Council will seek to secure Government financial support from funds such as the Housing Infrastructure Fund to help enable delivery of the catalyst sites and delivery essential infrastructure.

3. The document proposes that Green Belt release will be minimised through densification including, potentially, tall buildings. Does the Council have, or is it considering procuring, a sensitivity study to help to identify suitable areas/locations for tall buildings? Derby City have recently undertaken a study of this sort which could provide a useful example.

Answer:

The Central Area Strategy has undertaken an urban design analysis of the Central Area including the location and heights of potential tall buildings. How tall buildings activate the streets around them, relate to natural and heritage features are key considerations. More detailed work will be needed if tall buildings form part of potential neighbourhoods.

4. 'We will not meet our targets for emissions reduction without near complete decarbonisation of the housing stock.' [1] 80% of the homes we will be living in the UK by 2050 have already been built today [2].

As such we must consider retrofit development within the plan (both urban and suburban) if serious about meeting climate mitigation targets - this can also facilitate densification of existing neighbourhoods, and significantly reduce energy use by homes. There are both city council, private and community-led models for delivering this - the plan should consider allowing. Is there accommodation for this within the plan, how can this be expanded?

[1] Committee on Climate Change, UK Housing: Fit for the Future?, (2019) pg.11)

([2] Institution of Engineering and Technology, Nottingham Trent University, Scaling up Retrofit 2050, 2018, p. 5)

Answer:

We agree that over the period covered by the Sheffield Plan, existing housing will be far more significant in terms of carbon emissions than new homes. We estimate that the housing stock will increase by about 15% over the period covered by 2038. The Sheffield Plan deals with new development so does not address the energy efficiency of the existing stock; other local and national programmes will need to address that.

Our current policy requires that new buildings and conversions must be designed to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases. Buildings are also required to be designed to use resources sustainably, through things such as:

- *minimising water consumption*
- *re-using existing buildings wherever possible*
- *designing buildings flexibly from the outset to allow for possible future uses*
- *using sustainable materials wherever possible*

We also currently require (for schemes of 5 or more houses or 500 sqm for non-residential) that at least 10% of a building's energy needs are provided via decentralised renewable and low carbon methods.

We are planning to take forward similar policies in the Sheffield Plan but will take account of any recommendations from the Citizen's Assembly (on becoming zero carbon) and changes to building regulations when deciding what standards to set.

5. I'm very interested in digital connectivity (which is included in Aim 6). What tools does the council have/will have in future, to encourage improved digital connectivity? E.g., could it require new developments to be built with the capability of accepting 'fibre to the premises'? And if mmWave 5G is to be delivered in the city centre, what planning assumptions could be made for the additional aerials that mmWave 5g will require?

Answer:

Improving digital connectivity is a key priority for the Council, for the City Region and for the Government. The Council has an approved Digital Connectivity Strategy and the provision of high quality superfast full fibre broadband will be supported through planning policies wherever possible to support businesses and householders. This can be allied with related changes in Building Control regulations to ensure such provision is made for new housing developments above a certain size. The current pandemic has emphasised even more the importance of high-quality digital connectivity with changing ways of working and shopping, for example, with more home working and more online retail transactions, and accessibility to public services online. In terms of new masts/aerial infrastructure, the Council will seek to support such infrastructure whilst also balancing the need to preserve the visual amenity and the character of areas where necessary.

6. Given that the Green Belt Review does not cover landscape quality and biodiversity issues but you do intend to carry out a Landscape Character and Green Belt Capacity Study, when, how and by whom will that study be carried out and what existing or new landscape character assessments will be used?

Answer:

The landscape character study is being carried out in-house and expands on the 2011 Preliminary Landscape Character Assessment. The work is being prepared taking into account guidance from the Landscape Institute. Whilst it has already considered in detail some of the sites covered by the Green Belt Review, it remains work in progress and will need to consider new sites that have been put forward recently through the Call for Sites or through this consultation. The impact on landscape will be one factor that will be taken into account, if we conclude that exceptional circumstances exist to justify removing land from the Green Belt.

Biodiversity issues would need to be covered as part of the site selection process. Where appropriate, landowners and developers will be expected to provide ecological surveys for sites they are promoting and those surveys will be reviewed by the Council's Ecology Service.