



QD6 Optimising site capacity

- A Development proposals must use the design-led approach to make the best use of land and optimise the capacity of a site, with reference to Policy QD1 (Delivering high quality design in Lewisham).
- B To establish the optimum capacity of a site consideration must be given to the appropriate development density having regard to:
 - a. The type and nature of uses proposed;
 - b. The site context, with reference to the site's immediate and surrounding area, taking into account:
 - i. Location setting;
 - ii. Local distinctiveness and character, including heritage assets, with consideration given to the prevailing and/or emerging form and proportion of development in the area;
 - c. Public Transport Access Levels, taking into account current levels and future levels expected to be achieved by the delivery of planned public transport infrastructure; and
 - d. Capacity of infrastructure to support the land uses and density proposed, having regard to the individual and cumulative impacts of development.
- C Development parameters for specific sites are set out in this Local Plan (Part 3 – site allocations). Where development proposals do not accord with the indicative capacity set out in a site allocation policy, they will only be supported where it is clearly demonstrated the optimal capacity will be achieved, having regard to (A) and (B) above.

Explanation

- 5.43 The delivery of Good Growth will necessitate that new developments use the Borough's limited supply of land effectively and efficiently, whilst improving the quality of places and spaces that people inhabit and use, along with the natural environment.
- 5.44 Development proposals must demonstrate how they will deliver the optimum capacity of a site. The optimum capacity is one that is derived through careful consideration of density taking into account the site's local character, the types of uses proposed, access to public transport and the infrastructure available to support the development. The optimum capacity is not the maximum capacity or density. Development proposals should provide evidence of an options appraisal, undertaken at the early stage of the design process, which demonstrates the approach to achieving the optimum capacity. This requirement may be applied flexibly taking into account the location, nature and scale of development. For instance, for householder and other smaller developments a planning statement may be sufficient.
- 5.45 Development proposals must demonstrate an understanding of a site's contribution to local character. This includes the historical pattern of development along with the existing and emerging character of the locality. The Lewisham Characterisation Study should be referred at the early stage in the design-led approach. It is a useful starting point for considering densities and provides an indication of those areas where new development should focus on reinforcing the established urban form and fabric, as well as those that may be more receptive to gradually managed change or transformation.
- 5.46 The spatial strategy requires that new and higher density development is focussed within and around well-connected locations. Proposals must demonstrate how they have responded to accessibility, referring the latest Public Transport Access Level (PTAL) maps (published by TfL), and also assessing opportunities walking and cycling, including those that could be delivered by the development itself.
- 5.47 Development proposals should address both existing and future PTALs taking account of planned improvements to the network of transport infrastructure. The phasing of development will need to be carefully managed, especially where infrastructure is planned but not yet implemented. This will be a particularly important consideration in Lewisham's Central and South areas, where the delivery of the Bakerloo line extension will drastically improve PTALs over the long-term (see Part 3 of the Local Plan). Policies TR1 and TR2 set out further details in this regard.
- 5.48 The introduction of new, higher-density development within an area may put pressure on existing facilities and infrastructure or create additional demands. Development proposals should therefore assess and plan positively for infrastructure needed to support the densities sought. This includes but is not limited to transport, community, green and other environmental infrastructure. Planning contributions and/or legal agreements may be used to secure infrastructure.

- 5.49 The optimum capacity of a site should be informed by the nature and mix of uses proposed. Residential-led schemes will generally be supported where density levels are appropriate to the local context and they deliver high quality and genuinely affordable housing. Commercial and industrial developments should seek opportunities to intensify uses on employment sites to deliver more jobs and new workspace. Mixed-use schemes will require careful consideration of amenity for all users and activities.
- 5.50 To support the delivery of Good Growth, and ensure densities are appropriate to their location, we will prepare planning guidance for specific areas. This includes the Catford Town Centre Framework and the A21 Development Framework. The Small Sites SPD provides guidance to support the sensitive intensification of residential and other areas.

