

It is suggested that an urgent review of density of dwellings per hectare is carried out across the two districts. This would apply to; the Ipswich fringe area, urban and market towns, and villages. This is especially necessary should the Ipswich fringe gain greater development significance with the inability of Ipswich Town Council to identify sufficient space within its boundary.

The book [*Social Housing: Definitions and Design Exemplars*](#) by architect Paul Karakusevic and published by the Royal Institute of British Architects in May 2017, explores a number of issues relating to housing supply and draws together 24 case studies by 20 architectural practices from eight European countries with the objective of capturing some of the best and most innovative examples of housing at what is described as “a critical juncture for the sector”.

This includes:

- The concept of high-density, low-rise housing.
- Noting that the way households use internal space is changing.
- The need to design high-quality neighbourhoods as well as high-quality flexible homes..
- The fact that residents have a key role to play in the creation of successful and sustainable neighbourhoods.

The late Sir Peter Hall, a professor at the Bartlett School of Architecture, reported back in 2009 that while housing density in central London was 80 dwellings per hectare (dph), it was as low as 20dph in many 1980s developments.

Neave Brown, the revered Modernist architect, is perhaps best known for his visionary 1970s Alexandra Road estate near Swiss Cottage built by Camden Council. With its striking stepped concrete terraces and spacious flats, not only does it provide 500 homes but, in Neave's own words, it's 'a piece of city', containing shops, workshops, a community centre, special needs school, children's centre, a care home for young people with learning difficulties and a 16,000sq m public park.

Brown believes every home should have its own front door opening directly onto a network of routes and streets that make up a city, as well as its own private external space, open to the sky, in the form of a roof garden or terrace. Each of these qualities was incorporated by Brown at Alexandra Road.

The Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) awarded Brown with its 2018 Royal Gold Medal, the UK's highest honour for architecture. Given in recognition of a lifetime's work, the Royal Gold Medal is approved personally by Her Majesty The Queen and is given to a person or group of people who have had a significant influence 'either directly or indirectly on the advancement of architecture'.

In Birmingham, the housing need was assessed in its 2016 Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) at 51,000 homes and [yet only enough land was available to build 43,000, a shortfall of some 8,000 homes.](#)

In the German city of Freiburg there are two developments in the suburbs of Vauban (2,000 homes) and Rieselfeld (4,200 homes) that offer high-density, car-free living with access to public open space.

This is family housing of no more than three to four storey with a private balcony or terrace provided for each dwelling, along with access to good public transport and local facilities.

A typical low-rise housing development will accommodate around 35dph. If the density of new housing developments in urban areas was raised to the minimum level achieved in Freiburg (which is 48-60dph) then somewhere like Birmingham could potentially accommodate all 51,000 new homes on the land that has been identified in the SHLAA. Perhaps Ipswich could follow suit.

The Birmingham Development Plan broadly supports this approach and states that development should take place at a minimum of 100dph in the city centre, 50dph in local centre's and on good public transport corridors, and 40dph elsewhere.

This is consistent with the [National Planning Policy Framework](#), which states that local planning authorities should “set out their own approach to housing density to reflect local circumstances”, although it is not clear what average densities are actually being achieved at the moment.

The [Housing White Paper](#) identified this issue earlier this year in which it said that we need “innovative approaches to meeting demand, especially in areas of high demand where available land is limited”.

In order to meet the challenges of the JLP and in particular the spatial options, an urgent review of housing density should be undertaken as they would apply to; the Ipswich fringe area, urban and market towns and villages. Well designed sites adjacent to good-quality open space, with access to public transport and the move to a model of collaborative consumption for other facilities will make higher-density living an attractive and affordable and proposition.

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