



Cabinet
Office



Supplementary planning guidance

Density standards

February 2025

Contents

1. Introduction	1
2. Context	2
3. What is density, why does it matter, and how do we measure it?	3
4. Spatial strategy	3
5. Planning for higher density in the built-up area	6
5.1. A design-led approach	6
5.2. Sustainable communities	7
5.3. Placemaking	8
6. Density standards	9
7. Managing superdensity	9
 Appendix 1: Policy H2 – Housing density	 11
Appendix 2: Schedule of accommodation	12
Appendix 3: Glossary	13

About supplementary planning guidance

The Minister for the Environment may publish supplementary planning guidance in the form of guidelines and policies in respect of: development generally; any class of development; the development of any area of land; or the development of a specified site¹. Supplementary planning guidance is designed to operate under the Island Plan and is complementary but subordinate to it.

Supplementary planning guidance may cover a range of issues, both thematic and site specific, and provides further detail about either policies and proposals in the Island Plan, or other issues relevant to the planning process.

Where relevant, supplementary planning guidance will be taken into account as a material consideration when making planning decisions.

The current supplementary planning guidance is listed and can be viewed [online](#).

¹ Article 6 of the Planning and Building (Jersey) Law

1. Introduction

This supplementary planning guidance has been adopted and published in accord with **Proposal 21** of the bridging Island Plan which states that the Minister for the Environment will develop supplementary planning guidance to establish minimum density standards for the island's built-up areas to assist with the interpretation and application of **Policy H2 - Housing density** (see policy at appendix 1). Its adoption supersedes any previous guidance issued in relation to minimum density standards².

Draft supplementary planning guidance was published in October 2022. This generated constructive feedback on the implications of new guidance for future housing development in the island. The Minister has carefully considered the responses received and has made changes to the draft guidance. The revised guidance, originally published in July 2023, will help ensure that the application of a design-led approach to increasing the density of new development delivers the optimal use of urban land in Jersey.

The published guidance was further revised in February 2025, to remove a standard about the development of larger homes in the built-up area where they were in excess of 279 square metres (sqm.) or 3,000 square feet (sqft.) gross internal floorspace.

This guidance is principally aimed at those involved in the planning and design of any new residential development in the built-up area and it will also assist decision-makers in the determination of planning applications for this form of development where it will be a material consideration.

The operation and use of this guidance will be monitored during the plan period of the bridging Island Plan and their effects considered as part of any subsequent Island Plan review.

² Previous guidance includes, but is not limited to Planning Policy Note No. 5: Residential Density Standards and Section 6.0 of Planning Policy Note No. 6: A Minimum Specification for New Housing Developments

2. Context

Jersey's success in attracting people creates a tremendous challenge for the provision of additional homes and infrastructure. As the island changes and grows, there is a need to ensure the best and most efficient use of its limited land supply and there is an inevitable pressure to increase development densities.

There are ways of creating more and better homes in Jersey on previously developed land and at taller, but moderate height, before having to resort to high-rise development or the further release of greenfield land. It is possible to create successful places with higher density development within existing neighbourhoods based around streets with a variety of urban forms, including houses and carefully integrated taller buildings: in St Helier these might take the form of medium-tall (4.5-6 storey) and taller (6-8 storeys) apartment blocks.

It is a common misconception that high density requires high-rise and precludes more familiar patterns of living. Tall buildings are not necessarily an efficient use of land: the same built volume can be delivered in radically different forms: as the diagram below³ demonstrates, the perimeter block, with spacious courtyard, provides the same floor-space as the tall tower.

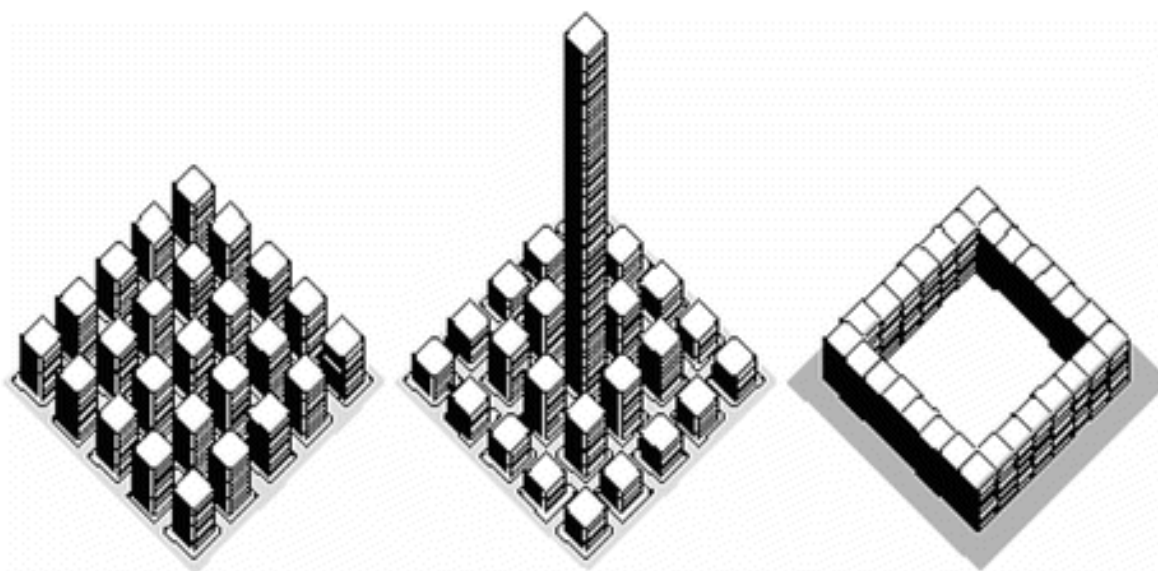


Figure 14: Delivering high density needn't mean tall buildings: the same volume delivered by different forms of development

It is the purpose of this note to set minimum standards for the density of residential development on sites of five or more homes and a maximum standard for the size of new homes in Jersey's built-up area; and to provide positive guidance on how to combine greater density of residential development with popular and familiar urban forms where people want to live. This can help deliver the best and most efficient use of previously developed and urban land.

³ Lionel March, "Architecture and Mathematics Since 1960", pp. 7-33 in *Nexus IV: Architecture and Mathematics*, eds. Kim Williams and Jose Francisco Rodrigues, Fucecchio (Florence): Kim Williams Books, 2002.

⁴ Cited above

3. What is density, why does it matter, and how do we measure it?

Density is a way of measuring the intensity of development on a particular site. On its own it does not indicate whether a proposal is good or bad.

Density is generally used for residential development. It can be measured in numbers of homes (units or dwellings), habitable rooms⁵, bed-spaces (or people), or floorspace. None of these is ideal – and they all measure the built capacity of development rather than the actual number of people who may end up living there.

The simplest way to measure density is to set out the number of homes that will be delivered on a specific area. To compare densities with any accuracy, we also need to measure the relevant site area in a consistent way and for the purpose of this guidance and its implementation the net site area should be used. For this guidance homes or dwellings per hectare or dph is used throughout. The intensity of the development has a direct bearing on the form of homes provided: any development above 60dph will likely be flats rather than houses.

A more nuanced approach to providing an indication of the intensity of development, and the likely number of occupants, is to use habitable rooms per hectare or hrh. When assessing development proposals, we will require information about the number of bed spaces and other habitable rooms in addition to information about the number of homes to be provided as an integral part of a planning application. A schedule of accommodation is required to be provided in support of a planning application for any residential development involving the creation of one or more homes (see appendix 2).

Guidance 3.1

A schedule of accommodation should be provided in support of a planning application for any residential development involving the creation of one or more homes.

The density of development should be expressed as both dwellings per hectare (dph) and habitable rooms per hectare (hrh) relative to the net site area.

4. Spatial strategy

As set out in the Island Plan's spatial strategy, development of the highest densities should be located at the most accessible and sustainable locations, focusing growth in the island's existing built-up areas, and Town in particular. This is where homes are better related to workplaces, schools, shops and local services, where the need for travel is reduced, and where there are likely to be more sustainable travel choices.

⁵ See glossary: habitable rooms as these are the areas of a home where people spend most of their time.

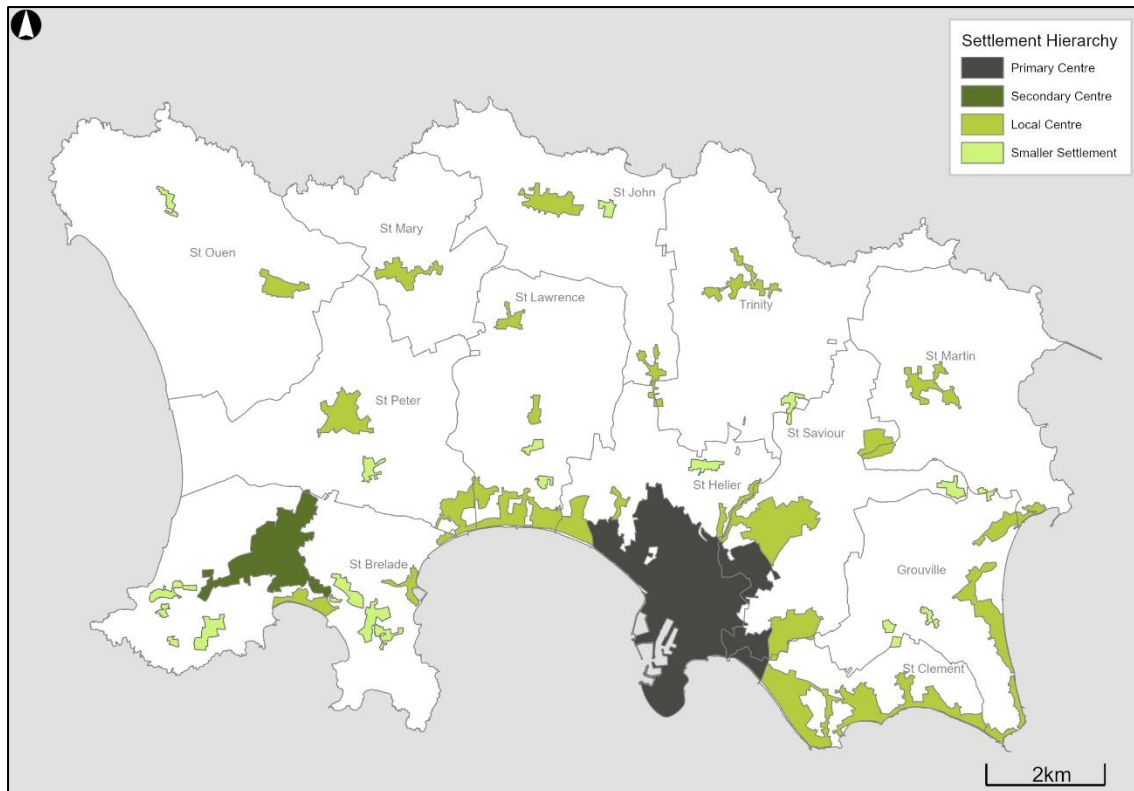


Figure 2: Jersey's settlement hierarchy⁶

There are distinct and different places throughout the island's built-up area: it is not all the same. It is important that new development makes a positive contribution to the character of an area. In seeking to achieve the optimal use of land it is important that denser forms of development have regard to local character and identity.

The bridging Island Plan defines the island's settlement hierarchy, and different parts of the built-up area, as follows:

- **Primary centre: Town of St Helier⁷**

The Town of St Helier has developed as the island's primary centre for commerce, shopping, housing and public services, benefiting from its location as the focus of Jersey's transport, social and economic infrastructure.

It has much of the necessary facilities and services required to support a more intensive use of land for a mix of uses. There are opportunities for the development of new homes on outworn urban sites, particularly in the north of town, where this needs to be balanced with the introduction of new community facilities, open spaces and green infrastructure. There is also considerable opportunity for the development of new vibrant, mixed-use quarters, with high-quality public realm on the St Helier Waterfront.

⁶ See Spatial strategy in the [Bridging Island Plan](#) pp 38-43

⁷ The extent of Town is defined on the bridging Island Plan proposals map [Bridging Island Plan 2022 - 2025 Interactive Web App \(arcgis.com\)](#). It extends from and embraces Grève D'Azette in the east, first Tower in the west, and up to Mont à L'Abbé, Vallée des Vaux and St Saviour's Hill in the north. Its southern edge is where it meets the sea.

The Town of St Helier has many and varied characteristics: these are identified and defined in the [St Helier Urban Character Appraisal](#).

- **Secondary centre: Les Quennevais⁸**

Les Quennevais has developed as a secondary urban centre in the island, providing much residential accommodation supported by a good range of community, education and sports facilities, and a secondary island retail centre.

Further work is proposed to explore the potential of Les Quennevais to provide new, higher density forms of development whilst also enhancing the quality of the neighbourhood and the local shopping centre.

- **Local centres⁹**

Within the built-up area framework there is a range of local centres, providing sustainable urban communities and places in which most of people's daily needs can be met within a short walk or cycle. This includes traditional parish centres; historic harbour villages; suburban centres and some areas characterised by development along the south and east coast.

Some of these areas are the subject of growth and development, particularly through the delivery of affordable homes, providing the opportunity to develop new homes at higher densities to support local facilities, and to offer the potential for investment in new community infrastructure.

- **Smaller settlements¹⁰**

The remainder of the island's built-up area comprises a mixture of small, mostly suburban residential forms of development, often with little or no local facilities and services, where opportunities for development will be more limited. New sympathetic development here may serve to support the development of community facilities and services. In some cases, the development of key sites in smaller settlements, such as St Saviour's Hospital, will be guided by a development brief.

⁸ The extent of Les Quennevais is defined on the bridging Island Plan proposals map [Bridging Island Plan 2022 - 2025 Interactive Web App \(arcgis.com\)](#). It extends to and embraces La Moye; Le Saut Falluet; La Petite Route des Mielles; Tabor Heights; and Park Estate.

⁹ Local centres and their extent are defined on the bridging Island Plan proposals map [Bridging Island Plan 2022 - 2025 Interactive Web App \(arcgis.com\)](#) and include Bagot-Longueville; Beaumont - First Tower; Bellozane; Carrefour Selous; Five Oaks; Gorey Village; Grands Vaux; Grève D'Azette - Ville-ès-Renauds; Maufant; Sion; St Aubin; St Brelade's Bay; St John's Village; St Lawrence Church; St Martin's Village; St Mary's Village; St. Peter's Village; St Ouen's Village; and Trinity Village.

¹⁰ Smaller settlements and their extent are defined on the bridging Island Plan proposals map [Bridging Island Plan 2022 - 2025 Interactive Web App \(arcgis.com\)](#) and include Clos de Roncier; Grouville Arsenal; Grouville Church; Le Clos de L'Atlantique/Parcq de L'Oeillère; Les Fourneaux; Les Ruisseaux/Route de Noirmont; Mont au Prêtre; Mont Félard; Mont Mado; Mont-ès-Croix; Petit Port Clos; Route des Genêts/Longfield Avenue; Rue des Landes; St George's Church; St Saviour's Hospital; Teighmore Park; Victoria Village; and Ville Emphrie..

5. Planning for higher density in the built-up area

Density, in itself, is a crude tool: it is a measure of a proposed residential development but should not be a determinant of it. To be successful the provision of more dense forms of development throughout the island's built-up areas must have regard to:

- the quality of design, relative to its context;
- the quality, type and mix of homes being created; and
- placemaking

5.1 A design-led approach

A positive **design-led approach** to increasing the density of new development, within its context, will ensure that the identity and character of each place is enhanced and, where relevant, protected. This will require an imaginative and contextually sensitive approach to denser form of development to create sustainable communities in liveable neighbourhoods.

St Helier's distinct character areas are defined and mapped,¹¹ to enable the location of a site, relative to its specific character area, to be identified. The [St Helier Urban Character Appraisal Review 2021](#) provides an objective assessment and guidance about that which contributes to the distinct character of different parts of the town. This should be used creatively by architects and developers to inform the design of their proposal, while ensuring that the essence of St Helier's distinct and different urban character is maintained or enhanced.

Different parts of St Helier have varying levels of sensitivity and capacity to accommodate new, denser, and potentially taller, forms of development. The sensitivity assessment enables judgement as to where there are opportunities to accommodate higher density, taller development with less impact on the character of St Helier.

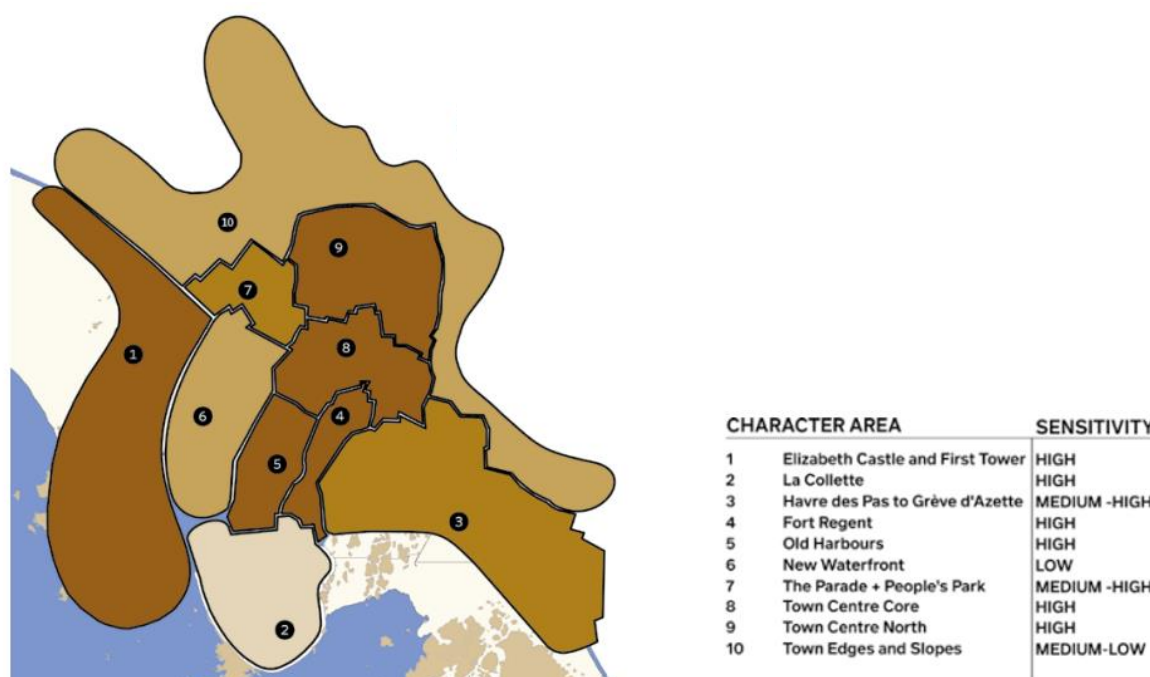


Figure 3: St Helier's sensitivity assessment¹²

¹¹ See additional data layers (JILSCA polygons) [Bridging Island Plan 2022 - 2025 Interactive Web App \(arcgis.com\)](#)

¹² See The development dilemma: capacity, sensitivity and built form in a unique setting pp 77 – 98 [St Helier Urban Character Appraisal Review 2021](#)

The design guidance in the Urban Character Appraisal for St Helier will be a material factor for the assessment of residential development proposals in the town.

The impact of new denser forms of development upon local character is also an issue in other parts of Jersey's settlement hierarchy. The character of local centres and smaller settlements is varied, but generally defined by lower density, smaller-scale and traditional building forms. The design of new residential development, driven by functional criteria - including their larger scale, density and parking standards - can produce characteristically uniform developments that bear little relationship to their context. This can dilute the identity and character of traditional settlements. Proposals for new and denser forms of residential development here should be based on a thorough analysis of the landscape, context and visual elements of the development site in order to ensure that it is integrated into the existing settlement and surrounding landscape. Part 5 (pp 215-224) of the [Jersey Integrated Landscape and Seascape Character Assessment \(ILSCA\)](#) provides design guidance which will be material to the assessment of development proposals in rural settlements.

To enable an understanding of the impact of a proposal on the character in which a site is located, an appropriate level of supporting information will be required with all planning applications: this should feature as part of the narrative to demonstrate how the design of the proposal responds to its context as part of a design statement¹³.

Residential schemes of five or more homes should provide a minimum level of density that is appropriate to the site's context and the character of the local area, which should accord with minimum density standards set out at guidance 6.1. It is only by exception that the density of development below minimum standards might be acceptable. Examples might be where it is essential to safeguard the special interest and character of the area such as development in a conservation area or other parts of the built-up area, where lower density development, smaller-scale or traditional building forms is characteristic. A more flexible approach might also be adopted for mixed-use development schemes.

In all cases, the impact of new development upon neighbouring residential amenity will remain an important consideration.

5.2 Sustainable communities

There will also be a need to ensure that more dense forms of development are making a positive contribution to meeting the island's housing needs and that they provide an appropriate mix of homes that help support and sustain mixed neighbourhoods and local communities. An over-provision of one form of dwelling type, such as one-bedroom flats, should not be used as the easiest way to deliver the highest development yield as this will not create vibrant local communities and will not be supported.

The vast majority of new development in Jersey consists of one- and two-bedroom flats with a limited number with three-bedroom homes. It's easy to overlook the fact that an increasing number of flats, even the smaller ones, are actually family homes.

Residential development, particularly larger schemes of ten or more homes, should contain a balance of homes for families, the elderly and young people to help deliver more sustainable communities throughout the island¹⁴. To cater better for families, developments should include

¹³ [Information you need for your planning application \(gov.je\)](#)

¹⁴ See [Policy H4: meeting housing need](#)

more homes with three or more bedrooms and provide a proportion of these as houses or duplexes. Family homes should offer at least one single bedroom, utility space or extra storage with better forms of private and shared outdoor space that make maximum use of roofs, courtyards and raised gardens.

Houses will continue to be developed, however, flatted forms of development are likely to remain the predominant form of new high-density housing and there is a need to encourage forms of development that create resilient communities, and which work better for a wider range of people. The design of new residential development should enable people to easily meet their neighbours and live in good quality homes and pleasant surroundings that support their health and wellbeing.

In exceptional circumstances, where there is an overriding need to provide a particular type of residential scheme to meet a specific housing need, such as the provision of a greater proportion of houses or sheltered accommodation, residential densities below the minimum standard for the locality may be acceptable.

The Minister for Housing and Communities is best-placed to assess and determine the island's housing needs and it is appropriate that advice is sought, as an integral part of the planning process, about the type of homes proposed as part of larger residential development schemes.

Guidance 5.1

The Minister for Housing and Communities should be consulted about the mix of homes for development proposals providing ten or more homes.

5.3 Placemaking

New residential development in Jersey's built-up areas is as much about creating better neighbourhoods as it is about delivering new homes. High quality residential amenity and sustainable communities will lie at the heart of achieving good places for people to live.

When new homes are being proposed, there will be a requirement to consider the needs of existing and future residents in providing access to open space, green infrastructure and other community services and facilities, and the capacity of existing infrastructure to absorb more development.

Development will need to provide or contribute to community facilities and infrastructure that will be impacted by the likely increase in the number of people living in the area.

Density is, however, a blunt tool and most usefully considered at larger scales of development of five or more homes. Measuring density on small sites sometimes produces a very high figure, which might be acceptable in the specific context, but would be oppressive and unsustainable if repeated over a wider area, where reliance is made on existing community infrastructure. Consideration will be given to the cumulative impact of building a number of smaller, higher density developments in close proximity.

6. Density standards

Different parts of the island's built-up area are able to accommodate different levels of density.

Setting a range of density standards for residential development of five or more homes across the island's built-up areas should enable the development of popular and familiar urban forms where people want to live to help deliver the best and most efficient use of land in Jersey's built-up area.

Development of five or more homes will be expected to meet or exceed the minimum standard of density, relative to the area within which it is located.

Guidance 6.1

Residential development, of five or more homes, should generally meet or exceed the minimum residential density standards established for the island's built-up areas as follows:

- **Town of St Helier** 50 dph
- **Les Quennevais** 40 dph
- **Local centres** 35 dph
- **Smaller settlements** 30 dph

7. Managing superdensity

As the density of new development continues to rise, its long-term sustainability becomes increasingly dependent on effective structures of ownership, management and the funding of services.

Denser (and especially taller) development requires more management. High-rise development is inevitably more expensive to manage and maintain than lower-rise buildings, due to requiring more lifts, a higher proportion of communal areas to be cleaned, more sophisticated technologies for fire safety, window cleaning, security, pumped water supply, smoke ventilation, cladding systems and provision for safe access for maintenance.

At levels of 'superdensity' – defined as 150 homes per hectare (around 450 habitable rooms) or above – there is a need to subject developments to more detailed scrutiny to ensure their longer-term sustainability; and that their impact on the wider area is considered.

Developers may be required to demonstrate how funding streams for long-term management can be assured¹⁵, including projections of service charges to ensure that dense developments do not become unaffordable for future occupiers. Planning for good management at levels of density at or above 150 dph should include:

- a **management plan**, which specifies how the development will be managed. The plan must demonstrate that satisfactory levels of security can be achieved and include measures to address antisocial behaviour by individual residents. The plan should set out rents and service charges, and how these will be changed in the future.
- a **maintenance plan** setting out objectives and standards, as well as how it will be funded by freeholder or landlord; and

- a **residents' forum** to discuss management, and changes in procedures and obligations.

Very dense and taller development will only be justifiable in appropriate circumstances in some locations and requires more careful consideration of its potential impacts over a wide surrounding area, including

- its height and design relative to the site context and its relationship with, where relevant, the St Helier townscape;
- strategic views and important vistas;
- the impact on the historic environment and the setting of listed buildings and key landmarks;
- the impact on the amenity of nearby occupiers and on the public realm; and
- the capacity of local utilities or community infrastructure to support a more intensive form of development.

The development of very tall residential towers and/or hyperdense development – at over 350 dph – will not generally be supported. At these densities, and even with the best practice approach, evidence¹⁶ suggests that it is very difficult to create the conditions that allow mixed communities to thrive.

Guidance 7.1

Proposals for the development of new homes at or above 150 dph should demonstrate how the accommodation will be sustainably managed into the future to sustain the new residents and existing residents (sustainable communities).

Sufficient supporting information should be provided to demonstrate the sustainable future management of the development.

Guidance 7.2

Proposals for the development of new homes should not exceed 350 dph.

¹⁶ [Superdensity: the sequel](#) (2015)

Appendix 1: Policy H2 – Housing density

Policy H2 – Housing density

A positive design-led approach for the provision of new homes will be encouraged at all sites in the island's built-up area to ensure optimum efficiency in the use of land.

Residential development will be supported where it meets or exceeds the adopted minimum residential density standards established for the island's built-up areas.

The appropriate density for any individual site will be informed by:

- the quality of design, relative to the nature of the site and its local context, and the character, capacity and sensitivity of the area to accommodate the development;
- the quality, type and mix of homes being created; and its contribution to the creation of sustainable communities; and
- the level of accessibility by walking, cycling and public transport, to a range of services and facilities, including the capacity of existing local infrastructure to accommodate the development; and
- the quantity and quality of amenity space and parking, including visitor parking.

Residential development below the minimum density will only be supported where it is essential to protect the special interest and character of the area, or where there is an overriding justification to provide a particular mix and type of homes.

Proposals involving five or more homes should be supported by a schedule of accommodation and density statement: proposals that are not accompanied by this information will not be supported.

Appendix 2: Schedule of accommodation

For development involving the creation of **one or more homes** (whether by the development of a new home(s), or the extension and/or sub-division of an existing dwelling), a schedule of the accommodation to be provided should be submitted as part of the application.

It should also be updated and amended accordingly to reflect any changes to a proposed residential development scheme and that which is approved and completed, to include changes made at either the planning approval and/or building bye-law approval stages. Any updated schedule should form part of the approved documents.

This should include, as a minimum, the following information.

Existing

- Number of existing homes on the site by tenure and type
- Number of habitable rooms per existing home
- Gross internal floor area of existing homes (including details of its composition)

Proposed

- Number of homes to be provided by tenure and type
- Net number of homes to be provided on the site by tenure and type
- Gross site area
- Net site area
- Density of development (dwellings per hectare)
- Density of development (habitable rooms per hectare)
- Number of dwellings by type (house or flat) and size (bedrooms)
- Schedule of accommodation by type (i.e. house or flats; and number of bedrooms) relative to:
 - potential occupants (bedspace, differentiating between single- and double-bedrooms)
 - gross internal floor area
 - living, kitchen and dining space
 - internal storage space
 - external/dirty storage space
 - external private open space
 - external communal open space
 - cycle parking provision, for residents and visitors
 - motorcycle parking provision, for residents and visitors
 - car parking provision, for residents and visitors
 - electric vehicle charging points (active and passive)

Appendix 3: Glossary of terms

Duplex: apartment on two levels (traditionally called maisonette)

Habitable rooms: bedrooms, living rooms, lounges and dining rooms are generally considered to be habitable rooms as these are the areas of a home where people spend most of their time. Bathrooms, hallways and landings, utility rooms and kitchens (unless a kitchen-diner) are not considered to be habitable rooms.

Net site area: the area of a development site, including the space that might be required within it to provide internal access, private garden space, car parking areas and children's play space associated with the use and enjoyment of the dwellings to be provided; but excluding any elements of infrastructure and services which might serve a wider area such as public open space that serves a wider area, significant landscape buffers, public roads or other community infrastructure (inclusion of these elements would form the gross site area).

Previously developed land: land which is, or was in the recent past, occupied by a permanent building, structure or element of infrastructure such as a road. It does not include land used for agricultural purposes, including where the land includes glasshouse or polytunnel structures, as these are considered as temporary structures on agricultural land.

Tall buildings: tall buildings are those that are taller than their surroundings or cause a change to the skyline. The term 'tall building' is relative, and the most useful indicator of the extent of the 'tallness' of a building within a specific townscape is the ratio of the height of a tall building to the prevailing contextual height.

The Bridging Island Plan defines anything as a tall building where it is two or more storeys (where any roof plant will also be considered as a storey) above the height of the prevailing contextual height. It will also apply to a building that is 18 metres or more above ground level (or is four-six storeys high) recognising that the storey height of a building can vary depending upon the type of accommodation provided (but are commonly 3 to 4.5 m).

The predominant height in the historic part of St Helier is 2.5-3.5 storeys (or equivalent). Using this as a baseline height, any buildings that are 4.5-six storeys are 'medium-tall', six-eight storeys are 'tall', and eight storeys plus are 'high-rise'.

Tower: vertically-proportioned building