

122. Planning policies and decisions need to reflect changes in the demand for land. They should be informed by regular reviews of both the land allocated for development in plans, and of land availability. Where the local planning authority considers there to be no reasonable prospect of an application coming forward for the use allocated in a plan:
- a) it should, as part of plan updates, reallocate the land for a more deliverable use that can help to address identified needs (or, if appropriate, deallocate a site which is undeveloped); and
 - b) in the interim, prior to updating the plan, applications for alternative uses on the land should be supported, where the proposed use would contribute to meeting an unmet need for development in the area.
123. Local planning authorities should also take a positive approach to applications for alternative uses of land which is currently developed but not allocated for a specific purpose in plans, where this would help to meet identified development needs. In particular, they should support proposals to:
- a) use retail and employment land for homes in areas of high housing demand, provided this would not undermine key economic sectors or sites or the vitality and viability of town centres, and would be compatible with other policies in this Framework; and
 - b) make more effective use of sites that provide community services such as schools and hospitals, provided this maintains or improves the quality of service provision and access to open space.

Achieving appropriate densities

124. Planning policies and decisions should support development that makes efficient use of land, taking into account:
- a) the identified need for different types of housing and other forms of development, and the availability of land suitable for accommodating it;
 - b) local market conditions and viability;
 - c) the availability and capacity of infrastructure and services – both existing and proposed – as well as their potential for further improvement and the scope to promote sustainable travel modes that limit future car use;
 - d) the desirability of maintaining an area’s prevailing character and setting (including residential gardens), or of promoting regeneration and change; and
 - e) the importance of securing well-designed, attractive and healthy places.
125. Area-based character assessments, design guides and codes and masterplans can be used to help ensure that land is used efficiently while also creating beautiful and sustainable places. Where there is an existing or anticipated shortage of land for meeting identified housing needs, it is especially important that planning policies