



CROYDON HOUSING TYPOLOGIES

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CONTENTS

1.0	EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	04	8.0	VIABILITY APPRAISAL	84
			8.1	Assumptions	
2.0	WHY IS THIS STUDY NECESSARY?	10	8.2	Preliminary results	
			8.3	Finding	
3.0	UNDERSTANDING THE CMC	12	9.0	CONCLUSIONS	90
3.1	Character areas		9.1	What is the maximum physical capacity for new homes in the CMC?	
3.2	Areas attractive to families		9.2	What quantum of family housing is possible with that capacity?	
3.3	Public open space		9.3	What are the other factors that can affect this capacity?	
3.4	Conservation areas & Listed Buildings		9.4	How many extra people and children does this mean the CMC will have to support?	
3.5	Topography		9.5	What pace of delivery is indicated?	
3.6	Social Infrastructure		9.6	What are the key issues for the viability of family housing in the CMC?	
3.7	Transport connectivity		9.7	Can the CMC really be considered as one place?	
3.8	CMC market context		9.8	What factors will make family housing attractive	
3.9	Key planning context.		9.9	How can a family housing market be established?	
			9.10	How might affordable housing relate to a family housing strategy	
4.0	TALL BUILDING APPROACH	22	9.11	What strategies might be followed	
4.1	Definition of high buildings		9.12	What is the way forward for Croydon?	
4.2	Original tall buildings and UDP tall building zone.		10.0	POTENTIAL PLANNING POLICY DELIVERY STRATEGY	100
4.3	Consented tall buildings in Croydon		10.1	Strategy	
4.4	Areas suitable for tall buildings		10.2	Spatial Planning Policies and Guidance	
4.5	The future image of Croydon		10.3	Spatial Themes and Policy Mechanisms	
4.6	Tall residential buildings				
4.7	Views to landmarks		A1.0	APPENDIX 1: CONSULTATION WITH LOCAL RSL'S	104
5.0	OPPORTUNITY SITES	36	A1.1	RSL meeting of 30th July 2010	
5.1	The opportunity sites				
5.2	Probability of development				
5.3	Categorising the sites				
5.4	Site category: Historic infill				
5.5	Site category: Mid rise				
5.6	Site category: Adjacent to infrastructure				
5.7	Site category: Shopping centre				
5.8	Site category: Tall building centre				
6.0	TYOLOGIES	46			
6.1	Typological approach				
6.2	Historic Infill sites				
6.3	Mid rise sites				
6.4	Adjacent to infrastructure sites				
6.5	Shopping centre sites				
6.6	Tall buildings sites				
6.7	Alternative housing types				
7.0	HOUSING CAPACITY	72			
7.1	Methodology				
7.2	Base Assumptions				
7.3	Total capacity				
7.4	Understanding the capacity				

1.0

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The draft Replacement London Plan expects Croydon as a whole to accommodate an additional 13,300 homes up to 2021. The CMC area is the part of the Borough with the greatest development potential and the emerging Core Strategy identifies the potential to accommodate 10,000 new homes here by 2031. The greatest need in Croydon as a whole is for family sized homes (3-bedrooms or more).

The purpose of the study is to optimise the number of family homes within the Croydon Metropolitan Centre (CMC) area by demonstrating how many homes can realistically be developed in the CMC Opportunity Area Planning Framework (OAPF) area, in a range of distinctive and attractive typologies, which would deliver a high quality living environment, especially attractive to families. In doing so it tests whether the 10,000 target can be met and how many family homes could be provided.

This report sets out the findings of the study, proposes possible strategies for delivering housing (including family housing) and identifies a number of challenges for the way in which spatial planning policies are developed. It forms part of the evidence base for the Council's Local Development Framework.

STUDY METHODOLOGY

Within the CMC a total of 100 opportunity sites have been identified, these sites have a wide variety of sizes and site conditions; some are empty, some are car parks, and some are a part of the local masterplans being brought forward. Others merely might be expected to come forward for redevelopment (following demolition) over the next 20 years. The largest sites have an area of up to 4.5ha, the smallest as little

as 0.1ha, overall the sites have a total area of 51.69ha.

The methodology followed by this report is based upon establishing a range of housing typologies (such as terraced houses, stacked maisonettes and thin tower blocks) that are suitable to various of the opportunity sites in the CMC. Different mixtures of these typologies can then be applied to different opportunity sites as feasible.

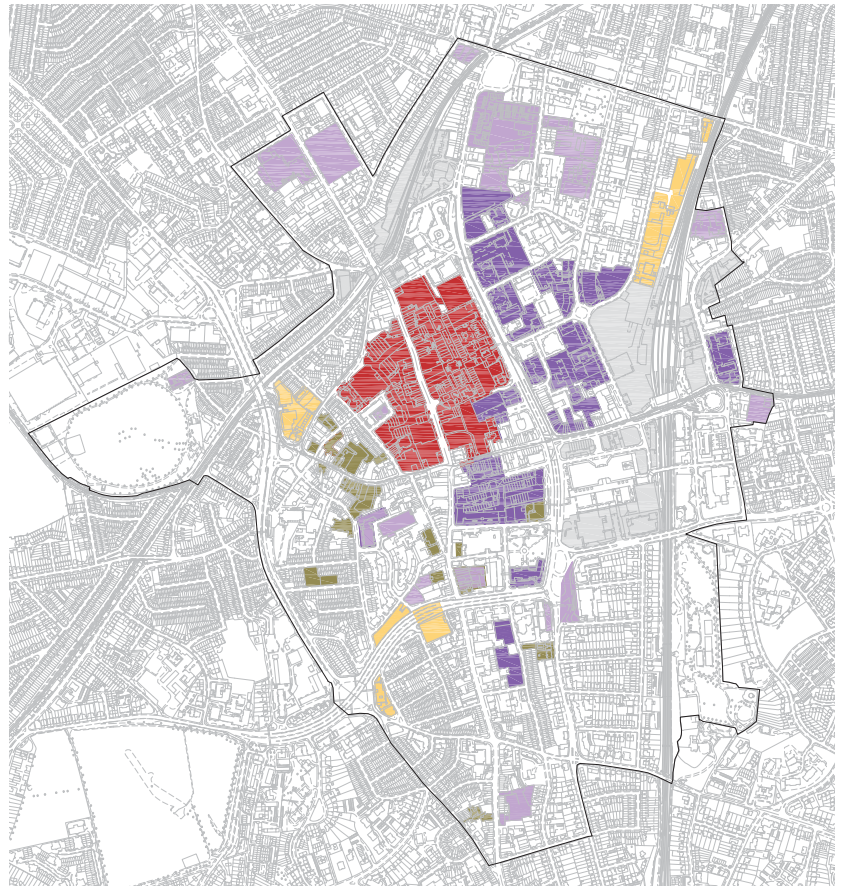
To simplify this process the study categorizes the sites into 5 categories, these categories reflect the varying qualities of the different character areas of the CMC identified by previous studies for LB Croydon. (Those sites within the existing CMC masterplans are not categorised, the form of development for these sites is decided by the masterplans.) Each of the site categories exists in a different type of context and thus a different mixture of building typologies is applicable to each one. For each of these site categories 3 varying scenarios are envisaged, each scenario provides a different proportion of family housing by varying the mix of the relevant typologies.

The five categories of site are:

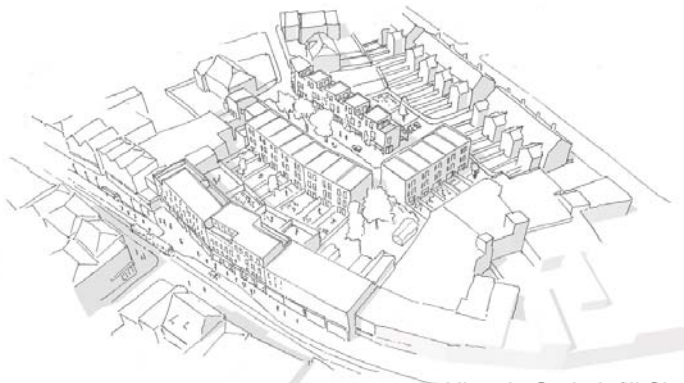
- Historic Grain Infill Sites
- Mid-Rise Sites
- Sites Adjacent to Infrastructure
- Shopping Centre Sites
- Tall Building Sites

A diagram identifying their locations can be seen below. Sketches showing the different styles of development envisaged in each category can be seen overleaf. By applying these typology mixes to the opportunity sites in each category the potential site densities are established, and from this the total number of units the opportunity areas could hold.

Croydon has a considerable existing tall building stock that forms an important element in the image and identity of the CMC. As a part of this project a tall building study has been carried out identifying which areas might be suitable for future tall buildings. This is reflected in the categorisation shown in the diagram below; the tall building sites, the proposed masterplan sites and the shopping centre sites are considered reasonable to include tower blocks in their typology mix.



- Tall building sites
- Mid-rise sites
- Shopping Centre sites
- Historic Grain Infill sites
- Adjacent to Infrastructure
- Masterplan sites



Historic Grain Infill Sites

APPROACH

This study examines a wide range of typologies, many of them containing a portion of family housing as the scenarios seek to optimize the number of family units. A policy of only placing family housing in its 'optimal' locations is followed. Good family housing should have generous, safe, outdoor private amenity space together with an easy relationship to communal or doorstep play space. Preferably it should also have a simple direct access system that does not involve too many family units being accessed through one access core.

These constraints mean that the majority of family units end up being placed at the top or bottom of buildings where gardens or terraces are easily possible, placing too many family units midway up tall buildings makes the provision of sufficient outdoor amenity space difficult without making the building structure excessively expensive.



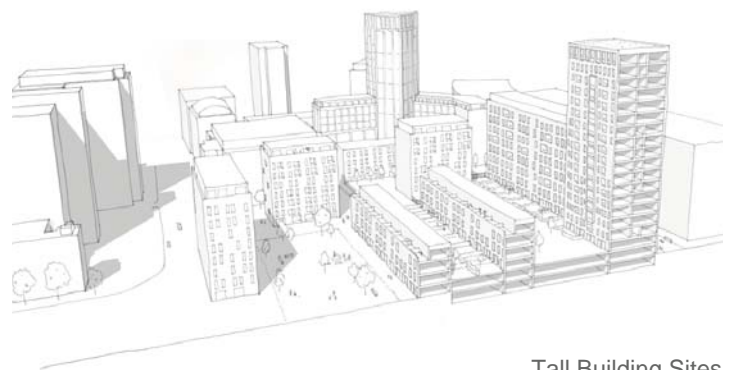
Mid-Rise Sites



Sites Adjacent to Infrastructure



Shopping Centre Sites



Tall Building Sites

The study identifies the following issues that relate particularly to tall residential buildings:

- Design – The use of high quality architectural design must distinguish buildings from unpopular examples from the past.
- Space and Design Standards – the importance of high quality design (space, noise insulation etc).
- Separation/Privacy distances – tall residential buildings need to be further apart than tall office buildings.
- Slenderness – slender buildings provide greater views of the sky and sense of space
- Ground floor open space – the need to 'free up' space at ground level for open space
- Relating well to spaces at ground level - Care must be taken to ensure the building achieves positive and legible relationships with surrounding streets and spaces at ground level.
- Amenity and Play Space – the need for imaginative solutions (e.g. roof top play areas and 'sky gardens').
- Sunlight/Daylight and Overshadowing – the need to avoid excessive overshadowing of amenity and play space and other dwellings.
- Wind – the need to include measures that minimise windy conditions in amenity and play areas.
- Safety - the safety of children needs to be safeguarded, particularly in places where they play.
- Access – the need for two lifts and the prioritisation of car parking for 'blue badge' holders and families.
- Environmental Sustainability – dense housing may help the viability of decentralised energy networks (by increasing demand for energy in evenings/weekends)
- Management - Day-to-day management is particularly important due to the high level of use of common areas and open spaces.

SCENARIOS

The study examined three scenarios for housing development in the CMC:

- Scenario 1 – maximised family housing, and a lower overall density
- Scenario 2 – Median levels of family housing provision and overall density
- Scenario 3 – Minimal provision of family housing, and a maximised overall density.

These scenario's provide theoretical maximum physical capacities of :

Scenario 1 - 6680 new units.
(40% family units)
Density range: 70-190 dwelling/ha

Scenario 2 - 8552 new units.
(24.4% family units)
Density range: 80-270 dwelling/ha

Scenario 3 - 11001 new units.
(12.9% family units)
Density range: 90-370 dwelling/ha

In only one of these scenarios is it theoretically possible to meet the 10,000 target. Also these figures are all maxima, they could only be made at the expense of a considerable portion of the CMC's current office space and public car parking provision. They would also require almost all new development to be residential in nature. Once trade-offs have been made with other uses (office space, public car parking and new schools and amenities) the 10,000 new dwellings target is almost certainly un-achievable.

IMPACTS

Providing this number of new homes could provide up to 25000 new residents in the CMC together with a child yield of up to 2,750 children. This would have a marked impact on the facilities of the CMC; in particular the need for school provision and public open space. The scenarios allow

for some provision of public or communal open space, however at present there is a shortage of public open space within the CMC and connections to the surrounding green spaces are poor. Large swathes of the CMC are more than a 5 minute walk from the nearest public open space. Links to existing public open space will need to be improved and new public green spaces of a full range of sizes should be provided.

OTHER FACTORS

As described above the numbers provided by the development scenarios are only theoretical maxima: they tell how many dwellings could be provided if every single opportunity site was developed, and developed for primarily residential use (the scenarios allow for the retention of existing retail frontage and uses, but little in other use categories). Such a comprehensive level of development is obviously extremely unlikely and a number of other uses, factors, planning policies and imperatives will need to be balanced against the need for new residential provision.

Some of these factors that will have the greatest impact on capacity are (largest potential impact first):

- The level of publicly accessible open space provided.
- The level of office provision retained/ created in the CMC.
- The amount of public car park provision retained.
- Any new extra retail provision.
- The space for provision of new schools.
- The space for the provision of other social infrastructure
- The level of car parking provision for new residential units.
- The design standards followed for the new residential development.

There are many possible permutations of how these factors could be played off against each other the diagram overleaf shows how the theoretical maxima of the scenarios (or gross physical capacity) might possibly be adjusted by some of these factors to reach a net physical capacity.

REFINED SCENARIO

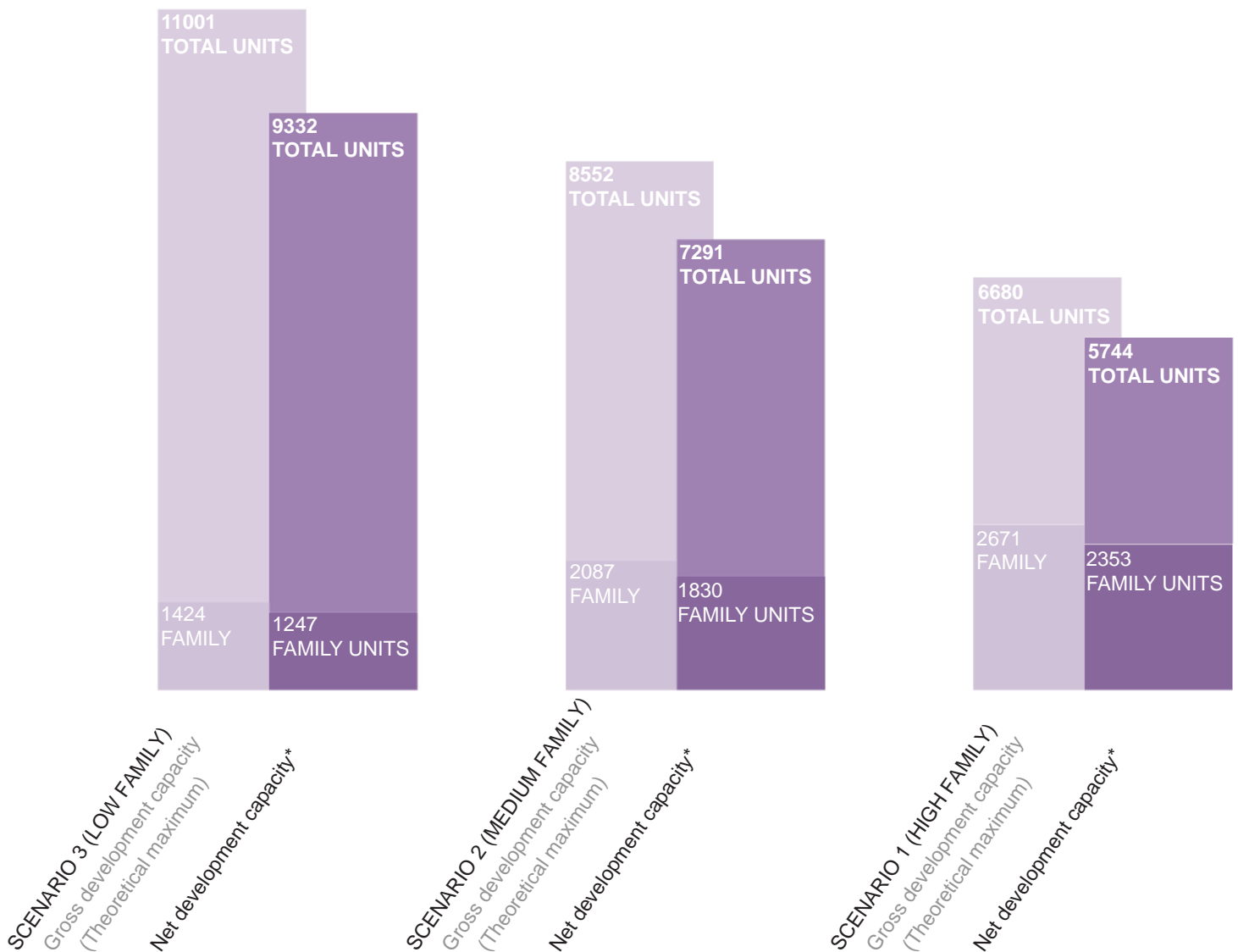
The different character areas across the CMC exhibit marked differences; the CMC is not really one place or residential market and should not be considered as such in strategy formulation.

The peripheral areas of the CMC which have a lower density and lower height character could be seen to be attractive to families in the near future; the densities of development applicable to these areas could also lend itself to high proportions of

family housing. If the aim of the Council is to provide significant quantity of family housing these areas can offer the 'quick win'; family housing here should be maximised here in the immediate term.

The core areas of the CMC present more challenges to the development of a family housing market. It is a busy area of a higher density; a mixed use environment with significant office and retail stock. It has little existing community or facilities relevant to family housing and a limited

history of residential development. The development of a family housing market in this area will take time to become established. It might be expected that schemes brought forward in the immediate term should provide low numbers of family housing, once the market is more established developments later in the plan period may be able to provide a greater proportion of family housing, although still a lower proportion than it will be possible to achieve in the peripheral areas.



* Includes allowance for:

- 75% of public carparks on opportunity sites retained,
- 25% of office use on opportunity sites retained.
- New pocket park in or near the New Town.
- One new primary school on a potentially mid-rise site

Assumes 100% of opportunity sites are developed in some form.

The new set of totals this course recommends would be as follows:

MAXIMISED FAMILY IN THE PERIPHERY, HIGHER DENSITY IN THE CORE AREAS

Gross development capacity:

8161 new units

28% (2302) family units

Net development capacity*

6937 new units

29% (2020) family units

VIABILITY

Private market demand for larger units has yet to emerge in the core of the CMC. However, there is reported intensive use of some new smaller private units by families with young children. In order to confirm and build from this context a critical mass of new housing will need to be provided. These may be in focused locations to confirm a residential quarter within the Metropolitan Centre as a whole.

Resident oriented retail, entertainment and cultural provision will be required, along with social infrastructure, open space and public realm investments. A phased approach to social housing provision may be required to avoid a perception of neighbourhood dominated by social housing or family stock dominated by social housing tenants. A sustained private housing demand will be required to deliver housing on the scale the target suggests.

There are underlying housing development viability issues in the Croydon Metropolitan Centre market. In general taller and higher density buildings face the greatest challenges whilst lower density schemes are closer to viability. Within any one typology progressively reducing the proportion of family housing required has marginal effects on the viability achieved. The fundamental requirement for the Croydon Metropolitan Centre is to raise value overall, however a near term focus on lower density schemes could serve as the foundation for a new residential community and market.

POTENTIAL STRATEGIES

The study has identified a number of potential strategies for establishing a family residential market including:

- Steady encroachment:
The areas around the periphery of the CMC should be developed and improved with a high proportion of family housing. These areas (many currently run down) can reconnect the CMC with the surrounding areas and start a steady encroachment of residential character towards the core of the CMC.

- Large schemes in the core area:
Some schemes could be large enough to create the necessary family amenity and character within themselves; thus accelerating the process of developing the family market. The Mid-Croydon Masterplan will be particularly important in this regard.
- Reinforcing neighbourhoods:
The creation of neighbourhoods which are of a size that a community identifies with and that build on the CMC's existing character areas can help foster the residential market and improve the perception of the CMC.
- Public open space provision:
Public and communal open space must be provided by every scheme that comes forward to help change the character of the core areas of the CMC. This should apply to all schemes, not just those with a family element. In addition links to existing green spaces must be improved and new 'pocket parks' near the core of the CMC should be considered.
- Exemplar council schemes:
Croydon Borough Council could bring forward some schemes themselves in order to improve confidence and 'kick start' the family housing market in the currently difficult areas near the core of the CMC.
- Providing more amenity in the CMC:
Improving the overall image of Croydon and increasing the range of public amenities (including open space, retail provision, cultural, entertainment and community facilities) available in the CMC is probably the most important single strategy to be followed. People need to be provided with a positive reason to move to Croydon.

Looking to the way forward, the report makes a number of recommendations on how the Council's Local Development Framework could be written and used to deliver housing and family housing in particular.

2.0

WHY IS THIS STUDY NECESSARY?

2.1 PURPOSE AND ROLE OF STUDY

The Council's Project Brief (April 2010) sets out the purpose of the study as being to optimise the number of family homes within the Croydon Metropolitan Centre (CMC) area by demonstrating how many homes can realistically be developed in the CMC Opportunity Area Planning Framework (OAPF) area, in a range of distinctive and attractive typologies, which would deliver a high quality living environment, attractive to people, especially families.

The Brief goes on to identify the key objectives as being to provide for the CMC OAPF area the following:

- A range of distinctive family and non-family housing single use and mixed use typologies, of high quality both in terms of attractiveness and environmental quality, meeting the latest emerging floorspace and amenity standards and demonstrating resilience to climate change;
- A capacity figure for each site or group of sites;
- A tall buildings strategy, demonstrating an awareness of individual and cumulative impacts of tall buildings; and
- To demonstrate that the typologies have a high likelihood of being viable, marketable and deliverable.

The draft Replacement London Plan expects Croydon as a whole to accommodate an additional 13,300 homes up to 2021. The CMC area is the part of the Borough with the greatest development potential and the emerging Core Strategy identifies the potential to accommodate 10,000 new homes here. However, the greatest need in Croydon as a whole is for family sized homes (3-bedrooms or more). This raises the following key questions that this study seeks to answer:

- What is the residential capacity of the CMC, taking account of other policy objectives, including: (i) providing a secure, attractive and sustainable environment, (ii) promoting sustainable modes of transport, (iii) strengthening the centre as a destination for recreation and leisure, (iv) maintaining and improving its status as a sub-regional shopping centre and (v) providing a wide range of business development and employment opportunities?

- Where could additional housing be located, at what densities and at what heights?
- What proportion of new housing can be expected to be for families and how achievable/viable is this?
- What are the requirements for accommodating the identified number and range of new homes in terms of growing market demand, residential amenity, creating a 'child friendly' environment, wider infrastructure and knitting it all together to make a place?
- What are the alternatives for the Borough – accommodating less housing in the CMC area and more elsewhere by boosting local centres?

The findings of this study will form part of the evidence base for the Council's Local Development Framework, as illustrated in the figure below.

