

Dorset is under threat from excessive house building & Planning White Paper



13th August 2020

An independent report for Dorset CPRE shows that the Dorset Council and BCP Council could be forced to plan for excessive numbers of new housing.

The Government's Standard Method for assessing local housing need produces a figure of 4,458 dwellings per annum for Dorset, which is 47% higher than the 3,030 new houses required by the existing Local Plans and nearly 100% higher than recent rates of housing delivery.

Now, the Government's **Planning White Paper** and **proposed Planning reforms** threaten Dorset with even higher, centrally-imposed housing numbers, while greatly reducing local people's say in the future of our communities.

Key Findings

- Central government's housing targets, using 2014 projections, **are 47% higher** than the existing Local Plans in Dorset.
- The government's housing targets are **way in excess** of any sensible forecast of **local housing need**.
- The report proposes that the local authorities should be prepared to **challenge the Government's Standard Method** based on outdated and flawed population and household projections.
- **Local authorities** should encourage the development of **suitable affordable housing for younger households**.
- Dorset CPRE supports a locally led democratic planning system rather than deregulated proposals.

The number of new homes provided in the period 2011-18 were sufficient to meet the on-going housing needs. So why is a higher rate of housing need now projected? Why threaten our Green Spaces and valued Dorset countryside?

Part of the answer, suggests this study, is that the household projections which underpin the housing needs calculations are out of date. They are based on 2014 projections rather than the 2016 household projections published by ONS, which suggest lower housing needs. The 2018 based projections released in July show even lower projections and a lower level of need.

Peter Bowyer, Dorset CPRE Chair of Trustees, said:

"Building excessive housing can only be at the expense of our very special environment and our communities. Our environment is Dorset's greatest economic asset. Our communities need appropriate homes to meet local need, including truly affordable homes for young families whom we need to keep and attract to work here and so help grow Dorset's economy."

"It is in everyone's interests that the housing numbers in local plans reflect local needs. Plans that are based on excessive and unrealistic projections can lead to proposed developments not being delivered, and also to land not being brought forward and hence the 5 year land supply not being met. The Local Plan and

associated Neighbourhood Plans could then fail and result in a developer led free for all.”

PDF copies of the Dorset Housing Needs Evidence report, produced by Opinion Research Services, are being sent to all town and parish members of DAPTC as well as to the Dorset and BCP Councils, and Dorset MPs. Please see below the link to the **Dorset Housing Needs Evidence report**.

Planning Reform - Planning White Paper

Government calls for deregulation of the planning system are nothing new. The system has been blamed time and time again for restricting growth and housing delivery. But the truth is the opposite.

Locally-led development offers the best outcomes for people and nature. It can ensure that the right development is in the right place, and creates places where people actually want to live. The [recently announced planning reforms](#) will only serve to undermine local voices, by preventing communities from managing their own places/neighbourhoods and as we've seen before, result in environments that don't work for the people that live there.

Key Concerns

- The White Paper is a Charter for unnecessary overdevelopment in Dorset with significantly higher numbers than are needed.
- There is a significant loss of local democracy and a reduction of the public involvement in the planning process - Dorset Council need to Stand up for Dorset rather than give in to demands from Westminster.
- The White Paper proposals do not guarantee adequate protection for the precious environment of Dorset and in fact are a threat.

Dorset CPRE are responding to both the **Changes to the Planning System** (deadline 1st October) and the **White Paper consultations** (by 29th October) and will issue further e-news during the consultation period to late October, and over the coming months. The National CPRE have made [an initial response to the White Paper](#) and have convened meetings with more than 30 organisations to join forces and build momentum to oppose the government's White Paper. Organisations included Shelter, the Town and Country Planning Association and the Local Government Association, as well as environmental NGOs such as Friends of the Earth.

Additional notes:

5th August: Peter Bowyer, Chair of Trustees, had an excellent discussion with This is Alfred (based in Shaftesbury) about the ['New House Building Target Could Put North Dorset Countryside At Risk'](#), the recording starts from 1:17.

[Opinion Research Services \(ORS\)](#) was commissioned by Dorset CPRE to establish a robust and independent evidence base on housing need in Dorset.

Downloads:

- [Dorset Housing Needs Evidence Report](#)