

Press Release

Immediate Release: 16 Jan 2025

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Countryside under threat from new housing figures

West Midlands Countryside Campaigners fear the Government shake-up of planning will lead to houses being built in the wrong places after a dramatic change to how many houses a local area is required to take¹.

Housing requirements more than double in many rural areas allowing developers to cherry pick sites in the countryside rather than build where the housing is most needed.

Open countryside and the Green Belt would both be under threat with little protection for local nature areas, as the definition of the so-called 'grey' belt does not include them.

Instead of starting from an up-to-date calculation of housing need for new homes in an area the new proposals are based solely on the existing stock of houses in an area.

In more expensive areas an 'affordability' add-on would then ramp up house-building even more, sometimes doubling the housing requirement. If house prices go up, this requirement could be even higher whether or not it is where housing is most needed.

Speculative development in expensive rural areas could increase at the expense of urban regeneration.

Ironically, Birmingham, which claimed it could not meet its housing need under the old system, might now be deemed to have excess capacity.

Peter King of West Midlands CPRE said: *We need to build houses but it's important that we support the areas where the need is greatest not those which suit the builders.*

This could have even worse consequences if local authority planning committees are taken out of the decision making process for housing sites identified in local plans which the Government is currently consulting on².

Peter King added: *Our fear is not only that we will get housing in areas with poor infrastructure, but the opportunity for local politicians and people to influence developments so they serve local needs will be lost.*

End

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Notes:

1. The attached table shows the difference in annual housing numbers for each local authority in the West Midlands under the new Standard Methodology compared to the old. It also shows the percentage change.

It then shows the amount which is added on for 'affordability' and the percentage of the new total that would represent. In the case of Stoke-on-Trent it is zero because it is below the cut-off point.

It also shows for reference the figures using the methodology from the consultation proposals.

It includes composite figures for specific areas such as the Black Country and an overall figure for the West Midlands. Note: the Green Belt authorities are local authorities with Green Belt, it does not imply all those houses would be built on the Green Belt.

2. See: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/planning-reform-working-paper-planning-committees>

**Annual Housing Numbers by local authority
under the old and new Government methodology (West Midlands)**

Local Authority	Old	New (Dec 2024)	% Change	Affordability Addition'	Affordability %	Consultation (July 2024)
Birmingham	7174	4,448	-37.99	828	22.88	4974
Coventry	3082	1,388	-54.97	214	18.24	1527
Dudley	657	1,462	122.53	336	29.79	1594
Sandwell	1550	1,346	-13.18	260	23.90	1509
Solihull	866	1,323	52.81	559	73.04	1317
Walsall	906	1,148	26.73	203	21.43	1294
Wolverhampton	1096	1,086	-0.88	171	18.66	1227
Telford and Wrekin	463	857	85.19	195	29.53	953
Cannock Chase	248	518	109.05	151	41.19	555
East Staffordshire	417	602	44.42	160	36.25	644
Lichfield	289	745	157.79	357	91.96	753
Newcastle-under-Lyme	330	545	65.17	88	19.30	593
South Staffordshire	223	651	191.90	259	65.89	676
Stafford	358	751	109.90	241	47.35	782
Staffordshire Moorlands	159	454	185.58	92	25.54	497
Tamworth	123	445	262.10	168	60.65	444
Stoke-on-Trent	705	874	34.41	0	0.00	1043
Warwickshire						
North Warwickshire	163	364	123.06	128	54.64	381
Nuneaton and Bedworth	421	737	75.02	253	52.44	774
Rugby	525	618	17.81	208	50.58	642
Stratford-on-Avon	553	1,126	103.59	594	111.68	1098
Warwick	653	1,062	62.61	517	94.85	1080
Worcestershire						
Bromsgrove	386	713	84.67	368	106.78	704
Malvern Hills	369	651	76.49	350	116.51	609
Redditch	143	486	239.98	182	60.08	489
Worcester	339	552	62.76	173	45.68	584
Wychavon	486	971	99.84	480	97.77	959
Wyre Forest	211	584	176.60	192	49.02	617
Herefordshire	773	1,363	76.33	645	89.72	1375
Shropshire	1070	1,994	86.35	788	65.40	2059
Black Country	4209	5042	19.80	969	23.78	5624
Combined Authority	15331	12202	-20.41	2569	26.68	13443
Green Belt	21071	23422	11.16	7398	46.17	24838
Staffordshire	2147	4713	119.50	1517	47.48	4944
Warwickshire	2315	3907	68.75	1701	77.09	3975
Worcestershire	1934	3957	104.59	1746	78.99	3962
West Midlands	24738	29866	21.03	9162	44.09	31754
South Worcestershire	1194	2174	82.09	1004	85.73	2152
Birmingham and Black Country	11383	9940	-16.62	1797	23.35	10598
GBCHMA	17459	18444	-1.20	4777	38.30	18544