



Date: 2 October 2020 **For immediate use**

<https://www.malvern hills.gov.uk/news-alerts/concerns-raised-over-housing-numbers>

Concerns raised over proposed housing numbers

Proposed planning reforms could lead to more than 50,000 new homes being built across South Worcestershire in unsustainable locations and worsen the affordable housing crisis.

That's the warning from Cllr Sarah Rouse, Leader of Malvern Hills District Council, in response to the Government's Changes to the Current Planning System consultation.

The proposals, together with the Planning for the Future white paper, have been described as the biggest shake-up of the planning system since the Second World War.

Ministers say changes are necessary to speed up the building of new homes, to tackle the affordable housing crisis and boost the country's economic recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic.

But Cllr Rouse warned the proposed methodology used to calculate the number of new homes needed, would result in 51,640 new homes being built across South Worcestershire over 20 years. This effectively doubles the number of homes required in the area.

Cllr Rouse said it would force building in unsuitable and unsustainable locations and take no account of efforts to tackle climate change.

The proposal to build more First Homes – where a 30% discount is given to first time buyers, serving members and veterans of the Armed Forces and key workers - would also likely result in a drop in affordable housing provision, meaning those in real need of housing would miss out in favour of those struggling to make it on to the property ladder.

Cllr Sarah Rouse, Leader of Malvern Hills District Council, said: “The level of growth demanded by these reforms and the new housing calculation methodology will result in unsuitable and unsustainable development being forced on the people of Malvern Hills District and the rest of South Worcestershire.

“We have seen – and are properly planning for – significant levels of growth to meet local housing need across this area already. The lack of skills and availability of labour in the construction industry are more likely factors behind any delay in building new homes than issues with the planning system.

“I urge the Government to take note of our concerns and to urgently rethink these proposals which will end up doing more harm than good.”

ENDS

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