



Worcestershire

Standing up for your countryside

From the Chairman:

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September 2020

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
House of Commons
Email: XXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Dear xxx,

Housing targets under White Paper

I am writing on behalf of CPRE Worcestershire regarding the Government’s proposed changes to the planning system.

We are particularly concerned about the impact of the Government’s proposed radical shake up to the Planning System contained in the ‘Planning for the Future’ consultation and how it could affect many rural communities.

I am sure you are aware of the proposals to split local areas up into areas of ‘growth’, ‘renewal’ and ‘protection’.

This could lead to large tracts of countryside where permission for development would only be subject to Design Codes.

Moreover, the opportunity of communities and individuals to influence planning decisions would be drastically reduced in areas designated for ‘growth’ or ‘renewal’.

You may, however, not be aware of the more insidious, and potentially more devastating, proposals in a separate consultation document, ‘Changes to the Planning System’ These would change how the local housing requirement is calculated and extend ‘Permission in Principle’ to Major developments. See: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/907215/200805_Changes_to_the_current_planning_system_FINAL_version.pdf

The changes to the housing requirements standard methodology would, if implemented, dramatically increase the overall housing numbers for Worcestershire and would do so in a way which ensured more housing was built on poorly located, car-dependent sites in the countryside, undermining urban regeneration while failing to deliver either affordable housing or to address Climate Change.

The attached report shows the impact on Worcestershire, and how it leads to a series of undesirable key outcomes, and in particular:

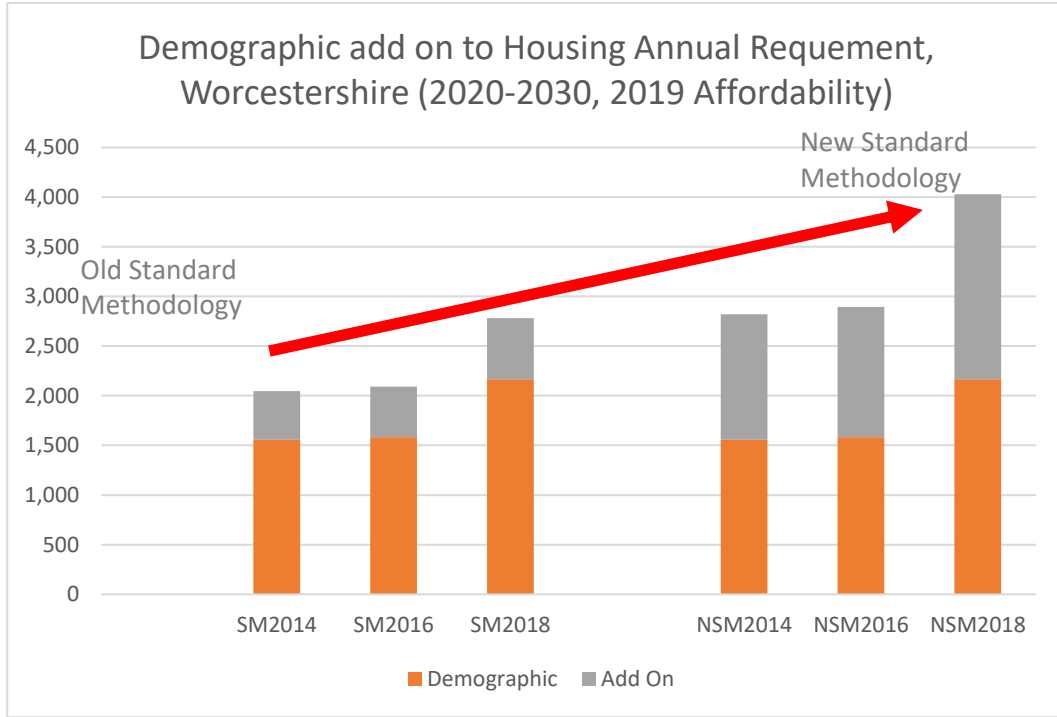
The Campaign to Protect Rural England exists to promote the beauty, tranquillity and diversity of rural England by encouraging the sustainable use of land and other natural resources in town and country.

President: David Hawkins
Chairman: Dr. Peter King
Secretary: Terra Newman – secretary@cpreworcestershire.org.uk

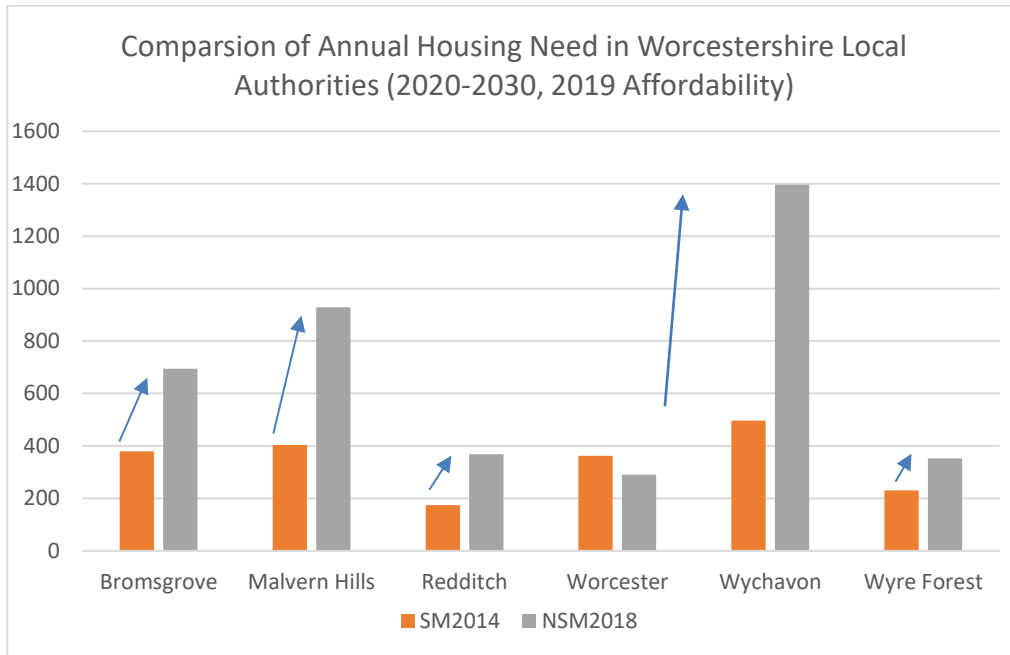
Vice-President: Ann Stallard
Vice-Chairman: Frank Hill

Registered charity 201606

1. New Housing requirements which are 97% higher and nearly 80% above genuine demographic need.



2. A dramatic shift of housing into rural area of Worcestershire.



Furthermore, the extension of 'Permission in Principle' would mean that large housing sites could be given certainty of planning permission without considering vital implications, such as transport and environmental matters.

Far from protecting the countryside and encouraging urban regeneration, these changes would encourage unsustainable and unaffordable housing that would not meet the real need of the most vulnerable in the county.

The promise in the Government's 25 Year Environment Plan that 'New development will happen in the right places' would be undermined in Worcestershire.

Furthermore, the National Planning Policy Framework (para 11) stresses that Plans should meet objectively assessed need. Nationally, this is probably of the order of 230,000 to 240,000 (according to research published by our CPRE Devon colleagues. However, the White Paper targets total 337,000, which is itself in excess of the government's own subjective target of 300,000 per year for England.

This is far from a unique situation and work we have seen from other CPRE Branches and Regions suggests this situation will be replicated for other rural areas across the West Midlands and more widely.

Not only that but the increased reliance placed on non-demographic elements would mean that housing requirements for individual local authority could become increasingly volatile depending on the year they were calculated in.

I hope you will urgently raise this issue with the relevant Planning and Housing Ministers and seek an immediate review of these changes.

Yours Sincerely,

P.W. King