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**NEW GOVERNMENT PROPOSALS WOULD DRAMATICALLY INCREASE GLOUCESTERSHIRE HOUSING**

The Government is currently consulting on radical changes to the planning system. Among other things, this would dramatically increase the number of new houses that local authorities are required to plan for.

For their local plans, local authorities are required to determine the amount of new housing that will be needed in their area. They are required to do this using a Standard Methodology set out by the Government and designed to deliver the Government’s target of 300,000 new homes per year across England.

As part of the consultation on a new planning system, the Government is proposing far-reaching changes to the methodology for calculating the local housing requirement.

CPRE Gloucestershire finds that the proposed new methodology would increase housing numbers in the county far beyond what is genuinely needed. Moreover, the methodology would lead to more housing being built in the countryside on poorly located, car-dependent sites. This would undermine urban regeneration while failing to deliver either sufficient affordable housing or to address climate change. To confirm this impression CPRE Gloucestershire employed Gerald Kells, a Policy and Campaigns advisor, to assess the numbers and report on the impact.

Comparing the old and new methods

The starting points for both methods of determining housing needs are the Office for National Statistics (ONS) projections of population growth and household formation for each local authority area. Under the current method, ONS projections from 2014 are being used. To these an ‘affordability adjustment’ is then added to calculate local housing requirements on the basis that the higher house prices are relative to earnings the greater is the need for additional housing.

Under the proposed new method, the calculation would be based on the 2018 ONS projections which in general are lower than those for 2014. The method would also take into account the existing housing stock numbers. The ‘affordability adjustment’ would be amended to account for changes in affordability over the last ten years, which results in those areas with the steepest house price rises since the recession in 2009 getting the highest adjustment whether or not this is the best place for that housing.

**What this means for Gloucestershire**

**Required housing delivery: dwellings per annum**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Current Standard Methodology** | **Proposed New Standard Methodology** | **Percentage Change** |
| **Gloucestershire (total)** | **3245** | **4747** | **+46%\*** |
| **Cheltenham Borough** | **531** | **529** | **-0.4%** |
| **Cotswold District** | **487** | **1209** | **+148%** |
| **Forest of Dean District** | **370** | **608** | **+64%** |
| **City of Gloucester** | **658** | **578** | **-12%** |
| **Stroud District** | **635** | **786** | **+24%** |
| **Tewkesbury Borough** | **564** | **1037** | **+84%** |

\* For Gloucestershire as a whole, the new housing requirement is 80% above the baseline figures derived from the ONS projections.

The figures for Cotswold District are particularly alarming as 80% of the District lies within the Cotswold AONB and there are comparatively few local opportunities for employment. Across the District, and particularly within the AONB, the need is for local jobs and affordable housing and not more homes for people working outside the area or more second homes. The same can be said for the Forest of Dean.

The Tewkesbury figures are equally alarming for another reason. Under the Joint Core Strategy, the Borough has provided the lion’s share of the housing needs for Gloucester and Cheltenham which have constrained boundaries. The two major urban areas are separated by Green Belt which was significantly reduced to accommodate the JCS requirements. Further loss of Green Belt would be problematic but development is constrained to the east by the Cotswolds AONB and to the west by the River Severn. The lack of corresponding increases in Cheltenham and Gloucester masks the fact that the ONS projections of population growth have reduced significantly between 2014 and 2018.

The more detailed report of the impact of the new methodology which we commissioned is available from CPRE Gloucestershire ([www.cpreglos.org.uk](http://www.cpreglos.org.uk), email [info@cpreglos.org.uk](mailto:info@cpreglos.org.uk))