

## DENSITY GUIDELINES

1. CPRE considers that the impact of our Oxfordshire Councils' present housing plans, which envisage the equivalent of two new Cities the size of Oxford within the next fifteen years, will damage to an unacceptable extent our countryside and green spaces, not least the Green Belt and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
2. We welcome the provision of necessary housing for local families, but we are making every effort to remove from housebuilding proposals that part of the "demand" attributable to accommodating workers coming into the County to take up (hypothetical) new jobs, roughly half the total.
3. We are seeking to rebalance the present unrestrained Growth Strategy with protection for the rural nature of the County which present residents enjoy and which in fact lies at the heart of our economic success.
4. At the same time we are now seeking to increase the density of housebuilding which would in turn reduce the amount of countryside lost for the development of any particular number of houses.
5. Density is the number of houses erected on a site including the roads etc. which service them.
6. Government density targets are for between 30 and 50 houses per hectare. These targets are themselves modest. Victorian terraces - amongst the most sought after types of housing - average 70 houses per hectare, and typical city infill, 100 houses. Our Council targets however are at the lower end of the Government's indicative scale. The Vale of the White Horse for example, merely aspires to achieve at least 30 houses per hectare.
7. Builders like to erect executive housing - typically only 5-10 houses per hectare - because it is most profitable, and may have led Councils to fear that if they are not allowed to build the kind of houses they want to, they will not build any at all, obviously an absurd proposition.
8. High density housing not only takes up less precious land, but it also provides less expensive houses. Lower price houses and starter homes for local people is where the real demand lies, not in yet more executive houses for commuters.
9. High density is not inappropriate in the countryside. Most village people were accommodated in small dwellings, and most villages contain high density terrace housing.

10. CPRE Oxfordshire will therefore seek to promote housing development at the highest realistic density in each location, with a yardstick target of at least 70 houses per hectare. As an illustration, that could potentially more than halve the land-take for the 20,000+ houses in the current Vale of White Horse District draft Local Plan, even if numbers were not reduced.

CPRE Oxfordshire  
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