

Housing numbers

During my last meeting with Wokingham Borough I was reminded that Wokingham has a target to build 856 new homes a year from 2013. (LEP study of housing need Feb 2016) That makes Wokingham's share of the West Berkshire total 30%, with the other Councils providing the rest of the 2855. Reading itself has a lower target of 699, despite having substantial brownfield redevelopment potential, the coming of Crossrail and the possibility of more starter home and smaller flats in the centre. Bracknell has to build just 635 a year. Going forward there needs to be a fair division of the requirement.

The total numbers needed in the future also should take into account any change of migration policy designed to lower the numbers of additional people coming to live and work in the country as a whole. The current high numbers of new home sis partly the result of adding 330,000 extra people each year to our population, as we wish anyone coming to live and work here to have access to decent housing. If the government sticks to its target of a substantial reduction and takes the necessary measures on leaving the EU, could the targets be lowered.

Were the Council to agree to a new settlement at Grazeley of 15,000 homes that would on its own provide 17.5 years worth of housing against targets. Would the development be spaced out over such a time period? Is it feasible to say no to building on any other large sites throughout such a long time period? Or might Grazeley add to the build rate? If other sites are granted on appeal or run over from past grants of planning, then we need to build even more infrastructure to take care of a faster build rate than present plans.

I am writing to the authorities to ask what thought is going in to future targets in the light of these issues.