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How many houses, what kind of homes?

A report for the Campaign to Protect Rural England (Shropshire Branch)

Gerald Kells

Summary : Nov 2015

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Over the next two years Shropshire will be developing a new Local Plan which will determine how much development is permitted across the county. It is essential to get that right. In particular there needs to be a balance between building the new houses that are needed and protecting the countryside.

On the basis of the latest housing projections the Campaign to Protect Rural England believes the current housing target of 27,500 houses by 2026 is too high. Our research suggests it could be reduced by as much as 10,000.

The existing population of Shropshire is declining. Housing growth is fuelled mainly by in-migration, most notably from Telford. Shropshire needs some in-migration. However, there is a balance between providing enough homes for local people and encouraging Shropshire to become a commuter belt.

We believe it is just as important not to allow too much housing as too little.

We will be looking to the Council to critically examine its current targets as it develops its new plan and to ensure it engages with the local people who will be most affected if housing is built close to them.

Fig 1. Core Strategy Targets versus Household Projections for Shropshire

Fig 2. Cumulative Core Strategy Targets versus Household Projections for Shropshire

Like many attractive areas Shropshire has also struggled to provide enough affordable housing and we believe the emphasis in the new plan should be on providing houses to meet the needs of all parts of society.

At the same time Shropshire’s population is aging. To ensure the housing provided in Shropshire is fit for purpose there needs to be more emphasis on providing housing suitable for elderly people.

**Conclusions**

The review of the local plan is an opportunity to reassess Shropshire’s housing policies to ensure the right amount and type of housing is built.

CPRE expects to play an active and positive role in responding to the plan’s development.

In undertaking its technical work CPRE will look for Shropshire Council to:

1. Critically assess the overall need for housing to ensure the countryside is protected and urban regeneration promoted.
2. Consider whether the latest population and housing predictions will allow a reduction in housing numbers.
3. Review the extent to which Shropshire should encourage in-migration and how to ensure it supports a balanced social and age mix.
4. Develop policies on what type of housing to build to meet the need of Shropshire’s population, including the need for affordable housing and specialist housing for older people.

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