

Date: 25 July 2018

LESS THAN TWO PER CENT OF GREEN BELT ENOUGH TO BUILD FIFTH OF NORTH SOMERSET'S NEW HOMES

- **Bristol, South Gloucestershire, Bath & North East Somerset all set to release Green Belt land for new homes – but North Somerset refuses**
- **Meanwhile North Somerset house prices go up £20k in just one year, as demand outstrips supply**
- **Despite fears of 'urban sprawl', North Somerset's Green Belt has actually *grown* since policy introduced in 1957**

Releasing less than two per cent of North Somerset's Green Belt would provide enough land to build 4,500 homes adjacent to Bristol – including 1,800 much-needed affordable homes.

According to official Government figures¹, North Somerset has 15,530 hectares of Green Belt. Of this, just 300 hectares would need to be released to build almost 20 per cent of the 25,000 homes North Somerset Council has to accommodate between 2016 and 2036.

Taylor Wimpey is proposing to build three new villages adjacent to Bristol, a proposal known as *The Vale*. This land currently includes an under-used golf course and a landfill site.

Each of the three neighbouring authorities – Bristol, South Gloucestershire and Bath & North East Somerset - has proposed to release Green Belt land as part of the Joint Spatial Plan (JSP).

However, despite support for Green Belt development from several Parish and Town Councils within the district, North Somerset Council has refused to include Green Belt sites in the JSP.

Pressure is growing on North Somerset Council to allocate more land for housing, making the case for releasing Green Belt even stronger.

At a recent North Somerset Council meeting, the council's planning and policy manager Michael Reep said he believed the 25,000 homes may not be enough, saying that he suspected the housing numbers 'will go up.'



Nailsea Town Council, Backwell Parish Council, Clevedon Town Council, Banwell Parish Council, Congresbury Parish Council, Churchill Parish Council, Cleve Parish Council, Yatton Parish Council and the North Somerset Villages Alliance have all previously made statements supporting development in the Green Belt adjacent to Bristol to help preserve other parts of North Somerset.

Nailsea Town Council said it 'supports appropriate extensions of the Green Belt,' and Congresbury Parish Council said 'North Somerset urgently needs to review and amend its Green Belt policy.'

A number of North Somerset councillors have also stated their desire to see a green belt review, or have suggested that development in the Green Belt is preferable to some of the proposals put forward by the Council to date.

The draft JSP already states that releasing land from the Green Belt is warranted. In one of the draft JSP documents - the Statement of Engagement - it concludes:

'...exceptional circumstances have been made to warrant land to be released from the Green Belt to support sustainable growth in some specific locations.'

North Somerset's Green Belt has actually grown since it was first established in 1957; the only major change since then is the *addition* of land between Portishead and Clevedon which came about in 1975.

Taylor Wimpey's project director Gareth Hawke said: "House prices in North Somerset have increased an average of £20,000 in the past 12 months². There are 3,300 people on the Council's own housing waiting list. Demand is clearly outstripping supply, making the chance of buying or renting a home increasingly difficult for local people.

"Other local Councils in the area – and across the UK – are releasing land from the Green Belt to provide homes for our population. We are not talking about land from a National Park or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty like the Mendip Hills – we are talking about land that is currently home to an under-used golf course and a landfill site.

"We are simply proposing to deliver much-needed high quality homes for a wide range of people, in the most sustainable location adjacent to Bristol where there is already the infrastructure to allow people an alternative to driving to work."



More details of *The Vale* are available at www.thevale-northsomerset.co.uk where interested parties can provide feedback and sign-up for regular email updates.

People can also find out more and sign up for updates via The Vale Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/taylorwimpeythevale/> or follow the Twitter feed @twthevale.

ENDS

Contact: Andrew Smith on 07450 194116. Andrew.smith@conversationpr.co.uk.

¹Department of Communities and Local Government, Local Planning Authority Green Belt: England 2016/17

²National Housing Federation Home Truths 2017/18: The housing market in the South West.

Note to media:

Taylor Wimpey UK, part of Taylor Wimpey plc, is one of the largest residential developers in the UK. It operates from 24 regional offices across England, Scotland and Wales, and builds over 14,500 homes every year.

Taylor Wimpey is a responsible homebuilder that is committed to health and safety, environmental sustainability, providing excellent customer service and engaging with local communities.

In 2017 Taylor Wimpey contributed over £413 million to local communities in which it builds across the UK via planning obligations, providing, for example, local infrastructure, affordable homes, public transport and education facilities; Taylor Wimpey continues to innovate with its range of high quality and energy efficient house designs on developments across the UK; Taylor Wimpey has a strong and sustainable customer base, with over 90% owner-occupiers.

First time buyers accounted for 41% of Taylor Wimpey's sales in 2017, with a range of offers available to help first time buyers purchase a home of their own; Taylor Wimpey seeks to be an inclusive company which values people as individuals – whether they are employees, customers or

**Taylor
Wimpey**



Press Release

other stakeholders. It aims to be successful through its creative and innovative workforce that reflects the diversity of the local communities in which it works.

For more information please visit www.taylorwimpey.co.uk