

**COUNCIL  
19 SEPTEMBER 2024**

**PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

**TITLE OF REPORT: NOTICE OF MOTIONS UNDER STANDING ORDER 4.8.12**

The following motion has been submitted, due notice of which has been given in accordance with Standing Order 4.8.12.

**Motion on the Government Planning Reforms and Housing Targets**

On 30<sup>th</sup> July 2024, the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government made a statement to the House of Commons on changes to National Planning Policy.

The Government announced not only would it be re-introducing mandatory housing targets for Local Authorities, but that it would increase overall targets from 300,000 new homes per annum to approximately 370,000 per annum.

Under the Government's proposed new method announced as part of changes to the National Planning Policy Framework, North Hertfordshire will be required to build 992 new homes per year, representing an increase of 9%.

Neighbouring authority Luton will see its housing target reduced by 22%, and as a result of the Government removing the urban uplift, major cities such as London, Liverpool and Birmingham will all see a reduction in their housing targets by up to 31%.

Following the adoption of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan in November 2022, 47% of land within the district is designated as Green Belt. The reforms of which are proposed by the Government will weaken protections for Green Belt land, and could result in inappropriate development taking place within the district, particularly in and around our rural communities.

As a result of our Local Plan having recently been adopted, North Hertfordshire currently does not need to provide evidence of a five-year housing land supply in accordance with the 2023 NPPF. However, the Government is proposing to remove this element of the 2023 NPPF, which means that should this proposed change come into force there would be a presumption in favour of sustainable development through the decision-making mechanism. The loss of this protection increases the likelihood of approval for major developments proposed within the district on sites not identified in the Local Plan.

The Government has also stated its ambition to build "a new generation of new towns" which will comprise of at least 10,000 homes. In order to identify potential locations for these 'new towns' a New Towns Taskforce has been created within the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government.

Therefore, Council resolves:

1. not to take part in the Government's New Towns Scheme, and oppose any attempt by the Government to introduce a new town within the district of North Hertfordshire.
2. that the Leader of the Council writes to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government calling on the Government to:
  - 2.1 not increase the Housing Target for North Hertfordshire.
  - 2.2 restore the Urban Uplift, ensuring cities and urban areas take their fair share of housing development, particularly as many of these areas already have the infrastructure to support additional development.
  - 2.3 ensure infrastructure to support approved development is built prior to houses, thereby reducing the negative impact of development on existing communities, and ensuring local infrastructure is ready to provide for residents moving into new homes.
  - 2.4 adopt a brownfield first approach to development, and provide greater protection for green belt land in North Hertfordshire.
  - 2.5 not to amend paragraph 11(d) of the 2023 NPPF, which currently provides protection for North Hertfordshire as a local authority that has recently adopted a local plan but does not have a five-year housing land supply.
  - 2.6 strengthen the rights of local residents to ensure they have a meaningful say when development is proposed within their communities.
  - 2.7 not remove the emphasis and focus on 'beauty' and 'beautiful design' from the National Planning Policy Framework.
3. that the Leader of the Council writes to the Member of Parliament for Hitchin, the Member of Parliament for North East Hertfordshire and the Member of Parliament for Stevenage highlighting the opposition of Council to the Government's proposed planning reforms and housing targets, urging them to stand up against these proposals which would have a detrimental impact on residents and communities across North Hertfordshire.

Proposed by: Councillor Ralph Muncer

Seconded by: Councillor David Barnard