

MATTER 3 HOUSING TARGET

Two New Government Reports Relating to Inspectors' Questions for Examination Part 2 [ID19] of the South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse Joint Local Plan 2041

***Dr Roberts, Chair of Board of Directors
Bioabundance Community Interest Company***

15th June 2026

Q3.10 ARE THE RESPECTIVE HOUSING REQUIREMENTS JUSTIFIED?

Absolutely not. They are far too high. But we have lost all hope.

We know that you, Inspectors, will push for more and more and more houses. There is no respite from the rapaciousness of building companies and the GDP-greedy Government Treasury.

And we, here, are left to pick up the pieces. We face a degraded ecosystem, danger from fires, increased flooding, our Thames turned into a sewer, and a collapsing social infrastructure (insufficient GPs, school-places, social services, public transport; overwhelmed hospitals, and so on). We can't even keep up with the pot-holes!

Still here goes, this is why the housing numbers are too high:

- 1) The homes are not needed. There is more housing per person in this country than there has ever been. Our districts were growing slowly, according to Office for National Statistics projections, and we were forced to accept a Plan in 2020 to build 4 homes for every one that could be filled. This, due (explicitly) to Government wanting to extract Gross Value Added, changing the face of our districts and bringing in people from elsewhere.
- 2) Development does not benefit local people. The homes are a magnet for those priced out of London. And look at London! Streets of empty homes used as uninhabited money-boxes and annual weekend retreats by obscenely rich foreign nationals. Foreign nationals are 'investing' also in our districts, in new housing relentlessly advertised abroad, again for use as money-boxes, or to rent out. We are becoming bond slaves to overseas buyers.
- 3) The price of homes has not dropped. We have built more homes in South Oxfordshire than anywhere else in the country; yet the cost to income ratio has gone up from 7:1 to 12:1. It is well understood that building homes does not bring their price down in a near infinite market.
- 4) The housing targets are undeliverable. Planners have done their best to spread out the top-down target, over time. But developers will not build at the speed required for us to satisfy the 5-year housing land supply (5y HLS: maintaining 5-years-worth of projected building-out to meet housing targets). Indeed the 2020 plan, forced upon South Oxfordshire by Central Government and found 'sound and deliverable' by Inspector Bore, failed the 5y HLS rule *within just 6 months!* We lost land in an Area of Outstanding Beauty in Sonning Common and an ancient forest in Didcot. And so it goes on. Developers *do not build* when the market stalls, and it is stalling now. Will you, Inspectors, follow Inspector Bore's example and create a Wild West Bonanza for developers? We expect you will.
- 5) Our sewers cannot take more development. Thousands of the homes in South Oxfordshire's Plan would feed into the Oxford Sewer, condemned by the Environment Agency and operating illegally.

- 6) There is nowhere left to build in South Oxfordshire. We know this because the Environment Agency approved development at Bayswater Brook, despite their initial objections i) sewage would enter the illegal Oxford Sewer and ii) high flood-risk. There is a stepped approach to high flood-risk which of course you know about. The final step is 'if there's nowhere else for the housing to go, go ahead and build it there'. This final step was passed. It means there was nowhere else in South Oxfordshire to build. So how come more housing is proposed?
- 7) If we wanted to house Oxford's unhoused in new buildings, we would not be building executive housing and splayed-out estates. We would build tasteful, campus-style, four-storey blocks with individual units, accommodated within Oxford.
- 8) There is no mandate from the people to develop our districts as a New Helsinki, Singapore or Silicon Valley envisaged by Central Government (see Q2.1). We did not agree to the destruction of farming and nature for GDP growth. Liberal Democrats and Greens voted in by us to protect our rural way of life and stop urban sprawl, were overruled.
- 9) Greenhouse gas emissions from development are huge, and nature is always destroyed as concrete covers the land. Ours is one of the most nature-depleted countries in the world (insects, and much of the rest of our wildlife, have all but vanished). Government reports from 2025 alert us to the National Security Crisis here in the UK, from ecosystem collapse and climate breakdown (see Q5.3)

Bioabundance Community Interest Company includes MPs, councillors at all levels of local government, parish councils (eleven), community action groups, planners, academics, ecologists, and climate scientists. We have over 250 groups and individuals focused on restoring nature, and mitigating and adapting to climate change. We work for the restoration of Oxfordshire's nature to its best state since 1970, and for the wellbeing of current and future generations.