

1. This Council notes:

1.1 The recent confirmation by the Government that it intends to put into law the proposals set out in the White Paper entitled 'Planning for the Future' and dated 6 August 2020 which set out proposed reforms to the planning process for the future;

1.2. That the vast majority of planning applications are given the go ahead by local authority planning committees, with permission granted to around 9 out of 10 applications;

1.3. That research by the Local Government Association has said that there are existing planning permissions for more than one million homes that have not yet been started.

2. This Council is concerned that the government planning proposals seek to:

2.1. Reduce or remove the right of residents to object to applications near them;

2.2 Grant automatic rights to developers to build on land identified as 'for growth' through a Government algorithm imposing up to 26,000 additional new homes (over a 20 year Plan period or 1,231 per year according to Lichfields consultancy) on our District without consultation;

2.3. Remove locally generated and approved Section 106 payments for infrastructure associated with developments and their replacement with a centralised national levy.

3. This Council Further Notes:

3.1. The Town and Country Planning Association has commented that these proposals "will undermine local democracy, marginalise local councils and fail to achieve high quality places" and the Royal Institute of British Architects has called these proposals 'shameful and which will do almost nothing to guarantee delivery of affordable, well-designed and sustainable homes'. The RIBA also commented that these proposals could even lead to the next generation of slum housing;

3.2. These proposed planning reforms are opposed by the all-party Local Government Association, which incidentally is currently led by Conservative Councillors.

4. This Council Believes:

4.1. That the existing planning procedures, as currently administered by our own team in Somerset West and Taunton Council, allow for local democratic control over future development, and give local people a voice in commenting on and objecting to planning proposals which affect them;

4.2. That proposals for automatic rights to build in 'growth' areas through a zoning process, and increased permitted development rights, risk largely unregulated development and unsustainable communities;

4.3. That local communities must remain key partners in shaping the future of their communities, and that local determination of the planning framework and the fair and open local consideration of planning applications play an important part in this process.

5. This Council resolves to:

1. Write to and lobby both of the District's Members of Parliament, urging them to strongly oppose these proposals and to publish the replies received from them;

2. Highlight its concerns over these proposals with the public and local residents who will be affected.