

Campaigners' mixed reactions to proposed housing targets

by **STEPHEN LLOYD**
 steve.lloyd@trinitymirror.com
 Twitter: @FleetNandM

PROPOSED new housing targets are good news for Hart, Rushmoor and Surrey Heath, a campaign group claims.

The government has published a consultation, Planning for the Right Homes in the Right Places, on its proposals to simplify the calculation of housing need across the country.

"The good news is that this new methodology, if adopted, will result in a significant reduction in Hart housing need," said David Turver of We Heart Hart. "There are also reductions for Rushmoor and Surrey Heath."

Mr Turver said that if government proposals were adopted, Hart's overall housing target would drop from 8,022 to 6,132 new homes.

Rushmoor's target would be cut by 2,982 homes to 6,174, while Surrey Heath's target would reduce by 630 to 7,392.

"Taken together, these reductions are very welcome and reduce the risk that Hart will be forced to take any overspill from Surrey Heath," said Mr Turver.

He added the new targets would mean that proposed new settlements at Murrell Green, between Hartley Wintney and Hook, at Winch-

field, and at Rye Common between Crondall and Odiham, would not be needed.

"Overall, we think that if these proposals are adopted, it is very good news for Hart, Rushmoor and Surrey Heath," said Mr Turver. "The new Hart housing need would be very achievable and would save many of our precious green fields that are under threat.

"We would urge people to respond to the government's consultation and give it their support.

"We also expect the council to set to work immediately to revise the draft Local Plan to take account of these new developments.

"This should be easy. They are already planning for far more houses than we need, so striking out the controversial green field developments should be a relatively simple task."

However, the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) Hampshire fears the proposed new housing figures are set to have a significant impact on Hampshire and could put at risk the vital role of protecting the countryside.

While the charity believes more homes are urgently needed to meet Hampshire's housing needs, it says the priority focus must be on affordability and location.

Edward Dawson, a CPRE



David Turver from We Heart Hart and Tristram Carey of Winchfield Action Group with a map of Hart district and the areas under threat of development

Hampshire trustee, said: "We think the new numbers are helpful in some areas of Hampshire but potentially damaging in others.

"Parts of southern Hampshire will be expected to take

higher numbers and this extends into east Hampshire. To the north, parts of Basingstoke and Deane will be given an increase from the current 850 houses a year to 974.

"This would mean exten-

sion of development into sensitive rural areas and villages.

"Other areas, like Hart and Rushmoor, will see some relief and it may kill the idea of a new town there for years to come."