

Dear Councillor

Oxford City Council is currently consulting on its future housing needs. I will respond to the consultation but also wanted you to be aware of my views as I believe the City's approach could also have huge consequences for our own District.

If these figures are to be challenged, then our local authorities must act NOW, otherwise they are likely to dictate housing numbers across the whole of Oxfordshire.

Oxford's preferred scenario, based on work done by Cambridge Econometrics (CE), would expect to see Oxfordshire's population growing by nearly 27% by 2040, compared to Office for National Statistics estimates of a UK population increase of less than 5%.

I do not believe this to be either realistic or desirable. I note that previous projections by CE have already been shown to be over-optimistic and this would assume carrying on recent high rates of growth consistently over the next 20 years. It would put immense pressure on our local environment and infrastructure. It would also undermine the Levelling Up agenda as it is not based on providing jobs for existing residents but on creating new jobs to attract people in from elsewhere.

The priority should be the provision of social housing (for rent or purchase) to meet existing need, not seeking to generate additional need.

In light of our climate and biodiversity emergencies, I support Need not Greed Oxfordshire's calls for a precautionary approach to housing growth, based on the Government's Standard Methodology figures or less, rather than the arbitrary growth projections of a single firm of consultants.

I understand the Council will be putting in a response to this consultation and I would support a robust challenge to the City's approach.