

Planning Myths Debunked

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CLASH
Campaign by Locals Against Sewell Housing



Fiction!

"The Government house building targets are mandatory."

FACT!

Government targets have never been mandatory. Michael Gove's written statement to Parliament of 5 December 2022 states that the government's housing need figures are "*an advisory starting point, a guide that is not mandatory*". Current targets are based on outdated population forecasts from 2014 and overstate housing need by over 75%.

Fiction!

"If St Albans doesn't meet government targets, Whitehall will step in, take control of the local plan and force us to build on the green belt."

FACT!

Under planning legislation, government can intervene in the Local Plan process. However, where ministers have done this, it has been to censure, not take control.

Fiction!

"Taking away Green Belt and building more houses on the periphery of St Albans will make housing more affordable for key workers and first-time buyers."

FACT!

The housing market is not a simple 'supply & demand' model in highly desirable locations like St Albans. Supply is controlled by a small number of house builders, who manage delivery to maintain high prices and profits, and, in any case, the properties built are not normally affordable for key workers and first-time buyers.

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www.savenorthstalbangreenbelt.org

SAVE NORTH ST ALBANS GREEN BELT

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Fiction!

If we don't build on the green belt, St Albans centre will be overrun by too many flats and high-rise developments. Building on Green Belt will reduce urban development

FACT!

Developers prefer greenfield sites because they are easier and more profitable to develop, not because they are actually what is needed. It makes sense to build where amenities and good transport links already exist; this will reduce local car journeys and so reduce congestion, pollution and emissions. This means brownfield (previously used) sites in existing built-up areas. But such development needn't be high-rise, and needn't increase the density excessively if done imaginatively.

Fiction!

Councillors must not interfere with the preparation of the local plan by council officers and should not engage with residents' groups to avoid perceived bias. They shouldn't make statements about the local plan and the use of green belt land so as to avoid accusation of predetermination.

FACT!

Officers and councillors should work in partnership to produce a Local Plan. Council officers, as planning professionals, need to ensure that legal requirements are met, that the plan is technically sound and that due process and procedure are followed. However, councillors can and should steer and guide the strategic direction.

The Full Council will need to approve the plan and can reject it: Councillors will own the Plan as much as officers. Councillors must, therefore, engage with their local residents as either individuals or with recognised organisations. This doesn't have to be through formal public consultation. Residents will be asked to comment formally at set stages during plan development.

www.savenorthstalbansgreenbelt.org

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