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PRESS RELEASE: Alarm over ‘ridiculously high’ housing targets for Lewes district

Planning chief hears countryside campaigners’ concerns over unsustainable housing numbers.

Countryside campaigners raised the alarm about the impact of government housing targets on rural districts at a packed meeting in Lewes.

Members of the CPRE Sussex Lewes branch were joined by Cllr Laurence O'Connor, Lewes District Council cabinet member for planning, at their annual general meeting on Monday (17 July).

They said ‘undeliverable’ government targets were imposing unsustainable housing numbers on the district and were leading to the ‘exact opposite’ of levelling up.

John Kay, planning lead for the CPRE Sussex Lewes District group, said: “I would like to thank Cllr O'Connor for joining us and hearing our concerns. Rural districts like Lewes are being given ridiculously high housing targets because of the use of the flawed ‘standard method’ algorithm and the government’s insistence on using obsolete population projections. A developer-led approach to housing delivery is leading to a focus on car-dependent greenfield development. Meanwhile, sustainable urban brownfield sites in Lewes and Newhaven languish derelict for decades.”

CPRE Sussex wants local communities to have a greater say in deciding where new housing should go in their area.

The charity also wants to see local plans prioritising the types of housing needed to alleviate the housing crisis rather than just focusing on numbers.

Dr Kay said: “The housing crisis is primarily due to the acute shortage of affordable-rented housing. Market-rented housing and opportunities for first time buyers are also in short supply. Many people living in under-occupied large houses would happily step down if high quality, sustainably-located housing was on offer. Yet, none of this is currently being delivered as a priority. The market will not act on its own, we need to give local communities back their power.”

Find out more about how the CPRE Sussex Lewes District group is fighting for sustainable development at cpresussex.org.uk/lewes

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For press inquiries and interview opportunities contact sheena.journalism@gmail.com.

Notes for editors:

cpresussex.org.uk

About CPRE Sussex

CPRE Sussex is shaping a greener future for Sussex. Our priorities are:

- Beautiful landscapes, rich in nature and greener towns and cities
- Countryside and green spaces which are accessible to all, enriching lives and health
- Sustainable development for thriving communities
- Effective responses to the climate emergency

We engage with decision makers, influencing them and challenging them to protect the Sussex countryside and green spaces. We inform on environmental issues and empower individuals and communities with robust evidence to defend and enhance the green spaces they love. We believe in collaborating with others to ensure a greener future for our county. We research and provide advice on planning issues. Together we can shape a greener future for Sussex.