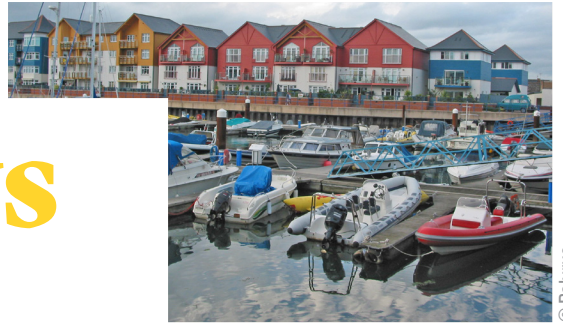


South West planning news

NOVEMBER 2017



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Headline news

Draft Publication Joint Spatial Plan for West of England Combined Authority published

The Draft Publication Joint Spatial Plan (JSP) for the West of England, published for consideration by the area's Joint Committee on 30 October, has been recommended for consultation. The document contains the policies to be considered during the final round of public consultation (Regulation 19). The consultation will be held from 22 November 2017 to 10 January 2018. Subject to any minor revisions, the Plan will then be submitted in March, with an examination in mid-2018.

Local news

Spaceport Cornwall gains investor interest

The Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) is reporting strong investor interest in proposals for a spaceport at Newquay Cornwall Airport. A trade mission to North America visited similar projects in New Mexico and California and met with a series of potential investors. The LEP is leading a bid to establish a spaceport at Newquay Cornwall Airport, in response to a Government drive to have a commercial launch facility in the UK by 2020.

LICHFIELDS

Exeter bus station redevelopment back on track

Councillors in Exeter have endorsed progressing the long-awaited redevelopment of the city's bus station site. The site is intended for a major new leisure complex, as well as a bus station, but its redevelopment has been delayed since The Crown Estate withdrew from plans in September this year.

The Council now intends to re-tender for a contractor next spring, with the intention for work to begin in winter 2018. Political support for the project is very strong, with councillors anticipating a mixed-use development including residential, offices, retail and public open space. The bus station is due to close in February next year.

Changes to local authority housing needs in the South West

DCLG's proposed new standardised methodology for assessing housing need, set out in 'Planning for the right homes in the right places', was released for consultation in mid-September. The consultation on the draft methodology ends on 9 November 2017.

The standardised methodology allocates housing need directly to authorities; the formula is based on household projections and an affordability ratio which seeks to boost housing numbers in the most expensive areas, as opposed to median incomes.

Under the proposed formula, total housing need in the South West would be 27,049 per annum, an increase of 1,919 in comparison to adopted local plan figures and equivalent to an increase of 11%. The biggest increases in comparison to current dwelling stock would be in the West of England Combined Authorities' area, the 'M5 corridor', rural Devon and wider Bournemouth. Areas experiencing a drop against their current adopted figures include Plymouth, Swindon, Taunton Deane and East Devon. ►►

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QUOTE OF THE MONTH



The Prime Minister outlined her plans to increase housing supply which means developers, big and small, local authorities and housing associations all stepping up to play their part.

Downing Street spokesperson, referring to Theresa May's meeting with housing stakeholders on 17 October, 2017

THE LICHFIELDS PERSPECTIVE

The release of the Regulation 19 Draft Publication Joint Spatial Plan for the West of England marks the next milestone in the preparation of this strategically important document. Whilst more detail is provided on the various 'Strategic Development Locations' in this iteration, the overall housing numbers remain unchanged – a cause for concern across the area's development industry.

Andrew Cockett, Senior Director

CONTACT US

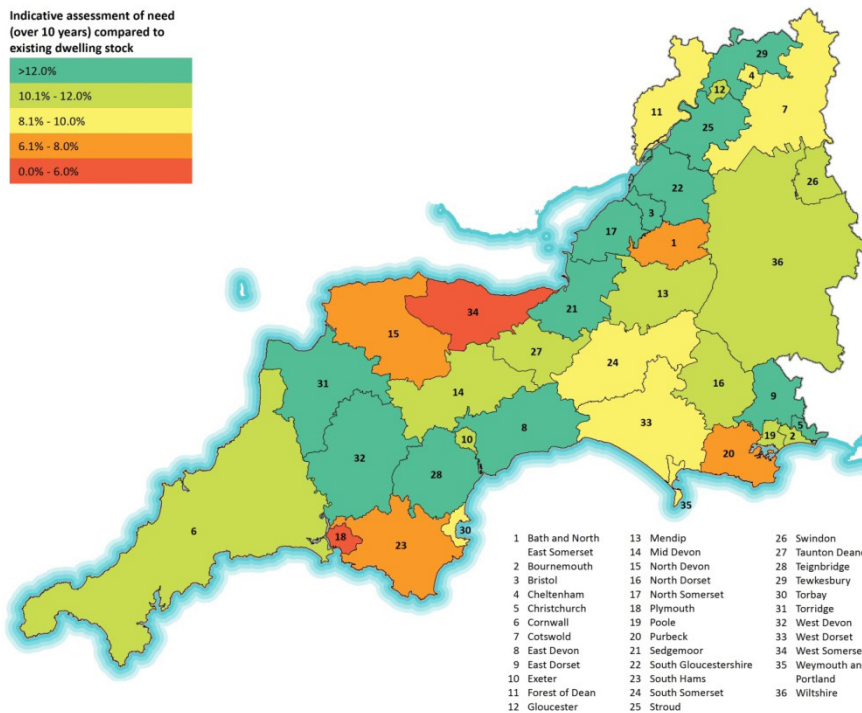
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Figure I: Indicative Assessment of Need in Comparison to Existing Dwelling Stock



Bristol city region mayor undecided on drawing up own plan

Commenting at Mipim UK on how from May 2018 he will have the power to produce his own spatial development plan for the city region, West of England Mayor Tim Bowles was reported as saying that a decision on whether to produce a mayoral spatial plan would not be taken until the four West of England councils' JSP had been finalised.

National news

Prime Minister's discussion with stakeholders on how to increase housing supply

On 17 October, Prime Minister Theresa May met with a variety of stakeholders in the house building industry, together with representatives of local government, to discuss 'achieving a step change in the delivery of new homes'.

Described afterwards by No.10 as 'a positive and collaborative meeting', the Prime Minister took the same approach as the Housing White Paper – one of explaining the Government's policy line and its range of actions intended to boost supply, and in return, the expectation of housebuilders playing their part and turning these proposals into reality.

Recent Government measures that were discussed included the additional funding for Help to Buy and the further £2 billion for affordable housing, both announced at the time of the Conservative Party Conference and reported in full in last month's Lichfields' Housing News.

20% application fee rise and new fees for PDR prior approvals

After some delay and as referred to in the February 2017 Housing White Paper, draft amendment regulations providing for a 20% increase in planning application fees in England have been laid before Parliament.

The Town and Country Planning (Fees for Applications, Deemed Applications, Requests and Site Visits) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2017 will come into force once approved by resolution of both Houses of Parliament; the actual date will be 'on the 28th day after the day on which they are made'. The new rules are expected to be in force before the end of the year.

The amendment Regulations will introduce:

- a fee for applications for permission in principle (£402 for each 0.1 hectare of site area) – the necessary secondary legislation for being able to make such applications has not yet been laid/made;
- Mayoral development corporations and urban development corporations being able to charge for giving pre-application advice;
- a planning application fee where there is an article 4 direction in force, withdrawing permitted development rights (PDRs) or where PDRs have been withdrawn by a planning permission condition; and
- a fee of £96 for prior approval processes for various PDRs that have been in force since April.

The Housing White Paper (para. 2.15) outlined that this nationally set planning fee increase would be only for those local authorities that committed to investing the additional fee income in their planning departments. DCLG's Simon Gallagher wrote to council chief executives to this effect in February this year, requiring also 'that existing baseline and income assumptions' would 'not be adjusted down as a result during this Parliament'. According to a recently published Government response to a House of Commons DCLG Committee report (on the house building industry's capacity), 'all 366 local planning authorities (LPAs) have agreed to ring fence the additional income' (see page 11 of the Response). ■