

Wiltshire and BANES leaders clash over housing targets

11th October

BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET COUNCIL WILTSHIRE COUNCIL LOCAL GOVERNMENT
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The leader of Wiltshire Council has accused Liberal Democrat-led Bath and North East Somerset Council (BANES) of “buck-passing” when it comes to housing targets.

Cllr Richard Clewer has strongly criticised the call from the leader of BANES for a regional cross boundary approach, which would allow Bath’s housing targets to go beyond local authority boundaries.

According to Cllr Clewer, this is “thinly veiled NIMBYism of the worst kind”, but BANES leader Cllr Kevin Guy has argued that he is “simply asking for a dose of realism” and suggested that Cllr Clewer is engaging in “petty, party-political point scoring”.

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housing crisis.

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The government is aiming to build 1.5 million more homes in the next five years. *(Image: Getty)*

Cllr Clewer said: “Unfortunately, we have seen time and again by the Liberal Democrats who control BANES Council that the solution to the problems they face is to pass the buck to Wiltshire.

“Instead of fighting the government’s planning reforms which unfairly increase the housing target for rural communities while letting London off the hook, they are instead calling for a more flexible ‘regional cross boundary’ approach.

“This is thinly veiled NIMBYism of the worst kind.

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“After failing to even build to the much lower targets of the previous government, Bath’s Liberal Democrats are effectively trying to get neighbouring authorities such as Wiltshire to take some of

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12:20 PM · Oct 9, 2024



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He added: "As we have seen with the figures in recent years with the closure of Cleveland Bridge

is to make Wiltshire residents pay the price for their policy failures.

“Wiltshire residents are not fools.

“The Liberal Democrats went into the 2024 general election promising to build 380,000 new homes a year across the country – 80,000 more than the new Labour government – yet local Lib Dems are now desperately trying to avoid the logic of their own policies and build those houses anywhere else but next door to where they live.”

Cllr Kevin Guy responded: “The Lib Dems are committed to tackling the housing crisis and we welcome the government’s renewed focus on this issue.

“We are already demonstrating our commitment to delivering good quality homes in B&NES.

“We have worked with key anchor institutions to form a dedicated Housing Mission Delivery Board and we’re directly delivering new homes, including affordable and social housing.

“Responsible councils have a duty to their residents to ensure that new homes serve local needs and are built in sustainable locations, with the infrastructure and services needed to build successful communities.

“In our response to government, we’re simply asking for a dose of realism.

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“The annual housing target for B&NES has been doubled.

“This crude target doesn’t recognise the unique circumstance of Bath’s World Heritage Site status and doesn’t come with any clear commitment to address affordability, infrastructure and skills shortages.

“Government requires neighbouring authorities to cooperate, and we stand ready to work in partnership with our colleagues in the region.

“This is such an important opportunity to make sure the right homes are delivered in the right places.

“We can’t risk squandering it with petty, party-political point scoring.”

In the letter Cllr Kevin Guy wrote to the Deputy Prime Minister responding to the new housing

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He noted that he still welcomed the government’s commitment to tackling the housing crisis .

Cllr Clewer was vocal in his opposition to the new housing targets when they were announced in

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