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# **The Letwin Review: an update**

**Andrew Down  
South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse  
District Councils**

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## Overview

- Purpose of review:
  - Analyse gap between housing completions and land allocated or permissioned (stage 1)
  - Make recommendations for closing the gap (stage 2)
- Draft analysis published June 2018
  - Reported to Growth Board July 2018
- Final report published October 2018
- HM Government response expected February 2019

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## Findings of draft analysis

- Clear negative relationship between size of site and the percentage built out every year
- Delivery rate is constrained by the developer's ability to sell at the price forecast when land was acquired
- Low build-out rates linked to homogeneity of product on large sites
- Absorption rates can be increased if different housing products are provided
- Greater range of markets => greater range of customers

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## Recommendations of final report

- Government to introduce new planning rules for larger sites (suggested definition: over 1,500 units) in areas of high demand:
  - Require a diversity of offerings
  - Establish a national expert committee to advise on diversity requirements and arbitrate between local authorities and developers at appeal
  - Make future Government funding dependent on acceptance of S106 agreement conforming to new policy
  - Consider establishing a large sites viability fund

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## Longer term recommendations

- Powers for local planning authorities in high demand areas to designate large sites through local plans:
  - Master plan to ensure diversity \*
  - Design code \*
  - Powers of compulsory purchase at rates reflecting the required diversity
  - Powers to control the development through either of:
    - Local Development Company
    - Local Authority Master Planner

*\* Oxfordshire authorities are already doing these things*

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## What does this mean for Oxfordshire?

- Now
  - Assess current build-out rates in the county \*
  - Use Oxfordshire Plan 2050 and local plan processes to consider the range of housing types and tenures offered
  - Increase coordination of planning policy across the county
  - Work with large site owners and developers to maximise diversity of the offering and increase build-out rates \*
  - Continue to work with Homes England to develop strategic sites
  - Make the most of the opportunities afforded by the Oxfordshire housing and growth deal to accelerate housing delivery

*\* Oxfordshire authorities are already doing these things*

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## What does this mean for Oxfordshire?

- Future
  - Explore options for practical responses in Oxfordshire (e.g. through the Executive Officer Group)
    - Oxfordshire is a high demand area with serious problems of affordability
    - How could we use the new powers if they do materialise?
  - Take any and every opportunity to influence national reform of planning policy
  - Establish / confirm credibility by delivering our commitments in the Oxfordshire housing and growth deal
  - Build on our already good relationships with Homes England and MHCLG