# Gloucestershire County Council's Vision for 23,000 New Homes Sparks Debate in the Cotswolds



A leaked document has revealed Gloucestershire County Council's long-term vision to build 23,000 homes in a proposed development linking Cirencester and Kemble in the Cotswolds. The vision, developed since 2020, aims to address the county's housing needs with new garden towns facilitating the construction of 142,000 homes by 2051. Cotswold District Council's Liberal Democrat leader, Joe Harris, has strongly condemned the plans, suggesting they could lead to a new city akin to Milton Keynes and negatively impact the Cotswolds' unique landscape.

The document, shared among the county's district council leaders, indicates a strategy to nearly double the housing stock in the Cotswolds, currently around 38,000 homes. Councillor Harris criticized the plan's lack of transparency and potential strain on infrastructure while advocating for small-scale, sustainable development on brownfield sites.

On the other hand, Gloucestershire County Council's Conservative leader, Mark Hawthorne, clarified that the document was intended to stimulate discussions on strategic spatial planning and emphasized that the final decision on housing locations would rest with district councils. He noted the county council's role in collaborating on transport issues.

The debate also coincides with national political discussions on housing. Labour's deputy leader, Angela Rayner, has announced plans to build new towns as part of her party’s housing strategy, drawing criticism from the Conservatives over her involvement given an ongoing police investigation into her past housing arrangements. Rayner aims to hold developers accountable for quality and sustainability in housing projects, contrasting Labour's proactive stance with what they describe as inadequate Conservative housing policies.