# Bristol developers call for 60,000 new homes as city faces housing crisis



Developers have proposed that Bristol needs to construct 60,000 new homes over the next two decades, significantly more than the current forecast of 34,650 homes outlined in the city's Local Plan. This assertion emerged during a second day of public inquiry into Bristol's planning strategy, as officials from Bristol City Council faced scrutiny from a government planning inspector and various property developers.

The inquiry is part of an extensive seven-week examination into the Local Plan, which sets out the framework for future development across the city. Presently, the city's housing demand is based on an outdated assessment methodology that suggests an annual target of 3,380 homes. However, recent changes introduced by the government have established a lower annual target of 1,925 homes. Michael Wilberforce, a planning policy officer with the council, acknowledged the uncertainty surrounding these figures, noting, “some numbers seem to be missing,” during early discussions regarding critical data points.

Much of the debate centred around the implications of these housing targets for future urban development in Bristol, especially in terms of the physical capacity for new homes in the area. Developers argued that the city is not only falling short of meeting its housing needs but that increasing the targets may require taller apartment structures or the use of greenfield sites on the city periphery—scenarios that could provoke local opposition.

Colin Chapman, the deputy head of planning at Bristol City Council, emphasised the necessity for updated methodologies in determining housing needs, stating, “the government has said the old methodology wasn’t correct.”

At the same time, the proposal for new student accommodation in the city has sparked considerable debate. Developers suggested that the Local Plan cap on purpose-built student accommodation (PBSA) should be lifted to alleviate pressure from the general housing market. These sentiments were echoed by Matthew Good, representing the construction firm Watkin Jones, who expressed concern over the council’s limitations, asking, “why would we want to apply a cap to that type of accommodation?”.

Amidst plans for new developments, there are rising concerns from the local community regarding the impact of increasing student populations. The number of students in Bristol has surged by 42% in recent years, contributing to rising rents and housing shortages for long-term residents. Michael Orr from the University of Bristol highlighted the struggles faced by vulnerable tenants, noting that students often outbid housing benefit recipients in a competitive rental market.

In a separate but related development, a contentious proposal for a ten-storey student housing block in Redcliffe has been met with strong public opposition. The project involves replacing existing office space with a C-shaped building housing 282 students, including features such as communal areas and a gym. The Bristol Civic Society has raised concerns regarding overdevelopment and the adequacy of the design, particularly in terms of privacy and the potential for antisocial behaviour in the area.

Critics within the community have voiced fears that plans for more student accommodation come at the expense of local residents' needs. Social media commentary reflects a sentiment of frustration regarding the direction of housing policy in Bristol, with notable comments questioning the long-term sustainability of such developments in light of potential fluctuations in student populations.

As Bristol grapples with the dual challenge of accommodating its educational institutions' needs while addressing an ongoing housing crisis, the outcome of the inquiry and planned developments will undoubtedly shape the city's landscape for years to come. The Local Plan continues to be a focal point for discussions involving the future of housing in Bristol, encompassing both student and general housing requirements.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.bristol247.com/news-and-features/news/developers-slam-councils-plan-for-35000-homes/> - This article supports the claim that developers are criticizing Bristol City Council's plan for 34,650 new homes, arguing it may not meet the city's housing needs. It also mentions the ongoing public inquiry into the Local Plan.
* <https://www.thebusinessdesk.com/south-west/news/13065-bristol-needs-to-build-more-than-6000-new-homes-in-next-two-decades> - This article corroborates the assertion that Bristol needs to build more than 60,000 new homes over the next two decades to meet the city's housing needs.
* <https://democracy.bristol.gov.uk/documents/s80015/Housing%20Delivery%20-%20Project%201000%20Update.pdf> - This document supports the claim that Bristol City Council has ambitious targets for housing delivery, including the One City Plan's goal of 60,000 new homes by 2050.
* <https://www.bristol247.com/news-and-features/news/developers-slam-councils-plan-for-35000-homes/> - This article highlights the debate around the Local Plan's housing targets and the implications for urban development in Bristol, including potential use of greenfield sites.
* <https://democracy.bristol.gov.uk/documents/s80015/Housing%20Delivery%20-%20Project%201000%20Update.pdf> - This document provides context on Bristol City Council's efforts to address the housing crisis through initiatives like Project 1000, aiming to deliver 1,000 affordable homes annually.
* <https://www.bristol247.com/news-and-features/news/developers-slam-councils-plan-for-35000-homes/> - This article discusses concerns about student accommodation and its impact on the general housing market in Bristol, echoing sentiments from developers and community members.