

What is the impact of unsustainable targets on sustainable development?

More and more local council's are increasing their housing target to what could be described as unsustainable levels. Is this a waste of resources?

Do approvals match delivery?

Whilst numerous housing applications are *approved*, the actual number of houses *delivered* in many authorities, historically and frequently falls far, far below the approval's granted. This means the much needed homes we need are not built.

One local authority we have been looking at with an historic 250 target shows that from 2005 to 2012 the average delivery was 179. Whilst the proposed target in the new draft local plan was originally recommended at a more sustainable, deliverable figure of 180, it has recently been increased by almost 50%. Is this sustainable?

If unsustainable targets are set by local authorities, those parts of the local plan dealing with housing and allocations become void - meaning areas where housing was not planned become vulnerable to development and sustainable development becomes unsustainable. Our environment and the local people pay a hefty price for this.

Sustainable is a much used word - interpreted in many ways! Let's take a look at sustainable in terms of development:

In 1987 The Brundtland Report was published by Oxford University. The report deals with sustainability. The report looks at with planet earth not just one area. Why? Because someone needed to examine a global concern about:

'the accelerating deterioration of the human environment and natural resources and the consequences of that deterioration for economic and social development'

That seems to read as - we're really worried that there won't be any planet left to feed or home the population of the world if we are not careful.

Mr Brundtland definition of sustainable seems logical, succinct and quite simple to understand - logical and fair which is what planning should be all about.

So - development is necessary, we all accept that but Brundtland takes it further and states *it is about balancing human needs with the protection of the natural environment for ever.*

No one can disagree with Brundtland's definition of sustainability. The key word here is balancing!

If we add Brundtland's report to Hillary Benn's speech to the Oxford Farming Conference in January 2010 then we can understand more about sustainability.

Britain needs to grow more food whilst using less water and reducing greenhouse gas emissions to respond to growing world population, he stated.

The government produced the Food 2030 report which clearly states that food and farming play a key role fighting climate changes and a nation's health. Intensive farming systems are reliant on high oil and chemical inputs, which are neither sustainable nor resilient to likely future shocks, such as global price rises. The solution lies in sustainable mixed and agro-ecological farming, and encouraging citizens to eat locally, seasonally and organically.

The Campaign for the Farmed Environment takes it further by adding they are producing a wealth of ideas on how farmers can help increase biodiversity and protect valuable resources. Their training events aim to train agronomists in wildlife friendly farming methods.

So in short - with the Brundtland report and Food 2030 we are saying we need to sustainably develop the country in a way that looks after this and future generations - we must not rape and pillage the agricultural land we have. Before we develop agricultural land in any way we must examine the need and ensure that housing numbers in local plans are SUSTAINABLE themselves in order to achieve our sustainable development for this generation and the next and the next.