Update for King's Sutton residents: West Northamptonshire housing land supply and the emerging Local Plan

King's Sutton Parish Council briefing note

Purpose of this update

King's Sutton Parish Council is issuing this briefing to inform residents of the latest position on housing land supply across West Northamptonshire and what it may mean for planning decisions affecting the village. The position is changing quickly, and it is important that residents understand both the immediate implications of the current housing land supply figure and the separate, longer-term implications of the emerging West Northamptonshire Local Plan.

Current five-year housing land supply position

West Northamptonshire Council is currently unable to demonstrate a full five-year housing land supply. The latest reported position is 4.3 years as of July 2026, which is below the national planning policy requirement for local planning authorities to show a deliverable supply of housing sites for the next five years.

In practical terms, West Northamptonshire Council has identified that one year of housing supply is equivalent to approximately 2,600 homes, or around 13,000 homes over five years. However, the Council has reported that only just over 10,000 homes can currently be evidenced as deliverable within the five-year period to 2031. This shortfall (when factored into the overall calculation methodology required) is the reason the authority's housing land supply is currently assessed at 4.3 years rather than five years or more.

What this means for planning decisions

Where a council cannot demonstrate a five-year housing land supply, national planning policy requires decision makers to apply what is commonly known as the "tilted balance". This means that planning applications for housing are more likely to be considered favourably unless the adverse impacts would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, or specific national policy protections indicate that development should be restricted.

The Parish Council notes that this position may increase the risk of speculative planning applications coming forward, including proposals outside existing settlement boundaries or on sites not previously identified for development. Each application must still be considered on its own merits, including highways, drainage, landscape, heritage, ecology, infrastructure and local amenity impacts, but the absence of a five-year supply changes the weight that may be given to housing delivery in the planning balance.

The emerging West Northamptonshire Local Plan

Separate from the immediate five-year housing land supply issue, West Northamptonshire Council is preparing a new Local Plan to guide development across the area up to 2043. The Regulation 18 consultation draft has been published and consulted upon, and the Council is now analysing responses before moving to the next stage of plan preparation.

The emerging plan identifies a minimum housing figure of 105 additional homes for King's Sutton. This figure is part of a wider distribution of growth across South Northamptonshire villages and the wider West Northamptonshire area. It is important to note that the Local Plan is not yet adopted, and the final figure and site-specific implications may change as the plan progresses through further consultation, evidence testing and examination.

What residents should take from this

- The current five-year housing land supply position is 4.3 years, meaning West Northamptonshire Council cannot currently show a full five-year supply.
- This may make it harder for the Council to resist some housing applications, particularly where the benefits of new housing are judged to outweigh local harm.
- The emerging Local Plan is a separate process and currently indicates that King's Sutton may be expected to accommodate at least 105 additional homes.
- The Parish Council will continue to monitor both planning applications and the Local Plan progress and will respond where appropriate on behalf of the village.
- Residents are encouraged to follow updates from West Northamptonshire Council and King's Sutton Parish Council, and to comment on planning applications or Local Plan consultations when opportunities arise.

Parish Council position

King's Sutton Parish Council recognises the need for appropriate housing, including affordable housing and homes for local people, but believes growth must be properly planned and supported by the infrastructure needed to serve the community. This includes safe roads, school and health capacity, drainage, utilities, public transport, environmental protection and the preservation of the character and setting of the village.

The Parish Council will keep residents informed as further information becomes available and will continue to press for transparency, proper evidence and meaningful engagement before decisions are made that affect King's Sutton.