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**WEST OXFORDSHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL**

27 July 2026

**Open Letter from the Leader of West Oxfordshire District Council
Housing Delivery Depends on National Infrastructure Investment**

As Leader of West Oxfordshire District Council, I want to reaffirm our commitment to delivering the homes that our communities need through a robust and evidence-based Local Plan.

Our emerging Regulation 19 Local Plan plans positively for growth. It identifies sites to meet housing needs, supports economic development, and seeks to ensure that development is accompanied by the infrastructure required to create sustainable communities.

However, there is one issue that lies beyond the powers of this Council.

Across West Oxfordshire, the capacity of the wastewater network and sewage treatment works presents a significant challenge to the delivery of new homes. Our updated evidence, including infrastructure planning and water cycle assessments, identifies where investment is likely to be required. What it cannot provide is certainty over when that investment will be delivered.

The Council has no statutory power to require a water company to invest, nor can we direct the timing of improvements to wastewater infrastructure. Those decisions depend upon national regulatory processes, investment programmes and funding approvals. This presents a clear national policy challenge.

Government rightly expects local planning authorities to plan for housing growth. West Oxfordshire is doing exactly that. Yet the successful delivery of that growth also depends upon timely investment by statutory infrastructure providers operating within national regulatory frameworks.

Without that investment, sites allocated through the Local Plan may face delays that are entirely outside the control of the Council, landowners or developers. The consequence is that housing delivery may not keep pace with planned allocations, despite the Council having fulfilled its responsibilities through the planning system.

We therefore call upon Government, regulators and infrastructure providers to work together to ensure that investment programmes support the housing ambitions set out in national policy.

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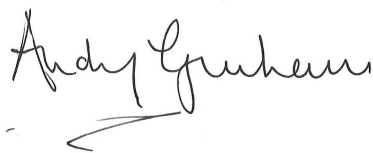
In particular, we ask that:

- wastewater infrastructure investment is aligned more closely with Local Plan housing requirements;
- funding and regulatory mechanisms enable timely investment where growth is planned;
- statutory infrastructure providers engage proactively with local planning authorities throughout the implementation of Local Plans; and
- Government recognises where housing delivery is constrained by nationally regulated infrastructure that local authorities cannot control.

West Oxfordshire District Council remains committed to working constructively with all partners to deliver sustainable growth. We will continue to engage positively with infrastructure providers and Government to help remove barriers to delivery.

Planning positively for homes is only one part of the solution. Delivering them requires the supporting infrastructure to be funded and built at the right time. If Government wishes local authorities to meet ambitious housing targets, it must ensure that the national infrastructure systems on which those homes depend are able to keep pace.

We stand ready to play our part. We now ask Government and our national infrastructure partners to play theirs.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Andy Graham'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the bottom.

COUNCILLOR ANDY GRAHAM
Leader of West Oxfordshire District Council