

South-East Hampshire Green Party -

Covering Fareham, Gosport, Havant,
Portsmouth, and Waterlooville

Green Party 

Real Progress

PRESS RELEASE: Thursday, May 12, 2005

LABOUR BRINGS ON THE BULLDOZERS WHILE THOUSANDS OF HOMES STAND EMPTY

SOUTH-EAST Hampshire Green Party is demanding that the Government brings thousands of empty homes back into use rather than smothering the South under concrete.

Former housing minister Keith Hill has suggested that 116,000 homes could be built between Portsmouth and Southampton in a resurrection of the "Solent City" plan that has haunted this area for years.

Andrea Claire Smith, press officer for South-East Hants Green Party, said: "People in this area do not want that scale of development. We feel this area is being developed to death.

"The scandal is that there are thousands of empty homes that could meet housing need in this area, but the Government is not doing enough to bring them into use. "Instead it is intent on building on a massive scale basically to provide homes for people attracted to London by the work available."

The Empty Homes Agency, a charity which works to bring vacant property back into use, has estimated that there are more than 10,702 homes that have been empty for more than six months in Hampshire - five times the number of homeless households in the county.

In East Hants, there are 643 properties; Eastleigh - 951, Fareham - 766, Havant - 840, New Forest - 1,416, Southampton - 2,448, Test Valley - 859, Winchester - 1,120. [1]

Andrea said: "Councils do work to bring empty homes, including private property, back into use, but typically they only have one empty homes officer per council. With councils in this area having hundreds of empty homes each, councils need at least two officers each working on the problem, which also blights surrounding homes." The Green Party also wants economic spread more evenly across the country so that people do not flock to London for work.

Andrea said: "Our economy is too reliant on London and the South-East and Labour's plan to make south Hampshire into a giant housing estate is a reflection of that. We need to tackle the root cause of the problem as well as the symptoms."

Ends

1. From the Empty Homes Agency:

www.emptyhomes.com/resources/factsfigures/homeless/sehome.htm

