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NEW TOWNS – A STRANGE MIX OF UNSUSTAINABLE SPRAWL AND URBAN REGENERATION SCHEMES WHICH AREN'T TOWNS

A report examining the New Towns Taskforce recommended sites for 12 new towns – finds them a strange mixture of the greenfield sprawl the Government wants to promote and existing urban regeneration proposals which local government could well progress alone.

The report by the Smart Growth UK coalition, [New Towns – The Taskforce's Strange Mixed Bag](#), looked at its 12 recommended sites. It found six are straightforward greenfield sprawl estates, which might one day become “new towns”, one is a big greenfield urban extension, and five are urban regeneration schemes which bear no relation to towns.

“The Taskforce decided that ‘new towns’ need not conform to any conventional definition of the term and repeated the myths that planning holds back building and that achieving targets would secure ‘growth’,” says the report. Its definition was simply a large, 10,000+ home development, but only in areas where growth is already strong.

The result is a mish-mash of large housing estates and existing urban regeneration projects or proposals. Nothing in their ideas undermines the conclusions of SGUK’s [first new towns report](#) last August that actual new settlements are the slowest, costliest and most destructive way of doing large-scale development.

The Government is expected to define a shortlist in the near future and says it hopes work will be underway on three of them by July 2029. As work is already underway on two or three of the schemes already, this is a remarkably low ambition.

The report contains statements by three of the campaigns fighting big urban sprawl proposals in their areas – the proposed new towns at Adlington, Chase Park & Crews Hill and Heyford Park.

Those three, along with the proposals at Marlcombe, “Milton Keynes Renewed Town”, Tempsford and “Wychavon Town” would involve large-scale destruction of productive farmland at a time the UK’s lack of food security is raising significant alarm.

The report also examined several other plans for large-scale, 10,000+ home estates and found them equally damaging.