

# Minister: No need to build on green belt

## Council leader says brownfield alone is not enough

**Ajay Nair**

[ajay.nair@archant.co.uk](mailto:ajay.nair@archant.co.uk)

The council leader has branded a minister's comments about not needing to build on the green belt "unhelpful".

Newly-appointed secretary of state for business, innovation and skills Sajid Javid made the comments on BBC Radio 4's *Today* programme on Friday.

He said: "There's no need to build on the green belt - there's plenty of land that's not green

belt that we can build on that is suitable for housing and we need to get on with it. We're creating a register of brownfield sites around the country that are suitable for housebuilding.

"What we're going to do now is go further and say that we will zone them for housing development - that means that those homes can get built a lot quicker."

Redbridge Council leader Cllr Jas Athwal said the borough's housing need would still not be met with brownfield sites alone,

in light of Oakfield Playing Fields, Forest Road, Barkingside, being earmarked for development.

"Mr Javid needs to be mindful of the unique characteristics of each area," he said.

"He obviously wants to make a mark but he needs to look at the population growth of Redbridge - it has to be managed."

The council leader said that the borough had more than 7,000 households in housing need in March.

Redbridge Council has looked at about 150 brownfield sites.

Commenting on the housing target set by Boris Johnson the leader added: "It's the left hand not being in kilter with the right hand."

Oakfields campaigners Kevin Page, of the London Green Belt Council, and Aldborough Hatch Defence Association chairman Ron Jeffries welcomed Mr Javid's comments.

Mr Jeffries said: "We have been saying it for some years, for we are aware that there are many brownfield sites in Redbridge that cry out for redevelopment."

### Sajid Javid said:

We're just not building enough homes. Last year we built 141,000 homes and a number of estimates say we need around 200,000 a year - and that's not just to meet people's aspirations, although that's hugely important. It's a need for a dynamic economy.

There's no need to build on the green belt - the green belt can rightly be protected.

I think we don't need to do that [build on green belt], yes we have lots of green belt in this country but it's very valuable and we need it.

We don't need to look at green belt.

