

Mr Chairman, councillors, ladies and gentlemen...

I'm honoured to be representing the 1,300 people who took the trouble to sign our petition - most of whom also wrote impassioned comments. The vast majority are from Bath, but there are many others from the UK and the rest of the world including America, New Zealand and Mexico - an indication that the preservation of Bath's green belt is of national and international interest.

I'm also representing the South of Bath Alliance which provides a voice for the communities surrounding South Stoke plateau – all opposed to the housing plans - that's South Stoke village, Combe Hay village, the roads to the north including Southstoke Road, Midford Road, Old Frome Road – and Sulis Meadows

And finally, I'm here as a resident of Bath who is proud of our city's status as a UNESCO World Heritage Site and accepts the need for more housing - but doesn't believe bulldozing the green belt is the only solution

South Stoke plateau is meant to have the highest level of protection. Not only is it part of the Cotswold Area of

Natural Outstanding Beauty, it's also designated green belt - which in this case should provide a buffer between the historic village of South Stoke and the city of Bath. The nationally important Wansdyke Scheduled Ancient Monument also runs through the plateau, while it's also ecologically important to threatened species including skylarks and greater horseshoe bats. Housing on the plateau would also jeopardise the delicate ecology and natural spring water routes that flow through the nearby Horsecombe Valley

It seems to me that this proposal is being driven by profit and convenience. PROFIT for the landowner and developers and CONVENIENCE because it makes up the housing numbers and it's a nice flat piece of agricultural land..

We say there is no need to destroy Bath's green belt if the density of housing on brownfield - especially the three MoD sites - was increased slightly. Incidentally, the MoD Foxhill site is a couple of minutes' drive from the plateau and has been earmarked for 800 houses - potentially putting a large strain on our already strained infrastructure.

A few months ago Adam Fergusson gave a talk in Bath to mark the 40th anniversary of the publication of his book, *The Sack of Bath*. I don't need to remind anyone here

today that he was the man who blew the whistle on the planning vandalism that took place in this city during the 60s and 70s. In his speech, Mr Fergusson warned of a second Sack of Bath and concluded by saying the green belt should be “non negotiable”.

Bath isn't just about its historic centre - its setting makes it unique too. If the green belt is allowed to be breached at South Stoke AND Weston we fear there's a real danger that Bath could lose its valuable status as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.