

BANES COUNCIL MEETING
November 14th 2013
Agenda Item 8

Chairman, Councillors

I am Robert Hellard from South Stoke Parish Council.

Your officers have just published a schedule of Core Strategy Amendments, which includes a requirement for 300 homes and a map entitled “Strategic Green Belt Site Allocations” for the South Stoke Plateau. This defines your intended urban extension to Bath and a new boundary for the Green Belt, south of the city. The area illustrated is more than twice the size of the existing Sulis Meadows estate, where 360 houses fit with ease.

This map at last acknowledges Bath’s World Heritage status and the important presence of the Wansdyke but fails absolutely to consider the importance of the Cotswold AONB and the conservation village of South Stoke. It quietly slips in a “potential access from South Stoke Lane”, which is barely more than a single track. This map and its loosely defined intentions fail to address the Inspectors requirement to allocate the intended housing and still leaves the future of this wonderful Cotswold Plateau at the mercy of negotiation with a “willing Developer”.

Mysteriously you have failed to adopt the Conservation Area appraisal for South Stoke which was in final draft form in 2009 and ready for adoption in 2011- I quote from your officer’s letter of May 2012 – “It will minor editorial tweaks...but should otherwise be ready to take to cabinet”. This together with the AONB status of this site, could and should inform this debate.

This Council should finally recognise the importance of the statutory protections that exist on this site and be brave enough to plan our future development in association with Neighbouring Councils, from where sustainable transport links already exist, rather than be bullied by eager landowners into accepting this “Green field first” policy.

Councillors, you now need to take control and work for us, your electors. Your predecessors bear eternal shame for the “Sack of Bath”, over which they presided.

How would you like to be remembered?

Robert Hellard.

Vice Chairman of South Stoke Parish Council.