

**Submission to B&NES Council Meeting at The Assembly Rooms, Bath
On Monday 4th March 2013.**

**by
Robert Hellard. Vice Chairman of
South Stoke Parish Council.**

Agenda item 9. Revisions to BANES' Draft Core Strategy.

The Parish of South Stoke has long been opposed to the prospect of any development on this southernmost part of the Cotswold Plateau.

There are many reasons why development here would be inappropriate.

The whole of the "Odd Down Plateau" is within the Bristol/Bath Green Belt. Government Policy, including the new NPPF, seeks to protect Green Belt Land for specific purposes. Development here would ride 'rough shod' over these and cause the 'Coalescence' of the ancient, independent, settlement of South Stoke with the City of Bath.

The majority of this land is part of the nationally designated "Cotswold AONB". This forbids major development absolutely, unless it can be proven to be of "over-riding Local and National importance". AONB land is afforded the highest level of protection against inappropriate development and no proof has been offered that this should be 'over-ridden' here.

The whole site lies within the setting of the World Heritage City of Bath. The inscription of the World Heritage Site, specifically draws attention to the importance of the long views into and out of the City. Any development on, or near, this exposed edge of the Cotswold Plateau would be clearly visible from many miles away and existing outward views from points of Public access would be ruined.

The Eastern end of this open plateau area is bounded on its North side by one of the few remaining parts of the "Western Wansdyke". This is a scheduled Ancient Monument protected by National Legislation. Any development south of this would seriously affect its setting. It is simply not possible to mitigate against such potential damage.

A large part of this plateau has a European Designation as a site of special importance for Wildlife Conservation, particularly as a foraging area for rare species of Bat. This would be eradicated by the proposed development.

We acknowledge the need for low-cost, affordable housing to support the expanding tourist economy of Bath but cannot see a proven need for speculative development to house outwardly commuting executives. There are apparently over 4000, as yet, unused plots with current planning approval in BANES and many more on acceptable brown field sites.

We ask you now to remove this Cotswold Plateau area from your list of potential development sites. Failure to do this will inevitably lead to the ruin of South Stoke as a Village and set a precedent which would allow a "Green Field First" policy to be pursued here and in other Green Belt or AONB zones around our World Heritage City.

