

South Stoke Parish Council

Newsletter No. 46

Amendments to BANES Draft Core Strategy.

At last year's Examination in Public (Eip) of BANES Draft Core Strategy the Inspector criticised the Council on a number of issues. Most importantly he questioned the method the Officers had used to assess housing need in the district. As a result the Core Strategy process has been suspended, whilst officers re-calculate the housing need using the Governments recommended format.

At an Extraordinary Council Meeting in the Assembly Rooms on Monday 4th March, BANES Council considered the amendments proposed to answer his criticisms. At that meeting they voted by 33 votes to 19 to include provision for 300 new houses on land on the Odd Down/South Stoke Plateau. Later an amendment was passed "To request that the Cabinet aims to maintain the rural buffer between South Stoke and Bath as a priority for the place-making process for land at Odd Down".

The Parish Council made a strong case at this meeting that this most Southern part of the Cotswold Plateau should be retained as open farmland.

The area concerned is entirely within the Green Belt, the Cotswold AONB and the Setting of the World Heritage City of Bath. A large part of the land is adjacent to the Wansdyke (a scheduled Ancient Monument) and is a site of European importance for foraging for the rare Greater Horseshoe Bat.

Development on this land would lead to the urbanisation of our Village and its coalescence with the City.

However the Council's proposals were carried and are now considered to be a "material consideration" in planning terms. In July the Government's Inspector will re-convene the Eip to test whether, with the proposed changes BANES Draft Core Strategy can now be considered "sound". His recommendations are then expected to go to the Minister with responsibility for housing for a final decision during the Autumn.

The Parish Council has already indicated its intention to raise objections to these proposals and to appear at the Eip in July to make sure that our views are clearly heard by the Inspector. At the same time we have been asked to engage in BANES "Place Making" process to help to determine where on the Plateau the 300 houses should be built.

The Parish Council has called a **Special Parish Meeting** to allow Parishioners to hear the arguments and to let us know their views.

This will take place in **South Stoke Parish Hall on Monday 8th April, starting at 7.0pm.**

In addition BANES have organised a **Consultation Event at the Parish Hall from 4.30 to 7.0pm on Wednesday 10th April.** This will be staffed by Council Planning Officers, who will answer any queries you may have.

There will be a further chance for you to comment at **The Annual Parish Meeting in the Hall on Monday 15th April, starting at 7.0pm.**

We have attached a map to this Newsletter with the areas that may be affected shaded in yellow. Odd Down Football Club's ground and Sulis Manor are within the City boundary and a small field near the Park & Ride is in Combe Hay Parish. Otherwise the entire site is in South Stoke Parish.

Please all come to give us your support and guidance.

M Devenish. Chairman SSPC