

Corston Parish Council

Chairman: Malcolm McDowall **Clerk:** John V May 9, Meadlands, Corston

Mr Simon James Emerson

Bath BA2 9AS

c/o Mr Chris Banks

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Banks Solutions,

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21, Glendale Close, Horsham,

6th September 2013

West Sussex RH12 4GR

BANES DRAFT CORE STRATEGY – STRATEGIC HOUSING LAND AVAILABILITY ASSESSMENT

Dear Mr Emerson,

1. As the Chairman of Corston Parish Council I am writing to make you aware of the Council's considerable disquiet at the recent revelation by B&NES that a field in Corston's Green Belt, which is good productive farmland, has been identified in their Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) as Homestead COR 1, with a theoretical capacity as a potential site for 180 houses. It is understood that this parcel of land is owned by the Duchy of Cornwall and leased to a local farmer. It is B&NES declared policy not to build on such land and to prioritise brown field sites as the first for development.

2. The subject was discussed by the Parish Council and local residents at the Parish Council meeting on 8th July 2013. Following subsequent enquiries an email was received on 29th July 2013 from Richard Walker, B&NES Policy Planning officer, which comprehensively outlined the background to the identification of Homestead COR 1. The email showed that B&NES have resurrected a previously unseen review which was conducted in 2008 to identify potential housing sites in the area in support of the then Government's Regional Spatial Strategy. The current B&NES draft Core Strategy did not include this parcel of land up until the SHLAA was revised in June 2013, but nevertheless it has now been included. It must be emphasised that regrettably this has been done without consulting the village community or the Corston Parish Council. On 3rd September an email was received from N Mould, the manager of the Duchy of Cornwall's office at Newton St Loe which has confirmed that the land identified as Homestead COR 1 "is available to help meet local needs as determined by the planning authority in consultation with the local community" (end of partial quote from the email).

3. As the Duchy of Cornwall has decided to leave the site known as Homestead COR 1 available for potential development under B&NES SHLAA, the Corston Parish Council will, in support of the majority of residents, strongly oppose this as it considered a most inappropriate course of action.

The following points support our case:

- a) The site lies within the Green Belt and Corston is a conservation village.
 - b) The building of 180 houses would increase the size of the village by approximately 45% and overwhelm already stretched local facilities and services. Such a high increase in the density of local housing would also create an unacceptable increase in the volume of traffic on the local stretches of the A4 and A39. These two major roads converge at the Globe Inn roundabout that is already at capacity with traffic grid-locked at peak times and also exceptionally busy throughout the day. There is a considerable risk that more traffic would invariably use Corston Lane as a 'Rat Run' and bring an increased danger to the local community, particularly pedestrians in the centre of the village and cause further deterioration of the village centre as a local hub for our community.
 - c) The beautiful western approach to Bath (a World Heritage city) along the A4, already regularly congested with very heavy traffic volume, would be seriously impaired by a further increase in traffic which would doubtless transpire as a result of the development of COR 1.
4. The Corston Parish Council believes that B&NES needs to fully utilise the development of 'Brown Field' sites within its jurisdiction for development, before ever considering further despoliation of the countryside.
 5. The Corston Parish Council is not averse to appropriate development, notably affordable homes, and will be using B&NES Placemaking methodology to consider if suitable appropriate expansion is feasible within the Parish.
 6. In summary, the majority of our village residents and the Corston Parish Council are strongly opposed to the development of COR 1 and requests that the Inspector be aware of the issues surrounding this particular piece of land and especially B&NES failure to consult, which could in the future easily lead to a legal challenge being initiated.

Yours sincerely,

M J McDowall

Chairman of Corston Parish Council

Cc: Jacob Rees-Mogg MP. (North East Somerset)

B&NES Councillor Caroline Roberts

Mrs Sally Davis, Farmborough Ward Councillor

David Trigwell, B&NES Divisional Director of Planning and Transport

N Mould, The Manager, The Duchy of Cornwall, Newton St Loe

The Bath Preservation Trust

Peter Duppa-Miller, ALCA and The Council for the Protection of Rural England

Corston Parish Council, Parishioners, local notice boards and the 'Corstonian' (Parish magazine).

