



Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2017

## Press Release

### **More sites could be released for development in North Somerset**

The Campaign to Protect Rural England and local campaign groups in North Somerset opposed developer proposals to release more land for development at the planning hearing held in Weston-super-mare last week<sup>i</sup>. Having given evidence, they were dismayed to hear from the Planning Inspector conducting the hearing that there is a likely prospect that more land will be allocated for development. An increase in housing sites will make defending our local countryside from ever more housing and roads all the more difficult, whilst failing to ensure that new housing gets built out quickly.

North Somerset contains valued Green Belt, AONB and open countryside and we believe it is important to protect these spaces from ill-judged development that fails to meet local housing needs. Despite this we saw a 50% increase in housing numbers in North Somerset following a challenge to the Core Strategy in 2012. Since then the Local Council has been effectively forced to approve speculative applications for housing in open countryside, which does not accord with its own Core Strategy. This has angered many local communities who are saddened at the prospect of so much green land being used for housing that is neither sustainable nor meets local needs.

**North Somerset Villages' Alliance Co-Chair, Steve Bridger said,** *we accept the need to build more genuinely affordable homes, but we need to look at alternatives to urbanising our precious village landscapes. There has to be a conversation with communities about what quantity and quality of housing is needed and what infrastructure should underpin that development. The big developers just want to build houses at the expense of everything else, so that conversation is being led by village campaign groups who have no choice but to stand up to developers and the Council, rather than working together to improve our communities for everyone's benefit.*

**CPRE Avonside Chair, Georgie Bigg, said,** *CPRE believes that new housing is needed, but we want to see a brownfield first policy. Developers should be required to build out the permissions they already have within a reasonable time, instead of sitting on land with planning permission. What's more, new housing should meet the needs of local people, particularly affordable housing, and it should be situated in locations that can easily be supported by local jobs, public transport and amenities such as schools and shops.*

ENDS

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The Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) fights for a better future for the English countryside. We work locally and nationally to protect, shape and enhance a beautiful, thriving countryside for everyone to value and enjoy. Our members are united in their love for England's landscapes and rural communities, and stand up for the countryside, so it can continue to sustain, enchant and inspire future generations. Founded in 1926, President: Emma Bridgewater, Patron: Her Majesty The Queen. [www.cpre.org.uk](http://www.cpre.org.uk)

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<sup>i</sup> The Site Allocations Plan was submitted to the planning inspectorate for examination on 24 February 2017. Hearings were held at The Grand Atlantic Hotel, Beach Road, Weston-super-Mare on from Tuesday 16th May 2017 to Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> May 2017

<http://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/my-services/planning-building-control/planningpolicy/sites-policies-development-plan-document/sites-policies-plan-part-2-site-allocations-plan-examination/>