

Stroud District Council
Received
20 JAN 2020
Development Services



Berkeley Cluster PS36 New Settlements at Sharpness.

16th January 2020.

Dear Sir,

The proposal to build large numbers of houses in the Sharpness / Berkeley area cannot and will not be supported by the majority of people currently living in the area. It is totally inappropriate to build such large numbers of houses in this rural area for the following reasons.

The roads in this area are mainly country roads, the bypass around Berkeley was never completed in spite of repeated promises made by councillors at the time of the original construction. All goods coming into or leaving the docks at Sharpness are transported by road, large storage warehouses are currently being constructed which will lead to even more heavy traffic using the local roads. Alkington lane is an accident waiting to happen with a very poor road surface and the camber which in place's is completely wrong, it's very narrow with barely enough room for large vehicles to pass each other, indeed there isn't even a footpath with pedestrians having to walk on the grass. The sheer volume of vehicles using the roads in this area if these plans went ahead would mean grid lock for many, how can it be justified the pollution would be enormous with vehicles travelling to the main source of employment at either Gloucester, Stroud or Bristol. The motorway links are very poor with queuing at the junctions which has become a regular event at peak times, a problem that will only get worse with other developments planned at Falfield, Buckover, Thornbury, Newport, Wickwar and Cam. We also note that Forest Green football club had obtained a planning approval for a new stadium close to junction 13 on the M5 motorway, an approval that has now been called in as we understand it by the new member of Parliament for the area, we just hope she is just as keen to represent the views of her constituents who live in this area who do not want this inappropriate large scale development. The developer talks about using the old railway line which is in our view not a viable option as there is no station at the point where the track joins the main line at Berkeley road, the nearest station is at Cam some distance further on. Travelling south to Bristol presents an ever bigger problem as the track and bridge were removed on the southern loop, and we would also question whether there is

extra capacity on the rail network to run extra trains into Bristol and Gloucester.

We hear constantly about pollution and reducing unnecessary car journeys indeed just recently we heard that Bristol are looking to introduce a ban on diesel vehicles operating in the city during certain hours of the day because of pollution and here we are advocating using vehicles to travel large distances to commute to work sorry but either the developers have got it wrong or Bristol city council, you really can't have it both ways.

Primary and secondary schools are another problem area because we've been told the developer will only consider building schools after they have completed 2400 houses so where do the children get their schooling in the mean time.

Flooding is another potential problem with this area and if as predicted sea levels continue to rise this will become an even bigger problem in the future as much of the land near the river and around Berkeley is already low lying and floods regularly and is part of the floodplain , there is a intermediate nuclear waste store (not to be confused with low level waste) close by containing many hundreds of tons of radio active waste with a aircraft exclusion zone because there is a perceived risk, with a blast zone around the fertiliser plant at Sharpness, 132Kv power lines pass through part of the area plus lower voltage lines and an electricity sub station, there are also two large water pipes passing through the area taking water from Purton to the treatment works at Littleton, really if you were planning to build large numbers of houses this is probably the last place you would choose.

We should also be mindful that the construction of nearly 200 homes are in the process of being constructed to the east of Berkeley and Redrow are likely to seek planning permission for just over 100 homes on land to the north of Berkeley on a site where there has been concern expressed about flooding in the area close to the flood plain in the south west corner. During the construction of the bypass a large amount of material was dumped in the lower

part of this field, the same field where Redrow are planning to build houses, the level was raised by 3 to 4 metres some of this was green material hedging etc that was simply buried so has there been a survey to see if any methane gas is being generated. Radon gas levels are also high in the Berkeley area including the field where Redrow are planning to build houses this area extends north through much of the area where development is proposed . (see enclosed plan) Radon gas can be the cause of serious health issues (see World Health Organisation Radon and Health facts sheet enclosed)

If this second permission is granted it will have a very significant detrimental effect on the roads around Berkeley. We cannot and shouldn't be expected to live in that sort of environment with roads over loaded, the current primary school in Berkeley will I'm told be unable to accommodate the increased numbers of children the two developments will likely generate unless or until there is significant building investment at the school. With the lead time to get plans drawn up and agreed, funding arranged, permissions granted, contractors engaged, it is probably already too late to get the necessary work completed before the facilities are required for the new children these building sites will generate.

Wild life is also another issue that should be considered with many different species of animals and birds using the area, there is evidence of birds using the area to overwinter especially when you consider how close it is to the river and Slimbridge. There are 4 designated areas close to the site, these designations recognise the fact that the Severn is an internationally important habitat for migratory fish and wintering birds, with the inter-tidal mudflats being of key importance to migration of several internationally protected bird species.

Severn Estuary Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

Severn Estuary Area of Conservation (SAC)

Severn Estuary Special Protection Area (SPA)

Severn Estuary Ramsar Site.

Due to these designations the coastline adjacent to Berkeley is also classified as the Severn Estuary European Marine Site.

In addition to the features associated with the estuary, there are extensive stretches of ancient hedgerow and a number of wooded areas.

It must be concluded that the views of the local people living in the area have not been considered there has been little or no contact and many people feel very let down and ignored by the very people who are tasked with representing their interests and views especially the older members of the community who have little access to computers or the ability to make their feelings known in writing to those who are charged with representing their views and looking after their interests.

Dispersal must be the way forward with every community taking some housing and sharing the impact, inconvenience and disturbance that goes with these projects, it should be shared between the many villages and not suffered by the few. The infrastructure should be in place before any developments take place to reduce the impact and very clearly that is not the case indeed as was said earlier if you were choosing to build large numbers of houses this is the last area that would in our view be considered, we call on all our elected councillors who are involved in the planning process to reject these applications and truly reflect the views of the people who elected them who live in this area.

There is concern among many local people that because such huge sums of money are involved, will local people have any real or meaningful say in what happens to our community and our way of life and does democracy really work or does the minority decide not the majority?

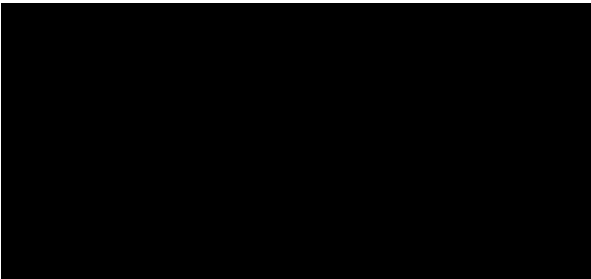
We also note the story carried by BBC news on the 4th January that North Somerset Council who are about to pull out of a plan to build large numbers of houses following a rejection by government planning inspectors. The planning inspectors found "significant concerns " when considering the proposals from those councils involved, they said it was unlikely they would find the plan "legally sound" because they could not be certain the sites had been determined on a "robust, consistent and objective " basis

(copy of the article included).

We believe the the same concerns apply to these proposals to build large numbers of house's in this area and believe those persons who are responsible at Stroud District Council should think very carefully before going forward with these very unpopular proposals.

We would request that this letter be made available to the Planning Inspector.

Yours Sincerely



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NEWS

North Somerset Council could pull out of 100,000 homes plan

🕒 4 January 2020

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The plans covered 12 sites across Bristol, South Gloucestershire, North Somerset, and Bath and North East Somerset

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A plan for more than 100,000 houses in the west of England could be rejected by one of the councils that drew it up.

The Joint Spatial Plan (JSP), created by four local authorities, set out the long-term housing and infrastructure needs of the region to 2036.

But it was rejected by government planning inspectors last year.

Now North Somerset Council has announced it wants to withdraw, with the other authorities expected to follow suit.

A dozen sites surrounding Bristol had been identified for significant numbers of new homes in so-called "garden villages".

Residents near the proposed sites had started campaign groups against the scheme.

Planning inspectors found "significant concerns" when considering the proposals from Bristol, South Gloucestershire, North Somerset, and Bath and North East Somerset councils.

They said it was unlikely they would find the plan "legally sound" because they could not be certain the sites had been determined on a "robust, consistent and objective" basis.

'Waste of public money'

When the JSP was drawn up North Somerset Council was run by the Conservatives but **the party lost 23 seats at last year's election**, leaving no party in overall control and Independents the largest group.

The decision to withdraw will be considered by the council on Tuesday. It proposes to develop its own plan over the next 15 years.

Councillor James Tonkin, who is responsible for planning and is one of the Independents, said there needed to be better public consultation this time round.

"We're starting with a clean sheet of paper. The essential thing is we've got to find between 25 and 30,000 more houses in the period 2026-36. They've got to go somewhere." he said.

The council would introduce the idea of building on green belt land, which had not been considered previously, he added.

The move was welcomed by Jan Murray, from Churchill and Langford Residents

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Action Group. Almost 3,000 homes would have been built near the two villages under the JSP.

"It was inevitable that it had to be withdrawn," she said.

"Frankly it didn't make sense to build remote strategic development locations away from the employment centre of Bristol, which is where the jobs are needed and where there is the housing problem. It was a huge waste of public money."

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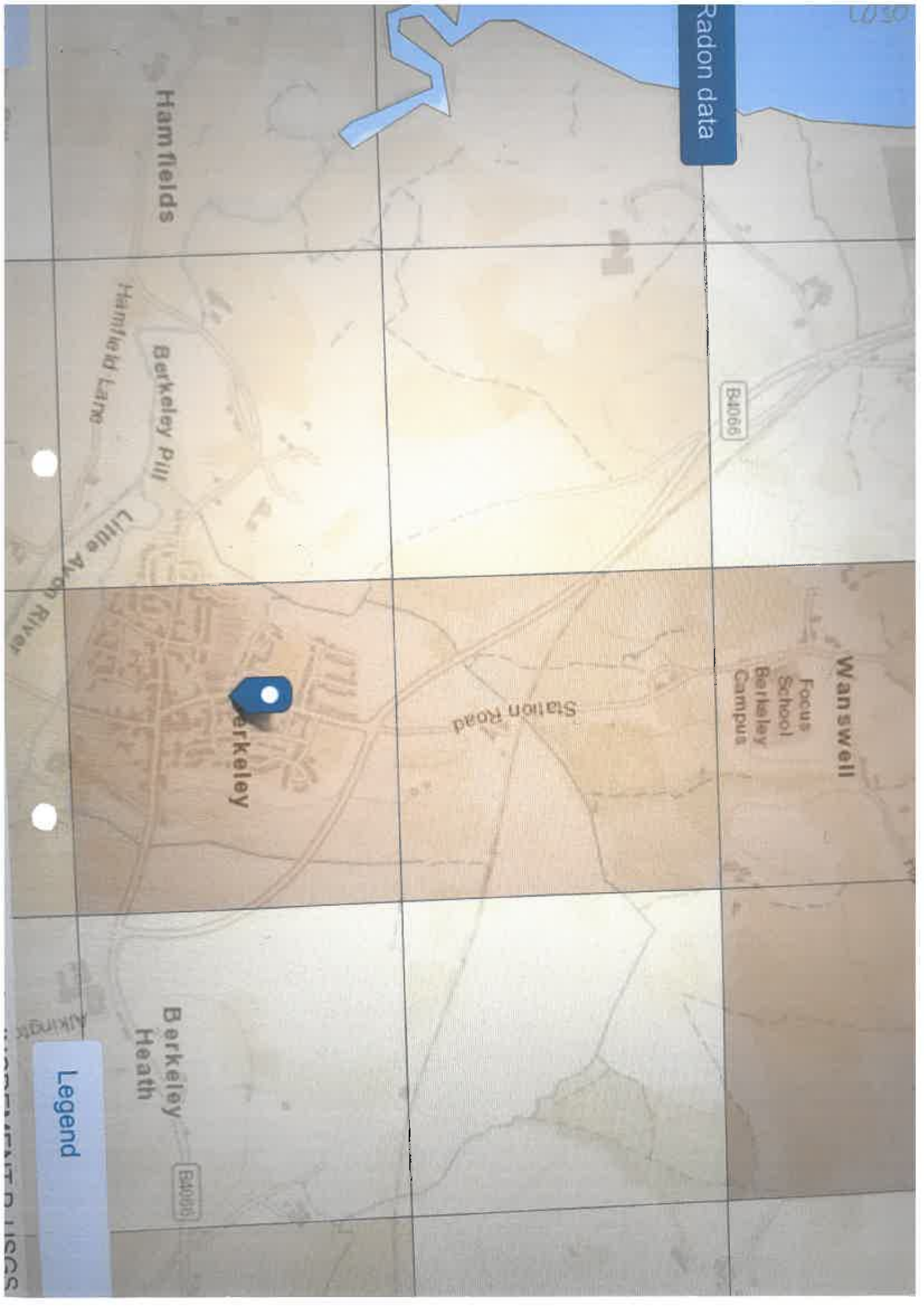
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Radon and health

30 June 2016

Key facts

- Radon is a naturally occurring radioactive gas which may be found in indoor environments such as homes, schools, and workplaces.
- Radon is the most important cause of lung cancer after smoking.
- Radon is estimated to cause between 3–14% of all lung cancers in a country, depending on the national average radon level and smoking prevalence.
- The lower the radon concentration in a home, the lower the risk of lung cancer as there is no known threshold below which radon exposure carries no risk.
- Well-tested, durable and cost-efficient methods exist for preventing radon in new houses and reducing radon in existing dwellings.

Radon is a naturally occurring radioactive gas. It has no smell, colour or taste. Radon is produced from the natural radioactive decay of uranium, which is found in all rocks and soil. Radon can also be found in water.

WHO's work on radon

- [The International Radon Project](#)
- [International radon project survey on radon guidelines, programmes and activities pdf, 620kb](#)
- [WHO's work on environmental health](#)

Radon escapes easily from the ground into the air, where it decays and produces further radioactive particles. As we breathe, the particles are deposited on the cells lining the airways, where they can damage DNA and potentially cause lung cancer.

Outdoors, radon quickly dilutes to very low concentrations and is generally not a problem. The average outdoor radon level (1) varies between 5–15 Bq/m³. However, indoors, radon concentrations are higher, with highest levels found in places like mines, caves and water treatment facilities. In buildings such as homes, schools, and offices, radon levels in the range of 10 Bq/m³ to more than 10 000 Bq/m³ have been found.

Health effects of radon

Radon is the most important cause of lung cancer after smoking. It is estimated that radon causes between 3–14% of all lung cancers in a country, depending on the average radon level and the smoking prevalence in a country.

An increased rate of lung cancer was first seen in uranium miners exposed to high concentrations of radon. In addition, studies in Europe, North America and China have confirmed that even low concentrations of radon – such as those found in homes – also confer health risks and contribute significantly to the occurrence of lung cancers worldwide.

The risk of lung cancer increases by 16% per 100 Bq/m³ increase in long time average radon concentration. The dose-response relation is linear – for example, the risk of lung cancer increases proportionally with increasing radon exposure.

Radon is much more likely to cause lung cancer in people who smoke. In fact, smokers are estimated to be 25 times more at risk from radon than non-smokers. To date, no other cancer risks have been established.

Radon in homes

For most people, the greatest exposure to radon occurs in the home. The concentration of radon in a home depends on:

- **the amount of uranium in the underlying rocks and soils;**
- **the routes available for the passage of radon from the soil into the home; and**
- **the rate of exchange between indoor and outdoor air, which depends on the construction of the house, the ventilation habits of the inhabitants, and the air-tightness of the building.**

Radon enters homes through cracks in the floors or at floor-wall junctions, gaps around pipes or cables, small pores in hollow-block walls, or sumps or drains. Radon levels are usually higher in basements, cellars or living spaces in contact with soil.

Radon concentrations vary between adjacent homes, and can vary within a home from day today and from hour to hour. Residential radon levels can be measured in an inexpensive and simple manner. Because of these fluctuations, it is preferable to estimate the annual mean concentration of radon in indoor air by measurements for at least 3 months. However, measurements need to be based on national protocols to ensure consistency as well as reliability for decision-making.

Reducing radon in homes

Well-tested, durable and cost-efficient methods exist for preventing radon in new houses and reducing radon in existing dwellings. Radon prevention should be considered when new houses are built, particularly in radon prone areas. In many countries of Europe and in the United States of America, the inclusion of protective measures in new buildings has become a routine measure. In some countries it has become a mandatory procedure.

Radon levels in existing homes can be reduced by:

- **increasing under-floor ventilation;**
- **installing a radon sump system in the basement or under a solid floor;**
- **avoiding the passage of radon from the basement into living rooms;**
- **sealing floors and walls; and**
- **improving the ventilation of the house.**

Passive systems of mitigation have been shown to be capable of reducing indoor radon levels by more than 50%. When radon ventilation fans are added radon levels can even be reduced further.

Radon in drinking water

In many countries, drinking water is obtained from groundwater sources such as springs, wells and boreholes. These sources of water normally have higher concentrations of radon than surface water from reservoirs, rivers or lakes.

To date, epidemiological studies have not found an association between consumption of drinking-water containing radon and an increased risk of stomach cancer. Radon dissolved in drinking-water can be released into indoor air. Normally, a higher radon dose is received from inhaling radon compared with ingestion.

The "*WHO guidelines for drinking water quality*" (2011) recommend that screening levels for radon in drinking-water be set on the basis of the national reference level for radon in air. In circumstances where high radon concentrations might be expected in drinking-water, it is prudent to measure radon concentrations. Straightforward and effective techniques exist to reduce the concentration of radon in drinking-water supplies by aeration or using granular activated carbon filters.

- [WHO Guidelines for drinking-water quality](#)

WHO response

In 2009, WHO published the "*WHO handbook on indoor radon: A public health perspective*", which provides policy options for reducing health risks from residential radon exposure through:

- **providing information on levels of radon indoors and the associated health risks;**
- **implementing a national radon programme aimed at reducing both the overall population risk and the individual risk for people living with high radon concentrations;**
- **establishing a national annual average concentration reference level of 100 Bq/m³, but if this level cannot be reached under the prevailing country-specific conditions, the reference level should not exceed 300 Bq/m³;**
- **implementing radon prevention in building codes to reduce radon levels in homes under construction, and radon programmes to ensure that the levels are below national reference levels; and**
- **developing radon measurement protocols to help ensure quality and consistency in radon testing.**

These recommendations are consistent with the International Basic Safety Standards (2014) and the IAEA Safety guide on radon (2014), both co-sponsored by WHO.

- **WHO Handbook on Indoor Radon: A Public Health Perspective**
 - **Radiation Protection and Safety of Radiation Sources: International Basic Safety Standards**
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(1) Radioactivity is measured in units called Becquerels (Bq). One Becquerel corresponds to the transformation (disintegration) of 1 atomic nucleus per second. Radon concentration in air is measured by the number of transformations per second in a cubic meter of air (Bq/m³).

Flood risk



High



Medium



Low



Very low



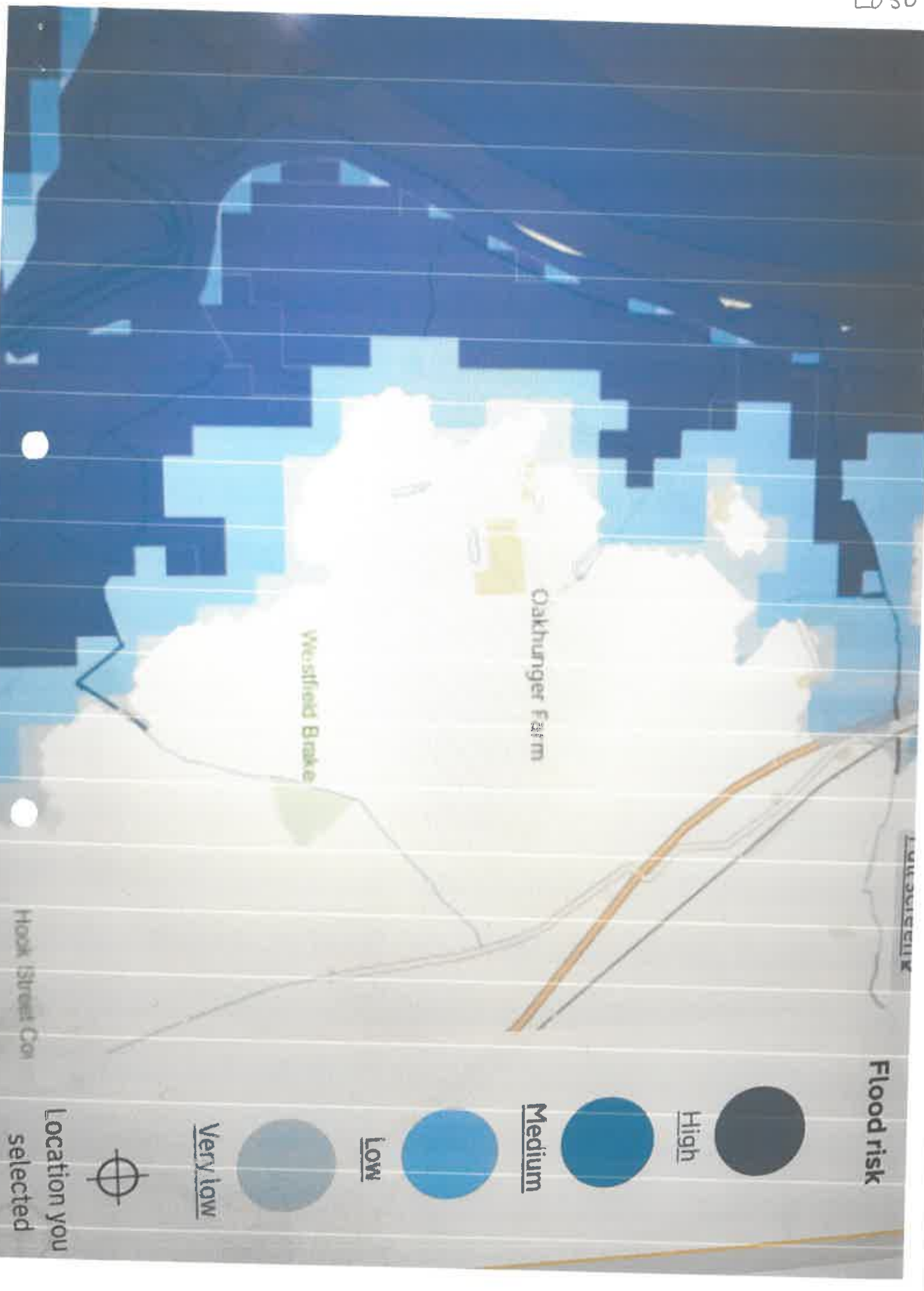
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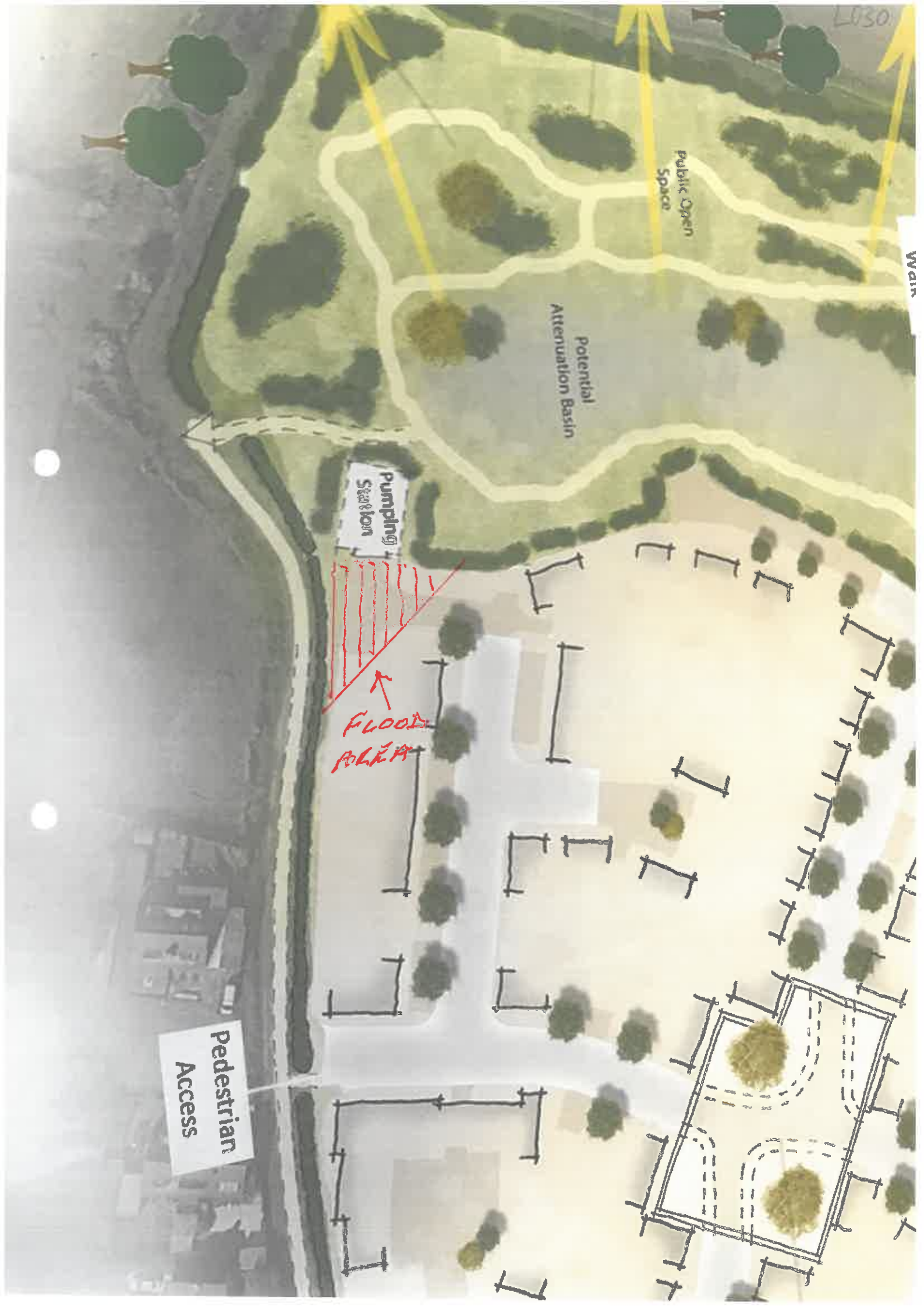
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Public Open Space

Potential Attenuation Basin

Pumping Station

FLOOD AREA

Pedestrian Access