**Babergh’s house-dumping threat to villages**

Babergh District Council’s determination to dump thousands of the least-needed houses on the most unsuitable villages is more than an affront to local democracy.

It will build for the future serious environment and infrastructure problems. The overcrowding created will cause social and health problems.

Of all the targeted villages, Capel St Mary has the most, and the worst, potential problems. There are currently 1,200 homes, a hard-pressed doctors’ surgery, few shops, inadequate parking and one congested main road to the A12 and the Old London Road.

Into this, Babergh wants 792 new homes, with planning permission already given for 200, an increase of **66 per cent**. Capel has three per cent of Babergh’s population but faces 10 per cent of all its housing plans for the years 2018 to 2036. It is the largest number of new homes in all 26 Neighbourhood Plan areas.

The planned dumping is against the wishes of Capel villagers expressed in local polls, surveys and drop-in meetings. There are no jobs in or around Capel for a huge number of new residents. There would be at least 2,000 more cars adding to local pollution and more congestion on the already inadequate A12.

For the last few years village approaches to Babergh District Council, spoken and written, calling for help and clarity over the Joint Local Plan and the village Neighbourhood Plan have been ignored. Instead of help and clarity there has been obfuscation.

On June 2, Capel Parish Council Chairman, Councillor Brian Rogers, asked Babergh’s Chief Executive, Arthur Charvonia, a number of questions and sought advice on whether the number of houses in Capel’s proposed Neighbourhood Plan would need to be revised to comply with the Babergh and Mid-Suffolk Joint Local Plan.

In a letter dated 16 June, Mr Charvonia didn’t answer the questions or give any advice. His reply was unhelpful. Without the help Babergh is obliged to offer, an acceptable Capel Neighbourhood Plan, which in preparation sets far fewer than 792 houses, could not be achieved.

For further information, (journalists enquiries only) please contact Capel St Mary Parish Council Chair, Brian Rogers, on 01473 311746 or email: brian.rogers@capelstmary.suffolk.gov.uk, or Parish Clerk, Julie Lawes, on 01473 314103 e-mail: capel.parishclerk@btconnect.com