



Our ref: SCS/CB/2013

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42 London Road  
Newbury  
RG14 1LA

Mr S Reynolds  
Parsonage Mead  
The Spring  
Market Lavington  
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Wiltshire, SN10 4EB

Dear Slater and Sean,

### **MARKET LAVINGTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN – LAND AT THE SPRING (SITE 3268)**

I am now able to report fully on the Neighbourhood Plan Public Consultation event held at Market Lavington on the 14<sup>th</sup> of March.

Firstly, I think it is worth saying that of the numerous consultation events we attend each year, I thought that Market Lavington was one of the most successful in terms of organisation, turn out and the general attitude of the attendees. The Steering Committee should be congratulated.

We had over 50 separate conversations during the event with members of the public. The vast majority of those who we spoke to understood the need for, and in principle supported the provision of, further housing in Market Lavington.

I attach, for the record, copies of our exhibition boards. As you know, we encouraged open engagement and received many useful informal views. We also gathered responses via a questionnaire. There were 18 such responses received at the event.

By way of summary:

- Question 1 - 13 respondents believed that the neighbourhood plan should allocate land for new homes, 4 did not and 1 one undecided
- Question 2 - 11 respondents preferred smaller sites, 4 preferred one large site and 3 didn't want any development
- Question 3 - 9 respondents thought The Spring is a suitable location for development, 8 thought the area was unsuitable and one respondent was not sure
- Question 4 – The main suggestion for the proposed development were:
  - o Adequate parking provision
  - o Single storey development at road frontage, 1 ½ and 2 storey development at lower levels
  - o Low density
  - o Affordable and starter homes
  - o South facing roofs with solar panels
  - o Mini roundabout at Park Road and one point of access
  - o Hedgerows and trees to be retained
- Question 5 – Other comments included concern about impact on existing services and facilities in Market Lavington

Of the eight respondents who did not support development at The Spring, most lived in close proximity to the site and were clearly concerned about a **loss of outlook**. We explained during the event that we were alert to this concern as it had already been conveyed to Slater by the Parish Council. The early concept scheme that had showed housing 'built up' to the road frontage had therefore been abandoned. We are confident that the site can be successfully developed with new housing generally set back into the site and at a lower level behind existing hedgerows; an arrangement that would be more consistent with the site's natural contours. Such an arrangement would have considerably less impact on neighbouring householders.

Our response to those who raised concerns about **infrastructure capacity** was to confirm that it is quite normal for infrastructure requirements to be professionally assessed during the course of any planning process and for the developer to fund works of improvement and expansion (in accordance with the Government's guidelines).

A general concern was widely expressed regarding **highway congestion**. We noted that as this site is west of the village centre it will naturally have less impact on congestion in the village centre than other sites. However, as the landowner and developer are already engaged with school officials and governors regarding access to the playing fields, we can widen this conversation to discuss the challenges of short term car parking demand, particularly during the morning drop-off and afternoon pick-up. It may be that essential highway works arising from the development can be focused towards improving the current highway situation.

Whilst many visitors commented on the negative aspect of increased housing and population, most appreciated that these increases have the potential to **improve the viability of current services** including shops for example who will appreciate the additional footfall particularly from a site that is within walking distance of the centre.

Concerns regarding the **heritage and flooding** were less apparent at the event than they had been in the earlier survey. To those who did raise these issues, we confirmed that the site has been the subject of a hydrological study which conclusively demonstrates that it is not at flood risk. It is clear that localised flooding has occurred in the past at Grove Rd roundabout, and we indicated that measures to address that issue can be considered as part of the drainage strategy for the site. We also confirmed that the appointed archaeologists are doubtful that the site is of any special heritage significance but that the site history will be fully revealed during the archaeological excavations scheduled for late April.

I'm sure you will agree, that this was a very useful event. We would encourage you to continue the dialogue with the community as the Neighbourhood Plan process moves forward and as the design of the scheme develops.

I look forward to hearing from you with further instructions.

Regards



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