

Statement by David Hunt (Chairman Welford Parish Council) in support of planning application 19/02850/FULMAJ

Elton Farm Development

As Chairman of Welford Parish Council I am writing on their behalf in strongly supporting the planning application. Throughout the planning process the council have been directly involved in discussions and we see this proposal as a satisfactory outcome for all stakeholders.

On 20th June 2018 a site visit was arranged for Parish Councillors to learn of a proposal for the conversion of four agricultural buildings to residential use. We reminded the agent (Savills) that plans for a previous nearby development of ten new houses had been required to be altered so that effluent was not discharged into the River Lambourn but was connected to the main sewer in Weston.

With this in mind the Parish Council were keen not to repeat the same scenario with the four houses on this planning application. At a Parish Council meeting on 4th December 2018 the Council voted “No Objection” to the planning application (18/01090/FULD) subject to there being a satisfactory and agreed method of sewage treatment which did not involve any effluent being discharged into the River Lambourn.

The developer proposed a private sewage package treatment plant (STP) for each dwelling. At this stage Natural England were satisfied that the proposed strategy would not result in harm to the sensitive SSSI. The Environment Agency did not respond.

The planning application was approved by the District Council Planning Committee at a meeting on 12th December 2018.

Following concerns raised by local residents and the Parish Council it became clear that the proposed treatment method did not address the potential for the

influx of phosphates. However, at this stage, connection to the village main sewage system was not considered financially viable.

The developer has now addressed the issue and has submitted the plan that has been proposed. The addition of two extra dwellings will provide funding for a pipe to be drilled under the River Lambourn allowing connection to the main sewer. This satisfies the conditions requested by the Parish Council, thereby protecting the Eco structure, wildlife and the environment of this ancient chalk stream. At a Parish Council Meeting on 16th October the Council unanimously supported the proposal. This decision was confirmed by a site visit on 3rd November at which detailed plans were displayed.

We are aware that the proposal requires extra building on a small plot of land that is not brownfield land and is therefore not within West Berkshire planning policy. However, we believe that an exception should be made on this occasion since the advantages far outweigh other considerations.

The Council consider that the new buildings are very attractive and in keeping with the rural landscape. The proposal completely removes unsightly outbuildings and creates a pleasant, unified development. We see this as a significant improvement to the environment. We look forward to seeing a satisfactory outcome to this proposal.

Yours faithfully

David Hunt

Chairman, Welford Parish Council