

19/02850/FULMAJ: Land Adjacent To Elton Farm, Weston Newbury, RG20 8JG

SUPPORTING WRITTEN STATEMENT LOCAL RESIDENTS (JOINT SUBMISSION)

Villagers of Weston want me to write in support of the proposed development as they are passionate about protecting the River Lambourn.

As you know it is one of only four rare chalk streams of its kind in the world. We can't make any more and as such it is afforded the highest protection as an SAC. The existing approved scheme for this development will see the use of Klargesters with treated sewage running into drainage fields. It is a fact that Klargesters and drainage fields do not extract phosphates which are extremely harmful to the river. Ultimately, like the plight of the Whorl snail supposedly protected by the drainage fields created on the Newbury Bypass, the drainage fields will become saturated due to proximity of the water table and phosphates will flow into the river causing catastrophe.

Experts (see Peter Evans scientific evidence) confirm that the existing previously approved scheme will not adequately protect this vulnerable chalk stream. Natural England expressed their concerns to this effect when commenting on the extant approval that sewage should go to the mains as the preferred choice. Nothing has changed from that stance taken by NE and now a viable scheme has been proposed to allow this to happen.

The River Lambourn is already a failing river because of the leaching of phosphates from years of agricultural use. The existing approved scheme would ultimately see more phosphates in the river. ALL planning decisions should ensure that no phosphates are allowed to enter the river.

These new proposals would see the sewage go to the mains 1.3 km away, where more phosphates would be extracted. This would be a win win situation. A higher quality development is delivered, the river is protected from any increase in phosphate levels both now and more so in the future as technology improves. There will also be a REDUCTION as two existing houses will be connected to the mains sewage system as part of this proposal. The concession is that a one off exception would need to be made to planning guidance with one additional house built on the greenfield.

Surely this is justification enough to secure the long lasting protection of such an important river. Don't we all owe it as custodians of our environment to make a one off exception without setting a precedent?

There is extensive support on Facebook, social media with 1105 signing the online petition and huge support from local residents, the wider community and further afield with 65 writing letters of support to the council.

The approved development does not protect the River Lambourn. The proposed one does. We have one chance to do the right thing before the approved scheme is fully implemented at which point there is no going back!

Please support these new proposals. The River Lambourn is worth making an exception for. SAC chalk streams are much rarer than greenbelt and this river is more at risk than the greenbelt which these guidelines were designed to protect.

(499 words)