

Direct email: [chris@navigusplanning.co.uk](mailto:chris@navigusplanning.co.uk)

Our ref: SPR/180714

Your ref:

18<sup>th</sup> July 2014

Lynne Compton

Clerk

Spratton Parish Council

[sprattonpc@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:sprattonpc@tiscali.co.uk)



Truro, Lushington Road,  
Manningtree, Essex, CO11 1EF

**Phone** 01206 700260

**Email** [info@navigusplanning.co.uk](mailto:info@navigusplanning.co.uk)

**Web** [www.navigusplanning.co.uk](http://www.navigusplanning.co.uk)

### **By email only**

Dear Lynne

### **SPRATTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN SITE ALLOCATION PROCESS: CRITERIA FOR CONSIDERING SITE SELECTION**

In an email dated 11<sup>th</sup> July 2014, you requested that, as independent consultants supporting the preparation of the Spratton Neighbourhood Plan, we provide an opinion on the merits of the analysis undertaken by Councillor Baillie entitled 'Criteria for consideration for site selection, including weighting'. This is analysis undertaken of the raw data created from the November 2014 public consultation.

Having reviewed the document, my main observation relates to Point 1. This addresses the responses to the following question in the November 2013 consultation:

*'If it could be provided as part of a new site for housing development, what level of benefit to the community would a new vehicular access to the Hall School site have?'*

It is clear that the question, as asked in the consultation, does not relate the level of benefit of any new vehicular access to a preference for either potential site allocation (which the analysis implies by referring to a link route from the A5199 even though this was not referred to in the consultation). The question simply asks about the level of benefit of a new vehicular access as a means of addressing the current congestion problems created by those wishing to access the Hall School. Whilst the preceding information provided about both sites states that a link road could be provided from each, it could not reasonably be inferred from the wording of the actual question that information was being sought on which site the responded preferred.

It is therefore my view that any analysis of answers to this question in order to determine which site people preferred cannot be sound. It is simply not a sound approach to make assumptions about an individual's site preference (if any) when they have not been explicitly asked to state this preference. In this context, I made it very clear when the November 2013 consultation was being prepared that it would not be wise to ask people about site preference and instead it should focus on ascertaining people's views on the value of the potential community benefits. The inevitable 'beauty contest' that would, in our experience, result is the reason why no such 'site choice' question was asked.

My opinion therefore is that the analysis does throw doubt on the ability to support the view that 92% of respondents were in favour of a link road. In fact, this creates sufficient doubt to be able to rely on this figure if a site allocation process is taken forward. However, the alternative quoted figures by Councillor Baillie of between 20.5% and 58% of people being in support of a link road (vehicular

access) through to the Hall School equally cannot be justified with the raw data from the consultation.

Ultimately, if the choice of the community as to which site they prefer (if any) is to be ascertained, then it will need to be the subject of a new consultation.

In respect of the matters raised in points 2 to 5, the analysis has merit in informing the site assessment process. Moreover, I would observe that this analysis, coupled with other information that has come to light which has served to suppress the overall value that can be attributed to some of the community benefits (in particular the lack of support from residents of Smith Street to a Link Road from Site 1) and to create uncertainty as to the overall need for housing, places the initially recommended outcome of the process in doubt. It is my opinion that, in light of this new information, no clear site choice can be made that is capable of support through the referendum process at the end of the Neighbourhood Plan without further consultation being carried out.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "CBowden". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent 'C'.

Chris Bowden  
Director

cc Barry Frenchman  
Michael Heaton