

4th April 2014

Economic Development and Planning  
County Hall  
Bythesea Road  
Trowbridge  
Wiltshire  
BA14 8JN

Ms Teresa Strange  
Clerk  
Melksham Without Parish Council  
First Floor  
Crown Chambers  
7 Market Place  
Melksham  
Wiltshire SN12 6ES

Dear Ms Strange

## **Community Governance Review – Adjustment to the Melksham Town and Melksham Without Parishes**

I write in response to the letter sent to Dr Brand by Mary Jarvis on 28<sup>th</sup> March 2014. Dr Brand has requested that I reply on his behalf. There are two matters raised in the letter, the first regarding the Community Governance Review and the second regarding the coalescence of Bowerhill with Melksham. I will respond to each matter in turn.

In terms of the Community Governance Review (CGR) that the Council is undertaking, this started on 1 April 2014 and will end March 2015. The CGR has been approved by Council and will be undertaken under a Working Party chaired by Cllr Stuart Wheeler. To that end we will be inviting comments on certain areas including many of the towns, based on requests we have received. The Council has a duty to consider all requests made, which includes a request regarding Melksham to consider boundaries.

Turning to the matter of coalescence, I understand that the 'possible development' of greenfield land referred to relates to a speculative proposal by a developer. Unfortunately, the Council cannot prevent developers submitting planning applications for land they wish to promote and will assess any applications on their merits against the policies within the adopted and emerging development plan for the area, as well as the National Planning Policy Framework.

The Council has committed to preparing a Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD) to identify new housing sites, which will consider land at Melksham to meet the requirements of the Core Strategy and ensure sufficient land is identified for development in line with the emerging Wiltshire Core Strategy. This identifies 'Melksham and Bowerhill village' as a Market Town and states that "*Market Towns have the potential for significant development that will increase the jobs and homes in each town in order to help sustain and where necessary enhance their services and facilities and promote better levels of self containment and viable sustainable communities*" (Core

Policy 2). Core Policy 15, as recently proposed to be changed, requires about 2,240 new homes to be provided at Melksham over the period 2006 to 2026.

The Site Allocations DPD will involve an assessment of all potential site options for development around the town to identify the most sustainable options for growth. The Council considers that a plan led approach involving public consultation is the most appropriate mechanism to identify new sites at the town and will take into consideration factors including landscape constraints or allocated uses of land that may exist. In implementing the current version of the emerging Core Strategy consideration will also need to be given to paragraph 5.80, which states: *"it is recognised that both Berryfield and Bowerhill have functional relationships to Melksham and have important individual characteristics which should be protected, where practicable."*

I trust you will find this information of help.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alistair Cunningham', with a stylized flourish at the end.

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