



23rd February 2023

Planning Policy Team
Development and Regulation
West Berkshire District Council
Market Street
Newbury Berks RG14 5LD

To whom it may concern

WBC LPR Regulation 19 Objection

I strongly object to the planning application for 1,500 houses (potentially more) at North East Thatcham.

Thatcham has had its fair share of new residential estates over the last 40 years.

The Rivers Estate off Bowling Green Road
Seige Cross off the A4
The Moors
Floral Way
The Estate near the Station
Lower Way, near the Discovery Centre, has just been given planning permission for residential building.
Estate off Henwick Lane and Floral Way
Centre of Thatcham, flats for retirees and those wanting care

Transport

Additional housing will increase traffic on roads around Thatcham, Upper Bucklebury, routes into Newbury, Reading and down Pipers Way towards Basingstoke (using the level crossing). 1,500 houses will bring upwards of 3,500/4,000 new residents into the area. An average of car ownership will be around 1,300 for single car families and 2,000 extra vehicles for 2 car families (not taking into account teenagers living at home). This will put a very heavy extra burden on our already busy roads. I realise that the public is being asked to consider other ways of travelling, ie bike, walking and public transport, but this is not a totally practical mode of transport for all. The inevitable increase in traffic through Upper Bucklebury will have a big impact on the village and safety issues especially regarding the local school. Harts Hill is a dangerous road and increased traffic here will make this even more so. Cycle routes along the A4 are not used to the extent that perhaps the Council thought they would be and I believe that a considerable amount of money has been spent unnecessarily here. I doubt that anyone, unless really fit would want to cycle up Harts Hill and walking is extremely dangerous. If an average of additional 2,000 car journey are made from this development, then

increase in traffic movement is going to be excessive for the area. Increased traffic wanting to use the Thatcham level crossing to travel towards Basingstoke and the Newbury retail park will create even more congestion in that area. No consideration has been given to alternative development sites, ie Colthrop with a new bridge over the railway line and canal.

Local Services

No consideration has been given to the increased pressure on Schools, Dentist and Doctors surgeries. We are all struggling at this time to get appointments for Dentists and Doctors, which was proven recently when Thatcham Health Centre and the Burdwood Centre were not taking any appointments. If this new development is built how are the local dentists and doctors going to manage another potential 3 to 4,000 patients? At best no new doctors or dentist accommodation will be built until building is well underway/or finished so excessive pressure will be put on these services. Schools and schooling will suffer badly with this increase in numbers of pupils. As quoted in the residents newsletter of 24th February "1,500 homes in north east Thatcham is proposed which can provide the necessary housing and supporting infrastructure". But there does not seem to be a clear plan as to how the necessary supporting infrastructure will be achieved to accommodate the increased local population regarding Health and Education when it is not even adequate for the present population.

Car Park on Harts Hill

Why is an access and car park proposed on Harts Hill? What purpose does it serve? This will only encourage more traffic on to Harts Hill which is definitely not suitable for heavy traffic especially when approaching Upper Bucklebury.

The car park could encourage night time antisocial behaviour which is apparent in various car parks on Bucklebury common.

Alternative Sites/General

How much consideration has been given to alternative sites, for example Colthrop and looking at potential brown field sites creating smaller developments over a wider area but still achieving the same number of additional housing and making the local supply of supporting services more achievable. Also, with the recent pandemic and high numbers of the employees working from home, the council could also look at converting more commercial properties into residential properties without having to build on vast acreage of countryside. This could also encourage our town centres to be thriving places once again. Vodafone have recently downsized their HQ from seven buildings to four by virtue of people working from home.

Within the past ten years an application for 700 house was put before the council at the bottom of Harts Hill adjacent to the A4 at the current time WBC refused this application, although I understand it went to appeal but nothing happened. Why is WBC now giving its approval to the same site but with increased numbers of housing?

There is also a proposed development at Sandleford, which I believe was approved but where nothing has happened for at least 10 years as the council and developers cannot seem to agree on access why can this not be resolved and progressed?

Countryside and Wildlife

Building 1,500 (at least) residential properties abutting an AONB will have detrimental affect on the current wildlife. It will push what is there now further towards Upper Bucklebury and beyond, and no doubt there will be more wildlife killed on the roads with the increased traffic and reducing the wildlife's range. Is the council going to have full audit of what wildlife is within the area so that any rare or low numbers of flora are noted and protected before any potential building commences?

Flooding

Has any account been taken into consideration about flooding if this development goes ahead? Harts Hill to Upper Bucklebury is very steep and I can see that in recent years with higher and heavier rainfall that these residential properties will be liable to flooding as was north Thatcham in recent years. The current flood alleviation schemes are nowhere near Harts Hill so these sites will not have any beneficial help.

For me and my family this proposed development will have a negative impact on us with increased traffic and extra strain on local support services and a great spoiling of what is now a very beautiful area one which will never be reclaimed once it is covered with housing.

Yours faithfully

[REDACTED]

Email : [REDACTED]