

From: [REDACTED]
To: [PlanningPolicy](#)
Subject: WBC LPR Regulation 19 Objection
Date: 28 February 2023 20:17:45

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Christa Steer

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[REDACTED]

28/02/2023

Subject: WBC LPR Regulation 19 Objection

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to object to this plan as a local resident who is impacted by the flawed nature of the plan and proposals outlined.

First off, I live in the [REDACTED]. This plan directly and negatively impacts the traffic flow through the village. Many of the children in the village walk to the local school as well as older children walking to the bus stops for their secondary school buses. Not only will increased traffic pose a significant safety threat, but also the current road infrastructure of the village is not viable to sustain the increased traffic directed this way through the exit at the north site on Harts Hill. Traffic to and from this site will be funnelled towards Upper Bucklebury. The road quality is already poor and increased traffic will not only further deteriorate the quality of the road but poses increased safety risk due to volume. This funnelling of traffic will put the village under significant burden and be of detriment to local residents.

The plan also details drawings of a new car park on Harts Hill which is unclear in its purpose. The logic behind this has not been clearly laid out. This will add more traffic to an already busy road and may also encourage anti-social behaviour at night-time which will put our local residents at risk as well as putting local police under unnecessary burden.

Lastly on traffic impacts, the council has come back to the SEA and indicated 'the policy is likely to have a Positive impact on road safety as safe travel will be critical to the design of the site.' and 'The policy is likely to have a significant impact on walking, cycling and public transport as the development should be designed with these in mind.'

There is no substance to these statements. They do not adequately demonstrate how this 'positive impact' will actually take effect. There is no clear evidence to support these statements and as such they must be considered null and void at best and misleading at worst.

Next; Healthcare. Concerningly, there is a lack of planning and care for this subject in the plan. There is no clear evidence to show that a prospective HIA specific to the proposed NE Thatcham development has been arranged or published by WBC or the developers. Furthermore, there has been no recorded direct engagement between the NE Thatcham Development Consortium and local general practices (local GPs) on setting up a new site or logistics around this.

The NHS Berkshire West Clinical Commissioning Group confirms there is a worse shortage of GPs in other parts of the country and as such it is clear that there is no real prospect of a new GP practice being established in Thatcham or West Berkshire as a result of this as our area will be a much lower priority vs other areas in the country with greater need and demand. Any indication in the plan therefore around establishing a new GP surgery are misleading, unrealistic and purely lip-service. The true viability has not been fully considered.

There has also been limited provision to mitigate the impact of increased patients to both local GP surgeries (three in the vicinity) and Thatcham dental practices. The three GP surgeries (Thatcham Medical Practice, Chapel Row and Burdwood Surgery) are already over-stretched with the current local population. Adding 1500 new houses and patients into that is therefore unfeasible.

Next; the environment. There are a number of challenges with regards to the environment for this plan which indicate the plan is unsound in this area. There is concern over the damage to the Bucklebury Plateau Biodiversity Opportunity Area and particularly the Common. There is no evidence to support the claims that SP17 will have a positive impact on the environment - there is reason to believe the impact will actually be negative due to the damage to the local biodiversity and the Common. A Sustainability Charter is required but there is no evidence that this has been undertaken or shared publicly.

With the development proposal and an estimate of 4000 additional people concentrated on one site the detailed provisions for parks and green space are at risk of not being appropriate for the volume of people. There is no indication of management of parks or detailed proposals for what these may look like. The initial proposed country parks have also now been downgraded to 'community parks.' The plan therefore lacks evidence of adequate green space and steps to protect biodiversity as well as lacking any mitigation of impact of footfall on nearby countryside.

The Sustainability Appraisal from the Local Plan Review accepts that SP17 will have a negative impact on environmental sustainability. 'The site is a greenfield site and

therefore would result in a negative impact on environmental sustainability which would need to be mitigated.' There is no view or detail around plans to mitigate this; only the need to do so. The same Appraisal then contradicts this by indicating an overall positive impact on sustainability through not taking into consideration the impacts on the environment (impact on biodiversity, impact on a major greenfield site, impact on legally protected wildlife) and outweighing any impacts with a perceived social and economic benefit impact.

Finally; Education. This is an area particularly important to me as a resident as I have a young son and another baby due in July. Within the Local Plan Review, the provision of Nursery, Early Years, Primary and Secondary education is not clearly outlined. There are no details for Nursery or Early Years. There is unclear information shared around Primary Education with no evidence or insight to support any view of planned numbers.

For Secondary education, there are no details of the location of the land to be provided or suitability of this; just a sum available from the developers to contribute to secondary education (without associated detailed timescales). There is not a number of Form Entries defined or satisfactory evidence of the number of pupils the school would cater for. There is also no clear provision or funding for adequate Sports Fields which require flat land and the only available land being adjacent to the A4 with all its traffic and fumes. The provision of Secondary schooling is unclear and lacking. Currently the two catchment secondary schools are The Downs School or Kennet. Where the schools are oversubscribed, children closer to their location are prioritised. The NE Thatcham children would therefore be prioritised for Kennet, removing the choice in this scenario for Bucklebury children. This proposal is therefore detrimental to our children and the future children of Upper Bucklebury.

In conclusion, as a local resident I am extremely concerned about this plan due to the lack of detail, clarity and believe this will have an adverse impact on myself and my family both now and in the future. Given my above objections, I find this plan to be lacking in robustness and feasibility.

Regards,
Christa Steer