

3rd February 2023

Dear West Berks Council Planning Team,

RE: NE Thatcham Development

I object to this proposed development. Here are my key concerns:

1. With this scale of development increased traffic pressure is inevitable. With the proposed exit on to Harts Hill a proportion of traffic will be routed via Burdens Heath to Cold Ash/Hermitage and the M4 and via Upper Bucklebury to Chapel Row. These roads are wholly inadequate. This is also inconsistent with encouraging the use of safe walking and cycling.
2. Harts Hill is a notoriously bad road with frequent accidents. Funnelling more traffic in this direction is dangerous.
3. I understand that more houses are needed. However, the scale of this development is wholly out of reasonable proportion for the ability of local amenities to cope. It merely continues with further residential development in the Thatcham areas which lacks a viable range of retail/office space that encourages and enables green travel within local communities and a viable local economy. It appears that WBC are merely chasing housing targets without insightful thought as to how to create viable and environmentally sustainable local communities.
4. Thatcham has been blighted by high volumes of HGVs from the Colthrope site which was a fundamental strategic planning error blighting the lives of Thatcham residents for decades. NET development only intensifies the out of balance nature of such large developments.
5. Please ban HGVs accessing major truck routes via Thatcham; they should be routed east to the M4.
6. I would like to challenge WBC statement that “The policy is likely to have a significant impact on walking, cycling and public transport....” How did WBC arrive at this unsubstantiated conclusion?
7. I would like to challenge WBC on the detailed plan that will result in enhanced health care facilities for a significant increase in population. I believe WBC assumptions are unsubstantiated and not evidence based and joined up with other healthcare agencies.
8. NHS dental provision in Thatcham is wholly inadequate today. WBC have not addressed how this issue will be addressed with an increased population.
9. The proposed NET development will cause harm to the Bucklebury Plateau Biodiversity Opportunity Area; how could it not with a development of this scale and impact. This is not acceptable.
10. This is a greenfield development within a landscape setting of the NWD AONB. The enjoyment and protection of this area will be harmed with a development of this scale. I challenge WBC to provide evidence to support the claim that this development will have a positive impact on the environment.
11. WBC proposal of ‘country parks’ normally means glorified dog toilets. This is no real amenity at all; only of limited benefit for dog owners and a place to avoid for everyone else.
12. The provision for all educational ages is not thought through or substantiated. Over the past 3 years 14% of early years settings have been lost in the UK. WBC can not simply ignore the wider policy issues and provision of early years facilities and impact on local communities and access for many to work opportunities.

13. The children of Bucklebury should continue to have a choice of secondary school and not be shoehorned towards the Downs School; that makes no sense.

Regards,

Kathleen McQuillen

