

From: [REDACTED]  
To: [PlanningPolicy](#)  
Subject: WBC LPR Regulation 19 Objection  
Date: 01 March 2023 17:45:58

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To whom it may concern at West Berkshire Planning,

I object to the West Berkshire Local Plan Review 2022-2039 proposed submission as it is unsound, due to the following reasons:

West Berkshire Council needs to understand that this is a rural county, not a built up conurbation. This is how the A4 will end up if Policy RSA13: Land north of A4 Bath Road, Woolhampton (Site Ref MID4); Policy SP17 HSA17 RSA13 North East Thatcham Strategic Site Allocation and Policy RSA9 Land between A340 and The Green, Theale (Site Ref: HSA 14) are allowed to go ahead. Being a rural council, and due to the landscape, West Berkshire is never going to be a rich council due to the number of inhabitants. But it must remember that each and every one of its inhabitants is entitled to a decent quality of life, easy and acceptable access to work; home; food provision; activities in the open air; decent healthcare provision for both health and dentistry; and schooling for all ages, and in my view this plan does not support that.

Why is West Berkshire Council not insisting on all the new properties being built with solar and wind power as from now, as well as any other long term eco building practices. You do not need to wait for the Government's target date before taking action. Brownfield sites should be used first and not just built to make up government target numbers. Woolhampton is a rural village and not part of a town, and should never be part of any aim to build along the A4 from Bristol to London, so there are no green fields visible.

Policy RSA13: Land north of A4 Bath Road, Woolhampton (Site Ref MID4) The plan for these 16 houses has been rejected already and has been refused on appeal. This should be dropped from the plan.

Policy SP17 HSA17 RSA13 North East Thatcham Strategic Site Allocation will add a small town onto the north east of Thatcham. The plan shows no difference in size to the previous plan that was for 2,500 homes. Yes, the plan has been put back in timescales but if this is accepted, we all know that in the next plan the extra 1,000 houses will be added. The diagram needs to be amended as to what will be built up to 2039. This has a huge impact as the provision of schools etc are dependent on the full number of houses being built, this is no longer clear that any provision for schooling will be made.

**Transport:**

The current roads in West Berkshire are no longer fit for current capacity and purpose. Adding all these homes in both Policy RSA13: Land north of A4 Bath Road, Woolhampton (Site Ref MID4) and Policy SP17 HSA17 RSA13 North East Thatcham Strategic Site Allocation, would have a catastrophic and detrimental impact to Woolhampton and other villages along the A4. As it is, it takes long enough to get onto the A4 from Woolhampton Hill when the traffic is clear (taken over 20 minutes before), and not just at peak times, when you can wait much longer.

We all know the car is and will remain king as this is a rural place and all transport

options are not going to be available. Safety is a priority, and I do not think this has been achieved in this plan. I believe that any traffic trip rates used by West Berkshire Council are unreliable - who takes traffic readings at 09.30 on a school day and calls it peak time? What proper assessments have been made of the routes that are most likely to be affected by the increase in traffic?

Policy RSA13: Land north of A4 Bath Road, Woolhampton (Site Ref MID4) looks like it will go straight onto the A4 - this will add another junction within a few feet of New Road Hill and the entrance to the Village Hall and the houses there. So far there does not seem to be a proper solution to enable traffic to access these properties and then how they move properly through the village.

Policy SP17 HSA17 RSA13 North East Thatcham Strategic Site Allocation would increase traffic by at least 3,000 cars - based on 1,500 homes and each house having 2 cars. We know the number of houses is still not confirmed but in the overall life of the project (after 2039) we would expect at least 2,500 homes, so 5,000 cars. Adding this number of vehicles getting onto the A4 and going through our villages. The Thatcham Railway crossing is not fit for access now let alone when you add a further 3,000 cars going over it. In [REDACTED] when moving to Thatcham I was asked if I had found the Thatcham bypass - Tull Way to Floral Way - well it is no longer a bypass but an essential road and quite often congested at all hours of the day. Every time roads are closed, people find other cut throughs, causing large amounts of traffic to use unsuitable roads and blocking other routes. These rural roads are not built for this amount of traffic. 3 way traffic lights at Woolhampton's BP Garage last week caused endless tailbacks and meant people were unable to exit from Woolhampton's side roads, yet again, meaning people turning around in unsafe places and creating other rat runs.

As I have several years before I retire, I do not want to spend my time getting to and from work caught in tailbacks of traffic trying to get from A to B. If I wanted that I would have chosen to live in a town. Mine and my family's quality of life will be severely impacted by these proposals.

#### **Water, Waste Water and Sewage:**

Policy RSA13: Land north of A4 Bath Road, Woolhampton (Site Ref MID4), 16 houses to add to the already overburdened Waste Water Treatment Works in Woolhampton. Site Ref MID4 is located in the Parish of Midgham, the sewage and water come from the Parish of Woolhampton, there is no impact on the Parish of Midgham of these buildings. So far there seems to be no solution to this issue.

Policy SP17 HSA17 RSA13 North East Thatcham Strategic Site Allocation would impact the local reservoirs and increase the impact on the local treatment areas. Harts Hill Road was closed for months recently when Thames Water needed to update the pipes up to Upper Bucklebury. This caused enormous disruption and impacts on business and homes alike, within the Bucklebury parish and surrounding parishes. With potentially 1,500 (2,500) homes bordering the way up to Upper Bucklebury, this will again have a detrimental impact on the village.

#### **Environmental Impacts:**

All the proposed plans will have an environmental impact on wildlife, flora, fauna and habitats. There is no evidence to support claims that SP17 will have a positive impact on the environment. But there is every reason to believe it will have a significantly negative impact. This plan shows there is no evidence of any serious attempt to investigate, analyse or systematically address the environmental consequences of any building works across West Berkshire.

Policy RSA13: Land north of A4 Bath Road, Woolhampton (Site Ref MID4) has an ancient woodland next to it. The Planning document says there will be a buffer of at least 15 metres between this and the development. How is this implemented? And will the same buffer be applied between Mariners Lodge and the development, to allow access for wildlife to New Road Hill?

Policy SP17 HSA17 RSA13 North East Thatcham Strategic Site Allocation will have a huge detrimental impact on wildlife, loss of habitat and reduction in much needed farmland in the area. We do not produce enough food to feed our nation, so we should be encouraging farmland to be put to the best possible use and encouraging the diversity of habitats, for insects, flora, and fauna. The change of use of this land will destroy the natural pathways between species, plants, trees, and fungi and mean protected and unprotected species could be lost forever.

My objection to Policy SP17 HSA17 RSA13 North East Thatcham Strategic Site Allocation is also about the proposed educational provision, which is far from clear, the inclusion of GP practices and no view of any form of discussion with healthcare providers over the correct need.

In addition, what also needs to be considered is the change to planning rules/guidance which is due to come from the Government in 2023, after Michael Gove (Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities) released a Written Ministerial Statement (<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-statements/detail/2022-12-06/hcws415>) detailing that the housing number should now be an advisory starting point and not mandatory.

This plan is unsound and should be looked at in more detail before the next submission.

Yours sincerely

Stephanie Molloy

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