

From: [REDACTED]
To: [PlanningPolicy](#)
Subject: Response to Local Plan Review West Berkshire Local Plan Review 2022 – 2039
Date: 02 March 2023 11:53:12

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To whom it may concern,

I am submitting my objection to LPR RSA10 Whitehart Meadow, Theale – 40 properties, as part of the West Berkshire Local Plan Review 2022 – 2039.

I am a current resident of [REDACTED] (Ami Painter, [REDACTED]) and I object to the plans on the following grounds:

Your Vision:

3.3 The development will negatively impact the infrastructure meaning it will not be sustainable either for the existing residents of Theale, or those who would be likely to settle in the new development if it were to be built. It will not foster community cohesion, health and wellbeing as it will blur the division of local areas between Theale and Calcot with the location of the site next to the M4, it will eliminate a natural area that people use to walk and exercise which will negatively impact the mental health of the existing residents who utilise this space.

Strategic Objectives:

7 Building on this site will not conserve or enhance the character or identity of the village. The village is already overpopulated, and this site would not be in keeping with the natural area where the land is located and would be detrimental to the rural feel of the village/community by becoming more brown land than green land which is already limited within this service centre.

Infrastructure:

4.2 The proposed development for this site is not a positive vision for the future. The impact to the village's infrastructure would be significant e.g. amenities such as the GP Surgery, Schools and high street facilities are already struggling to cope with the current population, without the additional proposed 200+ properties that are designated for Theale overall. This also contravenes the effective use of previously developed land.

4.12 The plans contravene the rural setting of Theale, as the additional development would reduce the rural space, negatively impacting the rural nature of the village.

4.19 The village does not need regenerating, as there already numerous areas of the village that have been redeveloped, as well as the growth of the commercial side of this service centre, with the upgrading of units within Arlington Business Park and the surrounding commercial areas near to the railway line. The site is also not an existing urban area which would be regarded as a more

suitable location for future development.

4.20 This site does not meet the strategy's aim of making effective use of brownfield land.

4.30 Theale's infrastructure struggles to cope with key services and opportunities with the Primary school being relocated to a larger site, which reduced the open recreational green space of North Street playing fields, due to the demand on the school that the previous location could not support. There are no regular public transport links compared with other rural service centres, as the bus service is approx. every 30 minutes, with trains being the same if not marginally more frequently. Due to the location of the village and the lack of frequent public transport options, residents use their own vehicles, with most having a least 2 cars which causes an abundance of parking issues within the currently overpopulated residential areas of the village.

5.i. This development would not improve the wildlife habitat and species conservation in line with climate change. There are numerous types of wildlife living or frequenting the Whitehart Meadow, with deer and other such animals using the space from the local Englefield Estate. This is as well as red kites and other species of birds that nest and hunt in that area.

5.1 In response to climate change, if extreme weather events such as flash floods are a concern, this development would cause an issue as this area is a flood risk. The properties that run alongside the meadow already have to take flood risk into account when considering mortgages etc. and a development on this site would only increase that risk. This could make it harder for people to purchase existing homes in this area if the risk were deemed too high that it would create an issue for mortgages and making existing homes in the area depreciate in value and not viable to sell.

K. The development would increase the number of people, properties and infrastructure at risk of flooding due to the reduction of the floodplain (section L) and would not mitigate flood risk but increase it. It would also exacerbate flooding problems on the proposal site and elsewhere as the flooding would increase in the recreational space between Whitehart Meadow and the old sewage works (RSA11 Former sewage treatment works, Theale).

5.28A The development would not fit into the life and texture of the village, nor would it be an improvement of the place. This is due to the significant impact on the infrastructure of the amenities of the village (as mentioned previously) as well as the highways infrastructure. There is already access issues at the M4 end of the High Street whereby traffic from junction 12 or any issues on the A4 cause a build-up and essentially block access to and from this end of the High Street and into the estates down Woodfield Way. This is already a significant concern with the lack of access for emergency vehicles for the residents in this area, as well as the abundance of street parking in that area where properties do not have adequate parking spaces and often narrow and limit easy access further into the estate.

5.30 The above also demonstrates how the development would contravene the practical use of the site by ensuring it is well connected, accessible, safe and easy for people to find, as it would not meet any of this criteria based on the location being at a dead end with a severe pinch point when traffic both through the High Street and on the A4/junction 12 are at its peak.

Landscape Character:

C: The development in conjunction with that planned for the old sewage works is not in context of the existing settlement. If the 2 sites were to go ahead, the developments would envelop the existing recreational space that would be left on Woodfield Way, effectively strangling the only remaining open land at the M4 side of the village. This would adversely affect the conservation (5.36) of the site in addition to being at odds with West Berkshire Council's plan of keeping the recreational space between the 2 proposed sites as a wildflower meadow to encourage wildlife habitation.

5.42 This development would not retain an actual or perceived visual break in settlements, as the residential areas of the village would populate the land up to the M4 and would not be a distinguished break between where Theale ends and the Calcot boundary starts. It would also eliminate the 'green routes' (F) used to commute or travel on foot or cycle, where residents use the meadow to walk through to access the only footpath to cross the M4.

Green infrastructure G: the development would not improve biodiversity and increase natural capital as it would displace many animals that use the meadow as their habitat, as well as obliterating West Berkshire Council's desired extension of wildlife corridors to provide habitat connectivity.

5.64 The planned development at this site does not meet the Council's commitment for strengthening local and strategic green infrastructure across the district for the benefit of the natural environment and health and wellbeing of the community. It reduces the green space and also areas for residents to exercise in and take time away from the built-up urban areas of the village.

Nationally Designated Sites:

There are suitable alternative sites with lesser impacts than proposed with the development on Whitehart Meadow. There is already a site at the end of the village at The Green/A4 junction which has planning permission for 100 units which would negate the need to build a development in restricted areas at the opposite end of the village.

5.70 The development on Whitehart Meadow would significantly reduce the buffer zone landscape feature protecting the residents from the M4 corridor. Residents along Woodfield Way and adjacent roads already experience an issue with air quality and noise from the M4. A

development closer to the M4 would increase the effects experienced with black soot and dust being a common build-up in homes along Woodfield Way from the heavy motorway traffic, as well as the noise experienced from the motorway and roadworks that consistently take place at junction 12.

5.80 This development would destroy an irreplaceable habitat.

Policy SP 11

This development would not provide or retain an appropriate buffer zone between development proposals and designated sites. Both in terms of existing properties, and the planned development of the old sewage works next to Whitehart Meadow.

5.67 The development would not promote conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and would not secure opportunities for a net gain for biodiversity.

6.4 Although collaborative working between West Berkshire Council, Wokingham Borough, Reading Borough and Bracknell Forest Councils can support local residents, it is having a detrimental impact to Theale with this planned development. If RBC have a shortfall of properties in their district, it should not mean that the required properties should be forced upon neighbouring areas which would lead to a detrimental impact on that area, its amenities and overall infrastructure. Theale should not have to bear the brunt of the failings of RBC's Reading Local Plan within their own district.

6.8 If no shortfall has been identified from other adjacent authorities or any of the other authorities within the Western Berkshire HMA have been identified, Theale should not be negatively affected by the developments proposed in order to satisfy the failings of other Councils, especially when there hasn't been a housing need/crisis identified in Theale specifically. This development would not serve local people and would only encourage residents to move in from surrounding areas, putting further pressure on the highways network, the limited public transport links, as well as local amenities that are already stretched beyond capacity. This would also not enhance or deepen the existing bonds in the community and could cause resentment from existing residents both in terms of the development taking place as well as towards the residents who may not be local to the area or contribute to immediate community.

6.73 This development contravenes the approach of the Council supporting the development of housing schemes that are initiated by local communities, as this site has not been initiated by local communities as an area for development that would benefit the village, landscape or community.

Town and District Centres: This develop would contravene the following principles that the

development should:

- Not have an adverse impact on the safety and capacity of the local highway network; and
- Not have an adverse impact on local amenity.

As it would create both.

7.52 This development would not be supported by adequate and appropriate infrastructure. The GP Surgery is already oversubscribed and cannot cope with the current level of patients. The amenities in the High Street are not adequate for the current number of residents in Theale. The parking is restricted, there are no longer any Banks, the pharmacy constantly under performs due to the pressures of struggling to fulfil orders based on the over subscription of patients at the GP Surgery, as well as the highways network struggling due to the number of residents as well as those commuting through Theale to the larger areas of Newbury and Reading where Theale sits in between.

This development would place undue burdens on the existing infrastructure and facilities.

Environmental Nuisance and Pollution Control:

The development would create an unacceptable increase in pollution, including from light, noise, dust, vibration and/or odour. It would also cause noise or vibrations of a level which would disturb areas that are valued for their tranquillity in terms of recreation or amenity.

10.45 Where the trees have been cut down already in Whitehart Meadow, this has now exposed Woodfield Way and surrounding streets to higher levels of light and noise pollution where the natural buffer has been removed. If a development were to be built on this site, it would increase the light and noise pollution as well as being an impact on those residents who would be living closer to the M4 and pylon.

Water Framework: Woodfield Way and the surrounding roads already suffer from poor wastewater treatment and water resources. There is often Thames Water working on the water station based in Alderfield Close, as well as regularly having to work on drains etc. along Woodfield Way. During extremes of weather in the summer, the water pressure dropped so severely that residents experienced issues with pipes rattling and air blocks where the infrastructure could not cope with the hose pipe ban and reduced water pressure levels with the existing numbers of residents/properties in the village.

Policy DM 8

Trees, woodlands and hedge rows:

There does not seem to be an exceptional circumstance for the loss or deterioration of protected trees, groups of trees, woodland or important hedgerows for this development.

Residential Amenity:

The development would cause unacceptable harm to existing residential dwellings in terms of the following criteria:

- Significant loss of daylight and/or sunlight to land and buildings;
- Significant overlooking of land and buildings that results in a harmful loss of privacy;
- Development resulting in an undue sense of enclosure, overbearing impact, or a harmful loss of outlook; and
- Noise, dust, fumes and odours.

Additional Comments:

The development would create further parking issues in Theale and would negatively impact existing residents would already experience problems with the roads and highways infrastructure in Theale.

The development would also create a burden in relation to the AWE 12km consultation zone for both the Aldermaston and Burghfield sites. The additional residents that would fall within this zone as a result of the development would create an unsafe environment within an already precarious position given the locality of the AWE sites to Theale.

In summary:

- Flood risk
- High voltage overhead power lines cross the site
- Noise and pollution from the motorway
- Possible land contamination
- Need to preserve the gap between Theale and Calcot/Tilehurst
- Impact on the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- Risk from fluvial, surface water and ground water flooding
- Impact on the Theale High Street Conservation Area
- Impact on surrounding housing
- Impact on infrastructure and amenities

The objections I have stated above would also apply to my objections for RSA11 Former sewage treatment works, Theale planned development.

Kind regards

Ami Painter

