

From: [REDACTED]
To: [PlanningPolicy](#)
Subject: WBC LPR Regulation 19 Objection
Date: 02 March 2023 23:43:39

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To Whom it may concern,

WBC LPR Regulation 19 Objection

I am writing to object to the planned development in northeast Thatcham as I find this unsound.

As a long term resident of Thatcham, I am concerned about this development for a variety of reasons:

Healthcare

GP Surgeries in Thatcham are already oversubscribed and it can take 3 -4 weeks to get a routine appointment. The building of an additional 1500 houses will put a huge strain on the GP surgeries yet there does not seem to be an evidenced plan on how these issues will be resolved.

The North-East Thatcham development plan (SP17) proposes a 450 sq m primary healthcare facility with the suggestion that a GP Surgery be offered to the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board or other such appropriate body. However, the document lacks any details into strategic healthcare planning.

NHS England rarely commissions new GP practices even where they consider there to be patient demand for improved services. NHS Digital figures of patients registered in the NHS Berkshire West Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) confirm there is an even worse shortage of GPs in other areas of the country. There is therefore no realistic prospect of a new GP practice being established in Thatcham or West Berkshire in the foreseeable future.

Five of the 10 lowest performing surgeries for percentages for same-day appointments came from this district. Both of the Thatcham Surgeries, The Burdwood Surgery and Thatcham Health Centre are in this group.

Thatcham dental practices are unable to provide dental care for the whole population with a significant minority of patients needing to travel further afield for NHS and private dental care. Thatcham Vision, endorsed by WBC in 2016, confirmed only 60% of residents were registered at a Thatcham dentist (with 17.5% registered with a doctor outside Thatcham). There is no evidence provided that either WBC or the developers have approached any local dental practices regarding the potential impact of increased workload resulting from additional housing.

Thatcham Town Regeneration

As you state in the plan, Thatcham town center and facilities badly need regeneration, only after that is complete, should any new housing be considered.

Transport

Traffic on the local roads is already overwhelming at peak times, with queues on Floral Way every morning, the A4 is very congested to the point that traffic will divert down country lanes which are unfit for the volume.

Since Covid, significantly fewer trains to/from Thatcham have been running. Given the lack of coordination around the transport policy, the plan will drive many more people onto the roads that are already struggling to cope.

Schools Provision Overview

The building of 1500 houses will obviously vastly increase the number of children in Thatcham yet the provision for education from Nursery, Early Years, through Infant to Secondary education is not clearly defined within the Local Plan Review (LPR). There is no coherent end-to-end plan: this therefore breaches the Council's obligations to provide education facilities for children. Without this provision, the Plan for a large new housing development is untenable.

The lack of a coherent Plan on Schools Provision across the various proposed developments also means that it is impossible to estimate the subsequent impact on traffic. The siting of a secondary school to the NE of Thatcham would result in a significant increase in traffic across the whole Thatcham area, not considered in the traffic plans and models in the LPR.

Unless the infrastructure (Schools, GP's, Shops etc) are built and functional in the first phase of the development the local community will suffer. Kennet School for instance has a capacity of 1881 **and** an actual number of pupils of 1860, so they **won't** be in a position to absorb the extra.

Flooding

Whilst there have clearly been extra measures built into the latest plans with the Wetlands Park, they have built over a large area of land that would normally soak up the rain. I doubt very much the small wetland areas proposed would provide any safety net for those on the other side of the A4, and we can look forward to a repeat of the 2007 floods.

It is hard to see how the Thatcham area can support a development of this size without a huge detrimental effect on its residents and the environment. I hope you take my concerns into account when considering this proposal.

With regards,

Pamela Darroch

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