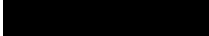


From: 
To: [PlanningPolicy](#)
Subject: Consultation on the Proposed Main Modifications to the West Berkshire Local Plan Review 2022-2039
Date: 14 December 2024 12:46:32

This is an EXTERNAL EMAIL. STOP. THINK before you CLICK links or OPEN attachments.

Dear Sir/Madam, in relation to the above consultation I would like to register the following concerns:

1. The proposal to build a specified number of homes in any location should be based on demographic requirements - what are these in West Berkshire ie: who actually needs homes (is it people who have to rent and can't afford to buy; first time buyers; young families; growing families; retired people; single people etc). such an understanding should then determine what facilities and access is necessary to support the relevant demographics. I have seen none of this in any published proposals or in the media and this must be the starting point before a single new house is built in my opinion.
2. I would also express concern regarding the fact that a substantial number of new apartments have been built in and around Newbury and yet many are still empty so who exactly are we building new homes for and can they afford them?
3. Furthermore, the number of large employers in the area has declined significantly. This in turn means that new house dwellers will need to travel to their work. How will they do this especially if it is to out of town business parks - most likely by car. The proposed location of so many of the new houses is hemmed in by local low capacity roads and although Thatcham has a station with connectivity to Theale and Reading, it is likely that working people will still want to travel to the station by car, putting further pressure on the local roads network which is already unfit for purpose.
4. What is the infrastructure planned to support all these new homes. The local dental practices cannot accept new NHS patients, the Royal Berkshire Hospital is at capacity, and I am not aware of any plans to increase the facilities/capacity/capabilities significantly of the West Berkshire Community Hospital. There does not appear to be any joined up thinking between building for building sake and specific geographic and demographic needs. If there is, this needs to be explained at the of front of document to impress upon central Government that a target for no other reason than it provides a media headline is utter nonsense and damaging to our local sustainability.
5. Lastly, and specifically regarding current and future environmental concerns, what are central Government doing about house design. Not a single house, in the yet to be finished, Donnington Heights estate has been built with solar panels and battery storage as part of the house builders remit - why not? Surely this should be a mandatory requirement of every new house and can be demanded by WBC as part of their approval process - yet it does not appear in this plan.

I would finish by saying that, far from being against new homes being built, I merely share the concerns of many people who I have spoken with, who also see that, with these new imposed spurious targets, there is a real risk of building inappropriate, poorly sited, eco-unfriendly housing in areas which have either (or both) poor infrastructure now or will create future infrastructure support problems that will be incredibly costly to address unless these concerns are fully addressed now.

Yours faithfully,

Neal Courtney



