

Email: [REDACTED]

1st March 2023

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: Regulation 19 Public Consultation

At the time of writing I am currently [REDACTED] and have lived in [REDACTED] my whole life. I have been very privileged to have been given the opportunity to grow up in such a beautiful area, and feel passionate that others in the future can experience the same freedom and beauty that I will always associate with my time here. I feel that with the current research available, it demonstrates that the current proposed plan would not enhance the experience of young people in the future, but instead negatively impact the local area and threaten the landscape for future generations.

The benefits of time spent outside have been widely reported in recent years, including improved cognitive function, brain activity, mental health and sleep (Jimenez et al, 2021). The local area is a popular area for walking - something that I noticed increased during the pandemic which has been supported by research (Bailey et al, 2022). Many people travel from local areas such as Thatcham up to Bucklebury in order to enjoy this Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) which is something that should be encouraged, but in a responsible way.

As an owner of two dogs, the local common is used at least once a day for walking. There is a very friendly sense of community, with everyone greeting each other as they pass and the opportunity to meet with family faces. However, especially during the pandemic I was concerned by how this increase in people led to a large number of out of control dogs which posed a danger to other users of the woods and wildlife. Dog attacks on horses are not uncommon (Horse and Hound, 2022), and there have been multiple occasions where I have experienced potential dangerous situations while horse riding in the woods including dogs jumping up in front of us and aggressively running behind. Dog walking has also been shown to have a negative impact on wildlife (Lett, 2007). This is not to say that responsible dog walking should be banned, but the proposed increase of at least 4,000 more people would lead to increasing numbers of dogs and walkers in this area wanting larger areas than “community parks”, with little being done to ensure that this will not have negative impacts. The increase in litter in the local area has also been a regular point of discussion, and something that will only be worsened by more people.

The vague mention of “community parks” as a plan to combat this is disproportionate to the amount of damage that will be caused by this development. The plans focus on replacing the damage caused, but by the time the project has been completed the wildlife living in these areas will have already been displaced - including protected species such as the nightjars that breed on Bucklebury Common. Limiting numbers of a species in a certain area due to a sudden threat such as this development can also lead to a reduction in genetic diversity, leaving the species vulnerable to further large reductions

if an infectious disease becomes spread on a local level as they are unable to adapt to environmental pressures (Furlan et al, 2012).

The main problem is that the plan involves building in a green field area which provides a habitat for wildlife and some of which currently has agricultural use. These areas should be protected for future generations and brownfield sites are associated with having less of a negative impact on biodiversity.

Yours faithfully



References:

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Horse and Hound (2022) *Dog Attacks on Horses: Understanding the Dangers* (online). Available from <www.horseandhound.co.uk/tag/dog-attacks> (Accessed 26th February 2023)

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