

To West Berkshire Planning

- I would like to OBJECT to the NE Thatcham Development of 1500 homes you are proposing as part of the West Berkshire Local Plan Review (Regulation 19) Consultation
- By virtue of its scale, proximity and high visibility from several approaches to the AONB and the wider landscape, the proposed extension will have a significant harmful effect upon the setting, sense of remoteness, tranquility and dark night skies of the North Wessex Downs AONB, contrary to Policy SP2 of the WBLPR and Paragraph 172 of the NPPF.
- The allocation is located on land forming part of the LCA WH4: Cold Ash Woodland and Heathland Mosaic Landscape Character Area as defined by the West Berkshire Landscape Character Assessment and includes land within the designated AONB. Accordingly, development of the type and scale proposed will result in the unacceptable loss of land which is of high landscape value in its own right, contrary to Policy SP8 of the WBLPR and Paragraph 170 of the NPPF.
- Paragraphs 1.26 and 2.24 of the Thatcham Growth Study (Stage 3) states that an objective of the Study is to avoid coalescence of settlements. However, the proposed development will significantly reduce the physical and perceived separation between Thatcham and Upper Bucklebury and an unacceptable loss of separate identity, contrary to the objectives of the Study, the AONB Management Plan, the West Berkshire Landscape Character Assessment, WBLPR Policies SP2 and SP8 and Paragraph 172 of the NPPF.
- The requirement for a network of green infrastructure linking Thatcham to the plateau and the AONB will result in an unacceptable increase in urban pressures on the environmental, economic and social fabric of the AONB, its communities and rural way of life, contrary to Paragraphs 91 and 172 of the NPPF.
- The proposed development will have an unacceptable impact on extensive areas of ancient woodland which adjoin the allocated site, contrary to Policy SP11, Dc4 and DC14 and Paragraphs 170 and 175 of the NPPF.
- The strategic site allocations at Sandleford and North East Thatcham are expected to deliver approx. 1,250 dwellings by 2037, which equates to nearly 50% of the total supply of dwellings to be delivered on all allocated sites over the plan period (4,670 dwellings). In light of the very real concerns about lead-in times and the deliverability of both sites, I believe there is an undue reliance on them. This has considerable potential to undermine the Councils ability to meet the housing needs of the area and maintain a 5 year housing supply over the plan period. The two sites also represent a significant component of the urban focus of the Spatial Strategy and are major contributors to the clear imbalance between urban and rural development, which is not justified by evidence and will have unacceptable consequences for the AONB, particularly with regard to meeting local housing need and maintaining vibrant and balanced communities.

Thank you for time.

F.Baker