

From: [REDACTED]
To: [PlanningPolicy](#)
Subject: WBC LPR Regulation 19 Objection - SP17
Date: 02 March 2023 21:44:16

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

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

I am writing to object to this proposal as I believe it is unsound, that it will have a negative impact on the environment, existing public services and potential road safety implications.

We outline our objections below.

Environment (AONB SP1 & SP 2) – the proposed development abuts Bucklebury Common and the North Wessex Downs AONB. Residents of the proposed new developments will be drawn to the Common and will significantly increase the pressures already evident on the delicate eco systems and existing wildlife. Parking on and around the Common is already exceeding capacity, with verges being used during peak periods, whilst the development is relatively close, not all residents will walk/cycle to the Common they are more likely to drive. The open spaces on the proposed developments will not be big enough or as appealing as the Common land within the AONB

The response that "***The development would involve a significant amount of open space which would be expected to serve the new population (and benefit the existing population)***" does not address the concern that an existing mature and diverse Common is far more attractive than a green area within a housing development for dog walkers, cyclists, off-roaders, etc.

Wildlife (SP11) - the impact on local eco systems and wildlife will be significant. Whilst plans identify mitigating actions (open space) and reference sustainable development it is quite clear that this development of farmland and natural open habitat will destroy areas

currently used and occupied by wildlife. The open spaces proposed in the development areas will not be enough either for the wildlife or the residents and the additional footfall, which is inevitable, will also impact wildlife on Bucklebury Common and the AONB.

The response that ***"In regards to impact on the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the Council is clear that development on the site will be landscape-led and has undertaken a Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment (LCA) which takes account of the AONB and which will provide the context within which any proposed development would need to conform. The LCA notes that whilst there is no strong inter[1]visibility between the site and the AONB it does lie close to it and concludes that the site does form part of the setting of the AONB. The LCA will be published as part of the council's evidence base to inform the proposed allocation."***

does nothing to address the impact of bulldozing existing mature farmland, building and laying tarmac, Being ***"landscape-led"*** is a not a sound argument when you've squashed all the wildlife and the songbird, bee and butterfly habitats that may or not return in a generation when we're being asked to protect our Countryside.

Traffic (SP17, SP22) - Thatcham is already a bottleneck for traffic flowing through the town on the A4 between Newbury and Reading. By introducing a new road network with the proposed traffic calming, traffic lights and roundabouts, the impact on the flow of traffic will be significant. All of the above will have a knock-on detrimental effect on the local roads and quiet lanes in Bucklebury as the additional cars and residents try to avoid the traffic chaos in and around Thatcham and the associated A4 area. The local lanes and roads which are designed with layouts, size and speed limits to support only local traffic will be used as short cuts through to Reading, Newbury and the M4 to avoid the A4 congestion. We note reference is made to the close proximity of the proposed developments to Thatcham Railway Station. The ability to get to the station at peak times is already near impossible by car. While we appreciate the plan places an emphasis on sustainable travel there is no requirement for residents to comply with this. Cycle ways and pedestrian routes may be included and built by the developers but in poor weather, the dark winter months and for convenience residents will turn to their cars and further impact on the already congested road network.

There was **no response** to our Objection and we have subsequently found out that there is a plan for an undisclosed northern exit from the site directly onto Harts Hill which connects Upper Bucklebury, Cold Ash and Bradfield indirectly to Thatcham.

They also provide access to the M4 at Chieveley and Theale and act as a "rat run".

Cold Ash has no footpaths and a School where cars regularly park in the road and children are offloaded - this is unsafe to promote more traffic through small Villages on B-roads which are in poor repair and are lined by Schools i.e. Cold Ash, Upper Bucklebury, Bradfield

Southend and Bradfield College.

Flood Risk (SP6) - Recent flood alleviation works to the North of Thatcham have been put in place to protect houses businesses and infrastructure in the areas most severely affected by the 2007 flooding event. The events will only increase. Whilst there are proposals included to manage the flow of surface water down into the valley (SUDS) they are not designed to support the heavy volume of water from such a large-scale development scheme. In extreme weather events which it is recognised will only increase in frequency and intensity, SUDS will simply release their water into the existing flood management scheme adding pressure on it and increasing the risk of Thatcham flooding again.

The response that ***"In regards to concerns raised in relation to the risk of flooding, new flood alleviation measures would be built in to the development. There is a current planning application (as of 1st February 2022) for a basin on the corner of Floral Way and Bath Road, as part of Thatcham's flood alleviation strategy. Flood attenuation schemes are included in the IDP."*** This all sounds very promising but until they are tested who knows if they will work. Thatcham flooded in 2007 largely because of the relatively small development around Floral Way, this development is significantly larger and on higher steeper ground and the run off will be faster and more significant.

Pollution - the development will generate significant levels of light pollution again impacting on wildlife and the eco systems adjacent which will drive these natural pleasures away from the area. Notwithstanding the effect for local residents on their night sky.

Pollution - the volume of homes and associated transport requirements will generate increased pollution from carbon emissions as well as those associated with population density. The clean air experienced on the Common and the AONB currently will be a thing of the past.

The response given does not address our concerns, the street lighting you can control is one aspect, however domestic lighting, garden floodlights, fireworks (in the season) are beyond your control.

Cars and central heating fumes are also beyond your control.

Rail - While Thatcham railway station is within a reasonable distance of the proposed sites there is no capacity for additional cars, railway or on [1]road parking. There is no reference

to any consideration around improving the infrastructure networks around the railway station and without this the already creaking system will be overwhelmed and fail. The trains currently stopping at Thatcham are governed by the length of the platform. Larger capacity trains will require a further platform extension and will require the level crossing to be closed for longer periods.

Our Rail concern is not addressed in the response however the issue of increased traffic is recognised "**TA report also acknowledges that there would be delays at junctions and the highway network on the A4 corridor and adjoining links as a result of the THA20 development, including some displacement of A4 traffic onto wider rural routes such as Upper Bucklebury. For instance, without mitigation the transport models used do show significant impacts along the A4 and Floral Way**" - it's impact is recognised but not adequately addressed.

"Concern regarding infrastructure provision is noted. Development which does not provide adequate and timely infrastructure will not be supported. An Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) has been produced to support the LPR, and as part of the masterplanning work liaison has taken place with infrastructure providers. The IDP is a 'living document' and will be updated regularly updated in consultation with infrastructure providers"

Medical - Medical services in Thatcham Bucklebury Cold Ash Chapel Row and Bradfield Southend are already under pressure, with some at capacity. New services are included in the proposed scheme (GP surgery) however there is no obligation for these services to be provided prior to completion of the housing. Indeed, we believe these will wait until the demand reaches a specified level. In the intervening period new residents will expect to join existing surgeries and services already at capacity. We wonder how and when the NHS will be engaged on these proposals to start planning for the influx of thousands of families who will expects schools GPs and hospitals to take care of them.

Our concerns have not been addressed.

The provision of medical services is not within the gift of the Developers, only the NHS and ultimately the Department of Health and the Treasury who control the funding for GP Practices and Dentists. These are over-subscribed in Thatcham and the surrounding districts and if something was built there aren't the Doctors, Dentists or Healthcare Professional to staff them. Don't build a future problem for existing residents hoping that the answer will present itself.

Observations

These still stand, Thatcham remains a small town that has little or no investment over the years.

By granting permission for this development the local authority is again devolving its responsibilities by placing the need to provide services and infrastructure onto others. Before West Berkshire Council considers further development in Thatcham it should first demonstrate, to existing residents, its commitment to invest in the area. Without this WBC will continue to face strong opposition to applications that see housing numbers increase significantly while anticipating the infrastructure and investment will be made by others in their own timeframes.

The response to our earlier submission does not reassure me, quite the contrary.

The new undisclosed northern access from the development to Harts Hill and Upper Bucklebury giving cars access to the ANOB and the opportunity to avoid the congested A4 fills me with dread...

We are opposing the North East Thatcham Development Proposal THA20.

Yours sincerely,

