

From: [REDACTED]
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Subject: Representation re W.Berks Local Plan Review. SP17
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Consultation on Proposed Main Modifications to the West Berkshire Local Plan Review 2022 -2039

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WBC LOCAL PLAN MODIFICATIONS MM25 & MM26

This seems to have been rushed, a convenient proposal made by WBC . Focused on magnifying an already expansive development with little care as to the impact of such an expedient decision. WBC has not done enough to ensure that residents are aware and can respond easily to these proposals. I was not aware of any meeting where a representative came to discuss the proposed modifications and their impact with residents and Parish councillors.

ISSUES

Soundness

I do not consider the Proposed Main Modifications to be sound.
Positively Prepared x
Justified x
Effective x

No evidence that an additional 1000+ dwellings are needed in this greenfield development to meet WB's housing needs. It is not clear where these additional dwellings will be located within the development boundary without further encroachment on a rural environment and designated open spaces.

It is not clearly demonstrated how the provision of all infrastructure services will be met In advance of need, in a timely way , in a co ordinated way .The additional numbers must have a profound impact on delivery of such pivotal services. There seems to be insufficient evidence of what provision will be in place to meet the needs of so many more families. Little recognition of the impact the increase will have on the already overstretched services in Thatcham.Mitigation measures are unclear.Statements are presented as a wish list.

* Road networks ,traffic and access

Demands and impact are not recognised sufficiently. Harts Hill Road ,one of the main Access roads to the villages ,is hazardous and heavily used . Further increase in traffic would inevitably increase risk to users. Floral Way is already heavily used ,with

many access points ,and is at times already congested .

Whatever mode of transport is used ,vehicles or cycles these routes are hazardous. Increased traffic to the A4, railway station, or School will amplify risks. The need for networks of paths and routes to highways needs to be emphasised, put in place before dwellings are constructed.

* Educational Services

Provision of a new Secondary School becomes even more essential ,not clear when or how this will be done.Clear proposals need to be in place long before house construction begins to avoid more pressure on overstretched Schools in Thatcham and increased number of young people needing transport out of the area. Primary services also need re consideration in view of the increase in demand for a wide range of services.There has been inadequate acknowledgment of an increase in use of designated play or community venues for young people. Thatcham's facilities and Town Centre would be impacted by this increase.

*. Health Facilities

Little information on service provision,Again increased demand cannot be met by already overstretched services in Thatcham..A new Primary Care facility within the development with safe access.

This is not viable until approved with the ICB.

Little reference to this.

SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL/STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Environmental Concerns

It is difficult to accept WB's statement that the additional dwellings will have a positive impact on environmental sustainability.To identify the proposed Country Parks and Open Spaces as a means of enhancing a landscape that will be destroyed by additional development seems strange. There is a failure to describe, evaluate and provide actual updated data .

Surface water drainage, run off, ground water and local drainage systems all placed at greater risk by increased development.

A serious concern in this area ,confirmed by a recent Environmental Agency report, Is the high risk of flooding in this area. Not addressed adequately by WB.Is there a Surface Water Management Plan in place.? Is it to left to the developers.

Biodiversity

To achieve net gain a development must have a higher biodiversity score after development than before.Not sure how that will be achieved or monitored.

WB has not updated previously flawed information ,nor shared outcomes of new Ecological studies to support increased numbers of dwellings on the site.

Master planning and Design code

It seems odd that the SPD will be funded by the applicant who has such a powerful role In the final decision making process. Especially in a development of this size and where there is a lack of clarity about the skeleton infrastructure needed before dwellings are in place on the site.