

From: [REDACTED]
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: UPDATED: Main modifications to the local plan consultation.
Date: 28 January 2025 07:27:06
Attachments: [REDACTED]
Importance: High

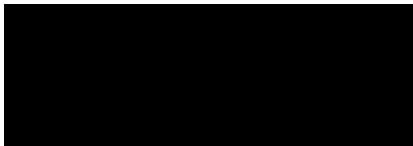
Dear Sir/Madam,

Apologies – I have made an update – please delete my previous version and accept version 2 attached.

Yours faithfully

Chris Read

Liberal Democrat Councillor for Bucklebury Ward
West Berkshire Council, Market Street, Newbury RG14 5LD



From: Chris Read
Sent: 27 January 2025 21:56
To: PlanningPolicy [REDACTED]
Subject: Main modifications to the local plan consultation.

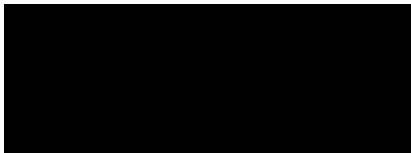
Dear Sir/Madam,

Please find attached my consultation response to the main modifications to the local plan

Kind Regards

Chris Read

Liberal Democrat Councillor for Bucklebury Ward
West Berkshire Council, Market Street, Newbury RG14 5LD



Cllr Chris Read
Member of West Berkshire Council for B [REDACTED]

Reference: WBC Local Plan Main Modifications MM25 & MM26

Comments on main modifications of the Local Plan

Dear Sir/Madam,

Please find below my comments as councillor for the ward of Bucklebury.

I would like to log that I judge the main modifications to the Local Plan to be unsound based on the points raised below in the whole document.

In addition, I wish to state:

The document is not “Positively prepared” – it does not provide a strategy for SP17 which, as a minimum, seeks to meet the area’s objectively assessed needs; and is informed by agreements with other authorities, so that unmet need from neighbouring areas is accommodated where it is practical to do so and is consistent with achieving sustainable development.

It is not “Justified” – which would mean an appropriate strategy, taking into account the reasonable alternatives (no other strategic site presented), and is not based on proportionate evidence.

It should be noted that I continue to oppose the whole of the development of SP17. This is not a sustainable development to increase Thatcham by 25% with the desperate hope that the necessary services and infrastructure for education, healthcare, traffic management, flood alleviation, sewage and water appears. There is lack of evidence the necessary spatial analysis was completed on the whole district to find a suitable strategic site for this level of development. There is strong evidence that the council did not complete all the suitable feasibility studies and that the plan was submitted in a rushed manner without the necessary oversight from senior planning officers. The council will be leaving a legacy that the future residents of Thatcham and Bucklebury will be picking up the pieces of for many decades to come. The cost of the reverse engineering and damage caused to both taxpayers and (especially with flooding) the insurance industry will be many times more than the paltry levy the developers of SP17 will contribute in my humble opinion.

I also formally support the report submitted by Bucklebury Parish Council on the original local plan submission and the report submitted by the Parish Council on these main modifications.

All my points below were raised either previously with the council or during the public consultation and have not been addressed.

Finally, I am also greatly concerned by the council's lack of willingness to engage the public. I raised that there should be a public meeting (in council chamber and online) on these main modifications early in the consultation. The council dragged its feet on this request and only "allowed" an online briefing to parish councillors close to the end of the consultation. Harding public in my humble opinion and extremely disappointing.

General comments.

Considering the major issues of sewage works at full capacity both at Thatcham and Woolhampton (significant 24*7 tankering has been ongoing all winter at Woolhampton) not development should start until new strategic sewage works built to cope with SP17 has been completed.

Considering the significant water issues in Upper Bucklebury (particularly in the Carbinswood area) which is reliant on the pumping station at the bottom of Harts Hill and that much of the water infrastructure is close to 100 years old and frequently breaks with the increase in water pressure not development should start until all necessary remedial and upgrade work is completed in Bucklebury and Thatcham.

Considering that Kennet secondary school is significantly over subscribed (with pupils in the West having to go to Trinity) and that there will be no increase in capacity at Kennet there must be a impact study completed on the transportation of pupils to Theale Green, Downs, or even Hurst. Free Home to School Transport costs and feasibility must be produced in detail for budgetary impact to WBC.

There must be a proper traffic impact on the Brimpton Road turn off from the A4, used due significant waits of up to 45 minutes to cross the Thatcham level crossing when going south (eg to businesses in Basingstoke). This will also have a significant impact to the new Police Logistics Hub to be built on Midgham Marsh during rush hours.

There is insufficient evidence demonstrated in the plan that the necessary parking and security of the increase in use on vans (van based economy <https://www.smmmt.co.uk/reports/light-commercial-vehicles-delivering-for-the-uk-economy/#:~:text=Light%20Commercial%20Vehicles%3A%20Delivering%20for%20the%20UK%20Economy%2C%20highlights%20for,equating%20to%2011%25%20of%20GDP>) will be made available for the new residents. Will residents be expected just to find what ever space is available inorder to complete their jobs or businesses.

MM1

The “long term vision” stated was not created by joint consultation and agreement with local residents or town and parish councils. This should be struck from the local plan.

MM3

The SP17 settlement boundary must be around the actual housing proposed of 2,500 and not the “green buffer”. As we have seen in Donnington and Hungerford the developer will only build further on the “green buffer”, with the potential for a further 2,000 houses and encroachment on the separate settlement of Upper Bucklebury.

MM10

There is insufficient independent evidence to demonstrate that the significant surface water drainage issues that will be caused by SP17 on a slope facing all one way through the town of Thatcham will be dealt with without another 2007 style flooding disaster. Development should not start without an independent study for the necessary culverts through Thatcham to the Kennet, the downstream impact for the Kennet to Reading, and the necessary infrastructure actually built. Existing flood control (storage) will be insufficient to store the considerable issues of increased ground water levels in late autumn and winter, increased back to back storms and significant surface water drainage this huge development will cause.

MM11

Strategies must not be led by the developer but must be independently consulted and analysed. Full reports must be pushed by the council before final plans are submitted in order not to leave a legacy of remedial risk, works and cost.

MM24

The Vision reference was NOT with the consultation or agreement of the residents of Bucklebury or Thatcham. The narrative was developers wished to build, and the vision was created by the council to meet the developers desires.

There is insufficient evidence of independent study of sustainability. No development should start unless independent studies are completed (the developer can pay for the studies but should not commission the studies unlike the very poor environmental study that was paid for and commissioned by the developer – hardly independent).

MM25

Public rights of way. There must be a demonstration of how the community of Upper Bucklebury can use the footpaths to the community of Thatcham throughout the year. Currently there is no contiguous footpath along Harts Hill and the footpath here and from Long Grove, Upper Bucklebury cannot be used during sustained wet periods (eg by school children walking or cycling to Kennet School in Thatcham).

There must be clarity in the BOB report that healthcare facilities will be increased to account for the additional residents. It would be no benefit if an existing surgery (eg Burdwood) closed and just moved to the new facility.

In addition, there must be a competent study involving the local University School of Pharmacy to put in place suitable pharmacy facility, especially as West Berkshire has the lowest number of pharmacies per head in the whole of England. Extremely disappointing to see that the increase in sustainability have been removed, evidencing this is a developer led application with no local policy input allowed above the NPPF minimum.

MM26

Green infrastructure proposed must be marked as OUTSIDE of the settlement boundary. There is no planning reason to keep it inside. The settlement boundary should be kept tight to the proposed upper boundary of the housing.

CA12 and CA17

Green infrastructure Local Plan should state as requested in public examination sessions on SP17 "Green Infrastructure marked on map shall be secured and retained in perpetuity through a legal agreement under trust or common universal access for the people of Thatcham, Bucklebury and all residents of West Berkshire without restraint or charge."

In summary, there is insufficient evidence to demonstrate in this Local Plan that SP17 North East Thatcham that should be the strategic site selected for West Berkshire.

Please note that I continue to wish to be notified of further developments and progress of the local plan, particularly SP17.

Yours faithfully

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of the sender.

Cllr Chris Read