

WEST BERKSHIRE
COUNCIL

02 MAR 2023

DEVELOPMENT & REGULATION

Planning
Council Offices
WBC
Market Street
NEWBURY
RG14 5LD

1 March 2023

Dear Sir or Madam

WBC LPR Regulation 19 Objection – SP17

I write to object to the plan. I find it to be unsound for the following reasons:

Environment

I have lived in [REDACTED]. This is within a designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. I believe that the open countryside proposed for a large part of the development will be destroyed for ever and that there will be detrimental impacts to protected wildlife. There does not seem to be any evidence of a positive impact on wildlife nor proven plans for providing adequate green space and protecting biodiversity. The two “country parks” proposed in the plans have now been downgraded to “community parks”. There appears to be no evidence of any sound attempt to investigate, analyse and address the consequences of such a development.

Transport

There appears to be a plan for an exit road at the north of the site onto Harts Hill Road. This is a challenging road, even under ideal conditions. There are no modelling results for this proposed junction. It would appear that some of the displacement of A4 traffic will, therefore, be directed towards Upper Bucklebury. The roads into, out of, and within the village are mainly unsuitable for large volumes of traffic and this increase in traffic will exacerbate the problem. I consider this to be a major risk of danger and could lead to loss of life. The council assessment of the proposal is a significant positive impact on reduction of accidents and safety. How is this proven?

Healthcare

There appears to be very little detail into strategic healthcare planning; neither WBC nor the developers, appear to have arranged or published a prospective HIA specific to the proposed North-East Thatcham development. It seems that there is no direct engagement between the Development Consortium and local general practices.

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When considering how new GP practices are commissioned by NHS England, alongside the fact that it would appear to make no financial, organisational or geographic sense for an existing GP practice in the area to set up a branch surgery, it seems unlikely that appropriate services could be provided in a timely fashion, if at all. Surely this complicated and essential provision cannot be left until the development is approved?

Dental practices in Thatcham are under severe pressure to provide care for existing residents. Pharmacies in the area are also under pressure to provide an adequate service.

WBC and the developers appear to have neither arranged a relevant HIA nor provided evidence of having appropriately liaised with local health care agencies or providers.

Education

Provision for education for the whole age-range is not clearly defined.

Secondary school provision appears unsound in respect of anticipated number of pupils; location of a school; the timing of necessary funding; the provision of necessary funding. The development plan states that the development is not sufficient to fill a 6-8 FE school. It would not be feasible for a new school to be smaller than 6FE.

Bucklebury children would probably no longer have a choice between the Kennet School and the Downs School for their secondary education.

There are no details in the LPR of the provision for Nursery or Early Years. The provision for Primary education is unclear and contradictory. Again, how can this proposal go forward without significantly increased information, research and assurance of the necessary provision?

In summary, it appears that, in order to meet an arbitrary target for new development, an easy option has been proposed to develop within one large area only.

Yours faithfully

A large black rectangular redaction box covering the signature area.