

Hermitage Parish Council's (HPC) response to the West Berkshire Local Plan Review 2022 - 2039.

We have reviewed the document and find it to be generally of a high standard; however, we have some significant concerns regarding the proposals in relation to the Hermitage parish.

You will have received a response from the Hermitage Neighbourhood Development Plan Steering Group. HPC strongly supports all the points in that response regarding RSA22 Land Adjacent to Station Rd Hermitage, so will not repeat them for brevity. Other aspects of RSA22 that we strongly object to are:

- The lack of parking provision for Holy Trinity Church. Parking additional to the residential requirements should be provided for this venue to reduce the risks associated with parking on Marlston Road and Lipscombe Close. This would need pedestrian access; we would hope that would be part a cycle route from that Marlston to Station Road to reduce cycle traffic on the B4009.
- Lack of landscaping behind the rear gardens off Lipscombe Close. Planting is needed to ensure the privacy of existing residents and provide a soft feel to the area consistent with the general village ambience and the proposed Neighbourhood Development Plan.

HPC does not feel competent to provide such detailed comments on proposals for other parishes; but we would like to express our support for the following overarching policies:

- DM1 Residential Development in the Countryside, because this will reduce settlement creep between communities and associated harm to the countryside.
- DM42 Transport Infrastructure. Particularly points a. and b. as this could build on the success of Eling Way
- SP2 North Wessex Downs AONB. In particular we support the statement that "The strong sense of remoteness, tranquillity and **dark night skies**, particularly on the open downland, should be preserved." We respectfully suggest that it should be made clear that the preference for dark skies applies equally to villages in the AONB (insofar as compatible with safety) since street lighting spills over into adjacent countryside.
- SP5 Responding to climate change.

SP11 Biodiversity and geodiversity, though we would suggest that point (a) should read "status of the site and species" since both factors will come into play.