

From: [REDACTED]
To: [PlanningPolicy](#)
Subject: WBC LPR Regulation 19 Objection
Date: 20 February 2023 10:37:36

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Mrs Lesley Hills

[REDACTED]

I am writing to submit my strong objection to the proposal to build 1500-2500 homes in NE Thatcham on the grounds that elements of the plan are unsound and there are several major flaws.

Michael Gove's written Ministerial Statement suggested that the planning inspectorate should no longer override sensible local decision making which is sensitive to and reflects local constraints and concerns. You appear to be ignoring that and, unlike other local authorities who are pausing their plan making processes until the outcome of the NPPF consultation process is completed and is expected to provide guidance later in 2023, you are ploughing ahead regardless and ignoring local constraints and concerns. As it stands, your plan is woefully lacking in detail in areas which will subsequently impact badly on both potential new householders and the established community in several areas.

Healthcare

Your plan proposes a primary healthcare facility but your document is lacking detail or insight to strategic healthcare planning. Such a development should have an accompanying Health Impact Assessment (HIA) in accordance with current guidance with Public Health England. No HIA specific to the proposed development appears to have been arranged or approved. GP practices in the area are oversubscribed and pharmacies are closing or short staffed. Trying to get a GP appointment is hard enough at the present time and monitoring of existing health issues can be hit and miss. The monitoring of my husband's [REDACTED] is no where near as regular as it once was. How will overstretched GP surgeries cope with an influx of people before any alternatives are established or built?

Dental Practices

When we moved into the area in 2004 we were unable to register with a dental practice in Thatcham. We have to travel to Newbury to a private practice which is not particularly convenient and will become more of an issue as we get older.

The local NHS is already struggling to cope. As the community ages more support is needed, not less. You have not achieved your objective to improve access to healthcare because you have not provided evidence for the provisions of a viable primary care facility.

Schools

The provision for secondary schools is not consistent with the council's guidelines for the minimum viable size. The Infrastructure Delivery Plan has omitted any costs for a new secondary school in NE Thatcham over the plan period. Traffic plans and models for increased traffic if a new school is built are not considered in the LPR. Local schools are oversubscribed. At present many Bucklebury children go to Kennet. Children from the proposed development would be given precedence to Kennet while those from Bucklebury would be limited to The Downs rather than having choices. This could result in siblings going to different schools and may impact their mental health.

The LPR is inconsistent, incomplete and contradictory on the provisions of secondary schooling and, therefore, unsound. WBC has failed its duty to make arrangements for suitable school provisions.

Transport

You predict "some displacement of A4 traffic onto wider rural routes such as Upper Bucklebury". Harts Hill Road is a narrow, winding road without pavements or lighting which is favoured by cyclists. Increasing the volume of traffic on this road is dangerous. There is mention of access arrangements proposing a new priority junction to access Floral Way and Harts Hill Road. It is stated that results from the modelling suggest that these will not cause problems. The document has no modelling results for this and, more worrying, there are no drawings for the proposed Harts Hill Road. There are drawings for all other proposed junctions so why not for Harts Hill which is the narrower, more winding road? The SEA accompanying the local plan suggests your assessment is that the policy is likely to have a positive impact on road safety as safe travel will be critical to the design of the site. Adding a car park on Harts Hill Road and planning an exit at the north of the site onto Harts Hill is contradictory to your assessment that there will be a positive impact on road safety. It was also suggested the policy is likely to have a significant impact on walking, cycling and public transport as the development should be designed with these in mind. Your plan, as it stands, will put more traffic on inadequate roads and have the potential for causing increased accidents resulting from increased traffic.

Parking is limited at the train station and there are often already a build up of lengthy traffic queues and time delays at the level crossing. An alternative development site was discounted despite it offering to build a road bridge over the train tracks. How does your proposal increasing the number of vehicles positively impact on public transport? I would suggest it will do the opposite.

Environment

The proposed development will have a significantly negative impact on the environment.

Thames Water suggest the council has not properly consulted with them over the time needed for water provision and foul drainage. Do members of the community just accept drops in water pressure when demands are too high and accept there will probably be yet more sewage pumped into our rivers? I think not.

Proposals for country parks have been downgraded to undefined community parks. How is this going to protect the natural environment and public enjoyment of it?

The LPR states its intent for SP17 is to drive additional traffic (cars and people) into the

AONB. This is completely in opposition with the management vision for Bucklebury Common which is focused on **not** increasing human pressure on the fragile ecosystems they are working to restore and nurture. Lockdowns highlighted the detrimental impact of increased footfall and the lack of awareness to protect the area. There was increased litter, dog faeces left on paths, dogs chasing wildlife and people walking off defined tracks causing damage. The effects are still being dealt with.

Your own Sustainability Appraisal accepts that SP17 will have a negative impact on environmental sustainability. It suggests such negative impact would need to be mitigated. Where is the detail of any such mitigating measures? Environmental issues are very important and can't be dismissed in such a disrespectful manner.

The SP17 policy is clearly intending to build as many houses as possible in a small area of environmentally important countryside. There are no effective promises about how the environment will be improved or, if not, mitigated. You have spent a lot of money on consultants preparing the plan but there is no evidence of any substantial attempt to investigate, analyse and systematically address the consequences of implementing this plan. You are ignoring local concerns and constraints and carrying on regardless.

In summary, your LPR has fatal flaws and is unsound.

Lesley Hills