

REPRESENTATION ON REGULATION 19-A DICKENS

I understand the recommendation that the SP17 site be considered for large scale development was as a result of WBC paying a consultant in excess of £100K on a HELAA study. Other sites were rejected including one part brownfield site where the developers were prepared to fund a bridge over the railway. This would alleviate a long running concern for the residents of Thatcham and Bucklebury over long delays at the level crossing which even by the LP's limited analysis will get much worse if SP17 went ahead.

When a 500 home development was proposed for Siege Cross in 2015/6 WBC in its objection said there had been a failure to comply with national and local policies. WBC considered the site to be a valued landscape in which the development would cause significant and demonstrable harm. However some 7 years later SP17, a development with 3 times the number of homes in the same area, is not considered to cause such harm.

The Sustainability Appraisal in the LP states SP17 will have no negative impact on sustainability. This opinion is not supported by any evidence and the SA is unsound.

I have concerns about the impact of SP17 on the environment, Bucklebury Common and the setting of the AONB. The LP offers no evidence that the required biodiversity net gain has been seriously considered as part of SP17. The impact on biodiversity of SP17 appears to have been under-estimated.

SP17 would see much more traffic turning onto Harts Hill Rd particularly when traffic on Floral Way and the A4 is backed up. A proposed car park on Harts Hill will encourage more traffic. The location of SP17 will mean car borne travel will dominate. There is no assessment in the LP of the traffic increase in Upper Bucklebury which will pose highway safety issues. In addition an oil pipeline running along the Southern boundary of the SP17 site could well restrict the number of exits forcing more traffic to use the Harts Hill exit.

Overall I think SP17 was put forward in a hurry without due consideration when the Grazeley option fell through. It is gross over-development of a greenfield site, not sustainable and lacking in adequate medical and education provision. There is also not nearly enough environmental protection and infrastructure support. It is unsound and should be withdrawn or at least amended significantly.