

From: [REDACTED]
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Fwd: Representation re W.Berks Local Plan Review. SP17
Date: 31 January 2025 15:47:22

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Sir,

Please find below response to local authority consultation on Thatcham NE development. I would question the veracity of any 'survey' referred to. the Proposal has been rushed through without adequate consultation or accounting for the new UK governments directive on the use of brownfield sites. Ecological claims asserted to in the policy are clearly falsified with little or no substantiation available; local infrastructure has been ill-considered and the proposal lacks credibility. Please see below for specific references to the document titled below:

Reference:

[Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment – Environmental Report. West Berkshire Local Plan review 2022-2039. proposed main modifications dated Nov 2024.](#)

Reference	
Page 11 'Education and Skills'	There are insufficient schools and places for the current population, teaching levels have and will continue to suffer. The infrastructure around the schools cannot sustain 'drop off' traffic.
Page 12	As local economy recovers post-covid and personnel continue to return to office there is increasing strain on already stretched local infrastructure. There is frequent flooding on the A4 between Thatcham and Woolhampton which causes problems in busy periods, hampering the local economy and seeing workers penalised. Roadworks in the area often create long delays and there is little alternative for diversion. The rail crossings are insufficient to sustain local traffic. The noise from Harts Hill and the A4 regularly reaches 70db for adjacent properties. Even at current levels, Harts Hill, Thatcham is a dangerous road, prone to speeding and disrepair.
Page 24 Focus on Thatcham	Period of consolidation from previous growth programme still required, inadequate infrastructure and services in place (see page 12 response above).
Page 27 Table 12 SP1	Regardless of comment the policy is not environmentally sustainable. It is the destruction of greenfield land, there is no adequate carbon reduction plan in place and no level of architecture will retain the aesthetic of the existing land. I would strongly challenge the author and source of this commentary.
P42 Table 31	there is no plan for community infrastructure to accommodate the additional housing or noise. Acoustic fencing, forest and tree borders, plus protected green boundaries to existing dwellings are requested.
SP17	No credible plan to affect GI or Greenfield site, there are other brownfield sites available that would permit the retention of village identity, the requisite housing figures without the destruction of habitat.

P 62 table 9	There is no credible low carbon plan in place, the intent appears to be to force through legislation then disrupt the ecosystems with disregard. I would request further investigation. There are newts and bats in the Thatcham NE proposed space.
P64 5B	The assertion that it will have a positive impact on the landscape character is simply not true and highly subjective. I question the authors integrity and credibility.
P64 – 7B	Labour government specify prioritisation of brownfield sites. The Thatcham development plan requires full review in line with new government.
P64	There is no sustainable energy plan in place.
P65	Any employment increase is temporary and contingent on the longevity of the build programme. It is unlikely that contracts will go to smaller local firms and on completion, jobs will cease and infrastructure will be unable to cope with the increased residents.
P66	No protection plan in place for biodiversity. The ecological assertions of this paper lack credibility, I would request to know the qualifications of the author.

Regards,

Mr C Smith
Thatcham resident

[REDACTED]
Date: Fri, 31 Jan 2025 at 14:45
Subject: Fwd: Representation re W.Berks Local Plan Review. SP17
To: Craig Smith [REDACTED]

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: Calliope Orfanos [REDACTED]
Date: 30 January 2025 at 21:29:17 GMT
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Representation re W.Berks Local Plan Review. SP17

**Consultation on Proposed Main Modifications to the West Berkshire
Local Plan Review 2022 -2039**

Ms Calliope ORFANOS
[REDACTED]



WBC LOCAL PLAN MODIFICATIONS MM25 & MM26

This seems to have been rushed, a convenient proposal made by WBC . Focused on magnifying an already expansive development with little care as to the impact of such an expedient decision. WBC has not done enough to ensure that residents are aware and can respond easily to these proposals. I was not aware of any meeting where a representative came to discuss the proposed modifications and their impact with residents and Parish councillors.

ISSUES

Soundness

I do not consider the Proposed Main Modifications to be sound.
Positively Prepared x
Justified x
Effective x

No evidence that an additional 1000+ dwellings are needed in this greenfield development to meet WB's housing needs. It is not clear where these additional dwellings will be located within the development boundary without further encroachment on a rural environment and designated open spaces.

It is not clearly demonstrated how the provision of all infrastructure services will be met In advance of need, in a timely way , in a co ordinated way .The additional numbers must have a profound impact on delivery of such pivotal services.

There seems to be insufficient evidence of what provision will be in place to meet the needs of so many more families. Little recognition of the impact the increase will have on the already overstretched services in Thatcham.Mitigation measures are unclear.Statements are presented as a wish list.

- * Road networks ,traffic and access

Demands and impact are not recognised sufficiently. Harts Hill Road ,one of the main Access roads to the villages ,is hazardous and heavily used . Further increase in

traffic would inevitably increase risk to users. Floral Way is already heavily used ,with many access points ,and is at times already congested .

Whatever mode of transport is used ,vehicles or cycles these routes are hazardous.

Increased traffic to the A4, railway station, or School will amplify risks. The need for

networks of paths and routes to highways needs to be emphasised, put in place

before dwellings are constructed.

- * Educational Services

Provision of a new Secondary School becomes even more essential ,not clear when or how this will be done. Clear proposals need to be in place long before house construction begins to avoid more pressure on overstretched Schools in Thatcham and increased number of young people needing transport out of the area. Primary services also need re consideration in view of the increase in demand for a wide range of services. There has been inadequate acknowledgment of an increase in use of designated play or community venues for young people.

Thatcham's facilities and Town Centre would be impacted by this increase.

*. Health Facilities

Little information on service provision, Again increased demand cannot be met by

already overstretched services in Thatcham.. A new Primary Care facility within the

development with safe access.

This is not viable until approved with the ICB.

Little reference to this.

SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL/STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Environmental Concerns

It is difficult to accept WB's statement that the additional dwellings will have a positive impact on environmental sustainability. To identify the proposed Country Parks and Open Spaces as a means of enhancing a landscape that will be destroyed by additional development seems strange. There is a failure to describe, evaluate and provide actual updated data .

Surface water drainage, run off, ground water and local drainage systems all placed at greater risk by increased development.

A serious concern in this area ,confirmed by a recent Environmental Agency report,

Is the high risk of flooding in this area. Not addressed adequately by WB. Is there a Surface Water Management Plan in place.? Is it left to the developers.

Biodiversity

To achieve net gain a development must have a higher biodiversity score after development than before. Not sure how that will be achieved or monitored.

WB has not updated previously flawed information ,nor shared outcomes of new

Ecological studies to support increased numbers of dwellings on the site.

Master planning and Design code

It seems odd that the SPD will be funded by the applicant who has such a powerful role

In the final decision making process. Especially in a development of this size and where there is a lack of clarity about the skeleton infrastructure needed before dwellings are in place on the site.

Calliope ORFANOS
30.01.25