
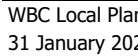


From: 
To: 
Subject: WBC Local Plan Review 2022-2039 - consultation response - Main Modifications MM25 and MM26
Date: 31 January 2025 11:04:19

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Dear Sirs

I am writing in respect of the consultation on the Proposed Main Modifications to the West Berkshire Local Plan Review 2022-2039 and in particular WBC Local Plan Main Modifications MM25 & MM26. I do not consider the Proposed Main Modification sound.

The increase of allocation on the site to 2,500 dwellings is unsound. Notwithstanding other arguments made by the Bucklebury Parish Council with which I am in agreement, I wish to focus on the Modifications regarding 'Community'.

In particular, the secondary school and SEND provision is subject to the requirement of a further feasibility study. If a sound approach had been taken by WBC in advance of the submission of the plan then the requirement for a further feasibility study would not be necessary.

There should be a minimum requirement to provide a new secondary school and SEND provision on site with land to be provided and build costs to be met by the applicant, for the reasons below:

1. The proposed development would be in catchment area for Kennet School. WBC School Admission Guide for September 2025 demonstrates that in each of the last 5 years Kennet School has been consistently oversubscribed and operated a waiting list.
2. The Office for National Statistics families and households report from 2023 (release date 8 May 2024) states that two in three households included one family and, of all families living in households, 43% had one or more dependent children. Applying those statistics to a development of 2,500 homes (assuming the 43% only have one child) means there would be at least 716 additional children needing primary and secondary school provision. In the event any of those households had more than one child then that number would increase further.
3. Even at 1,500 dwellings and a need for at least an additional 430 school places, it is difficult to see how the ambiguity over the delivery of the secondary school provision was sound, however increasing the dwelling to 2500 without a requirement for a new secondary school on site is manifestly unsound.

Some might argue that there are three secondary schools in WB that are not oversubscribed and propose they absorb the additional demand. This is not a rational argument. Two of those schools are on the west side of Newbury and so those schools being undersubscribed would not alleviate the oversubscription east of Thatcham as a result of the development. Theale Green School to the east of Thatcham is c8.4 miles away from the proposed development, but was undersubscribed by just 1 place in 2024 and so does not address the additional demand that would be created.

Given the acute lack of secondary places currently and no details of the feasibility study, it is clear the policy is unsound when considering the impact of either 1500 or 2500 new dwellings. Without a requirement for secondary provision now there is significant ambiguity and little reassurance about whether this would in fact be delivered - for it to be sound the Main Modification must ensure that the provision of secondary and SEND is

viable for the development.

I also support the detailed response provided by Bucklebury Parish Council that the proposed modifications do not on the whole provide a sound approach to the delivery of a comprehensive development.

Yours sincerely,

Ben Seth

