

From: [REDACTED]
To: [PlanningPolicy](#)
Subject: WBC LPR Regulation 19 - Objection to the proposed NE Thatcham Development
Date: 03 March 2023 10:22:42

This is an EXTERNAL EMAIL. STOP. THINK before you CLICK links or OPEN attachments.

03/03/23

Dear Planning Officers at WBC

I am objecting to the Plan, as I find it substantially unsound, with particular reference to the NE Thatcham Development.

My name is Peter Grey, and I am the owner of [REDACTED], a farm that immediately abuts approximately 800 meters of the eastern boundary of the proposed Thatcham NE Development ('the Proposal').

I am prepared to appear at a Public Enquiry, if invited.

Inevitably, as a Midgham resident, my submission is Midgham-focussed, but I believe that many of my points are relevant to other Parishes affected by this Proposal, namely Thatcham, Bucklebury and Cold Ash.

It is my proposition that the Proposal contains fundamental elements that are flawed, insufficient, and intrinsically unsound. These elements are:-

1. WBC is under a statutory obligation to carry out adequate consultation with all concerned/relevant parties, on schemes of this nature, notwithstanding the particular enormity and complexity of this Proposal.

It is my assertion that WBC has not carried out meaningful and/or timely consultation with, amongst others, key parties affected by this Proposal; namely, Midgham Parish Council, the residents of Midgham, and the property owners immediately adjacent to the Proposal. For example, there have been no public forums or debates organised by WBC to inform the above parties specifically of the nature, raison d'être and/or consequential impacts of the Proposal.

For example, I, as one directly affected by this Proposal, have not been contacted at all by anyone publicising or justifying this Proposal. Had they done so, they would have elicited the significant fact that I own the land and the stream that lies on the eastern margin of the Proposal, and have invested [REDACTED] years of time and expense in creating a wild life corridor in this area, close to the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), as well as further along the course of the stream and the adjacent land, also owned by me. **Suffice it to say, I will adamantly defend any attempt to adversely prejudice this hard-won situation.**

WBC's Proposal now calls for 1500 homes on a site initially proposed (in 2020) for 2500 homes, and is located NE of Thatcham, on prime agricultural land, currently in agricultural production, situated immediately adjacent to the AONB. In the current Proposal, the reduction in housing numbers is not reflected in a reduced development site size, so it is not improbable that the original proposal of a 2500 homes development will be reactivated

in due course.

The absence of any authoritative and detailed Environmental Impact Study to support this Proposal is astonishing; bland generalisations about 'positive impacts on the environment' are appallingly vague, misleading and totally unsubstantiated. In fact, this Proposal will probably have a significantly **negative** impact on the local environment and **highly detrimental** effects on the existing (and currently protected) wildlife systems. The new presence of approximately 4000 people, with all their attendant life support systems and facilities, will necessarily damage beyond repair, and permanently, the current well-established and abundant eco systems and bio-diversity.

There is no justification for this unplanned and delinquent devastation of the virgin countryside, when other more appropriate brownfield sites are available.

2. WBC is ignoring other potentially very significant impacts that a development of this magnitude will have on the present Village character of the locale, all of which will affect Midgham.

For example, **Traffic.** 1500 homes, at the outset, will involve at least an additional 1500 vehicles (cars and vans) utilising already oversubscribed existing road systems which, at best, are barely coping with current traffic volumes and will, at worst, create further major traffic problems. Cox's Lane has deteriorated significantly since I have lived here (for 29 years), and is now used as a 'rat-run' from Bucklebury to the A4. WBC is already aware of verges that have been hugely eroded, fences and hedges that have been badly damaged (releasing cattle, potentially onto the A4), and trees frequently have branches knocked down by vehicles that should be prohibited from using what is, essentially, a farm track. So walkers, cyclists, horse riders and local motorists are all much more substantially at risk **NOW**. What it will be like when any new development outlined in the Proposal releases increased volumes of traffic onto the Lane, via Bucklebury or the A4, is difficult to conjecture, other than that it will inevitably be even **more negative and dangerous**.

The WBC Phase 2 Transport Assessment Report July 2021 asserts 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'. **This is simply unsubstantiated and unachievable nonsense, as other privately commissioned traffic forecasts have averred.**

And, **Education.** Existing School facilities are already over-stretched and failing, and any exponential growth in pupil numbers, as a result of massive local housing development, will necessitate pupils being transported into neighbouring towns (assuming their facilities can cope). And, inevitably, more traffic problems. The Proposal makes no reference to a detailed study of the impact that a population of the size envisaged in the Proposal will have on existing local education resources, nor does it offer concrete solutions to cope with the required growth in educational demand.

The LPR, which accommodates the entirety of the Proposal, is inconsistent, incomplete and contradictory in its consideration of pre-secondary school, or secondary education provision.

And, **Healthcare.** I understand that WBC has not consulted with the existing local healthcare provision facilities, which include the GPs, Dentists and other special Health service providers. These are already severely overstretched, evidenced by 3 to 5 week waiting lists and, in some cases, by no specialist appointments available at all. The 450 sq m primary healthcare facility proposed, barely touches the surface of the shortfall, at present, leaving aside the demands of an increased population of 4000, **and is a typical**

WBC unsubstantiated effort to legitimise an ill-conceived, poorly researched answer to a serious issue.

3. Finally, I have to question WBC's continued vigorous promotion of this Proposal, in the face of salient criticism from various authoritative parties. The WBC proposition is certainly predicated on insufficient and unsubstantiated evidence. Whilst the core requirement for more housing cannot be ignored, it is essential to reflect that any such requirement must be accurately measured against scientific and professional research of demographic evidence, of suitable site locations, of size of individual developments, of character and quality of construction methodology, of current and future infrastructure requirements, of likely impacts on the environment and vital eco-systems, and on actual need, as opposed to profit generation.

All of the current reaction to this Proposal points to a need to thoroughly revisit the core elements of the Proposal, in particular for the need for such a massive New Town (the size of Hungerford), its location on virgin agricultural land, the absence of any authoritative support studies on Traffic, Education, Health provision, Policing, other Infrastructure such as drainage, telecoms, water, electricity and gas, impact on the local environment and eco systems and the effect such a Proposal would have on the lives and well-being of existing local residents.

I strongly recommend a 'back to the drawing board' policy on this Proposal and, indeed of the whole LPR proposition. The overall thrust of the SP17 policy is clearly to build as many houses as possible in an area of virgin countryside, the proposition being supported by insufficient and unsubstantiated evidence, which itself ignores the pragmatic probability of the consequential damage to the environment, both human and natural. It defies belief that a proposition of this magnitude is so poorly researched and presented and which proffers the message that everything will be all right, because WBC's unsubstantiated policies aver that it will be.

P J Grey.

Sent from my iPad