

Representation by [REDACTED]

Proposed Submission of West Berkshire Local Plan Review (LPR) 2022-2039

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Prepared to attend the public inquiry.

1 Representation on general justification of this LPR

The current proposed NE Thatcham development is contradictory to all the reasons employed by WBC to oppose an earlier proposal in 2015. The original WBC objections cited the detrimental effects on the enjoyment of the AONB, long views across the Kennet Valley and the maintenance of the separation of Thatcham from surrounding rural settlements. I agree with this **original view** of WBC as local walking Groups, in which I and many others participate, regularly enjoy the patchwork of footpaths crossing into the AONB from the development area.

This contradiction is not addressed in the LPR. The traffic and environmental studies are deficient and reflect the lack of early engagement with affected communities at a time of crisis with respect to Covid restrictions. Many of us in the rural community were astonished to learn of the plans so late in their development.

2 Representation on traffic implications

The traffic studies have largely ignored the fact that there is an Eastward route parallel to the A4 which traverses the Common, then follows the Avenue of Oak Trees (local beauty spot), then passes through Southend Bradfield and Bradfield College before joining the A340 between Theale and Pangbourne. This route has become increasingly busy after other developments in Thatcham, as an access to West Reading. The WBC traffic report predicts

further displacement of traffic onto this route without quantifying the effects on: -

- Wildlife (deer and badgers often killed on these unfenced roads).
- Pedestrian safety in Bradfield College as the road passes through the heart of the College.
- Road safety at the junction where the fast-moving traffic on the A340 is intercepted.
- Its enjoyment as a recreational cycling route for nearby urban communities.

3 Representation on Environment Matters

The destruction of this large agricultural escarpment will have a large visual impact on the Kennet Valley and the boundary of an AONB where other developments are constrained. The studies and amelioration proposals contained in the LPR are unaudited, simplistic, and ignore the effects on an important heathland area which is a rare environmental home for many species.

Local community associations such as The Bucklebury Heathlands Group and the West Berkshire Countryside Society have devoted time and money to the maintenance of this environment, which is now at risk of degradation.

Submitted 21st February 2023 by email attachments (Word and PDF).