

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [PlanningPolicy](#)  
**Subject:** WBC LPR Regulation 19 Objection  
**Date:** 01 March 2023 23:31:07

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Please find below my objections to the Local Plan Review as I find the plan and associated information presented to be unsound. My comments are focussed on the development of the area known as NE Thatcham, and relate to how the proposed development will impact my family as residents of [REDACTED]. I am happy to speak at a public inquiry if invited.

1. Development site and location

- a. The proposed NE Thatcham development concentrates the majority of planned housing across West Berkshire on one site. This is not in the best interest of our region. It will do nothing to support viability of the many villages.
- b. The proposed site will create the biggest single housing development site ever in West Berkshire. The resulting estate will be as big as Hungerford! The Plan is unsound as it does not stipulate how the necessary infrastructure for a new town the size of Hungerford will be provided.
- c. The proposed site is outside the settlement boundary of Thatcham on rural, high quality agricultural land. The site is not an urban fringe.
- d. The site represents creeping urbanisation, coming within one field width of the village of Upper Bucklebury (AONB) and Midgham. This will cause air pollution, light pollution and water pollution in the streams between the development and these two villages. Light pollution will be particularly bad in Upper Bucklebury, which is a naturally dark place, with no street lights.
- e. Being situated on the side of a hill, this large development will be visible from a wide area of the Kennet valley. The statement that it will be possible to screen it is unsound.
- f. The site is in the Outer zone for AWE. This is not mentioned in the updated plan, which is unsound.

2. Services and Infrastructure

- a. Water supply. The water supply for Upper Bucklebury and Chapel Row is pumped up Harts Hill Road. We regularly experience low pressure and have had four complete losses of supply in the last two months due to leaks under Harts Hill Road and Common Road. The development with its increased demand, and increased traffic volumes on Harts Hill Road will cause more disruption to water supply.
- b. Flooding. The land in question is a natural soakaway for the town of Thatcham. The Flooding report does not consider impact of flooding downhill from the development, and is therefore unsound.
- c. Air quality. The schools in Thatcham are near the A4 which is an Air Quality Monitoring zone. Increased traffic will make air quality worse near the A4, and increase particulate pollution.
- d. Healthcare. The council has not published a health impact assessment. There is already severe strain on dentist, pharmacy and doctors services in Thatcham and

the Bucklebury villages. The local GP practices have not been approached. This is a major risk to existing and future residents if the development goes ahead.

- e. Such a large development should include sports facilities for the new residents. These are not included in the plan.

### 3. Travel.

- a. The statement that the development will improve sustainable travel in the area is unsound.
- b. The statement that the development will have a positive impact on road safety is untrue for the reasons given below.
- c. The A4. This road is narrow in Thatcham and regularly becomes congested, particularly when traffic is diverted from the M4. It is used by many HGVs. When this happens many cars use Harts Hill Road/Common Road/The Avenue as a rat run diversion. This will increase if the development goes ahead.
- d. Many children have to cross the A4 to get to school. They are at risk of traffic accidents. This will increase if an additional 4,000 people are living on the NE Thatcham development.
- e. Schools. The plan does not state how the new children will be educated from the age of 3 to 18. There is already a lack of local secondary school places in Thatcham. More children travelling to Theale and Newbury for schooling will increase traffic on the A4.
- f. The statements about active travel are unsound. With a housing estate built on a hill, residents are unlikely to choose to cycle or walk.
- g. Traffic volume study dates from 2015. Transport needs and preferences have changed a lot since then.
- h. The development is a long walk from Thatcham Station. Residents are most likely to use cars to get there.
- i. The level crossing. This is a bottleneck which is closed for up to 40 minutes in an hour. 2,500 more homes (probably 5,000 more cars) will make this bottleneck worse.
- j. Harts Hill Road. This is a narrow, winding lane on a steep hill. It is not suitable for walking and cycling, and local residents avoid trying to use it for this purpose. The traffic plan reveals that the new estate will have a back entrance onto Harts Hill Road, which will significantly increase the traffic levels on this dangerous lane, causing even more accidents than currently. Through traffic from Harts Hill Road travelling NE towards Pangbourne and beyond, will increase traffic on the many small lanes, and through the villages as there is no two-lane route.
- k. Drawings show a car park on Harts Hill Road. This will create an additional hazard on this very dangerous, narrow, winding, hilly lane.
- l. The back entrance onto Harts Hill Road is likely to cause significant extra traffic on Common Road and The Avenue. These two roads are dangerous due to traffic speeding across the common. There are regular accidents where vehicles hit wildlife such as deer, rabbits and hedgehogs.
- m. Danger to cyclists. Cyclists regularly use both Common Road/The Avenue and the bridle paths across the proposed site from Upper Bucklebury down to Colthrop.

These bridleways will be removed, leaving no safe cycle routes from Bucklebury to Thatcham. Cyclists will now be at much greater risk of acar accidents.

- n. Danger to walkers. As quiet rural villages, Upper Bucklebury and Chapel Row have limited footpaths and no street lights. The increased traffic caused by the NE Thatcham development will increase the number of pedestrians hit by cars in our villages.
- o. There is no mention of improvements to local bus services for the new development.

#### 4. Environment

- a. The proposed NE Thatcham site abuts the AONB, yet the plan does not include an environmental assessment of the impact on the AONB. This is unsound.
- b. The site will remove ancient hedgerows holding hundreds of years of biodiversity. This is contrary to the vague statements in the plan about increased biodiversity.
- c. The ancient woodland south of Upper Bucklebury will be fully encircled by the development site, removing a valuable wildlife corridor which will cause loss of biodiversity.
- d. The two 'country parks' included in the previous plan have been removed. There will be nowhere for the residents to walk their pets.
- e. Bucklebury Parish Council commissioned an Environmental Audit of the proposed site. This states that legally protected species are resident on the proposed site and will be harmed by the development.
- f. Light pollution will particularly harm the rare, ground nesting birds and Owls resident on Bucklebury Common.
- g. The Common volunteers are working hard to protect the rare heathland environment of Bucklebury Common. This will be negatively impacted by the increased traffic and dogwalking caused by the spill-over of people visiting the Common.

With kind regards,  
Veronica Brunwin

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