



Planning Policy Team
Development and Regulation
West Berkshire District Council
Market Street
Newbury
RG14 5LD

1st March 2023

Proposed development of up to 2,500 houses on land at North East Thatcham

Dear Sir/Madam

I am writing to lodge my objection to the above proposal given the size of the development and its impact on the village of Upper Bucklebury and the surrounding area.

Of particular concern is the impact this proposed development will have on the environment. The northern boundary will be in close proximity to an AONB which includes areas of ancient woodland and common land that would be adversely affected by the increase in traffic, visitors and light pollution. During the recent pandemic and lockdown, the village was subjected to significant evidence of trespassing and problems with irresponsible dog walkers and I fear that this would increase if this development goes ahead. The spectacular views across The Kennet Valley to North Hampshire will be lost forever by this development.

A second, but equally important, problem will be that of the increase in traffic. The road through Upper Bucklebury and those through neighbouring villages are already subjected to motorists using them as a means of avoiding the A4 and accessing the A34 and M4 motorway. This will only get worse if this development is approved particularly the plan for an exit at the north of the site onto Harts Hill Road. Traffic leaving the site at this junction is only going to go in the direction of Upper Bucklebury where it will split between traffic going through Cold Ash and traffic through Upper Bucklebury and Chapel Row. The roads through these villages are ill suited to additional traffic: they are rural, single carriageway roads some of which do not have footpaths, which would constitute a serious safety hazard given the anticipated increase in traffic. The impact of noise and air quality from this additional traffic will be significant.

When Floral Way was constructed it was meant to constitute an important boundary between Thatcham and Upper Bucklebury. This proposal would break that strategic gap and result in the loss of the village's identity as a rural community. Bucklebury Vision set out a policy whereby the natural beauty of the landscape and the visual

quality of the area should be maintained. This proposed development seriously undermines those objectives.

What will future generations think of us if we desecrate this greenfield site with all the ramifications that it will have on the environment? The planning system is meant to protect rural environments and the increasing awareness of the importance of such areas in the face of climate change makes it even more important that these valuable sites are not destroyed. Once under bricks and concrete they will be lost forever.

Yours faithfully

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of the sender.