

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [PlanningPolicy](#)  
**Subject:** WBC LPR Regulation 19 Objection - SP17  
**Date:** 03 March 2023 14:38:44

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I write to object to the WBC proposal for 1500 new houses around Newbury Thatcham. I live in Upper Bucklebury, an area of relatively unspoilt peace and beauty on the edge of an AONB. The development, if built, will have a severely negative effect on the natural environment and the local population. The proposal is unsound.

#### Traffic:

The road running through Upper Bucklebury is already very busy and has become much busier since the development of houses at the bottom of Harts Hill. The increased volume of traffic from the proposed exit at the north of the site onto Harts Hill, is very a serious concern. The road to Upper Bucklebury is inadequate for a huge volume of traffic and, as it is already, dangerous for walking and cycling, so with an increase in traffic volume from the proposed new development even though the site may possibly have 'safe travel' within itself, the roads funnelling in and out will be lethal, noisy and high in pollution both in respects of light and air. There is also a proposed car park on Harts Hill, something that can only contribute to the traffic pressure on the road as well as further disturbance for wildlife due to dog walkers and others coming into the area.

#### Healthcare:

The Northeast Thatcham development plan SP17 is bereft of detail or insight into the strategic health care planning. Neither WBC nor the developers, as public and private stakeholders respectively, appear to have arranged or published a prospective Health Impact Assessment (HIA) to the proposed northeast side of the development. All proposals for a major development that is obviously likely to have a significant health impact in relation to its size and location should be accompanied by a fit for purpose HIA in accordance with the current guidance for public-health England. The HIA should include reference to how the proposals for development have been discussed with health service providers regarding impacts on primary healthcare services. Development proposal should demonstrate how the conclusion of the HIA have been considered in the design of the scheme because an unacceptable impact of health and well-being of existing new communities will not be permitted.

A multi – agency approach is required for tackling health and well-being. The Berkshire West Health and Wellbeing strategy 2017-2020 2021-2030, has been developed by the Reading West Berkshire and Wokingham Health and Wellbeing boards together with the Berkshire West integrated care partnership. Developers are encouraged to engage with the healthcare providers at the earliest opportunity in order to determine the healthcare requirements associated with a new development. It is a great concern that there appears to have been no direct engagement between the north east Thatcham development consortium and local general practices.

There are 3 over stretched GP surgeries which at present cover the area of the proposed NE Thatcham development site. Although independent to each other their combined lists include about 27,800 patients which really means just under 2000 patients per GP. Clearly, newly registered patients moving into a housing developments tend to make a greater demand on GP services. This is because there are more young children and higher maternity care. Pharmacy closes in Thatcham have put further pressure on healthcare practices.

There has been no approach by WBC all the developers to any local GP practice to discuss an appropriate site, floor space or location to which one or more practice could relocate in the event of the housing development being built. An enlarged primary healthcare site is required and might be better located close to the middle of Thatcham to improve access and minimise traffic as the proposed NE Thatcham development is peripheral to the centre of the population. This would be likely to be supported by Thatcham town council but has not been suggested in the sustainability appraisal of site options. Local practices did not have an input with inadequate 450 m<sup>2</sup> floor side proposal which they only discovered with the SP17 policy of December 2022, appendix D.

In respect of Health Care-Proposals for a major development that is likely to have a significant health being impact in relation to its size and location should be accompanied by a fit for purpose health impact assessment in accordance with the current guidance from public-health England. The HIA should include reference to how the proposals for development have been discussed with health service providers regarding impacts on primary healthcare services. The development proposal should demonstrate how the conclusions of the HIA having been considered in the design of the scheme because an unacceptable impact on the wealth health and well-being of existing new communities will not be permitted. It is of concern that neither WBC nor the developers as public and private stakeholders respectively appear to have arranged or published by prospective HIA specific to the proposed north-eastern development.

The three GP practices -which would cover the North East Thatcham development site already overstretched. These practices-Thatcham medical practice, West of Harts Hill Road, Burdwood Surgery east of Harts Hill Road and Chapel Row surgery.

Thatcham doctor's Surgery are run independently of each other in the combined list includes around 27,800 patients which is about 2000 patients per GP. Newly registered patient moving to make a greater demand on GP services, therefore how will this development support these needs?

WBC and the developers have not made provision to mitigate the new burden of 1,500 or more houses-They have not provided evidence for the provision of a viable primary care medical facility.

#### Dental care:

There is no evidence provided that either West Berkshire council or the developers have approached any local dental practices regarding the potential impact of increased workload resulting from additional housing. As it is now Thatcham dental practices are unable to provide dental care for the whole population.

#### Schools provision:

Provision for education for nursery earlier through infant secondary education is not clearly defined within the local plan review LPR. There is no coherent end to end plan: this therefore breaches the councils obligations to provide education facilities for children.

Without this provision a plan for a large new housing development is to untenable.

The lack of a coherent plan on schools provision across the various proposed developments also means that it is impossible to estimate the subsequent impact on traffic. The sighting of a secondary school to the north-east of touching would result in significant increase in traffic across the whole Thatcham area, not considered in the traffic plans and models in the LPR.

Policy SP1 7NE Thatcham strategic site allocation states that the site will provide early years provision – what are the details for this?

I cannot see any clear vision for proper funding or School Place provision -schools need to be available before houses are built. The LPA is inconsistent, incomplete and contradictory on the provision of secondary school in and around Thatcham. The latest LPR is in contradiction to the supporting documentation. It proposes that the sum of 15 million be contributed by the developers to secondary education. There are no details of the location

of the land to be provided and hence no possibility of assessing at suitability.

It is clear that the plan for secondary school provision is unsound:

There is no such a satisfactory evidence of the number of pupils the school is to cater for, the location of school is not clear, the number of form entries is not defined but it is noted to anything less than 6FE school is unsustainable, the timing of the funding is not clear and there is no evidence that the proposed funding is sufficient to meet the Council's obligations to provide education.

Environment:

The green spaces surrounding Thatcham and the local villages, Upper Bucklebury, Midham, Cold Ash, contain a biodiversity which will be lost for ever if built over by thousands of houses. This area is home to hares, buzzards, kites, stonechats, nightingales, thrushes, nightjars, great green bush-crickets, slow worms, meadow grasshoppers, woodlarks, dark bush-crickets, adders and all manner of protected fauna - all species needing protection, not annihilation. The nightjars fly to Bucklebury Common every June from Africa and mate undisturbed in the local fields and woodland; this red-listed species, for one, will be under threat.

The LPR's Sustainability Appraisal accepts that SP17 will, by building on a greenfield site inevitably have a negative impact on environmental sustainability but there is no detail on any mitigation for this impact. There are plans for community parks but they won't be safe havens for biodiversity with the additional 1000s in footfall, noise, litter, light pollution, dog walkers, cats ...the negative impact is endless and permanent.

To Conclude:

Siting a major greenfield development in this area of biodiverse treasure will cause irredeemable damage to the environment and will be permanent. The biodiversity will be lost forever.

This proposed development must not be allowed to go ahead.

Yours sincerely,  
Torbjörn Hultmark

