




## **WBC LPR Regulation 19 Objection**

Barry and Charlotte Anns  


On behalf of our family, we are objecting to the WBC Local Plan Review (LPR) 2022-2039 as we find it unsound.

### **Increased traffic**

The traffic on Broad Lane is already too busy.

During mornings and afternoons as people commute through the area, there is a lot of traffic. Outside our own house, you generally hear car horns, as people have disagreements outside the speed calming chicane.

Having stood and watched the traffic at different times of the day, you generally find that people appear to be driving too fast and are not anticipating cars coming from the lower priority side. Traffic is too high in volume to just be local traffic, many local friends and family tell me they use Broad Lane as a “rat run” to avoid the A4 when trying to get to Reading, Pangbourne, Newbury, Thatcham etc.

With the plan for an exit to the north of Harts Hill Road, and broadly more traffic in the area from the proposed housing development, things will only get worse which will further reduce quality of life and pollution for local residents.

Furthermore, the pavements are not wide on the opposite side of the road, and as previously noted, the chicane traffic calming is insufficient. This could lead to accidents and discourages further walking and cycling which are better for the environment.

### **Access, junctions and car park**

We are concerned to see that at the northern end of the NET site, there are new priority junctions proposed. As noted previously, this is only likely to lead to more traffic problems, pollution and potentially safety issues.

### **Safe and sustainable transport**

We do not see how the proposed development in the plan will reduce accidents and improve safety, nor increase opportunities for walking, cycling and use of public transport. The assessment appears completely flawed to us as local residents, and frankly, a “box-ticking” exercise. It feels as though this is an after-thought, not a properly considered part of the LPR.

### **Healthcare**

Healthcare does not appear to have been considered properly at all. There has not been a multi-agency approach and there has not been a Health Impact Assessment.

All GP practices in the area are already overstretched and based on what has been put forward in the plan, there appears to have been no approach from developers to engage with healthcare providers.

It would not seem to make financial sense for a new practice to open based on what is currently detailed in the LPR. The proposal to create a new primary care site appears to be unrealistic and unsuitable, and there is no reasonable mitigation for 1,500 or more new houses to be developed.

We are also concerned about the provision of dental practices, as it is a very difficult situation already locally. This does not appear to have been considered at all.

### **Environment**

We are absolutely devastated and stunned that a major greenfield development is being considered in the setting of the North Wessex Downs AONB. Surely as we discover more about the damage humans are doing to the planet, it does not make sense to further erode our beautiful countryside?

The plan does not consider the current enjoyment and health benefits to the local community of the open countryside, nor the further erosion of habitat for local wildlife.

One of the reasons my family and I moved to the area in 2013 was to enjoy the local countryside more and improve our health and wellbeing. We have already created many happy memories, and have been very grateful for what we have, as have local family and friends who visit us regularly to go for walks and to enjoy the treasure trove of footpaths.

My family and I feel extremely strongly about this point and feel much more must be done to investigate alternative brown field sites which do not damage the local countryside beyond repair.

It appears completely absurd to me that the SP17 policy can state that there will be an overall positive impact on sustainability, and this betrays a complete misunderstanding and ignorance of how beautiful and impactful the local area we already have is.

### **Education**

There is no coherent plan for education, and this very simply put makes the plan untenable. As a local resident, I am aware of how much Kennet School has already been expanded into a very large school, and I am broadly concerned too that without understanding what the plan is, it is ridiculous to try and make traffic predictions.

West Berkshire Council, as an education authority, has a duty to plan for suitable school provision. How this obligation will be met across all school years is not defined or evidenced in the LPR.

Whilst we both have experience of education in the area through virtue of using the education services for our children, Barry has particular experience in the management of schools due to being a Local Authority Governor. The current state of school premises and facilities in the area is underfunded and poorly managed. Policies around Academies and Multi-Academy Trusts have eroded WBC's ability to provide a broad spectrum of education services to schools left as Local

Authority schools. This further expansion will only make the situation worse, and we see no impact assessment or further resources planned.

### **Sports fields**

The objectives of WBC and the North-East Thatcham Development Consortium to provide sports fields have simply not been met as they have not provided evidence for funding or for a suitable location.

### **Timing on the LPR**

On 6th December, Michael Gove (Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities) released a Written Ministerial Statement (<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/writtenstatements/detail/2022-12-06/hcws415> ) detailing that the housing number should now be an advisory starting point and not mandatory.

The statement went on to say that the Planning Inspectorate should no longer override sensible local decision making, which is sensitive to and reflects local constraints and concerns.

There is no evidence that this change of direction has been considered in the LPR in its current form.