

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [PlanningPolicy](#)  
**Subject:** WBC LPR REGULATION 19 OBJECTION  
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As a resident of Bucklebury Parish I wish to raise my objections to the proposed development at North East Thatcham for the following reasons

#### Strategic Gap between Thatcham and Bucklebury

The land north of Floral Way has provided the gap between Thatcham and Bucklebury, and breach of the strategic gap has been cited by WBC to refuse planning applications in the recent past.

Bucklebury is a rural parish within the AONB, whilst Thatcham is an urban town, with Floral Way the boundary between them. The proposal would remove much of the strategic gap between Bucklebury and Thatcham - urbanising the village and the edge of the AONB. 1500 houses on the doorstep of the AONB will have a huge detrimental effect on the landscape, light pollution, and fragile ecosystems that WBC are charged to protect. WBC policies require the maintenance of settlements as separate entities. The proposed development will have a significant detrimental effect on both the countryside and the North Wessex AONB. The natural beauty of the area will be irretrievably lost if the development goes ahead. Traffic

A development of the scale proposed would lead to a significant increase in traffic, which has not been adequately considered in the proposals. The current road infrastructure will not be sufficient to support this level of increased level of traffic. It is an assumption that the bulk of traffic would use the A4, accessed via Floral Way; the A4 is already commonly overloaded at peak times, causing significant congestion which is harmful on the environment, and new residents would look to other routes. These routes would likely be through the Parish villages, particularly for access to the A34 and M4, on rural single-carriageway roads with blind corners and many without footpaths, therefore ill-suited to coping with the additional volume of traffic. The station and town centre are too far from the development, so people will continue to use their cars, further clogging Thatcham roads, increasing parking requirements, and doing little to help WBC achieve its Carbon Neutrality targets.

#### Education

The provision for education is not clearly defined within the Local Plan Review (LPR). There are no details in the LPR for Nursery or Early years and the provision for Primary Education is unclear and contradictory. Secondary school detailing is also inconsistent and incomplete. The latest LPR proposes the sum of £15 million to be contributed by the developers to Secondary Education but there are no details on the location of the land to be provided and hence no possibility of assessing its suitability.

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

#### Healthcare

West Berkshire Council and the developer appear to have neither arranged a relevant HIA nor provided evidence of having appropriately liaised with local health care agencies or providers.

The proposed North-East Thatcham development site is unsuitable for NHS primary care with local practises not having input into the provision to mitigate the burden 1500 or more new houses will make on a local NHS struggling to cope.

#### Conservation

The proposal would do significant and irreparable damage to the biodiversity and fragile ecosystems of Bucklebury Common and surrounding areas, including a number of

protected species. The proposal fails to meet the WBC core objective of protecting and enhancing existing landscape features and biodiversity habitats. The original Thatcham Growth Plan had a vague proposal for 2 country parks inside the Biodiversity Opportunity Area, but now in the updated SP17 text these parks have been downgraded to undefined 'community parks' which highlights how little commitment WBDC has given to protecting the natural environment and public enjoyment it. The LPR's own sustainability Appraisal, which suggests that SP17 will have a negative on environmental sustainability and a positive impact of sustainability (largely by ignoring the environmental consequences in favour of social and economic benefits) show there is no serious attempt to analyse and address the consequences of this development.

I feel the council should take the opportunity, as others have, to pause the plan making and to bring forward a revised plan in line with updated planning guidance when this comes in later in 2023.

I would like to reiterate my objections to the proposal at Thatcham North East as part of the review of WBC's Local Plan.

Rachael Matthews

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