

An EXTRAORDINARY meeting of THEALE PARISH COUNCIL was held on Monday 30th January 2023 at 7.30pm in the Pavilion, Englefield Road, and was attended by the following:

Chair: Cllr Clifford

Parish Councillors: Cllr Gallop, Cllr Paul, Cllr Hopcroft, Cllr Church, Cllr Gash, Cllr Cox, Cllr Fenwick, Cllr Coker

In Attendance: 1 member of the public

Locum Clerk: Mrs S. Haywood

ITEM	MINUTE	VOTE / ACTION
FUL/174/22/23	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE	
	Cllr Richardson – personal. Cllr Clark – personal. Cllr Paul – late – personal. IT WAS RESOLVED that the apologies be accepted.	Proposed:ZF Seconded:RG All in favour
FUL/175/22/23	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST and DISPENSATIONS	
	None received.	
FUL/176/22/23	APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING	
	IT WAS RESOLVED that the minutes of the Ordinary Full Council meeting held on 09.01.23 be approved as a true and accurate record of the meeting and be signed by the Chair.	Proposed:LC Seconded:KG All in favour Clerk
FUL/177/22/23	OPEN MEETING	
	No member of the public wished to speak.	
FUL/178/22/23	WEST BERKSHIRE COUNCIL LOCAL PLAN REVIEW 2022-2039	
	<p><i>Cllr Paul joined the meeting.</i></p> <p>IT WAS RESOLVED to respond to WBC on the Local Plan Review 2022-2039 with the following comments:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Strategic Objectives – 3.5.2. An affordable housing survey needs to be carried out and the need ascertained in Theale parish, and a district wide survey, so that the Plan statement is backed by evidence. 2) Strategic Objectives – 3.5.5. The Plan implies that a shopping centre makes a community prosperous but we believe it takes a lot more to build a community 	

from social, health and wellbeing etc. Theale has always been overlooked for leisure and community activities. There is also a lack of access and public transport in Theale to be able to support large scale development.

- 3) Strategic Objectives – 3.5.11. Theale has very little infrastructure, certainly not enough to support a large number of new housing. The Plan states that infrastructure is part of it but there are no specifics mentioned and they need to be included in the Plan. Also, the ‘catch up’ plans for new housing that has already been developed or approved as Theale has had significant development but to improvement/additions to infrastructure with the exception of the primary school.
- 4) Policy SP1 - “Within other defined settlements developments are expected to secure a net density of at least 30 dwellings per hectare with higher densities achievable in the centres of Hungerford, Pangbourne and Theale.” We object to Theale being included here as it is a rural village.
- 5) Policy SP1. Including current planning applications, Theale has a 57.3% increase in development which is extremely high and has huge effects on the character of the village. The large Lakeside Development is not included in the Plan and needs to be added. The approved development figures for Theale need to be inclusive and accurate so need revisiting and correcting.
- 6) Policy SP2 - “If it is considered that exceptional circumstances exist and development would be in the public interest, all opportunities to conserve and enhance the special qualities of the AONB will be sought.” – This statement needs revisiting as it excludes far too much of the district. A problem of this size needs the whole district to resolve the problem and these areas need to be included to spread the impact.
- 7) Policy SP3. There is a 57.3% increase in development proposed for Theale. We object to further development as it is not proportionate to the settlement.
- 8) Policy SP3 – Rural Service Centres – Service Villages. Woolhampton and Cold Ash are included but these are not service villages. The Plan needs to state the impact new development will have on utilities, services, and villages. Theale schools do not have the capacity to have a higher intake, nor the doctors surgery. Theale is not a Rural Service Centre as it does not have key services so should be moved to the Service Village section as Theale does not meet the criteria for a Rural Service Centre.
Sentence “These smaller rural settlements may offer some limited and small-scale development potential, appropriate to the character and function of the village, in order to meet local needs through” – we object and disagree to this sentence.
- 9) 4.33. Theale does not meet this as there is insufficient infrastructure, services, and public transport.
- 10) 4.34. Local services are already oversubscribed in Theale and could not cope with more demand. Theale has no leisure centre and no direct public transport to any leisure centre. Theale schools are either at capacity or very close to capacity so could not cope with an increase in demand. The GP surgery has no more capacity. We have little other facilities e.g. no dentist etc.

- 11) SP5. The Plan proposes to build on Thames Water peat bog which is a flood plain. We strongly object to this as it would drastically increase the flood risk to Theale residents. The peat also helps address the importance of climate change due to the peat capturing carbon. The Plan conflicts with the identified site, policy RSA11. SP5 and SP6 therefore conflict each other.
- 12) SP7 – first sentence. We object to this as the Plan would not be in keeping with Theale’s character.
- 13) SP7, 5.32, c, e and f. We object to this as it conflicts with climate statements as there is a potential to encroach on public open space. Theale already lacks sufficient public open spaces as there are very few in the parish.
- 14) SP8, c. We object to this as Theale already has a 57.3% increase in development and is over scale.
- 15) SP8, 5.39. We object to this as Theale already has a 57.3% increase in development and this affects the landscape so this conflicts.
- 16) SP9. Planning application 16/02850/OUTMAJ for the old sewerage works in Theale. The Archaeological Officer stated “No development/site works/development shall take place within the application area until the applicant has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter the development shall incorporate and be undertaken in accordance with the approved statement.” The Plan does not mention this. It should be included. It also conflicts with SP9.
- 17) SP9. “Development that would lead to substantial harm.....”. Theale High Street is a conservation area and more development would have a detrimental effect on that in regards to pollution, additional traffic etc.
- 18) SP10. The Blossom Lane peat bog area conflicts with the site selection.
- 19) HSA15. We object to this as there is a strong possibility that an increase in the population would use Theale’s facilities which are already struggling e.g. GP surgery, schools etc.
- 20) SP22. “Development proposals for main town centre.....”. Theale’s 57.3% increase in houses would have an adverse impact on the local network. Theale High Street already has insufficient parking and most of the High Street is single vehicle width due to parked vehicles and traffic calming give way areas. The traffic does not flow through the High Street due to this and there is often congestion.
- 21) SP22. The Plan states a wish to ‘retain our district centre’ yet the Plan would shrink Theale village centre and thus the Plan conflicts. There is also shrinking in infrastructure.
- 22) SP22. “Retail uses will be encouraged...”. Many of Theale’s shops have been or are converting to residential in the High Street. The Plan states a need for an increase in office space yet in Theale there are many either empty or have conversions to residential. 7.4 – There has been a large shift towards hybrid

working which means that less office space is required. The Plan conflicts concerning the need for expansion and evidence should be provided to substantiate the claim.

23) Town & District Centres, 7.43. Theale has had no leisure investment and no local leisure facilities are accessible by public transport. This needs to be reflected in the Plan.

24) 8. With regards to infrastructure, the Plan needs to state that there is an urgent requirement for an increase in medical/hospital provision as local hospitals and GP surgeries are already at capacity.

Cllr Gash left the meeting.

25) SP24. The entire text is very vague and needs to be made clearer. What is meant by 'adequate'? This needs more detail. The entire section is unrealistic and needs a lot more detail.

26) 8 – Non Strategic Site Allocations. RSA5. This will have a large impact on Theale's roads and infrastructure with more traffic, pollution, and congestion etc. The A4 already floods and increased traffic will exasperate such problems.

27) RSA8. This is on a flood plain and will have a severe impact on the surrounding area. It is also next to the M4 and will suffer from extensive air and noise pollution.

28) RSA9. We object to this section for the reasons already stated e.g. increased flood risk, increased traffic and congestion, increased air and noise pollution, unacceptable demand on medical services already under strain etc. 10 – it states a restriction of 2 storey high development which is inconsistent with the specifications to ensure preservation of character.

29) RSA10 C. Access is proposed from the High Street which already cannot cope with the volume of traffic and is often single file. This needs revisiting.

30) RSA10. Whitehart Meadow has been struck out and a reason should be given as to why. A Landscape Assessment needs to be referred to.

31) RSA11 P. 'Desk based' is not adequate and a survey should be carried out.

32) RSA11. Access into Blossom Lane is not suitable. Crown Lane already has issues with traffic often single file as two vehicles cannot pass due to the narrow access. It will also not be safe for pedestrians due to the narrowness of the road.

33) RSA11. The sewerage works were removed from the last Local Plan as they were rejected as a suitable site so this should be removed from the Plan, no changes to access the site have been made since the last plan.

34) RSA11. The water main is not mentioned and needs to be.

35) RSA11. Sulham Brook. This is a main river and a 10m buffer will not be sufficient. It should be a minimum of 30m. We object to this section as it is an increased flood risk.

- 36) Policy DM2. A settlement boundary has to be retained between Theale and surrounding villages in order for Theale and its neighbours to retain their individual characters.
- 37) DM3 states “Development that would have an unacceptable impact on the health or wellbeing of existing or new communities will not be permitted” yet all the development proposed would have an unacceptable impact, particularly air and noise pollution, increased traffic and congestion, further strain on medical facilities, loss of open green space, loss of biodiversity etc.
- 38) 10 Development Management Policies. 10.2. It states leisure facilities are very good yet Theale has none, or any direct public transport links to any. This needs to be stated in the Plan. Theale already has very little open green space and it is extremely important that these are protected.
- 39) S10. The Plan needs to state how omissions will be reduced. Omissions are already high with the M4 and the A34 cutting across most of the district. More development will dramatically increase these problems.
- 40) S10. The Plan states that you will meet national targets. The Plan needs to state how you will do this. With more development the Plan needs to state clearly how electricity and gas usage will be cut and how fuel poverty will be addressed.
- 41) 10.34. You need to explore the current Local Plan and address the issues in 10.15.
- 42) DM9. The Plan needs to state how air quality will be improved if there is to be a large increase in development, traffic etc.
- 43) DM15. 10.138. There is already loss of tree canopy and this should be avoided at all costs.
- 44) DM16 e. The Plan needs to state that all affordable housing will remain affordable e.g. no extensions allowed on properties which can increase value and then make the properties non-affordable.
- 45) DM16. 11.1. ‘Rent’ needs to be reinstated as there are many people who cannot get a mortgage for a variety of reasons.
- 46) DM19. 11.20. We request that this section is reinstated as you state a need so it conflicts.
- 47) DM22. 11.45. This statement needs to be reinstated.
- 48) DM39. There is no scope for providing outdoor sports provision, meeting areas etc. There is simply no space for such and an increase in population would increase the usage and impact on existing facilities.
- 49) DM40. The Plan needs to state how it will encompass open spaces within developments.
- 50) DM42. Theale already lacks access to facilities by public transport. The Plan makes reference to bus stops etc but Theale does not have adequate public

	<p>transport. The Plan needs to address this and state how public transport will be increased sufficiently.</p> <p>General comments applicable for the entire plan that WBC should consider adding before approving the reviewed Plan:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) An increase in houses by 25% with the aim of fitting them into a very small area of the county, mainly Theale and Thatcham, is not acceptable. The main reasons being extra demand on services already at breaking point or fully subscribed such as GP surgeries, hospitals, schools, dentists etc, additional traffic and air pollution adding to that of the M4 and the A32, and lack of public transport. 2) There is already a 57.3% increase in housing approved which is very high. WBC need to consider planning applications that have been approved and ensure they are contained within the plan. 3) There is major concern that the Plan will seriously compromise local medical provision, particularly hospitals and GP surgery facilities. The Plan needs to state these concerns and address the issues. 4) There is major concern that the Plan will seriously increase traffic, pollution and does not accommodate much needed public transport, especially to rural villages such as Theale. Solutions need to be considered. 5) 'Desk based' statements are not adequate/appropriate and a survey should be carried out. 	<p>Proposed:PC All in favour Clerk</p>
<p>FUL/179/22/23</p>	<p>DATE OF NEXT MEETING</p> <p>The next meeting will take place at 7.30pm on Monday 6th February 2023 in the Pavilion.</p>	

The meeting closed at 9.51 pm.

Chair: Date: