

# MIDGHAM PARISH COUNCIL

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

3<sup>rd</sup> February 2021

Dear Sirs

## **Local Plan Review 2020-2037 Emerging Draft December 2020**

Midgham parish council wishes to strongly object to the proposed development of 2500 houses to the north and east of Thatcham. The parish would have wished to carry out a public meeting to allow members of the public to express their views but have been precluded from doing so due to COVID-19 restrictions. Nevertheless, members of the parish council have received objections from concerned constituents and the matter was discussed by the parish council on January 18 2021. The parish Council wishes to object on the following grounds.

### **Strategic gap**

Midgham is a small village in the countryside. It is bounded to the east by Woolhampton and to the west by Thatcham. It is essentially farmland with a small amount of housing. Woolhampton has experienced large-scale development only recently and is steadily growing in size as a village. Thatcham has developed greatly over the last 20 years and it has expanded its boundaries accordingly. There is already ribbon development on the A4 between Thatcham and Woolhampton. The planned development would abut right up to the boundary of Midgham parish and consequently Midgham would become a small village effectively sandwiched between two large conurbations. This would have a severely detrimental effect on the village as it would be in danger of being completely subsumed by those conurbations. The development would fundamentally change the rural aspect of this area.

### **Traffic**

Midgham would be adversely affected by a vast increase of traffic which would be generated by the new development. The A4 is the main arterial route leading to Reading and the M4 and is already very heavily used particular at peak times. This development will significantly increase the amount of traffic on the A4 and by doing so increase the level of pollution from these vehicles, both chemically and by noise. Road noise is already a significant problem. Furthermore, Thatcham station which would be the railway station serving this plan development, has a level crossing which already incurs significant tailbacks particular during peak hours. The increased traffic can only add to this.

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Furthermore, this railway line has been electrified only recently and it is likely that more people will wish to travel by train. Any increase in train frequency will increase the delays at the level crossing.

## **Infrastructure**

There is already considerable pressure on local school places due to the large-scale previous developments in Thatcham and capacity for new students could be a serious problem.

General medical services in the area are already stretched and are likely to have considerable difficulty in coping with the large increase in population.

Whilst the A4 is a major road the roadways in and around Midgham are very narrow, devoid of pavement, and in some cases single-track. It is inevitable that due to the considerable increase in traffic and the concomitant delays, these small lanes will be used as rat runs or thoroughfares as people seek to circumnavigate traffic delays. This will be dangerous, will increase pollution, and will further destroy the countryside.

## **Midgham Parish Council**