

The site is awkwardly placed between congested roads in the Thatcham and Newbury directions and the single track “quiet” lane to the north. There are significant gradients both within the site, this not apparent from the developer’s submission. We also know from our own measurements that many of the developer’s distances are underestimates. It will therefore be hard work to travel on foot or bicycle to and from local facilities. Car use will be the norm thereby adding to the local congestion.

The lane is used a great deal by walkers, cyclists and horse riders as a quiet route. This use will be disrupted, if not wiped out, by the urbanisation and increased traffic both during and after construction.

The gradient and impermeable clay of the site makes flooding of the vulnerable Manor Park area below it a real possibility. Unproven flood alleviation measures are in the proposal but who will maintain them? Similar provisions in Manor Park have never been maintained and are now choked with vegetation. The average rainfall in the area has increased sharply since 2017. 857.9mm of rain fell in Thatcham in the last 12 months vs 151.89mm in the same period in 2016/2017

The removal of about 180m of established hedge will destroy wildlife habitat and contribute to the urbanisation that this proposal presents. Queries are raised over what environmental studies have taken place, the site is used by wildlife creatures.

The development looks like a “city block” transported to the edge of Newbury and it even includes some 3-storey buildings that are completely out of character with the area.

The developer is being allowed to count the existing public open space as part of the development thus letting them off such provision inside the site. We object to the lack of consultation on this issue. As locals, we know that the existing public open space is extremely wet for much of the year which will make it unpleasant to use.

The increased pressure on local services, in particular schools and GPs has not been considered in the proposal and thus the impact on existing residents. Utilities have come under increasing pressure since 2017 and more home-working will intensify this pressure.

WBC has declared a climate emergency, yet there is nothing sustainable in this proposal other than a marginal improvement in insulation above the minimum requirement of the Building Regulations. It is not even “low carbon ready”, for example by using underfloor heating compatible with heat pumps. The design of the proposal scheme is 10 years out of date.

There is widespread alarm amongst existing residents concerning how they will be affected, the outline application received a petition of over 500 names. The development will turn Waller Drive into a “rat run”.

There are a number of empty buildings in Newbury and other brown field sites which can be used.

The site is valued recreational land for local residents. The proposal scheme will irreparably damage the character of the area. Green space should be protected.