

BPC Summary of WBC Proposal for Thatcham North East

A summary of current WBC plans from a Bucklebury Parish Council perspective

Background

- As required by Government, WBC have to ensure sufficient sites for building are allocated to meet future housing and economic needs.
- As part of this ongoing process, West Berkshire Council (WBC) are updating their Local Plan, the 'Local Plan Review 2020 - 2037: Emerging Draft' (available on WBC website, link at end)
- Within the emerging draft of this update, WBC has proposed a site for 2500 houses and associated infrastructure to the north east of Thatcham.
- WBC have asked for public consultation on this stage of the plan review until 5th February 2021.

- The current WBC Local Plan 2016 - 2026 concentrated housing expansion in Newbury with 5,400 new homes, with approximately 900 homes in Thatcham.
- WBC is required to build approximately 520-570 houses per year, every year, to keep up with Government requirements.
- As part of the upcoming update, WBC requested submissions from developers for suitable sites across the district. This led to the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA), WBC's future 'land bank.'
- Approx 85% of West Berkshire is not suitable for development, either through the safety traces of the AWE sites, the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) to the north, and various flood plains.

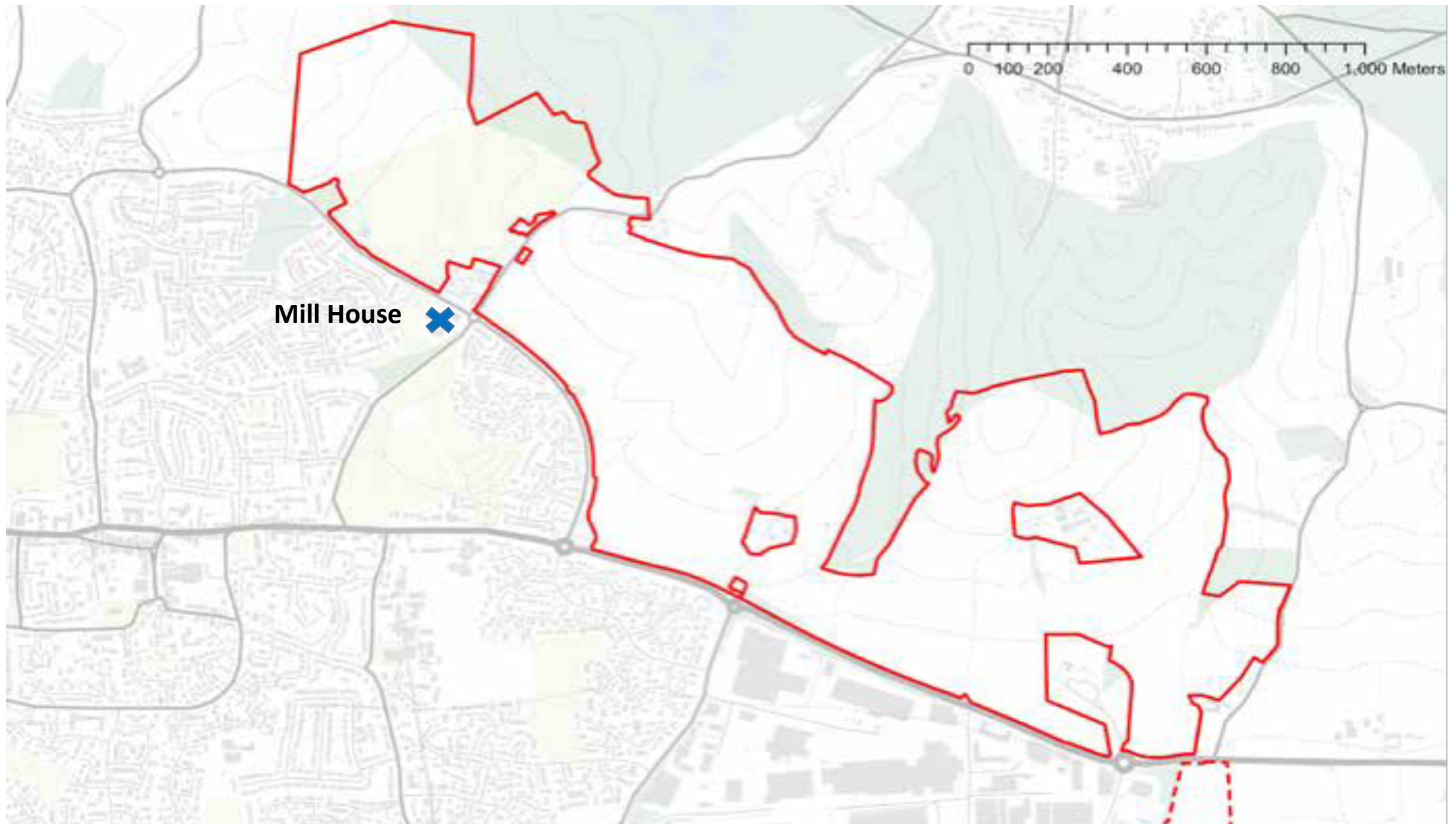
- WBC intended to build a site of 6000 houses at Grazeley (south of J11 M4), but a recent change in the safety zone around AWE prevents this 'strategic' development, and led to a significant shortfall in WBC's ability to deliver the required housing stock
- WBC reviewed all the sites available in its available 'land bank', and held community discussions about the viability of sites.
- Sites in Upper Bucklebury and along Harts Hill Road were part of this process, but were rejected at this time.
- A proposal for the 2500 house development to the north east of Thatcham was considered suitable for further investigation.

Thatcham NE Proposal

- WBC conducted a three stage review of Thatcham. Stages 1 and 2 are Thatcham Past and Thatcham Present.
- There has been significant piecemeal development of houses without the associated improvement in facilities of shops, schools, sports facilities. Secondary in facilities to Newbury.
- Led to 'Thatcham Strategic Growth Study Stage 3 Thatcham Future', which puts forward the vision for 2500 houses to the north east of Thatcham

The proposed Thatcham NE Plan

- Contained in the Thatcham Strategic Growth Study Stage 3 (available on WBC website, link at end)
- 4 proposals were amalgamated to produce this plan for 2500 houses and associated infrastructure to be built to the north and east of Thatcham.
- Expectation is that 1250 houses will be built by 2037.
- On subsequent slides, the Blue Cross represents the Mill House pub/ Coop/ takeaways area. Upper Bucklebury is by the scale marking to the top



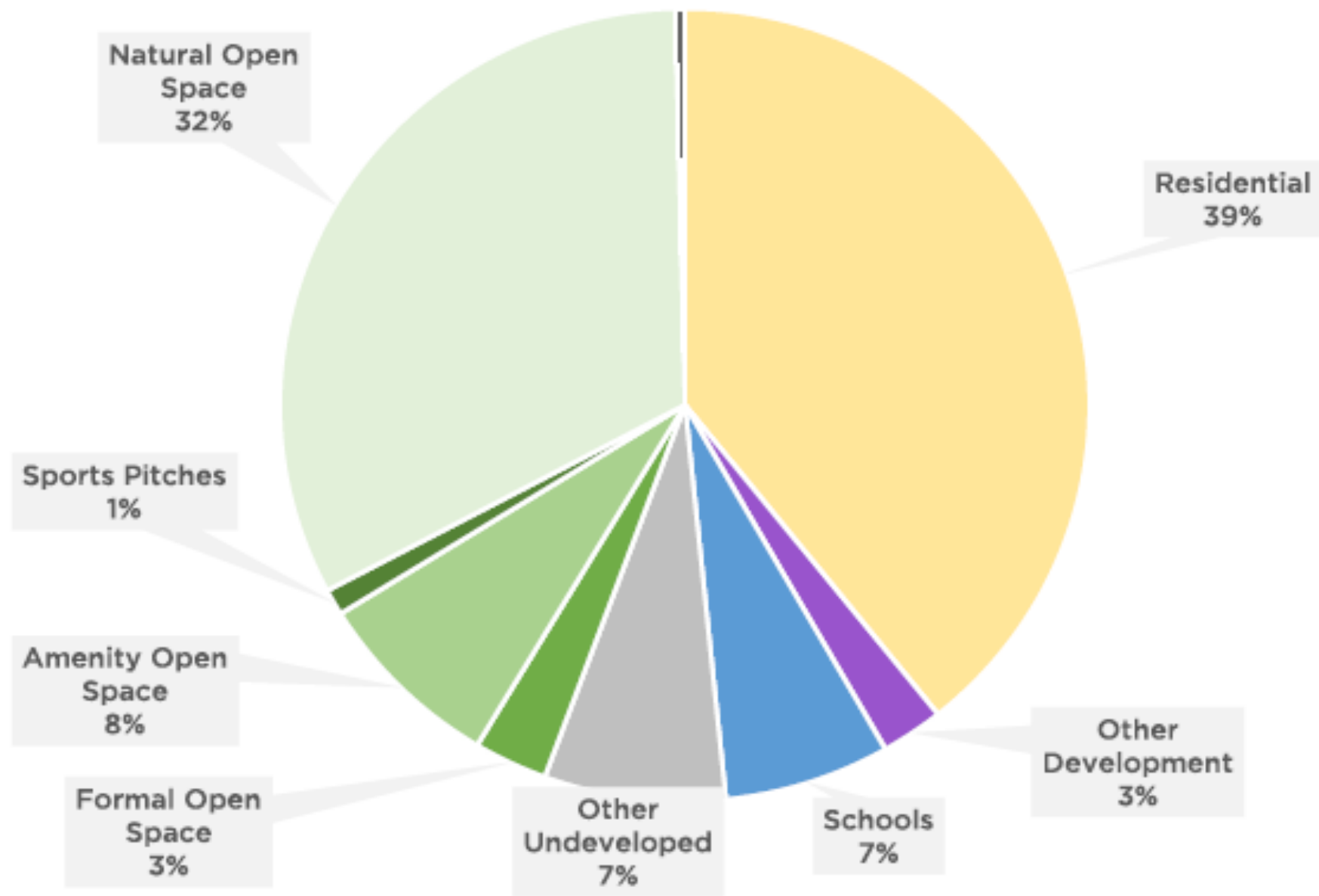
Mill House



0 100 200 400 600 800 1,000 Meters

- Due to the scale of the proposal, *at this stage* the plan includes provision for local shops, local services, office space, 2x primary schools, 1x senior school, community space, and sports facilities.
- Includes a “hilltop country park.” Appears to be a significant green buffer located along the northern boundaries.
- 50% green open space.
- 40% affordable housing.





Considerations

- These 2500 houses will be built somewhere in West Berkshire. If this strategic plan does not progress, then the constituent sites may be developed individually; with less of the proposed infrastructure.
- Traffic will likely increase, despite planning efforts to accommodate this.
- There is a significant 'green' buffer proposed to the northern edges of the site, to ensure that there is limited visibility of the site from the AONB. The building boundary is inside the shown site boundary due to this green buffer.
- North Wessex Downs AONB Board has objected to development on all the sites that make up Thatcham NE, due to the impact on the setting of the AONB and the breaking of the Floral Way boundary.

Timeline

- BPC have set up a Working Group to formulate a response to WBC
- BPC are holding two (identical) Zoom briefings for parish residents on Friday 15th Jan (7pm) and Wednesday 20th Jan (8pm).
- There will be a 'town hall' zoom meeting on Monday 25th Jan (7-8pm) where residents can put forward their opinions to the Working Group.
- Places can be booked for all the meetings at clerk@buckleburyparish.org
- BPC Working Group will submit the parish council's response to WBC by the consultation deadline of 5th February 2021.
- WBC produces the draft Local Plan Review in Spring 2021.

Questions

- This is based upon the source WBC documents, the ‘Local Plan Review 2020 - 2037: Emerging Draft’ and ‘Thatcham Strategic Growth Study Stage 3 Thatcham Future,’ both of which are available on WBC’s website.

[https://www.westberks.gov.uk/media/49828/Emerging-Draft-West-Berkshire-Local-Plan-Review-to-2037/pdf/Emerging_Draft_West_Berks_LPR_\(Dec_2020\)_Red_file_size.pdf?m=637437237642200000](https://www.westberks.gov.uk/media/49828/Emerging-Draft-West-Berkshire-Local-Plan-Review-to-2037/pdf/Emerging_Draft_West_Berks_LPR_(Dec_2020)_Red_file_size.pdf?m=637437237642200000)

https://www.westberks.gov.uk/media/49799/Thatcham-Strategic-Growth-Study-Stage-3-Thatcham-Future/pdf/Thatcham_Strategic_Growth_Study_Stage_3.pdf?m=637430460161270000

- It is intended to be complementary to the zoom briefings and town hall meeting that BPC is holding to inform residents.
- Any questions, please contact BPC clerk at clerk@buckleburyparish.org

Individual comments

- WBC welcome individual comments during this consultation, and each individual's comments will be considered in developing this proposal. This is just a proposal, and comments from individuals (and PCs) may lead to amendments.
- Comments can be posted at the WBC website, then “Having Your Say”, then “View a Consultation”, then “Local Plan Review to 2037”
- Or by email to planningpolicy@westberks.gov.uk