

Matter 5 – Natural, Built and Historic Environment – Matter 5

(Applicable Plan Policy references include: PR6 and PR7)

Question 1

WDC's Plan for 2650 new homes in Princes Risborough, within the setting of the AONB (some in Green Belt), and according to the Plan '*Major new road infrastructure in the form of a relief road*' within the AONB and Green Belt, doesn't fit with existing legislation and the good intentions expressed by WDC at the commencement of this process.

Visual exposure of the proposed relief road in short-and long-distance views, from the AONB and the National Ridgeway Trail, will have a negative impact. In addition the associated loss of tranquillity through the introduction of lighting, noise and traffic movement can only have a negative impact.

The proposed development behind Poppy Road impacts on Pyrtle Spring, a chalk headwater, and as such a UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) priority habitat. The relief road, further access road, and the planned housing development at this location together all constitute major development in the AONB, which would be subject to further public interest tests under the NPPF.

The Chilterns AONB setting is a major asset for the town of Princes Risborough as 10 million people live within an hour of the Chilterns. There is massive tourist potential.

Following publication of the government's 25 Year Environment Plan an independent panel has now been set up to review the Chilterns AONB (and other areas of special beauty) with potential to expand. The review will report in 2019.

Given that the Chilterns is already highly developed compared to most protected landscapes, and given the potential to deliver health and recreational benefits, only the most essential development should take place within the AONB.

Suggestions:

- Minimize adverse impacts, including landscape and views, on the setting of the AONB through avoidance in the first place. Our lanes are an important source of recreation for walkers, joggers, cyclists and horse riders. These should be protected not destroyed.
- Promote our AONB, including the opportunities to improve our health and wellbeing.
- The Poppy Road/Pyrtle nature conservation area should be left alone and not destroyed. We should be enhancing the important chalk stream and associated areas of vegetation - instead of fragmenting this scarce habitat. It complements the surrounding AONB area. We must maintain the Green Belt protection for this site. Development of this site is not consistent with the NPPF.
- Pending the outcome of the Government's current AONB review we should not plan any further development within the AONB or its close setting at this time.

I have asked to attend and would like to participate at this Hearing.