

**Test Valley Revised Local Plan
DPD 2011-2029
Regulation 22 – Submission to
Secretary of State**

**Policy LE15
Stockbridge Local Centre Topic
Paper**

July 2014

REVISED LOCAL PLAN

TOPIC PAPER – POLICY LE15 STOCKBRIDGE LOCAL CENTRE

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This paper has been prepared to provide the background justification to the designation of Stockbridge as a local centre (in the retail hierarchy) and Policy LE15 which would apply to the designation.
- 1.2 Stockbridge is defined in the Settlement Hierarchy (Policy COM2) as a Key Service Centre (see also Settlement Hierarchy Topic Paper).

2 Policy Background

- 2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) paragraph 23 states that centres in the retail hierarch should be defined in Local Plans

“Para.23: Planning policies should be positive, promote competitive town centre environments and set out policies for the management and growth of centres over the plan period. In drawing up Local Plans, local planning authorities should:...

- *define a network and hierarchy of centres that is resilient to anticipated future economic changes;...”*

- 2.2 The NPPF Annex 2 Glossary includes town centres and makes reference to other centres in the retail hierarchy

*“**Town centre:** Area defined on the local authority’s proposal map, including the primary shopping area and areas predominantly occupied by main town centre uses within or adjacent to the primary shopping area. References to town centres or centres apply to city centres, town centres, district centres and local centres but exclude small parades of shops of purely neighbourhood significance...”*

- 2.3 The NPPF does not provide definitions for different types of centre in the hierarchy or their characteristics, although one was provided by the former PPS6 (see Annex 1). Andover and Romsey have defined town centres and Stockbridge is designated as a local centre. There are no city centres or district centres designated in the Borough.

3 Local Centre Designation

- 3.1 Stockbridge serves the immediate day to day retail needs of residents of a number of rural settlements in the central rural area of the Borough. There are a number of retail outlets, both convenience and specialist shops, public houses, restaurants and tourist accommodation. It also has a tourist role, associated with the River Test and its internationally renowned fishing.
- 3.2 Taking account of the size, mix of use, commercial characteristics of Stockbridge and the area which it serves in its role as a retail and service centre, it is considered that its designation as a local centre is justified.
- 3.3 The designation of a local centre and the inclusion of a policy for Stockbridge followed a number of representations by the local community made at the Regulation 18 Preferred Options consultation stage, that a specific policy framework was needed to recognise the retail and commercial role of Stockbridge and help preserve the vitality and viability of the local centre.
- 3.4 Having reviewed whether this would be appropriate and justified, it was determined that Stockbridge should be defined as a 'local centre' in the retail hierarchy.
- 3.5 The key issue is considered to be the retention of the settlement's role and the potential loss of shops and facilities. In addressing these it is important to recognise that the loss and change of use of shops and other community facilities is protected by Policy COM14.
- 3.6 The mixed nature of uses in High Street, Stockbridge, which contains both residential and commercial properties and the sporadic location of the commercial uses makes the definition of retail frontages, as used in Romsey (Policy LE12) and Andover (Policy LE13) impractical. The size and role of Stockbridge is also below that which would justify town centre or district centre designation.

4 Stockbridge Local Centre (Policy LE15)

Policy LE15: Stockbridge Local Centre

Development will be permitted provide that:

- a) it is at a scale appropriate to the size of the local centre**
- b) It would not have a significant adverse impact on the vitality and viability of local centre**

- 4.1 The policy seeks to protect the vitality and viability of Stockbridge as well as allowing for scale of development which would be in keeping with its size.
- 4.2 Taking account of the size, mix of use, commercial characteristics of Stockbridge and the area which it serves in its role as a retail and service centre, it is considered that its designation as a local centre is justified.

TYPES OF CENTRE AND THEIR MAIN CHARACTERISTICS

Type and Characteristics	Centres in Test Valley
<p>City City centres are the highest level of centre identified in development plans. In terms of hierarchies, they will often be a regional centre and will serve a wide catchment. The centre may be very large, embracing a wide range of activities and may be distinguished by areas which may perform different main functions. Planning for the future of such areas can be achieved successfully through the use of area action plans, with masterplans or development briefs for particular sites.</p>	None
<p>Town Town centres will usually be the second level of centres after city centres and, in many cases, they will be the principal centre in a local authority's area. In rural areas they are likely to be market towns and other centres of similar size and role which function as important service centres, providing a range of facilities and services for extensive rural catchment areas. In planning the future of town centres, local planning authorities should consider the function of different parts of the centre and how these contribute to the overall vitality and viability.</p>	Andover Romsey
<p>District District centres will usually comprise groups of shops often containing at least one supermarket or superstore, and a range of non-retail services, such as banks, building societies and restaurants, as well as local public facilities such as a library.</p>	None
<p>Local Local centres include a range of small shops of a local nature, serving a small catchment. Typically, local centres might include, amongst other shops, a small supermarket, a newsagent, a sub-post office and a pharmacy. Other facilities could include a hot-food takeaway and launderette. In rural areas, large villages may perform the role of a local centre.</p>	Stockbridge

Notes

(1) Small parades of shops of purely neighbourhood significance are not regarded as centres.

(2) Source: PPS6 Planning for Town Centres, Annex A (superseded, although remains most recent as no NPPF definition)