

Test Valley Borough Council Next Local Plan - Refined Issues and Options Consultation

COMMENTS FORM

Test Valley Borough Council has published for public participation its Refined Issues and Options document. This is the second stage of preparing the next Local Plan, which follows the Issues and Options consultation in 2018.

You can respond to our consultation by filling out the form below. Further information can be found on our website at: www.testvalley.gov.uk/nextlocalplan

The consultation period runs from Friday 3 July 2020 to 4.30pm on 28 August 2020. Please respond before the close of the consultation period.

Once the form has been completed, please send to

If you are unable to send via email, please send a postal copy to our address below.

Contacting us

We are happy to help. If you have any queries, please contact us at:
Planning Policy and Economic Development Service
Test Valley Borough Council
Beech Hurst
Weyhill Road
Andover
SP10 3AJ

Tel: 01264 368000

Website: www.testvalley.gov.uk/nextlocalplan

Part A: Your Details

Please fill in all boxes marked with an *

Title*Mrs		First Name*	
Surname*			
Organisation* (If responding on behalf of an organisation)			

If you wish your comments to be acknowledged and to be kept informed of progress, please provide your email address below:

Email Address*	
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If you don't have an email address and wish your comments to be acknowledged and to be kept informed of progress, please provide your postal address.

Address*			
		Postcode	

If you are an agent please give the name/company/organisation you are representing:

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Personal Details and General Data Protection Regulation

Please note that representations cannot be treated as confidential. If you are responding as an individual, rather than as an organisation, we will not publish your contact details (email/postal address and telephone number) or signatures online, however the original representations will be available for public viewing at our offices by prior appointment. All representations and related documents will be held by the Council for a period of 6months after the next Local Plan is adopted.

The Council respects your privacy and is committed to protecting your personal data. Further details on the General Data Protection Regulation and Privacy Notices are available on our website

<http://www.testvalley.gov.uk/aboutyourcouncil/accesstoinformation/gdpr>

Part B: Your Comments

Please use the boxes below to state your comments and questions. Please make it clear which paragraph or question your comments relate to where possible.

Paragraph / Question Ref	Comments
	<p>Page 6 Under communities Small typo : 'plan' not deleted</p> <hr/> <p>Page 6 Response to resident comments on the TVBC Town Centre. There has been a huge systemic rise in online shopping which has been accelerated by the pandemic. Shops can only survive if they can make a profit. At the moment they don't. Footfall is insufficient. A strategy is needed to both reduce the overhead costs for shops or to create some 'unique selling point' for the town that will bring in more trade. Footfall will not be addressed simply by building more and more houses; this will at most add no more than 20% footfall at 588 housing growth even after a number of years. We need some unique attraction to bring people into the town. This does seem a stark omission from the plan. Suggestions: major focus on developing the town as a historic coaching station and giving more focus to the museum, developing a 'focal point' – a huge play centre/ 'beach' going down to the river, a science centre, a history of rural England museum etc.</p> <hr/> <p>Page 7 'enabling people to access a job' I think they want to access more than a job. There are too many shelf stackers with degrees working in shops. There is an urgent need to increase the supply better quality of jobs within the town – see business strategy. 'Clean and safe cycle paths' Excellent – but location (not too close to road fumes) and surfacing matter (tarmac or well tamped hardcore). These can also be used for mobility scooters.</p> <p>Increased frequency of buses Increased frequency of buses is a noble ambition but I catch the bus from Andover to Chilbolton and am sometimes the only one on it for a large part of the journey. A better focus would be on car sharing and journey sharing – maybe encouraging more parish councils to set up online schemes. (Remember the over 65s – key bus users have become more IT proficient over the pandemic).</p> <p>Community Involvement Para 1.13 But engagement is always with the middle class with time to comment. What strategies have you got for wider engagement?</p>

Climate change Paras 2.3 & 2.4

The built environment contributes 42% to our carbon footprint. You cannot build zero emission buildings that last (they lose efficiency) and house occupants use plugs. Zero emission houses do not take 'plug usage' into account. The bottom line is more houses more global warming. We need the courage to change the narrative to population stabilization or reduction and/or higher occupancy density. TVBC needs to engage the public in the debate.

Andover Town Centre Para 2.11

Hemmingway Design undertook a very thorough consultation activity – having the plans and opportunities to discuss in pop up shops in Andover was excellent as it encouraged a wider demographic to engage. Where I think the TVBC Council could have helped is to have had a clearer public discussion about the realities of the impact of more online shopping. Inevitably we have ended up with lots of calls for more shops. More shops is what people remember and what they liked. The world has moved on. Shops don't make a profit – certainly not in a town like Andover. So we need to have something unique that encourages visitors to come to the town if we want more shops. (Alresford is a good example – they have the Watercress Line and the town centre is quite vibrant – but made so by the visitors). We need more focus on what our 'unique selling point' as a town should be.

Despite the excellent work of Hemmingway, many, many people within the town simply do not understand that the plan is to knock down the Town Centre. When the building work starts, there is going to be a huge backlash – inevitably this will focus on the disruption and probably the waste of public money. TVBC needs to be very upfront and, in simple language, explain what the plan will entail, what it will cost, where the money is coming from and how people can further engage and comment.

Neighbourhood plans 2.15

These work in middle class areas but TVBC needs to ensure equal access to the demographic groups on some of the Northern estates. Andover has a lot of the 'left behind' and the plan must not ignore them.

Planning Reform 2.26

It is important that Test Valley contributes to this. The 'housing shortage' mantra is possibly a myth: there is an affordability issue around housing rather than a supply issue. Indeed many argue – i.e. Ian Mulheirn, former Treasury economist, did an excellent analysis in which he concluded that focusing on supply is completely wrong. This view, that 'supply' is not the key issue is supported by the enormous number of approved applications that remain undeveloped. Added to this, there is the issue of the high level of

funding provided by developers to political parties - not only the Conservative party. The Robert Jenrick case has highlighted this and is undermining confidence in our democracy. This is not a problem of any one political party; it is a general failure to find a more democratic way to fund political parties. It is very far from clear that the white paper referred to will make it easier for communities to play a role in decisions. Perhaps TVBC, which is a public not political organisation, needs to be careful how it phrases references to contentious proposals.

P 15 Review of evidence base 2.30

Can we see this? When you refer to evidence, can you put an online access to it so that we can study it. There is no such thing as a 'perfect evidence base' and they should be as much open to challenge as policy proposals.

Page 16 Objectives *"to create a Test Valley community where everyone has the opportunity to fulfil their potential and enjoy a good quality of life"*

A commendable aspiration but there are residents in areas of high deprivation in Andover who don't have these opportunities. There needs to be a whole section on supporting these 'left out' communities so that they are equally included in plans for their future and the future of their area.

Page 19 Housing need

There is a need to conduct our own survey of housing need which takes affordability into account. The question is not 'Do you want a house?' rather 'What is the maximum you can afford to spend on housing.' The required housing is the number of homes a) necessary to meet the homes people can afford b) an alternative policy for those whose income is insufficient to be addressed by an increase in supply.

5.24 Heirachies

Difficult to understand quite what this means but if it is any reference to Question 4 – subdividing villages into heirachies – this is a truly terrible idea. Villages are communities and this will end up being hugely divisive.

5.31 SHMAs

What is the evidence of the past accuracy of SHMAs? There seems to be a great number of Andover flats for the elderly that have remained unsold or unlet for many years.

6.2 Viable retail space

Can you clarify how much retail space Carter Jonas considered would be viable? Again – please attach reports

Page 26 Tourism

Test Valley underpromotes its tourism industry. A robust tourist plan is the key to ensuring a vibrant town centre. A prominent and staffed tourist office is crucial and work done on developing a 'USP' for the town – a

beech/playspace/science centre/heritage centre.

6.17 LEPs

Our local M3 and Solent LEPs have some excellent , enthusiastic staff but the LEP model is fundamentally flawed. Staff would be better being employed directly by TVBC to support promotion of business locally and responsively. I quote the Audit Office from last year:

"LEPs' role has expanded rapidly and significantly but they are not as transparent to the public as we would expect, especially given they are now responsible for significant amounts of taxpayers' money. While the Department has adopted a 'light touch' approach to overseeing Growth Deals, it is important that this doesn't become 'no touch'. The Department needs to do more to assure itself that the mechanisms it is relying on ensure value for money are, in fact, effective."

LEPs cannot be relied on to promote business growth. The local Council needs to do a needs analysis to assess the requirements of entrepreneurs and businesses and address their needs.

6.27 Skills and Training (see previous para)

The CITB provide skills for the construction industry. But we cannot rely on addressing every down turn by building more houses or even depend on more apprenticeships. A much more detailed approach is required.

The authority needs a much more hands on approach to supporting businesses – and not just those in retail and construction. It can develop relationships with universities, encourage improvement in the range of skills at the local college – increasing HND and BTech highers which would bring in students from outside the local area. It could encourage farmers with 'sheds' to let premises at very low cost to manufacturing and engineering start ups. There is a whole menu of other opportunities that would result in huge ROI for the council and the investment would not need to be that high. This part of the plan strategy needs more development if prosperity in the town is to be improved.

7.3 Environment

This is a good section but there is a significant omission; noise abatement and the quality of the aural environment. Noise from the Andover by pass detracts from quality of not only the built environment but also the nature reserves. Investigation of road noise reduction strategies should form part of the plan.

7.14 Strategic gaps

Gaps are essential. It should be essential in commenting on proposals for respondents to declare an interest if they would financially benefit from any development project that they are supporting in the plan. Those with a

financial interest are much more likely to respond to a consultation than those without and this distorts the accuracy with which consultations reflect the majority consensus. It should be urgently addressed.

8.9 Cycling and Walking

Work should be undertaken to develop an off road cycle route between Andover (or possibly Hurstbourne) which would put Andover at the head of one of the longest off road routes in the UK – potentially running from Hursbourne to the New Forest. It would be an enormous boost to tourism and the economy of the town I understand Wherwell Parish Council did some work on the section between Clatford and Fullerton.

8.26 CIL

What measures are there to ensure the public area aware that they can submit bids for CIL funding?

Additional needs for the plan

There is a loss of confidence in the democratic process in the UK which is a pity because we have been acknowledged as a country with excellent institutions. (Edelman survey 18/19). Similar data from Statistica. Most people now distrust government. From the Edelman survey, only the Russian Federation had more distrust.

Locally, there has been controversy about the Town Council. However, there is low levels of confidence (anecdotally) in the ability of individual people (particularly in the 'left out' communities) to influence any level of government.

So the plan needs to address the key issue of how to ensure people feel engaged in the democratic processes, how their voice can be more effectively heard and how to cut down the barriers between 'the people' and the 'politicians'

There are huge concerns about the awarding of contracts, the cabinet system of decision making and a widespread belief that 'politicians are all the same'

We cannot accept a situation where only just over 1 in 4 voters in the 'left out' wards in TVBC bothered to turn out to vote.

This is unacceptable and unhealthy.

There needs to be a whole section in the plan focussed on improving both accountability and engagement.

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