

Comment on Draft Local Plan 2040 – Cllr Celia Dowden - 4th March 2023

I recognise what is involved in the production of a Local Plan and thank the officers for their hard work.

But - this plan has been produced almost entirely by officers, with little active involvement of the councillors. It has been shown and explained to us, at various briefing sessions.

The development of the previous Local Plan was achieved through a series of meetings of a Plans Advisory Panel, comprised of councillors and officers.

Equity - Test Valley's local plans have dealt with Government Housing numbers in a similar way. Allocating large scale development of 1000+ homes to the main settlements. The strategy appears to be, enlarge urban areas.

This has the following effects.

- ❖ Urban areas are losing evermore open green space.
- ❖ The quality of life for residents in these areas is impacted in a disproportionate way
- ❖ Villages are becoming less sustainable

This plan has no positive allocation of housing land sites across all settlements, other than Tiers 1 and 2.

It is relying on rural parishes to draw up Neighbourhood Plans that include housing. Some parishes have no intention of developing Neighbourhood Plans while others resist any housing development.

Our villages and rural areas contain 29% of our residents. But, we are told, less than 5% of the planned new dwellings need be in those areas.

Village Vitality - The plan has no positive policies to maintain the viability of villages, nor to improve the viability of those struggling to maintain their schools, shops and public transport.

Allocations could be made which are appropriate to individual settlements, led by community needs and support existing facilities.

Infrastructure - The plan does not ensure current infrastructure problems are addressed, and new issues addressed ahead of development

Affordable Housing – Lack of any plan to counteract the very high cost of affordable housing within Test Valley.

Preferred Site at Velmore Farm - Allocation of 1,070 homes and 2.2 hectares for employment use.

This land adjoins Valley Park. If it is developed, it would have a significant impact on Valley Park residents. The proposed high number of houses, 1,070, compounds all of the negative impacts.

Traffic The impact of up to 2000 + vehicles onto Templars Way and all local roads will have a significant detrimental impact, particularly at peak times.

The 300 home development currently being built at Hoe lane in North Baddesley, plus the outline development of 1,100 homes at Whitenap in Romsey, will greatly increase vehicle movements on Templars Way and Castle Lane, before adding in the above site.

The impact of all of this, upon Templars Way, Castle Lane and all Local Roads needs to be assessed and taken into account.

Surface Water Flooding - There is an existing, ongoing issue from surface water from these fields. Surface water flows down onto Templars Way, School Lane and Castle Lane, adding to a rising water table, creating deep flooded areas across these highways. Attempts to rectify the issue have been unsuccessful.

Test Valley Policy E3 - Any development at Velmore Farm will compromise the role, character and integrity of this **Local Gap**.

Ecology - there will be loss of open aspect, green space, and damage to the biodiversity and wildlife habitats, from such a large scale development.

Overdevelopment

Valley Park over the last forty years has had almost 4,000 homes allocated to it for development. If this allocation were to be adopted at Velmore Farm that figure would rise to almost 5,000 homes.

Economic Impact of development at Velmore Farm. It would be the closer businesses that the new residents use. Chandlers Ford and Eastleigh would be the economic beneficiaries.

Cllr Celia Dowden