

Planning Policy

From: Mike Dean <
Sent: 04 August 2018 14:35
To: Planning Policy
Subject: Consultation for the next Test Valley Local Plan

I am responding to the Consultation document in my capacity as a current resident of Test Valley in the 65+ age group. I have lived in Test Valley since 1988 and have worked both inside and outside the area. My comments follow the sequence of Questions in the Consultation document.

Q1: The things I like about living & working in Test Valley are that it has good transport links to other areas of the country (most of my travel is now by car, but I have commuted to London in the past) and it has attractive countryside close at hand which makes it a pleasant environment to live in. The good transport links mean that it is easy to travel to larger shopping centres such as Salisbury or Basingstoke and also to visit regional attractions.

Q2: There should be better shopping facilities – I go to Salisbury or Basingstoke for the larger shops and although these are reasonably close they are outside Test Valley.

Q3: Local Plans for the next 20 years should aim to keep pace with developments such as online shopping (and its consequences) and there should be greater provision for electric vehicles in towns and filling stations. There should also be more effort going into recycling the materials that can be recycled, or incentives to use fully recyclable materials.

Q4: Local Plan should be consistent with standard methodology because this would be easy to explain to people. However a higher target should be set so as to include more affordable homes because it is this category that is generally in short supply.

Q5: Test Valley needs to retain jobs and if extra houses would help to retain workers in the Test Valley area then this would be beneficial to the local economy.

Q6: No views on this.

Q7: Houses generate road traffic not only from occupants but also the services provided to them. TVBC should consider the flows of traffic across the area and whether some areas are better able to accept development increases than others.

Q8: Approaches need to take account of the ability of the community & local infrastructure to support new developments. Existing large parishes should not necessarily be penalised by making them even larger. Parishes should not be able to veto all development.

Q9: Settlement boundaries should be defined by access to jobs, shops, services and transport links.

Q10: Percentage for affordable homes should not be less than 40%.

Q11: No views on this.

Q12: If the point of "exception sites" is to allow for affordable housing then there is no point in allowing market housing on that site unless the relevant numbers of affordable homes are being provided elsewhere in the area.

Q13: Self-Build plots will presumably need to be connected to local services (electricity, gas, water, drains, etc) and provided-for by other services (pavements, bin collections, street lights, road surface, etc) so they should be contained within current 'community' group areas, rather than being allowed to create new isolated dwellings.

Q14: Every case of “exceptional quality” would have to be determined on its merits so there is no point in having a policy of allowing “exceptional quality” because there is no accepted definition.

Q15: I don't think it is a good idea to create 'ghettos' for elderly people – communities will tend to have a mix of people of all ages and the elderly will probably tend towards smaller properties anyway. The elderly often want closer links to shops, banking and public transport, but these are all provided by the private sector so provision is driven by profitability, not need.

Q16: To some extent, the mix & type of housing will depend on the kind of future TVBC wants to create for itself. The housing market will prefer to build the more expensive houses, but if the people who live in them don't work in the Test Valley area then they will be lost to the local economy. It should be fairly easy to determine what people want in housing terms, so that should drive any housing policy.

Q17: It would probably be very difficult to enforce this policy. Building an extension as a 'granny annexe' might free up a small house elsewhere in the area and therefore be beneficial. However when the granny died, the extension would be used by the original family.

Q18: A density standard policy might constrain other housing options mentioned earlier. The aim should be to create or reinforce a sense of community and allowing varying densities might be a better option.

Q19: Yes, there are no benefits to a community in having smaller rooms and the housing industry would simply create smaller houses with the aim of cramming more into a specific space.

Q20: Yes, for a percentage. On the other hand, if TVBC is trying to encourage an older population then these standards could become more widespread.

Q21: Once upon a time a rural worker was someone who worked in the agricultural industry, but now a 'rural worker' might be an IT support company, a training establishment or a paintball adventure site. If TVBC wishes to encourage these types of business then it will need to consider if houses should be allowed for the staff.

Q22: TVBC should identify a site and make it available ! This issue has been dragging on for years and TVBC is now using the excuse that it can't do anything until all the seven other Hampshire Councils reach an agreement. If the Traveller community would make use of a site in Test Valley then one should be provided. Such a site might have a bearing on other housing settlement locations so the decision should not be allowed to drag on.

Q23: Para 5.50 identifies an approach that is being used elsewhere so this should be examined more closely to see what lessons can be learned and what might work in Test Valley.

Q24: Shops, community centres/halls, Post Offices or other such facilities should be given more protection.

Q25: There should be an overriding caveat that protection will be given only to facilities that are regularly used by a reasonable number of people. The 'Use It or Lose It' philosophy should apply and should be publicised. At the same time there should be a threshold where a facility is deemed 'vulnerable' (and not worth protecting) because of a lack of use.

Q26: A lot will depend on the nature of future employment in Test Valley, but if smaller units would be supported then it might be sensible to carry out a trial by converting a large, unused unit into several smaller spaces to see what the take-up was.

Q27: See answer to Q26.

Q28: The answer to this will depend on the nature of the business and the size of home. Cannabis-growing seems to be popular, but is illegal so the Council will need to have an oversight of the proposed business use. If the premises were used for food or drink preparation then presumably they would need to comply with relevant legislation. IT-based work probably wouldn't cause any problems, but activities generating noise or fumes probably would. I think each case will need to be decided on its merits so one overarching policy would be of no help.

Q29: The answer to this may well depend on the pricing of primary frontages. If primary frontages are too expensive then general retailers will be discouraged, but we don't want more betting shops, games arcades or mobile phone shops just because they can afford the high prices. TVBC should do a 'threshold' survey to see how many more small businesses might move into places such as the Chantry Centre if the primary frontage rates were varying percentage points lower. The lack of take-up of such locations suggests no demand at the current price and the type of retailers that Andover residents want don't want to come to Andover. On the other hand, cafes seems to be popular & well-patronised so maybe they should all offer free Wi-Fi so that people can have a coffee and do their internet shopping. More user-friendly 'Click & Collect' locations might also encourage people to come into town centres.

Q30: No views on this. What approaches work elsewhere in the UK ?

Q31: The Andover Tourist Centre should be put back in the Town Centre where it belongs / Tourism policy should include the food & drink products that are produced here.

Q32: No views on this.

Q33: Local Gaps should be associated with communities so the policy should reinforce the character of that community and aim to avoid coalescence.

Q34: Local Plan should recognise local green spaces where they are key to the character of an area. Neighbourhood plans should be taken into account, but the absence of a Neighbourhood Plan document should not be taken as signifying that a local green space is not important.

Q35: Yes. Given the current heatwave, and the likelihood that warmer weather will become the norm, water efficiency promotion should be part of the local plan.

Q36: Yes. Renewable energy is likely to become more important, particularly given the take-up of electric cars.

Q37: ' Climatic' conditions will dictate the answer to this. Solar panels need to face predominantly South and wind turbines need a consistent supply of wind so the Council is best-placed to identify suitable sites.

Q38: Yes, energy efficiency will become increasingly important to people as the cost of electricity rises.

Q39: Design quality could be improved by looking at best practice elsewhere.

Q40: The type of open space should be based on existing provision and likely future requirements. Allotments seem to be going out of favour so alternative open space options should be considered.

Q41: Recreational open space should be set per dwelling so as not to disadvantage those living in smaller properties. Recreational space should be based on the needs of all age groups, not just those of school age, so the 'Playing Pitch Strategy' is probably not appropriate. Designated recreation areas are becoming increasingly important as car ownership and home deliveries increase, in order to separate people from traffic.

Q42: Difficult to answer this question without examples of both approaches. I think a combination of mitigation and alternative open spaces would probably be better.

Q43: The Council's approach should not ignore local heritage, those aspects which are relevant to the area's development over time but are not significant in the wider sense. For example, Andover's status as a coaching town might be relevant in heritage terms even if there were no historic artefacts to highlight this. The military presence at Monxton has also developed over time and there is now a business park on what was an RAF airfield.

Q44: Cycling can be promoted by providing cycle routes and offering secure cycle storage where appropriate. Walking can be promoted by providing extra walking routes, such as down Salisbury Road from the A303 overbridge to the Andover Garden Centre. Public transport can be promoted by providing more frequent bus services.

Q45: The Council should be making provision for 2 medium-sized cars per dwelling with an allowance for visitor parking when both spaces are occupied. Consideration should be given as to how electric cars and domestic charging points are to be accommodated.

Q46: Increases in internet shopping and home deliveries is leading to an increase in delivery vans in residential areas. Home improvements also tend to generate workers' van & delivery lorries and these can very quickly block parking spaces, turning spaces and access routes. New developments should take account of the need for more & larger vehicles circulating at the same time.

regards,

Mike Dean