

Planning Policy

From: Mark Cooper
Sent: 05 September 2018 00:33
To: Planning Policy
Subject: TVBC Issues and Options Paper responses
Attachments: Issues and options consultation 4th September 2018.docx

Please see attachment.

Sincerely,

Mark Cooper

TVBC Issues and Options Consultation 4th September 2018

Question 1. Test Valley has a high quality environment with relatively easy access to the New Forest, the Hampshire coastline and areas of Country Parks and AONB's.

Ques 2. The transport infrastructure is inadequate for the demands put upon it, especially at peak times. The railway network is sparse and expensive and the inadequacies of public transport generally force up the use of the motor car.

Qu. 3. The natural landscape in Test Valley with its water meadows, valley slopes, scattered woodland and chalk hills is extremely valuable in both landscape and biodiversity terms. The Plan's first duty is to pass that inheritance onto future generations: landscape and biodiversity need to be both preserved and enhanced by positive management. After a period of rapid housing growth, the built infrastructure needs time to catch up with the demands placed upon it. Employment and housing growth should be modest, and, in the light of increased home-working, should be dispersed into smaller, more numerous sites. The concept in the last two BLP's of a small number of big sites bolted on to the two existing main towns has damaged Andover and Romsey residents 'sense of place.'

Qu 4. It is a nonsense to say that the housing requirement should NOT be consistent with Government Standard methodology. Otherwise we are in breach of planning policy and will have housing allocations imposed upon us. Nevertheless, because of TV's location next to the economically strong South Hampshire and Solent, TVBC needs to resist untrammelled growth because such growth will destroy the quality of life that makes demand for housing locally so strong.

Qu 5. It is government policy to continue to build their way out of recession. There is a balance to be achieved between maintaining economic growth and maintaining quality of life. It is that balance on which the next local plan should focus.

Qu 6. The current HMA's reflect reality to a large extent; equally a review is needed to test that contention.

Qu 7. I have been advocating 'proportionate' development allocations for more than 20 years.

Qu 8. The creation of new village settlements has already been advocated in some of the early work I produced for the Romsey Neighbourhood Plan. It is important to keep the new village relatively small in order to allow it to grow organically through a number of successive local plans. They should be located near, but not at, road nodes.

Qu 9. The current settlement boundary constraints work well. This is a topic which should be informed by the local village planning process. The BLP process should give each settlement a growth percentage to achieve in the next local plan but then ask the village where it should locate that growth. If they fail to produce sites then the Borough would, regretfully, have to impose sites.

Qu 10. The 40% affordable housing provision should continue and be applied to all sites of 5 dwellings and above.

Qu 11. Five dwellings. Below that number should elicit a financial contribution to allow the Borough to bank land for future affordable dwellings.

Qu 12. Yes, so long as the 60:40 ratio is adhered to.

Qu 13. Self-build is at a very low level and each application should be treated on its merits. Why should different rules apply to self-build?

Qu 14. There should not be special rules for 'exceptional quality' or 'innovative' nature. It gives the very rich the ability to build more or less anywhere, a facility we do not extend to the population as a whole.

Qu 15. The market is more than capable of meeting the needs of various demographics.

Qu 16. The housing market is a more efficient mechanism for determining housing mix, given that the Borough retains its 40% affordable policy.

- Qu 17. Guidelines should be more sophisticated; the ratio of built area to plot size, for example, could be a way of varying the sizes of replacements and extensions.
- QU 18. Some recent housing developments are too dense, so much so that quality of life issues emerge. All homes should have some outdoor amenity space, some defensible space on the public frontage, should have adequate parking within sight of living rooms and should have adequate sound insulation to ensure privacy.
- Qu 19. Internal space standards should be set nationally. In the absence of national guidance we should draft our own standard.
- Qu 20. Yes. If a home is wheelchair accessible, it is also accessible for prams, buggies and walking frames.
- Qu 21. We should attempt to define 'rural worker'. Having said that, if rural settlements were permitted to grow by the same percentage as the two towns AND the 40% affordable ratio was preserved, then the rural worker problem may be self-resolving.
- Qu 22. There is a great deal of public resentment against what they see as an abuse of the planning system by the definitions of Gypsy, Traveller and Show People. I am of the view that we should only permit such sites if the applicants can prove they are genuinely nomadic all the year round.
- Qu 23. Yes. Health and wellbeing are a facet of 'quality of life'. It is the Borough's role to facilitate the maintenance and enhancement of the residents' quality of life.
- Qu 24. Yes, but in the context that the nature of retailing, for example, is changing as a result of internet shopping.
- Qu 25. No. If a good (and honest) economic case cannot be made then community facilities should be allowed to evolve into related or other uses.
- Qu 26. There appears to be adequate provision in the current BLP and that should continue.
- Qu 27. There needs to be a greater degree of flexibility; we should be encouraging small scale employment attached to dwellings subject to constraints on the number of workers coming in from outside and the provision of adequate off-street parking.
- Qu 28. As above, and with hours and noise limits strictly applied if in proximity to neighbours.
- Qu 29. There should be more flexibility. Internet retailing will continue to grow. What's more important is maintaining 'live' frontages. Town centres are first and foremost 'meeting places'. Mixed uses for social interaction, recreation, doing business and yes, even retailing, should be a feature of the town centre zone. The issue is keeping such locations attractive so that people want to come in to town and meet.
- Qu 30. We should continue to generate TVBC apprenticeships but I don't think encouraging others to create apprenticeships is a role for the planning system, per se.
- Qu 31. TVBC should continue to increase its commitment to encouraging tourism. If activity is attractive enough to draw in people from outside then it will certainly draw in local people as well, contributing, therefore, to the maintenance of the vitality and viability of our settlements.
- Qu 32. TVBC should formalise a set of policies to encourage tourism in settlements and in the countryside but the caveat is that, at all times, there is the need to maintain the balance between economic activity and the preservation and enhancement of the townscape, the landscape and biodiversity.
- Qu 33. Local gaps are the only way to prevent settlement coalescence. If the gaps were made more flexible or the boundaries 'generalised' they would become much more vulnerable to developer pressure.

Qu 34. Yes. It should. Where the Neighbourhood Plan either does not exist or it has not allocated green space, it should be done by TVBC in default.

Qu 35. Yes. Absolutely. It will remain a very real issue

Qu 36. Yes. I have no problem with renewable energy installations including on-shore wind power subject to the caveat that installations are removed and the land restored once they cease to be operative.

Qu 37. It is not for the Borough to say where the best sites are for wind or solar, nor do we have the skills to undertake that process. The wind and solar sector will find the optimum locations and the Borough would then have to treat each planning application on its individual merit.

Qu 38. Yes.

Qu 39. Good design should be an issue. Where the Supplementary Planning Guidance exists it should be updated by the Borough. Planning Officers need to be confident of their design skills when it comes to advising applicants at the Pre-App stage.

Qu 40. Yes it should be specific but it is time that the Borough reviewed the ratios of the different types of open space.

Qu 41. Where possible, new open space should relate to new settlement but subject to the ability of existing residents to benefit from the same open space. An example of this is the allocation of the Whitenap Development's open space provision to the north of the site so it can link in with the Whitenap Playspace and benefit local residents especially those in the Tadburn Road area.

Qu 42. There needs to be flexibility. Where possible open space should relate to new development (subject to existing nearby residents benefiting as well) but the wider needs of the landscape and biodiversity should be considered, too. The public and council members should be involved in this process at an early stage so that they have 'ownership' of the scheme.

Qu 43. One particular issue needs to be highlighted. As settlements grow they engulf rural and old farm buildings. There needs to be a specific policy that preserves the setting of the old farmstead so that it can be seen in its cultural and historic context. The Luzborough Inn is a partially successful example.

Qu 44. On its own the Council can do little to enhance walking and cycling. New development infrastructure installation is wasted if older existing footpaths are left in such a poor state. They are bumpy, obstructed and made up of a tartan of old, often subsided, utilities trenches. Walking on them is distinctly unpleasant. Nor will cycling expand significantly until there are clear, separate cycle-ways with good inter-connectivity and with junction priority.

Qu 45. Whilst car use might decline, car ownership will continue to be very high. All developers must make adequate provision for on-site parking, which ideally should be overlooked by the living room windows of the vehicles' owners. On-site parking also makes vehicle power charging more straightforward.

Qu 46. The Council has allowed developers to treat car parking as a late addition to the planning layout of new estates or so it seems. Hidden parking courts are very unpopular. If owners cannot see their cars they regard them as being insecure. The problems that have arisen at Abbotswood need to be recognised and resolved and avoided in future housing developments.

Mark Cooper

4th September 2018

