

Planning Policy

From:
Sent: 09 September 2018 19:55
To: Planning Policy
Subject: Comments on the next Local Plan , Issues and Options Consultation .
Attachments: Consultion response TVBC July 2018 -complete.docx

Please find attached my comments on the consultation regarding TVBC's next Local Plan.

This is my personal response, but as a current elected member of Romsey Extra Parish Council , I have shared my comments with my Council colleagues for them to use, if wished, in the preparation of REPC's collective response.

TVBC's next Local Plan "Issues and Options Consultation" July 2018

A response to the questions posed by Dr Susan Tippett, September 2018

Romsey & Romsey Extra resident for 42 years

Romsey based GP for 31 years

Hampshire Primary Care Trust appointed Lead Clinician for Test Valley 2008-10, undertaking frequent liaison with TVBC's Health and Wellbeing Group .

Current elected Councillor on Romsey Extra Parish Council

1. What is good about living and working in Test Valley?

Test Valley is geographically very well placed to benefit from proximity to The New Forest, the English South Coast, heritage cities such as Salisbury and Winchester, in addition to the opportunities for work and leisure in bigger towns and cities such as Southampton and Basingstoke. It is also within possible daily commuting distance from London via rail links. It is an area of outstanding landscape, has possibly the best chalk river in the country, a better climate than many parts of the UK, above average levels of income and educational attainment amongst its residents, with relatively few areas of significant social deprivation. It is no wonder many people want to live here and hence the extremely complex task of balancing the quality of life expectations of existing residents, with the demand for yet more housing development in the Borough, so as not to damage the factors that attracted people to Test Valley in the first place.

2. What could be improved about living and working in Test Valley

A major review of transport infrastructure addressing the inadequacies of road and rail networks. There is need for a more comprehensive network of cycleways and footpaths which are maintained to useable standards.

3. What should the Local Plan aspirations be for the next 20 years?

Adopt a policy of localism; this consultation document is a very good start in seeking input at an early stage and recognising the diversity of communities in the Borough whose differing needs and aspirations require locally sensitive solutions.

A priority in the South of the Borough is to preserve the market town of Romsey as such, and stop the process of bolting on large scale housing developments on the town's perimeter. The town needs an opportunity to address infrastructure deficiencies brought about by the demands of the recent significant housing development and an increased population.

Treating Romsey & Andover as having the same needs and aspirations is inappropriate, their geography and history dictates a more individual approach is required, unless TVBC is prepared to accept culpability for allowing another historic market town like Andover to be subsumed by suburbia.

It should be remembered Andover was designated half a century ago, as a London overspill town and had infra structure designed to support a population of 60,000; considerably more than the now nearly 40,000 population.

The proposed Whitenap development for 2020 has been "sold" to us as a new village concept, but the fact that the rail network will not permit a new station stop within this development of 1300 houses, means it will not be a new village, but rather suburban sprawl, as has engulfed towns like Eastleigh and villages such as Chandlers Ford and Nursling. The Whitenap development will be putting significant pressure on already heavily used roads around Romsey if residents do not have easy access to the rail network. The residents of the new Whitenap development will no doubt look largely to Romsey town for services apart from the limited retail that might be available to them from a convenience store within the "new village" settlement.

The "bolting on approach" has already gone too far. Romsey, by virtue of its situation, cannot develop infrastructure further without losing the local gaps that enable the town to keep its appeal and individual market town character.

4. Should the Local Plan's housing requirement be consistent with Government's standard methodology?

Yes, otherwise we breach planning law and housing allocations will be imposed by Government.

5. Should the Local Plan increase its housing requirement to help support economic growth?

TVBC should meet what is required by Government and no more.

Test Valley could have every available patch of land covered with houses, were it not for planning restraints, such is its popularity as a place in which to live and work.

6. Do you think the HMA boundary is broadly correct.

Yes

7. Are there any other approaches to distributing development that we should consider?

No, the consultation offers several approaches.

However, please no more large-scale bolt-on developments to Romsey.

Proportionate distribution of development is the way forward.

8. Do you have any comments on the approaches suggested above.

New villages, as stated, should allow the development of a new community with integral new facilities and services and transport infrastructure. It is surely not too late to try and achieve agreement for a station stop on the existing railway which will pass through the new village of Whitenap. Such a facility would significantly mitigate the impact on already overburdened road links to Southampton.

Any future new garden village plans in the Borough, must ensure such transport infrastructure as is necessary, can be realistically achieved before permitting plans to progress. Lessons need to be learnt from Whitenap

9. How should the settlement boundaries be defined in the next Local Plan?

Maintain the boundaries of existing settlements, and then pursue proportionate distribution to these settlements with the ability for local village planning processes to locate the development within their existing settlement boundaries. Priority must be given to the use of brownfield land within the settlement boundaries for further development.

10. Do you think we should continue with seeking up to 40% of new homes to be affordable or should we change the percentage?

Continue with 40%.

11. What should the trigger be for seeking affordable housing?

Developments over 5 units cf. 15 at present.

12. Should we allow market housing on rural affordable exception sites?

Yes, as long as there is adherence to the 60:40 ratio.

13. How should we meet the requirement for self building plots? Should it be as part of sites over a certain threshold or separate sites?

Apply the normal planning regulations, rules and restraints to self build, there is no obvious reason for special rules for self-build applications.

14. Should we establish a policy that covers dwellings in the countryside which are of exceptional quality.

No. The same rules and planning processes should apply to all applicants, however great their design aspirations and resources to fund them, to do otherwise is discriminatory.

15. Should the council change its approach and set out a requirement that certain sites should provide for the needs of such groups as the elderly?

Market forces ensure housing provision for the various demographic groups are met.

The cases where site allocation may be necessary is for group homes for e.g special needs adults, children in care and offender rehabilitation.

16. Should we include a policy that requires a mix and type of housing, or should the housing market inform what mix and type of housing to build?

Leave it to the market, but maintain the 40% affordable policy.

17. Should we restrict the size of replacements and extensions to dwellings in the countryside to keep a range of dwellings?

Replacement buildings or extensions in the countryside need to be proportionate in size and in keeping with the plot size.

18. Should the Council establish density standards in the Local Plan?

Yes.

There are recent examples of new development which are too dense, e.g. Abbotswood in Romsey Extra). Quality of life is affected by inadequate sense of space and privacy. Test Valley is not an inner city area where every square foot has to be exploited to the maximum.

19. Do you think we should establish internal space standards for future homes?

Yes, if such standards are not set nationally.

20. Do you think we should set standards for accessible, adaptable and wheelchair user dwellings?

Yes

21. Should the Local Plan set out a definition of rural worker? And if so what should it include?

Yes. The definition should include people working in locations designated as "countryside", where the nature of the work could not be undertaken in locations that are within settlement boundaries.

22. How do you think we should meet Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople's needs?

There is a need to first define who is a genuine, itinerant, all year round Traveller/ Gypsy, and who just goes on the road during the summer months, e.g. the traders attending fairs who may well have permanent homes elsewhere in the UK.

If the Council were to provide, in the Borough, a hard stand area with a clean water supply and sanitation, with a maximum permitted stay of 3 months, for which an affordable rent is paid to the Council; this would serve the need of the seasonal travellers, as well as the all year-round traveller, who could reasonably be expected to move on after 3 months. Such a site in the Borough would nullify the claim made by certain so called "Travellers" that the Council has failed to provide a suitable site within its boundary.

What needs to be stopped is the purchase of farmland by so called "Travellers" who then, using the excuse the Council has not provided adequate sites for the travelling community, proceed to build on that farmland and create their own "guerrilla settlements" of often, quite large dwellings, surrounded by several caravans in the countryside. e.g. the site opposite Potter's Heron Hotel on the border of Ampfield.

23. Do you agree that we should have a specific policy on health and well being? What sort of issues do you think it should cover.

YES

It needs to be remembered that historically more health improvements have been achieved by public health measures to do with sanitation, environment and provision of amenities, than have ever resulted from medical interventions.

Department of Health organisational changes in recent years have seen the move of Public Health specialists from the NHS Health Authorities to County and Metropolitan Councils; in Test Valley's case to Hampshire County Council. TVBC needs to avail itself of the expertise of this resource in evolving the next Local Plan.

Issues around the needs of an ageing population, increasing levels of child and adulthood obesity, the road safety issues around inadequate cycleways, mental health issues, particularly for young people and in the workplace, are all pertinent in indicating where there is a need for reviewing the Council's spending priorities. e.g. Adequate green space and sport facilities are crucial to achieving improvements in managing mental health issues and obesity.

24. Should some types of facilities and services be given more priority than others?

The facilities and services for which the Council is responsible that enhance the health and well being of the population should be the first priority.

25. Should we continue to protect all community facilities and services?

No, if a community facility or service has no Public Health or local economy benefit there is not a case for continued support.

26. Should we allocate more land to enable more choice and flexibility in the market?

No, provision is adequate.

27. What are your views on providing smaller workspaces in the Borough?

Supportive, many people now work from home at least part of the time and small scale industrial units within communities offer opportunity for people to minimise their commuting.

28. What provisions or controls should be made relating to people working from home?

Constraints on the numbers of people visiting/ working at a home based work venue and control over provision of off street parking at such venues are necessary to avoid inconvenience and disruption to the lives of neighbouring residents.

29. Should the Council continue to encourage retail users within primary frontages, or should a more flexible approach be taken with a greater range of uses being allowed?

The priority for primary frontage property is that it is occupied by an active business whether that be retail, service provider, financial organisation, charity shop or other economically viable business. Inevitably for the future traditional retail outlets will be more in competition with internet retail. A more flexible approach to use of primary frontage sites is necessary.

30. How do we best continue seeking apprenticeships?

It is appropriate for TVBC to continue generating apprenticeships within its organisation, but I cannot see how the Local Plan has a role in encouraging other organisations to develop apprenticeships, other than by ensuring planning policy adheres to the principles that enable adequate affordable accommodation in the Borough for low paid workers and apprentices in training.

31. What should be included in any tourism policy in the next local plan?

TVBC needs to continue to encourage tourism through subsidies to the Tourist Information centres in Andover and Romsey and in providing printed material advertising what the Borough has to offer tourists and local people alike.

32. Should there be measures to support tourism proposals and if so, what?

Proposals to support tourism must have consideration as to the balance to be struck between preservation of the environment, landscape, townscape and biodiversity alongside increasing economic activity.

33. Should we continue to retain the principle of Local Gaps? Should we define specific boundaries or a more general policy which aims to avoid coalescence?

Yes retain the principle of Local Gaps, they are the only way to prevent coalescence of settlements.

34. Should the Local Plan identify and designate Local Area of Green Space or should this be undertaken via Neighbourhood Plans?

Yes, the LP should identify and designate areas of green space and if neighbourhoods do not have their own plans or have failed to allocate green space, the Council will need to allocate and designate these.

35. Should the next Local Plan continue to promote water efficiency from new developments?

Yes.

36. Should we identify suitable sites for renewable energy, including onshore wind in the Local Plan?

Yes.

37. If so which areas of the Borough would be appropriate and for which types of technology?

This is a question to be answered by the renewable energy technology industries in consultation with TVBC. Any such proposal will need to be considered individually by the Borough's planning processes as to its merits.

38. Should the Local Plan encourage energy efficiency when constructing new development?

Yes

39. How can we encourage design quality in the Borough?

Planning officers should undertake this task and appropriately advise applicants at the earliest stages of a planned new development.

40. Should the Local Plan be specific on the type of open space to provide or should it take account of existing provision /future requirements?

Yes; the LP should be specific, but in being so, take account of current provision and future requirements.

41. Should we continue to set a per hectare standard for recreational open space provision on residential developments? Or, should the Council require the provision of recreational open space on residential developments be based on the needs set out in the Playing Pitch Strategy?

There needs to be an appropriate proportional allocation of recreational open space. I do not know the precise difference between these 2 formulae for setting standards.

42. Should alternative open space for mitigation be provided as part of new developments or should land be specifically allocated or a combination?

Open space will ideally relate to new developments, however, the needs of existing residents, the local landscape and biodiversity are also considerations, such that early consultation with local councillors and the public in planning such schemes is highly desirable.

43. Is there anything additional which the Council should be taking account of?

New developments that surround and isolate a significant older building and or farmstead need to be constrained so as to preserve the surroundings of such historic icons.

44. How can the Council promote more sustainable forms of transport such as walking, cycling and public transport?

Not on its own.

This is a sizeable problem and requires collaborative planning and actions by the County Council and TVBC in conjunction with utility companies and public transport providers.

New developments will often boast smooth new footpaths and cycleways that on the new development boundary run in to pre-existing paths that are in a poor state of repair and cycle paths may come to an abrupt dead end.

Utility companies that dig up roads and footpaths and leave behind walking and cycle paths in a poor state, are in part culpable for the deficiencies in pre-existing pathways.

The intransigence of Network Rail in giving any constructive consideration to build a local station within the proposed Whitenap development is regrettable. Planners tried to achieve mitigation of the impact of further car congestion on Romsey's roads with this proposal and failed to reach any useful outcome from their efforts.

45. How do you think the Council should be making provision for parking within new development?

New developments will continue to require on-site parking for some years to come, moreover the parking needs to be immediately adjacent to the car owner's property as the proportion of electric vehicles requiring recharging increases.

46. Do you agree with the Council's current approach (to parking standards), or are there changes you would like to see made?

The current approach is not always ensuring parking in residential areas is close enough to the properties of the car owners, ensuring safety, accessibility, security and overseeing of the parking facility.

