



**RESPONSES TO THE TEST VALLEY
ISSUES AND OPTIONS CONSULTATION
FOR THE NEXT
LOCAL PLAN**

**RESPONSES MADE ON BEHALF OF
THE OWNERS OF SPENCERS FARM
KINGS SOMBOURNE**

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Q1: What is good about living and/or working in Test Valley?

Answer

It is a very affluent area with low levels of unemployment and crime. The population has a relatively good educational level which has improved between the last census and the one before.

Q2: What could be improved about living and/or working in Test Valley?

Answer

The Council needs to consider the serious and ever increasing requirements of the ageing population. Planning policies are totally inadequate. Provision needs to be made for all forms of support from care and nursing homes to the inclusion of proportions of housing in larger schemes for housing for the elderly. It should be noted that the concept of Life Time Homes is not fit for purpose. It relies on the modification of homes at later stages in life to provide stair lifts to upper floors, hoists to move people from their bed into the bath when it would be better to install a walk in shower that is wheel chair accessible.

Public transport could be improved by providing services related to the Council facilities in Romsey and Andover. There is regular movement between these two sites and the service could link to the villages between these two towns.

Q3: What should the Local Plan aspirations be for the next 20 years?

Answer

The Council should increase the housing provision based upon a dispersed policy. The increase in housing provision would help to make housing more affordable and reduce the reliance on affordable housing.

New development should be based on the villages rather than the two main towns. This would help to support services and facilities and make housing more affordable.



Q4: Should the Local Plan's housing requirement be consistent with Governments standard methodology? Do you have any evidence to support your view?

Answer

It seems that the Council will need to take an approach consistent with the Governments standard methodology. Is there any choice? Planning appeals will be based upon this.

Q5: Should the Local Plan increase its housing requirement to help support economic growth? If yes, do you have any evidence to support this?

Answer

Given that your paper recognises that there is a net out migration for employment, it must be desirable to provide more employment sites especially as jobs in retailing are in sharp decline.

Q6: Do you think the HMA boundary is broadly right? If not, how and why do you think it should be changed?

Answer

The Housing Market Area Boundaries in Test Valley area are very skewed towards Andover. No explanation is given. On the face of it those parishes to the north of Romsey relate more to Romsey than to Andover. Anyone looking to move to the Romsey area would inevitably also consider Braishfield, Michelmersh, Awbridge, Sherfield English and those parishes to the southwest of the district.

The HMA boundaries should be redressed to provide a better balance between Andover and Romsey and to better reflect the choices that people are likely to make.

Q7: Are there any other approaches to distributing development across the Borough that we should consider?

Answer

The failure to provide more housing in the rural villages has created enclaves of great wealth and expensive housing and an ageing population. The less wealthy have to rely on affordable housing. The services including shops and schools and community facilities suffer gradual decline. Every settlement and village needs to be assessed to examine its potential to accommodate more development.



Q8: Do you have any comments on the approaches suggested above?

Answer

Community led distribution is aspirational. Very few communities actually want to encourage new housing. The Council should set targets for the villages to ensure that greater provision of all forms of housing is made.

Q9: How should the settlement boundaries be defined in the next Local Plan?

Answer

All existing boundaries should be reviewed with the objective of making greater provision in the villages.

Q10: Do you think we should continue with seeking up to 40% of new homes to be affordable, or should we change the percentage?

Answer

An increase in housing provision would make private housing more affordable and thereby reducing the need for the 40% percentage.

Q11: What should the trigger be for seeking affordable housing?

Answer

The government guidance is paramount.

Q12: Should we allow market housing on rural affordable exception sites?

Answer

The proposal to include a proportion of market housing in rural exception sites would encourage more sites to come forward. This would also make such sites more viable. The combination of affordable housing with self build/custom build plots would help both.

Q13: How should we meet the requirement for Self-Build plots? Should it be as part of sites over a certain threshold or separate sites?

Answer



There is no reason why both provisions should not apply. The White Paper: Fixing the Broken Housing Market seeks to diversify the market. Self-build and custom build housing should be encouraged. Small sites would be very attractive for this form of development but it will need a proportion to be provided on larger schemes if the government's objectives are to be achieved as set out in the Acts. All large sites over 50 units should provide at least 5% for self build and custom build. The current proportion of self build and custom build housing forms just 7% of all housing in England.

There is the need to make provision for applicants on the Council's Register.

Q14: Should we establish a policy that covers dwellings in the countryside which are of exceptional quality?

Answer

Paragraph 55 of the old NPPF and paragraph 79 of the 2018 NPPF make provision for this form of housing. There is no need for a specific policy.

Q15: 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?

Answer

It is fundamentally important to make greater provision for the elderly. Early in this Issues and Options paper the fact that the population in Test Valley is ageing more quickly than the Hampshire average is acknowledged.

Nationally it is estimated that by 2035 there will be over 100,000 people over 100 years of age. The Council should invest in suite of policies addressing the issues of the older people including specific allocations, or percentages of allocation. This would save money for the NHS and the Care Services.

Self build and custom build housing should be encouraged to consider the future proofing of the houses to enable the occupiers to remain in their homes for a long as possible.

The Life Time Homes concept is inadequate. Is it reasonable to expect a widow or widower in their 80's to arrange for the provision of a stair lift or a hoist to move them from their bed to the bath at that age? This needs to be avoided.

Q16: 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?

Answer

It is not realistic to rely on the market which is dominated by large national house builders. The White Paper: Fixing the Broken Housing Market seeks to diversify the market. This can only be achieved by appropriate planning policies.

Beyond the policy requirements for affordable housing, aged persons housing and wheel chair users the market should not be unduly restricted. A policy seeking a broad mix of housing types and sizes would bring some control without being too prescriptive.

Q17: Should we restrict the size of replacements and extensions to dwellings in the countryside to keep a range of dwellings?

Answer

The policies for replacement dwellings and extensions should be based upon appropriate criteria. Restrictions on sizes should only apply where there is an unacceptable impact upon the landscape or townscape.

While it is desirable to ensure that there is a pool of small dwellings this would best be achieved by the provision of more housing with an appropriate mix of sizes.

Q18: Should the Council establish density standards in the Local Plan?

Answer

The existing approach as set out in paragraph 5.44 should be continued.

Q19: Do you think we should establish internal space standards for future homes?

Answer

The nationally described space standards should be adopted.

Q20: Do you think we should establish standards for accessible, adaptable and wheelchair user dwellings?

Answer



A reasonable proportion of new dwellings should be included in larger schemes for wheel chair users.

Q21: Should the Local Plan set out a definition of rural worker? And if so what should it include?

Answer.

It is difficult to be explicit. It should left vague as it could encompass many workers.

Q22: How do you think we should best meet Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople's needs?

Answer

The choice is make provision or leave it to appeals.

Q23: Do you agree that we should have a specific policy on health and wellbeing? What sort of issues do you think it should cover?

Answer

No. It is difficult to define a policy on health and wellbeing that is meaningful and deliverable in a Local Plan. They can only be aspirational.

Q24: Should some types of facilities and services be given more protection than others?

Answer

No. This is not practicable. The market will dictate what is viable.

Q25: Should we continue to protect all existing community facilities and services?

Answer

No. There is the issue of viability. These facilities and services need to be justified. Are they meeting the community's needs.

Q26: Should we allocate more land to enable more choice and flexibility to the market?

Answer



Yes, this is essential. It is paramount that more choice and flexibility is provided.

Q27: What are your views on promoting smaller workspaces within the Borough?

Answer

The offer of smaller work places is a good idea for startup businesses.

Q28: What provisions or controls should be made relating to people working from home?

Answer

Given that Test Valley has a large number of villages which are not particularly well served by public transport the concept of working from home must be considered advantageous in the context of sustainability. The provision of high quality broadband is essential to enable people to work from home.

However, home working needs some form of control to ensure that the use does not give rise to unacceptable levels of deliveries, parking, noise etc.

Q29: Should the Council continue to encourage retail uses within primary frontages or should a more flexible approach be taken with a greater range of uses being allowed?

Answer

The high street is changing rapidly due to internet shopping and the planning system needs a more flexible approach. Whilst some flexibility within primary frontage may be acceptable it is important to keep the primary frontage vibrant and relevant to retailing. It is the secondary frontages and more peripheral areas that need to be addressed. These areas need to be moved out of retailing and perhaps to residential so that retailing is focused on primary frontages. The mix of commercial uses should be included.

Q30: How should we best continue seeking apprenticeships?

Answer

Business leaders should be encouraged to offer apprenticeships.

Q31: What should be included in any tourism policy in the next local plan?

Answer

None

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

Answer

None

Q33: 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?

Answer

Local gap policies have been successfully challenged at Planning Inquiries. This is confusing for local residents who see it as an absolute restriction on development. It is desirable therefore to develop a more criteria based policy to address the issues of coalescence.

Q34: Should the Local Plan identify and designate Local Areas of Green Space or should this be undertaken via Neighbourhood Plans?

Answer

The skill set of Neighbourhood Planning Teams is limited and it is essential that advice is provided by the District Council.

Q35: Should the next Local Plan continue to promote water efficiency from new developments?

Answer

Yes

Q36: Should we identify suitable sites for renewable energy, including onshore wind, in the Local Plan?

Answer

If appropriate sites can be identified then these should be included in the new Local Plan. However, it would be preferable to develop criteria based policies to guide such proposals.



It would be preferable if householders were encouraged to ensure that their homes were well insulated and provided their own photovoltaic panels and communities considered ground source provision as well as wind turbines.

Q37: If so, which areas of the Borough would be appropriate and for which types of technology (e.g. wind turbines, solar photovoltaic panels)?

Answer

Areas of less landscape value.

Q38: Should the Local Plan encourage energy efficiency when constructing new development?

Answer

Yes. This is essential.

Q39: How can we improve design quality within the Borough?

Answer

This requires robust and clear policies supported by appropriate documentation. This could be the provision of a design guide, development briefs for specific areas and the engagement with neighbourhood planning.

Q40: Should the local plan be specific on the type of open space to provide or should it take account of existing provision/ future requirements?

Answer

It is essential to examine existing provision when considering future requirements.

Q41: Should we continue to set a per dwelling or 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 to be based on the needs set out in the Playing Pitch Strategy?

Answer

None

Q42: Should alternative open space for mitigation be provided as part of new developments or should land be specifically allocated, or a combination?

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Answer

A more flexible approach needs to be given to the provision of open space for mitigation so perhaps a combination of the two approaches may be best.

Q43: Is there anything additional which the Council should be taking account of?

Answer

None

Q44: How can the Council promote more sustainable forms of transport such as walking, cycling and public transport?

Answer

An increase in the amount of housing in the villages would make public transport more viable.

Q45: How do you think the Council should be making provision for parking within new development?

Answer

Test Valley has been identified as being particularly dependent upon the car. Parking should be provided to meet needs and provide for some over flow/visitor parking. Parking needs to be proximate to each residence, visible if possible from the household but not prominent in the street scene. Parking courts are not generally favoured by residents. On plot parking seems to work well.

The Council could consider the use of car ports instead of single garages. This avoids garages becoming general storage areas in preference to a place to park the car.

Q46: Do you agree with the Council's current approach or are there changes you would like to see made?

Answer

See above

