

**Planning Policy**

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**From:** Frances Candler <  
**Sent:** 14 September 2018 13:08  
**To:** Planning Policy; stockbridge parishcouncilclerk forward  
**Subject:** TVBC Issues and Options Consultation for the Next Local Plan - Stockbridge Parish Council Response  
**Attachments:** TVBC Local Plan Consultation Stockbridge Response.pdf

Please find attached Stockbridge Parish Council's response to the above consultation. I should be most grateful if you would confirm receipt,

Best wishes

Parish Councillor  
Stockbridge Parish Council



## Test Valley Borough Council

### OUR FUTURE – HOW DO WE PLAN FOR IT?

#### Issues and Options Consultation for the next Local Plan

JULY 2018

### RESPONSE FROM STOCKBRIDGE PARISH COUNCIL

#### VISIONS & OBJECTIVES

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

- Quality of life
- Close proximity to major cities such as; London, Reading, Basingstoke, Winchester, Southampton and Portsmouth
- Easy access to shopping/restaurants/entertainment/culture
- Good road / rail networks to areas of better employment
- Access to higher paid / more varied employment
- Low crime rates
- Access to countryside / outdoor pursuit.
- Accessibility of airports – Southampton / Bournemouth / Gatwick / Heathrow and London City
- Accessibility of seaports – Southampton / Portsmouth

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

- Many people choose to live in rural areas and commute into larger cities for employment. As a consequence, roads are heavily congested
- Housing is expensive
- Rail travel is expensive
- Bus / coach travel is irregular or non-existent in rural areas
- Parking fees are excessive in smaller towns
- High Streets are dwindling
- Better / cheaper / more efficient / reliable public transport needs to be introduced to reduce congestion on roads
- More should be done to encourage commerce in struggling towns and areas with high unemployment i.e. reduction in business rates, incentives to bring manufacturing into the area and reductions in parking fees
- Making recycling more accessible / encouraging recycling
- more support in preserving open spaces and respecting and enhancing the environment including conservation areas.
- More attention paid to community aspirations
- Better balance between interests of residents and businesses
- Community use of existing local facilities e.g. school playgrounds, playing fields, sports facilities

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

- To plan for the borough as a whole.
- To work in partnership with local communities. Under the current Local Plan Stockbridge is designated a 'key service centre' for several villages, and we would welcome the development of a 'Stockbridge Future' plan to enable the needs of residents, service users, businesses and visitors to be balanced in a sustainable community
- Building sustainably
- When planning, giving consideration to the infrastructure (schools / doctors / hospitals / shops / parking) required to support growth. Ensuring it is evergreen and scaling it appropriately
- Making sure development is futureproofed – broadband, electric charging points etc. for villages as well as towns
- Supporting better / cheaper / more efficient / reliable public transport to reduce congestion on roads.
- Encouraging more environmentally friendly travel
- Placing housing in areas with access to good public transport links

**LIVING IN TEST VALLEY**

**Q4: Should the Local Plan's housing requirement be consistent with Governments standard methodology?**

No, boroughs should be given autonomy and have the ability to decide their own targets. This will ensure that housing is placed in the most appropriate location, in numbers that meet the projected needs of the population rather than central government targets. However, autonomy might not be an option.

**Do you have any evidence to support your view?**

Yes, overdevelopment of Romsey which has resulted in flooding.

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

It's very difficult to comment when economic growth targets haven't yet been set, and how are they agreed? Shouldn't there be some sort of estimate of how much growth is sustainable? Land supply is limited.

**Q6: Do you think the HMA (Housing Market Area) boundary is broadly right? If not, how and why do you think it should be changed?**

As long as Hampshire remains structured the way it is, the boundaries seem reasonable. Should Hampshire become a unitary authority, the boundaries should be looked at again.

**WHAT OPTIONS DO WE HAVE FOR DISTRIBUTING DEVELOPMENT?**

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

The Defence Infrastructure Model Reform (DIMR) programme has identified a number of MoD sites which are underutilised. The Defence Estates Optimisation Programme (DEOP) is now looking to

dispose of these sites. TVBC should work in tandem with the MoD to establish the availability of ex-MoD brownfield sites.

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

- Proportionate distribution to smaller parishes coupled with supporting all parishes to develop individual Neighbourhood Plans is an acceptable way forward. This will ensure organic growth which is sensitive to the needs of existing communities.
- In constrained areas, new villages / towns should be considered near to existing transport links. This will allow infrastructure to be incorporated into sustainable designs. It will ensure development in the right areas with appropriate facilities to support communities.
- For TVBC to decide which are the most appropriate sites for housing and also to take advantage of 'windfall sites' would not meet the Council's own aspiration to work more closely with communities within the Borough and recognise their different needs.

**SETTLEMENT BOUNDARIES**

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

Where new development areas are proposed in the local plan, the settlement boundaries should be re-drawn to reflect these proposed changes. In respect of other settlements, some revisions could be permitted to allow for possible limited infill development which would not substantially alter the characteristics of the settlement by adding say no more than 3% of new dwellings to a settlement, or impinge on open countryside. However, in Stockbridge infill could result in the overdevelopment of small sites, and where possible, squaring off boundaries could make more sense.

It might be helpful to look at Parish Boundaries in the next Local Plan and align them with settlement boundaries. Stockbridge is considered a Key Service Centre under the existing Plan but part of Stockbridge settlement area is outside Stockbridge Parish Boundary, so two or three Parish Councils need to be involved in planning decisions.

**AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

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

40% is an acceptable figure. Councils need to consider the implications to housing benefit / council tax budgets for low income families and ensure that incoming contributions can support outgoing benefits.

However, TVBC should look beyond affordable housing. Home ownership is not for everyone. There are those who do not want the responsibilities and ongoing costs of home ownership. TVBC, and the government, should support the rental sector too (we understand TVBC used to run a scheme where they worked in partnership with private landlords) by treating private landlords on a business basis.

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

As existing.

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

Generally, market housing should not be permitted on rural exception sites, except where it can be demonstrated that the provision of limited market housing could contribute towards some

exceptional development costs (such as construction costs, infrastructure or flood alleviation) which would preclude a 100% affordable housing scheme being delivered.

## **SELF-BUILD HOUSING**

**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?**

We do not think it should be the role of TVBC to act as a land agent identifying plots for self-build.

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

Yes, and extend it to new-build in conservation areas. We understand Paragraph 55 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) covers this issue for architecturally outstanding houses.

## **HOUSING MIX, SIZE AND TYPE**

**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?**

No, we should focus on good mixed communities with a balanced demographic. We need to have communities where people have a choice of housing as they move through life and their needs change.

**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?**

TVBC have identified that "households within the Borough are changing with the over 65 age group forecast to increase faster than any other age group". It therefore may be sensible to include a policy which requires a mix / type of housing which responds to need. The market can only buy what it is offered. Houses need to be well designed and well-built and flexible - a starter home can also be a downsize home.

## **EXTENSIONS AND REPLACEMENTS OF RURAL DWELLINGS**

**Q17: Should we restrict the size of replacements and extensions to dwellings in the country-side to keep a range of dwellings?**

Could be considered if it would lead to a better balance of provision.

## **HOUSING DENSITY**

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

Possibly, but it shouldn't be prescriptive. It should be flexible enough to consider the existing built environment and ensure a mix of housing.

## **HOUSING STANDARDS**

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

Yes. The government has initiated building performance standards for government department new builds i.e. Service Families Accommodation, office blocks, prisons, hospitals. The standards dictate minimum room sizes, the use of sustainable materials and incorporate of renewable energy into designs. They are also looking at Modern Methods of Construction (MMoC) to improve delivery times.

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

Yes.

## **RURAL WORKERS**

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

Problematical to define, but guidance is needed to enable people to know if they qualify.

## **GYPSIES, TRAVELLERS AND TRAVELLING SHOWPEOPLE**

### **Q22: How do you think we should best meet Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Show people's needs?**

Having a clearly defined policy in place with pre-identified sites which isn't open to interpretation. Stockbridge has had the experience of planning permission for a site in the countryside being given on appeal because TVBC had not met its legal responsibility for the provision of sites. We hope that the 'work on a Gypsy and Traveller DPD which will consider how we ensure there are sufficient sites to meet this need' will not delay action in this area.

## **HEALTH AND WELLBEING**

### **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?**

Yes. it should include restricting the operation of food outlets near schools, but more importantly should focus on access to public open spaces, including the provision of connecting paths and pavements e.g. to Stockbridge Down from Stockbridge village

TVBC should engage with councils who have already used this approach and learn from their experiences.

## **FACILITIES AND SERVICES WHICH SERVE THE COMMUNITY**

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

Yes, village shops, pubs and community centres should be given protection where there is evidence of community need and community support. Neighbourhood Plans could be used to help identify services / facilities that need to be protected. Plans could also establish the reasons why they are of importance to the community.

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

See response to Q24.

**WORKING IN TEST VALLEY**

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

Whilst we believe that TVBC should be actively encouraging larger businesses to the borough we find it difficult to agree that protection should be given to strategic employment sites. A prime example of this would be the Walworth Industrial Estate. Many of the units on this estate have been derelict for years. They are unsightly, having been boarded up and are frequently subjected to vandalism and antisocial behaviour (ASB) such as raves, thefts (copper wiring/piping) and fires. Neglected buildings are off-putting to new investors and ASB places unnecessary pressure on emergency services. This could be avoided if the area was available for redevelopment perhaps accommodating housing or a number of smaller industrial units.

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

Agree. Small businesses should be encouraged.

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

- It should also be noted that many larger companies / government departments are supporting smarter working to make better use of resources
- Broadband needs upgrading in many rural locations to support this
- Home working should be positively supported and encouraged
- Controls should be in place to ensure that people working from home should not have an adverse impact on their neighbours or community. For example, a business operating from a single residential dwelling on Winton Hill in Stockbridge maintains a fleet of vehicles parked along Trafalgar Way to the detriment of home owners there and of visitors to Stockbridge looking for a place to park. The same home business stores unsightly catering equipment in the front garden of the property.

**RETAIL**

**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?**

Taking into consideration the challenges of competing with on-line business, a more flexible approach should be considered. However, part of the attraction of Stockbridge as a destination is the range and variety of its shops so we would support TVBC in encouraging retail use within the primary frontages on Stockbridge High Street as far as possible. There is a need to consider parking provision to match demand when issuing consents. Customers will be not be using the minimal public transport offer.



## **SKILLS**

### **Q30: How should we best continue seeking apprenticeships?**

- Review the Farmer Report
- Better promotion in schools and colleges
- Incentives to encouraging businesses to participate
- Give clear guidance on how to sign up - for businesses and potential apprentices
- Public education so that society respects skills that don't need a degree

## **TOURISM**

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

Tourism contributes significantly to the local economy. It encourages employment and helps to support community assets which otherwise may dwindle. Policies which actively encourage, advertise and/or support tourism should be incorporated.

In TVBC's document 'Economic Strategy (2017 – 2019)', Stockbridge is described as both an attractive visitor destination and a local centre for a large rural catchment, and is mentioned along with Andover and Romsey as an 'important destination for day-to-day shopping needs, as well as a number of specialist shops and financial services, plus hotels, restaurants, coffee shops and galleries'. However, while there are detailed plans to upgrade Andover and Romsey centres there is no similar plan to invest in the public realm in Stockbridge, or to improve the parking situation. There should certainly be more awareness of the part Stockbridge plays in attracting tourists to Test Valley and support should be provided for the town's infrastructure to enable it to cope better with the increase in visitors. More effort should be made to protect and improve the village's conservation area, and attention should be paid to the increasing heavy use of the Common Marsh which the National Trust is struggling to protect.

### **Q32: Should there be measures to support tourism proposals, and if so, what?**

Yes.

- Guidance / assistance to local businesses who rely on the tourist industry.
- Council support to promote local events.

## **ENJOYING TEST VALLEY**

### **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?**

Yes, in certain cases it might be advantageous to define specific boundaries.

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

Ideally, every area should have a Neighbourhood Plan which identifies and designates Local Areas of Green Space, but until that is achieved it is very important that the Local Plan should identify such spaces.

## **WATER QUALITY AND SUPPLY**

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

Yes.

## **RENEWABLE ENERGY AND ENERGY EFFICIENCY OF NEW DEVELOPMENT**

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

Yes.

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

Wind turbines, solar photovoltaic panels, small scale anaerobic digesters might be suitable if sites can be identified in Neighbourhood Plans.

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

Yes. However, it is not enough to look at new builds. TVBC should press the government for more support to improve energy efficiency in our old housing stock.

## **DESIGN**

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

- Ensuring Village Design Statements are reviewed and kept up to date and respected during the planning process
- Ensure that the number of plots per site is not given priority over how the overall development fits its surroundings
- Learning from experience. Looking at existing developments and considering what works and what doesn't

## **PUBLIC OPEN SPACE**

**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?**

The plan should take into account existing provision and 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?**

Continue with per dwelling or per hectare.

## **BIODIVERSITY**

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

Open space is essential to health and well-being. The inclusion of open space within a development should be encouraged, but where this is impossible alternative open space should specifically be allocated. We think the answer is a combination, as different sites might require different solutions

## **HERITAGE**

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

Protection given in NPPF should also be underlined.

## **INFRASTRUCTURE IN TEST VALLEY**

### **TRANSPORT**

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

- Provision of footpaths to link housing to settlements where narrow roads and increasing traffic make walking unsafe.
- Footpaths providing access to areas of open space.
- Dedicated cycle paths.
- Long stay park and ride facilities with cheap parking fees.
- Short stay car parks in towns.
- Regular, efficient, safe and cheap public transport.

### **PARKING STANDARDS**

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

Although parking is always incorporated into the design, the allocation is usually insufficient for modern families who usually have a minimum of two cars. Garaging is too small to fit modern day vehicles and roads within the development are narrow and incompatible with on street parking. This needs to be addressed in design planning guidance.

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

No.

- Charging points need to be incorporated into future design.
- Need to look more closely at parking arrangements when allowing planning permission for new or expanding businesses. In Stockbridge, High Street residents find it difficult to park their cars because there is increased pressure on spaces from employees and customers of businesses on the High Street.

