

Chapter 2 – Objectives

2 OBJECTIVES

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 This Plan is one of the key instruments that implement the Council's corporate aims and objectives on behalf of the community it represents. The Council has undertaken a considerable amount of informal consultation during the preparation of the Plan. This has helped to define the Plan's overall aim, key themes and objectives that have guided the development of detailed policies and proposals.

2.1.2 There was considerable support from the community for maintaining the high quality of the environment and a reluctance to see more development take place. However, the Council recognises that the Structure Plan requires provision to be made for additional development. In preparing this Plan the Council, therefore, has sought to balance the aspirations of the community with its responsibilities as the Local Planning Authority.

2.2 The Aim of the Plan

2.2.1 Sustainability is the guiding principle behind the Plan. It has been defined as improving the quality of human life whilst living within the carrying capacity of supporting ecosystems.¹¹ The protection of the environment is central to the concept of sustainability however, it is also concerned with economic development, social progress and the sharing of these benefits amongst people and communities. The principle of sustainability has a long term perspective and economic and social needs must be met without adverse impacts on the environment which would prejudice the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

2.2.2 The overall aim of the Plan has been developed from this principle and is:

To provide a framework for making decisions about development in the Borough which respects the environment, meets the needs of the community and enhances the quality of life.

2.3 Key Themes and Objectives

2.3.1 The overall aim contains three key themes (respecting the environment, meeting the needs of the community and enhancing the quality of life) that have been refined into seven objectives which form the basis for the subsequent chapters of the Plan.

Respecting the Environment

2.3.2 The objective for **Chapter 3: Shaping the Settlement Pattern** is:

To shape the settlement pattern by concentrating new development in and around existing built-up areas and protecting the countryside from inappropriate development.

¹¹ Caring for the Earth: A Structure for Sustainable Living, 1991, IUCN / UNEP / WWF

2.3.3 In order to create a more sustainable pattern of development, it is necessary to strictly control development in the countryside and to concentrate new development in and around existing settlements. Compact settlements make more efficient use of land and those that support a range of facilities enable needs to be met locally, thus achieving a degree of self-containment. By defining boundaries around towns and villages and applying different policies within and outside the settlements, regeneration and the re-use of previously developed land can be encouraged. Generally additional development in the countryside does not help to create more sustainable patterns of development, however, it is recognised that some development is necessary either because a countryside location is essential (for agriculture for example) or because it helps to support rural communities. Chapter 3 includes policies which seek to shape the settlement pattern in a more sustainable way.

2.3.4 The objective for **Chapter 4: Conserving the Environment** is:

To protect and conserve the Borough's natural and built environment, including wildlife, landscapes, natural resources and cultural heritage.

2.3.5 Test Valley has a diverse and high quality environment that requires protection from inappropriate development. Important environmental features include wildlife sites (such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest), attractive landscapes (such as the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty), natural resources (such as high quality agricultural land and groundwater), archaeological sites and features of the historic built environment (such as listed buildings, conservation areas and historic parks and gardens). Once lost, these environmental assets cannot be replaced and cannot be appreciated by future generations. Chapter 4 includes policies to ensure the protection and enhancement of the most important features of the Borough's natural and built environment.

2.3.6 The objective for **Chapter 5: Avoiding Hazards** is:

To ensure that proposed development is not at risk from natural or man-made hazards and will not cause or increase the risk of hazards to existing development, human health or the wider environment.

2.3.7 Planning can help to create a physically safe environment by ensuring that proper precautions are taken against the risks posed by natural and man-made hazards. Hazards that need to be taken into account in drawing up this Plan include pollution, land instability, flooding and hazardous installations. These hazards need to be considered in the location or design of new development, so that the future need for mitigation can be avoided and any risks to existing development, human well-being or the wider environment can be minimised. New development can also cause, or increase the risk of hazards, such as pollution, and any potential impacts need to be taken into account when planning decisions are made. Chapter 5 includes policies to ensure that any risks posed by natural or man-made hazards are minimised.

Meeting the Needs of the Community

2.3.8 The objective for **Chapter 6: Meeting Economic and Social Needs** is:

To meet the needs for housing, employment, community facilities, tourism and infrastructure in ways that support viable communities, maintain a

robust local economy and maintain the high quality environment of the Borough.

- 2.3.9 Meeting economic and social needs is an essential part of sustainability and this Plan focuses particularly on meeting the needs of the local community. Chapter 6 includes policies relating to different types of development (such as housing, employment etc.) which will be used by the Borough Council to assess planning applications for particular uses. In addition the Plan includes policies to retain existing uses which are beneficial to the community and specific policies to help meet local needs, such as the need for affordable housing.

Enhancing the Quality of Life

- 2.3.10 The objective for **Chapter 7: Integrating Transport and Land Use** is:
- To achieve a pattern of land use and a network of transport links that reduce the overall need to travel through the location and design of development and by encouraging the use of alternatives to the car.**
- 2.3.11 The integration of transport and land use policies is a key element in supporting more sustainable travel choices and in reducing the need to travel. The two main ways in which planning can help are by influencing the location and design of development and by encouraging the use of alternatives to the car, including public transport. Developments that attract a significant number of trips need to be located so that they can be well served by public transport and mixed use developments can give people the opportunity to live close to their work and within communities that can meet their needs locally. It is also important that development is designed to facilitate not only public transport usage, but also other modes of transport such as walking and cycling. Chapter 7 includes policies relating to both transport and land use which seek to reduce the overall need to travel.
- 2.3.12 The objective for **Chapter 8: Design** is:
- To enhance the quality of design of the built environment by ensuring that new development is visually attractive, locally distinctive, legible, safe and secure.**
- 2.3.13 Design is one of the three key themes which underpin the Government's approach to the planning system and all new development in Test Valley should have a positive impact on the built and natural environment. Development should not only be visually attractive, but should also strengthen the local identity of the area. Often the use of local materials or building traditions can help to achieve this. Developments should also be designed to provide recognisable routes and landmarks to help people find their way around, to reduce opportunities for crime and to reduce people's perception of their vulnerability to criminal attacks. Chapter 8 includes policies that seek to enhance the quality of design of new development.
- 2.3.14 The objective for **Chapter 9: Safeguarding Amenity** is:
- To ensure that the Borough's residents can enjoy their homes and public places without undue disturbance or intrusion from neighbouring uses.**

- 2.3.15 People are entitled to be able to enjoy public places and their own dwellings without undue disturbance or intrusion from neighbouring uses. However, where new development is proposed there is always the potential for the amenity of people living nearby to be adversely affected. The Council wishes to ensure that this does not happen. New development should not result in the loss of privacy or reduce the amount of natural light reaching a property to unacceptable levels. Also developments should not be subject to artificial light pollution, noise, vibration or unpleasant emissions. Chapter 9 includes policies to ensure that the general amenity of the Borough's residents is safeguarded.

Site Specific Proposals

- 2.3.16 **Chapter 10: Andover** and **Chapter 11: Southern Test Valley** have the same objective as Chapter 6 which is:

To meet the needs for housing, employment, community facilities, tourism and infrastructure (in Andover / Southern Test Valley) in ways that support viable communities, maintain a robust local economy and maintain the high quality environment of the area.

- 2.3.17 The allocation of land for new housing, employment and social and community uses is one of the key functions of the Plan. The Plan's site specific proposals to meet the Borough's needs for housing, employment, community facilities, tourism and infrastructure are set out in Chapters 10 and 11. Allocated sites are shown on the Proposals and Inset Maps.

2.4 Implementing the Plan

- 2.4.1 The Council recognises that the Plan is one component, albeit an important one, of a complex process which brings forward development. It also recognises that it cannot achieve the successful implementation of the Plan in isolation and that a number of private and public agencies and organisations have an important part to play. The circumstances in which the Plan has been prepared; economic, social and legislative are unlikely to remain constant and the Council will need to respond to change. However, it is important that the long-term aspirations set out in the form of detailed proposals should not be unduly influenced by temporary or short-term changes in circumstances. To do so would jeopardise the benefits of comprehensive development, particularly where large-scale development is concerned.
- 2.4.2 The Council will seek to establish partnerships with key agencies and organisations and obtain their support and commitment through the process of adoption of this Plan. The Council will also monitor the performance of the Plan and keep its policies and proposals under regular review.

