

Next Local Plan - Refined Issues and Options Consultation - Summary

Test Valley Borough Council

Our future - How
do we plan for it?



Introduction

The next Local Plan will set out the level of new homes, jobs and infrastructure to be provided to support the Borough's communities and meet their future needs, whilst also protecting the local environment.

What is this stage about?

As a non statutory 'stepping stone' stage the Refined Issues and Options documents sets out:

1. What has happened recently and what is currently underway which is of relevance
2. Headline feedback from Issues and Options consultation
3. The issues which we will be focusing on in preparing the next Local Plan. This includes meeting housing need, addressing climate change, and supporting the economy.

How does this fit with the Corporate Plan?

The Local Plan has a central role in the delivery of the spatial aspects of actions under each of the Corporate Plan 2019-2023 'Growing our Potential's priorities:



Town centres – to adapt and be attractive, vibrant and prosperous places



Communities – to be empowered, connected and able to build upon their strengths



People – to be able to live well and fulfil their aspirations



Local Environment – working together to care for and maintain our outstanding natural and built assets in Test Valley.

How does this relate to the Issues and Options Consultation (2018)?

This document seeks to build upon the outcomes of the previous 'Issues and Options' consultation in 2018 which sought views on issues that the Borough, and those that live and work in Test Valley will face in the future, together with how best to deal with them. The key priorities and recurring themes and issues raised were.

1. Protecting the high quality of life
2. Access to the countryside, open spaces and historic environment
3. Prosperous local economy

The key issues which could be improved focused on:

1. Accessibility by public transport and cycle routes
2. Town centres
3. Affordable housing and housing for an ageing population
4. Infrastructure including broadband, community facilities and services.

The environment was also a key theme, including

1. Climate change and renewable energy
2. Open spaces for healthy lifestyles
3. Natural environment and biodiversity
4. Protection of natural resources and assets.

For the future, the emphasis was on:

1. **Meeting needs in a way which does not have an adverse effect on environmental assets or high quality of life.**
2. **Development in sustainable locations, with public transport access**
3. **Development designed to respect the character of the place and minimise carbon emissions and mitigate against climate change.**
4. **Mix of new housing should also greater reflect local needs.**

The four themed chapters of the document reflect the priorities of the Corporate Plan and other key projects. They use similar headings to those of the previous Issues and Options document consultation.



Chapter 5 Living in Test Valley (Housing and Communities)

Meeting future housing needs appropriately is one of the greatest challenges for the next Local Plan. The plan should provide for the right number of homes, of the right type and in the right locations. This section includes: the housing requirement and its distribution, the settlement hierarchy and settlement boundaries, housing mix and affordable housing, self build and custom build housing, and gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople.



Chapter 6 Working in Test Valley (Town Centres and Local economy)

Town Centres and their ability to adapt and be attractive, vibrant, and prosperous places is one of Council's Corporate Plan priorities. This is going to be especially relevant given the current climate. Master planning exercises are being undertaken for both Andover and Romsey in order to ensure they are futureproofed, focusing on development which could potentially attract people back into the town centres for extended periods of time. They have the opportunity to adapt to future changes and build in resilience to the changes in shopping habits so that they are likely to move away from being solely retail led locations to offer a wider range of retail, leisure, cultural and other amenities.

A strong and robust local economy is key to delivering prosperity and quality of life. The next Local Plan will aim to be positive in supporting future economic growth and productivity, alongside protecting the Borough's environmental assets which are also important in making the area an attractive business location. This section also includes: tourism, rural economy, and skills and training.



Chapter 7 Enjoying Test Valley (Environment and Quality of Life)

For the local environment, people highlighted the value placed on the countryside, landscape, biodiversity and wildlife. Connections within the landscape and habitats were also raised. Parts of Test Valley are of international wildlife importance and national landscape importance. We also have many assets that are of importance for their heritage value, including listed buildings and scheduled monuments. The countryside provides many functions that we are dependent on.

In addition to supporting wildlife, the countryside supports rural communities and the rural economy which includes agriculture and forestry. While policies in the next Local Plan will need to take account of all these roles, this section focuses on the environment aspect. It includes: landscape, the design of development, local gaps and local green space, the historic environment, sustainable construction and renewable energy, biodiversity, public open space and green infrastructure, water supply, and water and air quality.



Chapter 8 Infrastructure and Community Facilities

The delivery of sustainable physical, social and green infrastructure, in line with national policy, will be a key objective of the new local plan. The infrastructure and community facilities serving the Borough's towns, villages and rural communities must evolve to meet the needs of communities and businesses and to enhance the lives of residents.

Planners need to find sites that are in sustainable locations well served by infrastructure i.e. those locations that are close to existing services and community facilities. We also want to explore how the next local plan can help support existing facilities in villages.

This section covers: transport, including sustainable transport, cycling, walking, public transport, car parking and electric vehicle charging; health, education, utilities and telecommunications; local resilience, and the community infrastructure levy. It's about bringing everything together and looking at how infrastructure could be funded.