

“Next Local Plan - Refined Issues and Options Consultation”

Upper Clatford Parish Council’s response to the “Next Local Plan - Refined Issues and Options Consultation” document is laid out below. A series of questions were posed within the document; It is important to note that our answers are formulated around the opinion or sentiment expressed within our recent residents’ Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) questionnaire and therefore represent the only valid, up-to-date indication of local opinion. Having engaged in good faith in large numbers to mould an NDP in compliance with the existing Local Plan (and expected to be valid until 2029), our residents are likely to be resistive to a Next Local Plan that conflicts with their NDP.

This response concludes with statements on Local Gaps, Local Green Spaces and walking/cycling.

Q1. Should we maintain the existing two HMAs, or use a single HMA, or should additional HMAs be created?

We believe that there should be 4 HMAs, with 2 focussed on Andover and Romsey and the other 2 covering rural areas, and furthermore we identify Upper Clatford as a rural village and would wish to see it included in a rural HMA.

Q2. In determining HMAs how should wider relationships with settlements beyond the Borough’s boundaries, be taken into account, including with Southampton, Salisbury and Winchester?

Relationships should be maintained with towns beyond the HMA boundaries acknowledging common boundaries.

Q3. Should an alternative approach to using parish boundaries be used for HMAs?

HMA boundaries should fully respect existing Parish boundaries, and under no circumstances should a Parish such as Upper Clatford be split between an urban and rural HMA.

Q4. Should the number of steps of the settlement hierarchy be increased, for example by sub-dividing the ‘rural villages’ into two separate tiers?

No, the current settlement hierarchy works well and where they exist, the adopted Village Design Statements and NDPs allow for sustainable future development.

Q5. How should we decide which settlements to include within each step of the settlement hierarchy?

We should continue to use the existing criteria, which is based on the settlements’ current characteristics, population, and access to a range of services and facilities.

Q6. Should we consider groups of rural settlements together, where these are closely related to each other and/or share facilities and services?

No, each rural settlement should continue to be considered separately, taking into account their Village Design Statements and NDPs.

Q7. How should we treat rural settlements which are close to other larger settlements and can therefore also easily access their facilities and services?

They should be treated no differently to other rural settlements. All rural settlements are dependent on larger settlements, some within Test Valley Borough and some within neighbouring Boroughs/Counties. The only difference being, is the time it takes to travel to them.

Q8. In updating the settlement boundaries to reflect recent development which has built and development with planning permission, should we also include new allocations?

No. Regard should be had to NDPs where they are in place or before the examiner. Unless there is support within the relevant plan underpinned by the neighbourhood questionnaire to extend settlement boundaries this should be resisted. This approach would directly reflect views of the people directly affected and should be reflected in the local plan.

Q9. How should we define settlement boundaries? What types of land uses should be included, such as public open space?

Areas of existing public place such as commons, play parks etc are already reflected in settlement boundaries. Unless supported by NDPs there should be no alteration.

Q10. Should the approach to using whole curtilages for defining settlement boundaries be retained, or should we take account of physical boundaries which extend beyond curtilages, or limit settlement boundaries to only parts of curtilages?

Great care needs to be taken in relation to extending the boundary to include physical features outside the curtilage or equally restricting the curtilage. Either could result in unintended consequences: eg garden of a listed building being divided from its house or a farm in a village having its farm land included or conversion of farm land to domestic gardens.

Q11. Should settlement boundaries be drawn more tightly or more loosely, and perhaps reflecting which tier settlement is within the settlement.

Settlement boundaries will have been considered as part of NDPs and any alteration should be congruent with those plans. Where there are areas with no NDP, alteration of settlement boundaries should only be made after full consultation with the residents directly affected.

Q12. Should settlement boundaries provide further opportunities for further limited growth beyond infill and redevelopment?

No. The current settlement boundary is a settlement boundary reflecting where the existing physical boundary is. Any alteration of that boundary unless supported by the relevant NDP is opposed. Within a settlement boundary any development needs to be considered in the light of that NDP and where relevant the characteristics of any conservation area.

Drawing a settlement boundary to encourage growth/ development is appropriate where there is a clear defined local need reflected in the appropriate NDP. The alteration of a settlement boundary in that context would be supported by the NDP as set out in answers to earlier questions.

Q13 -16b. Self-build homes

With no specific NDP questions aimed at self-build properties, there is no residents' opinion to promote and UCPC have no comment on these questions.

Q17-18. Revised tourism policy

UCPC cannot support a revised tourism policy or innovative proposals without knowledge of its detail. Consequent effects could impact upon biodiversity, traffic flows, important views, landscape character, pollution and the Local Gap.

Sections 7.12-7.15

Protection and retention of the Andover-Upper Clatford/Anna Valley Local Gap is overwhelmingly supported by local residents; such was the strength of feeling in the questionnaire, an entire chapter was dedicated to the Local Gap within the draft submission NDP document. This narrow strip of countryside is critical in maintaining the rural feel and independence of our villages.

Our Local Gap has been carefully analysed as part of the NDP process; ten component areas of differing characteristics were identified and are presented in detail in Evidence Statement UC10 available on upperclatford.com.

Existence in its current size and form is therefore effective, justified and overwhelmingly supported.

Sections 7.16 – 7.19

Upper Clatford has included designation of several new Local Green Spaces in the Draft NDP, reflecting the feedback from the community on the need to protect the natural environment. Upper Clatford PC therefore welcomes and supports the inclusion of these as future designations through NDPs.

Sections 8.9 and 8.10

We strongly support Test Valley Borough Council in its stated policies to encourage *"...opportunities for cycling and walking in the Borough, particularly for shorter journeys and as an alternative to car journeys is a key objective in helping to maintain healthy lifestyles, improving air quality and in reducing carbon emissions."*

The recent dramatic increase in recreational walking and cycling through the local rural areas is welcome, but has also highlighted some significant road safety issues. Most country lanes have no dedicated pedestrian footpath, whilst at the same time being subject to speed limits no less than the national limit of 60 mph. There are many locations, such as on Watery Lane in Upper Clatford, where pedestrians cannot walk safely without some urgent action to calm traffic speeds. We would strongly support any initiative to identify such dangerous locations across the Borough and to take action either to reduce speed limits or introduce other traffic calming or traffic separation measures.

