

# Test Valley Borough Council Next Local Plan - Refined Issues and Options Consultation

## COMMENTS FORM

Test Valley Borough Council has published for public participation its Refined Issues and Options document. This is the second stage of preparing the next Local Plan, which follows the Issues and Options consultation in 2018.

You can respond to our consultation by filling out the form below. Further information can be found on our website at: [www.testvalley.gov.uk/nextlocalplan](http://www.testvalley.gov.uk/nextlocalplan)

The consultation period runs from Friday 3 July 2020 to 4.30pm on 28 August 2020. Please respond before the close of the consultation period.

Once the form has been completed, please send to

If you are unable to send via email, please send a postal copy to our address below.

### Contacting us

We are happy to help. If you have any queries, please contact us at:  
Planning Policy and Economic Development Service  
Test Valley Borough Council  
Beech Hurst  
Weyhill Road  
Andover  
SP10 3AJ

Tel: 01264 368000

Website: [www.testvalley.gov.uk/nextlocalplan](http://www.testvalley.gov.uk/nextlocalplan)

## Part A: Your Details

Please fill in all boxes marked with an \*

Title*Mr		First Name*	
Surname*			
Organisation* <i>(If responding on behalf of an organisation)</i>			

If you wish your comments to be acknowledged and to be kept informed of progress, please provide your email address below:

Email Address*	
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If you don't have an email address and wish your comments to be acknowledged and to be kept informed of progress, please provide your postal address.

Address*		
	Postcode	

If you are an agent please give the name/company/organisation you are representing:

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### Personal Details and General Data Protection Regulation

Please note that representations cannot be treated as confidential. If you are responding as an individual, rather than as an organisation, we will not publish your contact details (email/postal address and telephone number) or signatures online, however the original representations will be available for public viewing at our offices by prior appointment. All representations and related documents will be held by the Council for a period of 6 months after the next Local Plan is adopted.

The Council respects your privacy and is committed to protecting your personal data. Further details on the General Data Protection Regulation and Privacy Notices are available on our website

<http://www.testvalley.gov.uk/aboutyourcouncil/accesstoinformation/gdpr>



**BJC PLANNING**

**RESPONSES TO THE TEST VALLEY**

**ISSUES AND OPTIONS CONSULTATION  
FOR THE NEXT  
LOCAL PLAN**

**RESPONSES MADE ON BEHALF OF**

**BJC Planning**

**on**

**AGEING POPULATION**

### Introduction

Policies relating to the Ageing Population are totally inadequate. They are more of a "wishlist" than a requirement to meet the overwhelming need for specialised housing of all forms.

The Council recognises the fact that the population in Test Valley is ageing more quickly than the Hampshire average. The problems of an ageing population need to be addressed. Nationally it is estimated that by 2035 there will be over 100,000 people over 100 years of age. The Council should invest in a suite of policies addressing the issues of the older people including specific allocations, or percentages of allocation.

### Background

It is widely recognised that there is a massive increase in the numbers and proportion of people living longer. The figures are quite dramatic. The ONS forecast is that over 100,000 people will be over 100 years old by 2035 (2015 estimate). This is, of course, good news in terms of longevity but it is also known that the elderly frequently suffer from a range of health issues.

This creates enormous costs for the NHS, the social and care services and for local government. The current issues with COVID 19 underlines this issue. A high proportion of people are dying in care homes. It is possible that death toll would have been significantly lower if individuals could have stayed longer in their own homes.

Many surveys confirm that most people would prefer to live in their own homes for as long as possible. Unfortunately, this is often impractical because most dwellings cannot provide a safe environment for those with even the most minor of health issues or injuries such as falls. Falls involving the elderly make up a very high proportion of NHS admissions. This often means that people are kept in hospital for longer than their issues require and then they have to be moved into care homes to free up beds in the absence of other alternatives. This is simply transferring the problem.

Dwellings can be adapted. Baths can be replaced by showers, stair lifts and lifts can be installed. Hoists can be provided to move individuals into beds. However, this can be very expensive and these are not works that the elderly can manage in later life. Indeed, this is such a significant issue that there are charities that have been established to assist with such improvement work (such as Care & Repair England). There are other works that are impossible to undertake or that are prohibitively expensive such as the modification of homes for the use of wheel chairs. This may need wider door frames and stronger floors and ramps to provide access. Older housing stock is often poorly insulated and the elderly

suffer most from the cold. The increased costs of heating may be problematic while improving insulation may not be cost effective. The need for housing specifically for the elderly is evident. A survey in 2015 revealed that "3.3 million people wanted to "rightsized" but cannot find anything suitable" (TCPA Report: Planning for an Ageing Population).

There is a serious shortage of all forms of housing but the emphasis of the government is on building homes for the young to enable them to afford their own homes with the Help to Buy scheme. While this is commendable, it distorts provision. Why would any house builder want to give up the financial benefits of Help to Buy to provide housing for the elderly that has no financial support?

There is little government support for housing for the elderly. Some may receive grants to adapt their homes but there is no financial support for new homes specifically for the elderly. Government and Council guidance is inadequate to achieve this from the private sector.

Local authorities claim that they include policies in their Local Plans to support the provision of housing for the elderly. However, the policies support Life Time Homes standards. This is a misnomer as it simply provides guidance to build homes that may still need future adaptation to meet the needs of the elderly.

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.

It is estimated that the provision of better homes for the elderly could save £2.1 billion for the NHS and major savings for the care services (Healthier and Happier Report 2019).

In 2014, just 7% (1.7 million) of homes in England had all four accessibility features that provide visitability: level access to the entrance, a flush threshold, sufficiently wide doorsets and circulation space, and a toilet at entrance level. English Housing Survey' (2015)

Our housing stock is among the oldest in Europe with some of the highest associated health and care costs. Most people want to remain in their own home, but current housing stock is not suitable for us as we get older.

### **Wheelchair Accessible Standards**

Age UK want 10 per cent of new homes to be built to wheelchair accessible standards to make up for a shortage of homes built for the specific needs of wheelchair users.

A recent survey by the Centre for Ageing Better found that '72 per cent of UK adults think all new homes should be built to be suitable for all ages and abilities'. They also found that '48 per cent don't think society does enough to enable people to live independently and safely at home as they grow older.'

Understandably most of us don't think about accessibility unless we become less mobile – which can happen at any age. So more information for the consumer is vital.

Some older people do choose specialist retirement housing. But this sector still represents only around 2.6 per cent of the overall housing stock across the UK. Even if we doubled the number of retirement schemes being built it would still represent a tiny minority of homes. Only a tiny minority of older people live in retirement housing. We need accessible general needs housing even more.

The Council has raised issues with regard to a policy on health and wellbeing that is meaningful and deliverable in a Local Plan. It could consider housing for the elderly as being especially relevant.

### Planning Policies

It is surprising that the NPPF 2019 makes so few references to the issues of the Ageing Population. The only references are in: -

- Paragraph 61 which refers to the need for a mix of housing for older people among other groups.
- Paragraph 64 b provides an Exemption to the full 10% requirement for affordable housing provision. It states that:-

“where the site or proposed development:

Provides specialist accommodation for a group of people with specific needs (such as purpose built accommodation for the elderly or students)”.

So provision for the elderly is competing with the share for affordable housing and student accommodation. Even this is not a requirement.

Ironically, the strongest support in NPPF is set out in a **Footnote 40**, on Page 23. This is in reference to “The government's Industrial Strategy”. It identifies one of four “Grand Challenges” of which “catering for an Ageing Society” is one.

### CONCLUSION

It is fundamentally important to make greater provision for the elderly. The Council recognises the fact that the population in Test Valley is ageing more quickly than the Hampshire average is acknowledged.

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.

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.

