
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

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

Part A: Your Details

Please fill in all boxes marked with an *

Title		First Name*	
Surname*			
Organisation* (If responding on behalf of an organisation)			

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>

Part B: Your Comments

Please use the boxes below to state your comments and questions. Please make it clear which paragraph or question your comments relate to where possible.

Question 1

Should (a) we maintain the two existing HMAs, but perhaps with a revised boundary between them, such as enlarging the area within STV HMA. If so, what additional area(s) of the Borough should be included within STV HMA? Alternatively, (b) should a single HMA for the whole of Test Valley be used? Or (c) should additional HMAs be created, increasing the number to 3 or 4, with the additional HMA(s) applying to the rural area?

A: The existing HMAs are very different in size and the northern HMA covers very disparate areas (Andover and rural) which will have different housing needs. Community involvement would be better achieved by a 'finer-grained' approach with more HMAs - either more compact areas or bringing together more widespread settlements with common interests (e.g. villages)

Question 2

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

A: Obviously the housing needs of an isolated community with little local infrastructure could be different from those of a community close to a large settlement, which could itself be outside the TV borough. So yes – 'taken into account' – although it is not clear what this would mean in terms of actual policy (but see response to Q4).

Question 3

Should an alternative approach to using parish boundaries be used for HMAs? If so, would this be easily be identifiable and practical for monitoring purposes.

A: Parish boundaries provide an established means of delineating areas and residents in them are represented by elected Parish Councils. The parish boundaries have historical significance any attempt to introduce alternative boundaries would look like an unnecessary complication would be likely to lead to strong local resistance.

Question 4

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

A: The term 'number steps' is not explained. Obviously there can be significant differences between the rural villages in terms of the desirability/sustainability of placing houses in them. Therefore if any allocations are made in these settlements this should take account of multiple factors including the character of the settlement, local facilities and proximity to facilities in nearby settlements. Whether this could be achieved by dividing villages into 'tiers' (possibly more than two?), or whether it would require a more detailed 'scoring system', is not clear.

Question 5

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

A: See response to Q4

Question 6

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

A: This might appear sensible, although such a policy would presumably mean grouping parishes together which would be seen as diluting community involvement at a parish level.

Question 7

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

A: See responses to Q2

Question 8

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

*A: This must depend on the particular situation. Where there is land within the current settlement boundaries that can be developed **without significantly affecting the character of the settlement** (e.g. infill) the expansion of the settlement into the countryside should be resisted. In some cases this may not be possible. A 'case by case' evaluation, with community involvement, is required.*

Question 9

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

A: The settlement boundary should encompass the main area of the settlement, excluding outlying houses. It should not include public open spaces that are effectively on the edge of the settlement with few houses beyond (see Hunts Farm playing fields in Timsbury, for example) or any other open space of specific value (open views, SINCS etc).

Question 10

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?

A: The adoption of the settlement boundary approach has merits in controlling development in the village but the existing boundary is in some cases arbitrary. There can be a problem at the edges of the settlement where in most cases established housing reduces in density and merges into countryside. Where the boundary has been drawn to include all or a large part of the curtilage of houses next to open country this can encourage over-dense development in these areas which is out-of-character with the edge-of-village locations and has an adverse visual impact on the surrounding countryside. This approach should be reviewed. In settlements where there is adequate space for infill development, where there are existing houses with large curtilages adjoining open countryside, the settlement boundary should exclude part of these curtilages to effectively prevent development beyond the existing 'housing line'

Question 11

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

A: It is not clear what this means. Does 'looser' mean 'more extensive', or 'less well-defined or flexible'? Perhaps boundaries could be enlarged in settlements in a 'higher tier' (assuming that this means that they can/should accept more housing) but see responses to Q8.

Question 12

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

A: It depends on local circumstances. Again, see responses to Q8.

Question 13

Should we have a specific policy for self-build homes?

A: The Parish Council has only limited experience in this area but that indicates that self-build activities can be very protracted and for this reason can create long-term disturbance to neighbours, compared with most 'commercial' builds. Therefore if 'self-build' developments are to be treated differently by a specific policy this factor should be taken into account. See following responses.

Question 14 Should we have a policy for large housing sites to include a proportion of serviced plots to be made available for sale to those seeking to build their own homes?

A: The Parish Council understands why developers may not be enthusiastic about this. For one thing we suggest that it would deter purchasers of developer-built houses if some plots were to be 'self-build' and the site therefore not completed for a (potentially) extended period. A development of only self-build houses on a site without immediate neighbours (perhaps community-led) would be a better option.

Question 15

Should self-build housing to be delivered as part of community led development?

A: It could be, but it is not clear why a separate policy would be required to enable this.

Question 16

Could the introduction of a self-build housing policy also be an opportunity for the Council to tackle the issue of climate change?

A: There is no certainty that any self-build house would be any more energy-efficient than a commercial build. And in any case the reduced emissions from an inevitably small number of self-build houses, even if they were more energy-efficient, would have a miniscule effect on climate change. So to introduce a self-build policy and publish a claim that this would make any contribution to tackling climate change would be seen by most people to be tinkering at the extreme edges of the issue and could give the impression that the Council was not addressing the matter seriously.

The Parish Council's view is that the Local Plan should treat self-build housing in the same way as developer-led or community-led housing developments.
