Spatial Strategy
Topic Paper

Test Valley
Borough Council

February 2022

1   Introduction

1.1   The purpose of this topic paper is to present a coordinated view of the evidence that has been considered in drafting the spatial strategy. It is hoped that this will make it easier to understand how we have reached our conclusions.

1.2   It provides background information, including relevant national and local policies, summarises the key issues for this matter taking account of evidence and consultation feedback. It also sets out policy options we have considered and assessed to inform our draft policies or approach.

1.3   This topic paper may be revised and updated at each stage of preparation of the Local Plan. This would encompass any subsequent changes to policy, our key issues and any new relevant evidence which has been produced to guide the draft policies or approach. The papers are available to view and access from the council website: www.testvalley.gov.uk/localplan2040

1.4   This topic paper supports the first statutory stage of preparing the draft Local Plan 2040 which is known as Regulation 18 which we are undertaking in two stages. This is Stage 1 which focusses on strategic matters. Following the public consultation for Stage 1, we will take account of any feedback to refine the draft Local Plan.

Overview of Topic

1.5   This topic paper explains the spatial strategy set out in the draft local plan and highlights the evidence base that has informed the approach taken. It sets out the aims of the spatial strategy and the options presented in the plan.

1.6   The Spatial Strategy sets out an overall direction for growth and sustainable development in Test Valley, over the plan period. It sits alongside the plan Objectives, and describes the location, types and shape of the growth that the plan is seeking to deliver and how this will be supported. The Spatial Strategy provides a clear strategy and direction, setting out how the Local Plan aims to positively deliver sustainable growth and development for our communities. It will be supported by additional policies, proposals and maps, particularly at Regulation 18 Stage 2, where site allocations will be identified.

2   Policy Context

National Policy Context

2.1   Local planning authorities are required to address the requirements set out in National planning guidance in preparing their local plans, namely the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, July 2021) and supporting National Planning Policy Guidance (PPG).

National Planning Policy Framework (July 2021)

2.2   At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which plans should pursue positively throughout their preparation. Paragraph 7 in the NPPF sets out that planning policies and decisions should play an active role in guiding development towards sustainable locations, but in doing so should take local circumstances into account, to reflect the character, needs and opportunities of each area.

2.3   Paragraph 8 states that achieving sustainable development requires the planning system to have the three overarching objectives of environmental, economic and social sustainability, which are interdependent and mutually supportive. The Social Objective specifically highlights the importance of supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations. It notes this can be secured by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health social and cultural well-being.

2.4   At paragraph 11, the NPPF advises that plans promote a sustainable pattern of development that seeks to: meet the development needs of their area; align growth and infrastructure; improve the environment; mitigate climate change (including by making effective use of land in urban areas) and adapt to its effects.

2.5   At paragraph 20, the NPPF requires strategic plan policies to set out an overall strategy for the pattern, scale and design quality of places, and make sufficient provision for:

        (a) housing (including affordable housing), employment, retail, leisure and other commercial development;

        (b) infrastructure for transport, telecommunications, security, waste management, water supply, wastewater, flood risk and coastal change management, and the provision of minerals and energy (including heat);

        (c) community facilities (such as health, education and cultural infrastructure); and

        (d) conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment, including landscapes and green infrastructure, and planning measures to address climate change mitigation and adaptation.

2.6   Paragraph 35 states that local plans are examined to assess whether they have been prepared in accordance with legal and procedural requirements, and whether they are sound. Plans are 'sound' if they are:

a) Positively prepared in providing a strategy which, as a minimum, seeks to meet the area's objectively assessed needs

b) Justified by providing an appropriate strategy, taking into account the reasonable alternatives, and based on proportionate evidence;

c) Effective in being deliverable over the plan period, and based on effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic matters; and

d) Consistent with national policy in enabling the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the policies in this Framework and other statements of national planning policy, where relevant.

2.7   Paragraphs 78 and 79 refer to rural areas, where plan policies should reflect local needs, including provision for affordable housing. In rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities and the services they support, to enable them to thrive. Where there are groups of smaller settlements in rural areas, it is noted that development in one may support services in another nearby settlement.

2.8   Paragraph 84 advises that planning policies and decisions should enable the retention and development of accessible local services and community facilities, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural building, public houses and places of worship.

2.9   Paragraph 86 confirms the key role that town centres play at the heart of local communities and sets out that plans should support their growth, management and adaptation, to promote long term viability and vitality. The NPPF advises authorities to recognise that a mix of uses in town centres, including housing, can help to promote vitality.

2.10   Paragraph 93 states that to provide the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services that the community needs, planning policies and decisions should plan positively for the provision and use of shared spaces, community facilities (such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship) and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments.

2.11   Paragraph 105 advises that significant development should be focused on locations which are, or can be made, sustainable through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. However, the NPPF recognises that opportunities to maximize sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas, and that this should be taken into account in plan-making.

2.12   Paragraph 106 notes that planning policies should support an appropriate mix of uses across an area and within larger scale sites, to minimise the number and length of journeys needed for employment, shopping, leisure, education and other activities.

2.13   Paragraph 119 stresses that plans and decisions should aim to make effective use of land, making as much use as possible of previously-developed or brownfield land.

Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)

2.14   The National PPG advises that plans set out a vision and framework for the future development of the area, addressing needs and opportunities in relation to housing, the economy, community facilities and infrastructure – as well as a basis for conserving and enhancing the natural and historic environment, mitigating and adapting to climate change, and achieving well designed places (paragraph 001).

2.15   Authorities must therefore prepare local plans by assessing future needs and opportunities for their areas, exploring and identifying options for addressing these needs, and setting out a preferred approach to delivering for these identified needs. The PPG advises that the process should involve gathering evidence, carrying out a sustainability appraisal, and effective engagement and consultation with local communities, businesses and other interested parties (paragraph 034). In this way, the Local Plan should be able to show how the presumption in favour of sustainable development will be applied locally (paragraph 036).

Local Policy Context

Partnership for South Hampshire (PfSH) - Statement of Common Ground (SOCG)

2.16   The Council is participating in ongoing work to prepare a Statement of Common Ground (SOCG), for South Hampshire region, which Southern Test Valley sits within, including a joint evidence base to replace the Spatial Position Statement (SPS) 2016. There is agreement amongst partner authorities that the PfSH area is an appropriate geography on which to prepare a Joint Strategy to deal with cross boundary strategic planning matters, to support the production of local plans. It is acknowledged that there will be some strategic issues that need to be considered in the context of a wider geographical area than that within the PfSH boundary.

The North Hampshire Narrative

2.17   The Council is working with Basingstoke and Deane, Hart and Rushmoor Councils as set out in the 'North Hampshire Narrative', which articulates what this wider area has to offer, its aspirations for development and what is needed to address housing, economic and infrastructure challenges, based on existing local plans, strategies and evidence. Place making and design is a key theme and opportunities have been identified to collaborate on; town centre regeneration; economic Initiatives including investment in skills; transport; green infrastructure and diversification in the housing market.

The Corporate Plan 2019-2023 'Growing our Potential'

2.18   The Council's Corporate Plan, approved in 2019, sets out a vision and corporate objectives to guide the work of the Council and its investment priorities. The four core strategic priority areas are as follows:

- 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 lie well and fulfil their aspirations.
- The Local Environment – for current and future generations.

2.19   The Local Plan 2040 is an important document that can help to deliver the spatial aspects of the Corporate Plan, by shaping the pattern, type, character and location of growth in the Borough. In particular, the Local Plan has a role to play in; supporting the viability, vitality and regeneration in our town centres; supporting and enabling communities to achieve the aspirations they have for their own local areas; helping to provide access to the local environment, and; seeking to ensure that local facilities, amenities and services can be sustained and enhanced so that our residents can live well.

Test Valley Borough Council Climate Emergency Action Plan (CEAP) (2020)

2.20   The Council declared a climate emergency in September 2019 and approved its first Climate Emergency Action Plan (CEAP) in 2020. The CEAP concentrates on what action the Council can make to contribute to mitigating the changing climate and reducing carbon emissions. The Local Plan will provide a mechanism to address and counter the changing climate.

3   Key Issues

Adopted Local Plan

3.1   The Council adopted a Local Plan in 2016 for the period 2011 to 2029. The spatial strategy set out in the Adopted Local Plan seeks to guide the location of development and growth to support the principle of sustainable development. The approach is set out in Table 3 in the Adopted Plan and comprises a range of spatial statements that are framed around the following key themes:

- Local communities;
- Local economy;
- Local environment;
- Leisure, health and wellbeing;
- Transport;
- Community safety; and
- Education and learning.

3.2   The spatial strategy sets out the Council's commitment to creating and maintaining sustainable settlements, through supporting the principle of social and economic element of sustainable development whilst ensuring proposed development respects the environment. Growth has been focussed at Andover, Romsey and at our Local Service Centres through a series of new neighbourhoods and site allocations, including mixed use, employment and housing developments, served by infrastructure and facilities where appropriate.

3.3   The spatial strategy in the adopted Local Plan is considered to have been positively delivered, in terms of housing delivery within the Borough.   The site allocations set out in the plan have largely been delivered, or are currently being delivered. This has been achieved during the early to medium lifetime of the plan, and the housing requirement for market and affordable has also been met and exceeded.

3.4   The five year review of the adopted Local Plan (undertaken in 2021)[1] identified that the spatial strategy remained sound. Through the review it was noted that that planning policies and the spatial strategy would be reviewed as part of the preparation of the next local plan to look beyond the adopted Local Plan period (i.e. 2029) and ensure local priorities and national planning policy continue to be reflected in the identified approach.

Relevant Evidence and Studies

Test Valley Borough Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) (2022)

3.5   A key element of the evidence base for the Local Plan is the Borough's Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) 2022. This was commissioned by the Council and completed by Justin Gardner Consulting (JGC). The SHMA sets out overall housing need as well as looking at affordable housing need, in the context of national policy. The study also looks at the needs from a range of specific groups in the population, including older persons.

3.6   The SHMA provides a local housing need assessment for Test Valley Borough, which has been calculated using the approach set out in the NPPF, and in accordance with the 'standard method'. The SHMA sets out that the local housing need figure for Test Valley is currently 541 homes per year, for the period 2020 to 2040.

Housing Market Area Study (HMAS) (2022)

3.7   The HMAS provides evidence of the 'housing market areas' that exist in the Borough and was prepared in accordance with national policy. A housing market area is defined in the NPPF as 'a geographical area defined by household demand and preferences for all types of housing, reflecting the key

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[1] Available at: https://testvalley.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planningpolicy/local-development-framework/dpd

functional linkages between places where people live a work'. Defining and understanding the Housing Market Areas that exist in the Borough can help guide our approach to the distribution of housing, through the spatial strategy.

3.8   The HMAS (2022) recommends the continuation of two separate HMAs, one for Northern Test Valley (NTV) and another for Southern Test Valley (STV). A revised boundary between these HMA is proposed in the HMAS (2022) to better reflect current regional and sub-regional characteristics, the demographics and geography of the Borough, commuting patterns and Travel to Work Areas, and our relationship to neighbouring towns and settlements. The proposed boundary split would broadly follow the route of the A30 across the centre of the Borough, east to west. The HMA boundaries and a more detailed breakdown of the housing requirement are explained more fully in the separate Housing Topic Paper.

3.9   It is proposed that the housing requirement is split according to the population within each HMA in the Borough. This is consistent with the 'standard method' for calculating local housing need, which is derived from demographic data. 57% of the housing requirement would therefore be met in Northern Test Valley and 43% would be met in Southern Test Valley, reflecting the demographics of the two housing market areas.

Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA)

3.10   A Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) for Test Valley was published November 2021 following a Call for Sites. It sets out all the sites that have been promoted and identified for potential future development. This evidence helps the Council to identify what land in the Borough could be available to deliver housing, supporting infrastructure and economic development, which will then be subject to more detailed assessment. It provides an indication of capacity and forms part of the local evidence base for the local plan.

3.11   The SHELAA currently indicates that sufficient land is available in Northern Test Valley for up to 22,170 dwellings, across over 123 individual sites. In Southern Test Valley, the SHELAA indicates that sufficient land is available for up to 14538 dwellings across over 142 sites. This evidence demonstrates that there is sufficient capacity in the Borough to meet our development needs and provides a starting point for further site assessment work, which will be undertaken to identify sufficient provision to deliver needs and the spatial strategy.

Hampshire County Council's Local Transport Plans (LTP3 and LTP4)

3.12   As the statutory Highway Authority, Hampshire County Council (HCC) is required to have in place a Local Transport Plan (LTP). The current LTP (LTP3) was produced in 2011 and reviewed in 2013. A new plan (LTP4) is currently in preparation to supersede LTP3 and will form transport policy for HCC to 2050 and will also reflect national and regional policy guidance. The LTP4 consultation sets out a vision to support a 'carbon neutral and resilient

transport system designed around people, which supports health, wellbeing and quality of life for all; connects thriving places; and respects Hampshire's unique environment'. One of the guiding principles behind LTP4 is to significantly reduce dependency on the private car.

Employment, Economic and Commercial Needs

3.13   An Employment, Economic and Commercial Needs Study has been prepared for the Borough as a whole, using the PPG methodology, through the Partnership for South Hampshire (PfSH). The outcome of this assessment is split between Northern and Southern Test Valley, to reflect sub-regional considerations and the geography of the Borough. Test Valley Borough has experienced significant employment and business growth in recent years and 36.25 hectares of new employment land has been developed over the period 2015/16 to 2020/21.

3.14   At this stage, the plan is not setting out any economic requirements to 2040, although the current employment land supply is known, and the projected employment requirement to 2040 has been estimated through the PfSH study. However, given that this assessment is based on past trends (which provides a 'lumpy' measure rather than a more graduated trend) it is considered appropriate to further test and refine the proposed employment requirement for the plan over the coming months. Alongside this, the market attractiveness and suitability of existing and potential employment sites will also be tested. The aim will be to seek to ensure that the proposed housing requirement, and number of jobs this would support will be aligned, whilst also providing opportunities to meet wider sub-regional economic needs.

Neighbourhood Plans

3.15   Our local communities can produce their own plans for their villages or communities, including as Neighbourhood Plans, which can potentially identify sites for development. There are a number of made Neighbourhood Plans in the Borough and others are at varying stages in the process[2]. It is important that these documents are considered in delivering the spatial strategy.

Main Issues from Consultation on Previous Local Plan Stages

3.16   The public consultation stages undertaken to date comprise the Issues and Options consultation (July 2018) and the Revised Issues and Options consultation (June 2020). At these stages, potential options for a spatial strategy were proposed for consultation.

Issues and Options consultation (July 2018)

3.17   At the Issues and Options stage, the following potential options were referenced in the consultation, as a basis for seeking to meet housing need:

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[2] Full details of Neighbourhood Plans in the Borough may be viewed at:-
https://www.testvalley.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planningpolicy/neighbourhood-planning

- Community led distribution, through the use of Neighbourhood Plans or other types of community led development, with the Local Plan considering the distribution of the remaining residual need for development.
- Proportionate distribution to parishes, whereby needs would be distributed on a proportional basis, reflecting the existing population.
- Local Plan allocations, whereby the most appropriate locations for development would be identified by the Council with a small residual amount (windfall) coming forward from sites that have not been identified across the Borough.
- New village(s), with the potential establishment of a new community supported by facilities, services and transport infrastructure.
- A mixed approach, which could include a combination of some of the options referred to above.

3.18 The following summarises common themes raised:

- Support for principle of sustainable development and prioritising development at more sustainable locations in the Borough, including where served by public transport;
- Support for the retention of two separate housing market areas in the Borough, to support housing distribution in Southern and Northern Test Valley.
- Mixed responses on the location of the boundary between the HMAs of NTV and STV. Some support for reviewing the position of the boundary;
- Recognition that the towns may provide the main focus for growth, but with support for an approach that allows a wider distribution of housing across the Boroughs settlements.
- Support for a range of smaller housing sites in the rural villages;
- Specific support for more affordable homes in rural settlements;
- Proportionate distribution of homes to parishes presents environmental challenges and may not be sustainable;
- Some support for garden villages in Borough;
- Support for aligning economic growth with delivery of new housing.

Refined Issues and Options consultation (June 2020)

3.19 It was recognised, for the 'Refined Issues and Options' Local Plan consultation stage, that respondents to the earlier consultation tended to support a wider distribution of housing in the Borough, across a larger number of settlements, including the provision of sites across the rural area. The second consultation therefore sought to narrow the focus by referencing potential options for comment, to inform the spatial strategy. They include the following:

- The retention of separate Housing Market Areas in the Borough, and a potential revised boundary and/or the creation of additional HMAs to inform housing distribution;

- The role of the town centre masterplan and town centre redevelopment in Andover in delivering future housing;
- The role of potential sites in Romsey and the wider area;
- Potential for bringing forward housing in the rural areas and through local community led schemes and neighbourhood plans;
- How the settlement hierarchy might be revised in the next plan, potentially with the introduction of additional tiers and/or the consideration of groups of settlements within the hierarchy, where they might be closely related and share facilities and services;
- Whether rural settlements that are close to other larger settlements might be treated differently within the settlement hierarchy, when nearby facilities can be easily accessed from those rural settlements.

3.20 The following summarises the main issues to the Revised Issues and Options Local Plan consultation:
- Support for variety of allocated sites, of varying sizes;
- Support for distribution of sites in both urban and rural areas;
- Support for retention of split HMAs north and south and for further subdivision;
- Lower level of support for one single HMA;
- Support for HMAs reflecting cross boundary commuting;
- Strong support for housing and growth around towns and service centres and to the more sustainable villages with more services, better access to public transport and a wider range of facilities;
- Support for wider distribution/more variety in sites and more smaller sites;
- Support for using a settlement hierarchy and support for a review of the tiers in adopted plan;
- Mixed views on increasing the tiers in hierarchy (some support/some concern);
- Support for grouping closer together settlements in the hierarchy where they share facilities;
- Support for principle of people to living closer to where they work including new high-density homes within town centre locations and opportunities for mixed uses on new development.

3.21 The comments received have been considered and have informed the consideration of the most appropriate options for the spatial strategy, as set out in the following sections and the proposed approach to Housing Market Areas for Test Valley.

Summary of Key Issues

3.22 A wide range of considerations and evidence have informed the evolving Spatial Strategy for the Local Plan 2040. They include:
- Our review of the current spatial strategy, as set out in the Adopted Local Plan

- The spatial strategy set out in our adopted plan has focussed development and growth at our larger settlements. In recent years, the more rural communities of the Borough have played a lesser role in delivering our housing requirement.

- Our evidence base, including the assessments set out in the SHMA (2022) and HMAS (2022), provides an overall housing requirement for the local plan and informs how this can be delivered across the housing market areas of Northern and Southern Test Valley. The spatial strategy must ensure that our housing requirement can be met effectively in Test Valley and will seek to shape and deliver this requirement in a sustainable way, for our communities, environment and economy.

- Our SHELAA indicates that there is capacity in the Borough for housing and economic growth to be delivered. Our spatial strategy will need to guide the assessment of these sites to determine the sustainable sites to meet its housing and economic growth needs effectively.

- The national and local policy context has informed the spatial strategy options and priorities being taken forward for further consideration and consultation. The spatial strategy will need to reflect the NPPF requirement that sustainable development must sit at the heart of local plans. Reflecting NPPF priorities for strategic planning, including the need to tackle climate change and consideration of social, environmental and economic sustainability objectives. The spatial strategy will seek to deliver a sufficient supply of homes whilst supporting the vitality of our town centres, promoting healthy and safe communities across the Borough and making efficient use of land, in line with NPPF guidance. Our spatial strategy must also support our rural economy and communities and our special and diverse environment

- Previous rounds of consultation for the draft local plan have informed the emerging spatial strategy. The options taken forward for further consideration reflect the key themes drawn from these consultations. Consultation responses have indicated support for the principle of sustainable development and growth across the Borough and the dispersal of housing across a range of settlements and at the most sustainable locations, including at our main town centres.

- The economic and employment evidence base for the Local Plan will inform the spatial strategy as it evolves and as potential sites are considered at the next stage. Our evidence of economic and employment land requirements (reflecting the employment needs of our housing requirement and wider strategic and sub-regional needs) is currently being updated and further tested and will inform the emerging spatial strategy and local plan policies at the next stage of the plan (Regulation 18, Stage 2).

- The spatial strategy should align positively with our local and corporate priorities, including our climate change declaration and CEAP. It should

seek to support; the future viability and vitality of our two main town centres (reinforcing the Masterplans for Andover and Romsey); the resilience and future sustainability of our communities; and the preservation and enhancement of our special environment, heritage, landscapes and biodiversity.

3.23   National Planning Practice Guidance advises that our options for the spatial strategy should be prepared and assessed to determine a proposed preferred approach to guide development in the Borough through the Local Plan. This process has been undertaken and demonstrates the Councils evidence led approach to the Spatial Strategy.

4   Options for Approach to Spatial Strategy

Options Considered

4.1   On the basis of the outcome of consultations, local and national policy and guidance and our evidence base, a number of potential options for distributing future development in Test Valley have been drawn together and considered. They comprise:
   A. Focused growth strategy through the provision of a new village(s) or settlement(s) in the Borough;
   B. Concentrating development at key sustainable transport hubs along public transport routes and stops in the Borough;
   C. Concentrating development at key economic or employment centres;
   D. Focusing development in the towns of Andover and Romsey;
   E. Distributing development in order to support the largest settlements in the Borough (incorporating more urban and rural locations); and
   F. Dispersal of growth to all parishes.

4.2   The analysis of the options are set out in more detail in Appendix 1. This shows the 6 identified options (A – E) for the spatial strategy, and sets out our robust assessment, with regard to:

   -   whether they are consistent with national policy;
   -   how they perform in terms of their sustainability as evidenced through the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) process;
   -   their deliverability over the plan period; and,
   -   the extent to which they address and meet identified local needs and priorities for Test Valley Borough (in relation to corporate objectives, our communities, and our economic and housing requirements).

4.3   The final column in the table summarises the assessment of each option.

Analysis of the Spatial Strategy Options

4.4   Through an iterative process, the first option (Option A) of focusing growth with the provision of a new village (or villages), is not considered to represent a reasonable option for the Borough. This position has been reached because the overall level of housing need does not justify an entirely new settlement(s)

and because the lead in time for such an approach would be highly unlikely to meet the identified housing and development needs, in the shorter term. On this basis, it has been concluded that there is no justification for this option being taken forward.

4.5   All of the remaining options (B to F) are considered to be reasonable for further consideration and have been assessed against sustainability objectives through the Sustainability Appraisal (SA)[3].

4.6   The Sustainability Appraisal (SA) demonstrated that the social, environmental and economic implications of the 5 options identified, for the spatial strategy, are interrelated and varied. While no single option would have no impact, it is evident that the implications of the identified options would be impacted by the level and nature of any mitigation that may be secured or provided in connection with the development(s). How the options are carried forward will therefore also determine the implications in terms of wider sustainability considerations. The extent to which impacts are mitigated will also be influenced by the measures and mechanisms that can be secured through policies set out in the Local Plan (for example, in respect of biodiversity, environmental impacts or access to open space).

4.7   Dispersing future growth to all parishes (Option F) has emerged as an approach that is not preferred. While this option presents the greatest opportunities to contribute to supporting housing need across all communities and parishes, with opportunities for neighbourhood plans across all areas, it could also lead to development in locations that are not well served by a range of existing facilities, services and infrastructure, or sustainable travel networks. This approach is likely to result in a greater dependence on travel by private vehicles and presents fewer opportunities to utilise previously developed land. It therefore also has poorer implications for the mitigation of climate change and air quality, and could also impact the character and identity of settlements, as well as our rural environment and landscapes. This Option may present deliverability issues, particularly in the more sensitive rural areas of the Borough, including the AONB. It may also do less to support the viability and vitality of the town centres. It is therefore considered Option F is not an appropriate and sustainable option to take forward.

4.8   The identified option of concentrating development at key sustainable transport hubs (Option B) is not considered to offer a preferred approach. While this option may offer access to sustainable transport modes, the location of sustainable transport hubs within the Borough does not consistently align with access to other key facilities, services, infrastructure or employment opportunities. While development should, in principle, take place in locations where opportunities to use sustainable transport can be maximised, this should not be the only driver for distributing development within the Borough. It is not proposed that Option B is taken forward.

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[3] Sustainability Appraisal for the Draft Test Valley Local Plan 2040: Regulation 18 Stage 1 Document Incorporating Strategic Environment Assessment, February 2022

4.9   The remaining three options (C, D and E) each performed fairly well in assessment and through the SA. They are considered to be more deliverable through providing options to deliver a range and mix of sites than the other options and together are more aligned with local priorities and meeting our housing needs. These options present opportunities for new development in locations with access to key facilities, services, infrastructure, and employment whilst also providing opportunities to safeguard our more rural environments and sensitive landscapes.

4.10   A combination of these options would also not undermine opportunities for some development in the rural areas or in smaller communities, to enable local housing needs to be met (including affordable housing). This approach may help to sustain existing local facilities and services within the rural communities of the Borough.

4.11   Options C, D and E also present scope for supporting the vitality and viability of the town centres of the Borough (linking positively to the Local Plan Objectives, Corporate Plan priorities and Masterplans for Andover and Romsey).

4.12   It is proposed there may be greater scope for positive effects for the sustainability of our more sustainable settlements, through bringing aspects of these three strategic options together in a hybrid approach. A spatial strategy has therefore been put forward for Test Valley having regard to the above considerations. This hybrid approach has been assessed within the SA.

4.13   The SA indicates that a hybrid approach is likely to have positive effects in relation to the local economy, including for the town centres and rural economy, with positive implications for maintaining and improving access to services, facilities, infrastructure and sustainable travel modes, and in relation to the health and wellbeing of the population.

Preferred Option

4.14   The recommendation at this stage, is that from the six options initially presented, three should be taken forward, in combination. These options focus on supporting the regeneration of Andover and Romsey town centres (Option D), supporting growth at our key employment areas (Option C), and supporting growth at our largest settlements (Option E). The former is a key priority as set out in our Corporate Plan. Together these present an appropriate and sustainable strategy for Test Valley based on evidence.

4.15   A proposed combination of three options (C, D and E) is set out within the draft plan to deliver a spatial strategy for sustainable development over the plan period. This reflects a slightly more dispersed growth approach than is currently the case in the Adopted Local Plan, through focusing growth not only at our largest range of sustainable settlements (both at towns and local service centres), but also at our larger and more sustainable rural settlements. Development at these locations can help to maintain and enhance the

sustainability and vitality of the settlements and the range of facilities that they can support.

4.16 This approach was also supported through responses to the Issues and Options and Refined Issues and Options rounds of public consultation. Rural areas face housing supply challenges, particularly around affordability and it is considered that the preferred strategy can help to address these. The approach can also provide opportunities for communities to plan for growth in their own areas, such as through Neighbourhood Plans, and it provides opportunities to look at a wide range of sites for consideration, in terms of their mix and size, to meet economic and housing needs. This can help to increase resilience in the supply of land allocated in the plan for future development.

4.17 A Health Impact Assessment (HIA) and Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) have been undertaken. At this stage, no health or equality concerns have been identified in respect of the preferred option set out. The HIA and EqIA will be repeated and refreshed as the plan is refined.

5 Proposed Way Forward and Recommended Approach

5.1 In the light of the above assessments and analysis of the policy context, evidence, and outcomes of public consultation, the following approach to the Spatial Strategy is recommended for the Local Plan 2040, for further wider consultation. The recommended Spatial Strategy comprises: -

5.2 Maintaining and enhancing a sustainable and attractive Borough through:

- Reducing our impact on our changing climate and integrating ecological networks and improving biodiversity;
- Providing inclusive growth that creates green, safe, and well-designed places;
- Supporting new or improved infrastructure which positively responds to its setting, local needs, and our changing climate;
- Promoting access to the countryside and conserving and enhancing the Borough's diverse landscape character;
- Providing developments that promote active travel and invest in infrastructure to enable clean travel that reduces our impact from travel;
- Working with our communities and organisations to deliver this.

5.3 Delivering vibrant and resilient towns at Andover and Romsey through:

- Promoting the town centres as destinations through delivering well designed, accessible, mixed-use developments with improvements to our public realm, maximising the use of previously developed land, to support the day and evening economies in accordance with our Masterplans;
- Being a key focus for sustainable growth along with supporting infrastructure which is integrated with the towns;

- Working jointly with Andover Vision and Romsey Future to deliver improvements to the town centres.

5.4   Sustaining vibrant and healthy communities through:

- Maintaining and enhancing the roles of our larger urban and rural settlements through accommodating development that meets the needs of local communities and supports existing accessible facilities;
- Supporting our strong and diverse economy including the rural and visitor economy;
- Development being supported elsewhere in the Borough to support the role of smaller rural settlements;
- Providing opportunities for communities to be empowered and plan for new development, through neighbourhood plans.

Conclusion and next steps

5.5   This Topic Paper sets out, explains and evidences the proposed Spatial Strategy for the Test Valley Borough Local Plan 2040, Regulation 18, Stage 1. The evaluation of the spatial strategy options, including our review of previous consultation responses and other evidence, has concluded that it would be appropriate to combine 3 of the 6 options to form a hybrid spatial strategy for the Borough (in preference to any one option in isolation). The resultant spatial strategy is considered to offer a positive, deliverable and sustainable approach to meeting our development needs for the plan period. It has been informed by Sustainability Appraisal and reflects local priorities and national policy, including the NPPF.

5.6   The next stage of plan preparation will involve refining the approach, including consideration of our economic needs and other updated evidence, together with an assessment of potential sites. The process will be informed by responses to public consultation, the results of site specific evidence such as Flood Risk Assessment and also Habitat Regulations Assessments, as well as further rounds of the Sustainability Appraisal, including Health Impact and Equalities Impact Assessments.

5.7   The emerging spatial strategy is crucial in identifying the pattern of growth that will occur over the plan period and will form the basis for the allocation of strategic sites across the Borough at Regulation 18, Stage 2. It will also help to ensure that the planned housing and employment growth is supported by appropriate investment in the infrastructure needed to create sustainable communities. The Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) will be developed to help identify the infrastructure investment needed to support our emerging spatial strategy and the Stage 2 local plan policies.

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Appendix 1: Assessment of Spatial Strategy Options

Spatial Option	Consistent with national policy	Summary of Sustainability Appraisal Outcomes	Deliverability	Does it meet local needs and priorities	Conclusion
A. The focus of growth is through the provision of new settlements, which could come forward as Garden Villages. Minimal growth supported at existing settlements through windfall.	Not wholly consistent with NPPF. This is because the approach is likely to result in new development in the countryside (at green field locations), outside existing settlements, and not necessarily in the most sustainable locations (particularly for active travel). It is unlikely to help sustain existing facilities and services in the settlements, or enable re-use of brownfield sites, or support the vitality and viability of existing town centres.	Not assessed within the SA as this option is not considered to be a reasonable alternative.	Deliverability will be a concern, particularly within the shorter term, as this option may take 10-20 years to deliver. It is likely to have more complex and protracted infrastructure, transport, masterplanning and construction implications. This approach introduces risk as it is likely to rely on a more limited portfolio of sites and/or landowners than a more 'dispersed' approach across the Borough. Housing supply is more likely to be deliverable and maintained over the plan period with a balance of housing growth in both urban and rural areas, and across a variety of sites (by size, type and location).	This option does not meet local needs fully or deliver benefits across a wide range of existing communities especially in the short term. It may not support the vitality and viability or sustainability of the rural communities and town centres in the Borough. It may not support the regeneration of existing town centres in the Borough, or directly support the two Masterplans for Andover and Romsey. At this stage, the identified housing requirement is not sufficient to justify a whole new settlement.	**Not proposed to take forward.** There is no justification for an entirely new settlement(s). The overall level of housing that is needed to meet our housing requirement does not lead to the need for a new settlement(s) or support this spatial approach to delivery.
B. Concentration at Key Sustainable Transport Hubs	Partially. This approach may support the	Some of the sustainable transport hubs in the Borough	The option is partially deliverable. Development at the	Partially. Supporting development and growth at the public transport	**Not proposed to take forward.**

Spatial Option	Consistent with national policy	Summary of Sustainability Appraisal Outcomes	Deliverability	Does it meet local needs and priorities	Conclusion
along public transport routes and stops	increased use of public transport modes/options, which is supported by the NPPF and other national policy guidance. However, public transport stops/hubs in Test Valley may be relatively remote and located in less sustainable locations, due to the limited local availability of accessible facilities, services infrastructure and employment opportunities.	align with our larger settlements. However, some (including railway stations, such as at Grateley and Mottisfont & Dunbridge) are located in smaller rural communities with varying access to existing facilities and services. The relatively limited number of locations that act as key sustainable transport hubs will limit the scope of this approach. As a result, this option may also result in increased levels of commuting, including by private vehicles.	larger settlements (served by public transport hubs) will usually represent the most deliverable and sustainable locations for development. However, deliverability through a limited range of more rural communities (that are served by sustainable transport hubs/stops) is likely to be problematic, particularly if this option were pursued in isolation.	hubs that are within the larger towns and centres will help to meet development needs in those areas and support the vitality and viability of town centres, where a range of employment opportunities already exist. However, this option may increase the scale of development at a limited range of rural communities, to a level that may be unacceptable, whilst also not helping to sustain facilities and services across a wider range of larger and smaller rural communities. This option is unlikely to facilitate the greatest level of infrastructure delivery with the widest community benefit.	It is recognised that it is sustainable to locate development at settlements with access to good public transport. However, for Test Valley, it is considered that this may not present the most sustainable option, given the location of some rural stations, and because this approach would put significant pressure on a small number of locations, to meet our needs, whilst not adequately maintaining or enhancing the vitality of a broader range of rural communities (inconsistent with the NPPF).
C. Concentration at Key Economic Centres. Focus of growth is our key economic centres, such as at our largest employment sites.	Consistent with the NPPF	The concentration of development at key economic centres has the potential to support economic growth in these locations, while supporting the availability of a local	This option is likely to be deliverable. However, the housing supply may be more resilient, over the lifetime of the plan, if there is more balance between housing growth across the	Partially. Concentrating development at key economic centres, would include Andover and Romsey, which has the potential to support one of our corporate priorities of regenerating these town centres. It may also	**Proposed to take forward in part** It is considered sustainable to locate housing near employment to reduce the need to travel and support self-containment of settlements or a group of

Spatial Option	Consistent with national policy	Summary of Sustainability Appraisal Outcomes	Deliverability	Does it meet local needs and priorities	Conclusion
		workforce. Some key economic centres also align with the larger centres and settlements in the Borough, providing opportunities to support the vitality and viability of these centres. However, the approach is likely to be less positive in relation to the rural economy. Some key economic centres are also not so well served by infrastructure, facilities and services. Therefore the opportunities to support or sustain existing local facilities may vary. The opportunities to integrate with existing transport networks and maximise the use of sustainable modes of travel may also vary.	urban and rural areas, including through a mix of sites by size, type and location.	support priorities around the growth and quality of employment, through the focus on existing economic centres. However, it may not meet local needs fully or deliver benefits across a wider range of communities (beyond the key economic centres).	settlements. However, this may not adequately maintain or enhance the vitality of our rural communities or support rural employment and tourism throughout Test Valley, if taken forward in isolation.
D. Focusing development in the	Consistent with the NPPF	The largest towns in Test Valley also	The option is likely to be deliverable overall.	It would support one of our key corporate	**Proposed to take forward in part**

Spatial Option	Consistent with national policy	Summary of Sustainability Appraisal Outcomes	Deliverability	Does it meet local needs and priorities	Conclusion
towns of Andover and Romsey: Focus of growth is at our major centres.		have a greater range of existing facilities, services and other amenities than the smaller settlements, as well as generally having better access to sustainable travel networks. Therefore development being concentrated in these locations has the potential to perform positively in this context, whilst also supporting the main town centres. However, concentrating development in such locations could reduce the ability of the rural communities to sustain a range of facilities and services and to retain existing facilities and services.	Development at the larger settlements will usually represent the most deliverable and sustainable locations for development and help to facilitate the greatest level of infrastructure delivery with the widest community benefit. Likely to be deliverable. However, housing supply may be more resilient over the lifetime of the plan if there is a balance between housing growth in urban and rural areas, including a varied mix of urban and rural sites, by size, type and location.	priorities of regeneration of town centres, supporting the viability and vitality of town centres and supporting the re-use of brownfield sites.	Locating growth at our major centres is generally sustainable and would reflect our local priority of regenerating our town centres at Andover and Romsey to be adaptable, vibrant, and prosperous places. However, this approach would not adequately maintain or enhance the vitality of our rural communities or support rural employment and tourism which exists throughout Test Valley if taken forward in isolation.
E. Supporting our largest range of Settlements: Growth is located at our largest range	Consistent with the NPPF.	The larger settlements tend to incorporate more significant employment sites	Likely to be deliverable. Some growth and housing would be delivered within the towns and across a	This option is likely to meet our local priorities as it would support the vitality and viability of a wide range of larger and	**Proposed to take forward** Distributing our growth to our largest range of settlements, comprising

Spatial Option	Consistent with national policy	Summary of Sustainability Appraisal Outcomes	Deliverability	Does it meet local needs and priorities	Conclusion
of settlements, including in our urban and rural settlements, reflecting the appropriate scale of the settlement.		and access to education provisions (although this varies between settlements). They also tend to have a greater range of existing facilities, services, amenities, and access to sustainable travel networks. This option has the potential to support existing provisions and access to them. To some degree, this approach may also support the vitality and viability of town centres, as well as local centres within settlements. It may help provide a local workforce for the rural economy. This approach could reduce the ability to sustain/retain existing facilities and services in the smaller communities where they exist.	range of larger rural settlements and villages, including a range of sites and locations.	smaller rural communities across the Borough. It would help to support the viability and vitality of the town centres and larger rural centres. This option could enable and provide more flexibility for our communities to plan for their future needs and take forward their ambitions for their area, potentially through the development of Neighbourhood Plans. This would also be consistent with our local priorities of empowering our communities to build upon their strengths.	those that offer access to a range of services and amenities, is considered a more sustainable option, subject to ensuring the scale of growth is appropriate. This option is considered to reflect our local priorities and align with national policy.
F. Spreading Growth at all Settlements:	Partially. This approach delivers	A more dispersed approach has the	Partial. The deliverability of this	Partial. Whilst there is support for flexibility to	**Not proposed to take forward**

Spatial Option	Consistent with national policy	Summary of Sustainability Appraisal Outcomes	Deliverability	Does it meet local needs and priorities	Conclusion
Growth is dispersed and takes place at all settlements in the Borough.	housing/ provision across all communities but may have negative environmental impacts in more sensitive rural locations and result in development at unsustainable locations, which would be contrary to the NPPF.	potential to support the economy across the Borough and support meeting the housing needs of communities across all parishes. The implications for the town centres and the range of provisions they can provide within the Borough are less positive. A more dispersed approach may also include development in less sustainable locations, resulting in greater dependency on travel by private vehicle for work and daily needs.	approach relies on the availability of a wide and diverse range of suitable and viable sites, across the Borough. There may be local constraints that limit the deliverability of this option.	permit development in some of the larger villages in the Borough, including through neighbourhood plans, where it can support their vitality and viability, this option may increase the scale of development to a level that would be unacceptable to many of the smaller/rural communities in the Borough. This option could enable some flexibility for our communities to plan for their future needs and take forward their ambitions, potentially through the development of Neighbourhood Plans. This would be consistent with our local priorities of empowering communities to build upon their strengths.

However, it may also lead to additional development in locations that are not well served by facilities, services and infrastructure or where there is less access to sustainable | This could enable the vitality of some of our urban and rural communities to be maintained and enhanced however this could lead to development taking place in unsustainable locations, where there are a lack of services and facilities and public transport. This could lead to unsustainable patterns of movement and reliance on the car and impact harmfully on village and landscape character. |

Spatial Option	Consistent with national policy	Summary of Sustainability Appraisal Outcomes	Deliverability	Does it meet local needs and priorities	Conclusion
				travel networks, which may result in greater dependence on travel by private vehicles. This approach also has the potential to result in additional development within or close to designated landscapes. There is greater potential to effect settlement character and identity, as well as rural landscapes and heritage assets. The implications of this approach will depend on the implementation and mitigation.	