

Dear Sir

I am grateful for the opportunity to comment on this stage of the Draft TVBC Local Plan 2040. My comments are confined to the value of the Borough Landscapes and the ways in which these can be safeguarded whilst the Local Plan meets future housing needs.

The Borough benefits greatly from the North Wessex Downs AONB which starts just 3 miles north of Andover and from the extensive area of rolling chalk farming country and woodland to the south (noted in earlier Local Plans for its great landscape value).

It is encouraging to note that, within the Vision statement,

- the Borough will continue to be known for its varied, green and distinctive landscapes.
- Objective 4 would conserve the variety of local landscapes and special landscape character and,
- Spacial Strategy bullet 4 would conserve and enhance the Borough's diverse landscape character.

Many of the Borough's village settlements are linear in nature, often following river valley floors. Under the current local plan, development of the villages has been guided by settlement boundaries which, across the Borough, have allowed limited 'windfall' additional housing sufficient to meet the annual target of 36 new village houses in the Borough - or about one new property per village per year. My own village has seen a net gain of 8 dwellings added to the housing stock.

The settlement boundary policy played a pivotal role in the 2016 TVBC Local Plan. The settlement boundaries were established following what must have been a significant amount of work by the TVBC planning staff and the authority clearly attached significant importance to their inclusion, in one instance overturning a challenge to one boundary in the High Court.

Regrettably, the settlement boundary policy does not appear to have been maintained in the Local Plan 2040 draft and, with the stated aim of allowing more housing development in the rural villages, one has to assume that some land will be used outside the settlement boundaries.

- What should not be overlooked is that the settlement boundary policy has had the benefit of maintaining the concealed nature of the rural villages within the rolling landscape.

To safeguard the landscape for the future:

- It will be important in any site selection for development beyond the existing settlement boundaries to take account of landscape views particularly from higher ground.

- Where some visibility of new housing is unavoidable to meet housing need, the careful choice of building material will be essential to reduce the visual impact. For example:

- Avoiding the use of bright red brickwork, conspicuous roofing tiles and white window frames.

- To maintain a dark night sky appropriate for a countryside location and to preserve bio-diversity habitats it will also be important to avoid the use of street lighting.

I hope you will find my comments helpful. I look forward to seeing the draft of Stage 2 of Local Plan 2040.

yours faithfully

Geoffrey Scard

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Co-author: Goodworth Clatford Village Design Statement (2003)
Co-author: Goodworth Clatford Neighbourhood Plan (2019)