

Dear Sir or Madam

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft Local Plan 2040 at its current stage. Generally it appears a very well-thought out and well-argued document. I would offer the following observations:

- 1.4, page 5 – the outstanding habitat of Test Valley is its chalk streams and I suggest that needs to be highlighted here.
- Vision – 2.21, page 18 – it is a concern that delivery of infrastructure always lags behind development, as we see in Romsey with large recent housing developments, yet not the provision of e.g. transport infrastructure or medical facilities to support them and existing residents adequately. Is development supporting delivery of infrastructure enough, or does this need to be strengthened?
- Climate change objective, page 19 – suggest ...'reduce emissions and increase energy efficiency from new development' ...
- Our communities – 2.31, page 20 – this also needs to refer to improving mobile phone coverage which remains woeful in many rural areas, preventing access to much on-line purchasing because of the use of one-time pass codes for security purposes.
- Ecology and Biodiversity, page 22 – there should be specific mention of the need to protect and enhance the quality of the chalk streams in the Borough, which are an internationally-renowned, scarce and highly valuable habitat.
- Sustainable spatial strategy p29 – suggest a definition of 'active travel' needs to be included in the Glossary.
- Settlement Assessment – 3.28, page 31 – again, mobile phone signal should be mentioned as a facility important to sustainability of settlements now. The identification of more categories of settlement based on the level of facilities is a great improvement and the overall assignment into the different tiers (page 33) looks realistic.
- 4.28, page 40 – conversion of existing buildings to new purposes rather than demolishing and building anew could have a role to play in this, especially in the towns.
- Strategic Policy 1, page 41 – if active travel means walking and cycling, there is a need to be realistic about how much can be gained from that in a rural borough with the age profile it has.
- Environment, pp 43-45 – again, specific mention should be made of the importance of the chalk stream ecosystems which are so much a defining characteristic of the Test Valley environment.
- 4.53, page 47 – suggest 'blue spaces' needs to be defined in the Glossary – water features?
- Generally find Strategic Policies 2 (page 48) and 4 (page 60) very positive.
- 4.109, page 62 – chalk streams finally get a specific mention, but why here?
- 4.113, page 63 – there is a need to ensure that CILS contribute meaningfully to the scale of investment needed to ensure that pre-existing levels of service and infrastructure are at the least maintained, and if possible enhanced.
- 4.117, page 63 – if the necessary level of improvement cannot be sustained by a development, in my view it should not go ahead. I am very concerned at the implication that policies might be watered down to accommodate development.
- 4.133, page 67 – parking standards in many rural areas need to be realistic given the predominant need to use a car for transport.
- 5.5, page 68 – I question the justification for Test Valley consistently exceeding its local housing target, especially when infrastructure improvement does not appear to be keeping pace with it.
- 5.56, page 77 – it is right to be sceptical of overblown forecasts of future economic needs, and of apparently making up for shortfalls elsewhere.

- Appendix 1, pp 83 - 84 – In such a rural area with generally very poor levels of public transport, categories of High, Medium and Low are very relative. The criteria used to assess them do not appear to be stated. I suggest that to be considered High, it should mean at least a bus service that enables people to get to work and back from their home into the two main centres of Andover and Romsey. A train station needs to be within easy practicable reach without a car. On this basis it would for example be hard to see how Lockerley qualifies as ‘High’.

Yours faithfully  
Heather Kirk

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