

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the emerging Local Plan.

My comments relate to the Settlement Hierarchy Assessment.

Tier 2 includes the rural village of Wellow. Whilst it might have a few shops, many in the village have to drive to reach them; due to the dispersed settlements eg East Wellow and Canada. Also, lack of footpaths and narrow lanes making it unsafe to walk or cycle; especially for the ever-increasing elderly population.

Wellow is nothing like North Baddesley, Rownhams or Valley Park. It does not have that density of housing, pavements on either side of the roads or street lighting. In the previous Hierarchy Wellow was designated as a 'Rural Village'.

Many would argue that the bus service is not frequent. There is a bus service on a Monday, Wednesday and Friday to Romsey. The X7 bus between Southampton and Salisbury, which goes along the A36 is mostly every two hours, so not really suitable for anyone relying on the bus to take them to work. The average house price in West Wellow is £650,741 (2021), people paying these prices are not going to be catching the bus, but driving to work. So, whether the bus service is considered high or not, it is mainly used by shoppers.

I am surprised to see Plaitford in Tier 4. The facilities in Wellow are as close or even closer to some residences in Plaitford as they are to residences in Wellow. The Nisa (with butchers and cash point) on the A36, is 819m from the Plaitford boundary and is therefore closer to Plaitford than it is to East Wellow. Just 103m from the west boundary of Plaitford on the A36, is a garage with Londis convenience store.

<https://www.londis.co.uk/our-stores/landford-service-station>

Table 12 shows Plaitford as not having a place of worship. St Peters Church is in Church Lane, Plaitford.

<https://www.hampshirechurches.co.uk/church.asp?p=Plaitford>

Residents of Plaitford use the recreational facilities on Lower Common Road, Wellow as they are part of the Cricket club.

<https://www.wellow-plaitfordcc.com/>

[Therefore, residents of Plaitford have access to several shops, chemist, cashpoint, place of worship and recreational facilities.](#)

So, I think that Wellow and Plaitford should be linked together in this Hierarchy Assessment, as you have with some settlements in the north of the borough.

The two settlements are also similar in the fact that they both extend into the New Forest National Park. Prior to the National Park being created, both these villages had a large extent within the New Forest Heritage area and are therefore important to protect from over development as they act as a corridor for wildlife moving in and out of the New Forest.

In the 2020 report on The Impact of Recreation on the New Forest; the Mitigation report suggests that there should be minimal development within one to two km of the edge of the New Forest National Park

https://www.testvalley.gov.uk/assets/attach/10040/New-Forest-RecreationImpact_Mitigation-Report.pdf

Other measures: Distribution of Housing

Para 4.50

One approach to avoiding impacts would be to limit the overall levels of new housing close to the New Forest SAC/SPA/Ramsar site, through policy identifying areas where there is a presumption against development. This would need to be considered through the Local Plan-making process undertaken by the respective planning authorities. As the modelling work shows, small numbers of houses within the first kilometre or two from the New Forest SAC/SPA/Ramsar site boundary have a disproportionate effect in terms of increased recreation use.

By placing Wellow in Tier 2, demonstrates to developers that TVBC want the village to expand and have densely built housing estates like the other Tier 2 settlements. All the land owners that put forward their farms for development (SHELAA) will see this as an opportunity to sell up and change the whole character of the village. This development would then lead to further erosion of the outer edges of the New Forest National Park.

So maybe there should be another Tier for settlements with certain protections such as conservation areas for ecological or historic buildings.

I hope you will review the position of Wellow in the Settlement Hierarchy.

Regards

Kathryn Taylor