

Head of Planning and Building,

Test Valley Borough Council

Dear TVBC,

Comments on Local Plan 2040, Reg.18 Stage 1

3,.27 Settlement hierarchy

We suggest that the key facilities should include:

Post Office, especially in view of local bank branch closures. In this village more people use the Post Office than the shop per.se. This is partly because customers for the Post Office also come from neighbouring villages that do not have Post Offices of their own.

Good broadband coverage

Good mobile phone coverage.

3.32 Allocation of houses to villages.

This proposal has some merit but to gain local acceptance it is necessary that the site allocations and the scale of the development respect the size and character of the settlement. Each Parish needs to have the opportunity to comment on, and influence, the number allocated and the proposition that are affordable; and should have a decisive role in choosing the location of any development. It should also be consulted on whether it rather see housing which resulted from a relaxing of the settlement boundary, rather than on a single site.

In the case of Abbotts Ann, if the site is to be chosen from SHELAA sites in the parish, then by far the most suitable is SHELAA entry 190 Land southeast of Dunkirt Lane. This is close to the centre of the village, thus adding to the vitality of the village institutions, and would not have an excessive landscape impact.

4.32 Energy performance standards

If TVBC is serious about its declaration of a climate emergency, then clearly it should impose higher standards on new development. We would like to see higher insulation standards, the use of heat pumps and solar panels on domestic roofs where appropriate. Higher building costs could be offset by landowners receiving less for their land and need not necessarily result in higher prices for housebuyers/renters. TVBC should also do more to ensure that the buildings with large roof areas are constructed with solar arrays on their roofs.

4.41 Local Gaps etc.

Local Gaps have a valuable preventing coalescence of settlements, protecting their identity and shaping the pattern of settlements. Gaps command wide public support and have been used with success in successive strategic and local plans to influence the settlement pattern. The open nature/sense of separation between settlements cannot be protected effectively by other policy designations. The scale of development in Test Valley demands that measures be taken to define the extent of settlements and maintain their distinctiveness therefore Local Gaps should be retained and their boundaries defined in the Local Plan.

Abbotts Ann has a strong sense of identity and community yet it is within the orbit of Andover. A physical separation between Abbotts Ann and Andover is essential to its identity. A gap between settlements serves to maintain their visual separateness both by the views out of the settlement and by the experience of travelling from one settlement to another. The land to be included within the gap performs an important role in defining the settlement character of the area and separating settlements at risk of coalescence.

5.10 Meeting housing needs

Empty houses should be targeted before building new homes. Action on Empty Homes says that its analysis of Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government figures show that 360 homes in Test Valley were not being used as of October 2020, up from 347 the year before.

Appendix 1

Anyone who lives here regards Abbotts Ann bus service as pathetic, not medium. Certainly it does not allow anyone to get to work and scarcely allows them to get into Andover for shopping or errands. Possibly TBVC's assessment is based on the possibility that people could walk a mile from the village centre to the Salisbury Road or the Army HQ on Monxton Road.

Dr J R Moon and Mrs J Moon,