

# Test Valley Borough Council Consultation for Local Plan 2040 Regulation 18 Stage 2

## COMMENTS FORM

Test Valley Borough Council has published its Local Plan 2040 Regulation 18 Stage 2 document for public consultation. This consultation document sets out a vision for Test Valley up to 2040, objectives for achieving this vision, our development needs alongside allocations for residential and employment development and theme-based policies.

The consultation period runs from Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> February to noon on Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2024. Please respond before the close of the consultation period so that your comments may be taken into account.

You can respond to our consultation by filling out the form below. This form has two parts:

Part A: Your Details

Part B: Your Comments (please fill in a separate sheet for each comment you wish to make)

Further information can be found on our website at:

[www.testvalley.gov.uk/localplan2040](http://www.testvalley.gov.uk/localplan2040)

Once the form has been completed, please send to [planningpolicy@testvalley.gov.uk](mailto:planningpolicy@testvalley.gov.uk) below by **noon on Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2024**.

Following receipt of your comments from, we will keep you informed of future consultation stages unless you advise us that you want to opt out of such communication.

If you are unable to send via email, please send a postal copy to our address below.

### Contacting us

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# The countryside charity Hampshire

## Part A: Your Details

Please fill in all boxes marked with an \*

Title* Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms/Dr/Other (please state)	Mrs	First Name*	Carole
Surname*	Oldham		
Organisation* (If responding on behalf of an organisation)	CPRE Hampshire		

Please provide your email address below:

Email Address*	
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Alternatively, if you don't have an email address please provide your postal address.

Address*			
	Postcode		

If you are an agent or responding on behalf of another party, please give the name/ company/ organisation you are representing:

Responding on behalf of CPRE Hampshire – the Countryside Charity
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## Personal Details and General Data Protection Regulation

Please note that representations cannot be treated as confidential. If you are responding as an individual, rather than as an organisation, we will not publish your contact details (email/ postal address and telephone number) or signatures online, however the original representations will be available for public viewing at our offices by prior appointment.

All representations and related documents will be held by the Council until the Local Plan 2040 is adopted and the Judicial Review period has closed and will then be securely destroyed.

The Council respects your privacy and is committed to protecting your personal data. Further details on the General Data Protection Regulation and Privacy Notices are available on our website here:  
<http://www.testvalley.gov.uk/aboutyourcouncil/accesstoinformation/gdpr>

## **Part B: Your Comments**

Please use the boxes below to state your comments. This includes one box for general comments and another for specific comments related to an area of the Local Plan.

Insert any general comments you may have that do not relate to a specific paragraph number or policy in the general comments box below.

If you are suggesting a change is needed to the draft Local Plan or supporting document, it would be helpful if you could include suggested revised wording.

If you are commenting on a document supporting the draft Local Plan (such as a topic paper, or the Sustainability Appraisal), please indicate so.

<b>General</b>
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CPRE Hampshire, the Countryside Charity, welcomes the opportunity to contribute to this consultation, which we do by way of this letter as the on line response is not suitable for the level of detail in our Response.

This Response is the outcome of discussion amongst the members of our Test Valley District Planning Group.

The Council is called The **Test Valley** BC - however, the draft Local Plan currently contains very little reference to either the River **Test**, or its many **Valley** villages and rural catchment communities. CPRE Hampshire feels that the draft Local Plan is too urban - centric to Romsey and Andover and fails to recognise the central role of a healthy River Test to all inhabitants and their environment within the Test Valley BC area.

For specific comments, please make it clear which paragraph, policy or matter your comments relate to where possible. Please use the box below.

If you are suggesting a change is needed to the draft Local Plan or supporting document, it would be helpful if you could include suggested revised wording.

Paragraph Ref	Specific Comments
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<p><b>Section 2 The Vision</b> <b>Page 18</b></p>	<p><b>Some support and major concerns</b></p> <p>1) The stated aim (preceding the paragraphs on Built, Historic and Natural Environment) to</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">“Conserve and enhance the built, historic and natural environment, including local character, identity, cultural heritage, the variety of local landscapes and the special landscape character of the Borough for everyone to enjoy”.</p> <p>is of course one which we would endorse. However TVBC have had the same or similar words in all previous versions of the Local Plan and yet TVBC have done much to destroy the attractive surroundings of Andover and Romsey by:</p> <p>(a) Adopting housing targets that have led to higher population growth in Test Valley than either in the England as a whole or Hampshire and far higher than Test Valley needed to satisfy its own locally generated needs plus a fair share of international in-migration.</p> <p>(b) Allocating largely greenfield land in excess of that needed to satisfy the presumed housing requirement, by neglecting the potential of brownfield sites and by deliberately and perpetually underestimating the contribution of windfall completions to the housing supply (facts relating to both these points are given later). It is not just the unnecessary land consumed, but also the fact that a rapidly expanded population brings associated issues such as increased traffic, loss of tranquillity and stress on already stressed water resources, sewerage capacity and local services.</p> <p>In the past TVBC has been able to state that the housing targets have been imposed by first the Hampshire County Structure Plan, then the regional RPG9, but with the last two versions of the local plan TVBC have had the opportunity to set housing targets that are largely of their own choosing – and their choices have belied their paper ambitions towards the environment of Test Valley. In the previous plan the housing target was inflated by largely spurious employment projections, in the current plan the need is inflated by an unnecessary adherence to the governments Standard Method.</p> <p>So we agree with the stated vision, but also believe that the plan that follows should do somewhat more towards fulfilling this ambition.</p> <p>2) In addition there is no reference to rural communities, the focus of the plan is very Andover and Romsey based, CPRE Hampshire are disappointed that the Local plan does not pay much attention to the rural parts of test valley and the specific issues they face. In focussing mainly on the urban areas of Andover and Romsey we believe there is a lack of analysis of those issues and how planning policy could help address them.</p> <p><b>3) Please revisit CPRE Test Valley District Group’s response to the Reg18 1 consultation as few of our reservations have been addressed.</b></p> <p>Once again, the tone and content of the Local plan document are not readily accessible to ordinary readers and note might be taken of other LPs in Hampshire which have addressed that issue successfully ( East Hants &amp; South Downs)</p> <p><i>The Borough will continue to be known for its varied, green and distinctive landscapes, heritage and rich ecology.</i></p> <p><i>Our diverse natural, built and cultural resources will be safeguarded for future generations to enjoy including access to our outstanding countryside.</i></p>
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<p><b>Transport and movement</b> <b>Para 2.65</b> <b>Page 25</b></p>	<p>Paragraph 2.65 highlights the issue of availability of public transport, but it is something of an under-statement regarding reality. ‘However, some of our rural areas, have limited access to public transport. Car ownership in the borough is higher than the UK average and most journeys in Test Valley are made by private car.</p> <p>Having flagged up the lack of public transport services in rural parts of the borough the plan in paragraph 2.68 ‘proposes supporting a shift from planning for vehicles, towards planning for people and places, decarbonising the transport system, reducing reliance on private car travel but makes no additional provision for those rural communities who are inevitably forced back on car dependency.</p>
<p><b>Chapter Spatial Strategy</b> <b>Page 32</b></p>	<p><b>3</b> *****</p> <p>Sustaining vibrant and healthy rural communities through</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintaining the roles of our rural settlements though accommodating development that meets the needs of local communities and supports existing accessible facilities</li> <li>• Supporting our communities to be empowered to identify and deliver their needs through the use of community planning tools</li> <li>• Supporting our strong and diverse economy including the rural and visitor economy</li> </ul> <p><b>CPREH comment</b> - It is difficult to see how the proposed policies will have a positive impact on tackling the issues faced by rural communities such as the affordability of housing, lack of public transport and availability of services and facilities. The affordable housing policies are a repeat of the existing policies which have delivered very few exception sites, a limited number of communities led schemes. Indeed, the new community –led policy, not to be confused with the NPPF definition is more onerous in terms of meeting the criteria e.g. schemes need to be led by parish councils and only in exceptional circumstances by others. To date most community-led schemes under the current policy have been initiated by landowners/developers.</p> <p><b>CPREH comment</b> - the lack of commentary in this section of the plan regarding the spatial strategy is odd as later in the document one reads ‘The rural areas account for about 19% of employment in Test Valley.’ Ref para 5.467 (page 227)</p>
<p><b>Policy SS4</b></p>	<p>.....</p> <p><b>Housing Requirement</b></p> <p>The figures embodied in Policy SS4 are based on the SHMA calculation of need based on the Government’s Standard Method. We do not disagree with the SHMA’s Standard Method calculation, but we do disagree with the assumption that TVBC is bound by this figure.</p> <p>In a ministerial statement in December 2023, Michael Gove, Housing Secretary, said: “The standard method does not present a “target” in plan making – it is an advisory starting point for establishing a housing requirement for the area.”</p> <p>A more objective and reasoned estimate of need is provided by ONS trend-based population and household projections. Analysis contained in the SHMA (section 4.41) shows that the 2018-based sub-national population (SNPP) forecasts combined with household representative rates (HRR) derived from any of the recent ONS data leads</p>

to a housing requirement that is substantially lower than the 571dpa derived from the Standard Method:

**Figure 4.17: Projected housing need – range of household representative rate assumptions – Test Valley (linked to 2018-based SNPP)**

	Households 2020	Households 2040	Change in households	Per annum	Dwellings (per annum)
2018-HRRs	52,324	59,523	7,200	360	371
2014-HRRs	53,042	60,009	6,967	348	359
2014-PRT	53,042	60,902	7,861	393	405

Source: Demographic projections

The SHMA goes on to reason that providing 571dpa would imply very substantial inward migration into Test Valley.

So why would TVBC consider this desirable? Is it because

- (a) it wants the additional income it would get from the New Homes Allowance, or
- (b) it has a cosy relationship with major housebuilders to provide a continuous stream of large-site approvals, or
- (c) it believes Andover and Romsey would somehow become more important and better if they were bigger, or
- (d) it likes the image of Test Valley being a thrusting, growth-oriented district?

The desire for a substantially increased population is not stated in the visions set out in Section 2 and neither is it compatible with the environmental aims discussed above. TVBC need to be much more open about what its real aims are for Andover and Romsey and open in justifying these aims.

In connection with population growth, the 2021 census shows that, at 12.1%, Test Valley had the highest population growth of any Hampshire district since 2011, compared with Hampshire as a whole recording a growth of 6.3% and England as a whole a growth of 6.6%. There has been a similar pattern in previous decades. In our view the population data alone provides a sound reason for Test Valley to aim for a substantially lower target than that given by the Standard Method – it has already endured enough of high population growth over recent decades.

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## Para 3.102

### Housing Trajectory

Table 3.3 embodies figures corresponding to TVBC's Housing Trajectory (2024) document which accompanies the main Plan document.

This document shows windfall allowances of 39dpa for Test Valley North and 22dpa for Test Valley South i.e. 61dpa for the whole district. These are absurdly low figures given past data for completions on unallocated sites given in Test Valley's Annual Monitoring Report 2022-2023 (the last available).

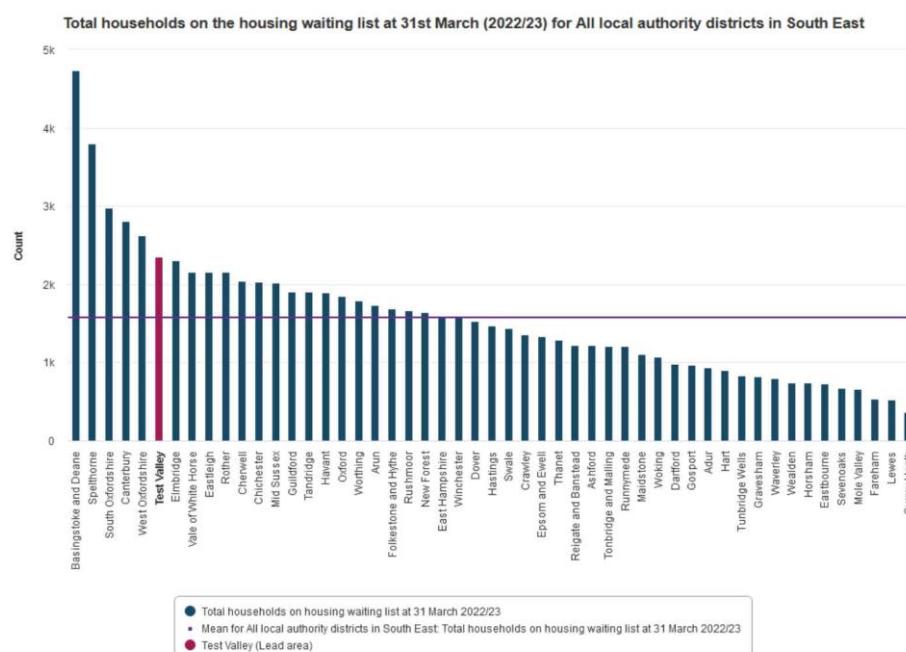
The data in this report (Appendices 5 & 6) shows that, over the last 10 years, completions on unallocated sites have averaged 228dpa in Test Valley North and





need to be considerably increased. But such a solution would not only produce more (the other 60%) houses of a type that are not needed, but it would also increase the greenfield take, unnecessarily increase the population of the borough and add more strain to services and water resources.

The need for affordable housing is also emphasised by the size of TVBC's housing waiting list which is one of the largest in South East England – see the graphic below.



TVBC's aim of providing just 200 affordable dpa does appear to come close to providing for the real needs of the borough.

CPRE suggests the following measures to boost the supply:

- Directly finance and construct some council affordable housing. When the borrowing caps that restricted building more council houses were lifted in 2018, the government said it heralded “a new generation of council homes” The Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government and Prime Minister's Office also announced a £2bn boost in funding for affordable housing at around the same time. So why is TVBC reluctant to follow this lead?
- Increase the percentage of affordable homes in new development to 50%. In this context we note (from the TVBC annual monitoring reports) that housing delivery has consistently exceeded targets, so clearly developers are not finding the 40% affordable target onerous, especially as the major housebuilders have been recording substantial profits during recent years. Also the government's definition of affordable housing has changed such that 25% of affordable housing should be in the form of first homes. In view of the financial aid now available to first home buyers, affordable housing becomes a more marketable proposition for housebuilders. We also note that the 40% target in the current local plan has, in reality, only resulted in 30% of new dwellings constructed during the last 5 years being affordable (para. 3.52).

## Para 4.1

## Housing Mix

Suggested Mix of Housing by Size and Tenure – Test Valley				
	1-bedroom	2-bedrooms	3-bedrooms	4+-bedrooms
Market	5%	35%	40%	20%
Affordable home ownership	20%	40%	30%	10%
Affordable housing (rented)	35%	35%	25%	5%

**Mentioned in  
policy DES2**

## Design

- a) requiring all new development to have heat pumps as their primary heat source,
- b) requiring all new development to have roof-mounted solar panels, and
- c) requiring all new development to have triple glazing.

**Policy SS5**  
**page 49**

Neighbourhood Development Plan Housing Requirements (Page 49)

**Economy**  
**page 52**

**CPREH comment** - In this section there is no reference to the rural economy, the issue of access to employment opportunities, the impact of the redevelopment of existing employment sites for housing. The focus is on strategic issues and the scale of additional employment land at Andover and southern Test Valley. That said there is a proposal regarding Thruxton Business Park Ref Policy NA9 (page 86), The existing site is proposed to be enlarged by 15ha for aviation and/or motor sport employment. Policy NA10 (page 87) supports employment development

<p><b>Policy CL1</b> page 131</p>	<p>on the 165Ha site.</p> <p>.....</p> <p><b>Countering Climate Change</b></p> <p>A specific mention of water is essential and needs to be higher up the list. Viz</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">b, Development will be permitted provided that long term water quality and quantity shall not be affected either in the surface rivers or their underground sources, flood and drought events are not exacerbated, and secure plans are in place for the maintenance of these installations.</p>
<p><b>Policy CL2</b></p>	<p>*****</p> <p><b>Flood risk</b></p> <p>We fully support the CL2 policies with one minor amendment.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><i>All new development close to ANY watercourse should take advantage of any opportunities to enhance the water environment and should retain undeveloped buffers of at least: 1) 8 metres from the riverbank of main rivers, flood defence structure or culvert; #</i></p> <p>River Test is a braided stream with only one enmained branch. Other substantial branches not enmained should have the 8 metre buffer as well.</p> <p><i>CPRE Hants note for clarification on buffers and enmained branches - Only main rivers are the responsibility of the EA . Each river course is designated as being enmained if it is the primary carrier. If it's a side channel it is a water course and is not the responsibility of the EA. Chilbolton common e.g. has both. The Test is braided i.e. has many channels, only one is enmained and the responsibility of the EA in any valley section.</i></p> <p>*****</p> <p><b>Countering Climate Change</b></p> <p>CPREH supports policy CL4 in the hope that legislation will be enacted to enable the higher levels of water efficiency espoused by TVBC to be enforced.</p> <p>The section which allows no compliance, viz:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><i>-This needs to be satisfied unless it can be demonstrated that it is not technically feasible or financially viable-</i></p> <p>should have very restrictive, specified criteria applied as commercial considerations should not outweigh water quality and quantity considerations. It is unlikely that there are no technical solutions. Permission should be withheld if this is cited.</p> <p><b>Water cycle Study</b></p> <p>This, dated Feb 2024, is unlikely to have informed the DLP but it demonstrates the weaknesses of the WwTWs in the Test Valley and their inability to cope with the projected increases in rainfall amounts. In fact, their inability to cope now is very much a current issue, which makes our amendments below all the more relevant and we request that they are included.</p> <p><i>Prior to occupation, adequate water supply, surface water drainage, wastewater infrastructure and waste water treatment capacity is available, or can be made available, and connected to the nearest point of adequate capacity, to serve the development so as to avoid risks of adverse effects on the water environment.</i></p>
<p><b>Policy CL4</b> Page 140</p>	

<p><b>Policy CL5</b> <b>page 142</b></p>	<p>Rather than “prior to occupation” we would prefer to see the following added :</p> <p>Provision must have been secured and costed in detail from the water companies before the development is given permission and permission shall depend on it being adequate in the long term so that</p> <p><i>Prior to occupation, adequate water supply, surface water drainage, wastewater infrastructure and waste water treatment capacity is available..... and connected to the nearest point of adequate capacity, to serve the development so as to avoid risks of adverse effects on the water environment.</i></p> <p><b>Water policy CL4 Water use and water management</b></p> <p><b>Water 5.63</b></p> <p><i>However, the proposed standard set out in this policy is beyond the optional technical standard set out in the Planning Practice Guidance so it will need to be reviewed as to whether this remains appropriate or not. A higher requirement is justified based on the level of pressure on water resources, now and into the future</i></p> <p>We fully support this policy but would recommend that annual review is clearly built into the implementation as water issues will become increasingly difficult and building controls MUST keep up and not lag behind.</p> <p><b>Water 5.65</b></p> <p><i>The Council has a role in supporting the delivery of these objectives. It is essential that development does not cause deterioration in the status of water bodies. Where possible, schemes to enhance the status of the water bodies should be undertaken</i></p> <p>CPRE H maintains that this intention should be an over-riding priority so should read.</p> <p>“ Development shall on no account cause deterioration...”</p> <p><b>Water Policy CL4</b></p> <p>Water Policies need to underpin all decisions and are not seen to do this throughout the Local Plan. Test Valley BC should work hard with developers to work to standards <u>well above</u> those currently required in order to preserve the globally important and rich water heritage and quality in the Borough and relieve the waster stress condition currently operating. Waste water treatment is an issue which deserves stronger regulation.</p> <p>The Policy CL4 states:</p> <p><i>Prior to occupation, adequate water supply, surface water drainage, wastewater infrastructure and waste water treatment capacity is available, or can be made available, and connected to the nearest point of adequate capacity, to serve the development so as to avoid risks of adverse effects on the water environment.</i></p> <p>This must be amended so that developers are required to do the above prior to permission being granted not leave it until prior to occupation:</p> <p>Amendment e.g.:</p> <p>Provision must have been secured and costed in detail from the water companies before the <u>development is given permission</u> and permission shall depend on it being adequate in the long term so that</p> <p><u>before permission is granted</u> adequate water supply, surface water drainage, wastewater infrastructure and waste water treatment capacity must be <u>available and connected</u> to the nearest point of adequate capacity, <u>adequate to serve the development into the future</u> so as to avoid risks of adverse effects on the water environment.</p> <p>*****</p> <p><b>Renewable and Low Carbon Energy</b></p> <p><b>Some support with strong concerns</b></p>
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<p><b>Policy Env 5</b></p>	<p>*****</p> <p><b>Landscape character.</b> We regret very much the downplaying of the role of the River Test, its tributaries and the landscape which it has created in this list.</p> <p>*****</p>
<p><b>Policy ENV6 Page 172</b></p>	<p><b>Tranquillity and Dark Sky Nights</b> <b>Policy ENV6 Lighting - Some support and strongly object</b> CPRE Hampshire support this policy as it relates to the AONB but strongly object that this policy only relates to the dark skies within the setting of the North Wessex AONB and believe it should apply to all rural areas within the Borough.</p> <p>.....</p>
<p><b>Ecology and Biodiversity Page 174</b></p>	<p>CPRE Hampshire are very disappointed to the lack of reference to Natural Capital and Ecosystem Services within the draft Local Plan, we would only find one reference to this in para 5.220 (page 174). We recognise that the Plan does focus on protecting and enhancing designated sites and biodiversity more generally. We believe that the concept of natural capital and ecosystem services is fundamental to climate change impacts and strongly believe that the concepts of natural capital and ecosystem services should be a fundamental part of the local plan framework as they bring together all the separate elements that the plan references in the environment chapter policies and links to the climate change/net zero aims of the council/local plan.</p> <p>Recognition of the benefits of natural capital and ecosystem services is clear in the NPPF paragraph 180(b), and the concept must be integrated into the local plan.</p> <p>*****</p>
<p><b>Policy B104 Page 182</b></p>	<p><b>Green Infrastructure (page 182) Support and Comment</b> CPRE Hampshire generally support Policy B104. The multi functionality of green &amp; blue spaces is hinted at in the policy and text, however, this could be stronger as CPRE Hampshire consider that the integration of green &amp; blue spaces in new development brings a multitude of benefits. These include enabling access to natural spaces for our communities which have health and wellbeing benefits. Accessing these spaces through active travel ought to be highlighted and prioritised in the policy.</p> <p>Whilst we support the policy stating that “Planning permission will be granted where it can be demonstrated that development incorporates enhancement to existing blue/green infrastructure or new provision” CPRE Hampshire believe the wording can be strengthened to make this a criterion to be met for planning permission to be given.</p> <p>Suggested alternative wording to strengthen the policy would be as follows, wording taken from CPRE Hampshire model policy on this topic available on our website ;</p>

*Development proposals will only be permitted where they demonstrate that they:*  
*a) Maintain or enhance the integrity, quality, connectivity and multi-functionality of the existing blue and green infrastructure network and individual sites;*  
*b) Provide new green, and where appropriate, blue infrastructure, or improvements to existing green and blue assets and linkages, which are integrated into the development design, which meets the needs of communities both within and beyond the site's boundaries.*

*2. Blue and Green infrastructure proposals must be designed to;*  
*a) Strengthen connectivity and resilience of ecological networks;*  
*b) Incorporate measures that are appropriate to the type and context of the development proposal as part of an overall landscape design;*  
*c) Maximise opportunities to mitigate, adapt and improve resilience to climate change;*  
*d) Maximise opportunities for cycling and walking, including multi-user routes and, where possible, facilitate circular routes; and*  
*e) Support health and wellbeing.*

*3. Development proposals that may harm the existing Blue or Green Infrastructure network must incorporate measures that sufficiently mitigate or offset their effects.*

*4. Where appropriate, the Authority will seek to secure, via planning condition or legal agreement, provision for the future management and/or maintenance of Blue / Green Infrastructure.*

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#### **Safeguarding Views**

CPRE Hampshire are disappointed that there is no policy referring to safeguarding views. There is a reference to views in paragraph 5.324 (page195) as part of the text relating to Policy DES2 Design Details and Considerations (page 197) but the policy itself does not include the importance of views.

Views are very much part of enjoyment of the landscape. Development needs to avoid significant impacts on important views or landmarks.

The District Landscape Character Assessment, Village Design Statements, Conservation Area Character Appraisals, Conservation Area Management Plans, Local Landscape Character Assessments, Parish Plans and Neighbourhood Development Plans may provide evidence on views and should inform development proposals.

CPRE Hampshire suggests the inclusion of a policy for safeguarding views , the wording below is taken from our model policy on this topic available on our website

*1. Development proposals will only be permitted where they preserve the visual integrity, identity and scenic quality of the District by conserving and enhancing key views and views of key landmarks*





<b>Appendix 3</b> <b>Page 251</b>	<p>CPRE Hampshire are surprised and disappointed that there is no specific policy within the Local Plan on the rural economy, given that the plan acknowledges the specific role that the rural based economy plays in Test Valley and that rural areas account for about 19% of employment.</p> <p>*****</p> <p><b>Site selection Utilities p251</b>  <b>See comments on policy CL4</b>  <b>Policy Com1 infrastructure should make specific mention of water resources and water waste infrastructure</b></p> <p>A stronger oversight of the provision of water and waste water provision is necessary.  <i>Proposals will need to demonstrate that there is adequate water and wastewater capacity to serve the development. Engagement with the relevant water companies will be required.</i></p> <p>Add :</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Provision must have been secured in detail from the water companies before the development is given permission and permission shall depend on it being adequate in the long term. ( see amendment to CL4)</p> <p>• <i>The Water Cycle Study provides evidence on where infrastructure requirements will be needed. This needs to be considered to ensure sufficient capacity is provided.</i></p> <p>The conclusions garnered from the Water Study should be summarised and included in the Appendices of the DLP. The brief mention of a related doc which is not included is not helpful.</p>
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## What happens next?

All valid responses received within the consultation period will be acknowledged and you will be given a reference number. Please quote this reference number when contacting the Council about the Local Plan 2040. If you have an agent acting on your behalf, correspondence will be sent directly to your agent.

All responses received will be taken into account as part of the preparation of the Local Plan 2040.