

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [Planning Policy](#)  
**Subject:** Valley Borough Draft Local Plan 2040 (Velmore Farm, off Templars Way)  
**Date:** 08 February 2024 08:57:50

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I am writing to express my opposition to the proposed development plan outlined in the Test Valley Borough Draft Local Plan 2040, specifically concerning the development of 1,070 houses and an employment site at Velmore Farm, off Templars Way in the Parish of Chilworth. My concerns are based on the following grounds.

**Traffic Congestion and Infrastructure Strain:** The increase of a large number of vehicles into the local road network is expected to drastically increase traffic congestion, particularly during peak commuting hours. This exacerbation of traffic congestion will not only result in longer travel times for residents but also contribute to heightened levels of air pollution and noise. The cumulative effect of these factors can significantly deteriorate the quality of life for the local community and negatively impact the environment. Our local infrastructure, including roads, and public transport services, is currently designed to accommodate a certain capacity of use. The sudden increase in vehicle numbers will strain these systems beyond their intended limits, potentially leading to accelerated wear and tear, and necessitating costly upgrades or repairs. This strain could manifest in more frequent road damage, reduced efficiency of public transport due to increased road traffic, and longer response times for emergency services navigating congested roads. With the increase in vehicles, the risk of traffic accidents and pedestrian safety concerns also escalates. Heavier traffic can make it more challenging for pedestrians to navigate crossings and for children to travel safely to and from school. The safety of cyclists could also be compromised, as more vehicles on the road mean less space and greater risk for those using alternative modes of transportation. The anticipated traffic congestion will likely extend the daily commutes of residents, affecting their work-life balance and overall well-being. Increased travel time means less time available for family, leisure activities, and rest, contributing to heightened stress levels and reducing the overall quality of life for the community members. The projected traffic increase could impede access to emergency services, with ambulances finding it more challenging to navigate through congested streets. This delay could have critical consequences in emergency situations. Furthermore, the accessibility of essential services, such as grocery stores, schools, and healthcare facilities, could be adversely affected, complicating daily routines and access to necessary services. This also includes concerns over traffic congestion on Templars Way and the surrounding areas, which are likely to see a substantial increase in vehicle movements, exacerbating existing congestion issues and putting a strain on local roads.

**Healthcare Services Pressure:** With a significant increase in patients, one of the most immediate impacts would be the increase of waiting times for GP appointments, dental services, and even urgent care. Longer waiting times can lead to delayed diagnoses and treatment, potentially exacerbating health issues that could have been managed more effectively if addressed promptly. Healthcare facilities have a

finite amount of resources, including medical staff, equipment, and space. An abrupt rise in the patient base will strain these resources, making it challenging to provide timely and quality care. This strain will also lead to staff burnout, further compromising the quality of healthcare provided to both existing and new residents. The increase in demand for healthcare services will require residents to travel farther to access care, especially if local services are overwhelmed or unable to accept new patients. This challenge is particularly concerning for vulnerable populations, including the elderly, disabled, and those without reliable transportation, potentially leading to untreated health conditions and decreased overall health and well-being. Preventative healthcare services and the management of chronic conditions will suffer due to the increased patient load. These services are crucial for maintaining public health and preventing the escalation of treatable conditions into serious health crises. A decrease in the availability and accessibility of these services could lead to a deterioration in community health standards over time.

Environmental and Flooding Concerns: Valley Park's susceptibility to flooding is exacerbated by the presence of clay soil, which impedes water absorption and drainage. The proposed development, involving substantial construction and land alteration, risks further reducing the permeability of the soil. This reduction in natural drainage capacity will lead to more frequent and severe flooding events, endangering properties and lives. Additionally, the increase in impermeable surfaces, such as roads and pavements, will escalate runoff volume, placing further strain on existing drainage systems and potentially overwhelming them during heavy rainfall. Green spaces play a vital role in flood mitigation by absorbing rainfall and facilitating groundwater recharge. The proposed development threatens to eliminate these natural sponges, thereby intensifying the risk of flooding. Beyond flood mitigation, green spaces contribute to carbon sequestration, air quality improvement, and provide essential habitats for wildlife. Their loss would not only exacerbate environmental issues like flooding and climate change but also diminish biodiversity and the availability of natural recreational areas for the community. The development stands to disrupt local ecosystems, threatening the habitats of various species and leading to potential declines in biodiversity. This biodiversity is crucial for ecosystem resilience, pollination of plants, pest control, and maintaining the balance of natural cycles. The loss of habitats will lead to the displacement or extinction of local flora and fauna, eroding the area's natural heritage and biodiversity richness. Local Gaps are designated areas intended to prevent the merging of settlements, preserving the unique identity and rural character of communities. The proposed development's encroachment into these areas not only threatens the physical local gap but also undermines efforts to conserve landscape character and maintain ecological corridors essential for wildlife movement and biodiversity. Beyond the immediate impacts, the proposed development will set a precedent for further encroachment on natural and semi-natural areas, leading to cumulative environmental degradation. This pattern of development will have far-reaching consequences, diminishing the region's ecological resilience, and reducing its ability to cope with the impacts of climate change. Additionally, The development's proximity to Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) like Hut Wood and The Rough, and its location within the recreational impact zone for the New Forest Special Protection Area (SPA), raises significant environmental concerns. The requirement for appropriate mitigation according to Policy BIO2 underscores the potential negative impact on these

sensitive areas. Moreover, as pointed out parts of the site are at risk of surface water flooding, which will be exacerbated by the development, despite the sequential approach to minimize flood risk. The proposal to amend the local gap between Southampton and Eastleigh to accommodate the development will lead to urban sprawl and diminish the green buffer that currently exists between these communities. The commitment to Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) and mitigation strategies does not fully compensate for the loss of existing natural environments and the ecological networks they support.

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