
Planning Policy and Economic Development
Test Valley Borough Council
Beech Hurst
Weyhill Road
Andover
SP103AJ

February 29th, 2024

Dear Sir/Madam,

**Re: Test Valley Borough Council Draft Local Plan 2040.
Southern Area Policy 6 (SA6). Land at Velmore Farm.**

Having read the relevant sections of this plan and having attended the exhibition at Valley Park Community Centre we are now submitting comments on your proposals.

We have concerns about both what is included in the draft proposal and what is not included. Firstly, regarding what is discussed:

- The proposed development sites within southern Test Valley are all in areas which have undergone significant development in recent years. There is no mention of appropriate development in more rural areas, which are also likely to have housing needs. Why are our more suburban areas being further adversely affected?
- Given that the current number of dwellings in the Valley Park Parish Council area is around 3000, this proposed development would result in at least a 33% expansion in the community. How can this be in the best interest of the existing community? This seems particularly the case when you propose the only community facility required to give planning permission is a primary school (SA6 a)). Paragraphs 4.188 and 4.189 refer only to potential for provision of a community hub and local centre, or the even more vague, 'improve existing facilities'. Therefore, this could be a large development with minimal facilities of its own, placing additional strain on our existing facilities (eg. community centre, leisure centre).
- Allowing this development requires a change in the current Local Gap. Given that the built areas in the proposed development are said to be focused on the middle, north and northeast of the site (4.190) this would significantly change the look of the area and create a continuous built- up environment from the 'Asda roundabout' to Castle Lane. It would also reduce the gap between Valley Park and North Baddesley.
- Vehicular access to the site is only proposed from the Templars Way/School Lane roundabout. This will have an adverse impact on the existing significant traffic problems in this area. Road signs on Castle Lane already warn of queues and these will only get worse. Furthermore, it does not seem sensible or desirable to have only 1 access point to such a large development, particularly when you are proposing mixed use, which could involve commercial vehicles requiring access. A single access

point would only add to the impression of a development simply 'stuck on' to the existing community without thought to integration.

- 4.188 mentions the possibility of 1.5 hectares of land for 'employment use'. This is on land adjacent to Hampshire Corporate Park and School Lane Industrial Estates. A cursory search today revealed many units in these existing developments available for sale or rent. How can additional units for employment be justified?
- 4.199 mentions small areas at risk of surface water flooding along the western boundary and southwestern area. SA6i) mentions that a sequential approach will direct development to areas at lowest risk of flooding. Given the local geology (ie mainly clay soil) and climate change , it is a serious concern that building is being considered on this site. Building is likely to make surface water flooding worse.

We appreciate that this document is a high- level description of your proposals but nevertheless think that there are some important omissions which could be interpreted as a lack of local knowledge and/or lack of concern for local issues:

- 4.189 makes no mention of healthcare facilities, even though you must be aware of current concerns over access to such facilities. Having talked to your representatives at the exhibition, we learnt that our local Integrated Care Board indicated it would want funding to expand existing facilities, rather than taking on an additional site. This seems too uncertain to provide reassurance to the existing community (which on average is ageing) that the new community (which on average will be younger with young children) will not overwhelm already inadequate access to local primary care services (knowing that we are heaviest users of this service at the beginning and end of our lives).
- There is no mention of active leisure facilities in this new development.
- 4.199 mentions flooding risk in parts of the site but makes no mention of the significant longstanding flooding problems at the roundabout between Templars Way and School Lane, and on School Lane itself. The proposed development may risk this getting worse. In addition, the vehicular access to the site is proposed at the very point where flooding occurs.
- We are concerned that no details are given on mitigating the various problems you have identified (4.1950-4.197, 4.198., 4.200). We must hope that an appropriate level of detail is included in subsequent consultations.

Given that you propose to impose a huge expansion on the Valley Park and Knightwood Park community we feel it is important that you acknowledge what makes this area a popular place in which to live and ensure you develop any new site to the same high standards, integrate it fully into the existing community, but without overburdening the latter. Having lived in this area for more than 20 years we feel the following points would be important to adhere to.

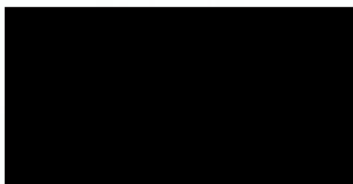
- Keeping the housing density in the new development the same as in the local area.
- The incorporation of numerous green areas within the development (not just at the southwestern corner as currently illustrated) thus breaking up the built areas.
- Green areas at the edge of the development to screen it from main roads.

- Linking green areas to benefit wildlife.
- Wide footpaths/cycle ways with planting in verges
- Flood mitigation in a beneficial way including balancing ponds and wetland areas.
- High quality maintenance and development of the green spaces (eg as Boyce Jeffrey and his team provide for our local woodland)
- High quality local services specifically for the new development which would in turn encourage a local community spirit.
- Public transport, perhaps this would be an opportunity to enhance the existing limited service.

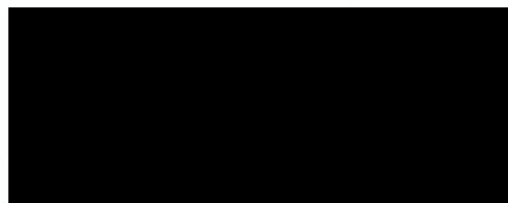
In summary, our overriding concern is that the proposed development is of too large a scale to be successfully integrated into the existing environment and its associated community. The proposal does not include sufficient detail to address our other specific concerns regarding the worsening of existing traffic congestion, the worsening of the current local flooding problems and the overburdening of existing services, particularly access to primary care.

We look forward to receiving your response.

Yours faithfully,



Dr Alison Grove



Mr Mark Coupar