

10TH March 2024

OBJECTIONS TO THE DRAFT LOCAL PLAN 2040

Dear TVBC members,

Thank you for the opportunity to see and comment on your draft plans with the public consultation. The public exhibition at the Valley Park Community Centre was useful and informative as a starting point. I should like to see greater detail and site plans as the planning process progresses, please. (Thank you.)

INTRODUCTION: After careful consideration of the facts, my husband's and my own, and other residents' daily living experiences, and from living within Harvest Road, Knightwood, for some 25 years I have the following comments and views to contribute.

We have considered all known factors, including the need for affordable housing and the home building targets set for councils by the government.

MY HUSBAND AND I OBJECT TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE VELMORE FARMLAND AND ANY LAND ADJACENT TO VALLEY PARK/KNIGHTWOOD, WHETHER FOR RESIDENTIAL OR COMMERCIAL PURPOSES for the foreseeable future for multiple practical daily living reasons.

We note that the intention is to build 1070 residential dwellings and *business/*storage units. [* These units were denied by the TVBC member I and other residents spoke with at the exhibition, but as we had already noted, do appear in the voluminous planning document.] The current plans are not detailed enough to show where within the site these commercial and industrial units would be located.

We note that there is no intention or obligation to provide an additional, staffed and equipped GP medical practice and yet the current ones cannot cope with the existing population and our needs, with both practices having previously taken on patients from Eastleigh and Chandlers Ford when those medical practices closed and that the Knightwood surgery recently closed because the North Baddesley Practice can no longer cope nor staff that site. This means patients have to travel to North Baddesley, which if you are reliant on public transport and live at Knightwood, as I do, is virtually impossible with the bus cutbacks for timed appointments, tests, and urgent medical care.

We appreciate that there is a need and a government requirement to build more homes within Hampshire and the Test Valley. However, Velmore Farm is a disproportionate, unfair number and distribution compared to the rest of Test Valley, as noted by the Parish Council in their objections. We are already over developed.

Our main reasons for objecting are, but not confined to:

- Valley Park and Knightwood do not have the infrastructure, public transport, medical and dental services, shops, drainage, etc... to cope now! We are already over-developed. We have an aging population and a growing number of individuals of all ages with disabilities, and needs above and beyond the current reduced support, activities, care and transport available. The Council are looking to make further cutbacks, including to community transport, bus passes, etc... I am one of those residents directly affected with multiple physical disabilities.
- We note that there is no intention or legal planning obligation to provide additional shops, community facilities, a staffed, equipped, GP medical practice, nor improved bus services. The existing ones cannot cope now with our needs! There is just the vague "hope" expressed by A TVBC representative, that a commercial business may see one or some of these needs as a lucrative business opportunity after the site has been developed!
- My husband and I already have direct experience, in my case several times in Berkshire and in Hampshire, that even when promised as part of planning approval these facilities and services do not materialize.

- In the case of developers' part funding bus services here for an initial number of years as part of the planning agreement, the Council then started withdrawing funding and the bus company reduced the service with each timetable change. This has had the direct result that residents such as myself who had an excellent service in all directions on moving into the area, have been unable to continue their employment, to get to and from medical appointments, to visit friends and relatives, to reach the trains and other bus services, to lead a full life outside our homes in the surrounding communities, towns, villages and countryside.
- **Knightwood, in particular has become very cut off for many of its' residents with the ongoing erosion of the bus services over the past 20 plus years. I am registered disabled. It is too far to walk to Chandlers Ford; to the railway station; to ASDA to pick up the BlueStar 1 bus for Southampton and Winchester; to the Bluestar 5 bus stops in Templars Way for Romsey and Eastleigh.**
- I had to give up volunteering in Eastleigh helping Eastleigh residents with mental health and physical problems because Eastleigh Borough would not provide their Dial a Ride transport due to my Harvest Road address coming under Test Valley. - Even though it runs just a few roads away! More recently, with the further 46/461 bus cutbacks and my physical health limitations I have had to cease my intermittent volunteering in Winchester too which I loved, helped a lot of people, and gave me a sense of purpose.

There are woefully inadequate community transport services and Dial-a-Ride provision for Test Valley residents within Knightwood. With cutbacks this will just get worse. One service on a Friday morning for about an hour to 1 hour 20 minutes shopping in Romsey at £6 a journey is not workable for me, and costs more than the bus fare... Given HCC's intention to withdraw all non-statutory transport funding and services, how are you going to provide services for a much larger community?

- **Any more building in the area will just increase the existing problems and create additional drains on our struggling resources.**
- Much of the farmland at Velmore Farm is higher than that of Valley Park and Knightwood, with runoff contributing to the **habitual flooding** within the area. Especially along the Templars Way roundabout and School Lane leading to the Industrial Estate. It is an issue for pedestrians, motorists and residential properties that has plagued us for decades and no one has yet been able to remedy it. It is difficult to see how therefore, how the ground works for a massive housing site will be able to correct the existing issues eliminating future flooding. We envisage that there will be a greater need for the water company to divert sewage and ground water into rivers such as the River Itchen, thereby exacerbating the pollution problems highlighted on our news programmes. - So damaging for humans, animals and nature.

The **mixture of heavy clay soils** adds to the problems not just there but extending around Knightwood too. (Even though balancing ponds were especially built to help offset the concreting over/hard landscaping with the development of Knightwood. With climate change and the overexpansion of this area we are experiencing worsening problems.)

Even though many of us have had our gardens landscaped to improve drainage we still live with soggy, boggy gardens and within our road we have been recategorized in the **highest flood risk zone!** With the climate changes we are already experiencing worsening conditions. And more plants are dying as a result. Surely, this carries through to our local wildlife, flora and fauna too???

- I see less deer, hedgehogs, other small mammals, birds (and types of birds) now than even 5-10 years ago. **As the housing has increased and with it the volume of cars on our roads, our local nature has suffered.** The **pollution** from the heavy number of vehicles on our roads is, I believe, impacting the health of our communities (with greater allergies and cancers for just two examples) as well as our wildlife and vegetation. Nationally and locally, we are supposed to be providing more sustainable, healthier public transport networks so that people do not need to be so dependent on their cars and will actually want to use buses!!! And yet, with all the bus cutbacks and inability to connect with our railway station, Chandlers Ford Centre, and local towns and villages we are failing.

We cannot get to our hospitals and clinics because the bus services that I was repeatedly assured had to be maintained (a legal requirement I was told by the Council and bus operators) have been removed. I do not drive, I am registered disabled with HCC with chronic, irreversible, ongoing mobility, pain and fatigue problems. When we moved here, we had an excellent network of frequent buses in all directions and a great Saturday service too. All this has been eroded, year on year.

We should not feel forced to move from the area we chose to settle in after thorough research and consideration. Life is hard enough now without the added burden that an additional large housing development will place on the already inadequate over stretched resources. The few remaining buses will be overcrowded by the time they reach any stops accessible to me.

I have been waiting some 20-25 years for a bus shelter, with seating for Harvest Road, and although agreed last year by the Parish Council, I am still waiting for it to be installed! When something as basic and essential as this is so difficult to achieve in spite of repeated campaigning, how are you going to provide for our existing and the new community given the County wide cutbacks proposed???

- **Development will adversely impact our diminishing green spaces for recreation, wildlife and conservation.** These have become even more important to so many of us as a result of the pandemic and the increased awareness of mental health and wellbeing as well as the importance of gentle physical exercise. There are an enormous number of dog walkers around here already who relish the country walks. Our award-winning green spaces and ancient woodland are and should remain protected. Has the Velmore Farm area been independently surveyed for protected species of plants and animals? What are the findings please?
- **The site of the Roman Road and land surrounding it needs surveying and potentially protecting.** Has an archeological survey been arranged? We would like to know the findings and recommendations please.
- **The roads cannot cope with the existing volume of traffic; the whole of Castle Lane is an accident hot spot; the wear and tear on them is bad and will only be worsened by 10 years of building and construction vehicles being used to access the new site.** There are increasingly dangerous potholes, road services AND PAVEMENTS needing repair and releveling for safety reasons throughout our local communities and countryside. And yet the councils are cutting back due to budgetary constraints. I, personally have known residents who have ended up in A&E due to injuries directly due to uneven, unsafe roads and pavements. As a disabled person I have to be extra vigilant myself, which is exhausting and often frightening. What are you going to do to remedy this and moving forward, in the longer term? Global warming seems to be speeding up the breaking down of our surfaces.
- It seems to me that **patch repairs are only a short-term sticking plaster.** Many roads and pavements need proper resurfacing with the top coat of fine asphalt rolling in for longevity and safety. If the government force the councils to build more homes they need to provide the funding, etc. to help both the existing and new roads and pavements to be maintained properly and safely.
- The **pilons within the area** will, we understand need to be removed and the electricity run under the ground. We understand this is a specialized, costly process and surely it may compromise the archeological remains/road?

CONCLUSION: Please record and include our objections and the reasons for doing so. Please keep us updated on all developments. We look forward to receiving answers to our questions in due course. Thank you for reading our reply.

****PLEASE WILL YOU CONFIRM THAT YOU HAVE RECEIVED THIS LETTER. THANK YOU. I AM RESPONDING ON BEHALF OF MY HUSBAND TOO.****

Kind regards,

[REDACTED]

MRS SUSAN ANNE DORSETT

AND

[REDACTED]

MR COLIN STEVEN DORSETT

(HUSBAND)

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