

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Planning Policy](#)
Subject: Test Valley Borough Draft Local Plan 2040
Date: 14 March 2024 14:48:53

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Development of Velmore Farm

I am appalled/disappointed with the announcement of the “draft local plan 2040” and the decision to place 1070 homes on Velmore Farm, a Green space/Local gap.

Despite 30+ years of assurances/promises from the Borough Council that green belt gaps of Velmore Farm and Hogtrough Wood would remain to protect wildlife. Yet again broken promises see this valuable green space destroyed. Houses are required but there are plenty of brownfield sites/ industrial areas to be used for housing not wild areas.

GreenSpace/Biodiversity

The impact on wildlife and the residents of Valley Park/ Knightwood will be immense and completely destructive to RED listed birdlife.

This country is being tasked with urgently turning back climate change and reversing the unprecedented decline in the biodiversity of our wildlife. The UK ranks in the bottom of 10% EU countries on biodiversity and this proposal will cause further decline in already low number of butterflies/insects/bird populations

Red listed birdlife

Velmore Farm has set aside areas adjacent to Templars Way which are currently home to 2 pairs of Skylarks (UK Red listed) which need this farmland and set aside area.

Relocating the green area will be a total pretence as increased footfall and dogs off lead will see these birds disappear!

The other Red listed birds that this development will have a major impact on include the following:

Swallow (breeding), Greenfinch, Swift, House Martin, House Sparrow. (Meadow pipit-Amber listed), Stonechat.

Over the past 30+ years I have been fortunate to see a large number of unusual birds over Velmore Farm and these include: Osprey (on pylon eating a fish), Red Kite, Buzzard (breeding and feeding on farm), Hobby (feeding on insects in summer), Lapwing, huge numbers of Corvids including daily sightings of Raven, Crossbill, Goshawk, Woodcock (breeding in adjacent Hutwood but utilise Velmore Farm), Of immense interest is the fact that Peregrine falcons visit the pylons weekly throughout the year and during the summer they are the homes to 1 or 2 juvenile Peregrines which sit on the pylons waiting for the parents to bring back prey to them. The proposal will mean the loss of all of these birds!!

Roe deer, Muntjac deer, mice, voles and moles also use this farm as breeding site and feeding station. In addition Grass snakes and slow worms have been seen on the set aside area.

The loss of this green space will have a detrimental effect on our already at risk population of Bees, Butterflies and other insects. Again the local Government are being required to set aside green space and ensure the reversal of the loss of these vitally important pollinators. This Proposal will have a MAJOR negative impact on pollinators.

Over the past 30 years I have been part of the Friends of the Park (in association with Test Valley Borough Countryside Rangers) in order to maintain local spaces, tree planting and encourage the increase in biodiversity. I have also been part of the Citizen Science program in Valley Park, monitoring Butterfly counts, Flower counts and recording the birdlife in the same area. Over the past 10 years there has been a serious decline in the populations of wildlife which due to the hard work of volunteers and rangers looks to be reversing in some species. However the loss of this green gap/space will have further detrimental effects on those species that use the area for breeding and as important, utilise the fields for feeding.

Roman Road

A Roman road goes across Velmore Farm and is the last remnant of an unbuilt road that has not been covered by housing or industrial buildings in the Chilworth/Valley Park area.

In 2023 Test Valley BC planted 6 orchard trees on a "Roman Road" along with other orchard planting in the area of Valley Park.

Test Valley BC were immediately forced to remove these trees from the site as it breached national policy on building/planting on known sites of Roman roads.

Can I ask how acceptable it is to plan for the build of 1070 houses on a historical site without the government body responsible vetoing this application!

Flooding of Valley Park and local roads

In recent years climate change has seen a dramatic increase in rainfall within this area. Flooding on Templars Way/School Lane is now a weekly occurrence from November to April. The consequence on traffic is chaotic with large delays in travel time.

Velmore Farm currently acts as a sponge, soaking up large volumes of rain water on clay sodding green space. Removing the grass/hedges/ trees will remove this "sponge" and markedly increase the amount of flooding on local highways. Significant investment will be required to reverse this situation.

Placing housing will have a double impact in that the new houses and gardens will be constantly underwater in winter.

Road traffic

An additional 2000+ vehicles will have a major impact at peak times and when incidents occur on the M27/M3. At peak times it currently takes 15 minutes to travel from School lane roundabout to Montgomery Way (approx 1000 metres). This additional traffic in conjunction with building works/traffic associated with the housing and highway alterations will seriously impact on traffic queues and will push traffic through our estate as cars use it as a "rat run" to Bournemouth Road. Severely impacting on the safety of

pedestrians and children!

Local Health Services, Doctors and Dentists, Care homes

An additional 2000+ patients for the local Health Services will break the system. The NHS is currently under severe pressure with backlogs, increased patient numbers and loss of staff. Trying to get a Doctors appointment at a surgery is very difficult due to demand and the ability to register with a Dentist in Chandlers Ford is virtually impossible. It is vitally important that these important services are not over run and placed in an even worse scenario than currently being seen

Employment site

There are already large numbers of vacant industrial sites in the surrounding area which need to be utilised. Given the current trend in people working from home only 30% of Office space in the Chandlers Ford area are currently being utilised. It is vitally important that these buildings and office space are targeted for new employment opportunities before “an employment area” is considered to be of prime importance.

Please carefully consider this application for development of Velmore Farm and the severe detrimental impact it will have on the environment, wildlife and other issues highlighted in this response to Test Valley Borough Draft Local Plan 2040.

Yours Sincerely
Dr Shaun Webb

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