

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 6th February to noon on Tuesday 2nd 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

Once the form has been completed, please send to planningpolicy@testvalley.gov.uk below by **noon on Tuesday 2nd 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

Planning Policy and Economic Development Service
Test Valley Borough Council
Beech Hurst
Weyhill Road
Andover
SP10 3AJ

Tel: 01264 368000

Website: www.testvalley.gov.uk/localplan2040

Email: planningpolicy@testvalley.gov.uk

Part A: Your Details

Please fill in all boxes marked with an *

Title* Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms/Dr/Other (please state)	Mrs	First Name*	Sarah
Surname*	Hains		
Organisation* (If responding on behalf of an organisation)	Nova Planning Ltd		

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:

On behalf of Metis Homes Ltd

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.

General
Please see enclosed representations.

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

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.

Test Valley Borough Council
Draft Local Plan 2040
Regulation 18 Stage 2 (2024)

Written representations prepared on behalf of Metis Homes Limited
March 2024



[Redacted text]



[Redacted text]
[Redacted text]

1. Introduction

- 1.1 These written representations have been prepared by Nova Planning Limited on behalf of Metis Homes Limited (Metis) in response to the Test Valley Borough Council (TVBC) Local Plan Draft for Regulation 18 Part 2 Consultation (Draft Local Plan/DLP). The comments set out in these representations relate to the publication of the Draft Local Plan and its supporting evidence base.
- 1.2 Metis is promoting land South of Romsey Allotments, Southampton Road, Romsey (the Site) for approximately 150 dwellings. The Site is part of a wider allocation for approximately 1,300 dwellings together with a range of facilities for a new neighbourhood at Whitenap, Romsey. Policy COM3 of the adopted Test Valley Local Plan 2011-2029 sets out the details of the allocation.
- 1.3 An outline planning application has been submitted for land to the east of the Site by The Ashfield Partnership, with the following description of development:

Up to 1,100 dwellings including affordable homes with associated open space, roads, parking, service infrastructure, local food production and landscaping. Employment areas (commercial, business and service), visitor accommodation, local community uses, community hall, medical consulting rooms, 1.5 form entry primary school, early years/nursery provision, conversion and/or new build at Whitenap Barns to provide commercial, business, service and local community uses with associated infrastructure. Creation of two new vehicular access points to Luzborough Lane (A27), pedestrian and cycle connection to St Barbe Close, and improvement of existing Whitenap Lane access. Provision of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG), provision of Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SuDs). All matters other than access to be reserved.

- 1.4 This application (reference 22/01213/OUTS) is currently under consideration. However, it is clear that the proposal does not provide the full quantum of development set out in Policy COM3. It is in this context that Metis are progressing proposals for approximately 150 dwellings on land to the west of the railway line forming part of COM3.
- 1.5 The Site was the subject of a pre-application advice request to TVBC in May 2023. A separate highways pre-application enquiry was submitted to Hampshire County Council (HCC) at the same time. Responses were received from both TVBC and HCC and these continue to inform on-going technical work as the proposals progress. The pre-application responses received confirm that TVBC and HCC Officers accept the principle of residential development on the Site, served by a vehicular and pedestrian/cycle access(es) to the A27 Southampton Road. Subsequently, an interim update was submitted to officers on 31 January 2024 with additional information regarding surface water drainage and highway matters. A second pre-application enquiry will be submitted in the spring/summer of 2024, detailing how the technical matters are being addressed. Public consultation with local residents and other stakeholders will also be completed in the spring/summer of 2024.

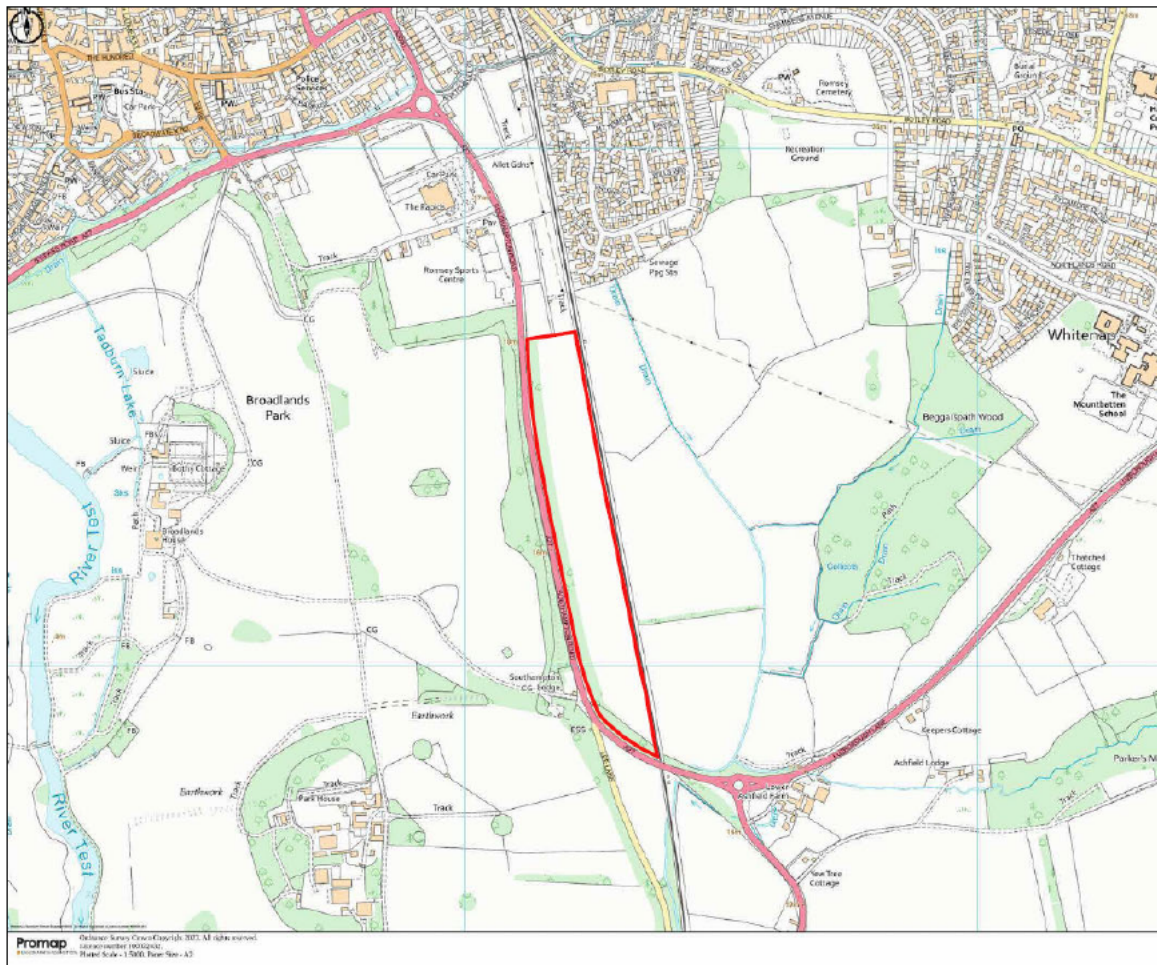


Figure 1 – Site Location

2. Draft Local Plan: Plan Period

The Council's Local Development Scheme states that the Council expect to adopt the Local Plan in Q2 of 2026. This means that on adoption the plan will cover less than 15 years. This is inconsistent with paragraph 22 of the NPPF which requires plans to look ahead for a minimum of 15 years from adoption. The Council should therefore extend the plan period by a year to ensure that on adoption, the plan period is consistent with the requirements of national policy.

3. Draft Local Plan: Chapter 3 - Spatial Strategy

- 3.1 Metis support the principle of seeking to maximise opportunities to redevelop brownfield (previously developed) land, as set out at Paragraph 3.12 of the Draft Local Plan and in the Sustainable Spatial Strategy. This approach is consistent with national planning policy and is therefore justified and sound. Metis also support the Council's recognition at Paragraph 3.12 of the DLP, that it is also necessary to allocate some greenfield land for development. Amongst other things, this reflects the fact that brownfield sites are often more constrained in terms of having higher land use values, increased costs associated with site clearance and decontamination, which in turn affects their deliverability and viability including the delivery of affordable housing and biodiversity net gain.
- 3.2 Metis support the strategy set out at Paragraph 3.14 of the DLP, which whilst promoting a wider distribution of development than in the Local Plan 2016, focuses on supporting an appropriate level of development at the largest range of sustainable settlements where there are key facilities. This includes Romsey as a Tier 1 settlement.
- 3.3 The Draft Local Plan does not bring forward Policy COM3 as an allocation. Instead the Draft Policies Map for Southern Test Valley shows the Site and wider Whitenap allocation incorporated within the settlement boundary where Policy SS1 applies. Spatial Strategy Policy SS1 confirms that,

There is a presumption in favour of sustainable development within the settlement boundaries identified in Settlement Tiers 1 – 3 provided that development is in accordance with relevant policies in the Development Plan. Settlement boundaries are identified on the Policies Map or within made Neighbourhood Plans.

- 3.4 Romsey is a Tier 1 settlement where strategic allocations are considered an appropriate scale of development under Policy SS1. The designation of Romsey as a Tier 1 settlement is supported. Metis also support the modification to the settlement boundary to include the Site and wider Whitenap allocation and the provisions of Policy SS1 which confirms the presumption in favour of sustainable development, including strategic allocations, within the settlement boundaries of Tier 1 settlements.

3.5 Notwithstanding this, in the event that planning permission has not been granted prior to the publication of the Regulation 19 Draft Local Plan, it is considered that the provisions of Policy COM3 should be carried forward into the Draft Local Plan as a Strategic Housing Site Allocation for Southern Test Valley. This would provide certainty in terms of developer requirements, setting the parameters for development and ensuring that appropriate infrastructure is delivered alongside new homes.

3.6 Table 5 of the Housing Implementation Strategy (published February 2024) confirms that land at Whitenap is still expected to deliver 1,300 dwellings under Policy COM3. This means that the current planning application will under-deliver 200 homes against this expected supply from existing allocations. The proposed residential development of the Site will help to address this.

Having regard to this, in the event that Policy COM3 is carried forward into the Draft Local Plan, Metis propose two additional requirements (vi and vii) to Policy COM3 Part f) as shown below. In addition, as the Site is separated by the railway line, it should be made clear which access is intended to serve which part of the Site as follows:

f) access to development shall be provided as follows:

Development east of the railway line:

- i) vehicular access to the A27/ A3057 junction (Ashfield Roundabout);
- ii) vehicular access to a new junction to the east of Ashfield Roundabout
- iii) vehicular access to Whitenap Lane to serve development at Whitenap Barns;
- iv) pedestrian/cycle links to Botley Road, Whitenap Lane, Tadburn Road and the A27/ A3057 via a new bridge over the railway line;
- v) pedestrian/cycle route within the proposed landscaping adjoining the A27 to Whitenap Lane;

Development west of railway line:

- vi) vehicular access to A27; and
- vii) pedestrian/cycle links at northern and southern end of A27.

3.7 Metis would also support amendments to Map A which accompanies Policy COM3 to include these new pedestrian, cycle and vehicle accesses. In addition, Map A currently shows the Site, indicatively, as open space. In order to facilitate the delivery of up to 200 homes to address the shortfall set out at paragraph 3.6 of the representations, this should be allocated for residential development, as shown in Figure 2 below. The removal of the Open Space designation (purple triangle) from Map A is proposed to reflect on-going discussions with officers who have indicated their support for such an amendment.

3.8 Policy LE3 of the adopted Local Plan allocates approximately 6 hectares of land at Whitenap for employment (Class B1 and B2) to complement the new neighbourhood. The policy suggests that the employment land will be located on the southern part of the site. The current planning application for Whitenap proposes just under 3 hectares of employment land.

3.9 Table 3.5 of the Draft Local Plan shows a residual surplus supply of B1a/B1b and B1c/B2 for Southern Test Valley between 2020 and 2040. On the basis that the Draft Local Plan identifies a surplus, it is proposed that Policy LE3 should be amended to reflect the current planning application and carried forward into the Draft Local Plan. This should be supported by corresponding changes to Map A so that the grey hatching is extended over the western part of the allocation (land South of Romsey Allotments).

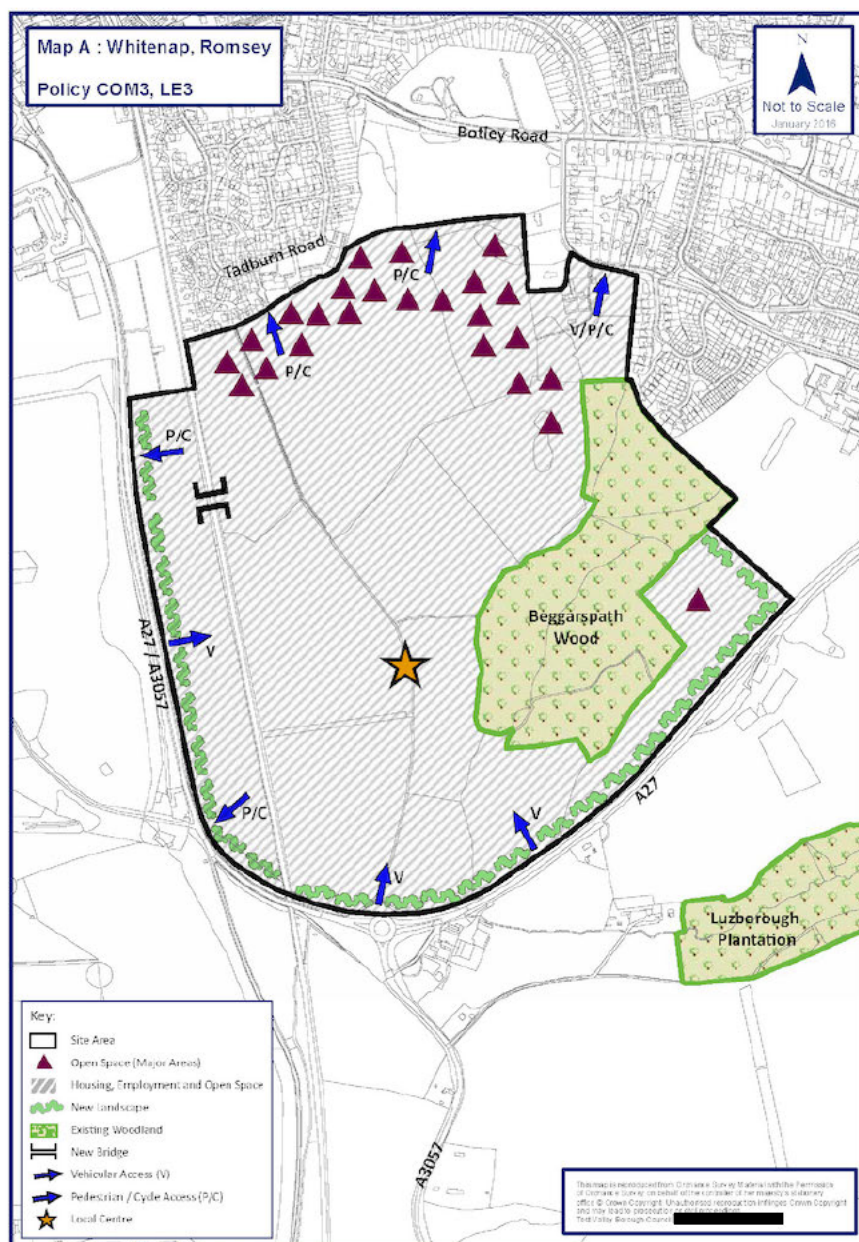


Figure 2 – Proposed Changes to Proposals Map A

4. Draft Local Plan: Chapter 5 - Theme Based Policies

Draft Policy BIO3 Biodiversity Net Gain

- 4.1 Draft Policy BIO3 reflects the legislative requirement for a 10% biodiversity net gain. However, as set out in the Home Builders Federation (HBF) representations (paragraphs 35 to 37) Metis would welcome amendments to ensure that the policy does not apply to development which is exempt under national legislation, that the Biodiversity Hierarchy is referenced rather than the Mitigation Hierarchy and that sufficient flexibility is incorporated into other policies to ensure that development is not made unviable by non-negotiable policies such as BIO3.

Draft Policy CL3 Sustainable Buildings and Energy Use

- 4.2 Metis support the need to act to reduce carbon emissions, but do not consider that this needs to be achieved through the Local Plan, given that the Future Homes Standard (FHS) is already in place nationally, providing a standard approach to be delivered through the Building Regulations process. Therefore, the inclusion of this draft policy is not justified.
- 4.3 If the Council chooses to go beyond current or future standards, this must be in a way that is consistent with national policy and robustly assesses its consequences, including consistency with the Written Ministerial Statement (WMS) published on 13th December 2023 and ensuring a well-reasoned and robustly costed rationale is provided in support of this approach.
- 4.4 Detailed commentary on this issue is provided in the HBF's written representations to the Draft Local Plan and Metis supports the position set out in paragraphs 18 to 27 of their representations.

Draft Policy CL4 Water Use and Management

- 4.5 Draft Policy CL4 requires that all new homes are designed and built to achieve a water consumption of no more than 100 litres per person per day. Part G of the Building Regulations requires standards of no more than 125 litres, confirming that Councils can impose stricter targets of 110 litres. Furthermore, the WMS dated 19 December 2023 does state that in areas of serious water stress, LPAs are encouraged to work with partners to agree tighter standards. However, it is not clear from the evidence base where the limit of 100 litres per day is derived from and where the justification is to support this lower standard. The draft policy is therefore considered unsound in its current form.
- 4.6 In addition, Metis do not consider that the requirements set out in the policy for applicants to demonstrate sufficient water supply and wastewater services are appropriate, given that it is the responsibility of water companies and other stakeholders to plan for future services. Further commentary on this and the policy as a whole is provided in the HBF representations paragraphs 28 to 34, which Metis support.

Draft Policy HOU1 Affordable Housing

- 4.7 Paragraph 3.15 of the Housing Topic Paper states that the whole Plan Viability Assessment has tested up to 50% affordable housing provision and concludes that a policy approach of 40% should be retained on a 'maximum reasonable proportion basis' taking site specific circumstances into account. However, the wording of the policy, including use of the term "target" means that negotiation is expected when applying the policy. This is explained at supporting paragraph 5.360 where viability is cited as a reason for reduced affordable housing.
- 4.8 The NPPF and PPG both seek to limit the extent to which negotiation is required as a result of local plan policies. As set out in the HBF representations (paragraphs 39 and 40) greater clarity is required to make it clear that a lower level of affordable housing provision is acceptable and not the exception.
- 4.9 In addition, Metis reiterate paragraph 41 of the HBF representations which calls for a site size threshold which is consistent with the definition of major development i.e. 0.5 hectares rather than between 10 and 14 units.

Draft Policy HOU5 Provision of Housing to Meet our Needs

- 4.10 Metis support the comments made at paragraphs 42 and 43 of the HBF representations. These seek an amendment to the policy so that it is not just the needs of newly formed households which should be considered. Metis support the HBF recommendation to amend the wording at part b) to "*a mix of homes by size (including number of bedrooms), type and tenure, which take account of the composition of the current housing stock, identified needs and other appropriate local evidence on needs and the supply of new homes*".

Draft Policy HOU6 Residential Space Standards

- 4.11 This draft policy proposes that the Nationally Described Space Standards will be adopted, however, no evidence is provided (as required by the NPPF and PPG) that these are required. If the Council is to adopt these standards, it will be necessary to provide evidence that they are justified and taken account of in the viability study.

Draft Policy TR3 Parking

- 4.12 As noted in the HBF representations, the policy requires development to be in accordance with standards set out in the Council's adopted parking standards. This is unsound as it seeks to confer the status of a local plan policy on guidance published outside of the plan-making process. The Council can provide guidance in an SPD, but it cannot require development to accord with it. If a specific standard is required, it should be included in the local plan. If not, the policy should be amended to state that development should have regard to the adopted parking standards.

5. Conclusion

- 5.1 In conclusion, Metis support the recognition that whilst the use of previously developed land is encouraged, there is also a need to allocate greenfield sites for development.
- 5.2 The Draft Local Plan proposes that Romsey is designated as a Tier 1 settlement where there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development within the settlement boundary. Given that the principle of development is already established through Policies COM3 and LE3 of the adopted Local Plan, it is proposed that land South of Romsey Allotments and the wider Whitenap allocation should be included within the settlement boundary as part of the Draft Local Plan. Metis supports this modification to the settlement boundary.
- 5.3 In the event that planning permission is not granted prior to the publication of the Regulation 19 Draft Local Plan, Metis suggests that Policies COM3 and LE3 of the adopted Local Plan should be carried forward, albeit amended to reflect the latest proposals for the Site. This should include extending the extent of the residential designation onto the land South of Romsey Allotments, adding reference to the proposed vehicle access and pedestrian/cycle links and amending the employment provision relating to Policy LE3 to reflect the proposals in the Whitenap planning application.
- 5.4 These written representations also set out Metis responses to some of the environmental and development management draft policies, including in relation to energy standards, water efficiency, affordable housing and internal space standards. Where stated, Metis support the representations prepared by the Home Builders Federation in response to this consultation.