

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [Planning Policy](#)  
**Subject:** Comments on the draft Local Plan 2040 Regulation 18 Stage 2  
**Date:** 31 March 2024 22:46:55

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Re: Test Valley Borough Council's Draft Local Plan 2040 Regulation 18 Stage 2

Dear Sir/Madam

I am grateful for the opportunity to comment on Test Valley Borough Council's Draft Local Plan 2040. This includes the proposed large-scale development of Velmore Farm, a valued local greenfield site, with an allocation of 1070 new homes and a large area to be developed for employment use. This development, if undertaken, would represent a significant incursion into the current green gap separating Valley Park from both Chilworth and North Baddesley. At present, Templars Way represents a hard geographical boundary of the Valley Park Estate.

With the recent large-scale residential development in North Stoneham, the tract of green space separating the settlements of Eastleigh and Chandler's Ford from Southampton has already been eaten away. If the respective councils continue to pursue large residential developments on this precious tract of greenfield land, our communities will soon lose their individual identities and simply exist as conurbations of Southampton, in an extensive and charmless, redbrick suburban sprawl.

Whilst I completely understand that new homes are required and that Test Valley Borough Council is duty bound to produce a local plan, the sites for development and sizes of some of the housing allocations, such as at Velmore Farm, are wholly inappropriate. Making our cities and towns even bigger than they are now is not the answer. Once these greenfield sites are developed, they are lost forever.

We need a sustainable local solution, which the draft Local Plan 2040 is not. We cannot simply continue to build more and more homes on greenfield sites. No doubt, there are plenty of brownfield sites that would be suitable for residential development across Test Valley that have not been given any consideration for inclusion in the plan. As smaller more expensive parcels of land, with higher development costs and lower profit margins, these probably will not appeal as much to the large house building firms that will inevitably be competing for the contracts. But the Council needs to balance its commitment to building housing with its obligation to protect greenfield sites for future generations.

The existing green infrastructure that surrounds Valley Park is prized by local residents. Even though Velmore Farm itself is privately owned, it is still deeply appreciated by local residents for its expansive green aspect and the associated sense of being close to nature that it affords us. It is for similar reasons that there was so much opposition to the previously proposed residential development of Great Covert Wood to the north of Castle Lane.

A large development appended to an already overdeveloped site is not the way forward. If this plan were to be approved, the implications for residents would be enormous in terms of the pressure on healthcare services, admissions to local schools, and increased volumes of traffic. Our general practices are already overstretched and the average waiting time for

a non-urgent appointment is about three weeks. Our primary and secondary schools are also oversubscribed (we had to wait for three years for our daughter to be accepted into a catchment area primary school after we moved to Valley Park). 1070 homes would likely add more than 2000 extra cars to the local roads, which are already congested. Even without these additional vehicles, Castle Lane and Templars Way can become completely backed up when traffic is diverted from the nearby motorways.

The Local Plan 2040 should not be designed for ease of implementation, but to serve the long-term interests of all residents of Test Valley, even if it proves to be logistically complex. Given the historic underinvestment in rural villages, which has resulted in the closure of village shops and services and the absence of any meaningful local economy in many cases, it is surprising that the thrust of the plan has not been to deliver homes to help revive such settlements across Test Valley. In conjunction with the development of appropriate brownfield sites within the larger towns, it should be possible to meet the quota for new housing in this way.

As I have made clear, I am strongly opposed to the draft Local Plan 2040 and would urge Test Valley Borough Council to reconsider the proposed sites for development.

Yours faithfully

David Hunt

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