

Comments on Draft Local Plan 2040

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My comments relate to the settlement hierarchy contained within the Draft Local Plan 2040 and, specifically, how the criteria used to differentiate between Tier 3 and Tier 4 settlements have been applied. In my view there are inaccuracies and inconsistencies in how TVBC have applied their own criteria to different settlements.

Background

Para 3.30 describes the “four broad facilities that provide the opportunity for our communities to meet their daily needs sustainably. Settlements that meet this criteria will continue to be in Tier 3.”

The 4 “facilities” are:

- Primary school;
- Food store;
- Outdoor sports facility, such as a playground or sports pitch; and,
- A community facility, which could be a village or community hall, a public house or social club or a church.

At para 3.37 the DLP observes “The settlements that have **all 4 broad facilities** have been identified as our more sustainable rural settlements and are identified in Tier3.” (*my emphasis*). This categorisation methodology is elaborated upon in a supplementary paper entitled “Settlement Hierarchy Assessment Update February 2024”. At para 5.11 of the supplementary paper it is stated that the settlements vary in the amount and type of facilities they offer and that there is a need to distinguish between those settlements that have some facilities and those that have limited facilities. It goes on to state that those villages that have the 4 key facilities will be placed in Tier 3.

Inaccurate Assessment

Thruxton does not have all 4 facilities.

In the supplementary paper “Settlement Hierarchy Assessment Update February 2024” it is explained that the Kimpton, Thruxton and Fyfield C of E Primary School is not in Thruxton but is on the parish boundary and therefore it is deemed that there good accessibility to a Primary School. I have no argument with this interpretation. However, we have no food store in the Parish and so we fail to meet all 4 criteria that TVBC have set out.

Inconsistent Application of Criteria

In the supplementary paper, a number of other facilities are set out to help differentiate between Tier 3 and Tier 4 settlements and (helpfully) a table is included in the Appendix (Table 7) which shows the 4 key facilities as well as the supplementary facilities for each settlement. These have been applied inconsistently.

- If the existence of a Primary School just over the Parish Boundary means that Thruxton has good accessibility to a Primary School, it should follow that Kimpton and Fyfield should be shown as enjoying equally good accessibility. The school is, in fact, within the Kimpton Parish Boundary but Table 7 shows Kimpton as not having a school at all. Similarly, Fyfield residents enjoy good accessibility as the school is very close to their boundary.
- On a similar line of argument, Table 7 shows that neither Kimpton nor Fyfield have an “outdoor sports facility, such as a playground or sports pitch”. In fact, there is a playground next to Kimpton Village Hall and both Kimpton and Fyfield enjoy “good accessibility” to the 3 Villages Sports Field adjacent to Kimpton, Thruxton and Fyfield C of E Primary School. The sports field is managed by The Three Villages Sports Field Trust and I am surprised that Table 7 does not recognise this.
- It is unclear which of the supplementary facilities have been assessed to be available to Thruxton residents. Table 7 shows that 4 supplementary facilities have been noted in Thruxton but I believe that we have only 1, that being the allotments. The other supplementary facilities listed are:
 - Food and Retail – we have no cafe or restaurant, no post office (stand alone, in a shop or mobile) or any other kind of retail facility catering to daily needs.
 - Education – we have no early years educational offering, nor secondary school or further education establishment nor any other education facility, including private school.
 - Health – there is no GP practice, pharmacy, dentist or any other type of medical facility within the Parish.
 - Recreation – we do have allotments and a park / public open space within the Parish boundary. However, we have no leisure or sports centre facility.
 - Other – there is no bank or ATM / cash point in the Parish and neither do we enjoy superfast broadband access. We have a bus service that currently offers 4 buses per day into / from Andover; however, this service runs only Monday to Friday; therefore, it fails to meet TVBC’s criteria of a daily service.

I request that these inaccuracies and inconsistencies are corrected before the next stage of development of the Local Plan 2040.

I am not asking for Thruxton to be re-designated as a Tier 4 settlement as I believe it is advantageous to the community to continue to enjoy a settlement boundary.

Thank you.

Peter Christie