

# **Test Valley Local Plan 2040**

## **Comments on the draft plan out for consultation section 18, stage 2**

**By Mr M & Mrs M Windsor,** [REDACTED]

The following comments are made about the proposed revisions to the plan to form the revised plan 2040.

Having studied what is proposed in the new draft plan we have several comments that we would ask you take account of, they are,

### **Settlement Hierarchy**

We note that Thruxton village is to remain in Tier 3, which we welcome and want that to remain as such and to retain its settlement boundary, which to be accurate will need to be redrawn to remove the current allotment site and the large verge at the top of Stanbury hill and the roadway by the bus stop along with the service road on Stanbury Road. This would then reflect more accurately the actual settlement boundary.

Neighbourhood Plans, Policy 5 (SS5) refers, states that made Neighbourhood Plans under review will be provided with a minimum housing requirement to be used at the review stage.

Question, how does this fit with the whole ethos and thinking behind Neighbourhood Planning which is supposed to be community led and housing need determined by local Housing Needs Surveys? If Test Valley are going to impose a requirement to allocate a certain number of dwellings, this goes against the whole ethos of neighbourhood planning and current central government thinking on this issue, we will challenge any imposition of numbers to be built.

### **Housing**

We cannot understand or accept why Test Valley is required to build yet more houses, when clearly the local community is dead against this continual building on greenfield sites that we require for food production. We do not accept that a real shortage of housing exists in Test Valley, when one considers just how many houses have been built over the last 10 to 15 years. It is very clear that services have not kept pace with the huge expansion of Andover for instance, It is very difficult for the local community to get appointments with local GPs, dentists and other such services. Bus services have significantly declined, and are about to decline even further, due to cuts by Hampshire County Council subsidies, shops in the town of Andover have also significantly declined, in number choice and quality.

Why cannot Test Valley take a leaf out of Basingstoke and Dean Councils book and reduce how many houses that they build. It is the case that if all the houses that currently stand empty were occupied, we would not need to be building yet more houses in Test Valley.

Test Valley is renowned for its beautiful and unspoilt countryside which attracts many visitors and tourist worldwide and adds significantly to the local economy, which you TVBC are quickly building over with all the proposed development.

It is about time that TVBC took on board the clear intent of Central Government and that is for local communities to determine what is proposed to be built in their community, where it is built and when it is built.

The proposal to build circa 1500 houses on the Test Valley boundary on the Ludgershall Road as proposed in the revised draft 2040 plan, needs very careful consideration, since Wiltshire will also be building a similar amount on the other side of the district boundary, these proposals will bring with them a huge volume of traffic onto the Ludgershall Weyhill Road, at peak times this will cause significant delays approaching the Weyhill Island, inbound during the morning travel into Andover and outbound during the evening depart. This will give rise to significant delays which will drive motorists to seek alternative routes through the villages which will exasperate the traffic issues through the likes of Thruxton village and its narrow roads with no pavements, where many mothers and children walk to and from school.

These significant proposals require traffic limitation measures to stop the villages being inundated and becoming "Rat Runs" You need to consider the wider network and not just the roads that serve the estates that you propose building. The wider network has not seen any change improvement for many years, being originally built for pony and trap and horse and cart, along with pedestrians.

## **Infrastructure**

Before TVBC embark on any major extension to house building in the district they need to ensure that the current infrastructure is updated since the current infrastructure cannot cope with the current requirement, one only has to look at the waste water system problems in villages such as Thruxton, Fyfield, Monxton and many more in the Test Valley, with the inundation of storm water which causes significant problems in the villages and downstream at the treatment plants. The Solent water is supposed to be a protected area and Nitrates and other chemicals restricted and reduced, with the continual building within the Test Valley catchment area it is impossible to reduce these issues even with supposed mitigation measures which will have little effect with the proposed quantity of dwellings. Significant damage is going to occur to the underlying aquifer which is a main source of drinking water for the region, wildlife and invertebrates in our chalk streams is being irreparably damaged by the total lack of forward planning and investment.

Building more houses just exasperates the issues that currently exist unless you increase capacity you will be creating yet further problems for existing communities. This not only

relates to waste water it also relates to drinking water supply, broad band, electricity, roads, long distance footpaths and cycle ways, all of which is sadly lacking and well, below national standards and requirements in Northern Test Valley. This lack of investment and forward planning is making proposed new builds unsustainable and storing up problems and significant cost for future generations.

Doctors, Dentists, shopping, arts and entertainment, connected cycle and footways in Andover town and the surrounding area has stood still despite 20K extra people living in and around the town, this needs to change if Andover is to grow significantly in future years. Car parking is becoming an issue in and around the town in view of the expansion, this is being made worse due to the reduction in bus services and communities having to use cars to gain access to town.

## **Employment**

Whilst we would support development to increase employment at the Thruxton Airfield/Track we would only do so if it was completely in line with the Thruxton Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP), in that it would fully comply with NDP EC1, a,b,c,d,e.

Also that it didn't impinge or impact the local community as the Earthline operation has and continues to do so, with significant dust, fumes and nuisance as a result of it taking place at the Thruxton industrial site which is upwind of the village of Thruxton.

The access to any additional facilities at the industrial site will need to ensure that HGVs and other traffic does not try and gain access through Thruxton village, the service road from the West end of Thruxton village will need to be closed to vehicle traffic and made clear that access from this point no longer exists.

It would be good to retain a footpath link along this route out of the village into the wider countryside on the West side of the village, something that is currently sadly lacking. The only safe footpath out of the village of Thruxton is Footpath No 3, no safe access exists out of the village across the A303 with a complete footpath link.

## **Transport**

The local road network is clearly not up to increased volumes of traffic such that will be generated by the proposals for the Ludgershall Road or in relation to the increased size of the industrial area of the Thruxton Airfield, this later proposal will require a new road layout with the A303 junction and the closure of the access road at the western end of Thruxton village. When proposing an increase in housing due regard must be taken of increased traffic on the wider network and not just the access to and within proposed development sites. It is very well documented elsewhere that Thruxton village has a very dangerous situation in that many mothers with children in buggies and children walking to school have to run the gauntlet daily in school term to get children to and from school as Thruxton does

not have footpaths which means that pedestrians, mothers with young children, dog walkers and people walking for exercise have to walk on the highway carrying traffic not all traveling at 30 mph, as is evidenced by the Thruxton Parish Council speed recording cameras, some vehicles travelling at above 50 mph in a 30 MPH zone on more than a few occasions.

Public transport to and from the village of Thruxton into Andover or anywhere else for that matter is virtually non-existent, 4 buses per day into Andover and 3 return, the last return being 3.45, so no use at all if trying to commute to work, or children returning from school or college. We need more sustainable travel routes into town so that cars are not used so as to reduce pollution and carbon usage. The villages need investment into sustainable modes of transport so as not to increase vehicle usage which exasperates the issues as above, walking to school with no footpaths and pollution.

Long distance footpath and cycle networks need to be provided that link with proper joined up networks which make commuting easier, safer and more sustainable.

### **Local democracy and transparency**

The need for local group appraisals of how the current communities view what is proposed needs to be undertaken and taken ahead of new developments otherwise you will be in grave danger of building dwellings, where they are not required, not wanted and not providing the type of accommodation that the local community need. To hold open meeting and exhibitions in town centres are not the way to carry out consultation, since many of our communities will not and do not attend due to travel restrictions, i.e. no buses, not willing to travel, not willing to engage with people outside own community. You, Test Valley need to meet the community in the local community in the village hall, local public house, local shop where they exist. Without this approach you will not be providing opportunity for the local community to be involved and have a say in what is produced in the 2040 plan, this is not democratic and the whole essence of current government guidance on this process is about local communities having a greater say and involvement in their community decisions of what is built where and what type.

The local community need to be much more involved in pre application advice to developers to ensure transparency and democracy, currently the local community have no opportunity of being involved in these pre application discussions with developers and land owners, and even when asked what has taken place in these discussions through Freedom of Information requests the information is not forthcoming, this breeds mistrust between the council officers, elected members (councillors) and the local community which you are in post to serve the community as are councillors. The local community are council taxpayers and therefore the people who pay officers and elected members to carryout the duties and should be involved in a democratic society and not ignored as in some recent planning applications.

Developers should be made to communicate the proposals that they have to local communities, at present developers and land owners undertake no consultation what so with local communities and then wonder why communities object to planning applications and point out the obvious mistakes.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion we welcome the opportunity of being able to make comment on the proposed 2040 local plan. However, given our previous experience we would particularly ask that you as Test Valley Councillors and planning officers take time and trouble to read and digest our foregoing comments, and respect the time we have put in to share our thoughts with you, and please please take them on board so as to avoid some fundamental mistakes. Local communities have long since been ignored in "Process and ideas and requirements for rural communities" which causes mistrust and a lack of a democratic approach, we are best placed to inform of the issues and what our needs are, we would welcome further involvement as this revision to the Local Plan 2040 progresses, thank you.

Mr M and Mrs M Windsor

30<sup>th</sup> March 2024