

DRAFT LOCAL PLAN 2040 – SA6: Housing Allocation: Land at Velmore Farm

As a resident of Valley Park I wish to oppose the draft 2040 Local Plan, in particular the allocation of 1,070 houses (plus 2.2 hectares for employment use) to the Velmore Farm site, which would breach a much needed local gap and result in significant negative impacts for the residents of Valley Park, the natural environment and climate change.

- **Local Gap** – Valley Park is already recognised as a densely populated area, its population density is 27 people per hectare, which is already far higher than the borough's average population density of 2 people per hectare (source: TVBC). The local gaps are therefore vital for the physical and mental health and wellbeing of the local population.

With such extensive development on an existing local gap, the proposals would contravene both the existing Local Plan (Policy E3) and the proposed new 2040 plan (ENV 4). Such a development would clearly not *"maintain the principle and integrity of the local gap designations"* and would *"diminish the physical separation and/or visual separation."*

If Test Valley residents are to continue to use their valuable time to engage with TVBC on these consultations, then in return they expect the Council to apply the resultant policies when considering development, particularly on matters expressed by residents as being of high importance to them (i.e. Local Plan Policy regarding Local Gap).

- **Valley Park Residents' Health**
 - **Pollution** - in view the already high population density, Valley Park roads easily become congested (e.g. Templars Way, adjacent to the proposed site). Further development, with the associated significant increase in numbers of vehicles on the roads, will result in increased levels of toxic emissions from slow moving and idling traffic, which would adversely impact the health and development of Valley Park children and the quality of life of those with respiratory conditions.
 - **Local Health Services** – the 30% increase in local residents would overwhelm GP and dental services that are already under pressure.
- **Climate Change** – if TVBC are serious about "Delivering a Net Carbon Future" and its commitments to minimising greenhouse gas emissions then it would site this development in a more sustainable location. The proposed Local Plan document states that *"It is essential that all development is designed so as to minimise greenhouse gas emissions, this spans from the location of proposals ..."* and in Policy CL1 *"development will be permitted provided that: a) Greenhouse gas emissions have been minimised."*

The roads adjacent to the site already become congested, this development would therefore result in greater and more harmful greenhouse emissions (from slow moving and idling traffic) than would be the case if TVBC were to allocate such extensive housebuilding to a site with road infrastructure and population density that could sustain the development – i.e. by not selecting a more sustainable site, TVBC cannot be seen to have minimised greenhouse gas emissions.

- **Local Services** – In addition to the issue of local health services (see above), Valley Park already doesn't have the scope of services to support the existing residents, even before such a large

development. Valley Park ranks in the top 30% of most deprived areas when it comes to physical proximity of local services; areas to the southeast (around School Lane) and north-west (around Skys Wood Road) rank in the top 10% of most deprived areas in the country in this regard (source: TVBC).

- **Traffic Impact** – the significant increase in traffic from the proposed development would overwhelm the already congested Valley Park roads, particularly when considering that Templars Way and Castle Lane (adjacent to/serving the new development) are used as a diversion route for traffic when accidents occur on the M3 and the M27.
- **Natural Environment** – such an extensive development on a local gap would clearly damage the biodiversity and wildlife habitats on the site.
- **Surface Water Flooding** – Roads adjacent/near to the proposed development site (Templars Way, School Lane and Castle Lane) frequently suffer from deep surface water flooding. Neither the Borough nor the County Council have been able to address this situation over the many years that this has been a problem.

Given how unsuitable and unsustainable the location is for such large scale development, it could easily been seen by residents as a politically expedient decision rather than a reasoned solution to new home allocation in Test Valley. This is perhaps reinforced when considering that the majority of Test Valley's housing requirement in the South of the Borough would be allocated to Valley Park (which has recently been the subject of electoral boundary change), longstanding elected local TVBC councillors were not consulted regarding preferred sites, it would breach Local Plan policy, it conflicts with TVBC's Climate Change commitments and there are other locations elsewhere in Test Valley that are clearly more suitable and sustainable.

In summary, this is evidently the wrong development in the wrong location and, as such, I wish to oppose to the Draft 2040 Local Plan.