

I am opposed to the proposed draft Test Valley Borough Local Plan 2040 predominantly due to large proposed Velmore Farm development area. The reasons for my objections are as follows:

Removal of the Local Gap – The area in question is currently designated a Local Gap between Chandler's Ford, North Baddesley and Chilworth. The proposal to place a planned development on this area is either corruption or incompetence. This move would go against Policy E3 of the current local plan. With the closing of the gap between Romsey and North Baddesley with the proposed Employment area reducing the gap between the two to a single field this will almost be creating a continuously connected sprawl from the new Horton Heath development all the way up to Romsey and the Abbotswood Development, with the places between being in distinct.

With the construction around the Stoneham Lane area too, linking Valley Park to Chilworth with the Velmore Farm development risks creating even more of a Greater-Southampton feel to the area rather than distinct settlements.

When looking at the larger region which Test Valley covers, there are a plethora of more suitable locations which could be explored for housing development which would not compromise the joining of settlements in the same way as this. Locally there is Land to the North of Flexford Road which could offer an equal area without joining Valley Park to a neighbouring settlement.

I appreciate there is also a lot of resistance to continue to expanding onto Romsey as it has already taken a large burden of development from recent adaptations to the Local Plan, but Romsey is uniquely placed where it is largely unbound by other large settlements.

I would also challenge Test Valley Borough Council that in drawing the draft Local Plan for 2040 that they have not been ambitious enough. The sentiment from the local consultations was an inertia or hesitation that this obligation is put upon the council to make development land available from Central Government policy, but have only looked at this period. It would seem that as most local communities are all resistant to further development, then a more pragmatic approach would be to find a suitable location for a larger completely new development. The total of approximately 4,000 houses needed in the South of Test Valley may have been better served grouped in one new development with new schools and infrastructure and the development potential for new waves of similar magnitude over subsequent rounds of new Local Plans.

Increased Traffic – Currently at peak times the local road network struggle. The main routes out to the wider network from the Velmore Farm site would be Castle Lane to North Baddesley, School Lane to the Selwood's junction, and along Templar's Way/Chestnut Avenue. Each of these locations are already prone to suffer with bad traffic most days of the week. The area is also at a high risk of snagging whenever there is an incident or closure of either of the motorways.

At the moment there appears to be only one proposed junction for access/egress of the development which is the roundabout of Templar's Way/School Lane. To add a potential of 2,000 cars using this point multiple times a day will massively impact the current residents.

I have grave concerns over the ability or suitability of creating an exit point on Bournemouth Road near to Asda as the gap between Elliotts Builder's Merchants and Hampshire Corporate Park does not appear wide enough to take a new road.

Impact on local NHS services I understand the development will not come with a new/increased GP provision to the area. It was explained to me that a contribution will be made to the existing GP

surgeries but this does not come with any guarantee that an increased number of healthcare professionals would be employed. Already residents of Valley Park are needing to register at the North Baddesley GP surgery, so I am unclear how the current provision would be able to cope with 2,000-3,000 more people in the area.

There is a decreasing amount of NHS Dental providers in the area, and is seemingly impossible to get a new registration. Again this issue is going to be further exacerbated by an increase in people in the immediate area without a requirement that this comes with new facilities.

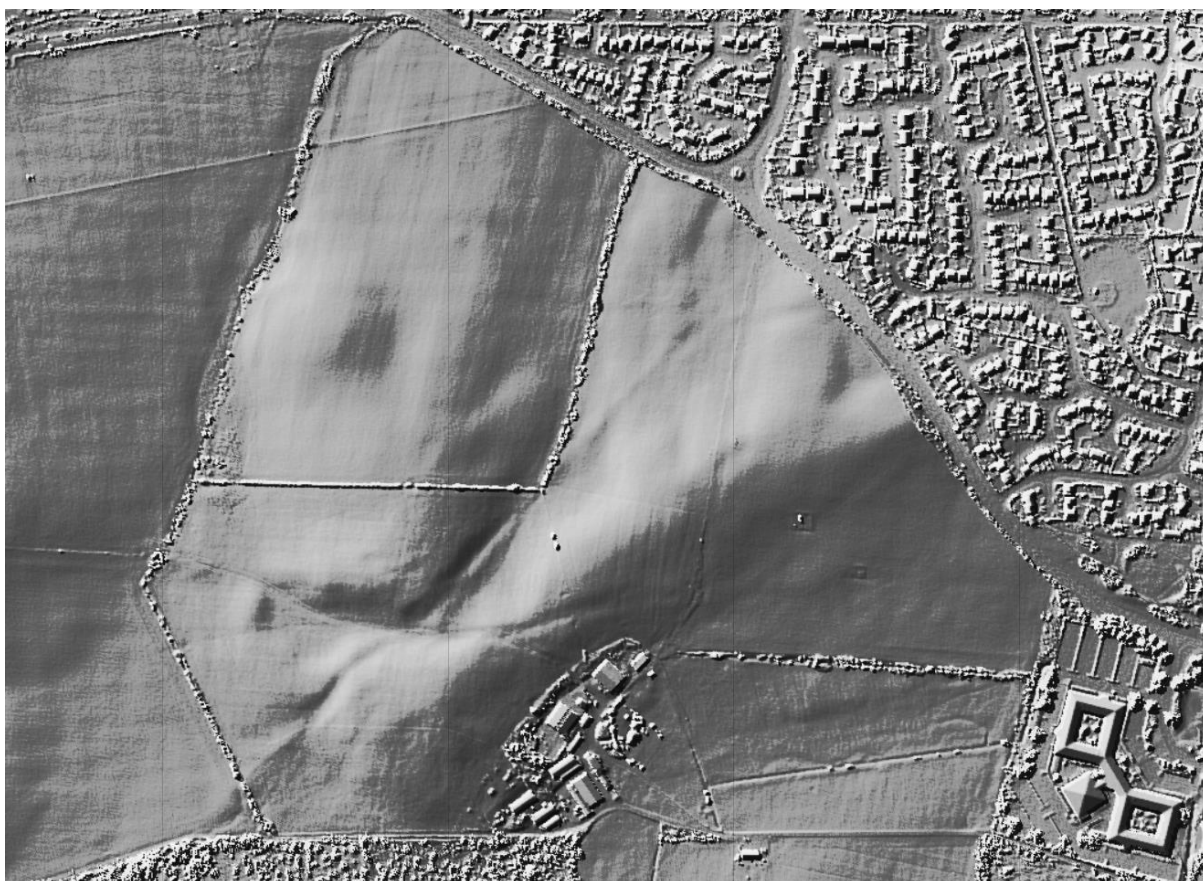
Electricity Pylons The site proposed is currently bisected by two sets of electricity pylons. Central Government policy/guidance is that no new building should take place under or near to pylons. I approximate the total width of the cables to be 50m from aerial photography, add to this a safe distance of say 20m either side, this then creates a large channel through this new development what would not be able to be used for housing. The added complexity of adding the extra geometry to place roads/houses will only move to increase the housing density that will be needed to create 1,070 new houses.

This is introducing an increased safety issue that may be completely mitigated by finding a more suitable site elsewhere. Has sufficient research into line-heights and what this could mean for construction of the development and future maintenance of the cables?

Roman Road Further to the issue of pylons bisecting the site, there is also the Roman Road which led from the Malwood Castle Hillfort near current day Minstead across to Winchester. Harm or loss of this asset will be in direct contradiction with Policy E9:Heritage. As I understand not too much is known of this road, and it has already been disturbed locally when Valley Park was constructed 30 years ago. Recently a new orchard was planted on top of the route and subsequently removed quite quickly due to the Roman Road. I cannot understand why a handful of small trees were not permitted and now there are proposals for houses and new roads to be built over/through the same ancient artifact a stone's throw away.

Even if full consideration is given and some form of protection is given to the Roman Road route, this further adds to the issues created by the pylons bisecting the site. With land set aside for the pylons, the roman road, a new primary school and the Green Space, I cannot understand how 1,070 houses will fit into the area without being significantly out of keeping with the style and density of the adjoining area. Creating a highly dense area would be against Policy E1: High Quality Development in the Borough. I think especially during the period of the pandemic, the importance of personal outdoor space is higher than ever, and a dense housing area will only be at the sacrifice of these spaces.

Confirmation of its presence is shown on LIDAR scans.



Creating more Car Dependant Housing There is nothing in this proposal for increased employment opportunity within the Chandler's Ford area. All this will do is create another car-dependant community. It is unclear why employment and residential areas were not placed in a more complimentary manner in the Local Plan as a whole. There is a large area being further allocated to employment at the Southampton Science Park, yet there is no housing proposed around the Chilworth area which would be much closer? Or a larger residential area near to the Land at Upton Lane, Nursling?

Flooding We are fortunate in this area in that although it is relatively flat in places and largely clay sub-soil we do not suffer with major flooding, however there are already signs that the Valley Park area is increasingly at risk of flooding issues. Prior to the development of Valley Park/Knightwood it was meadows/flood plane for the Monks Brook. Quite frequently the footpath that runs alongside the Monks Brook leading North from the Station towards Katrine Crescent will be impassable when the brook bursts its banks. We recently had a potential flood incident on 4th January 2024 where many houses were warned to be on alert. These houses were all around the basins that feed into the Monks Brook. The culvert at St Francis School was almost overtopped, with a risk of flooding out of the School, Church and Cleaveland Bay Pub. Where climate change is only increasing average rainfall and peak rainfall events, there is already not the capacity to cope with these potential rainfall events in the future. The proposed development of Velmore Farm will feed into the same watercourses which continue through and cause these areas. SUDS and other such flood prevention measures will not be able to prevent the fundamental increased run off by removing permeable farmland with houses and roads. No matter how long the water can be held by a couple of ponds/ditches, ultimately the watercourses downstream will need to take the water. All land to the West of School Lane will filter through the network and feed into the Monks Brook by the Station

and is then in section bound by both sides by properties. The East of School Lane will feed in and join at Flemming Park which already has issues as its fed also by the Motorway run-off.

