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Q1

Title Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms/Dr/Other(please state)*

Ms

Q2

First Name*

Carol

Q3

Surname*

Borwick

Q4

Organisation*(If responding on behalf of an organisation)

n/a

Q5

Email address *

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Q6

Postal address*

[redacted]

Q7

Insert any general comments that do not relate to a specific paragraph number or policy in the general comments box below.*If you are suggesting a change is needed to the draft Local Plan or supporting document, it would be helpful if you could include suggested revised wording. If you are commenting on a document supporting the draft Local Plan (such as a topic paper, or the Sustainability Appraisal), please indicate so.

Draft Local Plan 204

Draft Local Plan 2040

Valley Park Parish Council (VPPC) welcomed the opportunity to comment on the Test Valley Borough Council's Draft Local Plan 2040. VPPC was disappointed to learn that their democratically elected councillors had no input on the preferred sites for housing allocations, before they were presented by the officers. I am horrified that Valley Park residents, whom the councillors work on behalf of to ensure Valley Park continues to be a wonderful place to live, work, learn, grow up and grow older in, have been treated so disrespectfully when the Draft Local Plan will have such negative impacts on the area. This feels like stealth politics, coming in the back door.

The Valley Park Parish Council set out their position to resident in the recent Spring 2024 Newsletter and I have used their content and added to with some of my own observations and comments.

Key Issues

The preferred site of Velmore Farm, for an allocation of 1,070 homes and 2.2 hectares for employment use, breaches a local gap. The land adjoins Valley Park where I have had the privilege of living for nearly 30 years. I appreciate the outdoors, nature and wildlife and in particular the rural landscape that Valley Park enjoys.

If this draft local plan is adopted, and this land is developed, it would have a significant impact on Valley Park residents in a number of ways. The proposed high number of houses, 1070, compounds all the negative impacts on the existing residents of Valley Park such as myself, my partner and friends and neighbours.

Historically, Test Valley Local Plan has dealt with government housing numbers in a similar way. Allocating large scale development onto the two towns of Andover and Romsey, and the larger settlements. If placed near to a neighbouring borough boundary, minimising the negative aspects, as much as possible, on Test Valley. The strategy is to enlarge the urban areas which as the following effects

- urban areas are losing evermore open green space
- the quality of life for residents in these areas is impacted in a disproportionate way.
- villages are becoming less sustainable.

There should be a positive allocation of housing land sites across all settlements including those other than Tiers 1 & 2. The plan fails to do that. Instead, it hopes that parishes will draw up Neighbourhood Plans that include housing allocations but this may just be wishful thinking. Some parishes of no intention of developing Neighbourhood Plans whilst others resist any housing development.

The plan has no positive policies to maintain the viability of villages, nor to improve the viability of those struggling to maintain their schools, shops and public transport. Valley Park over the last forty years has had almost 4,000 homes allocated to it for development. If this allocation were to be adopted at Velmore Farm that figures would rise to almost 5,000 homes, whereby the Mid Test area around the market town of Stockbridge has received no allocation of homes at all.

Local Gaps

Local gaps were the most supported policy by residents within the last Local Plan up to 2029. During the Pandemic they were utilised by residents as safe areas to exercise and were really appreciated. I can personally testify to this. I already knew of the wonderful cycle paths around Valley Park but become even more aware of and appreciative of the areas of woodland, open fields and rural areas between for example Valley Park and Chilworth, North Baddesley, Chandlers Ford and so on during the Pandemic. These areas are wonderful natural environments, green open spaces, for residents' mental health, for the green agenda and green social prescribing. I benefit from this every day. I love living where I live because of the ancient woodlands, fields and farmland.

It is difficult to see how any development at Velmore Farm does not compromise the role, character and integrity of this Local Gap, contrary to Test Valley Policy E3. The VPPC is concerned at the loss of open aspect, green space, and the damage on the biodiversity and wildlife habitats, from such a large scale development. I am horrified by the potential loss of such wonderful open space, and the displacement of these animals and destruction of their habitats. On my regular walks around the area I see deer and no doubt there are also many other animals, birdlife, insects – some endangered such as hedgehogs, possibly badgers and bats – that will be have their habitat destroyed and their numbers will dwindle further. The ecosystem needs to be protected.

The VPPC is more than disappointed that the local Gap between Chilworth and Valley Park has been breached and that Velmore Farm

is proposed to be allocated the bulk of Test Valley's housing requirement in the South of the Borough, taking away a visible green lung for Valley Park residents.

Traffic impact

The impact of up to 2,000+ vehicles (although I would suggest more with 3-car households and visitors) onto Templars Way and local roads will have a significant and detrimental impact, particularly at peak times. The VPPC requests that Traffic Impact Assessments are carried out on all local highways, taking into account the extra vehicles. These Traffic Impact Assessments will also need to also take into account the additional traffic that will be generated from the 300 development at Hoe Lane in North Baddesley, currently under construction and the future development of 1,100 homes at Whitenap, Romsey and include existing impact from the development at Chestnut Avenue, Eastleigh. The impact upon Templars Way, Castle Lane, Knightwood Road, Baddesley Road, Bournemouth Road and Chilworth Road needs to be fully assessed.

The VPPC would also like to bring to the attention of the Borough Council and any future enquiry of this Draft Local Pan 2040 that Templars Way and Castle Lane is a diversion route for traffic, should accidents happen o the M3 and M27. These happen quite often.

Local Health Services

The VPPC is concerned of the increased pressure from upto 2,000 more residents (although again I would suggest more with the likelihood of mixed housing stock with family homes having 2, 3, 4, 5 or more people per home) upon our local doctor and dentist services. The 3,700 families in Valley Park share doctor's surgeries with North Baddesley and Chandlers Ford residents.

Surface Water Flooding

Velmore Farm is located at a higher landscape location to Valley Park and the soil, like Valley Park, is of different clay-based textures. The surface water from this site already accumulates and flows down onto Templars Way, School Lane and Castle Lane, creating deep flooded areas across these highways. This has been accruing over 10 years (although other residents I have spoken to suggest 25+ years), but has significantly increased from 2019 due to weather conditions caused by climate change. The Borough and County Council have, to date, not been able to address situation.

The large-scale development west of Knightwood Road needed a number of large balancing ponds to alleviate the recognised risk of surface water flooding of hones east of Knightwood Road. Equally the sports pitches and play areas that were developed needed at a later date huge sums of money allocated for drainage works to prevent constant surface water flooding.

Covering green space, which will act as a sponge, although somewhat saturated given the localised flooding, with bricks, concrete and tarmac will add to the flooding issues.

Overhead electric pylons

Electric pylons go straight across the land at Velmore Farm. Government Ministers are recommending homes should NOT be built under, or close to Electric Pylons. This Local Plan should be amended to state and make it clear that overhead electric cables should be located underground, on safety grounds, on any new housing developments. I personally would not move to any new home where pylons were nearby.

Infrastructure

The Plan does not ensure that current infrastructure problems and new issues are addressed ahead of any development taking place. Shops such as ASDA can not cope currently with challenges in food supplies – there is often a lack of stock on shelves. What will this be like when 1000+ new homes are filled with people shopping there?

There is a suggestion that a community hub will be included but what about schools, other than the primary school included in the plan? Can the local schools that currently exist cope with an influx of older students?

Archaeology Studies

The Valley Park parish Council request that full archaeology studies are carried out on all land at Velmore Farm. A Roman Road runs over the farmland. The National Historic Society should be notified about the proposal to develop this land. It must not be forgotten that an area, west of Knightwood Road, a Roman settlement was concreted over and was only revealed when this development was almost completed.

Valley Park might be home to 7,115 people now (est. population size in 2020, source www.valleyparkparish.org) but the area is of historic interest with the iron age settlement and the ancient woodlands. We should not lose more of our history – in fact this Roman Road should be celebrated and preserved.

Economic Vitality

How will this huge proposed development at Velmore Farm assist the economic vitality of our towns in Test Valley?

If development were to take place, it would be the closer businesses that the new residents use. Chandlers Ford and Eastleigh would be the economic beneficiaries.

I strongly oppose this draft Local Plan. There is far more arguments against the development than for. I understand that housing is

needed but what about repurposing buildings that are standing empty? Using brownfield land before destroying more green open spaces? This draft plan is likely to increase the population size of Valley Park to nearer 10,000. Our roads, facilities, infrastructure, drainage etc will not cope – and green open space will be gone forever, we will NEVER get this back – and our relationship with local fauna and flora will be tested even further. We should be conserving what we have, not destroying it.

Q8

Insert any specific comments in the general comments box below, indicating which paragraph, policy or matter your comments relate to where possible.*If you are suggesting a change is needed to the draft Local Plan or supporting document, it would be helpful if you could include suggested revised wording.

Respondent skipped this question