

Test Valley Borough Council Consultation for Local Plan 2040 Regulation 18 Stage 2

COMMENTS FORM

Test Valley Borough Council has published its Local Plan 2040 Regulation 18 Stage 2 document for public consultation. This consultation document sets out a vision for Test Valley up to 2040, objectives for achieving this vision, our development needs alongside allocations for residential and employment development and theme-based policies.

The consultation period runs from Tuesday 6th February to noon on Tuesday 2nd April 2024. Please respond before the close of the consultation period so that your comments may be taken into account.

You can respond to our consultation by filling out the form below. This form has two parts:

Part A: Your Details

Part B: Your Comments (please fill in a separate sheet for each comment you wish to make)

Further information can be found on our website at:

www.testvalley.gov.uk/localplan2040

Once the form has been completed, please send to planningpolicy@testvalley.gov.uk below by **noon on Tuesday 2nd April 2024**.

Following receipt of your comments from, we will keep you informed of future consultation stages unless you advise us that you want to opt out of such communication.

If you are unable to send via email, please send a postal copy to our address below.

Contacting us

Planning Policy and Economic Development Service
Test Valley Borough Council
Beech Hurst
Weyhill Road
Andover
SP10 3AJ

Tel: 01264 368000

Website: www.testvalley.gov.uk/localplan2040

Email: planningpolicy@testvalley.gov.uk

Part A: Your Details

Please fill in all boxes marked with an *

Title* Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms/Dr/Other (please state)	Mrs	First Name*	Alexandra
Surname*	Webb		
Organisation* (If responding on behalf of an organisation)	Southern Planning Practice Ltd		

Please provide your email address below:

Email Address*	
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Alternatively, if you don't have an email address please provide your postal address.

Address*			
	Postcode		

If you are an agent or responding on behalf of another party, please give the name/ company/ organisation you are representing:

Freedom Church

Personal Details and General Data Protection Regulation

Please note that representations cannot be treated as confidential. If you are responding as an individual, rather than as an organisation, we will not publish your contact details (email/ postal address and telephone number) or signatures online, however the original representations will be available for public viewing at our offices by prior appointment.

All representations and related documents will be held by the Council until the Local Plan 2040 is adopted and the Judicial Review period has closed and will then be securely destroyed.

The Council respects your privacy and is committed to protecting your personal data. Further details on the General Data Protection Regulation and Privacy Notices are

available on our website here:
<http://www.testvalley.gov.uk/aboutyourcouncil/accesstoinformation/gdpr>

Part B: Your Comments

Please use the boxes below to state your comments. This includes one box for general comments and another for specific comments related to an area of the Local Plan.

Insert any general comments you may have 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.

General
<p>Please see submitted representations.</p>

For specific comments, please make it clear which paragraph, policy or matter your comments relate to where possible. Please use the 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.

Paragraph Ref	Specific Comments
	<p>Please see submitted representations.</p>

What happens next?

All valid responses received within the consultation period will be acknowledged and you will be given a reference number. Please quote this reference number when contacting the Council about the Local Plan 2040. If you have an agent acting on your behalf, correspondence will be sent directly to your agent.

All responses received will be taken into account as part of the preparation of the Local Plan 2040.

**Land to the r/o Esso,
Greatbridge Road**

Representations to Test Valley
Borough Council Local Plan
Regulation 18 Stage 2

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BSc (Joint Hons) MSc MRTPI**



Client: Freedom Church

Date: March 2024

Ref: TV-705-AP

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 These representations have been prepared by Southern Planning Practice Ltd on behalf of Freedom Church, in response to the current Test Valley Local Plan Regulation 18 Stage 2 Consultation, in relation to 'Land to the rear of the Esso Garage', Greatbridge Road, Romsey, Hampshire SO51 0HB.
- 1.2 The land is currently the subject of planning application 23/00340/FULLS for the *Construction of church and community hub with associated landscaping and car parking* which is yet to be determined.
- 1.3 The site lies in a pocket of undeveloped land on the northwestern edge of Romsey adjacent to the defined settlement policy. To the south lies Greatbridge Service Station and housing fronting Budds Lane. To the west lies Budds Lane Industrial Estate separated by the railway line and its embankment and to the north is a care home for young people.
- 1.4 The site is an 'L' shaped parcel of land, with the top of the "L" extending from the road, north of Greatbridge Service Station to the railway line embankment (see aerial image below). The bottom of the "L" extends southwards behind the service station to meet up with the rear garden of No 6 Budds Lane and a vehicular repair and maintenance garage next to it. On the north side of the site are a woodland parcel and a residential care home.



- 1.5 These representations will respond to the Local Plan Regulation 18 Stage 2 Consultation and will also present the opportunity which the land provides.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 Freedom Church is a free evangelical church, based in Romsey for over forty years. The Church has grown steadily over that time in both the number of congregants and the scope of activities. It currently leases an industrial unit in the Budds Lane estate, known as the 'Freedom Centre'. The centre includes Romsey Foodbank and other community projects. The church also rents space at The Romsey School on Sunday mornings to provide a Sunday service. However, this is becoming problematic due to the efforts to set up a 'temporary' service in the space, rate of growth in popularity of the service, lack of kitchen facilities and additional increased rental costs.
- 2.2 The Freedom Centre itself, whilst satisfactory, offers limited kitchen facilities. The property is also leased and therefore expansion or refurbishment would be a costly exercise without a guarantee for future use.
- 2.3 Over the last few years Freedom Church has developed a partnership working model with multiple local agencies and projects including the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), Christians Against Poverty (CAP), Romsey Foodbank (Trussel Trust), Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB), Community Coaching (CCP) and education support through Transforming Lives for Good (TLG) to better support the needs of the local community. Whilst all of these can operate separately, it would be more beneficial in terms of working practices and the sharing of resources, knowledge and skill sets to be co-located, in one place.
- 2.4 It is a registered charity overseen by a Board of Trustees. As a registered charity, Freedom Church has an obligation to ensure that funds are spent in accordance with their charitable aims, and that expenditure is both proportionate and sustainable. As such, Freedom Church is looking to ensure that expenditure on developing a site is not beyond the realms of what it can realistically afford. This often rules out land that may be suitable for residential development as being too expensive. The vast majority of income is donated by the congregation and as such a financially efficient approach is of paramount importance.
- 2.5 The provision of a church and community hub on 'Land to the rear of the Esso Garage' on land that has been purchased by the charity would reduce rental costs but increase investment in services and facilities to be provided to the local community.

3.0 Response to the Draft Test Valley Local Plan 2040

Chapter 3: Spatial Strategy

Settlement Hierarchy

- 3.1 We support the settlement hierarchy set out within Policy SSI of the Draft Local Plan and support the primary focus of growth to be within the two tier 1 settlements; Andover and Romsey, where historically previous growth has also been focused. It is therefore appropriate for community-led development to be in these locations.
- 3.2 In order to meet the needs of local communities, in addition to focusing growth in the two principal settlements of the Borough, the Council should look to deliver services and facilities on smaller sites that might be adjacent to a settlement policy boundary (SPB).
- 3.3 Paragraph 97 of the NPPF recognises the need for planning policies to plan positively for the provision and use of shared spaces, community facilities, take into account and support the delivery of local strategies to improve health, social and cultural well-being for all sections of the community and ensure an integrated approach to considering the location of housing, economic uses and community facilities and services. By allocating this site, the Council will be able to demonstrate they have identified and can support a local health and well-being need. Allocation of this site is considered to enhance the sustainability of the local community and residential environment of Romsey.

Chapter 5: Theme Based Policies

Community Led Development

- 3.4 The relevant paragraphs under the 'Community Led Development' section the Draft Local Plan confirm that the Council is supportive of 'other uses' on sites in the countryside from proposals that are community led, justified and have local support. We support the Council's aim for the delivery of community led development and the provision of the policies to support and enable such development in the rural areas of the Borough, whilst ensuring that such proposals have clear justification and can support existing services and facilities.

4.0 Land to the rear of the Esso Garage – The Opportunity

- 4.1 The site on 'Land to the rear of the Esso Garage' presents an opportunity for Test Valley to allocate a small scale, sustainable site for community led development in the emerging Local Plan.
- 4.2 Policy SS2 of the Draft Local Plan seeks to allow appropriate development in the countryside. Criterion a) of this policy allows development outside of settlement boundaries if the proposed development is allocated or allowed in another policy of the Local Plan. At present, without allocation the land r/o Esso is guided by policies COM2 and COM9, however we believe that the site provides a great opportunity to contribute to Test Valley's religious, social and charitable needs and therefore believe it should be allocated through the Local Plan as a community led development site.
- 4.3 Whilst the site is located in Inset Map 3 - Romsey, North Baddesley and Valley Park of the Draft Local Plan, it shows that the settlement boundary ends just before and does not include the site:



Extract from Inset Map 3 with approximate boundaries of site shown in red

- 4.4 The site is adjacent to existing built development in the form of commercial and industrial uses, to the south and west and care provision to the north. The extension of the SPB for Romsey to the

north to include the site would provide a natural rounding off of the boundary, in keeping with the prevailing character of development. It would also maintain and enhance the sustainability of the settlement through the delivery of a community benefit. The Council is therefore encouraged to further review the SPB as part of the next stage of the Local Plan to ensure that the most sustainable sites, with suitable development opportunities, are being included.

- 4.5 It is clear from the preparatory stages of community engagement, the detailed submission setting out the evidence and justification along with the high level of support received from the public in response to application 23/00340/FULLS that the proposed church and community hub on this site would bring clear community and spiritual benefits that fulfil the aims of policies and local initiatives intended to create a more sustainable community, it should therefore be allocated for such development in the local plan.

5.0 Conclusion

- 5.1 Paragraph 16 b) of the NPPF sets out that plans should be positively prepared in a way that is aspirational but deliverable.
- 5.2 'Land to the rear of the Esso Garage' presents an opportunity for Test Valley to allocate a small scale, sustainable site for community led development in the emerging Local Plan.
- 5.3 The extension of the SPB for Romsey to the north to include the site would provide a natural rounding off of the boundary, in keeping with the prevailing character of development.
- 5.4 In summary, the allocation and inclusion of 'Land to the rear of the Esso Garage' in the SPB for Romsey would allow for Freedom Church to grow and provide for the improved delivery of a community benefit including:
- the promotion and improvement of mental and social health and well-being of residents.
 - supporting the vulnerable.
 - promoting social interaction.
 - enhancing existing facilities and services to meet the changing needs of the town.
 - contributing to local initiatives.
 - an outside prayer trail allowing increased access for all the local community to the spiritual benefits, enriched through careful landscape enhancements.
- 5.5 In light of the above and the details provided in these representations, it is requested that the Council review their allocated sites for community led development and look to allocate 'Land to the rear of the Esso Garage' to meet Test Valley's community needs over the plan period and beyond.
- 5.6 We trust the information contained within these representations is sufficient, however should you require any further information please do contact us.