

RUBIX LAND LTD

LAND AT SOUTH VIEW FARM, GRATELEY

**REPRESENTATIONS TO TEST VALLEY DRAFT LOCAL PLAN 2040
(REG.18, STAGE 2) CONSULTATION**

March 2024

CLIENT

Rubix Land Ltd

PROJECT

Land at South View Farm, Grateley

REPORT TITLE

Representations to Test Valley Draft Local Plan 2040 (Reg.18, Stage 2)
Consultation

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 David Jarvis Associates (DJA) has been instructed by Rubix Land Ltd (“Rubix”) to prepare representations in response to the Test Valley Draft Local Plan 2040 (Regulation 18, Stage 2) Consultation (TVDLP).
- 1.2 Rubix is promoting a significant area of land to the southwest of Grateley (‘Land at South View Farm’), within the Test Valley Borough Council (TVBC) area, for a residential-led development ranging from 250 – 1,000 dwellings (see site location plan at **Appendix 1**).
- 1.3 The land consists of four parcels currently used primarily for agricultural purposes extending to just under 57ha (140 acres). The two largest parcels take in the existing built farm complex and adjoining fields; Wallop Road runs along the western boundary, Mount Carmel Road on the southern boundary and Mount Hermon Road on the eastern boundary. The two plots are bisected by Salisbury Road/Bournemouth Road, with the existing settlement lying to the north.
- 1.4 The two smaller plots lie just to the east, adjoining Mount Hermon Road, Mount Carmel Road and Palestine Road, as well as existing residential properties on Mount Hermon Road and Zion Road.
- 1.5 Grateley Rail Station, lies less than 0.5km to the north with the village of Grateley (including Primary School) located around 2km to the northeast.

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- 1.6 Rubix Land is a residentially focused land promoter and professional investor in land and property in the South of England. Rubix has been working collaboratively with the landowner associated with the land at South View Farm and is solely responsible for promotion of the site.
- 1.7 The land has not been promoted for development for many years, but has now become available as the landowner is nearing retirement.

2. RESPONSE TO REG.18, STAGE 2 CONSULTATION

Plan Period

- 2.1 It is noted that the plan period is to run until 2040. However, the NPPF (para.22) advises that *“strategic policies should look ahead over a minimum 15-year period from adoption”*. Whilst it is clearly a laudable aim of the Council to achieve adoption earlier than the Local Development Scheme (LDS) advises, given that adoption of the Local Plan is not programmed until mid-2026, the Plan Period should be extended to 2041 so that it meets the 15-year requirement.
- 2.2 The plan should therefore make provision for at least an additional 550 dwellings for the plan period, considering the potential of additional strategic allocations to meet this additional need within and potentially beyond the plan period.

Test Valley Spatial Strategy

- 2.3 Rubix considers that the Spatial Strategy for Test Valley is flawed in that it fails to recognise the significant sustainability benefits associated with rail services running within and through the Borough. The strategy is therefore considered to be unsound as it has not been properly **Justified**.
- 2.4 Paragraph 109 of the NPPF advises that *“Significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes”*.
- 2.5 The TVDLR objective for “Our Communities” advises that the aim is to *“Deliver and strengthen sustainable, cohesive and healthy communities in our towns and villages”*.
- 2.6 With regard to the Transport and Movement objective, the TVDLR states that the aim is to *“Encourage active and sustainable modes of transport, that are accessible, safe and attractive to use, whilst also seeking to reduce the impact of travel in particular by private car.”*
- 2.7 Whilst the general strategy of identifying a wider distribution of development at the most sustainable settlements is supported, it fails to place sufficient emphasis on settlements with good access to rail services into the main settlements of Andover and Romsey and beyond.
- 2.8 In particular, it is noted that the Palestine/Grateley Station/Grateley settlements have been grouped together as a “Tier 3” settlement; however the existence of the rail station coupled with the generally unconstrained nature of the land in and around the settlement boundaries means that this should be recognised as a higher Tier 2 settlement, with the potential to provide strategic allocations that could take advantage of the existing rail service.
- 2.9 It is noted in paragraph 3.31 of the TVDLR that *“The level of public transport has been removed from the methodology reflecting the uncertainty over future rural bus provision.”* However, the presence of a rail station, with regular services to the larger settlements, should certainly be included as a significant sustainability feature. Providing further residential development adjoining Palestine/Grateley Station/Grateley would help to ensure the long-term viability of the rail service.
- 2.10 A large strategic allocation at this settlement would also potentially include provision of other community facilities (e.g. new Primary School, local centre, sports pitches etc), which would increase the overall sustainability of this location by providing such facilities for use by new and existing residents.
- 2.11 This overall approach would be in line with paragraph 109 of the NPPF. It would also meet the TVDLR objectives of delivering sustainable communities and encouraging sustainable modes of transport.

- 2.12 Rubix is promoting South View Farm, to the southwest of Grateley, which can accommodate a wide range of development scenarios from 250 to 1,000 dwellings and which is within a sustainable location immediately adjoining the existing settlement. The land is not constrained in terms of environmental and heritage designations (with the exception of a Scheduled Ancient Monument, which would be retained and protected as part of any adjoining development) and is therefore suitable for development.

Policy HOU6 – Residential Space Standards

- 2.13 This policy advises that the Council will require all market homes to meet part M4(2) building regulation standards, unless evidence indicates it is not feasible.
- 2.14 M4(2) is an optional requirement, with significant financial consequences beyond the mandatory M4(1). The wording in the consultation draft should reflect the building regulations of the time, rather than set its own ambition, which may consequently cause delays or viability issues for the delivery of housing.

Land at South View Farm, Grateley

- 2.15 As advised above, Rubix is working collaboratively with the landowner for the Land at South View Farm (**Appendix 1**) and can confirm that it will be taken forward as a single promoted site for development as a strategic allocation. The site is therefore suitable, available and deliverable.
- 2.16 Initial capacity work has indicated that the site can deliver in the region of 1,000 dwellings with associated community facilities, public open space and landscaping. Further detailed assessment of the site in relation to highways and drainage capacity/impact are in the process of being undertaken and further information will be provided to the Council in due course.

3. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

- 3.1 These representations have been prepared by David Jarvis Associates, on behalf of Rubix Land Ltd in response to the TVDLR Reg.18 Draft.
- 3.2 Rubix are promoting Land at South View Farm for housing development, on behalf of the landowner, and a formal promotion agreement is in place to this effect. The site is suitable, available and deliverable.
- 3.3 The site could incorporate:
- Up to 1,000 homes across a wide range of dwelling types and tenures to meet all housing needs including affordable housing and self/custom build;
 - Open spaces and recreational areas;
 - Areas for biodiversity improvements
 - Community facilities, potentially including a convenience store and primary school;
 - Cycle and pedestrian routes connecting the site to Grateley rail station.
- 3.4 These proposals will significantly assist the Council in meeting key objectives by delivering homes, sustainable and well connected growth. Rubix would be pleased to continue liaising with TVBC regarding this important strategic opportunity, which will deliver much needed market and affordable housing whilst meeting the overall objectives of the TVDLR.

Appendix 1

Site Location Plan

