

## Test Valley Borough Council opens consultation on new Local Plan

A new draft Local Plan for the period to 2040 will go out to public consultation for eight weeks from 6 February 2024, following its recent approval at January's Full Council meeting. It has been produced by the council in its role as the local planning authority, in accordance with strict national guidance and previous consultation with residents.

The Local Plan sets out the planning policies and principles required to meet development needs such as housing allocations and land for employment uses, while recognising the importance of conserving and enhancing the local environment and heritage.

It follows the principles set out in the Council's four-year plan, agreed through a democratic process involving residents from across Test Valley, and has been carefully tailored to make sure the varying needs of all communities within the borough are recognised and met.

New sites are identified within the plan, through careful consideration of constraints, in order to reduce the risk of speculative planning applications on sites where development should be resisted.

Residents, business owners and visitors to Test Valley will be able to comment on the proposals within the plan in a number of ways, including in writing, by email and through an online survey. Printed copies of the plan will be available at the council offices and libraries.

A number of drop-in sessions have been arranged, to discuss the proposals, at the following locations and times:

- Abbotswood Community Centre, Romsey, on Tuesday 20 February from 3.30pm to 7.00pm
- Picket Twenty Sports Pavilion, Andover, on Monday 26 February from 3.00pm to 7.00pm
- Valley Park Community Centre on Wednesday 28 February from 3.00pm to 7.00pm
- Memorial Hall, Ludgershall, on Monday 4 March from 3.00pm to 7.00pm
- Crosfield Annexe, Romsey, on Tuesday 5 March from 3.00pm to 7.00pm
- North Baddesley Village Hall on Saturday 9 March from 10.00am to 1.00pm
- The Guildhall, Andover, on Tuesday 12 March from 3.00pm to 7.00pm
- Nursling and Rownhams Village Hall on Wednesday 13 March from 3.00pm to 7.00pm

**Leader of the Council, Phil North, said:** "Producing a new Local Plan always includes very tough decisions – balancing the need for new homes, including affordable homes, with the impact those decisions will have on existing residents' lives. Ultimately, though, we are required by central government to provide sites for 11,000 new dwellings across the borough by 2040. If we don't, there is a huge risk of developers getting permission for speculative plans, which are unlikely to include the significant amount of new infrastructure we are demanding through the Local Plan process."

“I’m sure there will be strong views on this and I’m looking forward to hearing them as part of the public consultation process. This will enable us to take on board public comment and potentially reshape the plan before a final draft is submitted to the Planning Inspectorate.”

**Councillor Phil Bundy, Cabinet Member for Planning and Building, said:** “This draft version of the new Local Plan is the product of detailed analysis of the issues faced by the communities within Test Valley, as well as several rounds of formal consultation, and as such reflects the views of a wide range stakeholders and residents. We’re now keen to hear the views of as many residents as possible and I’d encourage everyone to find out more and have your say.”

Full details of consultation events and the locations of printed information will be available at:  
[www.testvalley.gov.uk/localplan2040](http://www.testvalley.gov.uk/localplan2040)

Following the consultation period, which ends on 2 April 2024, comments will be considered and a final draft version of the plan will be taken to a Full Council meeting, before submitting to the Secretary of State for assessment. Once adopted, it will replace the existing plan for 2011 – 2029.

**ENDS**