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**Your ref:**  
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Dear Adrian

Winchester District Local Plan 2020 – 2040 – Regulation 19 Consultation – August 2024

Thank you for consulting Test Valley Borough Council (TVBC) on the Regulation 19 Proposed Submission Local Plan for Winchester District, to 2040. We welcome opportunities to engage and collaborate with Winchester City Council (WCC) on strategic planning matters, policies and cross boundary issues.

Our adopted Test Valley Borough Local Plan covers the period 2011 to 2029, and we are currently in the process of preparing a new Local Plan. We undertook public consultation on our Test Valley Borough Regulation 18 (Stage 2) Plan 2040 earlier this year. Following the publication of a Consultation Draft NPPF 2024 in July, we are currently considering the implications of the proposed increase in our housing requirement for the Borough of Test Valley (through the revised standard method) over the Draft Plan Period.

We share a boundary with Winchester District to the east of our Borough and have cooperated on cross boundary matters during plan preparation. We have issued a joint Statement of Common Ground. Our joint engagement with the Partnership for South Hampshire on matters such as nutrient neutrality in the Solent Water catchment and in respect of the Solent Water SPA/SAC/Ramsar designations (for both phosphorus and nitrogen) is ongoing. We support Winchester District's Regulation 19 Local Plan's approach towards collaborative working with neighbouring authorities, including the work of PfSH, to which we are also committed.

We note that the Winchester District's Regulation 19 Local Plan proposes to meet the Districts current housing needs in full, including a 'buffer' of housing supply to help contribute towards a wider shortfall or unmet need in the area. As set out in the Test Valley Draft Local Plan 2040, Regulation 18 (Stage 2), we also proposed to meet our proposed housing requirement in full, based on the current NPPF. However, we did not take on any potential unmet needs from outside our area, in terms of housing or provision for gypsies and travellers.

Following the proposed planning reforms, TVBC is considering the implications for moving forward with the draft Local Plan 2040, including the potential consequences from the changes to the standard method, for calculating local housing need. We are therefore unable to confirm at this stage in plan preparation, how we propose to meet our proposed increased housing need, the extent to which this need can be met, whether it can be met in full, or if a possible unmet need will arise.

We support reference to the ongoing collaborative work with TVBC and other local authorities in the south to mitigate the impacts of recreational pressures upon the sensitive environment of the Solent. This is a key area of joint working, and we are similarly supportive of the BirdAware scheme in helping to manage recreational pressures and deliver ecological mitigation.

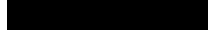
TVBC also welcomes the strategic emphasis in the Plan on seeking carbon neutrality and adapting for future climate change over the plan period and beyond. The objectives and policies recognise the role that local plans can play in supporting wider ambitions to mitigate and adapt to climate change and set out a range of ways through which this can be achieved. TVBC has declared a climate emergency and the overarching theme of countering climate change runs throughout our draft Regulation 18 (Stage 2) Local Plan and policies.

We welcome the value placed on the rural landscapes and on sustaining and enhancing green and blue infrastructure corridors and provisions (through Policy NE4). This policy recognises the many environmental, ecological, quality of life, climate and other benefits these resources offer. A range of green spaces, long distance walking/cycling routes, rivers and tributaries cross or abut our shared border, which is mainly rural in character. They are valued by our communities and businesses for their ecological, environmental and recreational value.

The Plan includes strategic provision for local gaps (Policy NE7), in line with 2008 PfSH guidance, to help maintain the integrity, open and visual character of physical gaps between settlements. This is consistent with our own adopted plan and our emerging local plan policies for local gaps.

We look forward to continuing our engagement on our emerging local plans. Please keep us informed of progress and areas for collaboration.

Yours faithfully,

  
Senior Planning Officer (Strategy)  
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