

CABINET

3 March 2004

TEST VALLEY BOROUGH LOCAL PLAN REVIEW: CONSULTATION ON REVISED
DEPOSIT DRAFT (2004)

REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

Contact Officer: Greg White (01962 848418)

RECENT REFERENCES:

CAB 619. Test Valley Borough Local Plan Review: Consultation On First Deposit Draft, 19 March 2003.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The First Deposit draft of a Test Valley Borough Local Plan Review (1996-2011) was published on Friday 3rd January 2003. There followed a six-week period for public consultation, closing on Friday 14th February. During that period an opportunity was given to make representations in support of, or objecting to, any of the policies proposed in the draft Plan. Having considered the draft Plan and its proposals, Cabinet resolved to make comments on behalf of the City Council. Such comments, which were generally supportive of the Plan did, however, include two specific objections to proposals made in the First Deposit Plan.

Overall, the Borough Local Plan Review was considered to present a reasonably balanced approach to current and anticipated issues of land-use and development. In particular, the Plan recognised the need to meet the housing development requirements specified in the Hampshire County Structure Plan Review (HCSPR) and to achieve this put forward an adaptive approach based on identified/allocated sites, forming part of a sequential strategy. This stressed the need to make maximum use of 'brownfield' development opportunities within the Borough's existing built up areas, but also envisaged the phased release of certain 'greenfield' sites.

In order to cater for additional strategic housing requirements in the form of a Major Development Area (MDA) at Andover, the First Deposit Plan went on to identify three locations for major new community development adjacent to the town. However, with regard to the further HCSPR requirement for a 'Reserve' Housing Site provision to be made at Southern Test Valley the Borough Council, through its draft Plan, declined to progress this matter, until the need for such a reserve had been fully established.

This unwillingness to provide, more positively, for the possibility of a reserve MDA in southern Test Valley led to the City Council's first objection. The second objection to the Plan resulted from the inclusion of a proposal to define, primarily for development control purposes, areas of 'special character' within certain parts of Andover, Romsey and Chilworth; all of which are clearly defined in the Plan as being 'built-up areas'. Such a proposal appeared to represent a clear departure from central Government's explicit requirements for housing densities, in cases of new development and, therefore, an objection was considered justified.

The publication of a Revised Deposit version of the Borough Local Plan Review, on the 30 January 2004, marked the start of a further six-week period of public consultation, with regard to a number of changes that have been made since the First Deposit draft. In the light of those changes, the overall approach contained in the Borough Council's Plan Review continues to be both reasonable and well-balanced, in terms of the City Council's primary strategic and local interests.

However, with particular regard to the City Council's two earlier objections, changes incorporated in the Revised Deposit Plan have had certain consequences. Firstly, the Revised Plan now contains a specific set of proposals to identify, and provide for the transport and other infrastructure requirements, of a major new housing site on the north-eastern outskirts of Romsey. This site is intended to meet the possible requirement for a Reserve Housing Site in Southern Test Valley, in the event that a compelling justification for its future release is established. The provision for that eventuality, which the Revised Plan now makes, overcomes the City Council's objection.

In relation to the City Council's other objection, concerning 'areas of special character', no change has been made to the substance of the proposal contained in the First Deposit version of the Plan. However, there has been one change in the Revised Plan which reduces the size of one of the special character areas. Despite this marginal reduction, the essence of the City Council's objection has not been resolved.

It is, therefore, recommended that Cabinet should acknowledge the change made with regard to the Southern Test Valley Reserve Housing Site and withdraw its objection. It is also recommended that the Test Valley Borough Council should be advised that Winchester's objection to the inclusion of 'special character areas' has not been satisfied by the change that has been made.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That, following the publication of its Revised Deposit Test Valley Borough Local Plan Review (2004), Cabinet advises Test Valley Borough Council that the City Council's two earlier objections to the First Deposit Plan have been affected, as follows:

- i The City Council's objection to the lack of a positive provision for meeting the possible strategic housing requirement for a Reserve Housing Site at Southern Test Valley has been satisfied by proposed changes STV 07.1A –6A;
- ii The City Council's objection to the inclusion of 'special character areas' within the built-up areas of Andover, Romsey and Chilworth has not been satisfied as a result of proposed change SC.4.1.a

1.1 OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

2 CORPORATE STRATEGY (RELEVANCE TO):

- 2.1 The consultation document is of relevance to the key aims of helping to look after the built and natural environment, for the benefit of present and future generations and to promote a thriving local economy in the District..

3 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- 3.1 None.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

The First and Revised Deposit versions of the Test Valley Borough Local Plan Review, together with files and correspondence held in the Planning Department of the Development Services Directorate.

APPENDICES:

None.