

## **Mid Test Update for Houghton Parish Council 1<sup>st</sup> July 2025**

### **Local Plan latest**

At an extraordinary council meeting, held on the 18<sup>th</sup> June, the draft Test Valley Local Plan was approved for public consultation over a 10 week period from Friday 27 June until noon Friday 5 September 2025. This is a vital step in shaping the future of our borough — from where new homes will be built to how we protect green spaces and ensure the right infrastructure is delivered.

But let me be clear: this isn't just about planning ahead — it's about protecting our communities from the consequences of new Government planning rules that came into force in December.

What's changed? The Government has introduced a revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) with no transitional arrangements. That means developers can now apply for almost any site — and even if the council refuses it, the Planning Inspectorate could approve it on appeal. Why? Because councils like ours can't instantly meet the new 5-year housing land supply targets, which have just been increased by 78%.

We absolutely need new homes — but they must be delivered in the right places, with the right infrastructure, and with proper community input. These new rules strip away local control and risk opening the door to speculative development that doesn't meet our standards or our needs.

New strategic sites are proposed across the borough, but those of particular relevance to Mid Test include:

- Land West of Holbury Lane, Lockerley – 50 homes
- Land adjacent to Hyde Farm, Broughton – 45 homes
- Land at Danebury School, Stockbridge – 100 homes
- Expansion of Weyhill – 1,034 homes
- Land West of Andover (Penton Mewsey) – 200 homes
- Land at Danebury School, Stockbridge – 100 homes
- Land North of Streetway Road, Grateley Station and Palestine – 80 homes
- Land to the north-east of Thruxton – 80 homes
- Land at Bulberry Field, Duck Street, Abbots Ann – 60 homes

The new targets imposed by Government hit rural areas like Test Valley the hardest, while reducing targets in many urban areas — including Southampton. So much for prioritising brownfield sites!

That's why getting our Local Plan in place is so important. It gives us a fighting chance to shape development with our communities, not have it imposed on them.

The consultation has launched, and I urge everyone to take part. This is your opportunity to help shape the future of Test Valley — and to push back against a planning system that’s becoming increasingly centralised and developer-led.

Dates and venues for the Local Plan public exhibitions in the local area are below.

<b>Where</b>	<b>When</b>	<b>Times</b>
Broughton Village Hall	Thursday 31 <sup>st</sup> July	4pm to 6pm
Stockbridge Town Hall	Wednesday 16 <sup>th</sup> July	3.30pm to 6.30pm
Grateley Memorial Hall	Thursday 10 <sup>th</sup> July	4pm to 6pm
Weyhill Fairground Village Hall	Thursday 24 <sup>th</sup> July	3.45pm to 6.45pm
Upper Clatford Village Hall	Thursday 31 <sup>st</sup> July	3.30pm to 6.30pm

## Local Government reorganisation

Test Valley Borough Council (TVBC) is working with eleven authorities across Hampshire and the Solent to transform local government.

The changes are in response to the government’s request for councils across England to look at how local government is organised.

The 12 councils have launched a survey for residents to inform the biggest change to local government in 50 years. Residents are being urged to share what matters most to them in their area and help shape how local councils provide services in future—so they reflect real places, local identity and culture, priorities, and people.

The survey is available at <https://ourplaceourfuture.commonplace.is/> until midnight on 27 July and takes 10 minutes to complete.

In Hampshire, in line with the government’s ask, the proposal is to move away from the current ‘two-tier’ council structure currently in place in most of the county, and replace it with a number of unitary authorities, which will provide all council services for the area they cover.

TVBC has been working with Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council, Eastleigh Borough Council, Fareham Borough Council, Hart District Council, Havant Borough Council, Isle of Wight Council, New Forest District Council, Portsmouth City Council,

Rushmoor Borough Council, Southampton City Council, and Winchester City Council, to develop options that would work best for residents, businesses and the wider community.

The evidence they have gathered shows that four mainland unitary councils delivering all council services in the areas they cover, would be big enough to deliver strategic services, but local enough to understand communities so they can tailor services more closely to their needs. Isle of Wight council would remain unchanged.

- For Test Valley, one of the options being explored could see TVBC join with Winchester, New Forest and East Hampshire. (Option 1)

Each council must decide their preferred option to submit to government in September, informed by feedback from the public.

Following submission in September, it is expected that the government will consult on the options that meet their criteria.

Hampshire County Council is also working with East Hampshire District Council to develop their own options, and they will be asking residents for feedback on their proposals separately.

Again , I urge all residents to participate in the survey. Further information can be found on-line or by attending these sessions.

Venue	Date	Time
Stockbridge Town Hall	Wednesday 16 <sup>th</sup> July	3.30pm to 6.30pm
Broughton Village Hall	Thursday 31 <sup>st</sup> July	4pm to 6pm

### **Neighbourhood Planning Support**

For your information, the government have with immediate effect removed the funding and support available to Parish and Town Councils to undertake Neighbourhood plans.

### **New Climate Change grant launched to support community projects -recent press release**

Test Valley Borough Council has launched a new Climate Change Grant to help community groups and not-for-profit organisations take action against climate change.

The grant is designed to support projects that improve energy efficiency, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, or help communities adapt to the effects of climate change. Eligible organisations can apply for funding up to £10,000.

The scheme is open to a wide range of groups, including charitable organisations, community associations, parish and town councils, and committees responsible for managing community buildings and assets.

Last year, the council refreshed its Climate Emergency Action Plan, setting out a plan of actions to help further reduce greenhouse gas emissions across the borough.

**Councillor Alison Johnston, portfolio holder for Climate Emergency and Countryside**, said:

"We know that many local groups are passionate about protecting the environment and supporting their communities. This grant is a great opportunity to turn those ideas into action. Whether it's improving insulation in a village hall or launching a local climate change project, we want to help make it happen."

For all the information needed before you apply please visit [www.testvalley.gov.uk/climatechange/grants](http://www.testvalley.gov.uk/climatechange/grants) where you can read the application guidance.

Alternatively, please contact the Climate Change team at [climatechange@testvalley.gov.uk](mailto:climatechange@testvalley.gov.uk).

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As always, get in touch if you have any questions.

Councillor Alison Johnston Email: [cllrajohnston@testvalley.gov.uk](mailto:cllrajohnston@testvalley.gov.uk)