



RESPONSE TO DRAFT LOCAL PLAN 2042 REVISED REGULATION 18 (2025) PUBLIC CONSULTATION

I write as Chair of SOS, Save Our Stockbridge, and on its behalf. Our name means exactly what it says – we try to save Stockbridge because we believe that Stockbridge is special.

We therefore object to the allocation of approximately 100 houses near Danebury School in the latest version of the Draft Local Plan 2042 Revised Regulation 18 (2025) Public Consultation, and this is our response.

1. Stockbridge – an Historic Linear Settlement

Stockbridge has been a linear settlement since Roman times. Its roots go back two thousand years to the time when the Romans needed to cross the Test Valley floor to get from Winchester to Salisbury. They built a chalk causeway across the valley in what has become Stockbridge and what has become the High Street. Stockbridge has remained in essence the same linear settlement – it starts at the now roundabout where the Andover, Winchester and Romsey Roads meet, and ends at the bridge over the River Test, just where the Salisbury, Houghton and Longstock roads meet. On either side of the settlement are hills (the valley sides) and they have remained almost unbuilt on for all those 2,000 years. It is a settlement where the countryside comes to the main street. We believe that Stockbridge would be recognisable to everyone who has lived here during those two millennia. It is the geography that has dictated that Stockbridge valley sides have not been built on, and the geography has not altered. It has made Stockbridge unique. How many other settlements in the Test Valley can say that they look just about the same as they have for over 2000 years? We believe therefore

that Stockbridge is rightly called ‘the jewel in the crown of the Test Valley’, as it was by the previous Head of Planning at TVBC.

We therefore urge the TVBC Planning Department and Councillors to pause and think again about this proposed allocation and how it will affect the uniqueness of Stockbridge. And having paused and thought seriously about the harm that it will do to this unique place, we urge them to remove the approximately 100 house allocation from the draft Local Plan 2042.

2. Need for more housing

We of course understand that the Government has suddenly required TVBC to provide many more houses in the Borough and we fully understand that it cannot have been an easy task to decide where all these new houses were to be built. What TVBC seems to have decided (as set out in their Draft Local Plan 2042 brochure) is that the proposed new developments should be ‘spread across the borough’. This suggests that new houses will be distributed apparently on the basis of what seems fair. This may be laudable in coming to many decisions but we submit that in this particular case the decision should be made on where best these extra houses can be built, without spoiling the best parts of the Borough, and in particular Stockbridge. The Consultation document at Para. 1.17 asks those responding ‘whether you consider these [new homes allocations] are in the best places to meet the Government’s ambitions and the needs of our communities’. SOS resoundingly responds **NO** to this question.

3. Landscape and Views of Stockbridge

No landscape appraisal has been carried out by TVBC before the allocation of this Danebury School site for approximately 100 houses. Stockbridge’s landscape should be a vital consideration in any decision to include this site in the Local Plan 2042 and we submit that failure to carry out an appraisal, before allocating this site, means that the process has been flawed.

Stockbridge is situated in a valley, on a floodplain and between two valley sides. Its landscape is integral to the look and feel of the town, and to its charm and character. All of its geographical and topographical features mean that it is not a suitable site for development from the landscape point of view.

We mention the following features by way of example: the River Test runs through it; the carriers from and to the Test run under the High Street; the High Street starts at the bottom of one valley and ends at the bottom of the other; its houses are only built on the causeway (now the High Street) or closely behind it; the views of its beautiful and natural setting within the valley sides can be enjoyed from the Common Marsh, Stockbridge Downs and the Test Way, all places to which members of the public have right of access.

It is stated at Para. 4.97 of the Consultation document that ‘careful consideration must be given to views into and over the development’. The views of Stockbridge lying in a valley with the valley sides rising up from the valley floor on either side are integral to the look of Stockbridge and help to make it unique. The views as one approaches from the A30 to Stockbridge from the direction of Sutton Scotney and London are unspoilt with the church spire showing and the valley sides protecting the single road settlement. Similar but opposite views are seen from the A30 from the Salisbury direction when, as well as Stockbridge lying in the valley, one sees the magnificent Grade 1 listed Lutyens house, Marsh Court. From the Common Marsh, to which there is public access, one can see the view of the Marsh Court River with the valley side to the west as a beautiful backdrop, as well as a charming view looking back to the north to Stockbridge itself. Different but beautiful views of the valley can be seen from certain points on Stockbridge Downs and the Test Way, both of which are also open to the public. Similar views from some parts of the High Street and residents’ gardens are available, as well as from the Romsey Road now that the dangerous trees have been cut down. It is ironic that the only people who will continue to enjoy good views of Stockbridge will be the new residents who will live in the proposed new houses.

Light pollution from these new houses will greatly affect Stockbridge. Each house will have lights, the connecting roads will have lights and every car will have lights, and these will be seen from all the views to which we have already referred. Amazing stargazing from the Common Marsh or Stockbridge Downs will be ruined as the lights will always be visible at night. Extra noise from cars and from people using their gardens will interfere with the quiet enjoyment of Stockbridge residents in the evenings, when visitors to the town have returned home. That noise will be greatly

amplified as it will travel across the valley floor and will reverberate around the valley.

Approximately 100 houses may sound a relatively small allocation but building them on the top of a valley side above an historic, and beautiful settlement will ruin Stockbridge forever. Such a development will be a real blot on the landscape. Stockbridge's look and its feel, its charm and its character will be lost after 2000 years. It is a momentous decision for TVBC to make and we urge the Planning Department and the Council itself to say that in this particular case Stockbridge should remain for the better part undisturbed, as it always has been. SOS submits that it is not suitable for development when its landscape is fully considered, and it is certainly not one of the 'best places' in the Borough to put a new development. Once 100 or more houses are built of this site they will ruin the views of Stockbridge forever.

4. Selection of the Site

There are many towns and villages in the Test Valley which do not have the charm, history or unique character as does Stockbridge. For example, Andover centre feels and looks down at heel. The old Sainsbury's building in the centre of the town has been empty for years and it is now on the market for development. It covers a large area but we were told by a TVBC Planning Officer, at the recent exhibition of the draft Local Plan 2042 in Stockbridge Town Hall, that Sainsbury's had not been considered in the allocation of extra houses for the Borough because Sainsbury's had not approached the Department. No doubt the same is true of the old Marks and Spencer's building and the old Post Office, both situated in the centre of the town. All these brownfield sites could, and indeed should be developed, to provide many flats and to inject much needed life into the centre of Andover. Those three sites alone could provide at least 100 new homes. TVBC's own Economic Development Strategy 2024-2029 identifies the rejuvenation of Andover as one of its priorities. The development of these sites would help to fulfil that priority and it would also comply with Para. 125 NPPF which requires local authorities to prioritise the development of brownfield sites. Does the Planning Department and the Council really have to wait to be approached before it can include these brownfield sites in the Draft Local

Plan? And will they sacrifice the uniqueness of Stockbridge rather than initiate a discussion with those large companies despite their own economic priorities and those of the NPPF? We submit that the Planning Department should have used their professional expertise to locate suitable sites for the allocation of new development in the Borough, and the fact that they did not means that the whole process was flawed.

5. The Size of the Site Allocated

We have looked with care at the Consultation document and in particular at paragraphs 4.91 to 4.100 which deal with land allocation at Danebury School. We note that at Para 4.91 of the Consultation TVBC states that the allocation is of ‘approximately 100 houses’. The document shows a large site but no mention is made of its size. However SHELAA map 479 measures part of the site at 20.2 hectares (51.2 acres) which is stated to be capable of providing 150 houses, and map 237 measures the other part of the site at 3.4 hectare (8.4 acres) which is stated to be capable of providing 46 houses. The site is therefore, as recognised by TVBC, capable of providing almost 200 houses, double the quantity now proposed to be allocated. That can hardly approximate to the 100 houses stated. But in fact the combined size of the two sites is 23.6 hectares and, using the rule of thumb scale of 30 houses per hectare, means that the site is easily capable of providing over 700 new houses. The size of the site is far larger than that required for 100 houses. Such an allocation should have been restricted to a size of site that was no more than necessary. We are very concerned that these facts were not apparently considered by the Planning department nor indeed brought to the attention of Councillors or indeed to the residents of TVBC who are being consulted as to the appropriateness of the draft Local Plan 2042.

6. The Site itself

At Para. 4.91 of TVBC’s Consultation document it is stated that development will be permitted subject to ‘access to the development via the north of the site from the A30’. We submit that such access is prohibited by virtue of the existing Restricted Byway 147/12/2, which by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 prohibits any type of vehicular access. The Byway is

depicted, at Figure 4.11, as a Track going west from the London Road at Danebury School towards Meon Hill, and is described in Para. 4.100 as following the route of a Roman Road from Winchester to Salisbury. It states that ‘the development will have regard to the setting of this historic right of way’. The A 30 runs in a similar direction although some way to the north of the Byway (Track). This means that access to the site from the A30 must cross the Byway which is of course prohibited and yet TVBC has stated that the allocation is **subject to** access from the A30. That must be the reason why the promoter of this development, as we were told by a Planning Officer, seeks access via the Houghton Road to the east of the site. The Houghton Road is no more than a narrow country lane which could not possibly accommodate the access and egress to 100 or more houses. TVBC suggests that the development must have regard to the fact that there is this historic right of way on the site and that the allocation is subject to ‘an appropriate layout reflecting the setting of the public right of way’. But vehicles are prohibited from using the existing Byway, **IF** access is to be via the A30. Sub para (a) and (d) are therefore mutually inconsistent.

It is suggested in Para. 4.94 that Danebury School playing fields will be moved to accommodate this new development to the north east corner of the site. But that of course is on a steep hill, the valley side, and so would not be suitable. The creation of new large playing fields would mean carving out a huge amount of chalk to permit the playing fields to be flat, and that would leave a huge, white, unsightly scar on the valley side. Again from the landscape point of view moving the playing fields is a non starter. No suitable alternative has been proposed. The school land is owned by Hampshire County Council, and HISP, which runs the school, have a long leasehold interest. From enquiries we have made of Hants CC it seems that, to date, they have not been asked whether they agree to this proposal, which would involve them in the sale of land (the existing sports facilities) or at least a land swap.

The allocated site is near to Danebury School which pupils, from the age of 11 years to 16 years, attend. That includes obviously those who are preparing for GCSEs as well as those taking GCSEs. Any development of this size, or more, on a steep hill and round the School will clearly adversely the quiet enjoyment of the pupils and teachers, for example by the actual construction itself and the extra traffic generated, by the obstruction of various parts of

the site, by the pollution caused and above all by the sheer volume of noise which will be generated. All the children and the teachers will suffer, and the pupils' education and the ability of the teachers to teach will clearly be adversely affected. It is just not fair on them, and particularly on those attempting serious qualifications, and such serious disruption would be suffered for a number of years, possibly by a whole generation of pupils.

We therefore request TVBC and its Planning Department to look again at this allocation of what is described as approximately 100 houses, and submit that on a full and proper consideration of the size and site of the allocation it should be removed from the Local Plan 2042.

7. The River Test

The River Test runs through Stockbridge, as do its carriers, which were dug in the late 19th and early 20th centuries to prevent flooding, and which run under the High Street being visible on either side of the High Street. The Test is a most precious resource: it is a world renowned chalk stream, it is said to be the home of flyfishing, and fishermen from all over the globe come here to fish for trout. It is also home to the famous Houghton Fishing Club. In the mayfly season it is a sight to behold as the nymphs, that have laid dormant on the river bed for up to two years, rise to the surface and become mayflies. The clear chalk stream is their perfect host. Very recently TVBC itself has recognised the importance to the Borough of this river. The Council voted unanimously for the River Test to have its own legal entity so that (as described in the Times of 31st July 2025 p.22) the river has the right 'to flow unimpeded, be free from pollution, and be fed by freshwater sources'. It will also be entitled "to ecological integrity" and regeneration from "environmental harm" (ibid).

The River Test in Stockbridge is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and has been for many years because it has such ecological merit. More than 100 species of plants are found along its banks, and more than 200 animal species live in and around it (ibid). Those of us who live in Stockbridge know how lucky we are to have all this flora and fauna on our doorstep – from otters and egrets to pipistrelle bats to crayfish. We have all noticed that in recent years insect life has greatly decreased and this has had a serious effect on trout numbers and as the Times also reported, the number of

Atlantic salmon returning to the river to spawn has fallen dramatically in the last 5 years from 906 in 2019, to 346 in 2024.

8. Pollution of the River Test

This deterioration in the Test has occurred not least because of pollution. In 2024 Southern Water allowed 29,355 illegal spills of sewage which on average lasted 10 hours a day (BBC News: Science and Environment). While not all these spillages went into the Test, many spills did, and we have actually seen raw sewage emptying from the large visible pipe which crosses the Stockbridge Common Marsh into the Marsh Court River. The National Trust Ranger has monitored the water from that outlet pipe and reported her findings regularly in Stockbridge Parish Magazine. The results have shown that from time to time spillages have occurred from that pipe even when not permitted, that is at times when there has not been heavy rainfall. So concerned was the National Trust that it installed notices at every entrance to the Common Marsh warning members of the public to be wary of allowing their children or dogs to go into the water. Yet in years gone by families happily enjoyed the river, and some local residents even learned to swim in the Marsh Court River. That river rejoins the Test a short way down stream so that in fact all that raw sewage flows into the Test.

9. Water extraction from the River Test

The Environment Agency has stated that it wants Southern Water to reduce extraction of water from the River Test from 136 million litres per day to 80 million litres per day. Despite this Southern Water applied in mid July for a Drought Order to include not only a hosepipe ban on their customers but also permission to extract even more water from the River Test. The river is already very low and more extraction of large amounts of water is bound to damage, even further, the river and its ecology. We see in Stockbridge the levels of the water in the Test because there is a white marker in the water on the north side of the bridge. It is our view that Southern Water cannot keep on extracting water from the river just because it has not built the infrastructure to ensure there is a sufficient water supply for their customers. Ever more extraction will ruin the river when it should be the pride of the

Test Valley. More houses built close to the Test above Stockbridge will demand even greater water supply and Southern Water's only answer is to extract yet more water from the river. If TVBC really is concerned to protect the River Test (see below – **Rights for Rivers**) it should not make this allocation of 100 new houses which will mean even greater extraction of water from the river and will add to the damage to the flora and fauna for which the river is renowned.

10. TVBC'S Rights for Rivers Resolution 17th July 2025

We are delighted that TVBC has now recognised that the River Test is a precious natural ecosystem and that it should be protected. We therefore find it astonishing that the same Council has allocated 100 or more houses to be built on the top of the valley side below which the River Test flows. Surface water from the built-up concreted site of 100 houses, or more, is bound to increase and it will flow through the chalk soil into the River, or onto the Houghton Road and then into the Test. More effluent will be generated from these houses and as Southern Water cannot cope with the current amount of effluent from the current number of houses in Stockbridge (see under **Pollution of the River Test above**), it obviously will not be able to cope with the effluent from these extra houses. At the recent exhibition in Stockbridge, when a planning officer was asked about this, her reply was that Southern Water had told the Planning Department that they would be able to cope, and this assertion seemed to be acceptable without more despite the Consultation document, Appendix 3 under **Utilities** stating: 'Proposals will need **to demonstrate that there is adequate water and wastewater capacity to serve the development**'. A mere statement from Southern Water that they have capacity is NOT a demonstration of adequate water and wastewater capacity. It is, we submit, plain and obvious that they will not be able to cope with this new development, because Southern Water does not have the infrastructure to cope with the current situation in Stockbridge, hence spillages into the Marsh Court River. If further evidence is needed then one only has to look at Southern Water's own literature, sent to every household to explain why water bills are to increase by nearly 50%, which states it will 'invest £1.1 billion to significantly reduce the number of storm overflow releases'. They therefore acknowledge that the current infrastructure is less than needed even for current requirements.

But if TVBC truly means, as it passed unanimously at the end of July 2025, that the River Test must be protected, then it will stop this proposed allocation of 100 houses directly above the River Test. We urge them to do so, and indeed urge the Planning Department of TVBC to do so, as the current proposal plainly runs counter to the decision of the Council to protect the Test.

11. The Floodplain

Stockbridge is situated on a floodplain which is why a large majority of the houses and other buildings are built along the High Street (on the causeway built by the Romans) and immediately to the rear of those buildings on the north and south of the High Street, as ribbon development. There has always been a risk of flooding in Stockbridge, as is well recognised by the flood risk areas drawn up by the Environment Agency in Stockbridge some of which are described as Flood Zone 3 (a 1 in 10 chance of flooding) and therefore of high risk. It was because the High Street kept flooding that carriers were cut, running under the High Street from and to the River Test, in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. The carriers remain, reducing the risk of flooding, as well as adding to the charm of Stockbridge. They have worked well but in more recent years, perhaps with the onset of climate change, Stockbridge has flooded or has been at serious risk of flooding. In the winter of 2013/2014 one house to the north of the High Street was completely flooded (and had to be knocked down), and others also on the north side suffered serious flood damage. Every house on the High Street was provided with sandbags. Parts of the Common Marsh and the Water Meadows and some gardens were flooded on both sides of the High Street. In 2015 TVBC, the Houghton Club river keepers and some well informed residents of Stockbridge, and at considerable expense to TVBC, took mitigating steps to prevent flooding both to the north and the south of the High Street. Despite heavy rains in 2019 and again over the winter of 2024 when Stockbridge was again at risk of flooding the town did not flood, but as climate change creates more extreme weather, and more severe storms, it seems only a matter of time before Stockbridge sees damaging floods again.

We are aware that one renowned pub and restaurant in Stockbridge, has suffered major sewage problems since at least 2016. We know that the pub

in question has already made a submission to TVBC about the Local Plan 2042, but in our view no business in Stockbridge should suffer constant sewage back-ups because the drainage system in the High Street, as repeatedly diagnosed by Southern Water, has completely collapsed. Any more development will mean more sewage problems for this pub, and probably for others whose homes or businesses abut the High Street. If the system cannot cope with current demand how will it begin to cope with the demand from an extra 100 or more new houses?

We submit that putting 100 or more new houses at the top of the valley side will seriously add to risk of flooding for Stockbridge residents and businesses, will add to sewage spills into the Test, and will add to sewage back-ups in the High Street. These are serious risks which will affect all who live, work or visit Stockbridge. It seems highly likely that flood insurance will be even more difficult to obtain and, where it can be obtained, premiums will increase. More work will then have to be done by TVBC to mitigate the even greater risk. The effects of this 100 house proposal are, we submit, far reaching and serious.

12. Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)

Stockbridge enjoys no less than 4 SSSIs – the River Test; the Common Marsh (to the south of the High Street and in the middle of the valley with the Marsh Court River running alongside); Stockbridge Downs (at the top of the valley on the east side towards Winchester); and Stockbridge Fen (to the north of the High Street behind Stockbridge Recreation Ground and running parallel to the A30 between the 2 roundabouts). They are legally protected sites under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and were chosen for their nationally important wildlife habitats, rare or endangered species, and unique geological formations. Stockbridge is very fortunate to have 4 of them in such a small geographical area. Residents recognise how precious these SSSIs are, how important it is to protect each of the sites where such ecosystems flourish, and how special they are for Stockbridge. Further we all recognise the need to foster these areas and by way of example: (1) the National Trust, which looks after the Common Marsh, installed a fence some years ago by the Marsh Court River to prevent erosion of the river bank. It has meant that the bank has been protected and it has grown back in

abundance and is a wonderful area for wildlife and plantlife once again to flourish; (2) a few years ago a local resident built a series of portable wooden bridges, which were placed over exposed peat inlets on the Common Marsh, and which allowed walkers to avoid disturbing the exposed peat. The inlets have recovered and the peat is no longer exposed.

The proposed 100 or more houses are to be built on the top of the valley, to the west above the river and settlement of Stockbridge, and are bound to affect these sites in particular the River Test, the Common Marsh and Stockbridge Fen by, for example, pollution, noise, and lightspills. It cannot be worth putting these SSSIs at risk; TVBC should be doing all it can to safeguard the long term health of our environment and in particular our precious SSSIs.

13. Stockbridge is a Conservation Area

A Conservation Area has the statutory definition : ‘an area of architectural or historic interest, the character of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance’. Stockbridge is of considerable architectural interest as it has many Grade 2 and Grade 2* listed buildings all along the High Street. They include (a) the Sir Edwin Lutyens Stockbridge War Memorial which has recently been restored and is used for all Remembrance services; (b) a Sir Edwin Lutyens Memorial Cross at the Cemetery on Winton Hill; (c) Seven Gables at the bottom of Winton Hill; (d) Old St Peter’s Church, the charming 12th century church (where the Andover, Romsey and Winchester crossroads meet), which is still used for worship; (e) King’s Head House, part of a former coaching inn a little way down the High Street; (f) The Grosvenor Hotel, the large hotel in the middle of the High Street which is home to the Houghton Fishing Club; (g) Stockbridge Town Hall, built in 1790 by a prospective MP John Foster Barham who intended it as a bribe to obtain the support of the then local Council; (h) the Old Rectory in the middle of the High Street; (i) the Three Cups Hotel near to the end of the High Street; (j) Mulberry House at the far west of the High Street adjacent to the River Test. There are also a number of other buildings in Stockbridge which are not listed but are recognised by TVBC as being of historical interest.

In addition, on the east valley side overlooking the valley and the whole of Stockbridge, is a Grade 1 listed Arts and Crafts house, Marsh Court,

designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens (constructed of chalk) and Grade 2* listed gardens laid out by Gertrude Jekyll. The building is a landmark from the town of Stockbridge, the Houghton Road, the Salisbury Road past Danebury School, and in particular from the Common Marsh. Its views of the valley will be severely adversely affected by 100 or more houses on the opposite side of the valley.

Stockbridge therefore merits its Conservation Area status on architectural grounds alone. But it is also of considerable historic interest. Although it is described in the Draft Local Plan 2042 as a Town, and indeed has a Town Hall, there is no Charter giving it town status. Although in the 17th century it was a rotten borough with two Members of Parliament, it had very few people who were permitted to vote. The number of residents in Stockbridge has hardly varied since the Middle Ages with the current number being 554. It is probably more accurate therefore to describe it as a village, which many of its residents still do, as it has the feel of a village particularly when the shops are shut and visitors have gone home. Stockbridge was traditionally used to graze sheep for local farmers and for those who drove their sheep from Wales to Southampton and Portsmouth. On the Drover's House, just outside Stockbridge on the Houghton Road, is still written (but in Welsh) 'Season's Hay, Rich Grass, Good Ale and Sound Sleep'. It was partly because it was used by drovers that Stockbridge adopted the Water Meadows system on the floodplain in the 17th and 18th centuries.

The Water Meadows are a man-made irrigation system using water from the Test and Marsh Court rivers to flood the meadows in the valley, allowing nutrient rich soil to be deposited on the meadows which enhanced grazing and hay production. As Stockbridge's prosperity relied at that time on the trade of sheep and horses the Water Meadow system greatly increased the production of hay and was therefore very important for the local economy and for livestock, especially in winter months.

Since time immemorial there has been a Lord of the Manor of Stockbridge, and apart from a period of a few years in the 19th century when the Lordship was pawned to a London pawnbroker, the Lord (or Lady) of the Manor has continued to exist to this day. Every year the Lord of the Manor holds a Court Baron and Leet aided by a Town Crier, a Jury, a Bailiff, a Clerk to the Court, a Hayward and a Steward at which the silver town mace is on display.

The mace was given to the Town by a hopeful Member of Parliament as a bribe to the electorate in 1681.

When Danebury Races were still at their height of popularity, in the late 19th century, the then Prince of Wales came to Stockbridge staying in a house then called Hermit Lodge at the beginning of the Houghton Road just after the bridge in Stockbridge. Lillie Langtry used to stay at The White House at the end of Stockbridge High Street adjacent to the Test, and it is said that they used the wooden bridge, to the south of the road bridge over the Test, in order to visit one another.

On any view Stockbridge is of considerable historic interest and richly deserves its Conservation Area status on those as well as architectural grounds. May we remind TVBC and the Planning Department that according to the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, this cultural heritage should be preserved and enhanced, not destroyed by allowing 100 or more houses to be built on the valley overlooking Stockbridge. May we also remind TVBC that by Section 16 of the NPPF the planning system is required to conserve and enhance the historic environment. We therefore urge TVBC to remove the approximately 100 house allocation from the Draft Local Plan 2042.

14. Traffic and Parking

100 or more houses will mean there will be at least 200 new residents – probably nearer 300-400. Each home will have at least one car, many two and some even three, say 150 more cars regularly travelling along the High Street for every journey the new residents wish to make. Occasionally they might walk or cycle, but realistically they will drive when they come to Stockbridge because the hill up to the proposed site is steep and long. No one with any disability will walk and most will choose to drive into Stockbridge as a matter of convenience. When one is in a car or looking at a map, the pedestrian return journey from Stockbridge to the site looks easy. But on foot it is challenging for many, especially if they are carrying shopping, or accompanying children or just feeling lazy. It is a fact that people who currently visit Stockbridge do not choose to walk from the laybys between the roundabouts, and only park there as a last resort. Often

there are many spaces available in those laybys when the High Street is congested and more drivers are still trying to park in the High Street.

The new residents living in those 100 or more houses will invariably use their cars when coming to Stockbridge to do their shopping, visit the surgery, take their children to the Primary School or the pre-school, take themselves or their dogs for a walk on the Marsh, or visit the Recreation Ground. They will in all cases need to park. Where? The High Street will become ever more congested, farm vehicles will not be able to get through, cyclists will be at increased danger, there will be more pollution of vehicles that are stationary but still emitting fumes, there will be more pollution from tyre particles. This pollution will affect everyone particularly those who walk along the High Street. It has to be remembered that there is only one way into Stockbridge and one way out. Everything has to pass along the High Street in either direction so to increase the number of residents by some 60% is bound to have serious adverse consequences on the High Street, all those who live on or near the High Street, and all those who visit Stockbridge to enjoy its many amenities.

15. Sustainability and the NPPF

By Section 2, para.7 of the NPPF ‘the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development’. We have set out already the many areas that will be adversely affected by this proposed allocation of housing development. This allocation does not contribute to the achievement of sustainable development – it does quite the contrary.

The Government is committed to reaching Net Zero by 2050, as is reflected in Para. 161 of the NPPF which states that the planning system ‘should support the transition to net zero’. Transport is the largest source of the UK’s greenhouse gas emissions. For these 100 houses, as we have said above under **Traffic and Parking**, realistically the people who live in them will invariably use their cars when they go out. Occasionally they might walk or cycle but given the topography of the site, up a steep hill and about a mile from the surgery, the Primary school, the pre-school, the grocers, greengrocers, bakery and butchers, they are much more likely to drive. Of course if they are going further afield they will have to drive as the bus service is very limited. Yet reducing car dependency is a key strategy of

achieving Net Zero. By contrast allocating sites in the centre of Andover, such as the brownfield sites of the old Sainsbury's, the old Marks and Spencer's and the old Post Office, that we have already identified under **Need for More Housing**, would mean a reduction in car usage and consequently a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.

By Para. 161 the NPPF requires the planning system 'to take full account of all climate impacts including ...water scarcity, storm and flood risks...'. A new 100 house or more development on the valley side round the school plus the effects of climate change will have, as we have already pointed out above, under **Water Extraction from the River Test and The Floodplain**, considerable impact on the water supply to the town and in particular will greatly increase the risk of storm and flood damage to Stockbridge. Para. 170 of the NPPF states, 'Inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding should be avoided'. Development is not 'necessary' at this site; as we have pointed out three large brownfield sites are available in the centre of Andover.

Section 15 of the NPPF requires planners to conserve and enhance the natural environment. The serious risks to Stockbridge's wonderful habitat and ecology and the risks to its four SSSIs by allocating this land for the development of 100 or more houses are incalculable.

We emphasise that this proposed allocation of land for development runs completely counter to the whole ethos of the NPPF, the legal requirement to achieve net zero by 2050 and the need for any development to be sustainable. We therefore urge the Planning Department and TVBC Councillors to remove this allocation now from the draft Local Plan 2042.

16. Stockbridge as a service centre

TVBC has placed Stockbridge in Tier 2 of its classification of towns and villages. In coming to that classification no consideration seems to have been given to the geography of Stockbridge, to the fact that it consists essentially of one High Street, that only 554 residents live here, that the bus service is very poor, that its GP Surgery is to all intents and purposes full, its Pre-school and Primary schools are full, that the water company cannot cope with its sewage, that its roads are congested and the parking capacity cannot

be increased. It is suggested that another 100 or more houses near to the centre of Stockbridge can easily be accommodated and will moreover make Stockbridge a thriving and economically sound community. The reality is that, as anyone who comes to Stockbridge knows, it is already a thriving community, and 100 or more new houses will ruin it.

The wide range of successful shops, cafes, restaurants, pubs and hotels as well as the many other community amenities, from the Community Cinema and Stockbridge Amateur Dramatic Society to the Scouts and Beavers, from the Open Gardens Days to the Stockbridge Football Club and the Community Market, show that it does not need more residents to make it thrive. But once it is swamped with hundreds more people and hundreds more cars, Stockbridge will not be able to cope in the way it has always done. Incremental change has been the way Stockbridge has developed over hundreds of years. The proposed influx of hundreds of new residents (with more apparently on the horizon) will alter Stockbridge forever and it will never be able to return to being the unique place it is today.

Conclusion

1. For each and all of the above reasons we submit that the allocation of 100 houses in the Local Plan 2042 on the valley side above Stockbridge is unsound.
2. The site chosen for approximately 100 new houses is large enough to build many more hundreds of houses. If this current allocation is made it is obvious that it will only be a matter of time before Stockbridge is described as Stockbridge New Town.
3. The look of Stockbridge, as it has looked since Roman times, as ribbon development on the valley floor, will be lost because of an estate built high on the valley side which will be highly visible .
4. The precious River Test will suffer yet more pollution.
5. Stockbridge will be at even greater risk of flooding and sewage problems.
6. The four Stockbridge SSSIs will be under increased threat whereas they should be protected and fostered.

7. The Stockbridge Conservation Area, with all its architectural and historic character, will also be under threat, rather than preserved and enhanced as it should be.
8. Access from the A30 is not possible because of the Restricted Bridleway crossing the site which prohibits vehicular access.
9. Suggested access from Houghton Road is a non starter as the road is no more than a country lane.
10. Stockbridge can hardly cope with the present influx of visitors – traffic congestion will increase and more parking places are just not available in the centre where people wish to park, because no site is available or suitable in Stockbridge. Air pollution will get worse.
11. Various amenities such as the GP Surgery and the Primary School are already full.
12. In 2013 a developer applied for planning permission to build 46 new houses near Danebury School. The application was refused for all the same reasons that still apply today.

Once Stockbridge loses its charm, character and uniqueness it will never be the same again. Its 2,000 years of remaining a linear settlement will be gone at a stroke.

We urge the Councillors of TVBC and the Planning Department for all of the above reasons, and in order to keep Stockbridge special, to remove this allocation from the Draft Local Plan 2042.

Jean Boney

Chair of Save Our Stockbridge

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