

Aylesbury Vale District Council  
The Gateway  
Gatehouse Road  
Aylesbury  
HP19 8FF

For the attention of Cllr Carole Paternoster, Cllr Neil Blake and Ms Tracey Aldworth

2<sup>nd</sup> October 2017

Dear Sirs

This letter is an official complaint from Halton Parish Council about the process followed by AVDC during production of the Draft Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan (VALP).

As background to this complaint, it is important to consider that 1000 dwellings is a large number of houses to be placed in any rural setting. When put into context of the current Halton Parish of only 309 dwellings and a population of 935, it is massive. By adding 1000 dwellings and potentially 2500 people, it would quadruple the size of the small rural community.

Our main issues are:

1. Halton Parish Council has not been engaged, communicated with or consulted by AVDC on the surprise inclusion of 1000 new dwellings in Halton Village shown in the latest version of the VALP. In the prior consultation versions of the VALP, there were potentially 800 houses shown against **Wendover**, but **Halton** had an allocation of just 17 new dwellings which Halton Parish Council supported.
2. Halton Parish Council is being prevented from making any informed response to the latest VALP by a lack of key information about the actual proposals for this small community.
3. There is a series of factual errors contained in the latest version of the VALP as it relates to Halton and the closure of the RAF base. Had the Parish Council been given the correct information, we would have been able to provide meaningful assistance within the consultation timeframe.

Moreover, we believe that, with this fundamental change in the plan for the “small village” of Halton, we have a right to be consulted more fully than other communities on the VALP. In order to be able to provide an informed response to the draft version of the VALP, we need some important information, including the following:

- The Master plan for final disposal of RAF Halton land.
- Essential information about:
  - how the environment will be protected including the AONB and existing green belt land.
  - preservation of heritage assets in the parish.
  - proposed provision of sporting facilities and public open spaces.
  - detailed supporting data about infrastructure such as retail space, community amenities, secondary schools and employment sites.
- a detailed traffic report which identifies the impacts on the roads in the parish (the existing Jacobs Report August 2017 does not provide this *'This methodology ensures that the wider strategic impact of the development site is included in the modelled results, despite the limited network coverage in this area; however, the limitation is that any local impacts in Halton will not be captured.'*

Although the Parish Council has had very little time to study the surprising details shown in latest VALP, we have identified a number of issues, errors and concerns, some of which are listed below (not exhaustive):

- Geography, AVDC appears to believe that RAF Halton is in Wendover (or Halton Camp or Wendover/Halton) and keep referring to it in such terms within the VALP
- . The closure of RAF Halton releases 740 acres of land, most of which are in the parish of Halton, with a few acres in the parish of Aston Clinton. Apart from being factually wrong, the VALP shows a disregard for the people being most impacted by this change.

### **Green Belt**

- The VALP appears to have been written suggesting the lifting of green belt land in Halton is acceptable. However, the detail about the RAF main site in Halton in para 3.3.2 is wrong. Although it has green belt status , the implication is that it may be lifted for more housing in the next plan.  
The rationale for lifting the green belt as shown in parcel RSA-3 should be for “exceptional reasons only” and the AVDC analysis needs to be tested by the Inspector.  
Furthermore it contradicts the statement in S2 Spatial strategy for growth which states – ‘*“Wendover will accommodate around 1,128 new homes with 1,000 new homes at Halton Camp which is now confirmed to be closing in 2022 recognising the sustainability of Wendover and the railway station. No further growth is allocated at Wendover reflecting the environmental constraints of the surrounding AONB and Green Belt land”*
- The policy map of Halton shows the areas designated for housing allocation.

- The Draft VALP shows that an artificial grass pitch, a sports pavilion, and at least 2 playing fields off Chestnut Avenue are now allocated for housing. This is contradictory to other AVDC documents about leisure facilities and open spaces. It is also against the NPPF.

- It also incorrectly shows the land between the RAF Sergeant's Mess and McEwan Ride which is part of the listed Halton estate as "allocated for housing development".

**-Employment.** Employment opportunities will be a serious issue for the area with the closure of the RAF site and the village needs a sustainable solution. Halton Parish Council cannot understand why the workshops area, the office buildings of Kermod Hall and the HQ block, along with the Sergeant's Mess would need a change of use from employment areas to housing.

In conclusion, the Parish Council's rights and position have been undermined by AVDC during production of the draft VALP. We are currently taking legal advice on this subject so that we can effectively represent our community. We would like to understand the AVDC's response to these issues and what consultative actions you are planning to take. Halton Parish Council welcomes the opportunity to work with AVDC to produce sustainable solutions for the RAF's withdrawal from its base at RAF Halton but we cannot assist in a vacuum of information where we are not engaged.

Yours faithfully

**Brian Thompson**

Cc: Halton Parish Councillors  
D Cllr S Bowles  
D Cllr R Newcombe  
D Cllr P Strachan  
Rt Hon David Lidington MP  
Clerk to Halton Parish Council