

Introduction

PROFILE OF TEST VALLEY

Test Valley is a mainly rural borough covering 628 square kms (243 square miles) of the western side of Hampshire. The borough has high quality natural and built environments, with a number of conservation areas, listed buildings and areas covered by designations, such as the New Forest National Park, and North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Beauty.

At the 2001 census, the population of the borough was 109,760. This population is projected to increase by around 14% by 2026 (HCC projections). Around half of the total population lives in the two market towns - Romsey in the south and Andover in the north. The rest of the population lives in the smaller rural settlements scattered across the borough.

Test Valley is a predominantly affluent area. The Indices of Multiple Deprivation show that of 354 local authority areas Test Valley ranks 317th (where 1 is the most deprived). However the Borough does contain some pockets of relative deprivation, and average incomes are lower than those regionally and nationally. Average house prices are higher than those nationally, and comparable to regional averages. Crime rates in Test Valley are amongst the lowest in the country.

Further information can be found in the Council's Borough Profile.

KEY ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

The following issues and challenges have been identified as key for the Council over the next four years:

- **Major Development Areas** - significant housing developments in Andover and southern Test Valley will have huge implications for the provision of services and facilities and will open up real opportunities for the future of our towns.
- **Sustainability** - featuring high on the national agenda, sustainability is now on our radars locally. The impact of our actions on future generations is an issue for the Council and the community as a whole.
- **Maximising impact** - in a landscape of increasing expectations and emphasis on value for money it is important that the Council makes the most of available resources and maximises impact by working smarter.

Chapter 1

THE PURPOSE OF THE CORPORATE PLAN

The Council's Corporate Plan sets out our vision and priorities for Test Valley over the next four years and beyond. The Plan is a key corporate document and a central link in the Council's overall Strategic Planning Framework.

THE STRATEGIC PLANNING FRAMEWORK

The Strategic Planning Framework (set out in the diagram overleaf) describes the links between the key planning documents which cascade down through the organisation, from the Community Plan to the individual objectives agreed at annual staff performance appraisals.

The **Community Plan** is the high level strategic document which sets out a shared long term vision and aims to improve quality of life for all in Test Valley. The Community Plan is based on a shared understanding of the needs of the area and is developed by a wide range of partner organisations who work together as the Local Strategic Partnership. The Council has a lead role in the partnership.

The Council's **Corporate Plan** sets out the Borough Council's medium term priorities and is our contribution to the delivery of the long term aims in the Community Plan.

The Corporate Plan contains key actions and measures which are drawn from the annual **Service Plans** in which each of the Council's services sets out its plans for the year.

The actions and targets contained in the annual service plans then feed down into the individual objectives set for each member of staff through the annual **performance appraisals**.

Other key Council strategies and plans also link into the framework:

The **Local Development Framework (LDF) Core Strategy** is the core planning document which sets the framework for future spatial development in the Borough. It determines the land use policies which fall out of the Community Plan.

There are **other strategies and plans** which are on specific themes e.g. housing or economic development. These link into the Community Plan, the LDF Core Strategy, and the Corporate Plan.

The financial implications of all of the Council's plans are picked up through the **Medium Term Financial Strategy** and **Annual Budget**.