



*“We have exceeded our targets on delivery of affordable housing”*

## Creating stronger & safer communities

**OUR AIM:** A place where people feel safe and involved, in strong local communities.

### THE SITUATION NOW:

**House prices in Test Valley are significantly higher than national averages. This combined with lower than average wage levels for many jobs in the Borough, means that affordability of housing remains a key issue for local people. Over the past three years we have exceeded our targets on delivery of affordable housing, including an innovative development of eco-homes. Working in partnership through the Hampshire Alliance for Rural Affordable Housing (HARAH) we have delivered affordable housing in rural areas.**

Major development commencing in Andover this year will see 3700 new homes by 2016, of which 40% will be affordable. A significant number of new homes are also planned for southern Test Valley. Planning for these major development areas will be challenging, but they provide opportunities for a range of benefits for local communities including community facilities and buildings; open space, play areas; sports pitches and facilities; transport and highway improvements.

Test Valley has a diverse range of local communities. Some are long established and have a strong sense of community, others are less developed. The Council works in partnership with the voluntary sector and other agencies to engage with local communities and encourage and support community projects. Although crime rates in Test Valley are amongst the lowest nationally, there are problems with persistent low level crime and anti-social behaviour in some areas of the Borough. The Council works with the Police and other agencies through the Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) to develop joint approaches to reducing crime and anti-social behaviour.

### THE OUTCOMES WE WANT TO ACHIEVE:

- **Improved** availability of a range of affordable and suitable housing to meet people’s needs.
- **Balanced**, vibrant and inclusive communities.
- **Improved** access to facilities and services.
- **Opportunities** for everyone to participate in and contribute to community life.
- **People feeling safer**, with reduced levels of crime and anti-social behaviour.

## KEY ACTIONS PLANNED FOR 2007/08:

1. **Develop major** housing development areas (*MDAs*) and ensure sufficient infrastructure provision and integration of new communities.
2. **Work with intelligence** from the Housing Market Assessment, and establish a local Housing Board, to develop a new Housing Strategy for the Borough guiding future action on housing from 2008.
3. **Enable the development** of further affordable homes to sustain the average completion rate of at least 100 affordable homes per annum.
4. **Develop a drop-in advice centre** by returning an empty shop back into use at Atholl Court, as part of the Council's key role in the delivery of the 'Turnaround Project' (*a multi-agency project looking at ways of improving quality of life within the Alamein Ward in Andover*).
5. **Develop mechanisms** to provide 3-year funding of key voluntary organisations from 2008.
6. **Encourage and promote** the development of Parish Plans, helping communities to identify their local needs and agree action plans to tackle priorities.
7. **Develop 'new community days'** - information days for new European communities in Andover and Romsey, to provide advice and information on housing, health and other services.
8. **Work with Romsey Community Improvement Partnership**, a multi-agency approach to developing activities with young people to address problems of anti-social behaviour and disaffected young people in Romsey.
9. **Develop the Council's** Neighbourhood Wardens Service, ensuring close working relationships with the new Community Policing arrangements.
10. **Implement a Borough wide**, joint 'hot-spot' tasking approach to target places and times with higher incidences of criminal damage and anti-social behaviour.
11. **Develop early intervention approaches** to reduce anti-social behaviour.
12. **Reduce our use** of temporary housing accommodation by 50% by 2010 in line with Government targets.

## MEDIUM TERM PLANS:

- **Use the Housing Market Assessment** to ensure sustainable housing options in both rural and urban areas.
- **Work in cross-boundary partnerships** e.g. Hampshire Alliance for Rural Affordable Housing (*HARAH*) and Partnership for Urban South Hampshire (*PUSH*).
- **Consider the implications** of the Local Government White Paper and develop the Council's approach to community engagement and neighbourhood working, including community asset management, and devolved decision making.

## MEASURING SUCCESS:

- **Sustained or increased** numbers of affordable homes delivered.
- **Reduced** homelessness and use of temporary accommodation.
- **Increased** levels of volunteering.
- **Increased** satisfaction with the local area as a place to live.
- **Increased** satisfaction with community facilities in the local area.
- **Reduced** levels of crime as shown by the Home Office crime indicators.
- **Reduced** levels of fear of crime.
- **Reduced** levels of anti-social behaviour.
- **Improved** speed in dealing with abandoned vehicles.
- **Respect** in neighbourhoods (*new Local Area Agreement (LAA) mandatory measure*).