



“We have made significant strides to deliver improved cultural opportunities”

Improving cultural opportunities

OUR AIM: A place where people can participate in and enjoy a wide range of cultural and leisure activities.

THE SITUATION NOW:

Over the past four years we have made significant strides to deliver improved cultural opportunities in Test Valley and progress the aims of our Cultural Strategy. Major achievements include the opening of ‘The Lights’ entertainment venue in Andover, the completion of extensive refurbishment and new dry side development at Romsey Rapids, and development of the ‘Andover Live’ programme of events. The new Andover cinema is under construction and expected to open in Spring 2008.

Leisure and cultural pursuits are increasingly being recognised for their wider benefits in improving overall quality of life. Cultural activity plays an important role in improving people’s overall health and well-being, developing vibrant, strong and safe communities, and contributing to a thriving local economy. An example is the role that physical activity can play in combating rising obesity levels. A recent Sport England survey shows that Test Valley residents currently have the 7th highest level of exercise in the country. We have pledged to increase that level by 3.5% by 2009.

The construction of new housing development in Andover is about to commence and priority will be given to integrate the new communities and provide new facilities where needed. We also want to ensure that cultural activities are accessible to all and encourage wider participation across the whole community by developing opportunities within local communities and the rural villages.

THE OUTCOMES WE WANT TO ACHIEVE:

- **Increased access** to a range of sport, recreational and cultural opportunities.
- **Improved offer** of venues and facilities for sport, recreational and cultural activities.
- **Increased participation** across the whole community through targeted promotion of opportunities.
- **Improved quality**, accessibility and use of our parks, open spaces, and play areas.

KEY ACTIONS PLANNED FOR 2007/08:

1. **Build on the success** of the first two seasons at 'The Lights' theatre with further development of the programme of performances, classes and workshops, events in the arena, and the theatre's outreach programme.
2. **Develop the 'Andover Live'** events programme of music and arts for the town, and stage the second Andover Live Music Festival, Summer 2007.
3. **Develop a programme** of rural community events and activities, to increase opportunities to engage in arts and other leisure activities in the villages.
4. **Host the Hampshire Water Festival** in Andover in July 2007 to provide a fun day of activities for all, and promote ways for people to help save water.
5. **Carry out a 5-year review** of the Council's Leisure Management Contract to ensure best use of resources in the future provision of leisure facilities.
6. **Produce a Sports & Recreation Strategy** which will explore shared resources and new partnerships.
7. **As key players in 'Sport Andover'**, a partnership to promote sporting opportunities in Andover, hold a Sports Fair in April 2007 and develop an annual festival of sport in the town, offering increased opportunities for more people to try different sports.
8. **Develop the Depot youth complex** to provide a wider range of activities and services for young people.
9. **Commence implementation** of the Green Space Strategy, including securing external funding to develop Phoenix Park in Andover and attain a green flag status for the War Memorial Park in Romsey.

MEDIUM TERM PLANS:

- **Develop new leisure facilities** in the major housing development areas (MDAs).
- **Explore options** to provide new modern sporting facilities to replace Andover Leisure Centre, linked to the development of the new college.
- **Work with local sports clubs** to enhance and develop sporting facilities at Foxcotte Park.
- **Explore options** for upgrading Andover Museum, linked to the development of the new Discovery Centre.
- **Develop** the 'Christmas Lights Switch On' festival with the intention over time to develop it into a week long festival of light.
- **Maximise opportunities** arising from the 2012 Olympic Games, and investigate establishing a 'Centre of Excellence' in Test Valley, for an appropriate Olympic sport.
- **Explore options** to develop a major new indoor facility, such as a snow dome/ski slope.
- **Work towards achieving improved standards** across all parks and open spaces within the Council's ownership by 2014, and ensure sufficiently high quality standards at two sites to achieve green flag status by 2011.
- **Implement improvements** to the Borough's playgrounds and play areas in line with the Council's Play Strategy.
- **Enhance** Andover's skatepark facilities at the Depot, with a view to getting national recognition and becoming a venue for national events.

MEASURING SUCCESS:

- **Increased** satisfaction with cultural facilities.
- **Increased** participation levels / visitor numbers / usage.
- **Achievement** of Green flag awards for parks/open spaces.
- **Increased** levels of volunteering hours.
- **LPSA2* targets** for physical activities.
- **Benchmarking** Valley Leisure performance.

* Local Public Service Agreement 2 (LPSA2) - Partners in Hampshire have agreed to stretch performance in specific areas. This separate agreement with government brings with it pump priming funding and potential to earn performance reward grants.