



*“The Council has made real progress over the past four years”*

## Enabling a prosperous economy

**OUR AIM: A place where people can realise their full potential in a vibrant local economy.**

### THE SITUATION NOW:

**Test Valley has a successful economy, with a low unemployment rate of 1% (April 2006). It is primarily a service-based economy, with an important manufacturing sector. Farming is also a significant employer.**

The Council has made real progress over the past four years in revitalising the borough’s town centres. In Andover, some major achievements include the development of The Lights entertainment venue and a new cinema under construction. These have contributed to the delivery of the ‘Andover Vision’, a long term plan for a more prosperous, entertaining and inclusive Andover. This is an innovative joint venture by the Council with strong business involvement and a range of organisations working together as part of the Vision Board.

The Council’s role in enabling the development of the local economy is recognised in its long term economic strategy for Test Valley which will be reviewed and updated in the coming year. A major priority for the coming years is the rejuvenation of our industrial estates to provide quality premises for businesses and maintain Test Valley’s competitiveness. On a day-to-day basis the Council’s economic development team aims to offer first class business support and advice to assist new and small businesses, of particular importance in the rural areas.

### THE OUTCOMES WE WANT TO ACHIEVE:

- **Revitalised** industrial estates.
- **Improved employment opportunities** and support for the development of the rural economy.
- **Improved opportunities** for training and skills development.
- **Increased opportunities** for tourism.
- **Improved quality** of the retail offer in town centres.
- **Development of innovative** and higher value-added products and services (less reliance on basic production).
- **Provision of first class** business support to new and small businesses.

## KEY ACTIONS PLANNED FOR 2007/08:

1. **Develop a Vision** for the Andover Industrial Estates and work with appropriate funders to manage and rejuvenate the industrial estates, (Summer 2007).
2. **Review the Long Term Economic Strategy** for Test Valley, (Summer 2007).
3. **Develop policies** within the Local Development Framework (LDF) to support the provision of employment opportunities, promote regeneration, reduce economic disparities in the Borough, and support the vitality of town centres.
4. **Promote the Andover Vision** to London commercial agents to try and attract better quality comparison goods shops (Autumn 2007).
5. **Lead on the Hampshire wide** (LAA) project to increase Hampshire's regional share of VAT registered businesses, working with enterprise agencies to promote 'growing businesses'.
6. **Encourage the growth** of innovative and value-added businesses through developments such as Chilworth Science Park, Roke Manor, CTC at Nursling, Telsecure at Broughton.
7. **Hold a Business Support Roadshow**, and take part in a Hampshire 'Meet the Buyers' event, enabling small businesses from the local area to meet and sell to major public and private sector organisations, (Spring 2008).
8. **Produce a revised second edition** of the Test Valley Business Directory, (Autumn 2007).
9. **Encourage a 'Local Labour in Construction' scheme** requiring developers to support construction apprenticeship schemes through planning agreements on large scale housing developments.
10. **Work with Test Valley Community Services** to promote the 'wheels to work' scheme.
11. **Organise and host** a Test Valley Tourism Summit in June 2007.
12. **Promote a new 'Hampshire's Countryside'** website in conjunction with Hampshire County Council, with on-line booking covering Test Valley, East Hampshire, Basingstoke and Hart. Launch May 2007.
13. **Promote Hampshire Hospitality Awards** with associated funding for training from Tourism South East, (Spring 2007).
14. **Produce promotional material** linking Test Valley producers (e.g. Hampshire Fayre members, community village shops etc) to attract visitors. Hold a launch event in Spring 2007.

## MEDIUM TERM PLANS:

- **Continue to develop** and implement the Andover Vision.
- **Encourage new employment** uses on the industrial estates (e.g. nursery, college facility, health & fitness centre etc).
- **Seek appropriate redevelopment** of the Ford Cottage site behind the Chantry Centre, possibly to include a new town centre hotel and catering outlets.
- **Attract a quality** department store to Andover.
- **Promote and continue to develop** the use of community venues for training and skills courses.
- **Develop a grants scheme** to support the sustainability of village shops.
- **Develop the skills training brokerage service**, subject to planning contributions, to provide advice and support to small businesses on training and employment needs.
- **Continue work with Romsey 2020 Vision** and Stockbridge Area Partnership to develop proposals under the SEEDA Hampshire Market Towns Programme.
- **Enhance marketing for local producers**, village shops etc, including the development of 'food trails'; a series of routes linking local food producers, shops and pubs.
- **Explore the potential** of a European funding bid (LEADER) to enhance the promotion of countryside activities e.g. walking, cycling, horse-riding, fishing, golf etc. to generate more tourism related spending.

## MEASURING SUCCESS:

- **Increased** footfall to town centres.
- **Increased** satisfaction with retail / catering offers in our towns.
- **Increased** percentage occupancy of units on the industrial estates.
- **Increased** visitor numbers to the borough and average expenditure. (*tourism impact assessment*).