

BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE TEST VALLEY



Sustainability Strategy

2012 - 2017

FOREWORD

“I am pleased to introduce “Building a Sustainable Test Valley” our Sustainability Strategy for Test Valley Borough Council to guide us through the next five years to 2017. Over recent years we have been making good progress to reduce the Council’s use of resources. In particular we have reduced our carbon dioxide emissions by an impressive 13%.

This strategy sets out how we will continue the drive to be more sustainable and build on our success to date. This will include further reducing the Council’s demand for natural resources and delivering an additional reduction in carbon dioxide emissions of 10%.

Enhancing and preserving the natural and built environment is one of the Council’s key aims. This strategy provides a strong foundation on which future decisions are made, both about our own use of resources and when making strategic decisions affecting future generations in the Borough.

I welcome the document’s clear objectives, 19 point action plan and the recognition of the need to regularly monitor progress to ensure we meet our targets and keep sustainability at the forefront of our minds.”

Councillor **Peter Boulton**
Portfolio Holder for Environment

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1** The Council has a range of responsibilities in the way it delivers its services, including seeking to promote sustainable practices. This incorporates a range of issues and areas of focus, such as reducing demand on resources and using them more wisely (including energy and materials), adapting to a changing climate and reducing expenditure on energy and fuel.
- 1.2** This strategy sets out the approach for the Council to reduce its demand on natural resources and deliver its services and functions in a more environmentally sustainable way. It also provides a framework for future decisions. This document includes an action plan for the next five years, and a framework to monitor our progress.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 There are many definitions of sustainability, all of which tend to recognise environmental, social and economic considerations. One of the most regularly used definitions for sustainable development was provided by the Brundtland Commission in 1987; this states that “sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”¹.

National Approach

2.2 The Government has established five principles that form the basis of sustainable development², namely:

- Living within environmental limits
- Ensuring a strong, healthy and just society
- Achieving a sustainable economy
- Using sound science responsibly
- Promoting good governance

1 Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development: Our Common Future, World Commission on Environment and Development (Brundtland Commission), 1987, Part I, Chapter 2.

2 Guiding principles for sustainable development, DEFRA (available: <http://sd.defra.gov.uk/what/principles/>).

2.3 The Government’s commitment to sustainable development highlights the need for stimulating economic growth, maximising wellbeing and protecting our environment³. It has also identified its intention to embed the value of nature into society.

Local Considerations

2.4 Everyone has a different role to play in supporting the Government’s vision and the guiding principles. It has been highlighted that for public sector organisations sustainable development can have a role in delivering value for money, particularly given the pressures on public expenditure⁴.

2.5 The environmental aspects of the Government’s vision cover a range of issues, in particular tackling a changing climate (mitigation and adaptation) and protecting and enhancing the natural environment. Both of these issues are important in Test Valley and the links between the two should be recognised.

2.6 Test Valley has a high quality environment, including the landscape and biodiversity, which the Council will aim to conserve and enhance. The water environment, including the River Test, is important in the Borough, as a source of water for residents, for ecology and an asset for the local economy.

3 Mainstreaming Sustainable Development: The Government’s Vision and What This Means in Practice, DEFRA, 2011 (available: <http://sd.defra.gov.uk/documents/mainstreaming-sustainable-development.pdf>)

4 What Should You Be Doing?, DEFRA (available: <http://sd.defra.gov.uk/advice/public/action/>)

3. ACHIEVEMENTS TO DATE

- 3.1** In 2008 the Council signed the Nottingham Declaration and embarked upon a number of initiatives including adoption of a Carbon Management Plan and Sustainability Strategy, undertaking a Green Fleet Review and preparing a Climate Change Adaptation Plan. Through implementing the actions setout in these documents and taking opportunities as they arose we have reduced our carbon dioxide emissions and promoted the theme of sustainability in the running of the Council. By the end of the financial year 2010/11, the Council's carbon dioxide emissions had reduced by approximately 13.4% in comparison to the Carbon Management Plan baseline position. We can now move forward in delivering further actions to promote environmental sustainability.
- 3.2** Through investment in IT infrastructure it has been possible to make savings in our energy consumption and the use of resources. The number of servers has been reduced with a consequential saving on energy required to power the air conditioning system. The type of computers and the number of printers we use have been reviewed. Through undertaking these measures, a national independent benchmarking survey identified the Council's approach to 'Green IT' to be in the top 25% in comparison with 1,000 UK organisations⁵.

- 3.3** We have made changes to some of our buildings to reduce energy consumption and associated carbon dioxide emissions. For example, changes to heating systems have been made to a number of buildings, for example in sports pavilions. We have installed a system to enable the more effective use of electricity at the Chantry Centre multi-storey car park and are installing more efficient lighting at the Beech Hurst office.
- 3.4** The Council has reduced the amount of paper it uses as a result of reviewing our procedures and a more efficient use of technology. In 2010/11 we used approximately 17% less standard A4 paper than in 2008/09.
- 3.5** The Council has reviewed the way it manages its fleet vehicles and has provided training on smarter driving techniques both of which have helped to promote the efficient use of fuel. Between 2008/09 and 2010/11 we reduced the amount of fuel used in running the fleet vehicles whilst continuing to deliver the same service⁶.
- 3.6** The Council is responsible for 14 Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs). For the period 2005-2010 all of these sites were identified to be in positive management by Hampshire County Council. A pilot project has also been undertaken for planting annual meadow flowers on the Andover Ring Road – this mix requires less watering than the traditional planting. As a result of the pilot, it is intended to increase the use of meadow flower mixes over the next few years.

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5 Undertaken by Hytec in 2011.

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6 The reduction achieved is approximately 11% however the baseline figure from 2008/09 includes additional miles travelled by the waste collection vehicles when the Andover waste transfer station was not available.

4. VISION AND OBJECTIVES

4.1 The Council's Vision is:

“To be an organisation of excellence committed to improving the quality of life of all the people of Test Valley”.⁷

4.2 This Strategy will help to deliver the Council's Vision. The Strategy focuses on a number of objectives which are set out below:

- Ensure sustainability is incorporated into our procedures and policies
- Procure materials and resources from more sustainable sources
- Reduce our emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases
- Through working with the residents of the Borough, reduce the amount of household waste collected, whilst increasing the proportion which is re-used, recycled or composted
- Reduce our water consumption
- Adapt to a changing climate to deliver a more robust estate and working practices
- Promote biodiversity and the positive management of Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) for which the Council is responsible
- Work with partner organisations and the community to preserve and enhance the local environment and quality of life of those living and working in the Borough
- Progress schemes which have an environmental benefit where there is a sound business case.

5. KEY THEMES AND AREAS FOR ACTION

5.1 A number of themes have been identified as a focus for action within Test Valley. They have been grouped by area of work rather than environmental / sustainability issue. It will be important to ensure that local and national policies and objectives for each of these themes are integrated into our work and operations.

5.2 The key themes are:

- Policy development and implementation
- Internal practices and procedures
- Transport and travel
- Managing the Council's estate
- Managing green open spaces and biodiversity
- Partnership working
- Community involvement

Policy Development and Implementation

5.3 Appropriate policy documents should take account of ways to conserve and enhance the Borough and think about wider environmental impacts, such as a changing climate. These matters are already highlighted within the Council's Corporate Plan and the Community Plan. It is important that this is followed through into Service Plans and the policy documents prepared by the Council. This reflects an objective of the strategy to ensure that sustainability considerations are incorporated into our policies and procedures.

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7 Corporate Plan 2011-2015: Doing Things Differently, Test Valley Borough Council, 2011, page 9.

5.4 The Core Strategy, which will establish planning policy for the Borough, will be a key document to consider the use of resources, climate change, and the natural and built environment within a planning context. The timescales for delivering this and other planning policy documents are set out in the Local Development Scheme (available on the Council's website). The Council's Housing Strategy 2012 – 2015 takes account of sustainability in seeking to improve access to decent homes⁸. New homes are being built to higher sustainability standards over time through Building Regulation requirements⁹.

Internal Practices and Procedures

5.5 This theme covers the way we work and the measures we can take to improve service delivery. With 528 employees¹⁰ there is the potential for a significant number of people to help make a difference. The theme picks up on how we use technology, how we procure goods and services and how we communicate our achievements. We have made a number of enhancements to the way our IT systems are delivered and will continue to seek opportunities to introduce even more sustainable practices.

8 Helping People Access a Decent Home: Housing Strategy 2012 – 2015, Test Valley Borough Council, 2012.

9 Note that through planning requirements development at Abbotswood in Romsey will be built to Code for Sustainable Homes level 3 or BREEAM Assessment Very Good Standard; development at East Anton (Augusta Park) is being built to BREEAM Assessment Very Good Standard; and new affordable housing is built to at least Code for Sustainable Homes level 3.

10 Headcount based at the end of November 2011, as at the end of March 2009 there were 572 staff.

5.6 The Council recognises it has a vital role in furthering sustainable development through its procurement of goods, works and services; these range from stationery and construction materials to refuse collection vehicles and property management contracts. Procurement decisions have major socio-economic and environmental implications, both locally and globally, now and for future generations. A key objective is to ensure that our goods and services are procured from sustainable sources.

Transport and Travel

5.7 The Council operates a fleet of vehicles for a range of purposes, including waste collection and for the management of parks and open spaces. A number of journeys are also undertaken by staff for business purposes. The Council has had a Travel Plan in place since 2001 to encourage staff to travel sustainably, with the most recent document produced in 2009. Staff travel surveys are undertaken annually. The Council is looking at opportunities to use fuel more efficiently in the management of the fleet vehicles and deliver the actions identified within the Travel Plan. This has the potential to support the objective to reduce our carbon dioxide emissions.

Managing the Council's Estate

5.8 There is a need to consider the use of resources in the running of the Council's estate it owns over 130 buildings, and our approach to new buildings. It will be important to continue to promote energy and water efficient measures; to deliver projects to reduce energy consumption and utilise lower carbon and renewable forms of energy. These matters link to objectives to reduce carbon dioxide emissions and reduce water consumption. There is a need to consider how we use resources and manage waste that is generated. In addition, we need to take account of the potential impacts of climate change and adapt as appropriate.

Managing Green Open Spaces and Biodiversity

5.9 The Council is a major landowner. It manages large areas of open space including sports pitches, parks and woodland (in total over 250 hectares). In managing its estate, the Council can play a role in promoting biodiversity.

5.10 It will be important to continue to seek opportunities to enhance the biodiversity of the Borough, implement the Biodiversity Action Plan and ensure the spaces we are responsible for are appropriately managed for nature conservation. This includes continuing the positive management of the Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation that the Council is responsible for.

5.11 The Council can continue to maintain the woodlands it is responsible for in a sustainable way, with the waste wood material being recycled, re-used or used as a fuel source to generate energy.

5.12 We should be seeking new and innovative opportunities to provide well managed green space whilst minimising the use of resources. For example, this will include looking at new varieties of plants in landscape schemes which require less watering and fewer maintenance visits. We will also continue to implement the River Anton Enhancement Scheme and continue to work with local people to ensure communities are involved in their local environment.

Partnership Working

5.13 The Council already works with a number of partners, such as Hampshire County Council, the Carbon Trust and Energy Saving Trust. It will be important to continue this and seek new opportunities. Partnership working provides an opportunity to share information, resources and best practice. The Council will continue to work with the Test Valley Partnership, as well as with other authorities in Hampshire. Through a partnership approach there is potential for achieving more in a time when resources are less readily available and to access greater expertise through joint working.

Community Involvement

5.14 Residents, businesses and other organisations within the Borough all have a significant role to play to support the objectives of this Strategy. The Council also has a role in leading by example to promote others to take appropriate measures. There is a need to continue to raise awareness and inspire action in terms of how the people of Test Valley can influence the local environment and wider environmental issues, such as energy and water efficiency, recycling and composting, and promoting biodiversity. In relation to promoting the reuse, recycling and composting of household waste, the target within the Borough is 36.5% by 2012/13¹¹. The Council can also help to support community and volunteer groups who contribute towards delivering the environmental objectives in the Corporate and Community Plans.

6. IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

- 6.1** The actions associated with the key themes will provide the focus for project delivery within the Borough, in some cases these can be implemented by the Council alone, with others needing the support of partners. There are limited resources available, particularly given the current financial circumstances; therefore a 'spend to save' approach will be important.
- 6.2** This strategy has links to a number of other documents and strategies. Figure 1 identifies some of the documents which are related to this strategy, where the objectives may overlap or the implementation of one strategy may help another.
- 6.3** Monitoring of progress in delivering the actions will be undertaken on an annual basis through the production of a monitoring report, this will be prepared based on financial years rather than calendar years.
- 6.4** An action plan has been prepared (see section 8) which sets out the key actions proposed over the period and how the actions will be monitored. Additional actions may be identified as the period progresses and further opportunities for partnership working are identified.

Carbon Dioxide Emissions

- 6.5** A key outcome of the strategy will be continuing to reduce our carbon dioxide emissions.

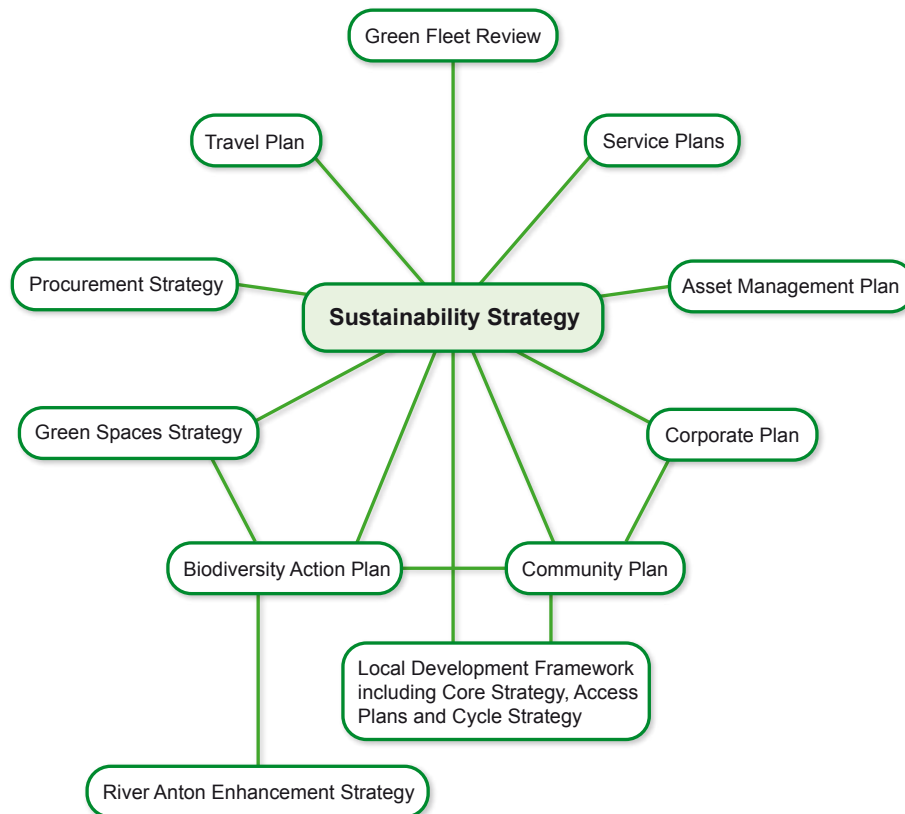
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11 In 2010/11, 36.4% of household waste was reused, recycled or composted.

- 6.6** The Council has established an indicator for its own carbon dioxide emissions, which includes our operational buildings, fleet vehicle travel and car based business travel. It also covers the buildings operated by Valley Leisure, including Romsey Rapids and Andover Leisure Centre.
- 6.7** Taking account of the measures proposed, a target of a 10% reduction in emissions against a baseline year of 2010/11 is proposed over the life of this strategy. This figure will be kept under review as the strategy moves forward.

7. CONCLUSION

- 7.1** The implementation of this strategy is intended to support the delivery of our objectives, incorporating sustainability into our procedures and policies and ensuring the sustainable use of resources. There should also be a 10% reduction of carbon dioxide emissions through the proposed actions.

Figure 1: Links between this Strategy and other Council Documents



8. ACTION PLAN

8.1 The below table sets out the actions and projects that the Council is intending to deliver in relation to the themes considered above.

Action Reference	Action Description	Lead from Officer Management Team	Lead Officer	Target Completion/ Timescales	How will the Action be Funded / Resourced?	Monitoring Requirements
Policy Development and Implementation						
1	Ensure Service Plans include a commitment to implementing the Council's Sustainability Strategy	Corporate Director	Performance Officer	As part of annual preparation of Service Plans	No additional resource required	Annual Service Plan approval
2	Ensure all policy documents / strategies developed by the Council consider adapting to climate change where appropriate	Corporate Director	Lead officer for each policy document / strategy	Not applicable	No additional resource required	Summarise the consideration in Cabinet Reports
Internal Practices and Procedures						
3	Complete the roll out of compact computers to all appropriate staff through desktop refresh programme	Head of IT	Infrastructure Manager	As part of the 4 year refresh programme – as departmental PCs reach their 4th year of operation they will be replaced with CFF ¹² devices. Completion of rollout will be ongoing over the next three years.	Funded through existing budgets	Annual review of percentage of total compact computers rolled out

Action Reference	Action Description	Lead from Officer Management Team	Lead Officer	Target Completion/ Timescales	How will the Action be Funded / Resourced?	Monitoring Requirements
4	Review Procurement Strategy to ensure sustainable procurement is an integral part of our purchasing; to consider including sustainability in procurement training; the review of evaluation criteria to include sustainability.	Head of Finance	Procurement Officer	June 2012	Within existing resources	Annual review of contracts with appropriate sustainability criteria and the number of officers who have received training
5	Updating contract standing orders to include sustainability considerations.	Head of Legal and Democratic	Head of Legal and Democratic	April 2012	Within existing resources	Completion of the project.
Transport and Travel						
6	Continue to seek opportunities to promote the efficient use of fuel by the fleet vehicles	Head of Environmental Services	Transport Manager	Not applicable	Within existing resources	For refuse collection vehicles: fuel use in comparison to dwellings served and through monitoring of carbon dioxide emissions
7	Deliver the Travel Plan action plans	Head of Planning Policy and Transport	Transport Planner	Update action plan every two years	Within existing resources	This is monitored by the Travel Plan and through the annual Travel Plan Surveys

Action Reference	Action Description	Lead from Officer Management Team	Lead Officer	Target Completion/ Timescales	How will the Action be Funded / Resourced?	Monitoring Requirements
Managing the Council's Estate						
8	Provide voltage optimisation system to serve Beech Hurst	Head of Estates and Economic Development	Property Services Manager	Complete within 5 years of approval of funds	Through the capital programme funding	Identify when project complete and carbon dioxide emission monitoring
9	Explore proposals with Valley Leisure to reduce the energy consumption in the running of leisure centres within the Borough	Head of Estates and Economic Development	Property Services Manager	Complete within 5 years of approval of funds	Funded as spend to save initiatives or through Asset Management Plan	Identify when project complete and carbon dioxide emission monitoring
10	Undertake sub metering at Valley Leisure sports facilities to evaluate the use of the CHP to facilitate future plant provision	Head of Estates and Economic Development	Property Services Manager	Complete within 5 years of approval of funds	Through the Asset Management Plan	Monitoring energy consumption to inform future work
Managing Green Open Spaces and Biodiversity						
11	Deliver innovative landscaping schemes whilst minimising the use of resources	Head of Community and Leisure	Parks and Countryside Manager	Not applicable	Within existing resources	Actions delivered through Service Plan and monitored through Performance Board

Action Reference	Action Description	Lead from Officer Management Team	Lead Officer	Target Completion/ Timescales	How will the Action be Funded / Resourced?	Monitoring Requirements
12	Ensure Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation within the Council's ownership are maintained in positive management	Head of Community and Leisure	Parks and Countryside Manager	Maintain current status of sites	Within existing resources and using external funding from ES & EWGS ¹³	Annual monitoring review by HCC (previously NI 197)
13	Support the role of volunteers in delivering sustainable improvements to Council green spaces	Head of Community and Leisure	Parks and Countryside Manager	Not applicable	As opportunities arise, for own sites using existing resources and external funding from ES & EWGS	Actions delivered through Service Plan and monitored through Performance Board
14	Implement the Biodiversity Action Plan and the actions it contains	Head of Community and Leisure	Parks and Countryside Manager	See Biodiversity Action Plan	As opportunities arise	Bi-annual monitoring report by Hampshire Biodiversity Partnership / Test Valley Partnership
Partnership Working						
15	Support the roll out of the Area Based Insulation Scheme with other Hampshire authorities	Head of Housing and Environmental Health	Principal Environmental Health Officer	December 2012	Funding already agreed by HCC and Districts	Number of homes surveyed and number of insulations achieved

Action Reference	Action Description	Lead from Officer Management Team	Lead Officer	Target Completion/ Timescales	How will the Action be Funded / Resourced?	Monitoring Requirements
16	Continue involvement in partnership / joint projects and seek to take opportunities as they arise	Corporate Directors	Various across Services	Not applicable	Through existing resources and as opportunities arise	Through Service Plans and monitored through Performance Boards
17	Continue working with and through the Test Valley Partnership to seek to support the objectives of this strategy	Not applicable	Partnership Manager and Action Group Co-ordinators	Not applicable	Through existing resources and as opportunities arise	No specific monitoring requirements – feed into Test Valley Partnership monitoring
Community Involvement						
18	Explore the potential to work with specific communities / Parishes to include promoting sustainable living	Head of Community and Leisure	To be agreed	To be agreed following review of Community Development Strategy	Through existing resources and as opportunities arise	Through Service Plans and monitored through Performance Boards
19	Continue to work with the local communities to promote sustainable living, including through Council events and roadshows	Corporate Directors	Various leads across Services	Not applicable	Through existing resources and as opportunities arise	Through Service Plans and monitored through Performance Boards

12 CFF: Compact Form Factor

13 ES: Environmental Stewardship; EWGS: English Woodland Grant Scheme.



A large print version or translation of this document is available on request.

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