

Work Experience

at Test Valley Borough Council

a guide for year 10 and 11 students







Test Valley Borough Council



How to apply

Test Valley Borough Council offers work experience placements each year to local schools within Test Valley. We ask the schools to get in touch to organise the placements for their chosen pupils, at least three months in advance, we don't take applications direct from students. Please speak to your work experience coordinator about a placement with us. We can allocate up to six pupil spaces to each school for year 10 and 11's.

This brochure gives guidance on all our different services, who can offer placements. The services included are:

1 - Community and partnership working

2 - The Lights Theatre

3 - Parks, Countryside and Sport

4 - Housing and Environmental Health

5 - Strategic Planning and Growth

6 - Planning and Development

7 - Environmental Service

8 - Property and Asset Management

9 - Strategy and Innovation and IT

10 - Legal and Democratic

11 - Human Resources

12 - Finance and Revenues

We encourage schools to identify students who would truly benefit from exploring careers in local government. Please consider pupils with an interest in their local community, public service or local issues, as well as those whose aspirations you'd like to help raise.

Our placements aim to broaden horizons, build confidence and increase awareness of the diverse careers within the council, giving students who may not otherwise access such opportunities the chance to gain valuable insight and inspiration.

The information below explains the different service areas within our organisation and the work they do. If there are any areas that particulary interest you, please let your work experience coordinator know so they can share this with us ahead of your placement.

The council takes health and safety seriously. Parental consent is required for any students undertaking work experience under the age of 18.

For more information, please visit: www.**testvalley.gov.uk/a-great-place-to-work**

Test Valley Borough Council

Introduction

Welcome to our work experience brochure where you will find information about work placements at Test Valley Borough Council for pupils in years 10 and 11.

Our work experience programme is designed to give young people an inspiring and inclusive introduction to local government. Showcasing the valuable services we provide with an aim to encourage young people to consider their local council as an employer of choice in the future.

Through the theme “Your Voice”, we focus on hearing young peoples’ views, encouraging youth democracy and showing how their ideas can shape their community. We aim to raise aspirations, build confidence and give something back to the local area by offering meaningful, hands-on experiences across our services.

By the end of the week, students would have had the opportunity to experience up to eight different services within the council. They will gain practical experience, explore career pathways and understand how diverse voices are heard and valued across Test Valley.

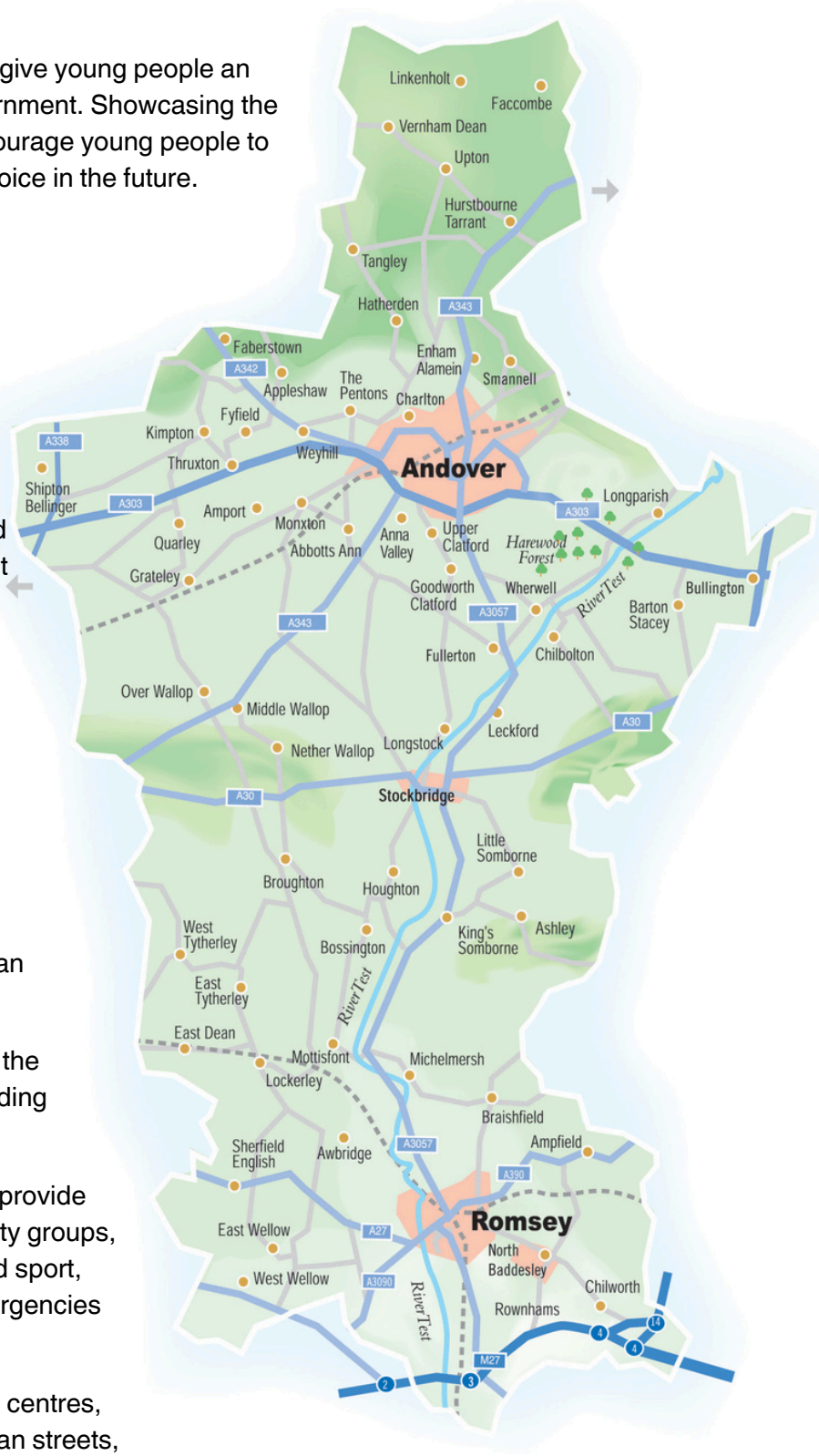
About the council

The council has 43 democratically-elected councillors and over 500 employees, working to help your communities thrive. Our place-based approach means we tailor our service to each community, listening to what you need, rather than adopting a one size-fits-all approach.

The services we provide are paid for by some of the council tax our local residents pay as well as funding from business rates and government support.

We collect your household waste and recycling, provide grants to support local businesses and community groups, manage public spaces for recreation, theatre and sport, and work with local partners on planning for emergencies like floods and pandemics.

We also make planning decisions, invest in town centres, manage local car parks and nature reserves, clean streets, support people who are at risk of becoming homeless and inspect food outlets and other businesses to make sure they meet the required standards.



Map of Test Valley, Hampshire

Test Valley Borough Council



1 - Community and partnership working

The community team works closely with councillors to support what matters most to local people. They spend time talking to community groups, listening to ideas and helping turn them into action through grant funding and practical support.

During your session, you'll learn what it's like to work with councillors and engage with residents. You'll explore feedback-gathering techniques, share what matters to young people in Test Valley and design a mini workshop to deliver to the team. It's a great chance to see how local decisions are made and how your voice can make a difference.

2 - The Lights Theatre

The Lights is a multi-purpose arts venue owned and managed by Test Valley Borough Council. It hosts over 200 professional and community-based shows/ events each year, alongside creative classes, workshops, dance studios and corporate meeting rooms. The venue also includes a vibrant café bar.

This session gives you a behind-the-scenes look of our theatre. Activities may include a backstage tour, shadowing the café team, helping with marketing and social media and a basic introduction to sound and lighting on stage.

This is a great opportunity to explore careers in the arts, hospitality, events and marketing.

3 - Parks, Countryside and Sport

The Parks, Countryside, Trees and Sport team cares for Test Valley's natural spaces and supports active, healthy lifestyles. We manage trees, nature reserves, parks, play areas and sports facilities, ensuring they're safe, welcoming and good for wildlife. We also support community projects, improve local facilities and plan new green and sports spaces.

Your work experience will be hands-on. You might visit a park or nature reserve, review plans for new play areas or help with habitat management. You'll learn how we protect wildlife while supporting recreation and explore careers in green space management, biodiversity, arboriculture and sport development.





4 - Housing and Environmental Health

Our housing and environmental health teams improve living conditions, support communities and protect public health across Test Valley.

The private sector housing team makes homes safer and more accessible by assessing conditions and adapting properties for disabled residents. You may review real examples of poor housing and discuss possible council action.

The housing development team focuses on affordable homes and works with developers, while the housing needs team supports people facing homelessness by exploring causes, statistics and budgeting for independent living.

You'll also look at environmental health scenarios such as food safety or pollution. By the end, you'll understand how these teams support safe, healthy and affordable living.

5 - Strategic Planning and Growth

This service helps shape the future of Test Valley through three teams: planning policy, regeneration and economic development. The planning policy team creates long-term plans for new homes, jobs, shops and transport. The regeneration team leads projects to improve Andover and Romsey town centres. Economic development supports local businesses, tourism and the rural economy and helps deliver the council's climate action plan.

During your session, you might tour Andover, explore ideas for future communities, consider housing needs or design a climate-focused campaign. You'll share your ideas, learn how planning decisions are made, and see how you can influence Test Valley's future.

6 - Planning and Development

The planning and building service shapes the places where we live, work and spend time. We assess new development to ensure it creates safe, attractive and sustainable spaces. Building control checks construction standards, while specialist officers protect historic buildings, landscapes and secure new trees and green spaces. We also collect developer contributions and act when rules aren't followed.

During your session, you'll explore what should be considered before planning permission is granted and join a walking tour of Andover to see how development can meet local needs while protecting the area's character. By the end, you'll understand how development affects your community and how you can influence future decisions.



7 - Environmental Service

Our environmental service teams at Portway and Bourne House depots keep Test Valley clean, green and running smoothly. We collect household, food, garden and bulky waste from around 60,000 homes each week, maintain over 100 recycling centres, sweep streets, empty bins, remove fly tips, care for parks and play areas, and manage the council's vehicle fleet.

Sessions may include inspecting bins and sharing recycling tips, supporting litter and fly-tip investigations, joining grounds staff for site checks or shadowing vehicle technicians in the workshop. You'll meet our teams, learn how we work, and get involved in practical tasks that make a real difference in your community.

8 - Property and Asset Management

The property and asset management team looks after the council's buildings and land, including the Chantry Centre, car parks, offices and business parks. They ensure these spaces are safe, well-maintained and used in ways that benefit the community.

During your session, you'll get hands-on experience by joining project engineers or building surveyors on site, or patrolling car parks with civil enforcement officers. You may also learn about compliance, health and safety and take part in a practice emergency scenario. You'll visit the Chantry Centre to see how we manage the space and support regeneration projects for residents, visitors and businesses.

9 - Strategy and Innovation (including IT)

This service combines communications, policy, innovation and projects, and IT. Together, they shape how the council works and engages with the community, develop key strategies, manage partnerships, and oversee performance. IT supports digital systems to keep staff working efficiently and securely.

During your session, you'll take part in activities that show how we plan projects, communicate with residents and use feedback to improve services. You may analyse consultation responses, help shape a campaign or explore future service improvements. By the end, you'll see how strategy and innovation guides council decisions and service delivery, while gaining practical experience to support your future career.





10 - Legal and Democratic

Curious about how decisions shape your community? Within Our Legal and Democratic Service you'll discover how councillors represent their communities and share ideas on the qualities they need. Design a campaign encouraging young people to register and vote. Take part in a simulated emergency planning exercise, making decisions on how the council should respond to a major incident. Explore how legal advice guides council decisions and gain insight into licensing and land charges that protect residents and businesses. You'll also shadow professionals and get involved in admin tasks to see how the team works day to day.

11 - Human Resources

Our Human Resources department supports all our employees and helps make the council a great place to work. The team manages recruitment, training, pay and benefits and workplace culture, ensuring everyone feels supported and included. HR also plays a key role in making sure the council's values are reflected in how people are treated at work.

In your session, you'll take part in a hands on recruitment exercise for an apprentice role. Learn how to create inclusive campaigns, write a job advert, how to attract diverse applicants, shortlist candidates, plan fair interviews and gain practical tips for your own applications and CVs.

12 - Finance and Revenues

The Finance and Revenues Service supports residents and businesses across Test Valley by managing budgets, collecting council tax and business rates, paying housing benefit, and providing financial support when needed. They ensure the council's money is spent wisely and transparently, making a real difference to people's lives.

In your session, you'll explore how the service works through interactive activities like quizzes, listening to customer calls and trying budget setting. Meet teams from finance, revenues, welfare and customer services, hear career stories from apprentices and learn how they help residents with benefits and business rates.

