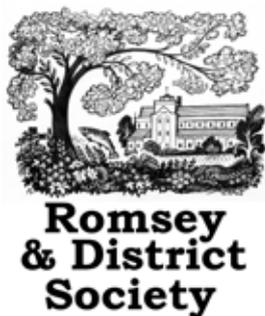
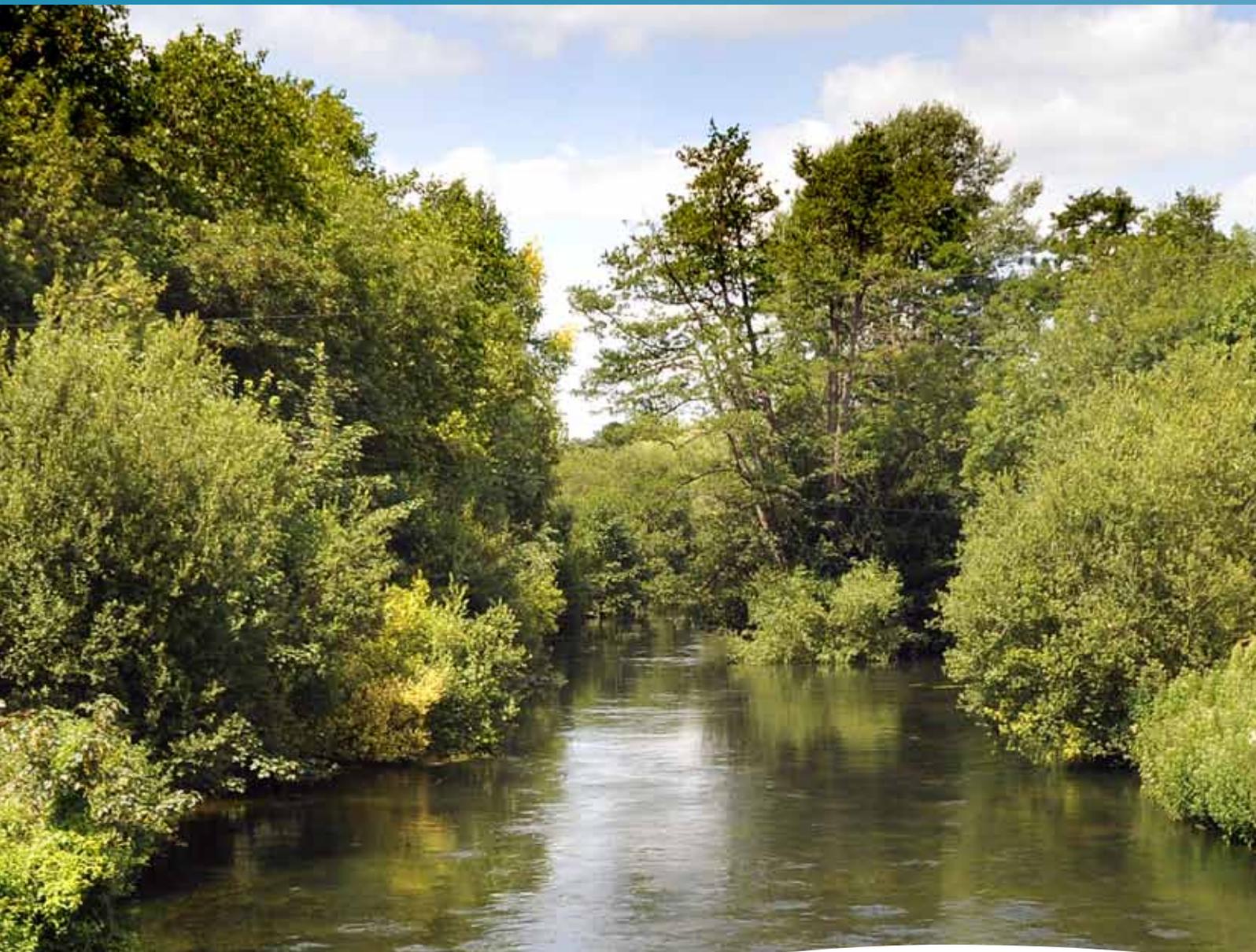


# Romsey's Waterways and Wetlands Enhancement Strategy



Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust



## Foreword

The waterways of Romsey have played an important part in the history of the town and add much to its character. In recent years their value has not been fully appreciated. I am pleased to introduce this new initiative which has the support of a number of key organisations. They have committed themselves to the enhancement of the Town's waterways and wetlands and to foster a greater interest in them. I look forward to individual projects being delivered and to raising the public's awareness and enjoyment of them.



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**Cllr Martin Hatley**

Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport

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# 1. Introduction

- 1.1** The town of Romsey lies on the River Test, one of the country's most famous chalk streams.
- 1.2** The water courses and wetland areas in and around the Town are important features and have played a key part in its development from Saxon times. As well as being very attractive they are important habitats for wildlife. Many of the waterways in the Town are fed by the River Test although there are others, such as the Tadburn Lake, which flow into the River.
- 1.3** The Borough Council together with Hampshire County Council, the Environment Agency, Natural England, Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust and the Romsey and District Society have come together as a partnership to enhance Romsey's waterways and wetlands for the benefit of the public and for wildlife.
- 1.4** The purpose of this document is to provide a direction and context for the coordinated enhancement of Romsey's waterways and wetlands. The document sets out how the water environment influences each area of the town and the scope for enhancing the watercourses and the areas around them.
- 1.5** This strategy has been prepared by the partners following public consultation on the draft document.
- 1.6** If you would like to be involved in the project, please contact us:  
[community&leisure@testvalley.gov.uk](mailto:community&leisure@testvalley.gov.uk) or contact Countryside Officers on **01264 368000**
- 1.7** This document can be viewed on the Council's website.

## **2. Background**

### **Reasons for setting up this project**

- 2.1** Romsey's waterways and wetlands are important to people and wildlife. The local landscape and history of Romsey have been greatly influenced by the Town's waterways. Some braids are part of the natural chalk stream whilst others are man-made for purposes such as providing water for the Abbey or for milling. They have shaped the layout and character of the town and the lives of residents and visitors alike.
- 2.2** The River Test is one of the country's most famous chalk streams. The River is a significant feature around Romsey. The main channel flows from north to south on the western side of the Town with many braids and streams leaving and joining it on its way southwards. Some of the most well known include; the Canal, the War Memorial Park stream, the River itself at Sadler's Mill and the Fishlake Stream. There is also a stream called the Tadburn Lake which runs in a valley through residential areas on the east side of the Town and joins the Test within the grounds of Broadlands.
- 2.3** A number of the water courses are particularly important for nature conservation. The channels of the River Test to the west of the Town are designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI – a national designation) as are the Canal north of Fishlake Meadows road and the Fishlake Stream. The waterways provide habitats for important protected species such as water voles. Land adjoining some of the waterways is also ecologically important. Fishlake Meadows is designated as a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs – of County-wide importance) and Tadburn Meadows is a Local Nature Reserve (LNR).
- 2.4** The water courses are important for recreation including fishing and walking. They also play a very important role in managing water levels and providing flood risk relief to areas of the town.
- 2.5** However, all is not well with the river and its braids. Development along the banks and poor river management has had a serious effect on the wildlife, heritage and amenity value of Romsey's waterways. There are areas which could be enhanced for public access or to realise and celebrate their historic or wildlife value and importance. The land and features next to the water courses is owned by a number of different owners and could benefit from some coordination of management activities.

**2.6** This document seeks to bring together the public organisations with interests in the waterways and to coordinate priorities and actions to achieve real enhancements to these important features.

### **Partnership Working**

**2.7** This Strategy has been prepared by the Partners who have agreed that working together will have significant benefits. A partnership approach will enable us to combine resources, knowledge and experience to achieve improvements for the benefit of people's enjoyment and for wildlife.

**2.8** It is acknowledged that some detrimental impacts of historic development may be irreversible, that there will be obstacles to progress and that there is a need for agreement with landowners. The partnership will seek to work with landowners and those with riparian interests. However there are many opportunities to enhance and restore the water courses and wetlands. Section 5 highlights some of those opportunities.

### **Consultation Responses**

**2.9** At the end of 2011, the partners asked for the public's views on a range of issues concerning the waterways in Romsey. From the responses that we received you told us that your main concerns were:

- The lack of continuous walkways close to the watercourses
- The wildlife value of the watercourses and river
- The need to make the most of the town's assets
- The need to get more people interested and involved in the waterways and to understand the importance of the natural features around the town.
- The need to plan for flooding
- The health and appearance of the waterways.

**2.10** The comments received have been used to develop a number of objectives which are set out in Section 3, together with a number of aims for each objective. Further consultation was held in January 2013, the results of which have fine-tuned the draft document into this formal strategy.

**2.11** The document has also been shaped by comments made to the Borough Council's Romsey Masterplan consultation in January 2012, where the waterways in Romsey were again an important topic.

### **3. Objectives**

- 3.1** The six objectives and aims cover a range of issues which have been identified by the partners and the public. The objectives are set out below together with some of the public comments received.
- 3.2** The aims set the types of works that partners and the public have identified as important. Some of these may need careful balancing, the express consent of landowners and/ or require compromises. An example would be the balance between public access and protection of wildlife. By working together, sharing information and ensuring that actions are taken in a coordinated way, real progress can be made in enhancing the waterways.

## **Objective 1. Improve Public Access**

### *What the public have said*

**3.3** “Allow access but encourage wildlife. Create cycle routes.”

### *What we know*

**3.4** The Borough Council and the County Council are aware of the importance of public access and linking with the wider Rights of Way network. We know it is important to create circular walks and areas which are accessible to everyone.

**3.5** Our aims are to:

- Create circular walks, providing links
- Link existing and proposed public access routes with the wider Rights of Way network
- Allow the public suitable sensitive access to nature sites to appreciate wildlife
- Provide information and promote routes around the town
- Seek to make routes attractive and accessible to all users
- Prioritise routes linking to the town centre.

### *Example*

**3.6** The new ramped access at the southern end of the Canal from the Plaza Theatre has improved accessibility to this important route for a range of users.

Before



After



## **Objective 2. Improve Ecology of the Rivers**

### *What the public have said*

- 3.7** “Romsey has some of the best wildlife sites in the County on its doorstep. These should be enhanced”

### *What we know*

- 3.8** The River Test is a SSSI, a national designation for its wildlife importance, Natural England and the Environment Agency work with landowners to enhance it. The Agency is also the competent authority for the delivery of the Water Framework Directive. This is a European directive which places a duty on member states to maintain and improve the quality of surface and ground-waters.
- 3.9** The Environment Agency also has other initiatives and responsibilities which do not directly address water quality, but are relevant to the wildlife qualities of the water courses. Catchment Abstraction Management Strategies (CAMS) for example are strategies for management of water resources at a local level. They make information on water resources and licensing practice publicly available and allow the balance between the needs of abstractors, other water users and the aquatic environment to be considered.
- 3.10** Our aims are to:
- Use the Water Framework Directive to:
    - improve water quality through better land management
    - reduce rural and urban diffuse pollution
    - improve ecology of the waterways
    - renaturalise channels where possible – this includes reducing the impacts of barriers to fish migration
    - improve the connectivity of the waterways
  - Restore the SSSI to achieve ‘favourable’ status
  - Enhance the quality of SINC’s and other areas of wildlife value
  - Identify and enhance important habitat links
  - Promote the benefits of healthy rivers to the people of Romsey.

### *Example*

- 3.11** Important improvements have been made to the Tadburn Meadows Nature Reserve, where careful works and management has increased the wildlife value of this area. The contribution of volunteers has been significant.



### **Objective 3. Improve the heritage features associated with the waterways**

#### *What the public have said*

**3.12** "Information Panels could explain about the town's mills, locks, water wheels and Canal traffic. Visitors to the town wouldn't necessarily know the history."

#### *What we know*

**3.13** The Lower Test Valley Archaeological Study Group (LTVAS) and the Romsey and District Society are actively researching, recording and publicising Romsey's history. Their input, alongside the County and Borough Councils' knowledge provides expertise in mapping, understanding and interpreting the historic features of the waterways, the remnants of which can still be seen today.

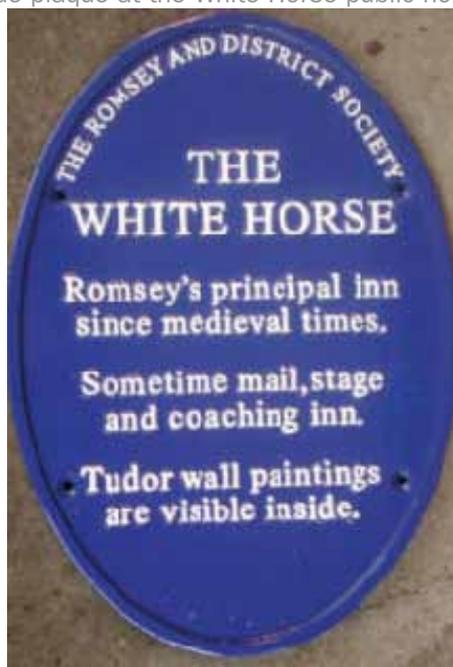
**3.14** Our aims are to:

- Map and reference heritage assets relating to the waterways, either directly or indirectly
- Support and provide expertise to events to promote the heritage assets such as walking leaflets, information boards and plaques
- Investigate opportunities for enhancements of key historic features
- Promote understanding of heritage value in decision making on waterway issues.

#### *Example*

**3.15** The Romsey and District Society, Town Council and Test Valley Borough Council jointly funded a number of blue plaques located around the town in 2004 to promote the historic environment. This is a good example which could be extended to focus on the waterways.

Blue plaque at the White Horse public house



## **Objective 4. Improve Awareness and Appreciation of the Waterways**

### *What the public have said*

**3.16** “The waterways are a wonderful asset to the town and more should be done to promote them”

### *What we know*

**3.17** From the consultation responses and the local knowledge of the Partners we know the importance of the waterways to those who come into regular contact with them. We know that more could be done to ensure that the public are aware of the waterways, their heritage and environmental value.

**3.18** Our aims are to:

- Establish a sustainable community volunteer group to help enhance the waterways
- Investigate opportunities to make wildlife and heritage assets more identifiable and accessible
- Establish a sustainable and regular forum with landowners
- Establish and arrange information and events to promote the waterways such as walking leaflets, information boards, plaques, regular local articles and open events.

### *Example*

**3.19** The Romsey and District Society arranges twice yearly stream cleans. These are very successful and have involved over 30 volunteers. There are other local groups with links to the water courses, including the Tadburn Conservation Volunteers and the Friends of War Memorial Park. Encouraging and coordinating volunteer groups will be an important part of the project.

Romsey and District Society Stream Clean, 2011



## **Objective 5. Improve Coordination of the Flood Defences**

### *What the public have said*

**3.20** “The build up of silt and distribution of water between channels is a concern regarding water levels.”

### *What we know*

**3.21** The Environment Agency is the lead organisation supervising the management of all sources of flood risk. To manage these risks the Agency can undertake works and has powers to regulate operations carried out by others. Much of the waterway system is privately owned and maintained. Coordinating defences, responses to flood risk warnings and advanced planning will benefit the town as a whole.

**3.22** The Environment Agency also leads on producing Catchment Flood Management Plans (CFMPs). These give an overview of the flood risk across each river catchment and recommend ways of managing those risks now and over the next 50-100 years. The Test and Itchen CFMP sets the framework for Romsey.

**3.23** Our aims are to:

- Map and plan all defences and responsibilities
- Regular flow gauging at strategic reaches.
- Seek to devise operational protocol for sluice owners.
- Seek to replace inappropriate materials and bank profiles where appropriate
- Improve flood risk especially for those in areas of high risk or large residential areas.
- Reinstate narrowings with improved layout & tree management where appropriate.

### *Example*

**3.24** The Environment Agency has installed a new grill and penstock at the siphon at Fishlake. It controls the level of water passing into some of the town centre streams. A key aim of the partnership is to coordinate such structures and controls across the Town.

Water Management at Fishlake



## **Objective 6. Improve Landscape setting of the Waterways**

### *What the public have said*

- 3.25** *“The works at Abbey Water have been great improvement to the appearance of the water course. There are other locations where similar enhancements would be really welcome.”*

### *What we know*

- 3.26** The prominence of watercourses was highlighted in the Town Design Statement, ‘Look at Romsey’ led by the Romsey and District Society and supported by other local organisations. Many of the watercourses and their settings have been altered over time for industrial, flood alleviation or practical purposes without significant regard to the environmental or visual impact of the work. There may be opportunities to make alterations which strike a balance between the practical and the attractive.

- 3.27** Our aims are to:

- Seek to replace inappropriate materials and bank profiles where appropriate
- Seek to enhance town centre streams for visual improvements
- Seek to enhance streams in industrial areas for visual improvements
- Seek to ensure that partners’ maintenance regimes and works are coordinated
- Encourage proactive management by landowners.

### *Example*

- 3.28** Hampshire County Council and Test Valley Borough Council worked with local bodies to improve the highway and stream boundary at Abbey Water. The changes included natural planting, channel works and removal of debris. This assists an increased flow and the width of water channel which in turn has an effect on the water temperature. This combines to enhance the wildlife and visual appearance of the water course as well as maintaining the capacity to cope with increased water levels in times of heavy rain.

Before



After



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## **Objectives and Key Aims**

### **1) Improve public access**

- a) Create circular routes
- b) Improve existing routes for all users
- c) Create new routes/links to wider rights of way

### **2) Improve ecology of the rivers**

- a) Improve habitats for wildlife
- b) Improve the condition of the SSSI and the SINCs
- c) Improve the water quality and ecology through delivering the Water Framework Directive

### **3) Improve the heritage features associated with the waterways**

- a) To improve features and their settings that showcase the history of Romsey
- b) Map heritage assets

### **4) Improve awareness and appreciation of the waterways**

- a) Increase public understanding of their wildlife importance
- b) Increase public understanding of their heritage importance
- c) Increase understanding of ownership, rights and responsibilities
- d) Establish a sustainable volunteer action group
- e) Establish a landowners' forum

### **5) Improve coordination of flood defences**

- a) Management of extremes of flows
- b) Coordination of flows
- c) Improve information and planning in relation to flood risk

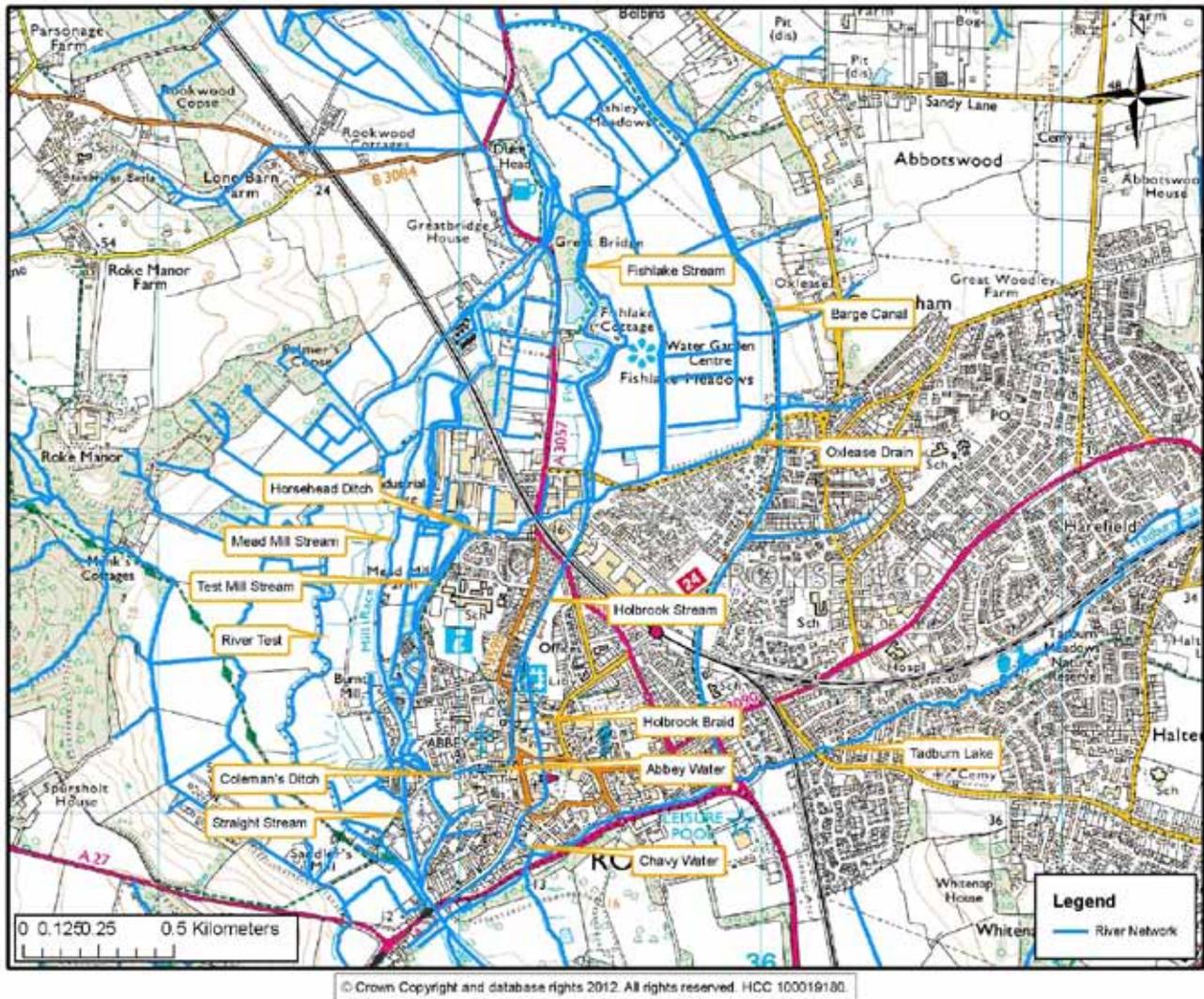
### **6) Improve landscape setting of the waterways**

- a) Replace inappropriate materials and bank profiles
- b) Enhance visual appearance of the town centre streams
- c) Co-ordinate maintenance regimes and works
- d) Encourage proactive management by landowners

**3.29** The challenge for the Partners and the community is how these six objectives can best be achieved.

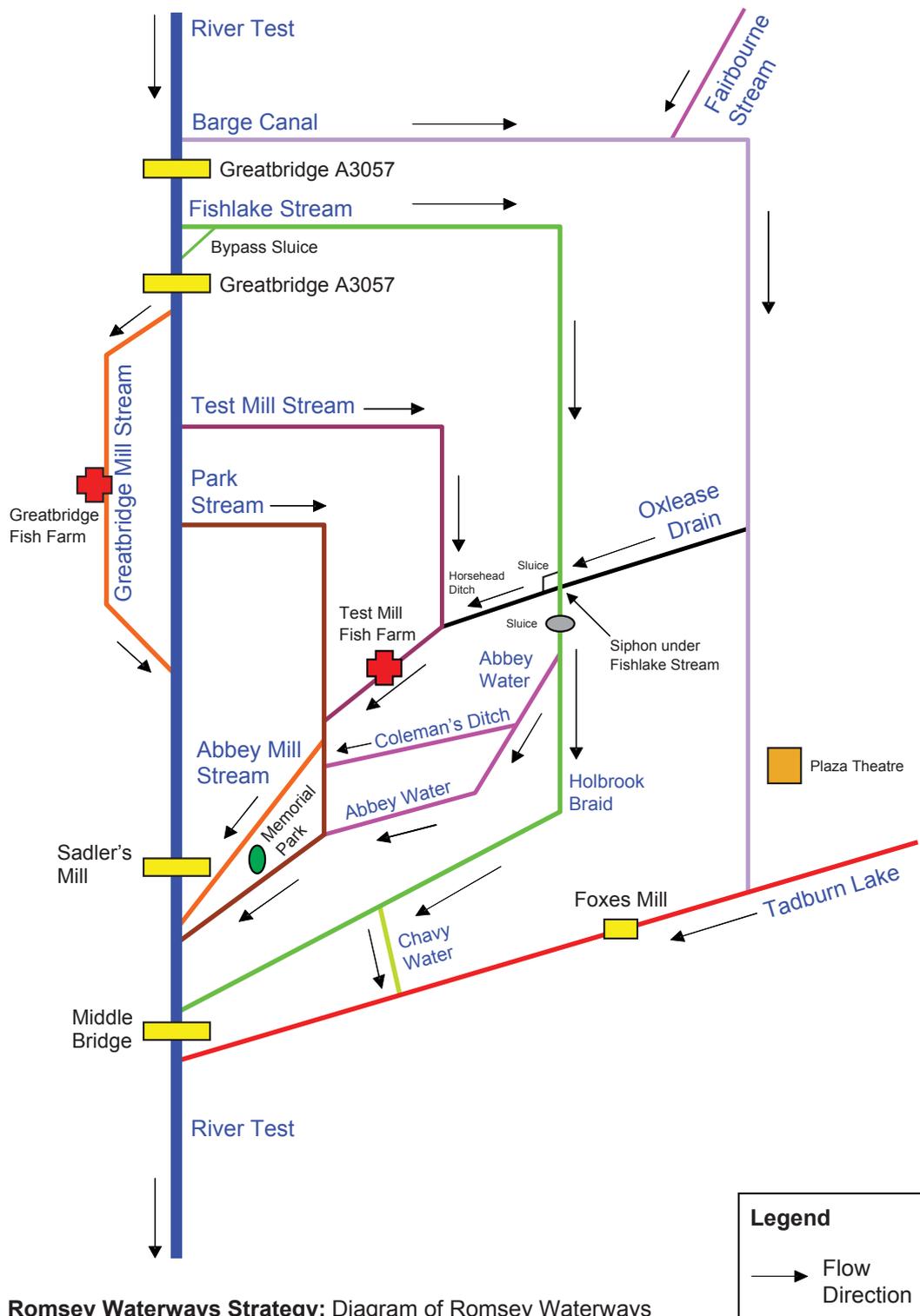
## 4. Waterways in Romsey

4.1 There are many braids of the River Test which feed through the Town. There is also the Tadburn Lake to the south of Romsey. Many of these watercourses are known locally by different names or associations. The map below sets out the names and locations of the braids we refer to in this document.



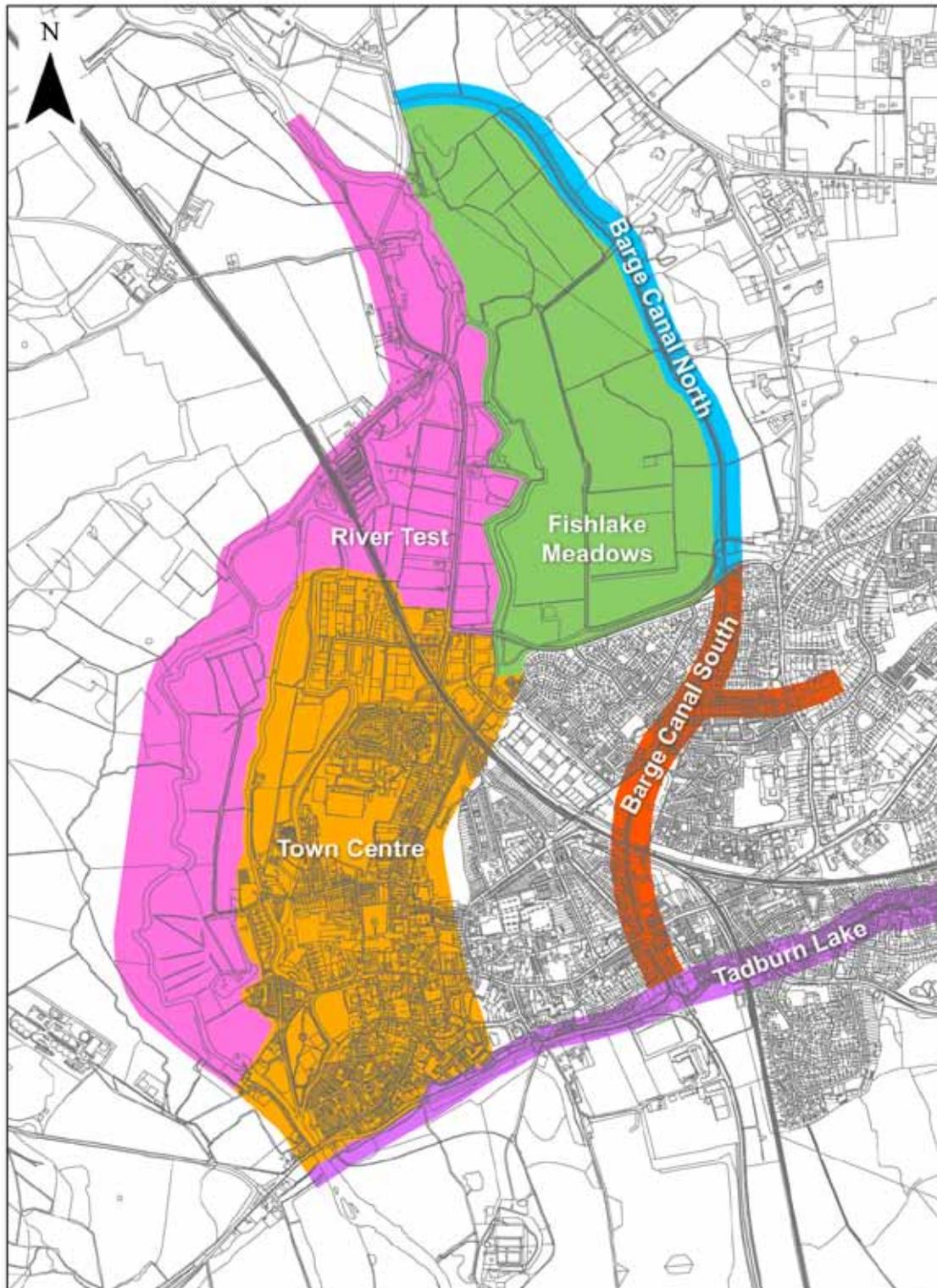
## Schematic

**4.2** It can be difficult to follow the watercourses through the town, and understand the links between them. They are sometimes covered and often do not run parallel to footpaths as they flow from one side of the town to another. The diagram below has been prepared to provide a simple presentation of the watercourses.



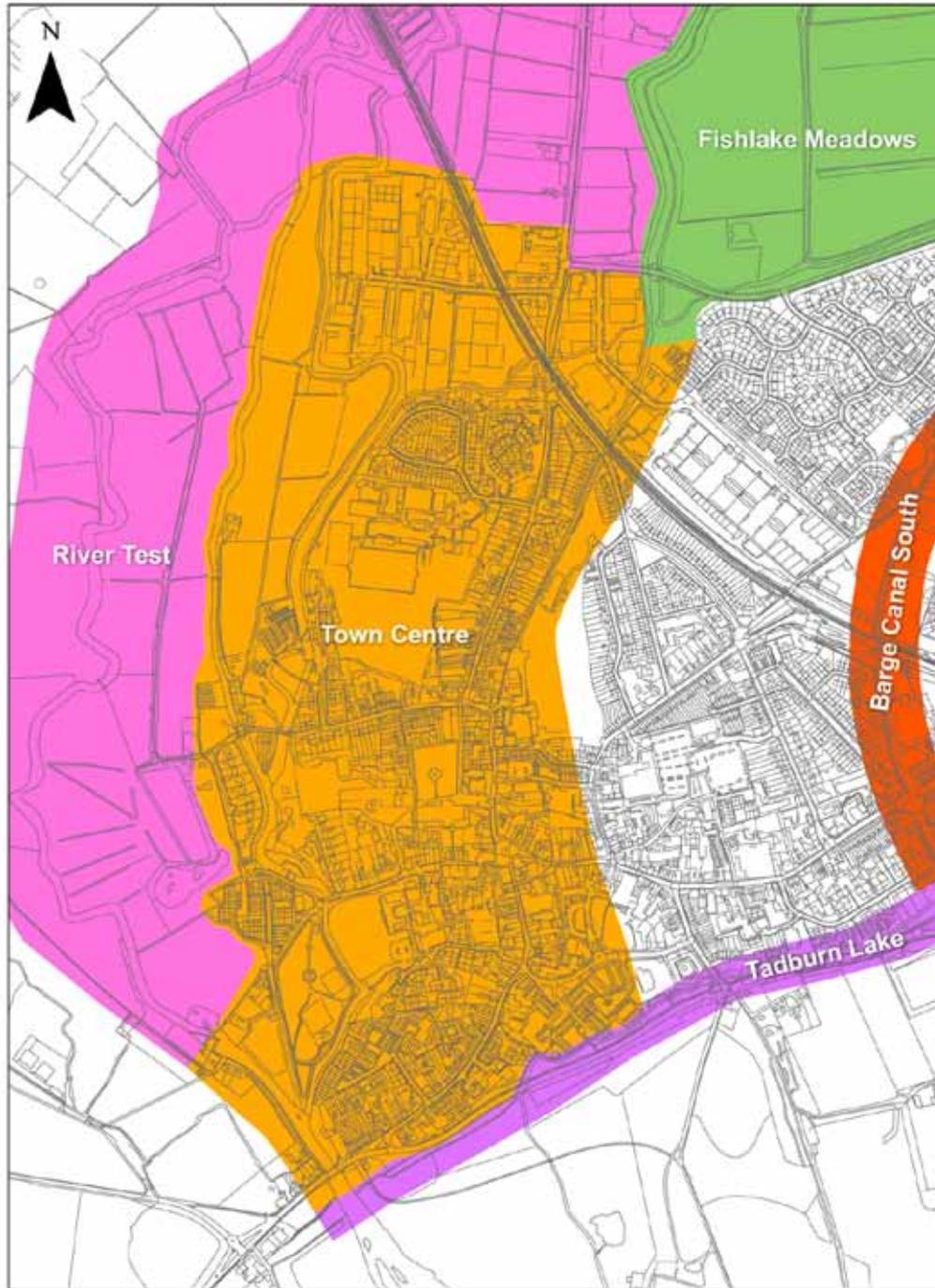
## Map of Character Areas

- 4.3** The partners have divided the town's waterways into different areas to reflect the character and relationship of the waterways to their setting and the particular issues within them. The map below shows these character areas.



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## Town Centre Character Area



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### *Location and boundaries*

- 4.4** The town centre character area lies on the western edge of Romsey and incorporates the historic core of the Town, later suburbs that spread outwards from the core, and more recent industrial development to the north. Its character is very diverse. Its boundaries are defined by the Mill Stream to the west, the limits of the industrial areas to the north (which form the north western edge of the town) and by the margins of Fishlake Stream to the east and south.

### *Character setting and watercourse description*

- 4.5** The area contains the medieval core of the town, with the Abbey and the Market Place and their wider setting. It is strongly defined by its outstanding heritage assets and a planned townscape dating from the medieval period. To the immediate north and south of the core are early suburbs from the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries, and to the west and further north 20th century residential, employment and educational development. A network of waterways can be found here. With milling, cloth processing and tanning forming the main industries in the past, these waterways have been central to the way the town has developed since its establishment in the Saxon period.
- 4.6** The waterways form a complex, man-made network of interconnected channels and streams that flow generally from north to south, with a number of linking sections running from east to west.

### *Holbrook Stream*

- 4.7** When the Fishlake Stream reaches the Town an off take joins the westward flow coming from the Canal. The remaining water passes along an aqueduct and continues towards the town centre as the Holbrook stream. Through the Romsey Industrial Estate this stream benefits from a five metre green corridor that slopes gently. A lack of intense management coupled with open conditions has allowed a valuable, attractive natural flow and flora to develop in places, with some other areas now appearing overgrown. Siltation is also occurring in a short section downstream of the Oxlease sluice off take due to an over widened channel. This green ribbon contrasts with its industrial setting and has the potential to be enhanced. From here the stream flows as an open channel hidden from view forming the boundary between gardens to properties on Cherville Street and the site of the former brewery.
- 4.8** Across its route through the town centre and along Middlebridge Street the watercourse is canalised and in part is culverted, for example where it passes underneath the shopping area of The Hundred. Besides the Bus Station the waterway is highly visible in this busy modern commercial area. In places here, and in Middlebridge Street, the channel has developed elements of good flora and in turn has an energetic channel and clean gravels. A very positive relationship is evident in Middlebridge Street where houses look over the water and have footbridges leading to front doors. In most cases it becomes an integral, valued part of the historic frontages.

### *Horsehead Ditch/Oxlease Drain*

- 4.9** This short but wide watercourse flows from Fishlake Meadows westwards to Test Mill stream. It is largely hidden from the public but is visible to the residents of Greatbridge and Priestlands Roads whose gardens and local greenspace overlook the water. On the northern bank there is fencing and mature leylandii screening and overshadowing the river.

### *Test and Mead Mill Streams*

**4.10** On the western side of Romsey several watercourses flow southwards including the Mead Mill Stream, the Test Mill Stream, Burnt Mill Stream, Park and Straight Streams. Extensive sections of these large streams flow through private farmland and properties making views of the water hard to come by. All have been created or heavily manipulated by man, which is evidenced by the straight stretches and right-angle corners. A waterside footpath from Priestlands to Hollman Drive runs along the eastern bank of Test Mill stream lined with trees on both sides. This stretch although linking two residential parts of town has retained much of its rural character.

### *Chavy Water*

**4.11** An off take from Holbrook stream to Tadburn Lake, this minor suburban channel passes tightly between residences of Chavy Water. Its canalised form made up of cement bag walling is mainly visible in a greenspace where it is overshadowed by the surrounding shrubbery.

### *Fishlake Stream*

**4.12** When the Holbrook stream splits near Cherville Street the westbound watercourse is still named Fishlake Stream. This stream's function was to carry clean water to the Abbey. It now flows in a narrow brick channel through the back of Cherville Street and underneath Church Street. It passes unseen to appear beside the Abbey United Reformed Church. This former mill pond is known as Abbey Water. This section is impounded leading to pooling of the water and a loss of flow, although some improvements have been made recently. The water continues westwards in Coleman's Ditch to the Test Mill Stream and also southwards in a small stream that meanders through the formal lawns fronting properties of Newton Lane.

Holbrook Stream, Lansdowne Close



Holbrook Stream, Middlebridge Street



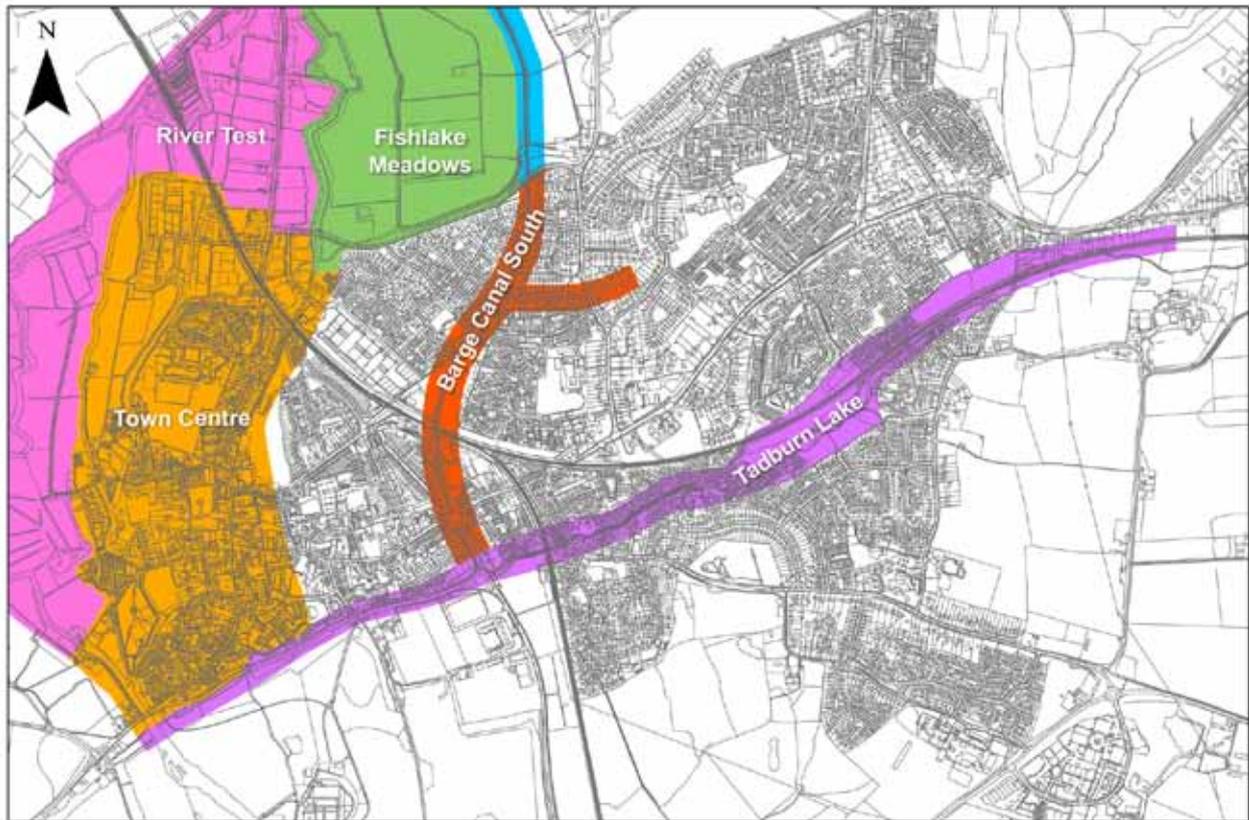
**Table 1 – Town Centre Character Area Initiatives**

	<b>Issue</b>	<b>Proposed Measure</b>	<b>Focus/ Location</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Time</b>
1	A number of the watercourses would benefit from increased, coordinated management.	Encourage regular coordinated management and removal of litter. Establishment of a volunteer group.	Townwide	2 (Wildlife) 5 (Flooding) 6 (Landscape)	S
2	A number of the watercourses have a lack of appropriate or sufficient in-stream habitat to support wildlife.	The installation or removal of features to encourage habitat growth should be investigated. Increased management and coordination is necessary.	Townwide	2 (Wildlife) 6 (Landscape)	S
3	The waterways have played an important role in the history of the town and continue to be important for wildlife and flood risk management. There is a lack of information about the waterways easily available.	Installation of information and interpretation boards would assist the public in further understanding the importance of the waterways. Other promotional events such as garden open days, local events and leaflets could also be valuable.	Townwide	2 (Wildlife) 3 (Heritage) 4 (Awareness)	M
4	Access to the watercourses varies through the town centre.  Whilst there are several different paths which run alongside the watercourses there is not a continuous route accessible to all. In some areas the pavement is too narrow and can lack drop kerbs.	There is some scope for more access to make the most of the access already available, planned or publicly owned through improved surfacing, increased access and visual enhancements.	Holbrook Stream (Industrial Estate, Brewery Site, Bus Station, Middlebridge St)	1 (Access) 4 (Awareness) 6 (Landscape)	M

	<b>Issue</b>	<b>Proposed Measure</b>	<b>Focus/ Location</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Time</b>
5	Public access to the waterways is important to the town. Walks can be more attractive and accessible when linked with wider rights of way and circular in nature. There are some rights of way which are currently not connected.	Opportunities to create circular walks from the town centre to the North, East, South and West should be investigated where possible. Landownership may be an issue.	Test Mill Stream Holbrook Stream	1 (Access) 4 (Awareness) 6 (Landscape)	M
6	Access in more rural locations, such as the path from Priestlands to Test Mill, can be narrow and uneven in parts, not suitable for pushchairs or wheelchairs. The appearance can be unwelcoming and the fencing and unmanaged appearance alongside the stream appear unattractive.	The more rural paths and settings could be enhanced with an appropriate surface, accessible to all potential users and increased management.  It would be desirable to extend the public footpath north of Priestlands and along the Oxlease Drain to the A3057, but due to both the nature of the bank, and because gardens come right down to the water's edge, this is unlikely to be feasible.	Test Mill Stream	1 (Access) 2 (Wildlife) 4 (Awareness) 5 (Flooding) 6 (Landscape)	M
7	Along some of the channels there are man made structures holding the banks (revetments) which have failed.	Re-creating more natural banksides would provide a more sustainable solution which would enhance wildlife interest. The cost and feasibility of replacing banks with more appropriate materials may be an issue however opportunities to explore options to enhance the banks should be taken.	Abbey Water Park Stream	2 (Wildlife) 3 (Heritage) 4 (Awareness) 5 (Flooding) 6 (Landscape)	S

	<b>Issue</b>	<b>Proposed Measure</b>	<b>Focus/ Location</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Time</b>
8	Some watercourses currently have limited flow and become silted up as sediment is not carried away by the water. This adversely affects the wildlife habitat.	There would be a biodiversity advantage in restoring flow in the streams. A coordinated approach to flows is required, and prioritisation of watercourses.	Chavy Water Holbrook Stream Abbey Water	2 (Wildlife) 5 (Flooding) 6 (Landscape)	S
9	Many of the watercourses are shaded by coniferous trees. This leads to limited submerged aquatic and marginal plants which are valuable for wildlife.	There is potential to manage some trees. This will need to be selective as the banks also contain a variety of mature broad-leaved trees.	Test Mill Stream Horsehead Ditch	2 (Wildlife) 6 (Landscape)	S
10	Important migratory fish such as salmon and sea trout routinely migrate through the Romsey area each year to the good spawning habitat to the north of the town. They follow dominant flows and require passable watercourses.	There needs to be coordination of dominant flows with watercourses which are passable and suitable for migrating fish. This may require removal of obstructions to fish migration, or a differing balance of flows to encourage use of suitable watercourses. Information on the legal requirements of the streams may be required.	War Memorial Park Horsehead Ditch Test Mill Stream Holbrook Steam	2 (Wildlife)	M
11	It is difficult to identify the watercourses when in the town centre.	There may be opportunities on bridges where a stream is visible to add a name board stating the name of the watercourse beneath.	Townwide	4 (Awareness)	S

## Tadburn Lake Character Area



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### *Location and boundaries*

- 4.13** The Tadburn Lake character area very closely mirrors the watercourses lower catchment area. Several tributaries arise around Emer bog and Ampfield Wood to the east of Romsey and join to form the Tadburn Lake at Crampmoor. The stream flows southwest into Romsey separating Halterworth from Harefield, passes under the railway before its confluence with the Canal adjacent to the Bypass. The larger combined watercourse then flows adjacent to the Bypass then underneath the road into Broadlands Park. The Tadburn joins the main River Test near to Broadlands House.

### *Character setting and watercourse description*

- 4.14** The headwaters and first couple of kilometres of flow are set in the countryside east of Romsey. Woodlands (both native and plantation) and sheep pastures are the dominant land uses found on the acid gravels and clays here. This geology gives the Tadburn an acid composition and 'flashy' flow regime which in turn creates a more incised, dynamic channel form compared to its chalk-based neighbours. The channel has a dominantly natural form complemented by the adjacent native tree and scrub vegetation. There are a few man-made channel modifications present including a fish farm, a ford and addition of field drains. The stream so far has a very positive relationship with its surroundings.

**4.15** The watercourse is wholly canalised as it passes adjacent to the railway line at Crampmoor although this is largely hidden from view, its more natural form returns near the 1970's Harefield residential development. At the Tadburn Meadows Local Nature Reserve the watercourse is intermittently canalised with gabions or concrete dominant on the bank adjacent to the railway embankment. The green space provided by the nature reserve allows the watercourse some room to function naturally creating features including meanders, bars, and river cliffs. As the Tadburn heads west into the 1970's development of Eight Acres, it is wholly canalised. The urban nature of the artificial channel is exacerbated by the adjacent railings, tarmac surfaces and adjacent housing. Natural fluvial features and wildlife are largely absent, however the concrete sections have reduced the risk of flooding. The relationship with the properties is rather negative, with most having closed-board fencing or high hedging abutting the river. The adjacent cycleway and footpath mirrors the route to the Bypass and provides some public access and views of the watercourse.

**4.16** Alongside the Bypass the Tadburn has a different character because it is no longer an acid stream due to the confluence with the Canal – itself an artificial braid of the Test. The wider character of the watercourse is again suburban with a mix of older, character housing adjacent to modern flats/maisonettes and the Bypass itself. Immediately adjacent to the Lake is a green corridor made up of trees, scrub and grassland. The channel itself has an intermittently natural form. From the Southampton Road west to Palmerston Street, sections are artificially wide and canalised mainly by metal revetments producing a lethargic, laminar flow. However, to the west of Palmerston Street, the watercourse has a much more natural form with some excellent habitat and natural fluvial features including bars and eyots where sediment has settled over time to form small islands and features. Despite this attractive nature, the watercourse is often screened from views by fencing and high trees especially leylandii. The small Chavy Water flows into the Tadburn just before it turns and flows southwards beneath the Bypass and into Broadlands.

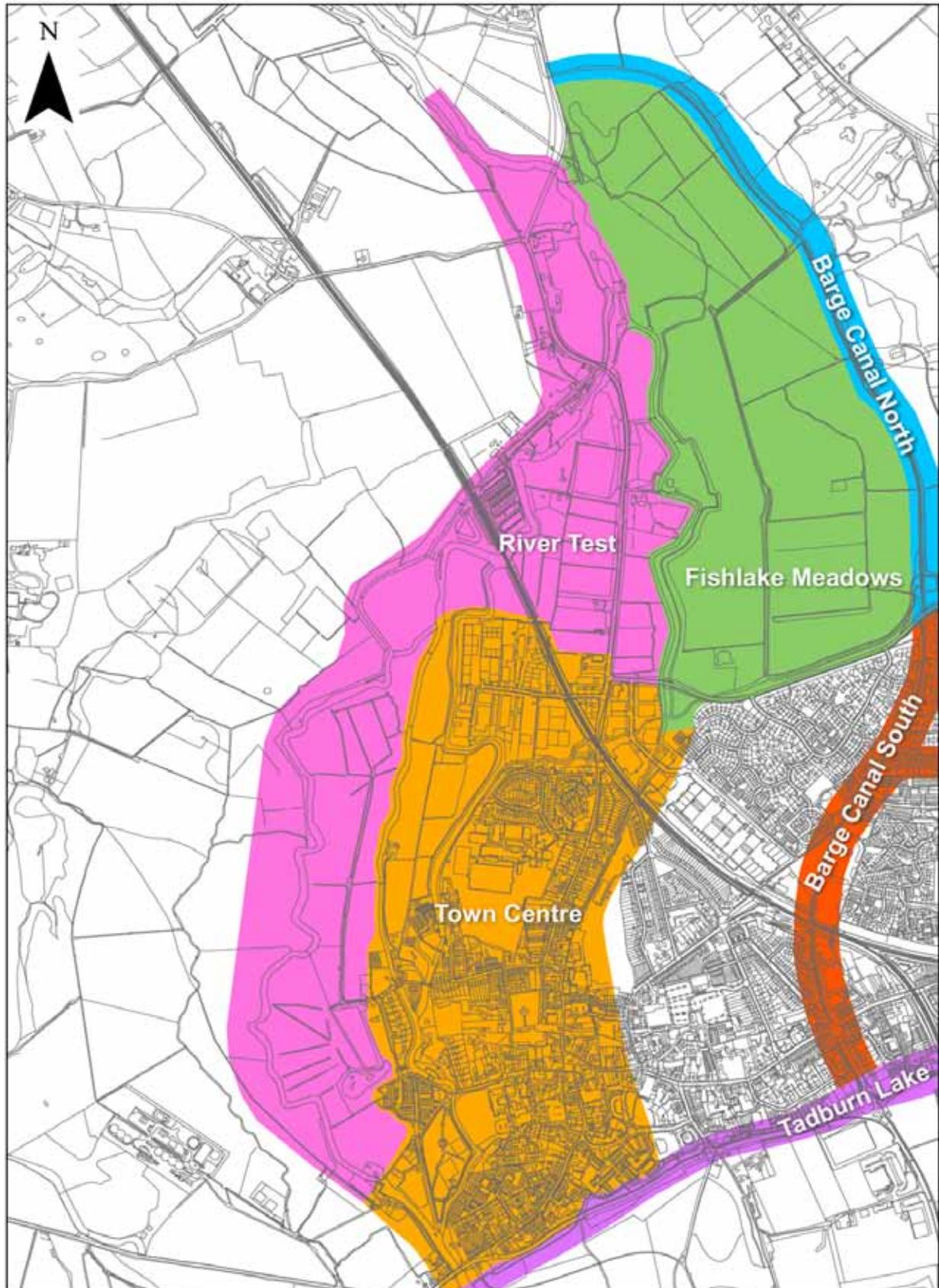
Rosedale Avenue, Tadburn Lake



**Table 2 – Tadburn Lake Character Area Initiatives**

	<b>Issue</b>	<b>Proposed Measure</b>	<b>Focus/ Location</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Time</b>
1	Romsey’s highest flood risk is from Tadburn Lake which is a small fast reacting catchment. Particularly in periods when the catchment is saturated there is a vulnerability to prolonged intense storm events. Some sections are concrete lined channel.	Works to watercourse could be made to reduce flood risk. Works to the banks could also enhance wildlife interest.	Tadburn Lake	2 (Wildlife) 5 (Flooding) 6 (Landscape)	M
2	There is very limited aquatic and virtually no marginal vegetation in the sections of the Stream. Work in places would enhance primarily the amenity value of the river but also may have some biodiversity gains.	Comprehensive river restoration due to the nature of the engineered channel structure here is not a realistic proposition. Management options such as rotational coppicing to open up views and increase light into the watercourse could be achieved.	Bypass	2 (Wildlife) 5 (Flooding) 6 (Landscape)	S
3	Parts of the stream have become overgrown with Himalayan Balsalm and Japanese Knotweed.	A comprehensive plan to remove non native plants problem is required.	Full length	2 (Wildlife)	S
4	The footway from Halterworth to the edge of the town centre follows the course of the Tadburn Stream. This path provides a direct link from the housing in the Character Area to the town centre, avoiding the need to walk alongside the main arterial roads into town.	There have been some improvements carried out recently including lighting, resurfacing, signage and fencing but there is scope for more. Lighting could be provided on sections of the path which are particularly well used by pedestrians especially in areas adjoining existing development. Shared use of the footpath could be explored. Links from and to the bypass using the bridges could be improved for cyclists and pedestrians.	Jenner Way Tadburn Meadows Bypass	1 (Access) 6 (Landscape)	M

## Main River Test Character Area



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### *Location and boundaries*

- 4.17** This character area begins at the Duke's Head public house and follows the flood plain southwards bordering the town until it meets the Town Centre character area at Sadler's Mill. The area is bounded by the built up area of the town to the east and the scarp slope to the west including Palmer's Copse and Pauncefoot Hill.

### *Character setting and watercourse description*

- 4.18** This rural character area is defined by the large, clear, braided chalk river and its large floodplain, both of which are near flat and used historically and currently as pasture. The upper two thirds of the floodplain has small and medium field sizes usually defined by native hedges and lines of trees, typically ash and alder. The pastures include unimproved grasslands and rush pastures typically cattle grazed. Many of these fields are historic water meadows and some of the related structures can still be seen. The lower third is much more open in character with larger field sizes with boundaries usually defined by post and wire fencing. Pastures here are improved and grazed or cut for silage. Planted Poplar belts are found by the riverside.
- 4.19** While there are many views of the Test floodplain (from Romsey itself or from the surrounding higher land) there is limited public access. The Test Way footpath passes through the floodplain but views of the River itself are hard to obtain. There is very little development within the area. The few buildings that do exist include the Greenhill Waste Water Treatment Works, 'World of Water' and Greatbridge House but they do not detract from the high degree of tranquillity of this area.

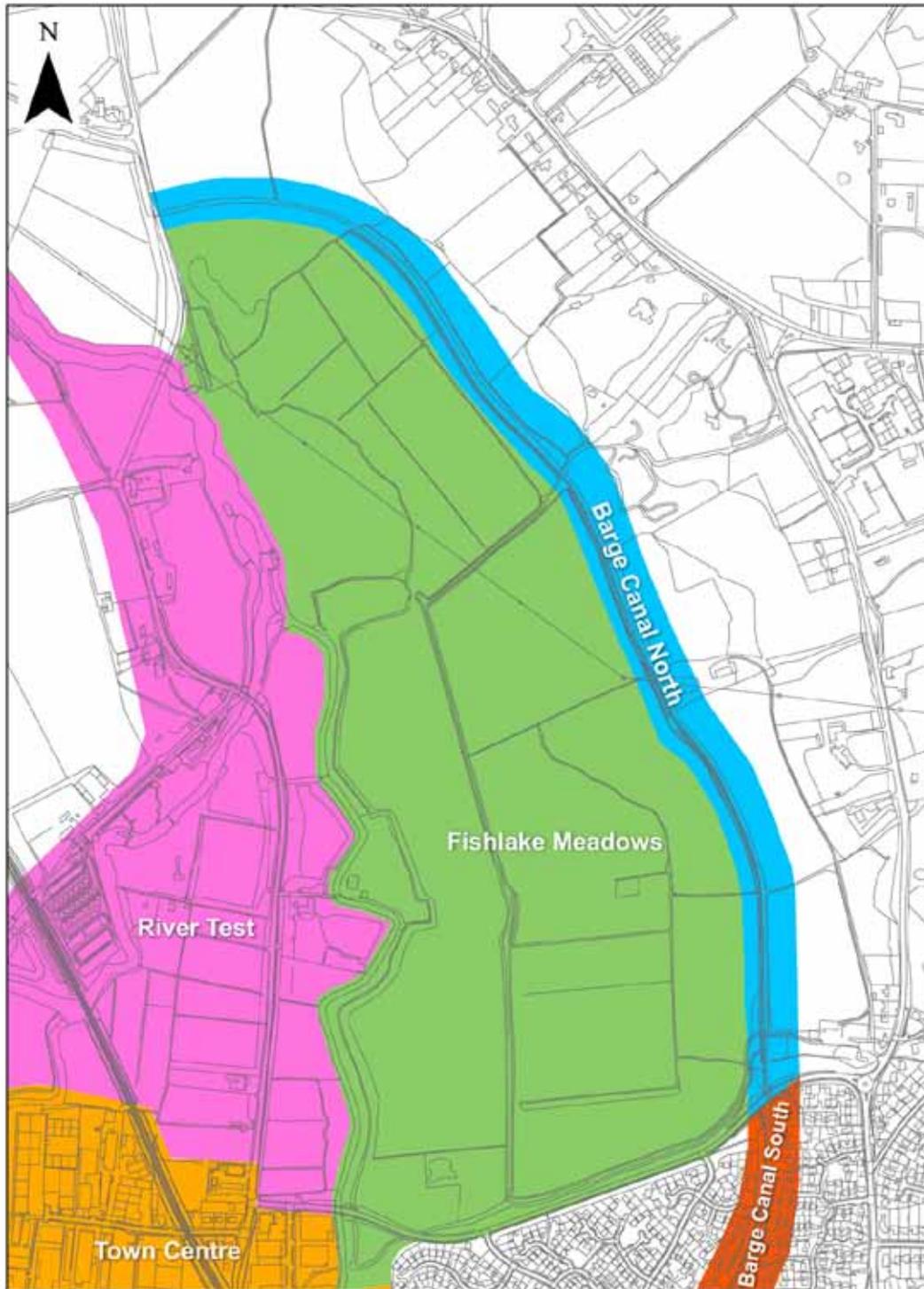
Main River Test, Middle Bridge



**Table 3 – Main River Character Area Initiatives**

	<b>Issue</b>	<b>Proposed Measure</b>	<b>Focus/ Location</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Time</b>
1	The River Test SSSI is currently in an unfavourable condition in all sections.	Further research into reasons for status and agreement of works to enhance the habitat	Full length	2 (Wildlife)	S
2	The River Test is one of the country's most important fly fishing rivers. It also provided water for industries within the town.	Installation of information and interpretation boards would assist the public in further understanding the importance of the waterways. Other promotional events such as garden open days, local events and leaflets could also be valuable.	Full length	3 (Heritage) 4 (Awareness)	M
3	The Test Way follows the direction of the main river but is often screened from view or separated from the path.	Investigation of enhanced links to the town centre and links to circular walks to the north and south.	Full length	1 (Access) 4 (Awareness)	M
4	In some locations the footpaths are narrow and have restrictive gates.	Enhancing the public access through appropriate surfaces, widened routes and remove/alter gates would enable the main river area to link with the town centre. There may be issues of landownership.	Sadlers Mill	1 (Access)	M
5	Along some of the channels there are structures holding the banks are failing.	There may be landownership issues but re-creating more natural banksides would enhance wildlife interest and may be less susceptible to erosion.	Sadlers Mill	2 (Wildlife) 6 (Landscape)	S

## Canal North Character Area



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### *Location and boundaries*

- 4.20** The Canal North character area lies to the north of the town centre and incorporates the Canal and its banks either side. The area is bordered by open land on both sides. The southern boundary is marked by Fishlake Meadows road, which crosses over the Canal. The western boundary is outlined by Fishlake Meadows and Ashley Meadows.

### *Character setting and watercourse description*

- 4.21** The Canal (originally named the Andover-Redbridge Canal) was opened in 1794 and flowed for twenty two miles from Andover to Redbridge. In the 1860s much of the route was filled in and replaced by a railway line, however, the section from Timsbury road bridge to Romsey remains to the present day. The Canal is an important aspect of Romsey's rich water-based industrial past and is an important aspect of the town's heritage. Until the 1980s the Canal existed as a relatively static waterway, only becoming a flowing stream following the re-engineering of the waterways north of the town centre. Today the Canal forms part of the flood alleviation network, is a popular backdrop to local recreation and provides a wildlife habitat which is part of a wider complex of wetland habitats. It is designated an SSSI in this northern section.
- 4.22** The northern section of the Canal has a very different feel from the remainder. Here it is bordered by the open, flat, grazed pastures of Ashley Meadows. With sunlight reaching the Canal a lush chalk stream flora has developed both on the banks and in the watercourse. This both softens the previous hard, engineered edges to the Canal and creates a more dynamic flow within the channel. This section of Canal has an adjacent grass public footpath that commands fairly open views of the meadows and woods beyond. This is a tranquil section affected only by the pylons and the road noise.
- 4.23** The southern section of the Canal North area has a different character. Woodland and lines of planted trees abut the watercourse southwards to Fishlake Meadows road. These enclose the Canal and its path, creating a shadier, cooler place that only gains glimpses of the surrounding pastures. The shade means much less vegetation growth with resultant broader, slower waters. The more engineered look to the Canal is stronger and further emphasised by several remaining structures.

Top of Canal, Ashley Meadows



Overgrown scrub in the Canal, north of Fishlake Meadows road



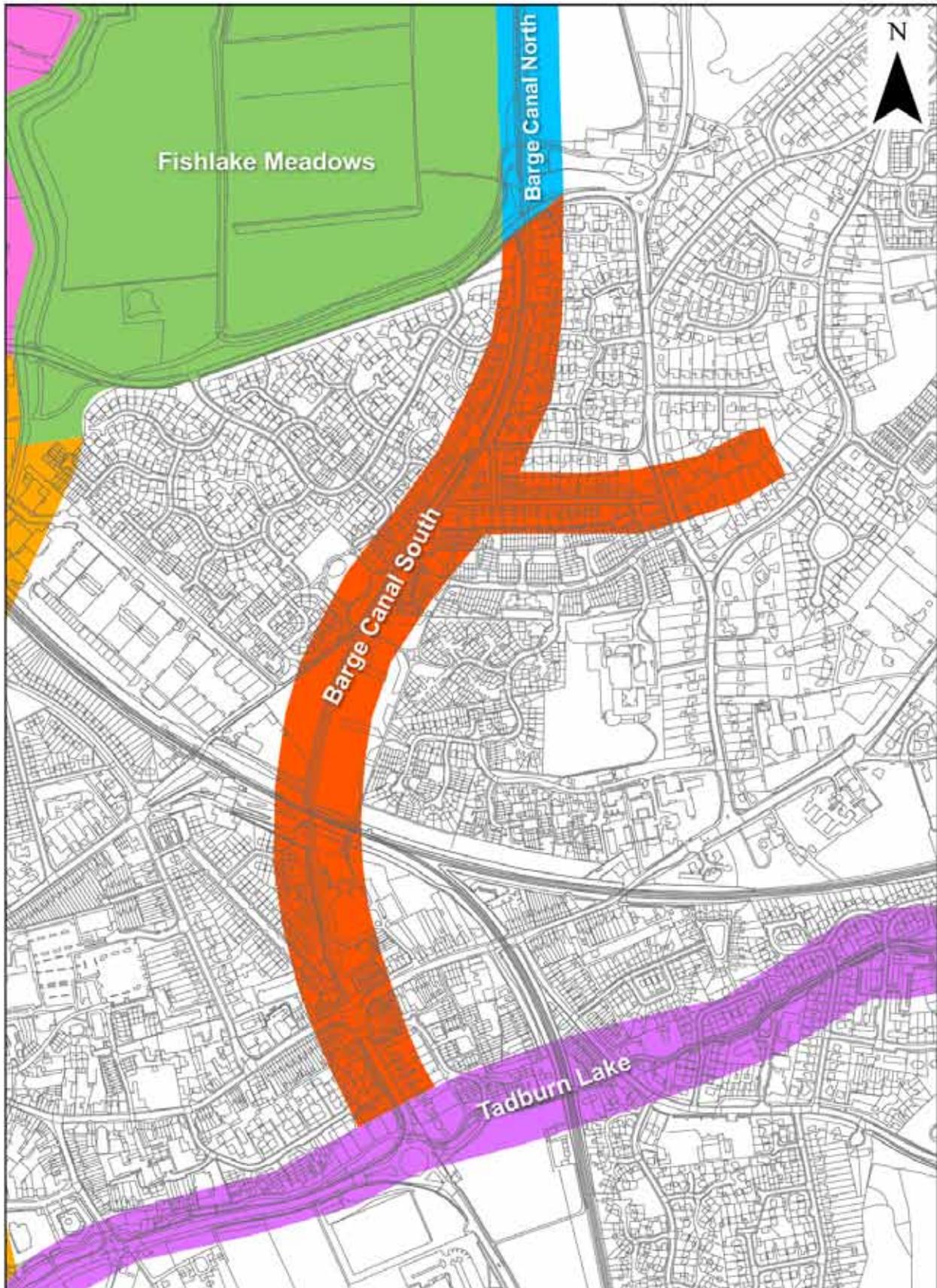
**Table 4 – Canal North Character Area Initiatives**

	<b>Issue</b>	<b>Proposed Measure</b>	<b>Focus/ Location</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Time</b>
1	The Canal is an important part of the history of Romsey and retains a number of historic features	Installation of information and interpretation boards would assist the public in further understanding the importance of the Canal. An audit and record of historic features would be of value.	Full length	3 (Heritage) 4 (Awareness)	S
2	The Canal provides a green corridor out to the north of Romsey but the quality in terms of recreation and value for biodiversity could be enhanced. A strategy is required which encompasses long term management and the need to improve the quality of the environment for people and wildlife. This could lead to an agreed management plan.	A vision could be achieved by identifying a single project lead for specific projects, engaging with the landowner to discuss obligations and identifying responsibilities and rights. The vision would include measures - Creation of marginal habitat using faggots / deflection of flows - Bank restoration - Management of sluices and structures - Vegetation management - Reduce incidence of shading - Management of access into the Canal - Interpretation to aid understanding (control of dogs) - The creation of a safe and inviting environment to encourage access into the wider countryside.	Full length	1 (Access) 2 (Wildlife) 3 (Heritage) 4 (Awareness) 5 (Flooding) 6 (Landscape)	S
3	At the present time, water levels and flow can vary widely, which is damaging to the Canal's wildlife and its attractiveness.	Ways of achieving more consistency through river restoration techniques should be investigated. The impact of drop boards and culvert under the A3057 should also be investigated.	Full length	2 (Wildlife) 5 (Flooding) 6 (Landscape)	S

	Issue	Proposed Measure	Focus/ Location	Objective	Time
4	Over recent years significant sections of the Canal have become progressively overgrown and shaded by scrub and trees. This has suppressed marginal and bank-side vegetation and reduced suitable habitat for water voles, dragonflies etc, as well as its attractiveness.	Careful planning is needed to re-create and maintain optimal conditions of light, shade and scrub and tree management.	Full length	2 (Wildlife) 5 (Flooding) 6 (Landscape)	S
5	The Canal is a Site of Special Scientific Interest which is not in favourable condition.	The Canal SSSI could be restored with a comprehensive package of measures put in place to ensure long term sustainable management as well as public access.	Length of Character Area	1 (Access) 2 (Wildlife) 5 (Flooding) 6 (Landscape)	S
6	There is potential to increase public access and link the town to the north with a shared route along the towpath through the Character Area. Public access would need to be balanced with the need to protect the Canal's special ecological importance, including the habitats around adjacent to it. There may be other opportunities to secure circular footpaths to the west.	The feasibility of such a cycle route or link to the west needs further investigation as well as discussions with the landowners involved.	Length of Character Area	1 (Access) 2 (Wildlife) 4 (Awareness) 6 (Landscape)	M
7	A number of the watercourses would benefit from increased, coordinated management.	Encourage regular coordinated management and removal of litter. Establishment of a volunteer group.	Full length	2 (Wildlife) 4 (Awareness) 5 (Flooding) 6 (Landscape)	S

	<b>Issue</b>	<b>Proposed Measure</b>	<b>Focus/ Location</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Time</b>
8	The area is popular with walkers.	It has been identified that additional benches would be welcomed by users. Finger posts identifying where bridges lead may also be useful.	Full length	1 (Access) 4 (Awareness)	S

## Canal South Character Area



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### *Location and boundaries*

- 4.24** The southern extent of the Canal South character area covers the Canal and its setting from Fishlake Meadows road south to the Plaza Theatre and its confluence with the Tadburn Lake beside the Bypass.

### *Character setting and watercourse description*

- 4.25** In contrast to the northern half of the Canal, this section is wholly suburban in setting, cutting through relatively recent residential development. For much of its length properties back up to the banks of the Canal closing it off from its surroundings with fencing and garden shrubbery. This limits views available to users of the adjacent towpath.
- 4.26** Although suburban throughout, the Canal's character changes along its length. A number of transport structures pass over the Canal including several footbridges, a road bridge and the railway bridge. Here the feeling of a built environment is at its most distinct with concrete footings, walls and hard, vertical sides to the Canal itself. The channel is straight, uniform and the water is deeper.
- 4.27** There are sections where open space abuts the Canal and the amount of adjacent land covered in native vegetation is higher. From Fishlake Meadows road to Withy Close the Canal is flanked by a towpath and a parallel footpath set back approximately five metres from the bank. In between the two paths is an area of scrub and trees creating a more natural but darker setting. For the most-part the path set back from the Canal is separated from the residential properties beyond by a relatively thick, high hedge, although this disappears at points, allowing direct access from residential front gardens. From Old Road to Withy Close the surfaces improve, as the towpath becomes a pedestrian/cycle route to the town centre. It splits by Withy Close, one arm goes west to the Railway Station and town centre. The second arm continues south to The Plaza. Either side of the railway line the Canal is abutted by open space, former school grounds and allotments. This allows sunlight to reach the channel and, as previously noted, the water vegetation is abundant thus narrowing the channel and inhibiting views of the water in places.
- 4.28** On reaching near to the Plaza Theatre, the Canal becomes culverted and disappears underground before re-emerging within residential rear gardens in between The Harrage and Southampton Road, before the confluence with Tadburn Lake beside the Southampton roundabout.

Footpath alongside Canal



Bridge over Canal



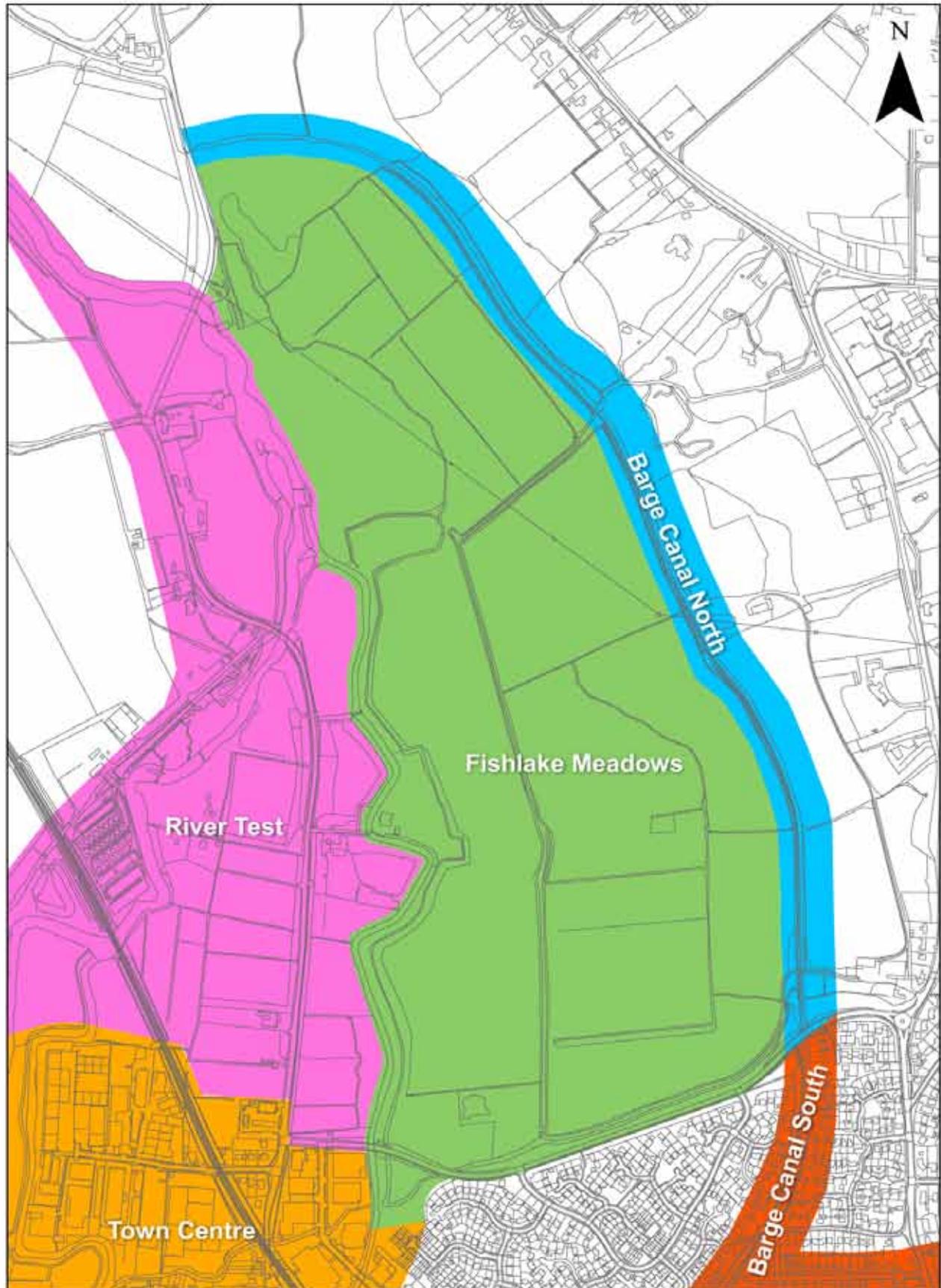
**Table 5 – Canal South Character Area Initiatives**

	<b>Issue</b>	<b>Proposed Measure</b>	<b>Focus/ Location</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Time</b>
1	The Canal is an important part of the history of Romsey and retains a number of historic features.	Installation of information and interpretation boards would assist the public in further understanding the importance of the Canal. An audit and record of historic features would be of value.	Full length	3 (Heritage) 4 (Awareness)	S

	<b>Issue</b>	<b>Proposed Measure</b>	<b>Focus/ Location</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Time</b>
2	The Canal provides a green corridor out to the north of Romsey but the quality in terms of recreation and value for biodiversity could be enhanced. A vision is required which encompasses long term management and the need to improve the quality of the environment for people and wildlife. This could lead to an agreed management plan.	A vision could be achieved by identifying a single project lead for specific projects, engaging with the landowner to discuss obligations and identifying responsibilities and rights. The vision would include measures - Creation of marginal habitat using faggots / deflection of flows - Bank restoration - Management of sluices and structures to maintain water levels generally - Vegetation management - Reduce incidence of shading - Management of access into the Canal - Interpretation to aid understanding (control of dogs) - The creation of a safe and inviting environment to encourage access into the wider countryside. - Scoping the potential use of parts of the Canal for water-sport	Full length	1 (Access) 2 (Wildlife) 3 (Heritage) 4 (Awareness) 5 (Flooding) 6 (Landscape)	S
3	At the present time, water levels and flow can vary widely, which is damaging to the Canal's wildlife and its attractiveness. Ways of achieving more consistency should be investigated, including whether the culvert under the A3057 is part of the problem.	It has been identified that there are several places where there are provisions for board-weirs to be fitted, but no boards in place. The advantage of reinstating these or whether an alternative approach could be more beneficial should be investigated.	Full length	2 (Wildlife) 5 (Flooding) 6 (Landscape)	S

	Issue	Proposed Measure	Focus/ Location	Objective	Time
4	Over recent years significant sections of the Canal have become progressively overgrown and shaded by scrub and trees. This has suppressed marginal and bank-side vegetation and reduced suitable habitat for water voles, dragonflies etc, as well as its attractiveness.	Careful planning is needed to re-create and maintain optimal conditions of light, shade and scrub and tree management.	Full length	2 (Wildlife) 5 (Flooding) 6 (Landscape)	S
5	A number of the watercourses would benefit from increased, coordinated management.	Encourage regular coordinated management and removal of litter. Establishment of a volunteer group.	Full length	2 (Wildlife) 4 (Awareness) 5 (Flooding) 6 (Landscape)	S
6	The area is popular with walkers.	It has been identified that additional benches would be welcomed. Finger posts identifying where bridges lead may also be useful.	Full length	1 (Access) 4 (Awareness)	S
7	The Abbotswood development of 800 dwellings will provide contributions towards the upgrade of the towpath.	These improvements need to be included and coordinated into any management proposals for the Canal.	Length of Character Area	1 (Access)	M
8	Permission has been granted for 34 dwellings at the former Romsey Infant School site. A footbridge is proposed over the Canal in the north west corner of the site to provide an emergency flood evacuation route and wider permeability benefits to the town. A 6m wide wildlife corridor is also proposed.	These improvements need to be included and coordinated into any management proposals for the Canal.	Southern end of Canal	1 (Access) 2 (Wildlife) 5 (Flooding) 6 (Landscape)	M

## Fishlake Meadows Character Area



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### *Location and boundaries*

**4.29** The Fishlake Meadows character area is located immediately to the north of Romsey town centre and incorporates Fishlake Meadows, Ashley Meadows and Fishlake Stream. The eastern and northern boundaries of the area are formed by the Canal, whilst the southern boundary is defined by Fishlake Meadows road and the late-twentieth century residential area beyond. To the west, the area is bordered by the A3057, the River Test and, further south, Fishlake Stream.

### *Character setting and watercourse description*

**4.30** This area is dominated by open, flat pastures interspersed with water bodies and some taller vegetation all occurring on the natural floodplain of the Test. It has a very natural feel and rural character with little in the way of obvious man-made structures or materials. This character results from the natural form of water meadows. The original area of the flood meadows is considerably wider reaching than the present area (as illustrated on the map). Agriculture ceased in the 1980s and the Meadows have developed to become an important site for wildlife.

**4.31** Fishlake Meadows is a flat area of wetlands with extensive reed beds criss-crossed by a number of drainage channels. The area is interspersed with a number of trees and an increasing density of scrub, as well as both standing and fallen deadwood. The majority of the southern half of the site is a mosaic of reedbed and swamp vegetation. The eastern boundary and north-west corner of the meadows are dominated by unmanaged and rather dense and tussocky sward and reedbeds. The seasonal flooding that occurs and prevalence of wildlife all contributes to its character. There is no public access to the Meadows.

**4.32** Ashley Meadows is located immediately north of Fishlake Meadows, flanked by the Canal and the River Test. It is cattle-grazed pastures with some scrub and, despite the electricity pylons, retains a slightly more 'tamed' feel than Fishlake Meadows. Ashley Meadows comprises a number of areas of rush pasture as well tussocky flood pasture grassland. The area is divided in two by the presence of willow scrub. The south-west corner of Ashley Meadows comprises a poplar plantation. The area can be viewed from two peripheral footpaths and one central path.

**4.33** Fishlake Stream branches off from the River Test besides Ashley Meadows, before flowing south along the western perimeter of Fishlake Meadows. It is a large man-made carrier that flows through constructed banks above the natural floodplain (perched). Despite this it has a natural character with clear waters and lush native vegetation both on the banks and in the channel itself. The eastern bank is largely tree-lined which both overshadows the watercourse and cuts it off visually from the adjacent meadows. On reaching Fishlake Meadows road, Fishlake Stream becomes Holbrook Stream, which then flows south into Romsey town centre. The noise and traffic on the A3057 do detract from the tranquillity of this area.

Scrub encroachment into Fishlake Meadows



Fishlake Meadows



**Table 6 – Fishlake Meadows Character Area Initiatives**

	<b>Issue</b>	<b>Proposed Measure</b>	<b>Focus/ Location</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Time</b>
1	Fishlake Meadows has an important role in flood risk management during times of prolonged groundwater flooding events. The control structures need to be managed carefully to make best use of the various channels to convey high flows with least damage.	Fishlake Meadows will fill on groundwater events but can still provide some balancing to short intense storms causing local surface water runoff. The level of water that is held on the meadows should be monitored to balance flood storage needs with biodiversity benefits.	Fishlake Sluice	2 (Wildlife) 5 (Flooding)	S
2	There are a number of Environment Agency river level monitoring sites in the Romsey area. These are at Fishlake sluice, Oxlease drain, Plaza Grill (Canal), Brewery grill (Fishlake), Rivermead and on the Tadburn. Due to the locations of the EA's monitoring sites it is not possible to use the data to determine water levels in the Fishlake Meadows or to see how or if the work on the siphon may have affected levels in the Fishlake Meadows.	The installation of a gauge or measuring board could allow for more detailed modelling and understanding of the water control measures on the Meadows.	Up Stream of the Oxlease Siphon	5 (Flooding)	S

	<b>Issue</b>	<b>Proposed Measure</b>	<b>Focus/ Location</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Time</b>
3	The wildlife of much of surrounding area has been surveyed and includes significant areas of agriculturally unimproved and semi-improved grassland, albeit not at SINC level.	With appropriate management, the wildlife and attractiveness of these wetland and meadow habitats could be enhanced to complete a wide, scenically diverse and wildlife-rich corridor.	Non SINC land north of Fishlake Meadows		M
4	The marginal fen vegetation is particularly wide in some of the watercourses where it is likely to have narrowed the open water channel enough to speed the rate of flow. Some of this vegetation is being progressively shaded by willow and alder growth and needs managing.	Increased management is required to enhance the wildlife and habitat interest of all the elements of the SINC.	Western boundary of Fishlake Meadows SINC.	2 (Wildlife) 6 (Landscape)	M
5	Water levels are a key attribute to the formation of the still wetland habitat. The wildlife richness of this very important SINC depends on the maintenance of its current wetland habitats, with extensive areas of open water.	There is a need to see a protocol developed for the inlet and outlet structures that maintains the habitat whilst taking account of the full range of interests in the area and other constraints such as flood risk.	Full Area	2 (Wildlife) 5 (Flooding) 6 (Landscape)	S
6	The wildlife value of the wetlands is high. This has encouraged increased number of visitors to the site.	Further monitoring and recording of the species on site is important. The balance of public access with the wildlife importance is a key aspect of a management and access plan.	Full Area	1 (Access) 2 (Wildlife) 4 (Awareness)	S

## 5. Next Steps

- 5.1** The partners will develop more detailed proposals for each Character Area.
- 5.2** Many of the proposals will need to involve local landowners and riparian owners. Their input and consent will be invaluable in progressing the project. The project partners will seek to discuss the aspirations set out with these groups where appropriate to ensure that anything proposed is achievable.
- 5.3** It is proposed to provide an annual update of the progress made by the partners on the website, [www.testvalley.gov.uk/romseywaterways](http://www.testvalley.gov.uk/romseywaterways)

### Public Involvement

- 5.4** A key element of enhancing the waterways is the time, expertise and motivation of local volunteers and interest groups. The partnership is pleased to have the Romsey and District Society as a key member, which has taken a lead in highlighting, organising and managing local enhancements, such as 'Stream Cleans'. The responses to the initial consultation on the Waterways project also highlighted the number of local people who would generously offer their time to carry out enhancement projects. A local group focussing on the Canal has had an initial meeting. If you would like to be involved or offer assistance to the project, please contact:

**community&leisure@testvalley.gov.uk** or contact Countryside Officers on **01264 368000**

### *Focus*

- 5.5** It is envisaged that whilst opportunities for enhancements will be progressed where possible, the initial focus of the Partnership will be on the Canal South Character Area for a number of reasons. It is a key route into the town centre from the Cupernham ward and a key link from the town into the Countryside. As part of the permissions at the former Romsey Infants School and Abbotswood, developer contributions are coming forward to enhance the route. In terms of ownership, Hampshire County Council, Test Valley Borough Council and the Environment Agency, which form part of the Partnership, own or control significant areas of the route which should support implementation.

## Partners

- 5.6** Each of the partners has particular responsibilities and interests. A summary of these is set out below, along with contact details should you wish to find out more.

### *Test Valley Borough Council*

- 5.7** The Borough Council owns and maintains a number of individual sites within the Town, many of which border water courses, such as Memorial Park and Tadburn Meadows. The Borough Council through its Greenspace Strategy has in place management proposals for its recreation areas within the Town. It can support this project through the review of those plans such that they complement it.

Kevin Harrington, Parks and Countryside Manager  
**kharrington@testvalley.gov.uk** or **01264 36 8815**

### *Hampshire County Council*

- 5.8** Hampshire County Council is also a significant landowner, particularly along the Canal. It also has responsibilities relating to the Rights of Way network with a number of footpaths alongside waterways including; the River Test, the Canal and the Tadburn.

David Carman, Environmental Initiatives Manager  
**david.carman@hants.gov.uk** or **01962 832354**

### *Environment Agency*

- 5.9** The Environment Agency has an overview role in flood risk matters and is the lead organisation supervising the management of all sources of flood risk. To manage these risks the Agency can undertake works and has powers to regulate operations carried out by others. The Agency works with Local Authorities on addressing 'local flood risks'. The Agency is also the competent authority for the delivery of the Water Framework Directive. This is a European directive which places a duty on member states to maintain and improve the quality of surface and ground-waters. In carrying out those duties it is able to call upon sources of funding which may be available for the implementation of the strategy.

Ian Tripp, Technical Specialist  
**ian.tripp@environment-agency.gov.uk** or **03708 506 506**

### *Natural England*

- 5.10** Natural England is the government's adviser on nature conservation and delivers the government's agri-environment schemes. One of its roles is to ensure Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) are managed to maintain or restore favourable condition. Natural England is working with the Environment Agency on a joint 'River Restoration Project'. The project is currently developing a strategy for those parts of the Test system designated as an SSSI; identifying where the habitats and channel forms don't meet those appropriate for favourable condition, and the types of works that could be used to improve the condition. Natural England also delivers the current agri-environment scheme Environmental Stewardship. This is used to guide and fund appropriate management of important habitats, particularly through Higher Level Stewardship.

Alison Graham-Smith, Conservation and Land Management lead adviser for the Test Valley  
**alison.graham-smith@naturalengland.org.uk** or **03000 604834**

### *Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust*

- 5.11** The Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust is a well established conservation body with considerable experience of managing ecologically important sites and in involving the public in environmental projects.

John Durnell, Head of Conservation  
**JohnD@hwt.org.uk** or **01489 774400**

### *Romsey and District Society*

- 5.12** The Romsey and District Society is dedicated to improving the quality of the environment for the benefit of people living and working in Romsey and the surrounding villages. It promotes conservation, understanding, enjoyment and enhancement of the natural, built, historical and urban environment and works for enhanced public access where compatible with this aim. It also undertakes practical tasks such as stream cleans, and organises regular social and cultural events. Through its members it is able to help promote public interest in the project.

Elizabeth Pratt (RDS) Chair of the R&DS Natural Environment Committee  
**elizabeth.pratt@virgin.net** or **01794 511036**

If you would like to be involved in the project, please contact us:

**[community&leisure@testvalley.gov.uk](mailto:community&leisure@testvalley.gov.uk)** or contact Countryside Officers on **01264 368000**

Beech Hurst  
Weyhill Road, Andover  
Hampshire  
SP10 3AJ

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