

INVESTING IN TEST VALLEY

2015-2019 and beyond



The Council's Corporate Plan, "Investing in Test Valley", sets out four priority aims which focus on ensuring the borough remains a great place to:

- Live, where the supply of homes reflects local needs
- Work and do business
- Enjoy the natural and built environment
- Contribute to and be part of a strong community

The Plan is underpinned by a Corporate Action Plan which runs for the lifetime of the plan and is updated annually.

The first year of the Corporate Action Plan has seen a lot of work done to begin delivering on the Council's four priority aims.

Live where the supply of homes reflects local needs



- **247 new affordable homes** were built in 2015/16.
- £30,000 grant from Department for Communities and Local Government to encourage **neighbourhood planning**.
- Work is underway to prepare the new **Housing Strategy**.



Picture: New rural housing in King's Somborne

We helped to deliver 247 new affordable homes in the borough in 2015/16, which is great news for our local communities. There are few things more important than having a roof over your head and these new homes will really help to make a difference to people's lives.

We are now going even further in helping communities to get things done that matter to them by assisting them to think about their long term needs and how community planning can help. I am pleased that we have been able to successfully obtain a £30,000 grant from the Department for Communities and Local Government to assist us to explore the role of neighbourhood planning. As part of this, we are working with eight pathfinder parishes to develop a toolkit for communities across the borough to assist with neighbourhood planning.

We believe that neighbourhood planning is a force for good and will guide development that meets local needs.

We are also in the process of finalising our Housing Strategy, which will help to us to deliver homes that reflect local needs. We decided to wait and see what the Housing and Planning Act contained before agreeing our strategy, which we intend to do in November. Unfortunately, some of the provisions of the Act will make the delivery of affordable housing very challenging.

Enjoy the natural and built environment



- Following significant public consultation, the draft management plan for **Fishlake Meadows** has been adopted by Council. Transfer of the site is expected in autumn 2016.
- The process to prepare and let a new **leisure management contract** is underway. The contract is expected to be awarded in November and will commence in April 2017.
- Evidence is being collected to inform the new **Waste Strategy**.



 **WasteWise**

Test Valley
Borough Council

Picture: River Test at Fullerton

As part of a planning permission for a development of 64 homes on Oxlease Farm, TVBC will be given Fishlake Meadows along with £1.3 million towards its long term management as a nature reserve. Over the first year of the Corporate Action Plan, the Council undertook significant public consultation over the plans for the site and results have been used to inform a management plan. It is anticipated that the site will be transferred to the Council in autumn 2016.

You may have seen in the last few weeks that Andy Lester wrote an article for the Romsey Advertiser stating that Fishlake Meadows has been an excellent example of partnership working.

We are keen to ensure our residents have access to great local leisure facilities and I am pleased to report that the project to prepare and let a new 30-year leisure management contract is progressing well. It is intended that a preferred bidder will be selected for recommendation to Council in November 2016, with the new 30-year contract commencing in April 2017.

As part of the work to develop the evidence base for the Waste Strategy, the Council teamed up with independent research agency ResearchBods to run an innovative four week public consultation on waste and recycling in Test Valley in October 2015. Over 100 residents from across the borough took part, giving feedback on our

current recycling services and ways in which we could help them to recycle more of their waste. This consultation has been nationally recognised and was presented at the Local Area Research and Intelligence Association annual conference. The results of this consultation will be used to inform the review.

Work and do business



- Subject to occupant interest, **ultrafast broadband** will be rolled out to businesses on Walworth and Portway business parks by Virgin Media Broadband.
- The **Hampshire Superfast Broadband Programme** will extend superfast broadband coverage to 95% of Hampshire's domestic and commercial properties by 2018. The Council is investigating ways to support those properties not covered by the scheme.



Hampshire
Superfast Broadband



The Council has also been working closely with Virgin Media Business (VMB) to enable occupants of Walworth Business Park and Portway Business Park to have access to ultrafast business broadband. Subject to enough occupant interest, VMB has agreed to invest more than £600,000 to roll out the service to the two business parks over the next few months.

The service will enable occupants to access impressive download speeds for no more than £60 per month. This opportunity will enable local businesses to compete, grow and attract new commercial enterprise to the area.

The Hampshire Superfast Broadband Programme will extend superfast broadband coverage to 95 per cent of Hampshire premises (domestic and commercial) by 2018. Alongside partners, the Council is investigating ways to support the remaining premises not covered by the Hampshire-wide project. It will be less than the 95 per cent in Test Valley due to the rural nature of the borough.

Work and do business



- Working with Romsey Future, Revd. Canon Tim Sledge hosted the **Romsey Tourism Conference** in the Abbey to inform Romsey Future's tourism work stream.
- The **four new coach parking spaces** at Romsey Rapids are attracting more visitors to the town.



Picture: Romsey Tourism Conference

Romsey Future has seen the introduction of four new coach parking spaces at Romsey Rapids. These spaces, the idea for which emerged through Romsey Future's extensive public consultation, provide the infrastructure for coach parties to visit the town, and are marketed extensively by the Test Valley Tourist Information Centre.

In addition to the coach parking spaces, work is continuing to increase the number of visitors to the town. In April, Revd. Canon Tim Sledge hosted the Romsey Tourism Conference in Romsey Abbey. Attended by over 40 people, the conference brought together representatives from Romsey's tourist attractions and businesses to discuss ways in which Romsey can be established as a renowned tourist destination.

Work and do business



- The **Andover Technology and Skills Centre**, delivered in partnership with Andover College, is due to be opened in time for the autumn term.
- **The Skills Training Fund** has helped 400 residents into work with 133 businesses. In addition to our funding of £260,000, employers have contributed £90,000.
- The enhancing Andover town centre project saw progress on the introduction of **arches** to signpost people to traders on the town's lanes, and **wayfinding monoliths**. Year two has seen the erection of one arch, with six more to come.
- The **heritage trail** received £9,900 from the Heritage Lottery Fund and was launched in summer 2015.



Picture: George Yard arch

The Andover Technology and Skills Centre, delivered in partnership with Andover College, is due to be opened in time for the autumn term. The Centre is a valuable investment in the development of advanced technical skills in Andover.

The Skills Training Fund was set up as a result of developer contributions for Andover Business Park. Last year the fund has helped 400 residents into work with 133 businesses. In addition to our funding of £260,000, employers have contributed £90,000.

The arches project is progressing and will see metal artworks installed onto the front of the historic archways in the centre of town, improving their appearance as well supporting local businesses down these alleyways. One of these arches has now been installed and unveiled, with six more to come.

The wayfinding project is due to be completed by the end of the summer which will see a number of monoliths installed in and around the town centre. The monoliths will display maps of the town and will help to direct visitors and residents.

The heritage trail was successful in gaining Heritage Lottery Funding of £9,900 which will allow the trail to have a larger phase two. This will see plaques fitted into the ground as well as a number of information boards displaying the history of the town

at various parts of the trail. The funding has already helped deliver a host of public tours of the trail.

Contribute to and be part of a strong community



- The **Romsey Future** vision document has been adopted by Council, as well as a range of local organisations and community groups. Year two of will see partners working together to deliver on Romsey Future's ambitions for the town.
- As part of the commitment to renew **Andover Vision**, a community conference was attended by local Councillors, community groups and voluntary organisations who worked together to identify ways to make Andover a better place to live. Year two will see extensive community consultation to develop the vision ready for April 2017.

Romsey Future

Andover Vision

Test Valley
Borough Council

The Romsey Future initiative is an excellent example of where we have fundamentally changed the way we work with our communities. The 20-year vision has now been adopted by the Council as well as a range of local organisations and community groups.

Romsey Future has helped to deliver some really tangible successes, including the introduction of new coach parking at Romsey Rapids and the highway and footway improvements to Church Street in Romsey, which we hope will encourage greater footfall in the area.

Year two of the Corporate Action Plan will see partners working together to deliver on Romsey Future's ambitions for the town.

In 2005 Andover Vision came about, bringing together key stakeholders in Andover. Various achievements came from this partnership working – such as a new theatre for the town, a new cinema and junior graduation ceremonies to name a few.

As part of our corporate commitment to renew the Andover Vision, we invited local Councillors, community groups and voluntary organisations in Andover to come together to share what they think a new vision for Andover could look like, as well as identifying some key ideas on how we can make Andover an even better place to live.

Contribute to and be part of a strong community



- Through **Empowering Communities** a new induction session for Councillors has been developed. Year two will see a new training and development programme to support Members in their community Councillor role.
- The **Test Valley Resilience Forum** is helping to increase community resilience.
- £1.4 million allocated to the **Community Asset Fund** for 2015-19.
- £350,000 allocated to the **Councillor Community Grant Scheme** for 2015-19.



An induction session for new Councillors has been developed, which focuses on what new Councillors are likely to face in their role, with a particular emphasis on the role of the Councillor as a community leader.

As part of a continued commitment to training and development, a Councillor training and development programme has been developed for 2016/17 in order to continue to support Councillors in their roles.

I am proud to have led an initiative that has delivered a positive outcome from the 2014 floods. During the flooding it was obvious that communities with resilience plans in place were better prepared than those who did not. Therefore, we have established the Test Valley Resilience Forum, which brings communities together to help create resilience plans across a variety of issues and potential emergencies, including but not limited to flooding.

£1.4 million has been allocated for 2015-19 for the Community Asset Fund. Communities can apply for grants of up to £25,000 to help with large scale projects. Last year the Fund contributed to, amongst other things, a flood alleviation scheme in Stockbridge, a purpose built performing arts space at Harrow Way Community School, and several village hall improvements across the borough.

The Councillor Community Grant Scheme has supported various community groups across the borough, and will continue to do so with the £350,000 that has been allocated for 2015-19. Last year the Fund contributed to, amongst other things, the cost

of purchasing and installing a defibrillator in Andover, and Jane Scarth House's school choir festival in Romsey.

Project Enterprise

- Since February 2014 over **£25 million** has been approved for investment in property.
- Completed purchases all yielding in excess of **7% returns**.
- Rental income from approved purchases is set to be worth almost **£1.3 million per annum**. This is £1 million more than would have been received by way of interest had the money remained in reserves.

	Total cost/approved budget
	£'000
Projects completed in prior years	
Sopwith Park, Portway	912
Imperial Court, Walworth	696
Plot 88, Walworth	4,587
Total	6,195
Projects completed 2015/16	
Shirley Road, Southampton	5,773
Total	11,968
Approved projects yet to be completed	
Investment property	4,952
Development on Walworth	3,114
Development on Walworth	5,400
Housing development in Andover	392
Total	25,826

And finally – Project Enterprise – which doesn't sit under one of the four corporate aims but is one of the major Corporate Action Plan projects. We established the Project Enterprise work stream in February 2014 to reduce our reliance on external funding from central government. We have approved, and expect soon to have completed, more than £25M of investment property purchases. I am pleased to report that our completed projects are all yielding in excess of seven per cent returns. Our rental income from our approved purchases is set to be worth almost £1.3M per annum. This is £1M more than we would have received by way of interest had this money remained in our cash reserves.

Project Enterprise

- **Valley Housing Ltd.** has been set up to address the need for more private sector rental housing in Test Valley.
- The Council has embarked on a joint venture with Kier to develop **Evolution 50**, a 50,000ft² warehouse on Walworth Business Park.



As part of Project Enterprise, the Council has created “Valley Housing Ltd.” after identifying a need for more private sector rental housing in Test Valley. To this end, the Council has planning permission to erect two three bedroom town houses on land adjacent to 96 High Street in Andover, which will be let for full market rent. As well as addressing housing need in the borough, Valley Housing Ltd. will also provide a good return on investment for the Council.

The Council has embarked on a joint venture with Kier to develop **Evolution 50**, a 50,000ft² warehouse on Walworth Business Park. The new unit, which is part of the Council’s commitment to rejuvenate the business park and develop the local economy, will provide an excellent opportunity for a large company to join the business park.

New projects for year two

- Triggered by the Boundary Commission, the **Test Valley Borough Council Electoral Review** will review the electoral arrangements for the Council.
- Following the Council's purchase of the **Andover Magistrates' Court**, future options for the site will be explored.
- A new **Green Spaces Strategy** will be developed to guide the management of the borough's green spaces.
- Delivery of new sports facilities at **Ganger Farm**.



In addition to the projects already on the CAP, four new projects have been added for year two.

Triggered by the Boundary Commission, a review of electoral arrangements in Test Valley will be undertaken over 2016-17. Members have been contributing information on the time they spend undertaking their role, which will contribute to the Council size submission to the Boundary Commission.

Last year the Council, in partnership with Hampshire County Council, completed the purchase of Andover Magistrates' Court from the Ministry of Justice. The car park is now providing valuable additional town centre pay and display parking. As part of the Hampshire-wide One Public Sector Estate project, options for this strategically important site will be investigated over year two of the CAP.

This year, Romsey War Memorial Park won its ninth successive Green Flag Award. Rooksbury Mill won its eighth Flag and Valley Park celebrated its seventh consecutive success. Officers are currently developing the evidence base for the production of a new Green Spaces Strategy which will guide the management of the Council's green spaces from 2018-2028, ensuring that they continue to be managed to an award-winning standard.

We shall also be working on an implementation plan for the delivery of the sports facilities planned for the Ganger Farm development.

Corporate performance indicators

32.7% Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting

98% Percentage of applicable land that has an acceptable level of litter and detritus

68% Processing of major planning applications within 13 weeks

247 Cumulative number of affordable homes delivered

98.26% of Council Tax collected

85% Percentage of homelessness preventions

76% Enforcement cases concluded within 42 working days

My thanks to you all

The first year of the Corporate Action Plan has seen a lot of work done to begin delivering on the Council's four priority aims, and I look forward to seeing what is achieved in year two.