



A new era for **Andover**



**Leader of Test Valley Borough Council,
Councillor Phil North**

Andover is my home. It is where I grew up and have always lived. It is a town filled with incredible people and fantastic local businesses. Shops have always come and gone but in recent years we have all felt the full effect of the national decline of the high street. We live in a world where retailers must compete with the convenience of the internet and evolving shopping habits. Boarded up units in towns up and down the country are the very visible and unsightly scars of that ongoing battle.

But we are set to mark a new era for Andover. By combining the purchase of the Chantry Centre with the Cultural Quarter project, we have kick-started a major scheme to transform our town. Town centres are becoming more of a place for leisure and living as well as retail. We, therefore, need to create a place where people will want to visit, work, live and spend time with their family, friends and colleagues. We have a once in a generation opportunity to revitalise our town and 2019 marks the start of a new era for Andover.

My fellow councillors and I have an ambition to deliver a town that people can be proud of. A town for those who have spent their lives here and a town for those who have relocated to the area. A town for those who live outside Andover and a place where businesses can thrive and grow.

This is my commitment to all those who live and work here. And this is my commitment to the town I have spent my life calling my home.

Phil North

A once in a generation opportunity

Earlier this year Test Valley Borough Council bought the Chantry Centre in Andover town centre. The council already owned the freehold but has now bought the long leasehold from Aviva. This is a very real demonstration of our commitment to regenerating the town.

As the council pushes forward with its vision for Andover, the project to develop a Cultural Quarter on the adjacent site can now be joined with the Chantry Centre. This creates a once in a generation opportunity for a major redevelopment of Andover town centre. The project will begin with the council developing a masterplan for the area and we are delighted that HemingwayDesign and NEW Masterplanning have been awarded the contract to deliver this. To have two high-profile companies on board is genuinely exciting and indicates the significance of this major project.

Entertainment, enterprise, exercise

Like all other comparable towns, we expect that Andover will continue to see a reducing retail presence. Why would people come to the town centre when they can shop from the convenience of their own home? The answer to that question lies in creating a town that does not rely solely on retail and offers a high quality, attractive outdoor space and leisure destination. From exceptional eateries and a state-of-the-art theatre, to top class leisure facilities and great local shops, we want Andover to be the destination of choice for anyone looking to watch the latest show, purchase products and produce from local retailers, grab a bite to eat, work out, relax and socialise.



The town centre redevelopment area

The Cultural Quarter area includes The Lights theatre, Andover College, the new leisure centre, Andover Magistrates' Court and one of the Simply Health offices. Following the purchase of the Chantry Centre, the council is now a majority landowner and we have the opportunity to fundamentally redevelopment the town centre and ensure that it serves its growing community.





Next steps

The council will now work with HemingwayDesign and NEW Masterplanning to develop a masterplan for the whole of the town centre. Once this is in place we are likely to seek a joint venture partner to deliver the redevelopment scheme.

In the meantime, we will be pressing ahead with other enhancements to the town centre. Our brand new leisure centre will be a wonderful facility for the town and our decision to keep this facility in the town centre means it will bring valuable footfall to this area.

Our plans for delivering a new riverside park at Town Mills are progressing as we continue to work with Hampshire County Council to bring this project to life. This will be another important piece in the fabric of the Andover town centre of the future. Creating an attractive, family friendly space is at the heart of the council's proposals for this area and indeed will be underlying principles for the redevelopment of our town centre, reflecting the evolution of other town centres like Andover.

On a smaller scale, the council will be taking opportunities to make some immediate improvements. We receive regular feedback about the condition of the Chantry Centre toilets at the bus station and so refurbishing these will be one of the projects at the top of our list.



At the end of January 2019, the council opened a new Changing Places toilet facility in the Unity office, which also operates the Shopmobility scheme. This will assist in improving the accessibility of our town centre for some residents and visitors.

We also know from speaking to customers of The Lights and Andover Leisure Centre that it would be helpful for us to extend the opening hours of the Chantry Centre car park. This is something we will seek to facilitate as quickly as possible.

The redevelopment of the town centre will be a large and complex project and it isn't going to happen overnight but we are starting work on it straight away. We will continue to share our plans with residents and businesses along the way and will be consulting on the masterplan over the summer of 2019.

A new era for Andover

The council is absolutely committed to delivering a revitalised town centre that everyone can be proud of.