

Test Valley Borough Council's Sustainability Framework DRAFT

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This framework document set out the Council's objectives for promoting sustainable practices in the way it delivers its services, with a focus on environmental matters. It sits beneath the Council's Corporate Plan and links with a variety of strategies and policy documents. The achievements to date are identified, along with ongoing activities.

2 Background

Corporate Plan

- 2.1 The Corporate Plan¹ sets out the Council's vision and priorities for the Borough, which provides a focus for the activities and services delivered. The starting point is the vision:

We aim to be an organisation of excellence committed to improving the quality of life of all the people in Test Valley.

- 2.2 In order to help achieve this vision, four priorities are identified. They are that we will seek to invest in Test Valley to be 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

- 2.3 All of these priorities contribute to helping create sustainable communities.

What do we mean by sustainability?

- 2.4 The term 'sustainability' has different meanings to different people, and in different contexts. Therefore it is important to summarise how we are applying this term in the context of this framework.

¹ Investing in Test Valley: Corporate Plan 2015-2019 and beyond, Test Valley Borough Council, 2015.

- 2.5 A regularly cited definition uses the term ‘sustainable development’ and was provided by the Brundtland Commission in 1987, which states ‘*sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs*’² – this approach can be applied more broadly than just in relation to development. It also recognises that decisions we make now can have important implications for the future.
- 2.6 Sustainability is often considered to have social, economic and environmental roles that need to be considered collectively. The Corporate Plan priorities (identified above) reflect these strands.
- 2.7 This framework has regard to all these views of what sustainability means. It will primarily focus on the environmental aspects, but there will be some overlap and links to the social and economic factors.

National Direction on Sustainability

- 2.8 Legislation, national policy and commitments can inform the Council's approach to considering sustainability. Therefore we can have regard to such positions when making decisions and considering how we deliver services.
- 2.9 Some of these national commitments are summarised below for reference, however this does not represent a comprehensive record:
- The Climate Change Act sets out a duty to ensure that the net UK carbon account for the year 2050 is at least 80% lower than the 1990 baseline;
 - The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 establishes a duty for local authorities to have regard to conserving biodiversity in exercising its functions;
 - The Fuel Poverty Strategy for England identifies a target to ensure that as many fuel poor homes as is reasonably practical achieve a minimum energy efficiency rating of Band C by 2030; and
 - The Government has made a commitment to ensure almost every car and van is a zero emission vehicle by 2050³.

3 Objectives

- 3.1 In order to promote sustainability, a series of objectives has been developed which will be worked towards. The objectives are set out below:
- Ensure sustainability is incorporated into our policies and procedures

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

³ A commitment made as part of the membership of the Zero Emission Vehicle (ZEV) Alliance.

- Show leadership on environmental sustainability matters where it makes good business sense to do so
 - Use resources (including energy and water) more efficiently and try to encourage those living and working in Borough to do the same
 - Continue look at ways to reduce carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions in order to contribute towards achieving national targets
 - Procure materials and resources from sustainable sources
 - Reduce the amount of waste generated, whilst increasing the proportion which is re-used, recycled or composted
 - Ensure that we plan appropriately for the long term, including adaptation to a changing climate and improving our long term resilience
 - Create the opportunities for more sustainable travel
 - Conserve, and where possible enhance, the local environment including biodiversity
- 3.2 These will be taken into account, alongside other considerations, in delivering services and running the Council's estate.
- 3.3 A series of topics have been identified below, documenting ways to help achieve the objectives, the Council's approach to certain matters and work that is already underway. Where relevant, cross references are provided to existing strategies and policies which provide more information on these matters. Links to additional related information provided by other organisations can be found appended to this Framework.
- 3.4 The impact the Council can make in the way it operates on its own may be relatively small, however, when this is considered alongside the impact of others living and working in the Borough, there is scope for a much larger cumulative effect.
- 4 Starting at Home...**
- 4.1 Our home environments and lifestyles can have an important influence on our quality of life (including our health) and the impact we have on the environment. For example, if we do not carefully manage how we heat our homes and allow air to circulate then we can risk condensation build up and mould growth, which can have health implications, particularly for more vulnerable people. The way we use resources can reduce the amount of energy or water we use and can also influence the cost of bills we have to pay. Small changes can sometimes make a big difference.

Did you know...

- In 2010, about 10% of households in Test Valley were regarded as being in fuel poverty, this is slightly lower than the Hampshire average
- Based on 2015 data, about 24% of carbon dioxide emissions in the Borough were from domestic sources
- In 2015/16, approximately 32.7% of household waste was recycled in Test Valley

- 4.2 The Council has a number of responsibilities and delivers services to help people across the Borough in making a difference at home – some of these are identified below.
- 4.3 Local authorities have a role in trying to use their position to encourage energy efficiency in all residential accommodation in their areas – this is established through legislation. As a result, the Council has published an [Action Plan](#) (known as the HECA Action Plan⁴) setting out key actions that will be taken in the short term. This is to try and reduce the number of households in fuel poverty and increase energy efficiency of domestic properties leading to a reduction in energy usage.
- 4.4 Linked to this, the Council's Private Sector Housing Team has responsibilities linked to ensuring that the private housing stock within the Borough is suitable for the people who live in it. The team has varying roles including raising awareness of issues, looking at financial assistance options (e.g. loans, grants) and taking enforcement action where necessary. The approach is established through the [Private Sector Housing Renewal Strategy](#).
- 4.5 In relation to new homes, the Building Regulations process establishes the standards that new buildings should be achieving, including in relation to energy efficiency. The Council is securing a higher level of water efficiency for new homes through the Building Regulations process linked to the planning policies for the area⁵. A range of organisations can provide advice on water efficiency and saving water, which may include your relevant water company.
- 4.6 The Council is a waste collection authority and works with Hampshire County Council and other organisations through [Project Integra](#) which provides an integrated approach to collection, treatment and disposal of waste. Alongside operating the collection of recyclables and waste from households, the Council seeks to raise awareness of opportunities to reduce waste generation and encourage more waste to be re-used, recycled or composted.

⁴ This links to the requirements of the Home Energy Conservation Act (HECA) (1995).

⁵ See policy E7 within the Test Valley Borough [Revised Local Plan](#).

- 4.7 Information is provided on the Council's [website](#) about all these matters, as well as the Recycling Stars initiative. This initiative seeks to increase awareness and participation, minimise waste, increase recycling and reduce contamination (i.e. putting things in the wrong bins). The Council works with schools and other supporters through this initiative.
- 4.8 The Council is finalising a new Waste Strategy, which will provide more detail on the Council's approach to waste and recycling.
- 4.9 Places to access more information from the Council:
- Advice on energy efficiency and the condition of private sector housing view the Council's [website](#) or contact the Private Sector Housing team
 - More information on what you can / can't recycle in the Borough, details of the waste and recycling collection services and the Recycling Stars initiative is available at:
<http://www.testvalley.gov.uk/wasteandrecycling>
 - For more information on water resources see:
<http://www.testvalley.gov.uk/aboutyourcouncil/corporatedirection/enviromentandsustainability/water>

5 Continuing at Work and as part of your Community

- 5.1 Many of us have good habits at home in terms of thinking about the energy and other resources we use and it is important to remember the same when we are at work and as part of the community as much as possible.

Did you know...

- Based on 2015 data, about 29% of carbon dioxide emissions in the Borough were from industrial and commercial sources (including agriculture)

- 5.2 There are many organisations within the Borough that are actively supporting environmental sustainability activities, including community groups and initiatives. In some cases the Council has sought to support these groups and communities – this links back to the Corporate Plan and the 'contribute' priority.
- 5.3 One such example of how the Council can help is the availability of the Community Asset Fund. This fund enables certain groups to bid for up to 50% of the cost of relevant projects that provides or enhances community infrastructure – this can include refurbishing community facilities, and supporting local flood alleviation schemes.

- 5.4 In addition, parish and town councils can use different community planning tools to improve their resilience and meet their needs. A Community Planning Toolkit has been prepared by the Council to help guide town and parish councils on the options available to them, with support being available from the Council's Communities team.
- 5.5 There are also networks in place to bring together businesses and share best practice on sustainability considerations. One such example is the Hampshire Sustainable Business Partnership (more information in Appendix 1). Sometimes straight forward measures can make a difference to operational costs and the quality of the work environment. A first step could be to undertake an energy and water audit of premises.
- 5.6 The Council aims to take account of environmental sustainability as part of its operations having regard to the objectives set out above. This includes looking at opportunities to minimise the use of resources in the running of the estate and increasing our green credentials when it makes good business sense to do so. It also includes encouraging staff to be more sustainable in their use of resources.
- 5.7 A recent example is that following a review of the energy usage at the Council's Portway Depot, an opportunity was identified to reduce energy consumption through the installation of more efficient LED lighting, as well as generating energy through the installation of solar photovoltaic panels. This forms part of the Council's Project Enterprise scheme and these improvements are now in progress.
- 5.8 A number of other projects are delivered through regular asset management planning, including the staged upgrading of lighting in the Council's main office with more a more energy efficient system using LED lighting. Changes such as these can contribute to real changes in energy use, for example over the last 8 years the electricity consumption of the Council's Beech Hurst office in Andover has generally been falling (whilst there has been an increase in the staff based at this site) - reporting indicates between 2011/12 and 2015/16, electricity consumption at Beech Hurst fell by approximately 20%.
- 5.9 There are opportunities to take account of environmental sustainability in how we purchase goods and services. The Council's Contract Standing Orders (which manage and regulate the way the Council lets its contracts) and Procurement Strategy highlight the need to take account of the sustainability framework and its intentions to reduce demand on natural resources, and to deliver services and functions in a more environmentally sustainable way.

- 5.10 It is also important for businesses, including the Council, to think about business continuity and how this may change in the future⁶. Linked to this, the Council also has responsibilities in relation to emergency planning along with a series of other agencies.
- 5.11 Places to access more information from the Council:
- For information on the Community Asset Fund see: <http://www.testvalley.gov.uk/communityandleisure/workingwithcommunities/communitygrants/caf>
 - The Community Planning Toolkit is available at: <http://www.testvalley.gov.uk/communityandleisure/workingwithcommunities/communityledplans/community-planning-toolkit>

6 Enjoying in the Environment

- 6.1 The environment around us, including parks and other outdoor spaces, has been identified as important by residents. Access to such spaces is regarded as having a positive contribution to physical and mental wellbeing, and can have benefits to community cohesion⁷.
- 6.2 The environment is also important for other reasons, providing a variety of functions that we depend on and benefit society and the economy. These are often referred to as ‘ecosystem services’. With this in mind, it is important that we conserve the environment around us, including the air we breathe and the water we consume. Some of the matters discussed in other sections of this document can help with this topic too.

Did you know...

- The Biodiversity Action Plan (2008) indicates that about 11% of the land area of Test Valley is subject to one or more wildlife designation.
- There are 4 Local Nature Reserves in the Borough for which the Council is responsible – these are Anton Lakes, Rooksbury Mill, Tadburn Meadow, and Valley Park Woodlands.
- A recent survey by Sport England indicated that in Test Valley approximately 24% of people were inactive (less than 30 minutes per week), 14% fairly active (30 to 149 minutes per week), and 62% active (150+ minutes per week)

⁶ For example, climate change forecasts indicate the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events may increase – this could include storm events and heatwaves, along with a greater risk of flooding.

⁷ Also see Public Parks, House of Commons Communities and Local Government Committee, 2017.

- 6.3 There are a range of habitats and species found within the Borough, some of which are regarded to be of national and international importance for nature conservation. A number of organisations, including the Council⁸, are working to conserve these sites and biodiversity in general.
- 6.4 The Council manages a number of green spaces across the Borough, including Local Nature Reserves. The Green Spaces Strategy (which is currently being reviewed) provides the overarching approach to managing the Council's green spaces, with additional management plans in place for the Local Nature Reserves.
- 6.5 The Council also works with partners to conserve other assets within the Borough, in order to improve habitats and enhance biodiversity. Examples of such projects include the River Anton Enhancement Scheme and through the implementation of the Romsey Waterways and Wetlands Strategy. A project is currently underway, to bring forward an additional nature reserve in Romsey at Fishlake Meadow. Details on this scheme are available on the Council's website.
- 6.6 The Parks and Countryside team organise a series of events over the year, including working with local conservation groups and volunteers, to help conserve the nature reserves and give an opportunity to find out more about these spaces and species in the area (e.g. bats walks in summer months).
- 6.7 The Test Valley Biodiversity Action Plan provides more information on the biodiversity within the Borough and the range of organisations involved. It also highlights the role that everyone can play in supporting local biodiversity, such as through gardening for wildlife (places to find more information about this are available in the appendix).
- 6.8 There are multiple organisations involved in managing current and future risk of flooding (accounting for the implications of a changing climate). The Council's responsibilities are more limited on this matter. However, there is a role for us to work in partnership with other agencies to try and reduce future risk of flooding and deal with emergency events if they arise. Recently, the Council has been supporting the Environment Agency, along with Hampshire County Council, in relation to a flood alleviation scheme for Romsey.
- 6.9 Places to access more information from the Council:
- For more information on the Local Nature Reserves managed by the Council, and educational visits to this sites, see:
<http://www.testvalley.gov.uk/communityandleisure/naturereserves>

⁸ There is a legal duty on the Council to have regard to conserving biodiversity as part of our policy and decision making through Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.

- To find out more about the River Anton Enhancement Scheme see: <http://www.testvalley.gov.uk/communityandleisure/parksandgreenspaces/river-anton-enhancement-scheme>
- To find out more about the Fishlake Meadow Nature Reserve visit: <http://www.testvalley.gov.uk/communityandleisure/fishlake-meadows-nature-reserve>
- The Biodiversity Action Plan is available at: <http://www.testvalley.gov.uk/communityandleisure/naturereserves/biodiversity-action-plan>

7 Travelling

- 7.1 The choices we make about travel can have a number of implications, for example, on levels of congestion during peak periods, levels of emissions from vehicles (which can influence air pollutant levels) and our health and wellbeing. In promoting more sustainable travel patterns, the first thing to consider is whether there is an opportunity to reduce the need to travel (such as the way services are delivered, working from home, etc), this also includes by linking trips where appropriate. Where journeys need to be made, there may be alternative modes of travel available.

Did you know...

- Based on the 2011 Census, just over 70% of those living in the Borough who are in employment travel to work by car or van, this compares to about 10% by foot, about 3% by bike and just under 6% by coach, bus, train or tram. About 7% mainly work from home.
- Based on 2015 data, about 47% of carbon dioxide emissions in the Borough were from transport sources

- 7.2 The Council has its own Travel Plan which sets out its approach to promoting more sustainable travel. A number of measures have been identified including, provision of facilities to enable cycling to work, car share parking spaces, and technology to enable remote working (as part of encouraging digital transformation) and telephone conferencing. The Council also manages its own fleet of vehicles, with a range of measures including route management and vehicle tracking system in use. In addition, the Council keeps the specification of vehicles under review when they need to be replaced. This recently resulted in the addition of two electric vehicles to the fleet.
- 7.3 The Council has adopted three Access Plans⁹ and a Cycle Strategy and Network document which identify a series of measures to improve sustainable transport and access opportunities across the Borough. These are being delivered as funding is available. Linked to this, the Council's website includes information on walking and cycling in the Borough – a link is provided below.

⁹ Andover Town Access Plan, Romsey Town Access Plan, and Test Valley Access Plan.

- 7.4 The Council seeks to encourage others to consider the promotion of sustainable travel opportunities. For example the planning system provides a mechanism to secure travel plans for larger developments, both through local policies and national guidance¹⁰.
- 7.5 Opportunities to increase the ability of customers to access services without having to come into the Council's offices have been reviewed, this includes through updating the Council's website. A range of services can be undertaken online, which have been grouped into one place within the headings of 'apply', 'pay' 'report' and 'check'. The 'My Test Valley' app is also available.
- 7.6 Places to access more information from the Council:
- For more information on travel planning and to view the Council's Travel Plan, see:
<http://www.testvalley.gov.uk/transportparkingandstreets/traffic-management/travelplans>
 - Additional information on sustainable travel options is available at:
<http://www.testvalley.gov.uk/aboutyourcouncil/corporatedirection/environmentandsustainability/sustainable-travel>
 - Details on walking and cycling in the Borough:
<http://www.testvalley.gov.uk/communityandleisure/cyclingwalking>
 - Information on the services that can be undertaken via the website are available at: <http://www.testvalley.gov.uk/do-it-online-services>

8 Monitoring Progress

- 8.1 The Council keeps track of progress of key projects through the Corporate Action Plan (CAP) process. The Council's project management framework guides the management of CAP projects, and environmental sustainability will form part of a project initiation checklist. Reports to the Council's Cabinet also include a section to summarise how such matters have been taken into account.
- 8.2 The Council will also keep track of a number of metrics as part of monitoring service delivery that will give us an indication of our progress. This will include monitoring Display Energy Certificates for relevant buildings, use of energy and water particularly for key buildings within our estate, along with the use of fuel in running the Council's fleet.

¹⁰ See policy T1 within the Test Valley Borough Revised Local Plan and paragraph 36 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Appendix 1: Information and Guidance from External Organisations

The Environment Centre: <http://www.environmentcentre.com/>

A Hampshire-based environmental charity that provides information on reducing the use of natural resources and living sustainably, including energy efficiency, saving water and waste management.

Energy Saving Trust: <http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/>

Provides information on saving energy at home (including energy efficiency and insulation), renewable energy and travel.

Future South: <http://www.futuresouth.org/>

A not for profit public-private partnership that is seeking to support low carbon innovations creating economic growth and improving quality of life.

Hampshire and Isle of Wight Local Resilience Forum:

<http://www3.hants.gov.uk/localresilienceforum.htm>

Comprises of local emergency service responders, local authorities and associated businesses, organisations and voluntary sector representatives working together to reduce risk in the local area and improve community resilience.

Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust: <http://www.hiwwt.org.uk/wildlife-gardening>

A nature conservation charity that operates across Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, this link provides information on gardening for wildlife.

Hampshire Sustainable Business Partnership (SBP):

<http://www.hampshireiowsustainablebusiness.co.uk/>

The SBP is an independent partnership based organisation which is hosted by the Hampshire Chamber of Commerce and seeks to support a sustainable low carbon economy across Hampshire; this includes working directly with businesses.

Hants Car Share: <https://hants.liftshare.com/default.asp#>

This comprises a partnership between *liftshare* and Hampshire County Council to promote opportunities for car sharing.

RSPB: <https://www.rspb.org.uk/get-involved/activities/give-nature-a-home-in-your-garden/>

A national charity that initially focused on bird species but now looks at protecting wildlife and the wider countryside, this link provides information on gardening for wildlife

Sustrans: <http://www.sustrans.org.uk/>

A charity that seeks to encourage travel by foot, bike and public transport.

Waterwise: <http://www.waterwise.org.uk/>

This is a not for profit organisation that provides advice on water efficiency in the UK, this includes information on how you can think about saving water at home.

WRAP: <http://www.wrap.org.uk/>

A charity that provides advice on resources and waste – links into a number of campaigns including Love Food, Hate Waste.