

## **Test Valley Borough Council Interim Economic Development Strategy Preparing for Recovery - Playing to our Strengths**

### **SUMMARY:**

- The report explains the need for and background to an Interim Economic Development Strategy for the next two years;
- It describes the main impacts that the Coronavirus Pandemic is having on Test Valley's economy;
- It sets out the Council's Local Economy Recovery Action Plan; and
- Provides an update of the key aspects of the 2019 Economic Development Strategy action plan.
- The Interim Strategy will be published in due course.

### **Foreword by Cllr Drew**

I am delighted to write the foreword to this interim economic development strategy as we begin 2021 - a year of recovery. We face a level of uncertainty rarely experienced: Test Valley is in Tier 4 lockdown but vaccinations are taking place in Andover and Romsey and we have a trade deal with the EU.

The interim strategy describes our understanding of how Covid-19 and the lockdowns are affecting our residents and businesses and sets out the Council's response. The Council will support its residents and businesses to help provide the resilience that our community and economy will require for the longer term. We will continue to deliver business grants as well as many other forms of support and over the longer the Council has put in place the building blocks to enable our town centres to recover to serve their communities.

### **1. Introduction**

This Interim Economic Development Strategy has been prepared against the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic and the end of the Brexit transition period on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2021. The level of economic uncertainty means for at least the next year or so it would be inappropriate to make detailed forecasts, consider their implications for the local economy and potential policy responses with any certainty as to the outcome.

The report looks at the short and medium term implications of the Pandemic, uses the Local Economy Recovery Action Plan as the basis for our interim response (Appendix 1) and re-visits the 10 actions from the current Economic Development Strategy.

The Local Economy Recovery Action Plan already demonstrates how the Council has been proactive in seeking to achieve a more resilient economic base moving forward. In establishing masterplans for Andover and Romsey town centres in a

timely fashion it has put in place the building blocks to enable the centres to be able to take advantage of the economic recovery whatever the nature of those centres will be in the future.

### 2. Background

Economic development is the thread that runs throughout the corporate plan and many of its priorities relate back to the Economic Development Action Plan.

The *Test Valley Economic Development Strategy 2017-19 and beyond*<sup>i</sup> was approved by Council in February 2017 and its Action Plan approved by Cabinet in March 2018.

Although the strategy was prepared under the previous corporate plan (Investing in Test Valley 2015-19) and based on the 2015 Test Valley Economic Assessment its themes remain fully consistent with the four priorities of the current corporate plan (Growing our Potential 2019-23). In particular:-

- Growing the potential Town Centres – will remain a priority over the long term
- Growing the potential of Communities – through community enterprise and through Test Valley “being open for business”
- Growing the potential of People – by raising aspirations and skills and access to jobs
- Growing the potential of the Environment – by creating attractive places for residents and visitors alike.

### 3. Why an Interim Strategy?

The Economic Development Strategy covers the period 2016 to 2019. The level of uncertainty caused by COVID 19 and its economic impact means it is difficult to predict how the changes either instigated or accelerated by the Pandemic will evolve and therefore what the best solutions could be.

Furthermore there are the continuing economic effects of the end of the Brexit transition period on 1 January 2021<sup>ii</sup>

In addition to Economic Development, the Interim Strategy must acknowledge:-

- the green recovery and climate emergency action plan<sup>iii</sup>;
- the importance of local community enterprise, in building a sustainable base for local businesses to recover; and
- EM3 LEP’s Revive and Renew – Economic Recovery and Renewal Action Plan<sup>iv</sup> which was introduced in response to Covid19.

The EM3 Recovery and Renewal Action Plan identifies 6 inter-related priorities all of which are relevant to Test Valley’s economic recovery:

- Job creation and skills for employment
- Digitisation and ultra-fast digital infrastructure for business resilience, innovation and growth
- Growth in the low carbon economy
- New Transport & Smart Mobility

- Town centres and Housing Supply – reimagined and fit for the future
- Supporting business-led innovation, entrepreneurship, high tech , scale-up business and international trade

However, whilst this strategy covers an interim period that is not to say that the Council won't be looking to support the economy in the longer term.

The Local Plan Review has already begun with consultation on Issues and Options, work is underway to prepare the evidence base for policies and proposals and work also continues to deliver the two Masterplans.<sup>1</sup>

#### **4. Economic life in the Borough – emerging economic effects of the pandemic**

The economy will swing from contraction to growth, following successive lockdowns and stimulation, through initiatives such as Eat Out to Help Out until a vaccine becomes widely available in 2021.

The basic structure of Test Valley's economy has not changed in the past year but the Coronavirus Pandemic and lockdowns have profoundly disrupted it at an unpredictable pace. Specific business sectors and sections of the workforce are being affected in different ways. At the same time new opportunities are being opened for some. The combination of impact and opportunity is changing all the time.

During the first lockdown community facilities not only acted as volunteer hubs but switched to delivering local produce. The increase in working from home and demand for local services is also likely to be of longer term importance.

#### **Strengths: Test Valley has a number of factors in its favour:**

- A diverse business base which is not heavily dependent on certain sectors or a small number of very large employers
- Located in the south east region with good connectivity to London, south coast ports and other concentrations of economic activity. Test Valley's location gives it good access to economic opportunities.
- A relatively highly qualified and affluent resident working population, especially in the rural and southern areas, many in managerial/professional occupations, who have been able to switch from longer distance commuting to working from home
- Low overall deprivation levels – albeit with pockets in specific kinds of deprivation
- Lower vulnerability to redundancy when furlough ends: the proportion of Test Valley employees on furlough (27%) is below the Hampshire average (30%), as is those self-employed on furlough (72% compared with 75% in Hampshire)

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<sup>1</sup> Andover <https://www.testvalley.gov.uk/news/2020/sep/new-era-for-andover-as-masterplan-published>

Romsey <https://www.romseyfuture.org.uk/the-masterplan>

- An attractive environment and accessible to people able to visit; tourism businesses are already investing heavily in the borough ready to contribute to a 2021/22 recovery in the hospitality sector

### **Weaknesses:**

- Some Andover neighbourhoods have relatively high Education/Skills and Income Deprivation where the increase in Universal Credit claimants is focused. There is an associated effect in terms of workers having to switch from sectors shedding labour to other sectors and into casual employment (involuntary zero hours, “gig” economy etc.) which could worsen income deprivation
- The Pandemic and lockdowns have accelerated longstanding trends in the composition of town centres, more so Andover, as customers have switched to online shopping
- Exposure to impact on sectors employing a lot of workers involved in face to face customer contact and where furloughing is highest including hospitality, arts and recreation and leisure, tourism, wholesale and retail. The volume of business grants which have and are being awarded for these customer facing sectors demonstrates the scale of impact in Test Valley.
- Possible impact on the manufacturing sector caused by the Pandemic, the end of the Brexit transition period, policies on trade with China and the decline in aviation, aerospace and oil and gas through the disruption to global supply chains

## **5. Unemployment**

One obvious impact of the Pandemic and lockdowns so far has been the rise in unemployment which could grow to levels not seen in recent decades.

Test Valley’s UC claimant rate rose by 170% between January 2020 and October 2020, from 1,010 to 2,720. 48% of this increase was among Andover residents who make up less than 40% of the borough population.

Overall though Test Valley’s claimant rate of 3.8% is below Hampshire (4.4%) and the UK (6.5%).

Just over 10% of this increase was among 16-24 year olds (from 125 to 310 in 8 months). Test Valley’s youth unemployment rate of 5.7% remains below Hampshire’s 5.9% and significantly below the UK’s 7.4%. (October 2020)

In two of Andover’s 6 wards the claimant rate for 16-24 year olds exceeds the national average and in a further two it is the same.

Individual businesses have been significantly affected: EM3 data Test Valley has experienced more start-ups than liquidations between March and June 2020. Businesses have been forced to adapt by reducing costs and finding new markets. This has inevitably includes reducing headcount and laying off staff.

The Local Economic Recovery Plan highlights a need for additional support for training to enable workers to transition from sectors that have been hit hardest, by acquiring higher value skills, in to those which will grow in the future.

### **6. Next Steps – Test Valley Local Economy Recovery Action Plan**

The Council's current response to the economic impact of the Coronavirus Pandemic and lockdowns is set out in the Local Economy Recovery Plan (Appendix 1).

The following section outlines the Council's role in relation to that of the Government. Finally, the report offers a brief update in relation to the actions from the original Economic Development Strategy.

### **7. The Council's role in economic development**

It is important for local authorities such as Test Valley Borough Council to support and promote economic development activity because businesses and the investment and jobs they bring for residents are essential to help create healthy and sustainable communities. Without jobs our centres would become dormitories dependent on areas beyond our boundaries for their livelihoods.

The Council's contribution to economic development comes in many forms from the long term such as the local plan allocation of employment land through to much more immediate business support e.g. business and training grants.

The Council's budget for proactive business support (e.g. grants, promoting tourism etc.) is about £350,000 which is tiny in comparison to the level of Government investment during the pandemic.

#### **7.1 Government Investment**

The Council's relationship with both residents and businesses is fundamental: its regulatory responsibilities (including: determining planning applications, licensing business premises - and as the administration of Government COVID grants best illustrates - business rates award) means that the Council is constantly working with businesses.

Since March 2020 Government has invested approximately £164m. into the Test Valley economy through:-  
£31.086m. in business grants  
£16.15m. in additional business rate relief  
an estimated £116.2m (to November) on furlough  
£0.4m. on other grants.

However, the Council also has a vitally important economic development role in disseminating information, connecting businesses to the most appropriate advice and support and with working through comprehensive networks.

#### **7.2 Andover and Romsey town centres**

The health of our town centres is a corporate priority. Town centres have and will be meeting places where people come together to celebrate, interact and do business. Our town centres and the businesses that give them life need to be supported as they evolve to meet future challenges and opportunities including people working from home for more of the time.

Lockdowns and the pandemic have accelerated town centres' vulnerability to longstanding trends including competition from neighbouring centres, out of centre stores and online.

Our town centres and the businesses that give them life need to be supported as they evolve to meet future challenges and opportunities including people working from home for more of the time.

The Council is looking to work with EM3 to establish a flexible business hub to support local entrepreneurs and employees who want to continue to work from home but within a convivial supportive business environment in Andover town centre.

The Council's work to develop masterplans for Andover and Romsey town centre, the acquisition and pro-active management of The Chantry Centre in Andover and the broader community leadership support of Andover Vision and Romsey Future represent strategic decisions which place both town centres in a strong position to take advantage of the economic recovery.

The challenges to our town centres, Andover in particular, reinforce the need to progress these long term ambitions and to enable both centres to continue to adapt and thrive over the next 30 years.

In terms of town centre management the establishment of a BID in April 2019 was a critical step in bringing the town centre businesses together on a formal and resourced footing. After the creation of a number of membership services and negotiating the successive lockdowns 2021 will be the opportunity for the BID to begin to deliver on larger ambitions.

In Romsey the Town Centre Manager has embarked on a new set of initiatives to support her members. The Council works closely and supports both through a variety of means.

### 7.3 **Footfall**

Town centre footfall is declining nationally as more people shop online rather than visit their local centre. Andover's town centre footfall fell by more than a quarter between 2013-19. Due to the pandemic, the 2020 figure is estimated to be just 52% of what it was in 2019.

Romsey's town centre footfall fell 12% between 2013-19. The 2020 estimate is 62% of what it was in 2019.

### 7.4 **Retail Vacancies**

Andover's primary shopping area vacancy rate rose from 10.09% in 2012 to 15% in 2013 and after falling has now risen to 17% (October 2020).

Romsey's vacancy rate followed a similar pattern in that it rose from 6% in 2010 to 8.2% in 2013. It then fell to just 4.8% in 2018 and now stands at 5.9%. The national vacancy rate 12.4%.

The economic impact points to the need to support centres and their businesses now and through the medium and long-term.

The attached recovery plan (Appendix 1) refers to a number of initiatives including upgrading the Council's Independent Retailer Grant from £1,000 to £1,200 and encouraging recipients to develop an online presence to complement their bricks and mortar premises.

As noted above, over the medium term there is an opportunity to retain those who are working from home instead of making long commutes by public transport by attracting flexible co-working space in town centres.

The opportunity to retain some of those who previously commuted long distances by public transport is part of a wider trend set in play in which homes with gardens in market towns such as Romsey and Andover have become more attractive than inner city flats.

In the medium term EM3 is looking to work with central Government and partners on spatial development plans which support sustainable economic growth.

In the longer term the masterplans will enable the comprehensive evolution of centres in line with contemporary economic behaviours.

### 7.5 **Stronger relations with EM3**

The medium term priorities in this strategy closely reflect those of EM3's Recovery Strategy.

The Council is working closely with EM3 on a number of issues including the Andover Masterplan; Town Mills Environmental Enhancement; the EM3 5G Digital Connectivity Group and ongoing developments at the University of Southampton Science Park such as jointly supporting its Catalyst programme for the next two years and the Future Towns Innovation Hub.

One impact highlighted by EM3's Recovery Plan which closely reflects Test Valley's practice is the need for upskilling. As certain sectors contract and opportunities arise in others, workers need the encouragement and support to re-train to switch directions. In particular, there is a need to improve skills from level 2 to levels 3, 4 and 5. The Council has deployed a wide range of initiatives on education, learning and skills training but more is needed as we move through the crisis.

### 7.6 **Promoting and strengthening the Tourism offer**

The original action plan identified the visitor economy as a key sector for Test Valley and it is one that has perhaps been affected most in terms of closures, job cuts and furlough.

However it is resilient and already there are major signs of recovery in the medium terms with many businesses in Test Valley investing significantly in their future.

The recent consultants' review of how the Council supports tourism, the move towards more online marketing and the exceptional opportunity to attract "staycation" visitors in 2021/22 augurs well for the recovery of the visitor economy in Test Valley from 2021 onwards.

### 7.7 **Supporting economy in our rural communities**

Rural facilities such as village and community shops and local suppliers have played a key role in both supporting their communities through lockdown by offering delivery services and community support but also by providing jobs.

It is key, moving forward, that such facilities are able to remain resilient, including an online presence and through the shop local and t local initiative. There must be opportunities to reinforce the importance of local enterprises as more commuters continue to work from home.

It is hoped that following the immense success of the LEADER Programme that the Shared Prosperity Fund recognises the vital importance of our rural businesses.

### 7.8 **Broadband**

Closely related to realising the potential of our rural businesses and for residents working from home is the need for high quality and affordable broadband throughout Test Valley.

There have been a series of schemes to deliver better broadband but Test Valley is predominantly rural and there remains a small but stubborn proportion of premises with a poor quality service.

- Supporting the roll-out of Virgin Media's "Test Town" fibre to the premises across central Test Valley <https://tvneed4speed.co.uk/>
- Promoting awareness of/supporting Gigabit Rural Vouchers<sup>2</sup> for rural communities to access high bandwidth broadband; and
- Hampshire County Council/BT Openreach "Hampshire Superfast Broadband" programme<sup>3</sup> is coming to an end

### 7.9 **Climate Emergency – Growth in the low carbon economy**

The Council's Climate Emergency Action Plan sets out short, medium and long term ambitions. EM3's Recovery Plan also refers to a range of actions designed to achieve a low carbon economy including more business support through a clean growth business support service.

It is evident that progress towards achieving a low carbon economy is happening through business innovation and investment and through our changing behaviour, encouraged and guided by legislative change. The Coronavirus pandemic has accelerated this process through, for example,

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<sup>2</sup> <https://gigabitvoucher.culture.gov.uk/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.hampshiresuperfastbroadband.com/>



working and shopping from home and, in turn, “clean growth” will also contribute to business reliance (e.g. town centre retail) and innovation, as witnessed at the University of Southampton Science Park.

The Council is one of several Hampshire local authorities to sign up to the EU business energy reduction programme <https://locase.co.uk/> which though delayed is due to start before the end of the year.

The Council is also working closely with another EU funded energy reduction scheme called Green Tech South <https://greentechsouth.com/> based at Portsmouth University which has delivered thousands of pounds of grant to Test Valley businesses.

Working with Kier to deliver the Walworth Business Park Extension:  
The Walworth Extension has the benefit of planning consent and Kier are actively promoting the site top potential occupiers.

### 7.10 Using Procurement to deliver social and economic benefits

The Public Services (Social Value) Act requires people who commission public services to think about how they can also secure wider social, economic and environmental benefits.

The Council’s Climate Emergency Action Plan includes procurement as one of its delivery mechanisms.<sup>4</sup>

### 7.11 University of Southampton Science Park

Test Valley is a mid-sized economy at £3.3.bn. (2018) of which USSP is estimated to make up 15%!

The USSP benefits from a bespoke planning policy which identifies additional development opportunities. USSP has supported TVBA for the past 10 years. The Council has awarded the Business Incentive Grant to 7 start-up businesses in the Catalyst Centre within the Innovation Centre at USSP

## 8. Conclusion

This interim update is a hybrid document. We are still in the middle of both a health and economic emergency which will continue in 2021 but should ease. The strategy sets a benchmark of both our current understanding of the economic impact – which will change – and the Council’s response. The Council’s economic development actions will continue through the short and medium term. The report also highlights critically important initiatives which are well-placed to put Test Valley in a competitive position for a sustainable economic recovery in the longer term.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/social-value-act-information-and-resources/social-value-act-information-and-resources>

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<sup>i</sup> <https://www.testvalley.gov.uk/business/businessgrantsandsupport/test-valley-economic-development-strategy-2016-19>

<sup>ii</sup> [https://www.gov.uk/transition?utm\\_campaign=transition\\_p3g&utm\\_medium=cpc&utm\\_source=seg&utm\\_content=ala\\_act0&gclid=CKSy9e7F-uwCFcN0GwodA9AAnQ](https://www.gov.uk/transition?utm_campaign=transition_p3g&utm_medium=cpc&utm_source=seg&utm_content=ala_act0&gclid=CKSy9e7F-uwCFcN0GwodA9AAnQ)

<sup>iii</sup> <https://www.testvalley.gov.uk/aboutyourcouncil/corporatedirection/environmentandsustainability/climate-emergency-action-plan>

<sup>iv</sup> <https://enterprisem3.org.uk/hub/revive-and-renew-recovery-and-renewal-action-plan#:~:text=Revive%20and%20Renew%20-%20The%20Recovery%20and%20Renewal,Renewal%20Action%20Plan%20for%20the%20Enterprise%20M3%20>

## Appendix 1

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**Covid-19:  
Local Economy Recovery Action Plan**

**Scope - to support, adapt and grow the economy of Test Valley**

**Key areas of focus:-**

- **Assess the structure of the local economy, and its vulnerability to Coronavirus impacts**
- **Identify local initiatives to mitigate the immediate impacts and promote recovery**
- **Promote the competitive advantages of the local economy in the 'new normal' national and global economies**

The Economic Recovery Workstream will reflect and inform preparation of an interim update of the Economic Development Strategy

<https://www.testvalley.gov.uk/business/businessgrantsandsupport/test-valley-economic-development-strategy-2016-19> pending a more comprehensive review in line with the review of the Test Valley Local Plan.

**Key Priorities:**

**3 Main key areas of focus have been identified. Running through this is the process for how the Council delivers on these priorities and identified where resources are required**

The Local Economy Recovery work needs to be set within context of national policy because the scale of the problem is so extensive that only Government can make a significant difference nationally and to a large degree locally. Therefore the scope for the Council's role focusses on where possible helping meet local gaps in provision and market failure and on facilitation. Such a response builds upon our existing range of provision. Whilst Government has invested much in supporting businesses and the economy to date – and more will be needed – the economic recovery will effectively be largely delivered through private investment which needs to be encouraged and managed by public agencies. There is already strong evidence of this resurgence in Test Valley's leisure and hospitality sector.

<b>Place (4,5,)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>assess impact of COVID on our local economy</b></li> <li>• <b>identify measures which will help our town centres, through the support of our businesses and to continue to attract visitors.</b></li> <li>• <b>support the rural economy and its business community.</b></li> <li>• <b>continue to emphasise the importance of the TV economy and its businesses</b></li> </ul>
<b>People (2)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>understand and promote access to local support programs to boost resident's employability.</b></li> </ul>
<b>Business (1,3,6)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>promotion tourism</b></li> <li>• <b>review of Hospitality &amp; Manufacturing sectors which have greater potential for unemployment.</b></li> <li>• <b>review the interim Business Incentive Grant process and Independent Retailer Grant?</b></li> <li>• <b>work with partners – (EM3 LEP, Solent LEP, HCC, PUSH, Andover BID, Chamber of Commerce) to identify and implement recovery actions.</b></li> </ul>

	<b>1. Supporting the Borough's Businesses (BUSINESS)</b>
<b>Impact Assessment Ref No.</b>	<b>Action Required</b>
1.	<p>Continue to deliver the National Lockdown Grant Schemes through to March 2021 which could include business support activities.  <a href="https://www.testvalley.gov.uk/business/covid-19-national-lockdown-business-grant-schemes">https://www.testvalley.gov.uk/business/covid-19-national-lockdown-business-grant-schemes</a></p> <p>Make a one-off contribution of £20,000 to support the University of Southampton Science Park Catalyst business accelerator programme to enable high growth-potential tech start ups to become commercially successful in two cohorts during 2021/222 and 2022/23.</p> <p>Seek to retain existing businesses through estates management, Andover Skills Training Fund, other business connections (e.g. recruitment, B2B opportunities) etc.</p> <p>Promote inward investment opportunities through Kier for Walworth Business Park and commercial agents.  <a href="https://www.testvalley.gov.uk/business/land/invest-in-andover">https://www.testvalley.gov.uk/business/land/invest-in-andover</a></p> <p>Work with EM3, Hampshire County Council and DIT to promote Test Valley (especially Andover) as a place for business investment.</p> <p>Liaise with local business networks e.g. FSB, Chamber etc.</p> <p>Promote local businesses e.g. Test Valley Online Business Directory, Hampshire Fare "Stay Local Stay Local"  <a href="https://www.hampshirefare.co.uk/news-events/news/stay-loyal-stay-local">https://www.hampshirefare.co.uk/news-events/news/stay-loyal-stay-local</a> promotion of TVBC procurement opportunities – ongoing.</p> <p>Retain, support, and promote village facilities (e.g. shops, pubs etc) as economic and community hubs.</p> <p>Continue to support businesses with BIGs and IRGs</p> <p>Promote local businesses through loyalty schemes such as Lifestyle card &amp; B2B for Andover Town Centre</p>
	<p>Review eligibility criteria and procedure for offering and administering Business Incentive Grant to those setting up a new business.</p> <p>Support and advise SMEs with partner agencies (DIT, EM3, Make UK etc) on both investment plans and challenges (recession/Brexit etc) and promoting Test Valley for inward investment.</p>

Creating an online Start Your Own Business in Test Valley guide

	<p><b>2. Supporting the Borough’s Workforce (PEOPLE)</b></p>
<p><b>Impact Assessment Ref No.</b></p>	<p><b>Action Required</b></p>
<p>2.</p>	<p>Support and work with Test Valley Skills Zone members to refer clients for employability/training advice and support. Two Andover Wards youth unemployment higher than national average e.g. claimant count in young people in parts of the Borough. Between January-September 2020 the number of benefit claimants in Andover rose by 890 and in Romsey by 275.  <a href="https://www.testvalley.gov.uk/business/learningeducationandskills/test-valley-employment-skills-zone">https://www.testvalley.gov.uk/business/learningeducationandskills/test-valley-employment-skills-zone</a></p> <p>Investigate, with Eastleigh BC, Winchester CC, New Forest DC and DWP, the possibility of a Youth Hub to address youth unemployment.</p> <p>Refer clients to free expert advice and guidance on starting and running a business from Enterprise First (new service arranged by TVBC from 1 July 2020).</p> <p>Need to prepare wider re-training/skills grant that includes all of Test Valley.  <a href="https://www.localgov.co.uk/Ten-ways-for-councils-to-rebuild-local-economies-post-Covid-19/50665">https://www.localgov.co.uk/Ten-ways-for-councils-to-rebuild-local-economies-post-Covid-19/50665</a></p> <p>Support and enforce Employment and Skills Plans with developers (working with schools/colleges on careers/work placements).</p> <p>Work with Lidl to extend the CNR Skills training fund to include North Baddesley.</p> <p>Promoting apprenticeship opportunities with employers including TVBC.</p> <p>Promote Government Kickstart Scheme internally within TVBC and also externally to Test Valley businesses.  <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/kickstart-scheme">https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/kickstart-scheme</a></p>
	<p>Promotion of Skills toolkit free resource <a href="https://theskillstoolkit.campaign.gov.uk/">https://theskillstoolkit.campaign.gov.uk/</a></p> <p>Pop-up Business School online event – Promote through TVBC comms and intranet to encourage as many people to participate from Test Valley. 500 virtual spaces available across several authorities.</p>

	Get Inspired Careers Event week beginning 24 April 2021, working with <a href="https://www.ebpsouth.co.uk/">https://www.ebpsouth.co.uk/</a> and Simplyhealth.
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	<b>3. Risks to local manufacturing/engineering sector ( 35% fall in GDP Q2 2020 compared with 55% fall in manufacturing sector) (BUSINESS)</b>
<b>Impact Assessment Ref No.</b>	<b>Action Required</b>
3.	Resume activities of Manufactured in Andover Group. <a href="https://www.testvalley.gov.uk/business/businessgrantsandsupport/localbusinessinformation/manufactured-in-andover">https://www.testvalley.gov.uk/business/businessgrantsandsupport/localbusinessinformation/manufactured-in-andover</a>
	Promote Manufacturing Growth Programme.
	Work with Make UK through HCC Resilience (Economic Recovery) Group.
	Promote Andover Skills Training Fund.

	<b>4. Town Centres - Enhancing attractiveness and viability (PLACE)</b>
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Impact Assessment Ref No.	Action Required	
4.	Work closely with Romsey Town Centre Manager and Romsey Future Groups; and Andover BID manager; and Stockbridge Business Association.	
	Review Town Centre Local Plan policies with view to providing interim guidance in line with government planning policy changes.	
	Identify pedestrian and cycle improvements with partners to allow better access to the town centres and information for residents (e.g points from meeting)	
	Working to retain and attract retailers (encourage flexible office space in the town centre). <i>Vacancy rate in Andover is 17% which is higher than national average, Romsey is lower with 5.4%.</i>	
	Public realm and environmental improvements across towns to improve attractiveness and footfall. Footfall data July: Andover 2020: 25568, 2019 51633 (50% decline in 2020) Romsey 2020: 38229, 2019 68974 (45% decline in 2020)	

<b>5. Town Centres - Master planning (PLACE)</b>	
Impact Assessment Ref No.	Action Required
5.	Complete Town Mills Riverside Project
	Continue to deliver the Andover Master planning and Romsey South of Town Centre proposals
	Implementing early phases of Masterplans.



	<p align="center"><b>6. Impact on hospitality/leisure/tourism sector, including events, markets, fairs - need for business to adapt online (BUSINESS)</b></p>
<p><b>Impact Assessment Ref No.</b></p>	<p><b>Action Required</b></p>
<p>6.</p>	<p>Continue to deliver the National Lockdown Grant Schemes through to March 2021 which could include business support activities.  <a href="https://www.testvalley.gov.uk/business/covid-19-national-lockdown-business-grant-schemes">https://www.testvalley.gov.uk/business/covid-19-national-lockdown-business-grant-schemes</a></p> <p>Work through Romsey VIC this year and emphasize as part of 2021/22 contract: the use of social media platforms to market Test Valley and its tourism businesses, working closely with partner agencies (The Marketing Collective, freelance PR consultant, TSE HQ) and HCC <a href="http://www.visit-hampshire.co.uk">www.visit-hampshire.co.uk</a>)</p> <p>Encourage and support best practice for digital transformation (online events- Trout 'n About 2020 24<sup>th</sup> July – 8<sup>th</sup> August) Investigate support for village shops to develop online capacity. Using digital transformation for a virtual walking/heritage trail.</p> <p>Promote “shop local” campaign e.g. Test Valley Online Business Directory, Hampshire Fare “Stay Loyal Stay Local”  <a href="https://www.hampshirefare.co.uk/news-events/news/stay-loyal-stay-local">https://www.hampshirefare.co.uk/news-events/news/stay-loyal-stay-local</a></p> <p>Continue to promote Loddon &amp; Test LEADER while funds are available.</p> <p>Supporting applicants claim EAFRDs (EU grant)</p> <p>Promote Test Valley tourism “staycation” opportunity, working with partner agencies such as Enjoy Summer Safely.</p>