

# Test Valley Borough Council

Corporate Plan 2019 - 2023

ANNEX

## Growing Our Potential



# Welcome to Test Valley Borough Council's Corporate Plan 2019-2023



## Growing Our Potential

**We are an ambitious, innovative and optimistic council. Our new Corporate Plan, Growing Our Potential, is focused on how we can build upon the strengths of the Borough and its communities to improve the quality of life across Test Valley.**

Our ambition to grow potential is underpinned by our investing approach which is more than just about money; it is about devoting our energy, skills and resources to the right things at the right time.

The Borough is rich in community, environmental and economic assets. This is resulting in more people wanting to live and work in Test Valley. It is also at the heart of what makes the Borough an attractive place to visit and enjoy, whether it be the renowned high street of Stockbridge, the attractions of historic Romsey or Andover's green spaces and state-of-the-art leisure facilities.

Our culture of, and commitment to, place-based working continues to be at the centre of how we will do business through this new Plan. It is central to our making well-informed decisions which reflect the needs of all communities in order to ensure that not just those who shout the loudest are heard.

This sets the context for our new strategic priorities, drawing upon our enabling and community leadership role. We aim to tackle the issues which are the most important for our communities,

including businesses, in a way which builds upon their strengths.

We are seeking to create, and sustain, successful, vibrant and prosperous communities within Test Valley. We are passionate about playing our part in delivering inclusive growth, so that our residents reap both social and economic benefits, resulting in greater access to opportunities and improved wellbeing.

In developing this plan we have engaged with more than 2000 residents to gain an understanding of what is most important to them. Key issues, such as the future vitality of our towns and rural communities, the ability to access a decent home, a thriving local economy and looking after the local environment, all featured highly. We are also seeking to address some of the challenges our communities face, and respond to national trends such as the changing nature of town centres, tackling homelessness and exploring opportunities so that people can recycle more.

Together these issues not surprisingly form the focus of our new strategic priorities so that we can grow the potential of:

- **Town Centres**
- **Communities**
- **People**
- **Local Environment**

We will deliver the priorities of this Plan through our Corporate Action Plan that will also run from 2019 to 2023 and will be updated annually. This will show how we intend to make progress by detailing the specific actions that we will take forward against each of the priorities.

This plan has been built on the strong foundations of the previous plan. We recognise that much of what we are working on now will require focus beyond the next four years, just as elements of the previous plan continue to feature within our new strategic priorities.

To deliver on those priorities we must retain a clear focus on maintaining financial resilience within a challenging climate for local government and crucially, ensuring value for money for our residents.

**We passionately believe that the potential of our communities and the Borough's many other assets provide the springboard for delivering our shared ambitions.**



Cllr Phil North  
Leader of the Council



Roger Tetstall  
Chief Executive

# What is the Corporate Plan?

The Corporate Plan outlines the Council's vision and priorities for Test Valley over the next four years. It sets our direction and provides a focus for all of our activities and services. As a result, it informs decision making and the allocation of resources across the Council.

## The Corporate Plan in context

The Corporate Plan is an important link in the Council's overall strategic planning framework. It describes the links between the key planning documents, which together will help us to deliver our priorities.

We also use the Corporate Plan as our contribution towards meeting the long-term aspirations for the Borough that we share with our partner organisations, through the Test Valley Partnership.



# How we develop the plan and our priorities

## 1. We start with four important principles:

### Vision led

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

### Values driven

We are committed to high standards in everything we do, shaping our behaviours and building our reputation in the eyes of our residents.

Our five values are:

 **Accountability**

 **Integrity**

 **Empowerment**

 **Inclusiveness**

 **Ambition**

### Democratically accountable

Our councillors, elected by local people, shape what we do and bring together the needs and expectations of the communities they represent in order to make balanced decisions.

### Evidence-based decision making

We seek to understand the key issues and then we take a full assessment of what is needed and why.

## 2. We build the evidence base

### Public engagement:

During the summer of 2018, local councillors and officers attended more than 70 events across the Borough and engaged with more than 2,000 residents about what was important to them and would improve their quality of life. Residents were also invited to complete a survey online. This was advertised through social media, online videos and a link on our website.

We used creative methods to engage with different groups, including organising competitions, games and workshops. In addition we actively took part in events organised by communities such as Andover Parkrun. By attending local events, setting up smaller focus groups and inviting residents to share their views online we now have a greater understanding of what is important to our residents which has helped us to shape our strategic priorities.

### An inclusive approach:

Inclusiveness forms one of the Council's five values and sits at the heart of our evidence-

based approach. Reflecting the needs of all communities in order to ensure that not just those who shout the loudest are heard is a prerequisite to making well-informed decisions.

The Council's Equality Objectives are published as part of the Corporate Plan. They provide the framework in which the Council ensures an inclusive approach as part of our duties under the Equality Act.

**Objective 1:** To strengthen the Council's evidence-led approach for developing new policy and strategy. By developing a suite of engagement tools and clear processes that will enable the needs and views of people who share a protected characteristic to be understood.

**Objective 2:** To strengthen the Council's approach to understanding the experience people have of the services they receive. We will develop ways in which the views of people who share a protected characteristic are sought as part of reviewing how services are provided.

## 3. We ask Councillors to consider and balance the evidence gathered to shape our priorities

Our councillors set the priorities for the next four years and beyond. Their role has been to set the priorities of the Plan by considering and balancing the evidence and information collected to inform what the Council will do over the next four years and beyond.

# About Test Valley



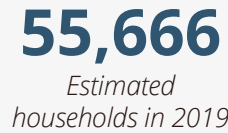
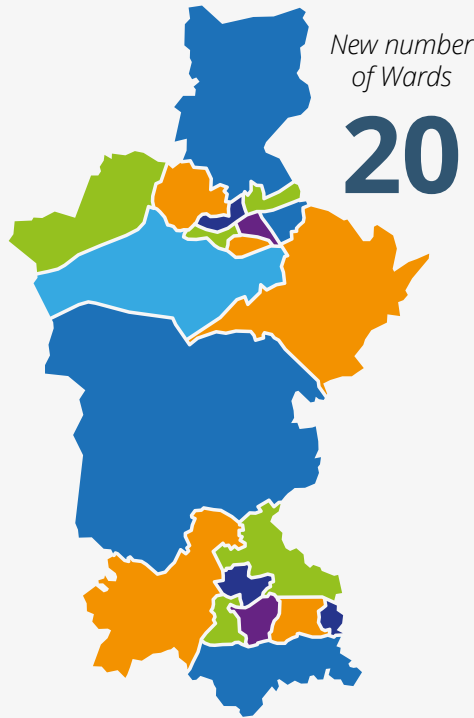
Population (2019 predictions SAPF)



5.6% increase



Estimated 2023 population



5.4% increase



New number of Councillors

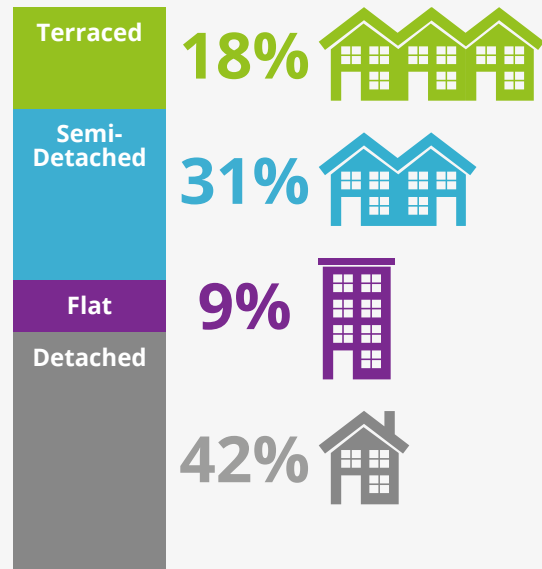
**43**



65.3% urban population

34.7% rural population

## Housing type



**9**

Local nature reserves



**7**

times winner of Federation of Small Businesses awards



Over £1 Million awarded to communities through CAF Grants 2015-19

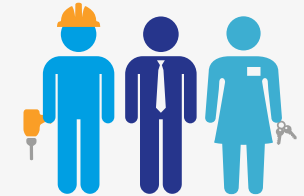
**3**

open spaces with Green Flag award standard



**6,145**

Test Valley businesses



**56,600**

Test Valley jobs (2017)

# Public feedback

Overall, the residents of Test Valley expressed their aspirations and determination to support and develop their Borough. They care greatly about the place they live and want to see it grow and develop in a way that supports them and their communities.

## Residents are keen to take part in more leisure activities across the Borough making the most of Test Valley's green spaces.

- Being able to easily access the countryside and green spaces within Test Valley.
- More accessible and well-linked cycling and walking routes.
- Continued investment in our green spaces and nature reserves.

## Residents highlighted their ambitions and aspirations for Test Valley's town centres

- More events and activities.
- Amenities such as family friendly restaurants and leisure facilities.
- Good availability of local services and transport links.
- Many people recognised that town centres are changing, becoming less retail focused and developing into destinations where people can enjoy social activities.

## Community spirit is something that residents rate highly.

- Increasing importance of helping our neighbours.
- Getting involved in activities in their local community.
- People want to do more but time is viewed as a barrier.

## Test Valley's residents care about their local environment and want to recycle more.

- They would like to have more opportunities to recycle.
- More, clearer information about what they can recycle and how they can play their part.



# Looking ahead: Challenges and opportunities



In developing this Plan we have been looking ahead to understand the strategic challenges we will face over the next four years and beyond. Understanding these challenges means that we can also view them as opportunities and can continue our programme to do things better for our residents.

## Encouraging inclusive growth within our towns

Our challenge is to ensure that the benefits of growth impact positively on all of our communities. For example, as new people locate to Andover and Romsey it is imperative that we are agile in future-proofing our town centres as places that bring communities together.

## Sustaining vibrant rural communities

Around a third of the Borough's population lives within our rural areas. We need to explore what more we can do to champion the ongoing sustainability of our rural communities. By working with local people and key partners to ensure that the right homes are in the right places, underpinned by appropriate infrastructure to enable our villages to be great places to live, work, enjoy and visit.

## Preserving the natural assets of Test Valley for future generations

Through our strategic planning, we will continue to ensure that we balance our commitments to housing delivery and economic growth, alongside preserving and enhancing the natural environment as a place to enjoy and spend time.

## Maintaining financial resilience in an uncertain environment

The Council is committed to delivering high quality services. Through our investing ethos this has created the space in which to manage financial challenges in a sustainable way. Investing, however, does not mean that the Council has moved away from saving money or challenging ourselves to think differently. Our focus in the medium term is very much on managing the key financial risks associated with ongoing changes in how local government is funded.

## Developing our workforce to be fit for the future

Our people (officers and councillors) are our greatest asset. We must continue to build upon our commitment of investing in their growth and future-proofing our workforce through the development of a People Strategy so that we have the right skills, attitudes and behaviours to ensure that we are best placed to continue to deliver high quality services for our residents.

# Our Investing Approach

We are an ambitious, innovative and optimistic Council. Operating within an environment in which there is an ever increasing demand on our services within tough financial conditions, we have sought to develop and embed our “investing philosophy” at the heart of how we do business as an organisation.

Investing is about more than just money; it is about devoting our energy, skills and resources to achieving the best results for our residents and communities. To achieve this, our operating model underpins our approach and how we pursue the ambitions of this plan. It enables us to undertake a full business assessment of our existing and potential activities and opportunities, so that we can make the right decisions about where to invest. This means we can be confident that we are taking an efficient and effective approach and delivering value for money for our residents.





# Our Priorities

Using our investing approach we will **grow the potential of...**



## Town Centres

to adapt and be attractive, vibrant, and prosperous places



## Communities

to be empowered, connected and able to build upon their strengths



## People

to be able to live well and fulfil their aspirations



## The Local Environment

for current and future generations



# Growing the potential of **Town Centres**

to adapt and be  
attractive, vibrant and  
prosperous places





# Town Centres



## Over the next four years and beyond we will invest in:

1. Taking this once in a generation opportunity to respond to the changing face of the High Street. Future-proofing our town centres to be accessible places where people live, shop, work and spend their leisure time.
2. Enhancing public realm and improving the appearance and environment of our town centres.
3. Making our town centres attractive places for inward investment to attract more jobs and increase footfall.
4. Working with Andover Vision and Romsey Future to ensure that growth within our town centres benefits all of our communities.

## What's going to happen as a result?

- We shall involve the people of Andover in the development of a Masterplan so that they can contribute to shaping the future of the town centre, together with Andover Vision, the Business Improvement District (BID) and other interested parties.
- We will bring forward proposals for the regeneration and re-development of Andover town centre to support the future demand for business, leisure and residential opportunities.
- In partnership with Romsey Future we will develop a Vision and Masterplan as a blueprint for the future development of land south of Romsey town centre.
- Working closely with local businesses, we will support the development of the new BID in Andover town centre, delivering on its priorities to increase footfall and improve the High Street.
- In Romsey we will work with local businesses and stakeholders through Romsey Future to promote the town's tourism and visitor offer.
- We shall work with the EM3 Local Enterprise Partnership in pursuance of their strategic growth ambitions. In particular, we will also explore the opportunities presented by the use of changing technology.
- Through the review of our Local Plan, we will provide a long-term strategic overview of what is needed in our town centres, within an ever changing environment, putting in place the mechanisms to enable delivery.



# Growing the potential of **Communities**

to be empowered, connected and able to build upon their strengths





# Communities



## Over the next four years and beyond we will invest in:

1. Building upon our positive track record of working with communities. We will do this by harnessing the strengths that exist within communities, so that local people are able to contribute and play an active role.
2. Bringing local communities together alongside their councillors and other partners to plan for their future needs. We will enable communities to take forward their ambitions by helping them to access funding opportunities, resources and support.
3. Supporting the Borough's business community by attracting inward investment and creating the conditions for new and existing businesses to thrive. Encouraging the growth of economic prosperity within Test Valley communities.

## What's going to happen as a result?

- Our Members, as Community Councillors, will enable and facilitate communities to come together and ensure that all voices are heard. Councillors will champion and support people to develop and deliver local projects and initiatives.
- Building upon our success in empowering communities, we shall work closely with town and parish councils and other local organisations, to strengthen this work further. We will support more communities to take part in a range of community planning activities such as neighbourhood planning, community resilience and local action planning.
- Through the Andover Vision and Romsey Future partnerships we will play our part in helping to deliver the shared ambitions of these communities.
- We will work with our partners in the voluntary and community sector to reduce the barriers that people face in being able to give their time and volunteer within their communities. A priority is to focus on how opportunities to volunteer can be made easier and more accessible.
- Promoting the wellbeing of our communities by securing a legacy of outstanding sports, leisure and cultural spaces that are accessible and will enable a positive impact on the quality of life of the Borough's residents for generations to come.
- Through the delivery of the Economic Development Strategy we will ensure an ongoing focus on promoting the Borough as "being open for business".



# Growing the potential of People

to be able to live well and fulfil their aspirations





# People

## Over the next four years and beyond we will invest in:

1. Working with communities and partners to help identify and deliver the supply of homes which reflects current and future housing needs.
2. Taking a positive approach to supporting those who are most vulnerable. Enabling people to build upon their strengths to address the underlying causes of their housing need. Improving outcomes and support available for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.
3. Creating communities that have the infrastructure and accessibility to meet the needs of a changing and growing population. Establishing attractive, sustainable and vibrant communities for people to live, work and enjoy.
4. Supporting the growth and quality of employment within Test Valley to enable people to fulfil their aspirations. Addressing barriers within the current and future workforce such as raising aspirations, skills and access to opportunities. Increase the variety of jobs available so that people can earn and live well.



## What's going to happen as a result?

- We will strengthen our community-led approach to spatial planning so that local people can play an active part in shaping their communities. This will include our ongoing commitment to undertake the review of the Local Plan in an inclusive way, and support communities who will benefit from developing a Neighbourhood Plan or Village Design Statement to do so. More specifically, we will work with all of our communities to explore opportunities to deliver more new affordable homes in urban and rural areas.
- We will renew our key housing strategies to focus on new ways of working that will support people to build upon their strengths, to help resolve their housing issues. We will support people in a personalised way by building upon lessons learned from the developmental pilot, enabling people to access the right support and the right time.
- We shall explore opportunities to see how more social rented housing can be provided. We will work with the private rented sector to meet housing need, drive up standards and develop services that improve access to the sector for people on low incomes.
- We will support communities to ensure that the right infrastructure at the right scale is secured that delivers homes and employment growth, enabling people to access a job, live in a decent home and fulfil their aspirations.
- In partnership with business and education providers we will work to increase the provision and level of skills across Test Valley. We will continue to build on our track record of fostering stronger relationships between schools and businesses.
- We will continue to make the most of the opportunities for inward investment to increase business productivity across Test Valley. Through our strategic partnerships with partners, including Walworth Business Park and the University of Southampton Science Park in Chilworth, we will promote the important economic growth role that the Borough plays both in Hampshire and beyond.



# Growing the potential of **The Local Environment**

for current and future generations







# The Local Environment

## Over the next four years and beyond we will invest in:

1. Providing high-quality green infrastructure such as green spaces and nature reserves for our communities to access and enjoy for generations to come.
2. Enhancing the quality of our public realm to improve the local environment, so that these are attractive spaces and places that people can enjoy and spend time.
3. Expanding the network and usage of family-friendly cycling and walking routes to make them accessible and well linked, in order to promote wellbeing and more sustainable travel.
4. Opportunities to work with our communities and partners to reduce the amount of household waste produced by increasing recycling and ensuring improved knowledge of our recycling processes.
5. Making the most of the benefits from inward investment and economic growth. Promoting the Borough as an outstanding place to live and work, whilst safeguarding its heritage and natural assets.



## What's going to happen as a result?

- Through the review of our Local Plan and our strategies for green spaces, we will continue to identify opportunities to increase access to the countryside and green spaces for Test Valley residents.
- We will work with parish and town councils to make the most of the green spaces within their communities.
- We will work with residents to understand their need for more, safer cycle routes and walkways, taking on board their feedback and using it to inform and develop plans to deliver an appropriate infrastructure. We will also support community-based initiatives to encourage more people to use these facilities.
- Our "Love Where You Live" campaign will continue to encourage and promote ways in which everyone can help improve where they live and work through community-led activities such as "Sparkle Days" and working with local schools. We will also continue to take a zero-tolerance approach to people who spoil local areas.
- Through the Hampshire Waste Partnership we will play our part to develop opportunities to increase the range of materials that can be recycled. Taking a positive approach, we will encourage people to recycle more by developing campaigns and initiatives that educate and help make recycling easier.

# What next:

## Delivering our priorities and measuring our impact



The Corporate Plan sets out our priorities, providing the direction and focus for our activities and guiding the allocation of resources over the next four years. It also outlines the impact we hope to make as a result of our actions, so that we can demonstrate to residents how we are working towards our vision to improve quality of life in Test Valley and be an organisation of excellence.

The Corporate Plan is underpinned by the **Corporate Action Plan (CAP)** which runs for the lifetime of the plan and is updated annually. This shows, in detail, how we intend to make progress and focuses on the specific projects we will take forward against each of the priorities.

The Cabinet reviews the performance of the CAP on an annual basis. This enables the active performance management of the CAP and ensures that the Council is allocating resource in the most effective way. Each year, the Leader of the Council will make an annual presentation to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to report on progress made during that year. This will form the basis of an annual update report and will be published on the Council's website.

We monitor our progress by measuring the impact of our work and by showing the difference we have made as a result. This is done by having a range of performance and satisfaction-based indicators against which our progress can be judged. The indicators are used as part of a broader suite of operational management tools that ensure standards are being met ensuring that the things that matter most to residents are being delivered in an efficient and effective way. The indicators also provide a useful analysis, both in terms of the performance within a given year and by telling a story over a number of years.

In addition, each of our services produces an annual Service Plan which describes the things they do and how they contribute to the Corporate Plan priorities. Progress is monitored on a quarterly basis through the service performance boards.

# Our Values

We are committed to high standards in everything we do, shaping our behaviours and building our reputation in the eyes of our residents.

## INTEGRITY

We ensure that as an organisation, our communities can trust us to act fairly and honestly, and so can our staff.

## ACCOUNTABILITY

We are accountable to all of the people of Test Valley for our actions and how we use resources, ensuring that we provide value for money.

## EMPOWERMENT

We are an organisation committed to continuous learning, enabling and motivating all of our people to do their best work.

## INCLUSIVENESS

We value diversity, promote equality of opportunity for all, and ensure that our services are accessible to everyone in Test Valley.

## AMBITION

We are a dynamic organisation committed to achieving, improving and innovating.

