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CORE STRATEGY KEY ISSUES



October 2010

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1** This document has been prepared to inform discussions on the development of the new Core Strategy and the Corporate Plan. These are important tools in delivering the themes of the Community Plan. This key issues paper provides the starting point for drawing together what we know about the Borough and the key issues the Council and its partners will need to address in planning for the future of the area.
- 1.2** If we have identified the correct key issues we can then look to put into place policies and proposals to help improve, enhance and protect Test Valley. We need your views as to whether we have correctly described Test Valley and identified the key issues which it faces. All Borough Councillors, Parish Councils and members of the Local Strategic Partnership have been sent a copy of this document.
- 1.3** The review of what we know about the Borough has been set out under each of the key themes of the Community Plan, which are:
1. Local Communities
 2. Local Economy
 3. Leisure & Culture
 4. Environment
 5. Transport
 6. Education & Learning
 7. Health & Well Being
 8. Community Safety
- 1.4** Each of these themes has a number of broad objectives which are in bold italic text. The key issues are highlighted within the main text.
- 1.5** Attributing the information available to the eight themes does not always result in a comfortable fit, the important point is that the information and the issue is not lost. Detailed points/ examples have not been included.

2 LOCAL COMMUNITIES

- 2.1 The Community Plan aim is ‘support and encourage a strong sense of community’. There are a number of elements which are considered to help support that aim;

Providing for the future housing need and mix at an appropriate scale that is in keeping with the settlement’s character and function.

- 2.2 The population of the Borough is estimated at 113,470, it is expected to rise by 5,200 by 2016¹. 60% of the population is estimated to be of working age; 20% is of state pensionable age; with those over the age of 85 expected to rise from 2.5% of the population to 3.5%. The percentage of Test Valley’s population of pre-school age children is estimated at 5.5%. The age structure of Test Valley’s population is similar to that of Hampshire. However it is expected to have the largest rise in pre-school age children in the county by 2016.
- 2.3 The population of the Borough is concentrated in the towns of Andover (39,000) and Romsey (17,000). The smaller areas of North Baddesley, Valley Park, Chilworth and Nursling and Rownhams have a combined population of approximately 21,000². These are located on the edge of Southampton and Eastleigh. This comprises 60% of the total population. The remaining 40% is spread across a large number of small villages in the rural part of the Borough. Stockbridge acts as a centre for a number of the rural communities. It has a primary school, a secondary school which is located on the edge of the town, a health centre, dental practice and a range of shops and businesses.
- 2.4 The housing needs of the Borough will need to reflect the impact of an ageing population and the demand that will have. The impact of an increase in the number of children on the housing requirement within the Borough will also need to be assessed.
- 2.5 The overall average sale price of a house in Test Valley in the 3rd quarter (October to December) of 2008 was £225,000, slightly above the regional average of £220,000, and considerably above the England & Wales figure of £175,000³.
- 2.6 Of the existing housing stock, 75% are in owner-occupation, 15% are social housing and 10% privately rented. This compares to 69%, 19% and 10% respectively for England and Wales (Census, 2001). The forecasted composition of household types requiring market housing by 2026 is 36% for Families, 33% for Single People, 26% for Couples and 5% for others. This compares with 40%, 25%, 31% and 4% respectively for the Borough in 2001.

1 HCC Small Area Population Forecast.

2 HCC 2007 Based Small Area Population Forecasts for mid 2008

3 ONS/ Land Registry/CLG 2009

2.7 An issue facing the Borough is the gap between house prices and income. There are relatively high house prices and relatively low incomes resulting in a large proportion of Test Valley residents being unable to access open market housing. This is especially the case in the rural areas. The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2007) identifies a current need of 2,290 households with 69% of new households unable to rent or buy market housing. The Council's records indicate that there are currently (September 2010) 3,661 households on the Joint Housing Register (2,994 Housing Register and 667 on the Housing Transfer List). This need may increase with changes to Housing Benefits where there may be difficulties in finding suitable private rented sector accommodation locally for households that are accepted as homeless or at risk of homelessness. The current affordable housing target is 150 completions per year.

2.8 **How the Council can address access to affordable housing will be a key issue. In particular, given the current economic climate and the impact on viability of development, the percentage of affordable housing to be sought, how that housing is to be delivered and achieving a mix of house types to better reflect the profile of the population will be a major challenge.**

2.9 **An important issue for the Borough is providing housing for the future through identifying appropriate sites.** The Council has established an interim housing requirement of 5,700 dwellings in Northern Test Valley (NTV) and 3,620 dwellings in Southern Test Valley (STV)⁴.

2.10 The character of the Borough is predominantly rural with less than 5% being identified as built up. Given the scale of the housing requirements, most will need to be met on greenfield sites to be allocated in the Core Strategy or other DPDs. **The issues facing the Borough are where the remaining requirement for development should be located and how to encourage sustainable patterns of development.** To guide future development a settlement hierarchy is being developed. This identifies the most sustainable towns and villages, based on their facilities and accessibility, and sets out the broad scale of housing development considered appropriate. This will assist with identifying appropriate locations for development and help the promotion of sustainable development by focussing it where residents would have most opportunities to access facilities.

4 Southern Test Valley comprises Ampfield, Chilworth, North Baddesley, Nursling and Rownhams, Romsey Town, Romsey Extra and Valley Park.

2.11 The Council's Core Strategy will provide a basis for identifying an appropriate and continuous supply of land. This will comprise existing commitments, permissions, windfalls and greenfield allocations. The Council will seek to maximise the contribution from brownfield land and has undertaken a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment which has been taken into account in informing the housing strategy. The majority of the housing requirement will be phased over the lifetime of the Core Strategy. There is an issue that the rate of delivery may be affected by economic factors beyond the Council's control.

Create sustainable communities, locating development where daily needs for employment, shopping, leisure, recreation, education, health and other community facilities are accessible by sustainable modes of transport.

2.12 Andover is some distance from other larger centres including Basingstoke (20 miles), Winchester (13 miles), Southampton (24 miles) and Salisbury (19 miles) and is relatively self contained providing a range of facilities including retail, within the town centre and out of centre shopping, leisure and recreation; it is also an important employment area. It serves its own residents and a wider catchment area approximately 70,000 people in total. However, for many residents it does not provide for all of their needs and for a range of purposes residents go elsewhere. To achieve a greater degree of self containment the range of facilities need to be developed. **The key issue is how the town centre should develop in terms of the range and choice for shopping and as a leisure destination serving the growing population and how this is to be funded.** By doing this, it would encourage people to spend more of their time and money in Andover and would have a number of benefits; it would support the local economy, create employment and reduce the need to travel to other destinations.

2.13 Romsey and the settlements of the southern most part of the Borough are close to the larger centres of Southampton and Eastleigh and residents look to them for a range of higher order facilities and employment, plus residential areas close to those centres look to them rather than Romsey. With respect to shopping, a large proportion of the convenience and comparison expenditure is spent out of the Borough. **The key issue is whether Romsey should expand its role as a centre serving the area and if so to what extent and at what scale without impacting on its character.** The changing pattern of retailing has meant that the demand for shops is changing whilst the demand for other town centre uses continues e.g. coffee shops and food outlets have increased. Market towns have traditionally been places where people meet and it may be that whilst the reasons to come to the centre may change, the future planning of the area should consider how it can continue to perform that function.

2.14 Local centres and shops within the Borough are important for local communities especially for those members of the population who may not have access to a car or the availability of public transport is limited. **The retention of such local centres and shops is an issue as patterns of shopping have developed.**

2.15 This is especially the case in the rural villages of the Borough which are experiencing a change of demographics with the populations decreasing and getting older. Rural villages provide a range of facilities which meet the daily needs of residents, some will have a greater range than others e.g. Stockbridge, Longparish, Broughton. Most have limited or no facilities and will rely upon neighbouring villages or will travel to the larger adjoining towns such as Andover, Romsey, Winchester and Salisbury. The decline in rural facilities has been taking place for sometime with changes in lifestyles and availability of services via the internet having a significant impact. **The issue is how to prevent the villages from declining further and support the remaining facilities.**

3 LOCAL ECONOMY

3.1 The Community Plan aim is ‘to ensure that the local economy thrives and remains competitive’. This could be achieved by;

Providing a range of job opportunities.

3.2 The Borough’s economy has performed well in recent years, with a significant contribution being made by residents who work elsewhere. The Borough has relatively low numbers of people out of work (6.8% compared with 9.3% for Hampshire, 9.5% for the South East and 13.4% for Great Britain, at December 2009)⁵. Certain areas of the Borough are on a lower average pay. The main sectors of employment are: distribution, hotels and restaurants, banking, finance and insurance and the health sector. Test Valley has a high percentage of people whose occupation can be classed as Managers and Senior Officials in comparison to the overall percentages in the South East and England⁶.

3.3 Tourism plays a valuable part in the Borough’s economy. Between 1998 – 2008 the number of day trips into Test Valley grew by one quarter from 2.5million to 3.1million. The total expenditure on tourism doubled from £89m to £178m. The number of full time equivalent (FTE) jobs in tourism more than doubled from 1,307 to 2,787 (110%) and the number of actual jobs (including part time, seasonal etc.) grew by three quarters (from 1,838 to 3,175) at the same time as the overall number of jobs in Test Valley grew only marginally (from 47,200 to 48,897)⁷.

3.4 A distinctive feature of Andover is its high degree of self-containment with 70% of its residents living and working in the town. There are a range of businesses based in the town including several major employers e.g. Stannah, Twinings, the Army Land Command and early next year a Co-Op distribution centre. In some areas of Andover there are large percentages of people whose occupations are classified as falling into elementary occupations. In Alamein, 18.4% of the working age population are engaged in elementary occupations which largely consist of labouring, waiting tables and cleaning; in comparison, the overall percentage of people engaged in these occupations in England is 11.8%.

5 Test Valley Borough Profile/ Office for National Statistics 2009

6 Test Valley Borough Profile/ Office for National Statistics 2009

7 Draft Tourism Statement 2010

- 3.5 There is a need to regenerate Walworth Business Park, and to a lesser extent Portway Business Park in Andover, which is experiencing high vacancy rates and poor environmental quality. The future economic performance of the town is closely linked to making improvements to both parks and improving their attractiveness to potential employers. **A key issue will be how to initiate a successful regeneration programme whilst maintaining a vibrant and viable town centre given the likely pressures for town centre uses on the Business Parks.**
- 3.6 The economy of southern Test Valley is based on high value business parks [e.g. Adanac Park, Nursling] highly qualified workforce and good communications. The University of Southampton Science Park, located at Chilworth, is one of the key locations in south Hampshire for high technology companies and high value jobs. The Partnership for Urban South Hampshire (PUSH) will identify the amount of new employment provision that needs to be met in the South Hampshire sub region with a distribution of floorspace amongst districts and the need for upskilling of the existing workforce.
- 3.7 Southern Test Valley is less self contained than Andover and experiences a significant amount of out commuting, reflecting its relationship with South Hampshire and good transport links. However, given the employment opportunities within the area there is a significant inward flow of workers. **The issue to consider is the extent to which the imbalance between residents and jobs should be redressed to create greater opportunities to live and work more locally.**
- 3.8 The rural area of Test Valley experiences the highest proportion of out commuting in the Borough and has the highest proportion of highly qualified people in the workforce. It is continuing to see the impact of changes in agriculture and diversification into other businesses. A significant amount of floorspace has been granted permission for employment use principally resulting from the change of use of existing buildings. Access to high speed broadband is seen as a key issue particularly for businesses for whom the internet is a key part of their operations. Farming is a very significant part of the Borough's environment and economy. In 2007, there were 748 farm holdings covering 47,820 hectares in Test Valley. In total, approximately 1,466 people were employed (either full or part-time, or casually) in farm labour⁸. **Balancing the development of the rural economy with the increase in traffic movements on rural roads is a key issue.**

8 Survey of Agriculture and Horticulture, Local Authority Datasets 2007

4 LEISURE & CULTURE

4.1 The Community Plan theme is ‘to enable residents and visitors to enjoy a wide range of high quality leisure and cultural facilities’. This could be achieved by;

Provide for leisure, recreation, culture and tourism needs.

4.2 Test Valley has a range of facilities which are accessible to residents, although they tend to be on a small scale. These include; The Lights Theatre, the Reel Cinema, Andover Leisure Centre, Charlton Sports Centre, Finkley Down Farm at Andover. Two new large outdoor sports facilities are being provided at Augusta Park and Picket Twenty. At Romsey there are The Plaza and Lantern Theatres and the Romsey Rapids and Sport Centre.

4.3 The main sports centres and pitches are located at Andover, Romsey, North Baddesley and Valley Park. There are additional local facilities such as children’s play equipment and informal recreation areas, allotments and parks serving these areas and the other villages in the Borough. **Meeting the future recreation needs of the Borough’s population and developing new standards of provision will be a key issue.** The Council has identified at Andover the need to consider the role of the Andover Leisure Centre and at Romsey that of the Sports Centre. With respect to those open spaces the Council manages a programme of improvements has been identified in its Green Spaces Strategy. This provision would need to be coupled with the proposals within the Green Infrastructure Strategy.

4.4 Outside of Andover and Romsey most of the recreation facilities are managed by parish councils. Most villages have a recreation ground which provides for formal team sports as well as informal activities.

4.5 The Borough, in terms of tourism, is principally a day/short stay destination. In addition to the high quality natural and built landscape, the area has a number of significant attractions e.g. The Hawk Conservancy, Finkley Down Farm, The Army Air Museum, Hilliers Arboretum, Romsey Abbey, Mottisfont Abbey, Thruxton motor racing circuit, Danebury Iron Age Hill Fort. Tourism generates a significant amount of economic activity and is an important component of the local economy. **An issue for the Borough is whether it wants to develop as a significant tourist destination and if so how that can be achieved whilst maintaining and enhancing its existing qualities.**

5 THE ENVIRONMENT

- 5.1 The Community Plan aim is ‘to enable everyone to play their part in ensuring we maintain a high quality and sustainable environment’. This could be achieved by;

Protect and enhance the built and historic environment, conserve and enhance the local character, identity and cultural heritage.

- 5.2 The built heritage of the Borough plays an important role in defining the character of the area and is one of the main reasons for attracting visitors.

- 5.3 The central core of Andover was established in the Middle Ages. Most of the town’s larger surviving historic buildings date from the 19th Century. Romsey’s character stems largely from its mediaeval street pattern, architecture of the 18th and 19th Centuries and visual domination by the Abbey Church (mainly 12th Century). Many of the villages grew up in the sheltered parts of the Downs and in the river valleys evolving from farming communities or important role as coaching stops (e.g. Stockbridge and Hurstbourne Tarrant). They vary in character as well as size, from small tightly knit settlements to linear settlements stretching along a single road or valley. There are 36 Conservation Areas, around 2,500 listed buildings, and 123 scheduled ancient monuments (SAM) including the Danebury Iron Age Hill Fort. The Borough has 57% of the total number of cob buildings in Hampshire and 38% of the total number of thatched buildings. At 54% of the total, it also has the majority of Hampshire’s cob buildings with thatched roofs⁹.

- 5.4 The historic sites and buildings of the Borough are a finite resource and once lost cannot be replaced. **The issue is how they can be best managed to ensure that their importance and value is retained whilst recognising the pressures arising from modern living.**

Ensure development addresses sustainability issues such as combating climate change, implementing water and energy efficiency measures and reusing resources.

- 5.5 **Responding to a changing climate is one of the key challenges in the coming years.** The use of resources will need to be carefully managed and the community’s resilience to extremes of weather will need to be developed. **The generation of renewable energy locally and its impact is an issue.**

9 The Hampshire Archaeology and Historic Buildings Record, Hampshire County Council

- 5.6 Reducing carbon emissions is one of the key aims of national government. The Councils per capita carbon dioxide emissions (including domestic, road transport and industry / commercial aspects) are 7.8 tonnes per capita with the regional figure being 6.6 tonnes per capita and the UK being 7.0 tonnes per capita¹⁰. The Council nearly reached its target of 36% of waste recycled in 2008/09¹¹.
- 5.7 Groundwater quality in Test Valley is good with the majority of public water supplies in the area coming from this source. The Catchment Abstraction Management Plan (2006) covering the River Test notes that many areas within the Borough are over licensed or have no water available for abstraction. The Environment Agency¹² has identified Test Valley as an area of serious water stress.
- 5.8 The Environment Agency is monitoring the issue of water supply and has advised that there is only limited scope to increase abstraction rates. **Minimising the amount of water required by new development and maximising the replenishment of groundwater sources are particularly important within the Borough.**
- 5.9 The rivers and streams within Test Valley are key elements of the landscape and help shape its character as well as being important habitats. **Minimising the demand for water is a key issue for the Borough.** How that can be achieved will be a challenge. The Council will need to work with the Environment Agency, the Water Companies, development industry and the community to achieve greater water efficiency and ensure protection of the water sources and supply within the Borough.

Protect high standards of water and air quality.

- 5.10 Whilst the quality of the watercourses is generally good the quality of the River Test has deteriorated in recent years. The reasons for this are not yet fully understood. The River is the defining landscape feature of the Borough and is important as the fishery business generates a significant income into the local economy. Understanding the processes currently at work and addressing the problems arising is a key issue for the future. The Council will need to work with the Environment Agency, Southern Water and the fishing community to ensure that the River's health is improved.
- 5.11 The air quality standard within the Borough is good. Road transport is the main source of local air pollution. **The issue for the future is how to maintain that quality.**

10 DECC for National Indicator 186 for 2008

11 Annual Monitoring report 2008-09 TVBC

12 Areas of Water Stress: Final Classification, Environment Agency (2007)

Conserve and enhance the countryside and landscape and improve access to it.

- 5.12 Test Valley has a diverse and high quality environment. The North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) covers much of the Borough north of Andover. To the south west of Romsey, the New Forest National Park extends into the Borough. In total over 8,000 hectares of the Borough are covered by national landscape designations.
- 5.13 The protection of the landscape is necessary in maintaining the character of the Test Valley. Of importance to local people is the countryside which separates settlements, particularly around Andover and in southern Test Valley, as this plays an important role in maintaining the physical separation of settlements. The relative accessibility of the countryside puts certain areas under pressure from visitors.
- 5.14 **The key issue is how to balance maintaining the high quality and unique mixture of natural environments whilst accommodating the requirements for new development and the desire to visit the countryside.** Recently the concept of Green Infrastructure has been developed. The aim is develop a comprehensive approach to the provision and management of natural and man – made assets and improve public access to them.

Conserve and enhance biodiversity.

- 5.15 The Borough has a wide range of wildlife designations located in or close to Test Valley. These include the New Forest (Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Area (SPA)), Emer Bog (SAC), Mottisfont Bats (SAC) Porton Down (SPA), Salisbury Plain (SPA and SAC), the Solent and Southampton Water (SPA) and the Solent Maritime (SAC). The 25 SSSIs within Test Valley cover over 2,100 hectares¹³. There are also further local sites of ecological importance.
- 5.16 These sites are a valuable asset to the Borough's biodiversity which is under pressure from a range of sources, including increasing demands from a growing population and need for development. The Council is seeking to manage its own natural assets in a positive manner working with key agencies e.g. the River Anton enhancement project, the local nature reserves at Andover, Romsey and Valley Park.
- 5.17 **The key issue is how to maintain and enhance the Borough's ecological resource.** The Council's Biodiversity Action Plan prepared with partners provides a framework for future action.

13 Test Valley Borough Council Annual Monitoring Report 2008/09

6 TRANSPORT

- 6.1 The Community Plan aim is 'to ensure a sustainable, efficient and integrated transport network which is based on the real needs and choices of local people and visitors'. This could be achieved by;

Encourage use of public transport, cycling and walking networks to help reduce reliance on cars and provide choice.

- 6.2 The rural nature and relative wealth of most of the Borough is reflected in high car ownership rates. The average number of cars/vans per household stood at 1.45 in 2001, above the Hampshire, South East and national averages. The percentage of households without a car was 14.5%¹⁴. This high ownership rate is reflected in the high use of cars for travelling to work and low number of residents using public transport to commute. Accessibility to services in the rural area is quite poor with rural households located further away from key facilities than both the rural county and regional averages.
- 6.3 The majority of journeys within the Borough are made by car. At Andover the significant investment in road infrastructure as part of its planned expansion in the 1960s, the low level of congestion and high car ownership means most journeys made by car. Certain areas of Andover have a low car ownership and rely on public transport.
- 6.4 In southern Test Valley there is good access to the strategic road network. The 2001 Census indicates that there is high car usage for journeys to work, however within the town car usage is significantly lower than for trips out of the town.
- 6.5 In the rural parts of Test Valley public transport is limited and there are few opportunities for non car based trips. Community transport schemes play an important role in providing access in the rural area.
- 6.6 The Borough is served by a network of bus services; within the built-up areas of Andover, Southern Test Valley and to a lesser extent the rural communities. Longer distance services also operate to centres outside the Borough e.g. Salisbury and Winchester.
- 6.7 Two main railway lines pass through the Borough; London – Exeter with stations at Andover and Gately, and Bristol – Southampton with stations at West Dean, Dunbridge and Romsey. There is also a passenger service from Romsey to Eastleigh via Chandlers Ford.

14 Office for National Statistics 2010

- 6.8 Cycling as a means of transport accounts for only a small percentage of trips within the Borough, less than the national average. The existing network is to a large extent fragmented particularly in the older more established urban areas. However there is potential to develop cycling as an activity as both Andover and Romsey are relatively compact towns and distances to key destinations are relatively short. Within the more recent larger scale developments at Andover and Valley Park a comprehensive network of routes are an integral part of the transport network.
- 6.9 Outside of the larger urban areas there are few dedicated cycle routes and on well trafficked roads cycling may be less appealing to many residents. The Council's Cycle strategy is seeking to develop links into Andover and Romsey from the adjoining villages as and when opportunities are available. The quieter rural roads and public rights of way have potential to provide attractive leisure routes.
- 6.10 **The key issues are; how the reliance on the private car could be reduced particularly for local journeys within Andover and Romsey; how to provide for and improve the transport needs of those living outside of the major towns of the Borough and the future funding of transport schemes.**
- 6.11 The Council together with the County Council has prepared a number of Access Plans for the Borough which provides a framework for securing investment in the area's transport infrastructure. It has also produced a Cycle Strategy which seeks to develop the Borough's network of routes linking key destinations such as the town centres to adjoining residential areas, schools and major employment areas.

7 EDUCATION & LEARNING

- 7.1 The Community Plan aim is 'to promote a learning culture in the whole community and to provide education and learning that meets the needs of individuals'. This could be achieved by;

Raise skill levels and reduce economic disparities across the Borough.

- 7.2 The Borough has a range of skills and knowledge within its population. It has a relatively small percentage of the population who have no qualifications in comparison to the South East region and England, and a relatively high percentage of the population with level 4/5 qualifications¹⁵ in comparison to England. However these figures should not disguise that there are some parts of the Borough where the level of skills and education is an issue.

¹⁵ First degree, Higher degree, NVQ levels 4 and 5, HNC,

- 7.3 Andover lacks some of the key features of a competitive economy including a strong pool of highly skilled people, high value jobs and strong links with universities. The proportion of highly skilled workers is below the Hampshire and regional average. Approximately 23% of the Borough's population has no qualifications with the highest percentage being in the most deprived Wards of Andover with 31% of the population of both St Mary's and Alamein Wards having no qualifications. This is identified as a weakness in the town's future economic development¹⁶.
- 7.4 With regard to the GCSE results across Test Valley, figures show that in the Wards of Alamein and St Mary's the average capped GCSE score is lower per pupil than the South East and national average.
- 7.5 The southern part of the Borough has different characteristics and benefits from a highly qualified population. The Wards of Valley Park and Ampfield and Braishfield, contain the largest percentage of people with their highest qualification at Level 4/5. This exceeds the overall Test Valley percentage, and the percentage of the population in the South East and England¹⁷.
- 7.6 The rural area has a greater percentage of highly qualified residents employed in higher order occupations.
- 7.7 **The key issue is how to improve the level of skills and education attainment within the Borough and in particular those areas where shortcomings have been identified.**
- 7.8 The Council has had some success in securing funding for training programmes from major developments within the Borough at Andover Business Park and Adanac Park, Nursling.

16 Test Valley Borough Profile/ Office for National Statistics 2009

17 Test Valley Borough Profile/ Office for National Statistics 2009

8 HEALTH & WELL BEING

- 8.1 The Community Plan aim is 'to promote and improve the physical, mental and social health and well being of residents of Test Valley'.
- 8.2 The health of the population of Test Valley is generally better than the national average. The Indices of Multiple Deprivation show that of 354 local authority areas, Test Valley ranks 317th (where 1 is the most deprived). The Borough has a low rate of child poverty, however there are still around 2,300 children living in low income households.
- 8.3 Green and open spaces have been evidenced to decrease health inequalities, increase life expectancy and generally have a positive impact on health and wellbeing¹⁸. The latest Active People (April 2010) survey results for Test Valley show that participation rates in sport and active recreation are higher than the national average, 25.3% compared to 21% national average. However almost half the population of Test Valley (49.3%) had done no sport or active recreation in the previous four weeks. It is estimated that 23% of the adult population of Test Valley is obese and children are estimated at 8.5% obesity levels. The percentage of physically active children is high at 58.8% compared to the England average of 49.6%. In Test Valley we have higher than the national average of 65+ people suffering hip fractures, regular weight bearing exercise activity can help reduce this.
- 8.4 We need to continue to improve our sport and recreational facilities i.e. leisure centres, sports pitches and playgrounds and the accessibility of them whilst **developing further opportunities for local residents to increase their participation levels in sport and physical activity which would reduce levels of obesity and promote mental wellbeing.**

18 Source Great Outdoors: How our Natural Health Service Uses Green Space to Improve Wellbeing. Natural England

9 COMMUNITY SAFETY

9.1 The Community Plan aim is 'to ensure that people in all parts of the Borough enjoy a quality of life that is undiminished by crime, fear of crime and anti-social behaviour'.

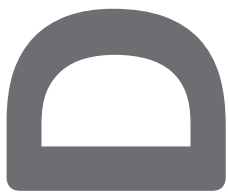
Create high quality, low crime environments and spaces.

9.2 Crime reduction in Test Valley for 2009/10 was 16% which compares very favourably with the Hampshire and national averages¹⁹. Whilst recorded crime is relatively low the Community Plan identifies that there is a high fear of crime. The Council is part of the Test Valley Community Safety Partnership which comprises a wide range of organisations. It has prepared a Plan²⁰ which has taken account of the Government advice on reducing crime. One of the key national themes is designing out crime. The Council as planning authority can seek to create an environment which minimises the opportunity for crime through design and layout of schemes. Better designed areas can also reduce the perception and fear of crime. **The key issue is to achieve well designed spaces and developments which are attractive.**

9.3 At the local level reducing anti-social behaviour, improving community cohesion and reducing the number of young people entering the criminal justice system have been identified as strategic outcomes of the Partnership Plan.

19 Test Valley Borough Profile/ Office for National Statistics 2010

20 Community Safety Partnership Plan, Test Valley Community Safety Partnership, 2008



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