

A newsletter from the Borough Councillors for the Test Valley Borough Ward of Mid-Test
Councillors Alison Johnston, Ian Jeffrey, and Stewart MacDonald



Armed Forces Covenant Fund's Hidden Voices Programme Reopens for UK Applications

Deadline: Round 1 is open for applications with a deadline of 1 October 2025 (12 noon)

UK registered charities, CICs and local authorities can apply for grants of up to £25,000 to support projects delivered over 12 months that enable accessible, bespoke mental health and wellbeing support for those with seldom heard needs in the armed forces community.

The funding is for projects that meet both of the following outcomes:

- Those who are underrepresented, or whose voices are seldom heard, within the armed forces community, have equitable access to mental health and wellbeing support which meets their specific needs.
- Awareness of the needs of underrepresented groups within the armed forces community has been raised among organisations supporting them, through mutual learning and knowledge exchange to embed best practice.

The project should be focused on supporting either serving personnel, veterans or their families or carers who are 'seldom heard', to access defined or bespoke mental health and wellbeing support.

There are two application rounds for financial year 2025/26.

If you apply by 12 noon on **1 October 2025**, you will receive a decision before end of November 2025.

If you apply by 12 noon on **21 January 2026**, you will receive a decision before end of March 2026.

[Visit Armed Forces Covenant Fund's Hidden Voices Programme](#) for more information

Armed Forces Covenant signing

On Tuesday 19 August TVBC held a signing ceremony for the new Test Valley Armed Forces Covenant.

This updated covenant replaces the Council's 2012 community covenant; it also renews the Council's commitment to the Armed Forces and reflects the developing needs of our Armed Forces community.

The revised Covenant has received input and feedback from the Test Valley Civilian Military Forum, council employees from the Armed Forces community and from the Council's Armed Forces Champion, Councillor Ian Jeffrey.

Have your say on the Draft Local Plan

Local Plan Public Exhibitions



Over the last few weeks, the planning policy team along with staff from other services have been out and about across the Borough holding public exhibitions on the draft local plan. The public exhibitions offered the opportunity for the public to learn about the draft Local Plan, its proposals and discuss queries or comments.

Many of you have attended those sessions, which has been really helpful.

The public consultation continues through until noon on 5 September so there is still time for the public to view the Revised Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan and make [comments](#).

There are four weeks left to have your say on the Draft Local Plan 2042 consultation.

What is a Local Plan?

The Local Plan guides future development within the Test Valley area. It sets out planning policies to address our communities' needs e.g. the amount of housing and employment needed, and how we intend to deliver sustainable development. It also covers policies on our town centres, countering climate change and conserving and enhancing our local environment and heritage. We also use it in assessing planning applications.

The Local Plan is produced by us (Test Valley Borough Council), in our role as the local planning authority, and must follow national guidance at each stage.

Local plans are important as they shape how places will change in the future. The Local Plan can play a key role in helping to deliver local priorities, such as those identified by our [Four Year \(Corporate\) Plan 2023-2027](#).

The Local Plan will influence future changes within local communities. These changes can be at a wider scale, such as the location of new residential development across the borough or at a local scale, such as the parking provision on new development. The Local Plan will set out the policies and principles by which planning decisions will be made and development undertaken, across the borough.

Why is it important?

This is having a plan-led approach where our communities have the opportunity to comment on the proposed approach to addressing our housing and employment needs. An up-to-date plan allows us to influence the location of future development through the policies in the plan to ensure development is focussed in the most sustainable locations with the appropriate amount of infrastructure delivered alongside.

If you and your community are seeking to influence the future of Test Valley, the Local Plan is the place to start.

Where we are with preparation?

The Council has already undertaken four stages of public consultationL [Issues and Options consultation \(2018\)](#), [Refined Issues and Options Consultation \(2020\)](#) , [Regulation 18 Stage 1 \(2022\)](#), and [Regulation 18 Stage 2 \(2024\)](#) We are now at the point of a Revised Regulation 18.

The Revised Regulation 18 draft Local Plan focusses on how we are seeking to address the increase in our housing need as a result of changes to national policy in late 2024. This includes setting out where new housing will need to be delivered across the borough.

Why is there another Regulation 18 stage?

Since we last consulted on the draft Local Plan, national planning policy has substantially changed to reflect the Government's ambition of increasing the delivery of homes both nationally and immediately. This means our housing need has significantly increased from 524 homes to 934 homes per year. To address this, we are having to revisit the Regulation 18 stage of plan preparation to identify how we are seeking to meet the increase in number of homes, through additional site allocations.

We need to have an up-to-date plan in place which sets out detailed policies of requirements from development to enable the Council to determine planning applications. The Council needs to show 5 years' worth of supply of housing land, which is made up of sites including but not limited to, those with planning permission or sites identified in the adopted Local Plan (2016) likely to be permitted in the next five years.

Without an up-to-date Local Plan, the Council cannot show that it has a 5-year supply of housing land as required by Government. This means we are at risk of speculative and unplanned development occurring in the borough. Moving forward at pace with the Revised Regulation 18 is important to make sure an up-to-date Local Plan is in place as quickly as possible to ensure developments are in the right place with the right amount of infrastructure. This also ensures that proposed sites have had the opportunity to be informed by public consultation.

What happens next?

The Local Plan will go through several statutory stages of preparation which includes public consultation before it is examined. The current stage is the Regulation 18 Stage and the next Stage is Regulation 19, which is the final round of consultation before we submit the draft plan to the Planning Inspectorate for an examination in public. If found to be appropriate through the examination process, it can be adopted. Upon adoption it will replace the current Test Valley Revised Local Plan 2011-2029 which was adopted in January 2016.

New theatre plans progress as planning application submitted



A planning application for the new theatre venue for *The Lights* in Andover, marking a major milestone in the town's cultural and economic regeneration has been submitted.

The theatre will be located at the top of the High Street, opposite the historic Guildhall, at the entrance to the Chantry Centre. This prominent location places the venue firmly at the heart of Andover's town centre, highlighting its pivotal role in the long-term vision to revitalise the area.

The proposed venue will feature a state-of-the-art multi-level auditorium seating over 400 people, a significant increase from the 249 seats available at the current theatre. There will also be a separate, flexible performance and event space, a range of dance studios, and meeting rooms which can be hired by the public. The new theatre will offer flexible social spaces for visitors, with café and bar areas at either end of the building. Terraced outdoor areas will also provide inviting spots to relax during the warmer months.

The new theatre will include accessible seating in both the circle and balcony levels, ensuring an inclusive experience for all visitors.

Demonstrating a strong commitment to environmental responsibility, the new theatre is targeting ambitious environmental standards, meaning it will be energy-efficient and built with long-term sustainability in mind, reducing its carbon footprint and running costs.

One of the striking differences between the new venue and the current theatre, will be the ability to run shows and events in both the auditorium and second event space simultaneously, as well as operating classes and meetings in other locations around the building. Quality sound proofing and an enhanced design will mean the venue can run at full occupancy.

Taking inspiration from two key public buildings in the town, St Mary's Church and the Guildhall, the façade will feature a series of stone arches, forming a striking colonnade. The building will be crafted from light coloured stone, to reflect the local chalk stream, paired with pale brick and elements of natural flint and bronze.

Construction is expected to begin in 2026, with the new venue opening in late 2027 or early 2028.

The project is part of the wider Andover Masterplan and is being supported by £18.3 million of funding from central government.

View the full design proposals and learn more about the project at: <https://www.thinkandovertowncentre.co.uk/theatre>

Bumper year of success for council's scrutiny committee

Test Valley's Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSCOM) has published its 2024/25 annual report, showcasing a year of impactful work that has improved services for residents and helped to shape key council policies.

The report provides a summary of the committee's successes, including the overhaul of our Council Tax Support Scheme, which has made it easier than ever before for residents to get help with their bill. OSCOM led a panel to simplify the scheme, which is already delivering faster processing times and clearer guidance for residents.

They have also helped to shape the Council's digital transformation strategy and action plan, to make sure that residents can access services in a way that works for them. The committee also provided valuable input into the upcoming rollout of the Council's new food waste collection service.

With a keen eye on the topics and issues that matter most to communities, they are focussing on how the Council can deliver new affordable housing and provide the best possible service to those in need of housing, and homelessness support.

Throughout the year, OSCOM has been involved in a variety of projects and explored a huge range of topics, from neighbourhood planning and grants to supporting voluntary sector groups. The committee has also welcomed external organisations, including Unity, to understand the impact of their work within communities across the borough and how the Council can best work with its partners to change lives. They have also added input into key strategies such as the Climate Emergency Action Plan and the Economic Development Strategy.

Two months to go until food waste collections start in Test Valley!



From 13 October 2025, weekly food waste collections will take place in Test Valley.

Our teams will be out and about at lots of different events over the next few weeks to talk about all things food waste.

This new collection service is being introduced as the Environment Act requires all councils to have food waste collections in place by 1 April 2026. The collections are being introduced five months earlier in a positive step towards transforming recycling in the area.

All of the collected food waste will be processed at an anaerobic digestion facility where it will be broken down by micro-organisms in the absence of oxygen. The methane-rich biogas generated during this process can be used as a fuel and the remaining product can be used as a nutrient-rich fertiliser.

Every household will be given a grey 5 litre kitchen caddy to help with the collection of food waste and scraps in the home. Most households will also be given a 23-litre kerbside caddy, which will be emptied weekly by one of our new specialist collection vehicles.

For households who live in flats or other accommodation with bin stores, and who already share their waste and recycling bins, a small 140 litre grey-lidded wheeled bin will be provided instead. This will be during September 2025.



Kitchen caddy and kerbside caddy

The larger, shared, wheeled bins for residents who live in flats

When will I get my caddies?

We are using a specialist distribution company for most households. They will start delivering the caddy packs from 26 August 2025. We anticipate this will take up to 7 weeks to complete. The caddy pack includes one kitchen caddy and one kerbside caddy, along with information on the new collection service.

In September, everyone will receive a postcard confirming what day their food waste will be collected on.

What can I put in my food waste caddy?



There are lots of items that can be placed into the food waste caddies. These include:

- all uneaten food and plate scrapings
- raw and cooked meat and fish including bones
- tea bags and coffee grounds
- fruit and vegetables including peelings (raw or cooked)
- out of date or mouldy food
- dairy products such as cheese, and much more

Will liners be provided for the caddies?

Yes - you'll be given a starter pack of compostable liners with your caddy pack. It's expected that the starter pack (a roll of 26 liners) should last a household approximately 10 weeks. If you wish to continue to use compostable caddy liners once you have used up your starter pack supply, they can be purchased from local shops or online. Alternatively, you can line your caddy with newspaper or paper towels. Food waste can be put into your caddy loose too, if you prefer.

Drop by for a chat at:

- Appleshaw Village Fete – 25 August from 12.30pm to 4pm
- ASDA Andover – 29 August from 10.30am to 3pm
- East Tytherley Countryside Fair – 30 August from 12 noon to 5pm

From what you can pop in your caddy, to what happens to your food waste once collected - come and ask any questions you might have.

John Lewis-owned estate handing out bottled water

The John Lewis Partnership has been supplying bottled water to around 500 residents in Longstock, it has been reported, four months after high levels of nitrate were discovered in water supplies coming from the retailer's Leckford Estate. **Test Valley BC** advised the estate to supply bottled water to nearby homes who source their water from the estate, and those supplies are expected to continue for a number of weeks as the estate installs filtration systems to address the issue.

Daily Mail The Daily Telegraph

Green Flag Awards fly high again for three Test Valley parks

Three popular parks in Test Valley have once again been awarded the prestigious Green Flag Award – marking over a decade of continued excellence in green space management.

Rooksbury Mill Local Nature Reserve in Andover, Valley Park Woodlands Local Nature Reserve, and Romsey's War Memorial Park have all retained their Green Flag status for another year. The awards are a national benchmark for well-managed parks and open spaces, recognising the efforts that go into keeping them welcoming, safe, and well-maintained for the public to enjoy.



The Green Flag Award scheme is run by environmental charity Keep Britain Tidy under licence from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. It sets the standard for high-quality green spaces in the UK and beyond.

Other News

Ukrainian Independence Day

To mark Ukrainian Independence Day on Sunday 24 August, the Ukrainian flag will be flying at the Guildhall, Beech Hurst, Former Magistrates Court and Crosfield Hall from Thursday 21 to Tuesday 26 August.

2025 marks 34 years since the Act of Proclamation of Independence of Ukraine was created, in 1991.



Romsey Post Office update

Councillors will recall a motion agreed at [Council](#) on 11 December 2024 regarding the post office in Romsey.

Romsey Post Office will be operated by an independent franchise retail partner from the current premises, from November.

Demfest 2025

This is a free event on 31 August 2025 and offers support, inspiration, advice and entertainment to families and individuals affected by dementia and other cognitive function conditions, organised by Romsey Dementia Action Group.

The theme for this year's event will be "Let's get moving" promoting accessible ways of keeping active and promoting wellbeing.

For more information visit [Romdag | Support | Romsey, UK](https://romdag.org.uk).



The UK Government's Rural England Prosperity Fund

is part of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund that provides capital funding for rural business and rural communities. TVBC received just over half a million pounds up to end March 2025 which has been distributed between businesses and community organisations across the rural areas of our borough to help develop our rural economy.

The UK Shared Prosperity Fund aims to increase life chances across the UK investing in communities and places, supporting local business, and people and skills. Some examples of how the Shared Prosperity Fund has helped local businesses are highlighted below.

For more information, visit: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-shared-prosperity-fund-prospectus>

Catering company awarded £23,000 Rural England Prosperity Fund grant



A local rural business in Test Valley has received a significant boost thanks to a grant of just over £23,000 from the UK Government's Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF), administered by us.

The Essential Party Ingredient (Miller and McKaig), run by Ollie McKaig and Flora Wordie, is a specialist catering company offering large-scale, high-quality kitchen and restaurant set ups at client's venues, and delivering fine dining at special events such as weddings and parties. The funding has supported the business in expanding its operations, investing in new equipment such as a large capacity dishwasher, mobile ovens, and wheeled cages to transport equipment.

Business owner, Ollie McKaig, said: "This grant has come at a perfect time for us. It's enabled us to invest in new equipment and improve our logistics, which means we can take on more bookings and offer an even better service to our customers. We're incredibly grateful to Test Valley Borough Council for their support."

Breach Farm Brewing raises a glass to grant support



A thriving microbrewery in East Cholderton is toasting its future growth with a grant from the Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF), delivered by us.

Breach Farm Brewing, based at Haydown Farm, has received just over £10,000 to invest in new equipment that will significantly boost its brewing capacity and efficiency. The funding has enabled the purchase of fermentation tanks, kegs, a malt mill, transfer pump, keg washer and additional cold room capacity that significantly transforms the brewery's operations.

The new malt mill has dramatically reduced the time it takes to grind malt from several hours to just 10 minutes, while the keg washer and additional cold room capacity have streamlined production and storage. With the new equipment in place, the team is now able to brew more regularly and meet growing demand.

Creative content business in Andover grows with support of Council Grant



A creative content business called Electric Bloom Ltd based in Andover has received a £750 Business Incentive Grant to support its continued growth.

Electric Bloom Ltd was founded by Lauren McManus. The business has long-standing contacts from the IT and telecoms industries and is now taking on a wider variety of projects, including event-based content creation.

Lauren applied for the Business Incentive Grant after hearing about it at a business fair at The Lights.

Hairdresser opens new salon in Andover with council support



Hairdresser Anastasiia has opened a new salon in Andover town centre, supported by a £750 Business Incentive Grant from Test Valley Borough Council.

Anastasiia Potashna opened her salon on the upper floor of 12 High Street in January, bringing her professional experience from Ukraine to the local community. The new business offers a range of hairdressing services in Andover's town centre.

The Business Incentive Grant is part of the council's wider commitment to supporting local enterprise and helping new businesses establish themselves in the borough.

Apply Now: Solar Panel Grants for Test Valley Businesses



Test Valley Council are offering grants to help small and medium sized businesses in local industrial estates and business parks to install solar panels - but funding is limited, and time is running out.

Through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, £50,000 has been set aside to support clean energy upgrades. Eligible businesses can receive a **one-off contribution of 20% of the costs of solar installations, up to a maximum of £5000**, to reduce the payback time of solar PV installations.

All installations must be completed by March 2026, so early application is essential to secure funding.

If you're a landlord, leaseholder, or occupier of a commercial property in a business park, don't miss this opportunity to cut energy costs and support climate action.

Last night of the Proms - 6 September

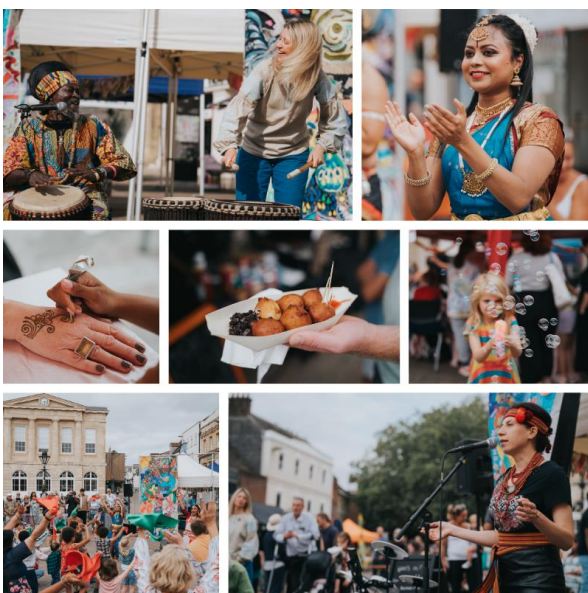
Head to Sir Harold Hilliers Gardens with your picnic, blankets and chairs to enjoy Last night at the Proms. The renowned Southampton Concert Orchestra, conducted by Paul Ingram, will be performing popular **classics** and all the usual Last Night of the Proms favourites, including Land of Hope and Glory and Rule Britannia.

Book tickets in advance to avoid disappointment: [Last Night of the Proms | Things to do in Hampshire](#)

Andover's multi-cultural street party returns, this bank holiday Monday!




Join us on Monday 25 August for a fantastic day of live music, dance, food and fun for all the family.

Following last summer's fantastic street party, this year's event will feature performances by local Nepalese dancers, Ukrainian musicians, a Chinese Lion Dance and belly dancers, amongst others.



There's also a chance to have a go yourselves with the popular African drumming and Morris dance workshops, as well as trying your hand at crafting Chochin lanterns or beautiful African beading. Don't forget the free henna tattoos!

With a fantastic array of street food and local produce stalls, you can sample delicious foods from around the world, while soaking up the festival atmosphere.

-  Date: Monday 25 August
-  Time: 12pm to 5pm
-  Location: Andover High Street

Defibrillators for public use are located at:

Stockbridge Fire Station (available 24 hours)

Longstock Village Hall (available 24 hours)

Leckford Estate Office (restricted hours)

Leckford Farm Shop (restricted hours)

Up Somborne Rookley Farm (24 hours)

King's Somborne Village Hall

King's Somborne – The Crown Inn (available 24 hours on front wall of pub)

Over Wallop - the White Hart pub, Pinchbecks Garage and the Army Flying Museum.

Nether Wallop -Village Hall and the Pavilion on the playing fields.

Broughton Village Hall

Mottisfont Social Club

Ashley- Ashley Farm (24 hours)

Lockerley - Outside the main door at the Lockerley and East Dean Memorial Hall. SO51 0JG

Lockerley - Outside the door of Lockerley Stores on Lockerley Green. SO51 0JN

Instructions for use are given when the device is commandeered.

In the event of an emergency, after dialling 999 to report the incident, the phone operative should give the access code for the cabinet, to the person/first aider using the device.

Contact

If there are any issues in this copy that you would like to discuss, or any items of news that you would like to be considered in a future copy please contact any of the Borough councillors.



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