

# A Green Infrastructure Strategy

for Test Valley (2014 – 2019)

July 2014



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# 1 Introduction

- 1.1 Green space is an integral part of the infrastructure which supports our way of life. It provides places for people to enjoy themselves, it has an important role to play as a wildlife habitat and it can assist in moderating the impact of a changing climate. How the existing green space or Green Infrastructure (GI) is retained and improved and new areas created in Test Valley is the challenge facing the borough.
- 1.2 The purpose of this Strategy is to outline what is important within the borough, what opportunities there are to improve what we have, identify how and where improvements could be made and to establish a framework for their delivery.
- 1.3 If you have any queries regarding the content of this document either contact us via

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## 2 Why is Green Infrastructure Important?

- 2.1 The importance of Green Infrastructure and biodiversity has been recognised and is reflected in a number of Government policy statements, guidance and research e.g. the White Paper on the Natural Environment 2011 which followed the Lawton Report 2010. The National Planning Policy Framework looks to Local Planning Authorities to set out a “strategic approach in their Local Plans, planning positively for the creation, protection, enhancement and management of networks of biodiversity and green infrastructure” (paragraph 114). The broad aim of the Government’s approach is to ensure the planning system delivers healthy sustainable communities which adapt to and are resilient to climate change and give the appropriate level of protection to the natural environment.
- 2.2 Green Infrastructure is important for biodiversity. The managed public open spaces such as parks and play spaces can be important for wildlife as well as for recreation and they complement the natural green spaces such as woodlands, rivers and streams in terms of providing habitats for plants and animals.



- 2.3** Adapting to climate change and making towns and cities more resilient to extremes of weather is a key aim of the Government. Green spaces have an important part to play in mitigating the impact of changes in the weather. Well designed flexible public spaces offer a range of opportunities to store water and modify urban temperatures. Green spaces with a generous planting of trees linked together to form networks can offer cooler cleaner air.<sup>1</sup>
- 2.4** The benefits of the availability of open spaces as places for recreation and healthy exercise are well established. Research has shown that there is a link between enhancing and protecting our environment and improving the quality of life and health of our communities. People feel better and behave differently when they have access to green spaces.
- 2.5** The presence of high quality green spaces can also have a positive economic effect. Research has indicated that the proximity of development to parks can increase property prices significantly and businesses value the presence of green spaces.

### **3 Purpose and Aims of the Strategy**

- 3.1** The purpose of the Strategy is to provide a framework for maintaining and enhancing the natural environment of the Borough. The Council has in place or is developing detailed initiatives which address particular topics which include such as its Biodiversity Action Plan, Greenspace Strategy or more wide ranging policy documents such as the Borough Local Plan. It also has prepared and keeps under review other policy documents which are closely linked to GI including its Cycle Strategy which seeks to improve access to a range of facilities including greenspaces and the wider countryside. The GI Strategy will draw together all of these approaches and ensure that they are delivered in a co-ordinated way making best use of the resources available.
- 3.2** The key aims of the Strategy are to:
- enhance the biodiversity of the Borough
  - enhance the quality of the natural environment
  - maximise the opportunities for the public to enjoy the environment
  - support the Council's response to a changing climate
  - support the well being of the residents of the Borough
  - support the economic prosperity of the Borough.
- 3.3** How the Council intends to achieve these aims is set out in section 7.

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<sup>1</sup> Public space lessons – Adapting to climate change: CABE SPACE July 2008

## 4 Definition of Green Infrastructure

4.1 Green Infrastructure<sup>2</sup> (GI) comprises a wide range of land uses including the following:

- parks and gardens,
- natural and semi-natural areas such as ponds and woodlands,
- hedgerows and single or groups of trees,
- greenway routes<sup>3</sup>
- green corridors<sup>4</sup>
- outdoor sports facilities, play areas,
- allotments and community gardens,
- village greens,
- cemeteries and churchyards,
- common land,
- the network of rivers, streams and canals,
- highway verges;
- the rights of way network; and
- sites identified for their nature conservation value.

### The Scale of Green Infrastructure

4.2 The provision of GI can take place at a number of different scales. Within the borough there are; national and international designations such as the New Forest National Park, North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Special Area of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) including the River Test, Chilbolton Common and Broughton Down; areas of county -wide significance such long distance footpaths e.g. the Test Way and the Clarendon Way, and Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs); areas important at a Borough level include major outdoor leisure facilities at: Charlton, Andover; Hunts Farm, Timsbury and Knightwood at Valley Park. The strategic elements of the rights of way network and cycle network and the local/neighbourhood level e.g. village greens, informal areas of open space. Each will make a contribution to the borough's GI resource which needs to be recognised.

4.3 Taken together these various elements comprise a network of spaces which are capable in combination of delivering a range of environmental social and economic benefits to the community.

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2 Green Infrastructure is defined in the National Planning Policy Framework (2012) as a network of multi-functional green space, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.

3 Greenway routes are traffic free routes which are generally attractive and well separated from traffic and are often link to the wider countryside.

4 Green corridors are often thin strips of land that provide sufficient habitat to support wildlife often in an urban environment and allow movement of wildlife along it.

## **5 The Green Infrastructure of Test Valley**

- 5.1** The Council has mapped the environmental resources within the Borough using the following grouped themes:
- Landscape Character
  - Green Space
  - Ecological Assets and Biodiversity
  - Access links
  - Cultural Heritage
  - Water Resources and Hydrology
- 5.2** The Council has also reviewed a number of studies, reports and strategies which have been prepared by key agencies such as the County Council, the Environment Agency and community groups together with its own documents relating to GI. See Appendix One. The information is held in a number of separate publications many of which can be viewed on the Council's website.
- 5.3** This exercise has informed an analysis of the issues relating to GI within three broad areas of the borough, Andover and its immediate area, rural Test Valley and southern Test Valley. Arising from that analysis a number of issues have been identified together with proposals to address them. These are set out in sections 10 to 17.

## **6 Role of Local Authorities and the Borough Council**

- 6.1** Section 40(1) of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 requires that every public authority must have a regard to the purpose of conserving biodiversity (the biodiversity duty).
- 6.2** The Natural England report: Natural Leaders: actions for local environmental leadership published in July 2010 identifies the lead role local Authorities can play in realising the benefits of the natural environment for their communities. The research points to areas where Council leadership can have a significant impact e.g. partnership working, setting a long term vision, preparation of planning policy and other documents, community engagement, and securing investment in natural capital.

- 6.3** At a local level the concept of GI has been developing through a number of initiatives. The Partnership for Urban South Hampshire (PUSH) has approved a Green Infrastructure Strategy to provide a long term framework (to 2026). The Council has put in place a Green Space Strategy covering land it retains and manages for recreation purposes and a Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) 2008.
- 6.4** The Test Valley Community Plan: Your Test Valley and the Council's own Corporate Plan 2011 have identified the environment as one of the key themes on which to focus action. In preparing these and other policy documents the Council has involved the community. In doing so a number of issues related to GI have regularly been raised:
- Conserve the existing settlement pattern and character of the borough
  - Provide links between towns and villages to the open countryside
  - Improve access to natural greenspaces and their connectivity to one another
  - Identify and protect important networks and resources
  - Strengthening the link between health and wellbeing and greenspaces
- 6.5** There are a significant number of organisations who have a strong involvement in the provision and maintenance of GI, e.g. Natural England, Environment Agency, Forestry Commission, Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust, Hampshire County Council, Local Nature Partnership, parish councils and local voluntary organisations. Through the development of this Strategy and its implementation the Council aims to promote partnership working and maximise the impact that the work that is carried out.

## **7 The Strategy**

- 7.1** The Strategy has six objectives which are set out in the paragraphs below. These will be achieved through a number of more detailed initiatives. For each objective of the Strategy the relevant initiatives have been identified to demonstrate how they can be delivered. Where appropriate, the work of other key agencies such as the Environment Agency, Hampshire County Council and Natural England has also been identified.

## Enhance the biodiversity of the Borough

- 7.2** The Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 requires every local authority to have regard to conserving biodiversity. The Council's BAP sets out the Council's approach to maintaining and enhancing the ecological environment of the borough. It includes an audit of the Borough, an action plan and a monitoring process. A review has been undertaken and a revised action plan is being prepared.
- 7.3** The BAP was prepared in partnership with a number of key organisations including the Environment Agency, Hampshire County Council, Natural England and the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust. The BAP provides an important reference document which will inform the plans and proposals of the respective organisations.
- 7.4** The Council owns a number of sites of ecological importance across the borough. Through the management of these sites it can support the actions of the BAP. Examples include; Anton Lakes, Andover, Rooksbury Lakes Andover, Tadburn Meadows, Romsey and Valley Park Woodlands, all of which have been designated as local nature reserves. The Council owns a significant amount of land and large number of buildings which it will seek to manage in ways which will complement the actions of the BAP<sup>5</sup>.
- 7.5** The Council has a duty to have regard to the conserving of biodiversity. As the local planning authority in considering the merits of planning applications it can discharge that duty. It can seek mitigation measures where there is an impact on ecological interests and encourage through the design process the promotion of biodiversity. The policies in its current adopted Local Plan (2006) and emerging Local Plan will provide the policy framework for the decision making process.

## Enhance the natural environment

- 7.6** The residents of the borough have highlighted the importance to them of the area in which they live and work. The environment is one of the eight key themes of the Community Plan 'Your Test Valley'. The aim of the Plan is to enable everyone to play their part in ensuring that we maintain a high quality and sustainable environment. In preparing its new Corporate Plan the Council, in 2010, carried out informal consultation with the public asking what mattered most to them. One of the key things they said that was important was having a decent environment.

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5 Sustainability Strategy, Test Valley Borough Council, 2012.



- 7.7** The Test Valley Borough Local Plan 2006 sets out the Council's planning policies for the area. It provides the framework for making decisions on proposals for development. Chapter four, Environment, and chapter eight, Design, contains a number of planning policies whose intention is to protect and conserve the Borough's natural and built environment. The Plan is to be replaced by a new Local Plan which will continue the same approach.
- 7.8** In considering proposals for development the Council will seek to minimise its impact and seek to secure environmental benefits. For example the Council may require existing landscape features to be retained and/or new planting to be provided and secure long term arrangements for their management. Where the Council proposes development e.g. through its planning policy documents it will include proposals to enhance the natural environment e.g. specify new planting to be provided, with an emphasis on native species.
- 7.9** The Council, informed by its understanding of the environment through such documents as the BAP, will initiate projects, subject to the availability of resources, which can contribute to the quality of the Borough's environment. At Andover it is working on a number of environmental initiatives e.g. River Anton Enhancement Project and the Andover Ring Road Project. The River Anton corridor and Ladies Walk are being managed with financial support from Natural England's Environmental Stewardship Scheme which is a ten year funded programme. It aims to deliver practical habitat management which will result in an improvement in the ecological value of the land covered by the project. In southern Test Valley, the Council has started work with the Environment Agency, Hampshire County Council, Natural England, Romsey & District Society and Hampshire Wildlife Trust on the Romsey Waterways Project.
- 7.10** The BAP can provide important guidance in respect of the details of any proposals for environmental enhancements which can support the actions within it.

## **Maximise the opportunities for the public to enjoy the natural environment**

- 7.11** To enjoy the benefits of the existing and proposed Green Infrastructure within the borough it should be accessible to residents. The Council will endeavour to improve access to GI through a number of initiatives. Through its planning policies the Council will seek to retain existing greenspaces and provide new spaces through the implementation of its public open spaces standards. In undertaking audits of the existing greenspaces the Council can assess the distances that residents would have to travel to reach them. This will help identify areas less well served and highlight where investment in improving access could be directed.
- 7.12** The Council's Town Access Plans and Cycle Strategy can provide the policy framework for delivering improvements to the transport infrastructure which serves greenspaces. The audits such as the Greenspace Strategy together with the Access Plans can highlight the potential to improve individual locations and access to them by residents.

## **Adapting to a changing climate**

- 7.13** The changing climate can have a significant impact on the Borough's biodiversity and in the way that Greenspaces are managed. In respect of extremes of weather (e.g. heavy rainfall or higher temperatures), how the environment is designed to cope with those extremes will influence the planning of GI.
- 7.14** The Council has considered the implications in terms of a changing climate. In the short term the impact is unlikely to be significant, however the Council is looking at the medium and longer term and what measures should be put in place now. In respect of extremes of rainfall it is working with the County Council and Environment Agency to ensure that the appropriate mitigation is in place where new development is proposed. Within its own estate the Council is keeping under review how its public open spaces should be managed to take account of the potential impact of hotter drier summers and wetter winters. The Council's Sustainability Strategy (2012-17) provides the framework for its approach.

## **Support the well being of the residents of the Borough**

- 7.15** The well being of residents can be enhanced by the availability of open spaces as places for recreation and healthy exercise. The Council can support and promote healthy living by ensuring that there is an appropriate provision and distribution of open spaces within the borough. The current Borough Local Plan (2006) and the emerging Revised Local Plan sets out the standards of open space to be provided in association with new development. The retention of existing open spaces as important recreation assets is also addressed by policies in those documents.
- 7.16** It is recognised that in combination the various types of GI can contribute to the quality and character of an area and the well being of residents. It is also recognised that some greenspaces may perform more than one function e.g. areas laid out as part of a flood mitigation scheme could have a positive impact in terms of the character of an area; areas of ecological importance such as woodlands or wetlands could provide for public access in a managed way. However it would be inappropriate to rely on such areas to meet the needs of residents in terms of informal recreation opportunities and areas where it is appropriate to encourage children to play. In undertaking audits of open space the Council will distinguish between those areas which it regards as meeting the formal and informal recreation needs of an area and other areas.

## **Support the economic prosperity of the Borough**

- 7.17** One of the key aims of the Community Plan 'Your Test Valley' is ensure that the local economy thrives and remains competitive. The Council in reviewing its own Corporate Plan in 2010 undertook public consultation. The response highlighted the concerns residents have with respect to the local economy now and in the future.
- 7.18** The economic performance of an area is related to its physical, social and cultural infrastructure (ODPM 2006). Green Infrastructure can contribute to the local economy in a number of ways; the health and well being of those working and living in an area; attracting new businesses and visitors to an area where the environment is of a high quality and promotes a positive image as well as supporting key infrastructure such as managing flood risk. Woodlands can also provide a commercial timber crop.

- 7.19** The borough's natural environment is of a high quality. The River Test and its tributaries, the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the New Forest National Park provide an attractive setting for businesses and draws tourists to the area. Tourism contributes over £170m per year to the local economy, the River Test itself through the fishing industry makes a significant contribution. The management of the river for fishing plays an important role in shaping the character of the valley along its length and the habitat created. A number of Green Infrastructure initiatives currently underway such as the River Anton Project, the Romsey Waterways Project and delivery of the Borough's Cycle Strategy which aims to improve access to the countryside are expected to contribute to the local economy.
- 7.20** The table on the next page illustrates how the range of initiatives relates to the aims of the Strategy.

**Table 1: Delivering the Strategy**

Objectives						
	Enhance Biodiversity	Enhance the Natural Environment	Enjoy the Natural Environment	Changing Climate	Wellbeing of Residents	Economic Prosperity
North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
New Forest National Park Management Plan	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
PUSH Green Infrastructure Strategy 2010	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
PUSH Green Infrastructure Implementation Framework 2012	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Test and Itchen Catchment Flood Management Plan	✓	✓				✓
Countryside Access Plans, HCC			✓		✓	✓
Test Valley Borough Local Plan 2006	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Test Valley Borough Council Sustainability Strategy 2012	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Andover Town Access Plan			✓	✓	✓	✓
Romsey Town Access Plan			✓	✓	✓	✓
Test Valley Access Plan			✓	✓	✓	✓
Cycle Strategy			✓	✓	✓	✓
Andover Ring Road	✓	✓				
Public Open Space Audit					✓	
Playing Pitch Strategy					✓	
Sport and Recreation Strategy					✓	
Greenspace Strategy	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Biodiversity Action Plan	✓	✓				
River Anton Project	✓	✓				✓
Romsey Waterways Project	✓	✓				✓
Higher Level Stewardship Scheme	✓	✓				
Village Design Statements / Village and Parish Plans	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓



## **8 Community Involvement**

- 8.1** There is a strong tradition of community involvement in environmental projects within the borough. The Council values the support residents and businesses give and through a range of initiatives encourage community involvement. The Council provides a range of opportunities for the public to be involved in environmental projects and events and in the preparation of documents which provide the policy framework e.g. the Borough Local Plan, Access Plans, Cycle Strategy. Currently the Council is actively involving the public in a number of current projects and supports a number of volunteer groups and associations e.g. Romsey Waterways Project; The Anton River Conservation Association (TARCA); Friends of the War Memorial Park, Romsey; Friends of Tadburn Meadows, Romsey; Friends of Valley Park Woodlands and Andover Trees United.
- 8.2** The Government through the Localism Act 2011 is seeking to encourage greater community involvement in the planning of their neighbourhoods. The Council is developing its response to the Act and intends to build on its current community initiatives.

## **9 Delivery**

- 9.1** The development and implementation of Strategy will require significant resources. It is anticipated that resources to bring forward any proposals would come from existing budgets (capital and revenue), developer contributions via section 106 agreements and the Community Infrastructure Levy and other sources of external funding e.g. from agencies within DEFRA.
- 9.2** The Council has a well established record of partnership working to deliver environmental improvements within the borough and will continue to develop new opportunities. It is currently involved in a number of projects with partners including; the Environment Agency, Forestry Commission, Hampshire County Council, Hampshire Wildlife Trust and Natural England.

## 10 Opportunities for Green Infrastructure

- 10.1** In the following sections for each of three broad areas; Andover, Rural Test Valley and Southern Test Valley, an analysis of the key components of GI has been undertaken, together with opportunities which are intended to inform more detailed proposals to improve the Borough's GI network.
- 10.2** The landscape of the borough is an important component of the Borough and it has helped shape the character of the area. The chalk downland covers much of the borough north of Romsey with the River Test and its tributaries flowing through it in a series of valleys. The southern part of the borough has a more complex geology which supports a more diverse range of habitats including large areas of woodland. The character of towns and villages of the borough is closely linked to the landscape in which they sit and it has played an important role in shaping the GI of the borough. A detailed assessment of the landscape character of the Borough is set out in the Test Valley Landscape Character Assessment 2004.

### Andover (see Map 1)

- 10.3** Andover developed as a market town. The historic core of the town lies across the chalk stream valley of the River Anton, a tributary of the River Test, which it joins south of the town. In 1960 Andover was identified as one of the towns to accommodate development from London and this resulted in rapid growth in its population, requiring new housing, industry and shopping facilities, beyond its historic town centre.
- 10.4** Andover sits in a 'bowl' created by the River Anton and its main tributary which curls north westwards. It is completely contained within the open chalkland landscapes of the north of the Borough. It is surrounded to the north by the gently sloping North Andover Plateau which is cut by a series of dry river valleys and gentle ridges running in a southerly direction towards Andover and linking to the River Anton. To the west, south and east, is the more gently undulating area of open chalk downland of the Thruxton and Danebury Chalks Downs. The ridges and hills of the Anna Valley containing the Pilhill Brook are located to the south.
- 10.5** The development and character of Andover has been shaped by the River Anton and its tributaries which flow through the town. The Upper River Anton Valley Floor is a narrow river valley containing the Anton which is an important chalk stream. It is made up of two tributaries, which converge on the northern edge of Andover. Its associated habitats form important green corridors through the town.

- 10.6** Andover has expanded outwards from the historic centre and along the valley floor and up valley sides. The village of Charlton, which sits across the main valley, is separated by a small strip of remnant farmland and the valley of the tributary of the River Anton. There are a number of small villages located further up the valleys to the north and west, such as Penton Mewsey and Enham Alamein. There are views to and from the town to the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).
- 10.7** The higher downland ridges are dominated by large scale arable farming, and this creates a strong rural farmland setting to Andover. These ridges contribute to the character of Andover and combined with the undeveloped upper sections of the dry valleys, provide visual separation between the town and the surrounding villages. The ridges also separate the villages themselves.
- 10.8** To the west and south of Andover, the downland ridge which forms the top of the Anna Valley separates the town from the villages which sit along the Pilhill Brook including Abbots Ann, Upper Clatford and Goodworth Clatford.
- 10.9** To the south the A303(T) and the extensive planting along the road on the Andover side screens Andover, and elevated views from the A303(T) provide views across the downland farmed landscape to the south maintaining a rural setting to the south.
- 10.10** The town is currently developing two major residential neighbourhoods to the north east at East Anton where care has been taken to keep the development from the upper ridges to protect the landscape setting of the town and rural views from the North Wessex Downs AONB to the east and at Picket Twenty to the south east. The principal development area is located contained within a small valley on the eastern side of the A3093(T), where again care has been taken to leave the higher ground undeveloped to protect the downland setting of Andover.
- 10.11** The higher open downland landscape surrounding Andover to the north serves as a rural setting of the town, and the higher sections are important in retaining that setting. Access across it from the town is enjoyed by a number of Public Rights of Way which run in a north-south alignment towards the AONB. Where development is extending up the valleys towards the higher ground, the upper sections of the individual valleys also serve as 'green gaps' between the town and the smaller settlements of Enham Alamein, Smannell and the Pentons.

- 10.12** This same landscape acts as the catchment to the Rivers Anton and Test and needs to be managed in accordance with the Andover Sub-area of the Test and Itchen Catchment Flood Management Plan with the River Anton corridor. The key messages are to influence land management to reduce flood risk and open up river corridors through Andover particularly in connection with new development. The Flood and Water Management Act 2010 requires developers to incorporate Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) in all new and redeveloped site plans (yet to be enacted).
- 10.13** Within the same landscape the River Test catchment which includes, the Bourne Rivulet, the Upper Test and the Pillhill Brook is a priority target area for grant funding via agri-environment schemes to achieve nitrate sensitive farming. This initiative currently attracts funding for capital works to reduce nitrate rich sediment entering watercourses.
- 10.14** The substantial tree belt along the A303(T) screens Andover and combines with the arable downland to the south of the trunk road to provide a rural setting to Andover. The downland and the chalk stream creates a 'green gap' between the town and the villages of Upper Clatford, Little Ann and Abbots Ann which sit in a line immediately to the south of Andover along the valley of the Pillhill Brook.
- 10.15** The higher ground of Bere Hill provides the downland setting of Andover to the south east, and the new development of Picket Twenty.
- 10.16** A green corridor comprising; Charlton Sports Centre the series of small lakes feeding into the tributary of the River Anton and an area of farmland provides a green wedge around the village of Charlton, providing its landscape setting, and contributing to its character.
- 10.17** The River Anton meanders through Andover across a valley floor overlooked by houses, highway corridors, the town centre, warehouses and industrial development. It forms a corridor through the town which should be conserved and enhanced and provides opportunities to improve its contribution to the character and quality of the townscape, improve it as a wildlife habitat and as a natural space accessible to a large number of people. The River acts as a link bringing together a number of green spaces e.g. Rooksbury Mill, Watermills Park, Town Mill Park and Anton Lakes. It also acts as an important recreational route, connecting the centre of town to countryside to the north, south and west.
- 10.18** The ring road corridor stretches from Hundred Acre Corner in the west around the north of the town centre to Picket Twenty in the east. It has wide verges along most of its length. These verges and the roundabouts have been identified as important habitats, including rare chalk grassland bringing chalk grassland flora into to the centre of the town.

- 10.19** Access to the countryside via the Public Rights of Way Network is generally good but there are significant gaps round Smannell and St Mary's ward. Smaller gaps in the network exist around Charlton and towards Penton Mewsey and Penton Grafton. The rights of way provide access to the countryside to the north of Andover, including the AONB, it is important to improve these recreational links to provide more opportunities to enjoy the countryside.
- 10.20** Historic routes through and around the town such as Dark Lane, Harrow Way and Mark Lane provide access to the countryside on the western side of Andover as well as corridors providing green corridors for biodiversity, linked to the Andover Ring Road.
- 10.21** The former railway line provides direct link from the town centre to the countryside south of the town. It is also an important green corridor complementing Watermills Park, Rooksbury Mill and the River Anton connecting the town to the wider countryside.
- 10.22** Associated with the new development at Picket Twenty, new woodland planting and public open space is proposed on the perimeter of the site adjacent to Harewood Forest to provide a buffer to the ancient woodland, provide for public recreation and reduce the pressure of development close to the ancient woodland site.
- 10.23** Associated with the new development at East Anton connections and extensions to the public access routes and new open space is being provided to connect the new development to the town centre and bring the countryside in to the development. On the northern boundary of the new development voluntary groups, with the help of the local community, two new woodlands have been planted at Diamond Wood and Harmony Wood.
- 10.24** Ladies Walk to the south east of Andover provides a linear link around the south east of the town through a green corridor of trees and with excellent views across Andover. It will provide a link to Picket Twenty via a new cycle route.
- 10.25** In view of the proximity of the North Wessex Downs AONB to the eastern edge of Andover, any proposals for landscape enhancement should take in to account views to and from the designated landscape.
- 10.26** Watermills Park and Rooksbury Mill are located in the south of the town and offer a significant facility for informal recreation, children's play and contact with the natural environment. Rooksbury Mill offers a unique opportunity to see some of the UK's most treasured and at risk wildlife including; otters, water voles and kingfishers.



**10.27** Andover Transition Town, along with other volunteers, have created a community orchard at Topaz Drive and a community garden at Vigo Road. The community garden provides a variety of herbs and perennial vegetables.

## **Potential GI Initiatives for Andover**

**10.28** Taking account of the analysis of the GI in and adjoining the town and the issues, a number of initiatives are put forward under the following themes:

- retaining the settlement character and pattern
- maintaining and creating green corridors
- maintaining and creating urban green spaces
- improving access to urban and natural greenspace

**10.29** The following proposals are identified for Andover:

### **Retaining the settlement character and pattern**

- Due to the open arable downland nature of most of the landscape around Andover screening of the settlement edge cannot rely on traditional screening by new planting which may look unnatural in an open chalk downland landscape. Ensure the use of the topography of the chalk landform to maintain the distinction and visual separation between settlements.
- Conserve the rural downland setting of Andover by maintaining the higher areas of the downland ridge and slopes as undeveloped areas.
- Maintain a green gap at the upper levels of the dry river valley between Andover and Enham Alamein.
- Maintain a green gap between west of Andover and the villages of the Pentons.
- Maintain a green gap between Andover and the villages of the Clatfords, Little Ann and Abbots Ann to protect the rural setting and character of the villages and Andover along the line of the Pillhill Brook and rising land to the west.
- Retain a positive relationship between the settlement edge and the open chalk landscape create a porous development edge with green space and green wedges as part of the amenity green space provision for new development, such as has been implemented at the development of East Anton.
- Retain the rural views from the settlement edge to chalk downland and AONB, such as from the Andover Ring Road corridor.
- Maintain and enhance the setting of Charlton village, by retaining the open character of the area around the Charlton Sports Centre, the River Anton corridor and the farmland east of Charlton village.
- Maintain the landscape corridor along the A303(T) south of the town to screen the settlement edge and retain the rural setting of the villages of Upper Clatford, Goodworth Clatford and Little Ann/Abbots Ann.

### **Maintaining and creating green corridors**

- Maintain and conserve a green corridor along the tributary of the River Anton and its winterbourne, through Penton Mewsey and Penton Grafton up to Weyhill Bottom.
- Maintain a green corridor along the River Anton to the south of Charlton village.
- Maintain and enhance the natural character of the River Anton corridor and its banks for biodiversity and flood management.
- Where development is proposed along the River Anton, opportunities to restore the natural bank of the river, maintain and extend the amenity links and provide additional green areas/planting to extend the biodiversity value of the corridor should be explored.
- Maintain and enhance the Andover Ring Road as a biodiversity corridor to conserve and enhance the grassland and vegetated habitats along it. Maintain the connectivity of its biodiversity corridor along its full extent and its links to the River Anton and Ladies Walk biodiversity corridors.
- Maintain and enhance Ladies Walk as a recreational, historic and biodiversity corridor to include new tree planting in accordance with its historic character. Maintain a green corridor along the length of Ladies Walk to conserve its historic character, the views of the town and its contribution to the setting of the town.
- Develop a 'greenway' route which follows the course of Harrow Way, and Mark Lane to provide an improved connection from Andover to the countryside west of the town. It also has a function as a biodiversity corridor which could be improved by enhancing the mixed native hedgerows along this route.
- Develop a 'greenway' routes along Walworth Road, with links to Phoenix Park, Ox Drove, London Road and Ladies Walk to provide recreational and biodiversity corridors from the east of Andover to the countryside. The routes should also connect to the Andover Ring Road Corridor to extend the biodiversity corridors along it to the countryside.

### **Maintaining and creating urban green spaces**

- The residents of Andover enjoy relatively good access to greenspaces within the town, particularly those areas close to Charlton Sports Centre, Anton Lakes, Watermills Park and Rooksbury Mill linked by the River Anton. The area to the south west of the town centre is less well served given the distance to greenspaces, the 'barrier' of the Weyhill Road and limited convenient routes to these major town spaces. New public spaces are proposed as part of the development at Augusta Park and Picket Twenty.
- Develop links between the residential areas of the town and the existing and proposed major public spaces at Augusta Park and Picket Twenty.

- Seek the retention of existing trees and promote new planting within the town.
- Improving access to urban and natural greenspace
- Identify opportunities to improve the network of rights of way radiating out from Andover linking it to the countryside and attractive and convenient routes within the town including:
  - North from Augusta Park
  - South from Andover across the A303(T)

## 11 Rural Test Valley

- 11.1** Outside of Andover and the southern Test Valley parishes the area is very rural in character. Within this area there are a number of distinct landscapes with their own character. They include; the river valleys of the Test, Anton and their tributaries; the chalk downs where there are significant areas of woodland e.g. around Ampport, Faccombe and Little Somborne; open arable chalk downland e.g. around King's Somborne, Thruxton and Cholderton and mixed farmland and woodland e.g. around East and West Tytherley, Awbridge and Sherfield English. Some of the woodlands, such as the West Tytherley Woods are of significance within the context of the South East of England. Around West Wellow and Plaitford the landscape is different again with the New Forest heathland areas close by.
- 11.2** There are a large number of villages located within these landscapes. Most of the villages are located in the valleys of the rivers and streams which provided a degree of shelter and a supply of water and also acted as transport routes. Many of the villages developed along the roads running through the valleys and their linear character has survived to the present day. After 1945 a number of villages experienced a significant amount of development in the form a new estates as both public and private sector housing was built. In more recent years, (post 1980) new development has been mainly small scale, often in small clusters to meet local housing need.
- 11.3** The area is an important one in terms of biodiversity. The borough is home to a number of priority habitats and contains a significant proportion of Hampshire's biodiversity resource. The River Test SSSI and its tributaries are nationally important chalk streams and the wetlands associated with them such as Bransbury Common, Chilbolton Common, Stockbridge Common Marsh provide habitats for birds and rare plants. Around Tytherley and Mottisfont there are significant areas of ancient semi-natural woodland. The area supports a number of unimproved grassland sites including part of Porton Down, Broughton Down and Stockbridge Down.

- 11.4** Compared with the larger settlements such as Andover and Romsey, the rural villages have limited provision in terms of GI. For many of the villages the only significant area of public open space is the village recreation ground which provides for formal sports activities and will often have children's play equipment. The village church and its grounds may be the only other significant area of greenspace.
- 11.5** Access to the countryside from the rural settlements is via an extensive network of Rights of Way. Running through the centre of the Borough is the Test Way part of which follows the former railway line between Andover and Romsey. The Clarendon Way links Salisbury and Winchester and crosses the Borough passing through King's Somborne, Houghton and Broughton.
- 11.6** The area is of high ecological importance containing a range of sites of local, regional and national importance. Maintaining and enhancing them is a key aim of the Council's Biodiversity Action Plan. Positive land management initiatives such as hedgerow restoration and woodland management can have a significant impact on the area's biodiversity. Managing the public's access to the countryside and to sensitive sites is a priority and an opportunity. The existing rights of way network provides opportunities for residents to enjoy the countryside.
- 11.7** Biodiversity Opportunity Areas are specific geographical areas with the best opportunity to restore and create habitats of regional importance. They are defined entirely on the basis of identifying those areas where conservation action is likely to have the most benefit for biodiversity based on existing biodiversity interest and opportunities for enhancement. The purpose of Biodiversity Opportunity Areas is to guide support for land management as they represent those areas where assistance for land management and habitat restoration would have particular benefit

### **Potential GI Initiatives in Rural Test Valley**

- 11.8** The borough contains a large number of rural communities, many of whom have undertaken appraisals of where they live. Many of these appraisals, which have been published as Village Design Statements and Parish Plans, have included an appreciation of the local environment including what is collectively referred to as Green Infrastructure. This document does not repeat the findings of those appraisals which are listed in Annex One. The Council will support local community initiatives under the four themes.

### **Retaining the settlement character and pattern**

- Develop borough wide policies to retain the distinctiveness of rural villages and support local community projects such as Village Design Statements, Neighbourhood Plans and Parish Plans which could identify important GI features and proposals,

### **Maintaining and creating green corridors**

- Identify opportunities to link existing areas of ecological importance.

### **Maintaining and creating green spaces**

- Support community led initiatives to enhance existing green spaces and create new green spaces.

### **Improving access to urban and natural greenspace**

- Identify opportunities to improve the links from villages to the adjoining countryside through the Test Valley Access Plan and Borough Cycle Strategy.

## **12 A Strategy for Southern Test Valley (see Map 2)**

- 12.1** The most densely populated area of Test Valley is the southern most parishes adjoining Southampton and Eastleigh. The main settlements of Romsey, North Baddesley, Valley Park, Nursling and Rownhams, Chilworth and the village of Ampfield are separated by areas of countryside, often quite narrow in places. Small areas of wooded farmland maintain and heighten the sense of separation between these settlements and contribute to their landscape setting and character. These settlements sit within close proximity to the much larger urban areas of Eastleigh and Southampton and their separate identity relies on the integrity of the wider landscape.
- 12.2** The key GI elements within southern Test Valley have been drawn together in sections 13 to 17 of the Strategy to provide an overview of how they can complement each other and to provide a framework for detailed proposals.



## 13 Romsey and North Baddesley

- 13.1** Romsey is a historic market town lying in the lower reaches of the Test Valley north of Southampton. The original settlement was built on shingle banks of the valley floor, at one of the crossing points of the River Test. Subsequent building has taken place on both peat and clay seams and the town has extended northwards in the river valley and eastwards up the hillsides to the level land beyond. The town is constrained to the west by the River Test, to the south by the Broadlands historic estate, and to the north by the wetlands of Fishlake and Ashley meadows along the river valley floor.
- 13.2** The smaller settlement of North Baddesley located to the south east of Romsey has grown up around the crossing points of two major routes. It is located further along the plateau area which stretches from the edge of the valley of the River Test towards Chandlers Ford and Eastleigh.
- 13.3** Romsey and North Baddesley lie within the landscapes of the lowland pasture mixed farmland, heathland and woodland, to the east of the River Test. On either side of Romsey, hills parallel to the river rise up to gently rolling plateaus covered by large blocks of woodland including plantations that make up the landscape character areas of Baddesley Mixed farm and Woodland and Melchet and Awbridge Wooded Farmland. As its development has been constricted by the floodplain of the River Test to the west of the town, it has therefore extended eastwards up the river terraces towards North Baddesley, which sits on the plateau.
- 13.4** The development and character of Romsey has been shaped by the river braids and floodplain of the River Test. The development of Romsey has been constricted by the River Test leading to an unusual elongated form of development eastwards away from the river and main town area. The direction of the town extends eastwards following the sides of the valley which contain the Tadburn Lake a tributary of the Test, and northwards along either side of the Barge Canal which was part of the Andover canal from Redbridge to Andover.
- 13.5** A thin line of development extends along the eastern stretch of the A3090 in to Ampfield Wood, and is known as the Straight Mile. Its wooded character makes an attractive approach to Romsey.
- 13.6** North Baddesley is located on the more open plateau area south east of Romsey - Baddesley Mixed Farm and Woodland and is contained to the east by the rising ground and dense woodlands around Chilworth - North Baddesley to Chilworth Woodland Mosaic.

- 13.7** Between Romsey and North Baddesley, on the plateau, is an area of mixed farmland made up from medium size arable fields, small pasture fields, and woodland. Hedgerows enclose the fields. This mixed farmland area contributes to the rural character of North Baddesley and Romsey and provides visual separation between the two settlements. On the western edge of North Baddesley the dense woodland separates it from Chilworth, Chandler's Ford and Eastleigh.
- 13.8** North of North Baddesley there is an extensive area of common land made up of small paddocks and woodland which extends to Emer Bog, a site of European importance, an area of boggy lowland heath.

## **Romsey**

- 13.9** The River Test and its water meadows contribute to the distinctive setting and character of Romsey. It is important to retain features such as views across the river and water meadows from within the town, which contribute to the rural character. Little of the main river is open to the public, but good views are possible from areas such as Mill Lane and the War Memorial Park, and at historic crossing points such as The Meads, River Mead Close, Sadlers Mill and Mainstone Bridge. The area also forms part of the functional floodplain of the River.
- 13.10** Glimpses out towards the opposite undeveloped side of the Test Valley e.g. of Squabb Wood are obtained from various points within the town such as Church Street and Broadwater Road. This relationship of views across the valley is repeated as you move further up the river terraces. There are views out across the town to the open countryside which contributes to the rural character of the town. Views of the Abbey, the Malthouse and the valley itself can be obtained from the Cupernham, Woodley and Halterworth areas.
- 13.11** Notable groups or avenues of trees are located along every main road radiating out from the town centre along Botley Road, Winchester Road, Broadwater Road, Malmesbury Road, the By-pass, and the upper part of Winchester Road. These are complemented in the town centre by large individual and groups of trees e.g. around the Abbey and Linden Road.
- 13.12** The mixed farmland landscape to the east of Romsey serves as a green gap between the town and the smaller settlement of North Baddesley, and prevents their coalescence. The landscape is open level farmland crossed by a number of public rights of way. It is therefore very important to have a well integrated settlement edge to the countryside which protects the character of both settlements and the amenity value of the footpaths. The extent of the visual gap is important in view of the openness of the plateau.

- 13.13** The town has grown around and been shaped by its location at the crossing points of historic routes and water corridors. The pathways along the Tadburn Lake and the Canal are important pedestrian/cycle routes provide good connections from the town centre to adjoining residential areas and the countryside to the east and north. Access on to the Test Way is possible to the west via existing Public Rights of Way around Sadlers Mill. The town is bisected by the railway lines which has resulted in poor access to the open spaces either side from the residential areas.
- 13.14** It is important to conserve and enhance established green links through the town to the countryside such as along Tadburn Stream and the Barge Canal for both recreational and biodiversity purposes. It is also important to extend or create new links in to the town to connect with these corridors especially where the development extends the settlement boundary further in these areas.
- 13.15** Whilst links out to the countryside from the town centre of Romsey to the north and east are well provided for there are poor access links to the south and west, particularly across the River Test. There is no corresponding green corridor extending south of Romsey through the urban area.
- 13.16** The smaller watercourses fed by the River Test are less important as major recreational corridors, but they are significant in that they appear in many parts of the town providing stretches of water within an urban setting.
- 13.17** The town is served by a number of greenspaces such as the War Memorial Park, Botley Road, Tadburn Meadows, Woodley Green, Mercer Way and Romsey Sports Centre. The principal road network (A3057, A3090) and the railway lines are barriers to the easy movement of pedestrians and cyclists to them. Abbey Ward has limited provision of open spaces.
- 13.18** The area north of Romsey around Fishlake and Ashley Meadows is an area of high biodiversity interest with limited public access via an existing public footpath. On the southern edge of Romsey and between it and North Baddesley are large blocks of woodland e.g. Beggarspath Wood and Luzborough Plantation, which are important landscape features and also ecologically valuable. The woodlands both screen and give an integrated and soft edge to the settlements contributing to the sense of separation between the two settlements.

## Potential for GI Initiatives in Romsey

**13.19** Taking account of the analysis of the GI and the issues a number of initiatives are put forward under the following themes:

- Retaining the settlement character and pattern
- Maintaining and creating green corridors
- Maintaining and creating urban greenspaces
- Improve access to natural greenspace

**13.20** The following proposals are identified for Romsey:

### **Retaining the settlement character and pattern**

- Development to be sensitive to the landform and consider the prominence of sites in views to the settlement edges. A green gap should be maintained between Romsey and North Baddesley.
- Development to be sensitive to the surrounding landscape character and integrate within the existing network of woodlands and hedgerows extending around the eastern edges of Romsey and North Baddesley
- The avenues and groups of trees within Romsey should be retained. Trees within the historic town centre of Romsey are limited due to the dense urban form. In considering new development, blocks or avenues of trees identified as important for GI should be retained and sufficient space provided for within the development ensure their long term survival.
- Where existing green corridors such as lines of mature trees and hedgerows are present, they should be retained with a sufficient buffer to ensure their long term survival.

### **Maintaining and creating green corridors - Romsey**

- To the south and west of Romsey opportunities to improve public access links across the River Test to link with the Test Way and provide a series of circular walks linked to Romsey town centre should be explored.
- To the south east of Romsey identify opportunities to create new links to the countryside and to provide circular routes and green corridors to the town should be explored.
- The existing waterway corridors through the Town should be maintained and enhanced.
- Where development is proposed ensure existing corridors are maintained and extended, with improved links to the existing Rights of Way network.
- Where development is proposed establish a network of greenways to connect areas existing spaces to the wider countryside.
- Maintain and enhance the watercourses network in Romsey for their biodiversity and improve public access

- Explore opportunities to extend and enhance the wetland habitats around the town.

### **Maintaining and creating urban greenspaces - Romsey**

- Explore opportunities to improve the existing greenspaces within the town, in particular the areas adjoining the Canal.
- Explore opportunities to provide new open spaces to serve the existing population and in particular, the Abbey Ward of the Town.

### **Improve access to urban and natural greenspace - Romsey**

- To the south and west of Romsey, identify opportunities to create links to the Test Way and provide circular routes.
- In the south east of Romsey, identify opportunities to create new links to the countryside and to provide circular routes to and from the town and linking it with North Baddesley and the proposed Forest Park.
- To the north and east of the town identify opportunities to create links to the countryside to provide circular routes to and from the town and linking it to Timsbury, Braishfield, Ampfield and Hillier's Arboretum.

## **North Baddesley**

**13.21** Much of the development of North Baddesley has taken place post 1945 and its character is very much urban in nature with few natural features within its boundaries. The Tanners Brook watercourse flows in a narrow corridor through the eastern part of the village. Along the A27 and Rownhams Lane there are a number of large mature trees together with significant individual and groups of trees within the village enhancing its character.

**13.22** There are a number of public open spaces within the village. The most significant the Recreation Ground on the eastern side and Mountbatten Park to the south west. There are a number of smaller spaces providing local opportunities for recreation, most of which are to the south and east of the village e.g. at Mortimer Way and Fleming Avenue. Overall the village is not well served by open space in terms of the scale of its provision and location.

**13.23** To the east, Wrens Copse and Roundabouts Copse and on the western side, Luzborough Plantation, are important landscape and nature conservation features. There is no formal public access to them.

**13.24** To the north of the village Baddesley Common and the internationally important Emer Bog are accessible via the rights of way network, from the A27. Emer Bog is also accessible with from Green Lane and Nutburn Road via public footpaths. A boardwalk exists around the Bog. However, it is important to protect the hydrology of the area and enhance biodiversity around the site to maintain the quality of the habitat of Emer Bog. Managing increased public access whilst conserving and enhancing its nature conservation value is a key issue.

## **Potential for GI Initiatives in North Baddesley**

**13.25** The following proposals are identified for North Baddesley:

### **Retaining the settlement character and pattern**

- The avenues and groups of trees within North Baddesley should be retained.
- Development to be sensitive to the landform and consider the prominence of sites in views to the settlement edges, green gaps should maintained between North Baddesley & Valley Park and North Baddesley & Chilworth.

### **Maintaining and creating green corridors - North Baddesley**

- Identify opportunities to link existing ecologically important areas.

### **Maintaining and creating urban greenspaces - North Baddesley**

- Identify opportunities to enhance the existing new greenspaces.

### **Improve access to urban and natural greenspace - North Baddesley**

- To the north and east of the village manage public access to Baddesley Common and Emer Bog.

### **Identify opportunities to create circular routes and links to Valley Park.**

- Explore opportunities to improve public access to the woodlands around North Baddesley.
- To the south and east of the village improve links to the proposed Forest Park.



## 14 Valley Park

- 14.1** Valley Park is a modern residential area developed since the 1980s as part of the planned expansion of Chandler's Ford. It sits in lower lying land to the west of the main channel of the Monks Brook. Smaller tributaries are located to the north west of parts of the settlement. It is framed on its western and northern boundaries by large areas of woodland. There are limited views of the development from higher ground to the south in Chilworth with much of it screened by the existing woodland or new landscape belts.
- 14.2** A key feature of Valley Park is the significant areas of woodland around which the residential areas have been developed. A number of significant woodlands are either entirely or in part located within it offering a contrast to the built development; including Badgers Copse, Titlark Copse, Small Profits, Sky's Wood, Little Copse, Zionshill Copse, Clothiers Copse and Tredgould's Copse. Within the residential areas there are significant individual and groups of trees.
- 14.3** There are significant areas of both formal and informal open space predominantly located to the west of Knightwood Road. Many of them adjoining the woodlands and linked by a network of shared pedestrian/ cycleways.
- 14.4** Outside of the built development the area adjoining it is characterised by blocks of woodland e.g. Great Covert, screening views of it when approached via the local road network which together with the areas of open land create a strong sense of separation.
- 14.5** The provision of GI in Valley Park is both extensive and wide ranging including; the retention of important landscape and ecological features, provision of formal and informal recreation opportunities and a well developed network of traffic-free routes.
- 14.6** The retention of its character owes much to the landscape features of the adjoining countryside combined with the woodland within it. Their retention with appropriate species is seen as important elements in any strategy.
- 14.7** Links to the countryside north of Valley Park are poor, hindered by the Romsey to Eastleigh railway line. The pedestrian/cycleway along Castle Lane links Valley Park to North Baddesley. It also extends to Chilworth and Eastleigh with a link to the railway station at Chandler's Ford. There are opportunities to link to the existing Rights of Way network to Chilworth.

## Potential for GI in Valley Park

### Retaining the settlement character and pattern

**14.8** Development to be sensitive to the landform and consider the prominence of sites in views to the settlement edges. Green gaps should be maintained between Valley Park & North Baddesley, Valley Park & Chilworth and Valley Park and Ampfield.

- The woodland edge of Valley Park should be maintained.

### Maintaining and creating green corridors

- The existing network of green corridors should be retained and enhanced.

### Maintaining and creating urban greenspaces

- The existing network of greenspaces should be retained and enhanced.

### Improving access to urban and natural greenspace

- Identify opportunities to improve access to the countryside to the west and south of Valley Park, based on the existing pedestrian/ cycleway on Castle Lane.

## 15 Chilworth

**15.1** The village of Chilworth has developed from its historic core around the church. Much of the settlement has developed in the 20th century commencing during the inter-war period of 1919-39 and post 1945. The form of development has been a distinctive one not repeated on such a scale anywhere else in the Borough i.e. large houses in large well landscaped plots.

**15.2** The village has been affected by the construction of the M3 and M27 motorways in terms of separating parts of the village and areas of woodland.

**15.3** The development has taken place against a woodland setting with views from outside the village screened by Hut Wood, Home Wood, Buxey Wood, Rownhams Plantation and Chilworth Common. These woodlands are of ecological significance and include areas of ancient and semi-ancient woodland and heathland.

- 15.4** In contrast to the woodlands are large areas of open countryside which offer long distance views to the west and north. In combination they contribute to the setting and character of Chilworth as a distinctive settlement despite its close proximity to Southampton and Eastleigh.
- 15.5** The village is poorly served by formal and informal recreation areas. There is a green in the centre of Chilworth and tennis courts in the Chilworth Old Village close to the church.
- 15.6** Maintaining the character of Chilworth as a settlement relies upon development set in large mature landscaped plots together with the retention of the substantial areas of trees.
- 15.7** The avenues of trees alongside the principal road, the A27, and estate roads provide an attractive setting and should be retained
- 15.8** The existing development, because it is set in a mature landscape and is surrounded by woodland merges into the countryside with no hard edges. The open countryside beyond provides a contrast in landscape which further enhances the setting of Chilworth. A well screened edge to Chilworth should be retained and development in the open areas beyond should be restricted.
- 15.9** The adjoining woodland provides opportunities for informal recreation activities via an enhanced network of rights of way.
- 15.10** Linking the various parts of the village bisected by the motorways and the Bournemouth Road, particularly the woodlands.

## **Potential for GI Initiatives in Chilworth**

- 15.11** The following proposals are identified for Chilworth:

### **Retaining the settlement character and pattern**

- Development to be sensitive to the landform and consider the prominence of sites in views to the settlement edges, green gaps should be maintained between Chilworth & North Baddesley and Chilworth & Valley Park/Chandlers Ford.
- Include development management policies in the new Local Plan to reflect and retain the distinctive settlement character of Chilworth.

### **Maintaining and creating green corridors**

- The existing network of green corridors should be retained and enhanced.
- Retain the tree lined character of the highway network.

### **Maintaining and creating urban greenspaces**

- The existing spaces should be retained and new ones created where opportunities present themselves.

### **Improving access to urban and natural greenspace**

- The potential to improve existing network of rights of way should be explored to provide opportunities for walkers, cyclists and horse riders to enjoy circular routes.
- The proposals to for a Forest Park should be developed.

## **16 Nursling and Rownhams**

- 16.1** The village of Nursling and Rownhams comprises a number of parts. The historic core of Nursling around the church north of the M27 Motorway, the Nursling Estate, a large employment area next to Junction 3 of the motorway, the residential area of Nursling, west of the Romsey Road and Rownhams which lies to the east of the Romsey Road. Hillyfields is a distinct residential area south of Home Covert. Upton is a residential area separated from the rest of the village by the M27 Motorway.
- 16.2** Much of the development is relatively modern having taken place since the 1970s, with a number of large residential estates being constructed together with the employment areas of Nursling Estate and more recently Adanac Park. Within the built up area there are a number of important greenspaces including; St Boniface Park and the village recreation ground. Smaller areas are found within the residential estates including a number of small ponds/lakes. There are important individual and groups of trees and hedgerows located within the village particularly along Horns Drove, Bakers Drove, Redbridge Lane and Brownhill Way.
- 16.3** Home Covert is an important area of woodland next to the village recreation ground and has been designated as a SINC. Adjoining the M27 motorway on its southern boundary, from Junction 3 to Junction 5 is an extensive undeveloped area which provides a green setting for the motorway. Extensive areas of new landscaping in association with the more recent development has taken place which screens it e.g. at Adanac Park, on the boundaries of Nursling Estate and the western end of Nursling Street.
- 16.4** To the west of the Nursling Estate is an extensive area of countryside which comprises the lower reaches of the River Test. It is an important area for wildlife and has been designated as a nature reserve managed by the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Trust.

- 16.5** Nightingale Wood which extends from the A3057 east to Rownhams Lane and Rownhams Plantation provide important landscape features when approaching the village from the north. Public access to both areas is limited.
- 16.6** Although Nursling and Rownhams have experienced considerable development in recent years it has retained a number of important greenspaces and new ones have been created. They have contributed to the area retaining a sense of identity despite the close proximity of the adjoining development in Southampton. The existing rights of way network provides opportunities to gain access to the countryside to the north, east and west. The existing pedestrian cycle route to North Baddesley provides a good route to the countryside north of the village.
- 16.7** The area is experiencing further change in the form of new development at Redbridge Lane with the possibility of further development adjoining Brownhill Way.

## **Potential for GI Initiatives in Nursling and Rownhams**

- 16.8** The following proposals are identified for Nursling and Rownhams:

### **Retaining the settlement character and pattern**

- Maintain the existing landscape features, develop a landscape strategy for the area along the boundary with Southampton (Redbridge Lane, Brownhill Way)

### **Maintaining and creating green corridors**

- The existing green corridors should be maintained and enhanced and where opportunities are available to create new ones.

### **Maintaining and creating urban greenspaces**

- The existing spaces should be maintained.

### **Improving access to urban and natural greenspace**

- Explore opportunities to improve the existing links to the countryside
- Explore opportunities to develop circular routes particularly to the countryside to the west and incorporating the Test Way long distance footpath.
- Links to the proposed Forest Park should be identified and developed as part of that project.

## Proposed Forest Park

- 16.9** The woodlands located either side of the M27 Motorway are significant landscape features, covering approximately 400Ha, and are an important ecological resource in the context of south Hampshire. The Council in its draft Revised Local Plan has proposed that they form a Forest Park which would be managed to enable greater public access and to enhance its ecological importance. The Partnership for Urban South Hampshire (PUSH) has identified the proposal in its Green Infrastructure Implementation Framework (2012) as one of 13 strategic GI projects.
- 16.10** PUSH commissioned the Forestry Commission to undertake a feasibility study. It has identified the key elements of the Forest Park such as parking, encouraging greater public access and managing the woodlands as a timber resource. The Council has prepared an implementation framework for the delivery of the Forest Park<sup>6</sup>. This framework has been the subject of public consultation.

## 17 Ampfield

- 17.1** Ampfield comprises several distinct areas of development. The area around Knapp Lane and the A3090 is its historic centre and is primarily linear development along the highway. It has been designated as a conservation area. The residential area south of Hook Road, adjoining Chandler's Ford, is separated from the core of the village by countryside. It has been developed post 1945 and its character is of large properties framed by a significant number of mature trees. Between it and the older village are two smaller clusters of development around the Potters Heron hotel and Hook Road. To the west is the linear development of the Straight Mile. It is an area laid out in the 1950s and 60s comprising substantial properties screened by areas of woodland and individual trees. They are set back from the road and separated from it by woodland and access roads.
- 17.2** The village is not well served by public open space. The village recreation ground which is the main open space serving the community is located adjoining the A3090. There is public access to Ampfield Wood, Chapel Wood and Hocombe Upper Plantation. Elsewhere there are few formal recreation facilities.

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6 Draft Forest Park Implementation Framework (January 2014)



- 17.3** The countryside separating the parts of the village include a number of areas of woodland which enhance the sense of separation including; Trodds Copse which is an SSSI, Ampfield Wood and Hocombe Upper Plantation. The area is a mix of large areas of woodland with open areas of arable land and rough grassland.
- 17.4** The village sits within a network of rights of way which provide access to the wider countryside including a circular walk, the Keble Way.

## **Potential for GI Network in Ampfield**

- 17.5** The following are identified for Ampfield:

### **Retaining the settlement character and pattern**

- Development to be sensitive to the landform and consider the prominence of sites in views to the settlement edges, a green gap should be maintained between Ampfield and Valley Park.

### **Maintaining and creating green corridors**

- Identify opportunities to link existing areas of ecological importance.

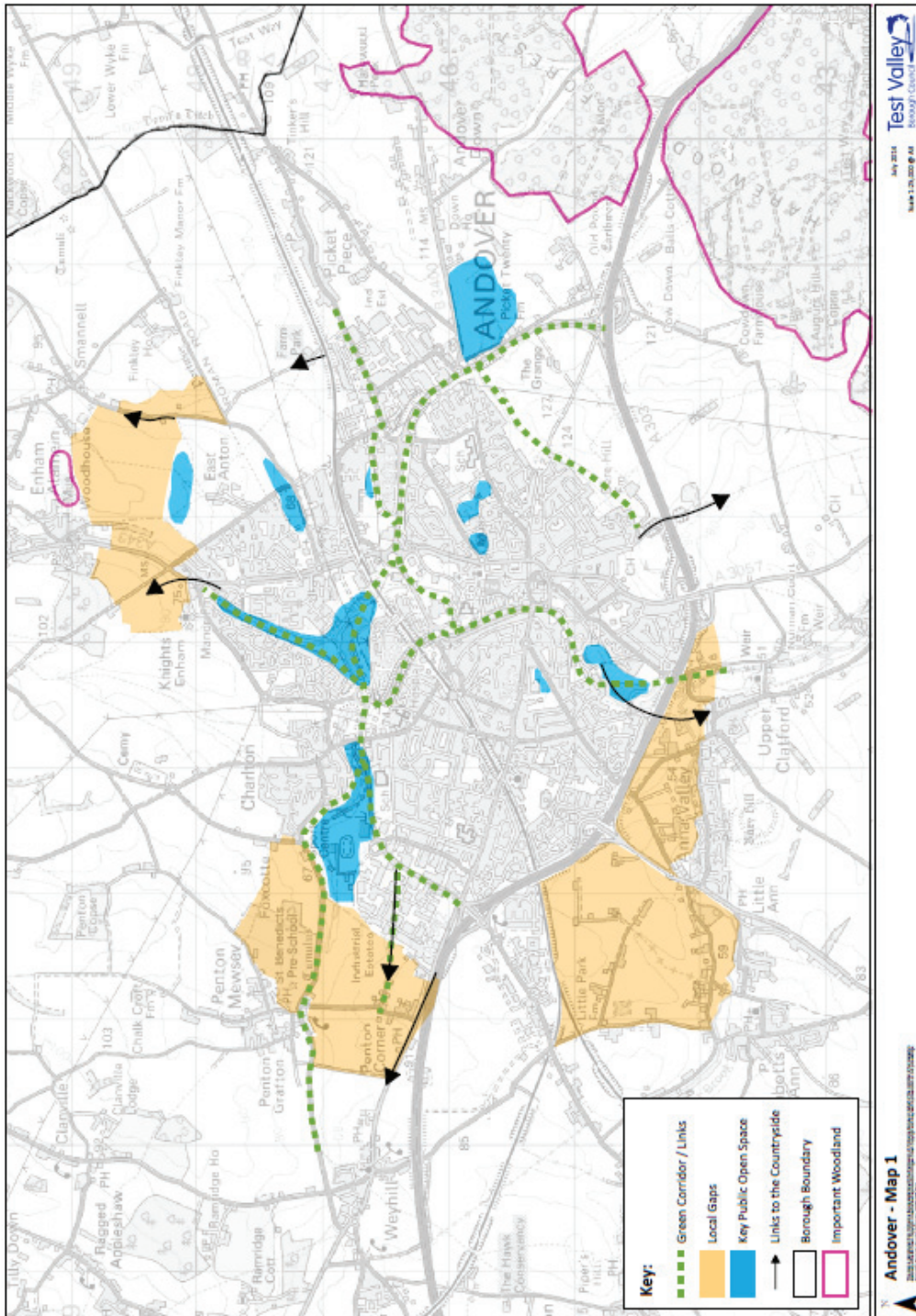
### **Maintaining and creating urban greenspaces**

- Identify opportunities to create new greenspaces.

### **Improving access to urban and natural greenspace**

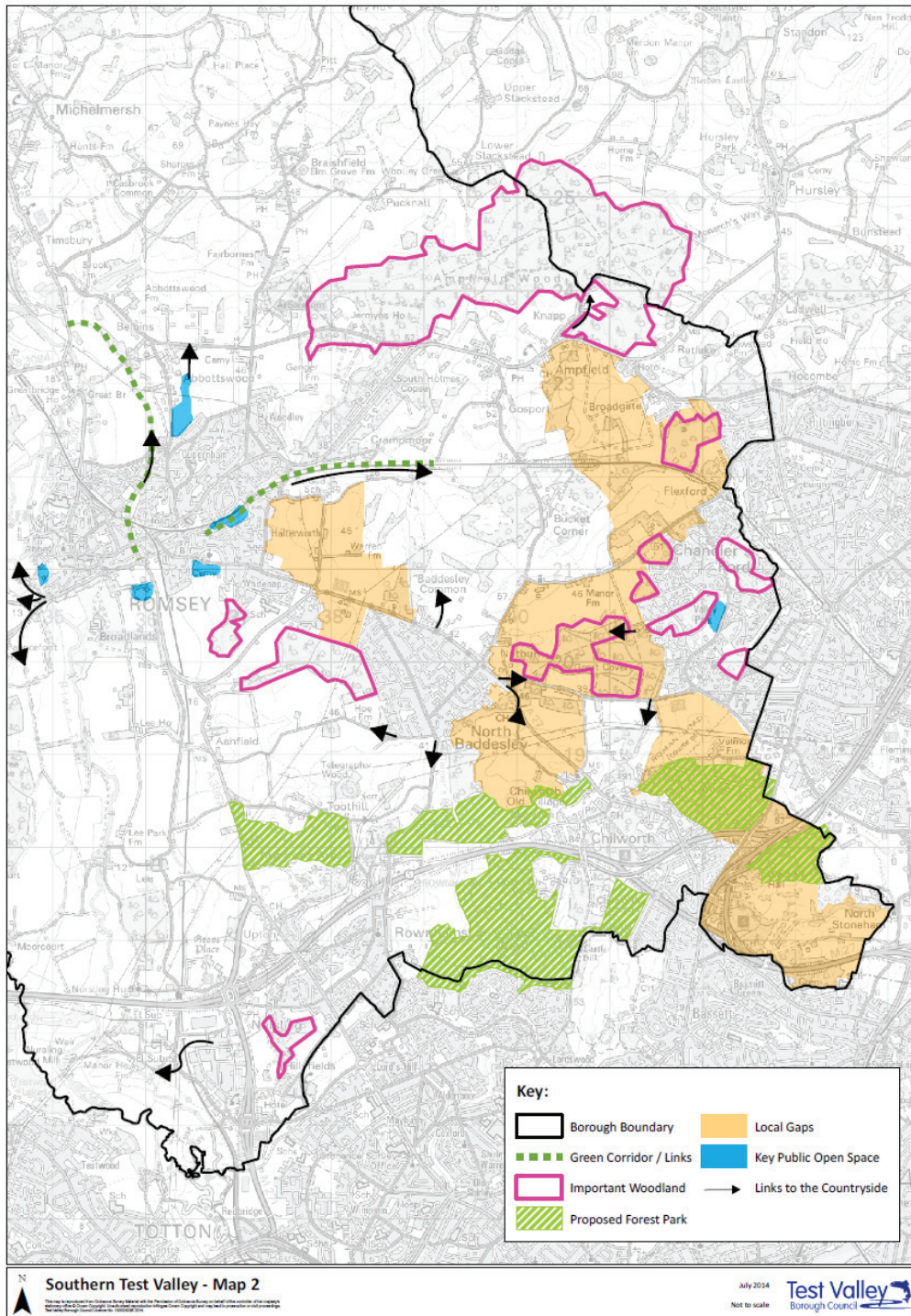
- Identify opportunities to create new links and circular routes from the village and around the parish.

# Map One





# Map Two



# Appendix One

## Strategies and Plans of Key Organisations

The following regional documents inform this Strategy:

PUSH Green Infrastructure Strategy, 2009  
PUSH Green Infrastructure Implementation Framework, 2010  
Test and Itchen Catchment Flood Management Plan, 2008  
County Overview Countryside Access Plan  
Countryside Access Plan for the Test and Itchen 2008 – 2013  
Countryside Access Plan for the Hampshire Downs 2008 – 2013  
Countryside Access Plan for the New Forest & South West Hampshire 2008 - 2013  
The Biodiversity Action Plan for Hampshire, July 2000  
The North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan 2009-2014  
New Forest National Park Management Plan 2010-2015

*Note: The HCC Countryside Access Plans review commences in 2014.*

## Test Valley Borough Council Strategies and Plans

The following local documents inform this Strategy:

Green Space Strategy for Test Valley 2007-2017  
Landscape Character Assessment, June 2004  
River Anton Enhancement Strategy 2008-2013  
The Biodiversity Action Plan for Test Valley, May 2008  
The Andover Town Access Plan, April 2009  
The Test Valley Access Plan, June 2010  
The Romsey Town Access Plan, April 2011

## Community Policy Documents

The following Village Design Statements have been adopted:

Abbots Ann, April 2000  
Ampfield, April 2003  
Amport, April 2008  
Braishfield, April 2002  
Broughton, April 2004  
Chilbolton, January 2003  
Chilworth, February 2006  
Enham Alamein, January 2009

Goodworth Clatford, April 2000  
Longparish, April 2003  
Longstock, June 2010  
Michelmersh & Timsbury, July 2001  
Monxton, May 2004  
Stockbridge, April 2003  
The Pentons, April 2000  
The Wallops, February 2004  
Thrupton, February 2006  
Upper Clatford & Anna Valley, February 2002  
Vernham Dean, January 2003  
Wellow, September 2010  
West Dean, February 2010

The following Town Design Statements have been adopted:

Romsey, January 2008

The following Parish Plans have been endorsed by the Community Partnership Board:

Broughton, 2010  
Houghton & Bossington, 2008  
King's Somborne, 2005  
Longparish 2005  
Romsey Market Town Health Check, 2008  
Sherfield English, 2008  
Wellow, 2010

The following Parish Plans have been completed but not yet endorsed by the Community Partnership Board:

Ampfield, 2007  
Barton Stacey, 2007





## **Planning Policy and Transport Service**

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