

Borough Councillor Report

Cllr Maureen Flood and Cllr Susanne Hasselmann

October 2025

Local Government Reorganisation – Test Valley Borough Council submits its proposal to Government

On 24th September Test Valley Borough Council held an extraordinary Council meeting in Romsey to debate and agree the preferred option for Local Government Reorganisation to be submitted to Government by 26th September 2025.

Councillors considered a joint proposal drafted by 12 of the 15 councils in Hampshire, titled 'Close enough to be local, big enough to stay strong'. It puts forward the case to government, supported by extensive evidence, analysis and research, to create four new mainland authorities for the area grouped around the major centres of Southampton, Portsmouth, Winchester and Basingstoke. The Isle of Wight would remain its own island unitary authority.

It has been produced in response to the government's decision to replace the current system of councils in Hampshire - including Hampshire County Council, the 11 district and borough councils and the existing unitary councils - with new unitary councils each covering a population of approximately 500,000.

All three proposed options in the document meet the government's criteria for reorganisation, and financial analysis shows that each would deliver more than £63 million in recurring annual savings, through streamlined services, reduced duplication, and more efficient governance.

In line with the preferred option selected by local residents, TVBC has thrown its weight behind option one, which would see it join with the three largely rural authorities in mid-Hampshire, including the New Forest, Winchester and East Hampshire.

Funding helps Citizens Advice reach thousands across the borough

Citizens Advice Test Valley has been awarded the first of three annual instalments of more than £301,000 per year for the next three years through Test Valley Borough Council's Revenue Grants Scheme, enabling the charity to continue delivering essential advice and support services to thousands of residents.

The organisation has supported almost 6,000 people in the past year alone, with outcomes valued at £1.1 million - thanks in part to this vital funding from the borough council.

Planning consent granted for riverside park transformation in Andover

Following a Northern Area Planning Committee meeting on Tuesday 23 September, planning permission has been granted for the new riverside park near Western Avenue, paving the way for the transformation of a hidden stretch of the River Anton and turning it into a lively, accessible and ecologically rich public space.

The designs include a central square, viewing platform, innovative play elements, and areas for events and food stalls - all set within a beautifully landscaped environment that showcases Andover's picturesque watercourse and rich history. The designs were shaped with help from representatives in the local community.

Construction is expected to begin in late 2026, with further opportunities for community involvement throughout the detailed design and delivery phases.

For more information please visit www.thinkandovertowncentre.co.uk/western-avenue-latest-news.

Test Valley Community Resilience Forum - 25 October

The next meeting of the Test Valley Community Resilience Forum will be taking place on 25 October at King's Somborne Village Hall.

Arrival and networking breakfast will be at 9.45am, with the session looking to begin at 10am.

Taking place at King's Somborne Village Hall, community representatives are invited to learn and engage in building and strengthening their local resilience. You'll hear inspiring stories from communities across Test Valley, explore practical approaches, and take away new ideas to support your own initiatives.

TVBC will be running a series of interactive workshops, developed by community representatives, covering key topics such as:

- Volunteering & Engagement – Facilitated by Peter Storey, King's Somborne and the TVBC Community team
- Funding Opportunities - Facilitated by SSEN and TVBC
- Understanding Risks & Community Assets – Facilitated by Cllr Phil Lashbrook, Chris Patey, Chilworth, Jenney Semmens, Lockerley and TVBC

The session will aim to end by 12pm

Please RSVP to communityresilience@testvalley.gov.uk to attend the session.

Remember Food Waste collections are starting in mid October

If you are in doubt when your first food waste collection takes place, you can use the following link and enter your postcode:

<https://www.testvalley.gov.uk/wasteandrecycling/when-are-my-bins-collected>

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