

Annual Report TVBC North Baddesley 2018/19

In Autumn 2018 the council ran “Be a Councillor” sessions in Romsey & Andover. The aim was to encourage people to get involved with local government and ultimately to stand for election on the Borough Council. It explained the role of a Councillor’s work in the community.

I as leader of the Liberal Democrats at TVBC and the majority group leader introduced the sessions and talked to participants.

The Corporate plan 2019 -2023 , Growing our Potential – was approved at the April 2019 Council. The Corporate Plan outlines the Council’s vision and priorities, it sets direction and provides focus for all activities and services, informing decision making and the allocation of resources across the council. The council have engaged with over 2000 people to gain understanding of what is most important to them. Key issues were :

- the vitality of our town centres,
- the ability to access a decent home,
- a thriving economy
- the environment.

The Local Plan

Councillors are already working with officers on policies for the next Local Plan 2029 to 2036. We are setting policies that shape how the development for the future will fit into our existing communities and safeguard the things we value.

South of Romsey Town Centre

Romsey Future a partnership of Councillors, stakeholders and interested organisations have held a public consultation on the creation of a masterplan for the area south of the town centre, which includes the bus station and Crosfield Hall site.

The consultation was with residents, businesses and community groups on their ambitions and ideas for the area and finished in October 2018. The feedback will be used to help create a supplementary planning document (SPD) which will set out the community's aspirations for the area for future developers. The Romsey Future partnership hopes to complete the SPD by February 2020.

Boundary changes

The boundary commission, instructed by government, set new boundaries in Test Valley. Boundaries are set by the number of residents being approximately equal for each councillor to represent. So new development of houses will effect changes.

200 homes have been moved from the Valley Park ward into the North Baddesley ward. These homes, off Castle Lane, were in the original ward of North Baddesley, based on the old boundaries, as was a large area of Valley Park. But as more and more housing was built in the area it was split into a separate ward – Valley Park, a decision, at the time, the ward members of North Baddesley did not agree with.

Changes to planning committees

A Planning Advisory Service Review of TVBC planning System took place in October 2018. They said we were atypical of other councils. We have a Southern Area Planning committee and a Northern Area planning committee. We are a long borough along the Test river !

All councillors serve on one of the planning committees depending on the wards they represent. We also have a Planning Control committee, of councillors from both the southern and northern area committees. This looks again, at any application which has gone against the report recommendation and the council's policies, and therefore may put the council at risk of costs against them if the application goes to appeal.

The suggestion for change was quite controversial. Many councillors felt a complete assessment of the Planning Advisory Service report had not taken place and that the decision made by, just 7 councillors, the cabinet, was premature.

The Planning Control Committee has been abolished and the two area committees Southern and Northern will have 13 members only. This leaves 17 councillors not on the decision making planning committees. A disadvantage, especially to new councillors. There will be a review before April 2020. But, It is rare that change in any organisations is reversed !

New 4 year term of Test Valley Borough Council

May 2nd 2019 saw the start of new term of Test Valley Borough Council. The Boundary Commission changes required the borough to go down from 48 to 43 Councillors. Several councillors stood down, 7 conservatives and 4 Liberal Democrats including Steve Cosier and Ann Tupper from the North Baddesley Ward.

I want to pay tribute to the immense input Steve and Ann have played in representing North Baddesley. Steve was elected in 1994, at 25 the youngest councillor on TVBC. His knowledge of the area from 3 generations of his family living in North Baddesley equipped him with a practical and emotional knowledge of the people he represented. And he did, for 24 years. A passionate and personable councillor, North Baddesley will miss his input, as will I, as a valued colleague who made councillor work and meetings more enjoyable with his lively and pertinent debate and a wicked sense of humour.

Ann Tupper was elected in 2003 and has committed 16 years to representing the area in which she lives, and being the voice of the local people, striving to improve and safeguard our area. Our heartfelt thanks go to her for her tireless efforts, until her personal family situation made it impossible for her to continue.

That means we have new representation for North Baddesley. Simon Cross and Alan Warnes. Both will bring fresh ideas and enthusiasm to the role! I have complete confidence that these two representatives for North Baddesley will prove an excellent choice for the residents. Finally, it remains only for me to thank all those residents who supported us in the May election and ensure everyone, of our commitment as a team to do our best for the people of North Baddesley.

Cllr Celia Dowden

Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group at Test Valley Borough Council

Ward Member for North Baddesley