



News Update

June 2006

Test Valley Partnership held a very successful AGM on Thursday 15th June at The Hillier Arboretum. The meeting was attended by over 60 representatives from many sectors of the community.

1. Chair's Report

Barbara North, Chair of the Partnership welcomed those present before giving a report on some of the main activities of the past year. She talked about the Partnership's growing maturity and willingness to get to grips with difficult issues. In the past year the Partnership has used its collective voice to respond to a number of important consultations including the North and East Andover School Places Review and the South East Plan and on the Local Strategic Partnerships – Shaping their Future paper.

Further Government guidance is awaited in the light of this last consultation which will shape the future of local strategic partnerships (LSPs) and new Sustainable Community Strategies. It is likely to be available by the end of the summer

The annual health-check event had been held in mid-May. Discussion had concentrated on two important areas of work necessary to take the Partnership forward. The first is that the Community Plan, which was intended to have a life of five years, is now generally acknowledged to be in need of revision. Detailed proposals are to be drawn up to manage this process. Secondly, it was agreed that the Partnership needs to revisit its governance arrangements to ensure that it is fit for purpose.

Barbara acknowledged the very high level of cooperation and willingness to work together that exists in the Test Valley Partnership and thanked everyone for their support

2. Election of Chair and Vice-Chair

Barbara North and Janet Blann were returned unopposed to the posts of Chair and Vice-Chair respectively, for the coming year.

3. What difference does the Partnership Make?

The main business of the evening set out to address this frequently asked question. Three members of the Partnership Board gave their personal perspectives on what the Partnership meant for them and their organisations.

Anne Wakefield from Hampshire Constabulary confessed to some initial cynicism at the prospect of having to attend yet more meetings when she was invited to join Test Valley Partnership. Her view quickly changed when she realised not only how her 'day job' was enhanced, but also how partnership working had become a core part of her day job. She explained that anti-social behaviour, for example, was not just an issue for the police. To address it effectively takes partnership working with parents, with the Youth Service, with Youth Offending teams and with schools etc. and the Partnership provides a framework to enable a joined-up approach to finding solutions. Anne also spoke of the trust that is engendered by working in close partnership with others and the importance of networking.

Bob Coates, from Mid-Hants Primary Care Trust, spoke about the growing importance of community leadership and the role that local strategic partnerships can play in this

developing agenda. He described the Turnaround Project as 'the greatest public health initiative in Mid Hampshire', saying that the Partnership had highlighted the needs of a relatively deprived community in a way that encouraged organisations to work together with the community to find solutions.

Jan Lefley from Romsey Community School contrasted her experience with the Test Valley Partnership, which she thought was very inclusive and helped people to feel connected, with that of another LSP in a previous post. She described difficulties being experienced in Romsey with a small group of young people who are being a persistent nuisance. Through the connections made in the Partnership, she was able to contact other partners, some of whom would not necessarily have worked together with the school to address an issue such as this.

Jan also emphasised the importance of family learning which has had a huge impact on the quality of life for many individuals and families. 40% of all family learning in Hampshire takes place in Test Valley, which also has the two largest centres for family learning in the county.

4. Local Delivery

The next three speakers illustrated the difference that Test Valley Partnership makes in terms of delivery at a local level.

Verna Kempthorne explained her role as Health Policy Manager which is a joint appointment between TVBC and two Primary Care Trusts. Part of her remit is to develop a programme to address the inequalities in health and well-being in the Borough.

Verna talked about the work of the Health and Well-Being Group in reducing ill health in the over 60s. As an example she referred to the recent Fuel Poverty Forum conference targeting front line workers with a view to increasing awareness of the health consequences for older people of fuel poverty. The group has also supported the Healthwalks Scheme, an initiative to promote an increase in physical activity levels and social inclusion.

Verna then described the early difficulties encountered in a project to deliver fruit and vegetables to schools at a reasonable cost to encourage healthier eating, particularly focusing on less well-off families. Problems arose because the schools it was intended to target did not have Parent Teachers Associations (PTAs), and they were needed to distribute the food. Using the links available through the action groups, Malcolm Crabtree of Leckford Estate was approached and agreed to help.

Malcolm explained that the reason for his initial involvement with the Economic Development Group was because of his interest in planning matters. When the co-ordinator of the group asked him if he could use his Waitrose connections to further the healthy eating cause of the Health and Wellbeing Action Group, Malcolm had agreed to help. Through this co-operative working the Eat to Live Project was born. Malcolm described how Waitrose had agreed to provide the fruit and vegetables necessary to sustain the project as part of its policy for charitable activity .

Finally in this part of the meeting, Jean Lannie gave an account of how the Eat to Live project is continuing to develop. She expressed her appreciation to Malcolm and to Waitrose for their continuing support. Jean talked about the success of Andover Family Learning and how she had built on this to promote healthy eating. She had a colourful market stall constructed which is managed by one of her workers and supported by a number of volunteers. She described how parents and children who attend the Family Learning 'Coffee Pot' sessions, take home a bag of vegetables and fruit at reasonable cost. Recipes and information about the food and how to prepare it are all part of the learning and healthy eating experience. This is proving extremely popular with parents

and children alike. There is much interest in the project and it is hoped to extend it across Test Valley. Jean stressed that without partnership working this successful project would not have got off the ground.

4. The Turnaround Project

Janet Blann summarised the background to the project and reported on progress. Three areas of relative deprivation in Test Valley had been identified - St Mary's Ward and Alamein Ward in Andover and the Abbey Ward in Romsey. The Partnership agreed that extra focus and resources should be directed to those in most need in Test Valley, and it was decided to make a start in the Alamein Ward. John Spens of Testway Housing agreed to take the lead on this priority. A small implementation group was formed and a thorough consultation with the community and with service providers was carried out in the form of a Participatory Needs Assessment (PNA). This was quite an undertaking for such a small group in a large geographical area and out of necessity the group was able to concentrate on one area only, King Arthur's Way. A report was produced following the consultation and a number of recommendations drawn up.

Janet briefly described how the project was progressing. A children's playground is being re-instated and is due for completion before the school summer holiday begins. King Arthur's Hall is currently undergoing renovation and redecoration. Two very successful network lunches have taken place at The Entertainer Public House in the heart of the estate. This has brought together professionals who deliver services in the area to keep them informed of developments due to take place in their area of work. Janet also referred to the emphasis placed on community engagement and involvement. A group of young mothers attended the latest network meeting and the hall management group are on board.

Steve Benson, the new Managing Director of Testway Housing, who will also succeed John Spens as Chair of the Project Steering Group, spoke about the next stage which is likely to be the appointment of a co-ordinator to lead the project at community level. Discussions are underway with the council to secure the lease of a vacant shop which occupies a central position on the estate. There are many possible uses which will both aid the project and benefit the community.

5. Conclusion

In her summing up Barbara North thanked the speakers for their contributions and for the excellent examples they had provided of the benefits to be gained from partners working together, aligning their priorities and making the best use of the resources each had available. She drew attention to the more detailed account of partnership activity contained in the half-term report.