



Joint Areas of Focus

2011 - 2013



Introduction

The Test Valley Partnership's Joint Areas of Focus, (JAFs), describe the key issues in the Borough that require a partnership-led response. The JAFs underpin the aims contained within the Community Plan, and provide the mechanism for organisations working locally to come together and develop joint approaches.

During 2010 the context for partnership working changed significantly. With reforms in the way public services are to be delivered, and with reductions in public funding, organisations are having to review how services are delivered locally and look for opportunities to work differently.

As a result, partnership working is more important than ever as it can enable organisations to respond to the needs within our communities in a more co-ordinated and organised way. Through sharing skills and combining resources where appropriate, partners will be able to focus on addressing the most important things in Test Valley which will continue to improve the quality of life for our communities whilst also ensuring it is delivered in the most efficient way.

In developing the Joint Areas of Focus, partners in Test Valley have identified the following ways of working as core to the work of the Test Valley Partnership. These are:

- To be intelligence led when planning projects or activities to make sure they are targeted appropriately
- To be co-ordinated in our response to local needs to reduce duplication and use resources more effectively
- To develop creative solutions in partnership with our communities so that they are relevant and mean something to local people

How will we know if we are making a difference?

The Joint Areas of Focus must be able to demonstrate that they are not only improving the quality of life for residents in the Borough, but that they are also a way in which partners can work more efficiently.

We will measure the success of our approach through three main outcomes which each of the JAFs will contribute towards. These are:

As a result of our JAFs we will:

- Have a positive impact on individuals or communities within Test Valley
- See communities taking more of a lead on tackling issues that are important to them
- Be able to demonstrate that working together through the JAFs provides the most efficient and/or cost effective way in which to address the issue

The Joint Areas of Focus 2011 - 2013

Using a range of evidence which has included a review of key facts, statistical data and feedback from local people, four JAFs have been identified which will form the basis for future partnership working across Test Valley. This is a significant reduction from the original fourteen JAFs and this reflects the need for there to be a clear focus for partners which is evidence-led during times of reduced levels of public spending.

- JAF 1: Increasing the capacity of our communities to take a lead on and resolve issues that are important to them
- JAF 2: Tackling the root causes and effects of Anti Social behaviour and Alcohol misuse
- JAF 3: Tackling Health Inequalities in a targeted way to support independent living and active communities
- JAF 4: Sustaining the learning and skills environment within Test Valley where people can achieve their potential

JAF 1: Increasing the capacity of our communities to take a lead on and resolve issues that are important to them

Description of the JAF: Test Valley consists of a number of different and varied communities; many of which thrive. There are however, communities where support is needed in order to develop the capacity for them to be able to tackle and resolve issues that are important to them.

Often solutions to issues such as access to services, supporting vulnerable members of the community, different perceptions within communities and issues of anti social behaviour are all things that local people, with the right support, can take a lead on resolving within the context of their community. Through this joint area of focus we will seek to work in a more co-ordinated and targeted way within communities, supporting them to develop the techniques and capacity to take forward local issues themselves.

Evidence base: Local people have told us that having a sense of community gives them the opportunity to get to know others and they tend to view their local area as the village or town that they live. They have also told us that community events are important to them and that being able to access local amenities, services and activities are all important aspects in enabling people to live independently.

A significant number of people in the Borough would have the potential to become volunteers in some form. In Test Valley, there are over 550 community groups, some providing important support, advice and services and others covering a wide range of activities and interests for residents to access, ranging from sports clubs, amateur dramatics, crafts, socials clubs, youth clubs etc.

What are we going to do?

As partners working locally we will.....

Have a positive impact on individuals or communities within Test Valley: by supporting local communities to plan and prioritise the things that are most important to them. We will do this by developing more locally focused profiles of their area which will provide an evidence base for them to work from. Success in this area will be recognised through evidence of more parish planning activity and greater involvement of members of the community in setting out what's important to them.

See communities taking more of a lead on tackling issues that are important to them: by supporting them to develop ideas for how they can take forward their priorities locally through techniques such as parish planning and community conversations. Doing this should result in increases in local volunteering within communities, greater evidence of communities resolving issues locally with partners and in our new neighbourhoods a growing sense of community being developed amongst the new residents.

Be able to demonstrate that working in this way is the most efficient and/or cost effective way in which to address this issue: by responding to the needs identified by local communities in a more co-ordinated way partners can compliment the work of each other and avoid duplication. We will do this by building on the lessons learnt through the recent community conversation project and by further embedding the customer insight led approach within our work as a partnership.

JAF 2: Tackling the root causes and effects of Anti Social behaviour and Alcohol misuse

Description of the JAF: Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) is a concern for local people, however, this does not mean that everyone is affected by it and, when they are, it is about delivering a successful resolution. Alcohol misuse is one of the key causes of ASB as well as the negative affect it can have in local communities and on people's health.

Often the causes of ASB and alcohol misuse relate to a number of wider issues so the required response should be about tackling the root causes in a targeted way. This involves looking at hotspot areas, working with specific groups and tackling perceptions within communities. Where there are issues, a partnership response is required in addition to preventative work that partners can undertake with local communities or particular key groups such as offenders, victims or at risk groups.

Evidence base: In 2010, there was a 13% reduction in levels of Anti-social behaviour in Test Valley in comparison with the same period in the previous year. In particular, there had been an 11% decrease in ASB incidents within Andover although the wards of Alamein and St Mary's account for 50% of all rowdy and inconsiderate incidents in Andover and 47% of all ASB incidents. In Romsey, was a 20% decrease in ASB. The main period of increase for ASB incidents is March through to August indicating there is a seasonal link.

Local people told us that they are worried about the impact anti-social behaviour can have on their family and local area however, very few are directly affected by actual incidents of ASB. They also recognised the relationship between ASB and excessive drinking particularly within the Town centres in evenings and weekends and amongst young people.

What are we going to do?

As partners working locally we will.....

Have a positive impact on individuals or communities within Test Valley: by demonstrating through recorded crime data and qualitative data sets, that the work of the partnership is having a positive impact on tackling instances of ASB when they occur in Test Valley. Linking education and awareness work into the current range of activities, we hope to see a positive impact on the behaviour and health and wellbeing of our target audience group. Working with the communities affected, we will enable them to have ownership of not just the problem, but the solution. Case management of offenders and early identification of problems will also form a key part to tackling instances of ASB and alcohol misuse when they occur.

See communities taking more of a lead on tackling issues that are important to them: by working with communities to develop locally provided youth provision and to ensure that projects are made sustainable and are community led. Through partnership working, the intention is to develop projects that tackle the root causes of ASB and alcohol misuse through a variety of diversionary activities such as physical activity and arts based projects. The projects will be needs led and they will aim to address a variety of issues. Most importantly, they will involve local volunteers and clubs, not only to achieve sustainability but as a mechanism to also build positive links across the community.

Be able to demonstrate that working in this way is the most efficient and/or cost effective way in which to address this issue: by addressing the impact of ASB and alcohol misuse within the context of supporting local communities to take more of a lead, will enable partners to share resources to support local providers of youth and diversionary projects to deliver more sustainable projects. Through the continued roll out of Myths and Misconceptions, schools and youth projects will start to deliver targeted awareness sessions on a range of issues such as ASB, alcohol misuse, teenage pregnancy and peer pressure.

We will also be more consistent in the messages we give to local communities in order to tackle negative perceptions, tolerance and fear of crime. Working in this way will enable us to be more targeted and result in partners being able to direct resources in the most appropriate and cost effective way.

JAF 3: Tackling Health Inequalities in a targeted way to support independent living and active communities

Description of the JAF: Health inequalities are influenced by a number of factors – social, cultural, environmental, economic and psychological. Often they illustrate issues related to deprivation, vulnerability and isolation. Addressing health inequalities within the context of the communities that people live in or are a part of is crucial to tackling the issue.

In Test Valley there are differences in health between some of our communities and, in particular, between our most affluent and most deprived wards. Addressing this issue is about responding to some of the root causes and in partnership with local communities tackling issues such as childhood obesity, teenage pregnancy, low levels of physical activity and mental health problems. Supporting people to live more independently is a key outcome for both communities and service providers. Part of the solution lies in encouraging communities to take on a greater role and for service providers to be more co-ordinated in how their services can be accessed.

Evidence base: Local people have told us that healthy lifestyles are important to them as they lead to a better quality of life.

Overall the health of people in Test Valley is generally better than the England average with life expectancy high for both men and women. However, there are inequalities in health between areas of Test Valley and health improvement initiatives should therefore be targeted towards areas such as the north east of Andover including Alamein, parts of Abbey ward in Romsey and parts of North Baddesley.

Over the last 10 years, rates of death from all causes and of early deaths from cancer, heart disease and strokes have fallen and are lower than the England averages. Test Valley has the 5th highest prevalence of obesity in Year 7 and between 2006/7 and 2007/8 the local prevalence of obesity increased from 14.8% to 15.5%. Teenage pregnancy continues to be an issue of concern that needs to be tackled especially given its proven links to social isolation and lower levels of educational attainment. Addressing the needs of older people within communities is important with high admission rates for hip fractures in the south of the Borough and with the increasing prevalence of dementia.

What are we going to do?

As partners working locally we will.....

Have a positive impact on individuals or communities within Test Valley: by continuing to develop targeted activities with our local communities that address issues of healthy lifestyles where evidence indicates that support is needed. To do this, we will build upon the success of healthy lifestyle projects within schools and communities through programmes such as Team Fitness, Walking Challenge and Active lifestyles.

Mental health and support for older people within communities is an area for renewed focus. We will therefore seek to build upon our work with older/vulnerable members of the community working closely with GP's and the locality health forums in developing more community based programmes of support for these groups.

See communities taking more of a lead on tackling issues that are important to them: by supporting communities in planning and prioritising their own needs and providing them with the most accurate/relevant information possible in regards local health issues. Building on the outcomes from the Community Conversations project we will support communities who were part of the project in developing local solutions for the issues they identified that affect older/more vulnerable members of the community.

Poor sexual health, alcohol misuse, anti-social behaviour and low levels of educational attainment continue to be a complex set of issues that can affect some of our young people within the Borough. Through the Myths and Misconceptions project, schools and youth settings will build on the foundations of the project from 2010 and begin to deliver the toolkit themselves to students across Test Valley. Alongside this, partners will continue to support the development of peer-led opportunities so that key messages around health issues can be delivered by people for whom the target audience can relate to.

Be able to demonstrate that working in this way is the most efficient and/or cost effective way to address the issue: by supporting communities to plan and prioritise local needs, partners will be able to target projects and activities which relate to health in a more focused way.

Following the Community Conversations project in early 2011 which focused on older/vulnerable people within communities, partners will come together and review the findings and explore opportunities for how services can be delivered in a more co-ordinated and efficient way for this customer group. By developing pilot projects in this area, partners aim to be able to demonstrate more effective service delivery at a lower cost.

Through the continued roll out of the Myths and Misconceptions project, the emphasis of the project will now change to one where schools and young people alike will begin to deliver the key messages with support from partners. As capacity is developed within local organisations and peer groups, the project will become sustainable reducing the need for large-scale one off projects which have been delivered in the past.

JAF 4: Sustaining the learning and skills environment within Test Valley where people can achieve their potential.

There are clear links between educational attainment and its impact on wider social outcomes such as health, crime, economy and thriving communities. Linked with this is the need to address low levels of aspiration and confidence within some of our communities and supporting people to access the opportunities that exist. For children and young people it is about sustaining and taking forward recent work to improve attainment across targeted areas within the Borough. For adults and communities, it is about consolidating and sustaining the successful approach to skill development that Test Valley has developed over recent years in regards to adult and community learning.

Following the recession in 2008, local people have prioritised the economy and being able to access jobs is important to them. To respond to this, partners need to support the development of the local economy to ensure it remains competitive by supporting the development of a workforce both now and in the future that has a good variety of skills to meet the needs of future employers.

Evidence: Overall Test Valley has high levels of achievement across its secondary schools and in 2009 schools across Andover saw significant levels of improvement in GCSE's compared to previous years.

Approximately 23% of the Borough's population has no qualifications with the highest concentration being in the most deprived wards of Alamein and St Mary's in Andover. This is identified as a weakness in the future economic development of the town, as evidence indicates that the Andover area is a self contained economy where a large proportion of people both live and work. Southern Test Valley, along with the rural areas, benefits from a highly qualified population supporting the high end business parks based within the south of the Borough and has higher rates of out commuting. Skill levels in Valley Park, Ampfield and Braishfield have the largest percentage of people with qualifications at level 4/5.

Adult and community learning in Test Valley is very strong and is a key way in which to address the development of skills locally whilst also building aspirations within communities. Currently two-thirds of all adult learning in Hampshire takes place in Test Valley with 31% (5,000 out of 16,000) of adult learners being in the Borough. With the current financial pressures, partners will need to consolidate their approach and build on the strong ethos of partnership working that exists in this area.

What are we going to do?

As partners working locally we will...

Have a positive impact on individuals or communities within Test Valley: by supporting communities to develop opportunities in partnership with agencies whereby people can continue to develop their skills and where issues associated with low levels of aspiration are also addressed appropriately through projects such as Turnaround. This will be achieved by building on the strong foundations of family and community learning in Test Valley and ensuring that future programs continue to reflect the skills needs of the Borough.

Through targeted schemes like Andover Graduation there will be an opportunity to raise the aspirations of young people within some of our targeted communities. Programs such as the Business of Learning conference and the new “111 in 2011” apprenticeship scheme will contribute to sustaining the learning and skills environment within Test Valley and ensuring a skill mix that reflects local employment needs are developed.

See communities taking more of a lead on tackling issues that are important to them: by supporting communities to plan and prioritise their own needs will identify issues in regards learning and skills that can then be addressed both formally through provision, but also informally through community-led activities. We will continue to develop our approach based on past successes such as the Job Clubs and recognising the role volunteering can play in helping people to develop their skills.

Be able to demonstrate that working in this way is the most efficient and/or cost effective way to address the issue: by building on the strong partnership foundations in this area and looking for new and efficient ways in which learning and skills programmes can be sustained within a climate of reduced funding. In particular partners around the Community Learning group will continue to develop a joint approach and a future model whereby adult and community learning can be delivered in the most effective and efficient way across the Borough.