



Your Test Valley

Community Development Action Plan

2009 - 2011



Test Valley
PARTNERSHIP

About Test Valley

Test Valley is a mainly rural borough covering 628 square kms (243 square miles) of the western side of Hampshire. The borough has high quality natural and built environments, with a number of conservation areas, listed buildings and areas covered by designations, such as the New Forest National Park, and the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding national Beauty (AONB).

In 2006 the population of the borough was 112,739 and this is projected to increase by around 7.1% by 2026. The increase in growth will not be uniform across Test Valley and Alamein ward will experience the highest % increase, with a predicted 39.2% growth from 2007-2013 (HCC small area population forecasts).

Some 64% of the total population in Test Valley live in urban wards within the two market towns of Romsey in the south and Andover in the north. The rest of the population live in the smaller rural settlements scattered across the borough (Census 2001).

Test Valley is not a deprived area. The Combined Indices of Multiple Deprivation in 2007 show that 19 of the 24 wards in Test Valley, are among the 25% least deprived in the country. However the Borough does contain some pockets of relative deprivation, and one ward is among the 50% most deprived wards in the country.

Across Test Valley, a relatively high % of the population in Test Valley are employed or self employed and a relatively low % are unemployed, in comparison with England and the South East. However there are some differences in economic activity. For instance in Alamein and St Mary's there is a high percentage of people who are unemployed in comparison to the rest of Test Valley and the South East, and in Abbey ward there is a very high percentage of people who are retired in comparison to local, regional and national averages.

Average house prices are higher than those nationally and regionally. Crime rates in Test Valley are amongst the lowest in the country.

Communities in Test Valley

Test Valley has a diverse range of local communities. Some are long established and have a strong sense of community with active community leaders. Others are less developed. A significant amount of community and voluntary activity already takes place, but there is a need to improve co-ordination to meet the needs of diverse communities in both urban and rural areas.

Most residents enjoy a wide range of opportunities and strong social networks reflecting the relative affluence that is characteristic of the borough as a whole. However, there are pockets of deprivation where quality of life is less satisfactory and opportunities are more limited, with a need for greater support to encourage community leaders and to promote community development.

Test Valley is becoming more culturally diverse, with parts of the borough seeing a significant increase in the number of migrant workers from Eastern Europe. Welcoming new residents and ensuring they are fully integrated into the community presents a new and important challenge. In addition, the population of Test Valley is set to grow significantly with government requirements for an extra 8,920 homes by 2026. In the short to medium term, three new neighbourhoods will be built as extensions to Andover and Romsey providing around 4,500 new homes. Planning for these major development areas will be challenging, and ensuring new residents feel part of our existing towns and settlements, is crucial. However the opportunities these new neighbourhoods present for benefits for local communities are significant, with new community facilities and buildings, open space, play areas, sports pitches, transport and highway improvements

Test Valley is fortunate in having a diverse range of residents, including a considerable military presence, and, Enham and other charities providing accommodation and support for a significant number of people living with disabilities. Being inclusive, ensuring **all residents** have access to services and facilities and a sense of “belonging” to their community, will result in the development of a happier and more sustainable society.

The Test Valley Partnership

The Test Valley Partnership was formed in April 2002 and has developed in line with Government guidance. It brings together a wide range of groups and organisations drawn from the statutory, voluntary, community and private sectors, sharing the single aim of working together to improve quality of life for the people of Test Valley. The Partnership has agreed the following statement of purpose:

‘By working together we will use our combined resources to better effect to bring about a sustained and measurable improvement in the quality of life of the people of Test Valley, especially those in most need.’

The Test Valley Partnership produced its first Community Plan in 2003 and this was reviewed and updated in 2008. The Community Plan sets out the desired outcomes for Test Valley based around eight themes:

- Community safety
- Education and lifelong learning
- The Environment
- Health and wellbeing
- Leisure and Culture
- The Local Economy
- Local communities
- Transport

Community Development Action Group

The Community Development Action Group (CDAG) is one of seven action groups within the Test Valley Local Strategic Partnership. It works to achieve the outcomes around 'Local Communities' in the Community Plan. CDAG is a vibrant group made up of a diverse range of partners from the statutory, voluntary and community sector who have an interest in community development. CDAG's aim is to:

"Support and encourage a strong sense of local community" – Test Valley Partnership Community Plan

To achieve this, CDAG work towards delivering a number of outcomes in the Test Valley Community Plan:

- People have access to the amenities and services they need wherever they live
- People feel that they live in strong, safe and supportive communities
- People are able to influence what goes on locally and more are involved in community activity
- Improved availability of a range of affordable and suitable housing to meet people's needs
- An improved standard of housing across both public and private sectors

Joint Areas of Focus

In 2009 partners through the Test Valley Partnership, identified a number of barriers stopping the outcomes in the Community Plan being achieved. To overcome these barriers, fourteen 'Joint Areas of Focus' (JAFs) were agreed. JAFs are the cross cutting issues that currently affect Test Valley and require a partnership approach in the short (0-6 months) to medium (6-18 months) term. Tackling JAFs at this time, will directly contribute to the Partnership meeting the longer term outcomes it has set itself in the Community Plan.

The fourteen Joint Areas of Focus are:

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| JAF 1 | Domestic Abuse |
| JAF 2 | Alcohol |
| JAF 3 | Anti Social Behaviour |
| JAF 4 | Support more cohesive and resilient communities in targeted areas of Test Valley |
| JAF 5 | Reduce the number of young people entering the criminal justice system |

- JAF 6** Raising the educational attainment of children and young people in targeted areas of Test Valley
- JAF 7** Breaking down the barriers to adult & community learning opportunities in Test Valley
- JAF 8** Coordinating the delivery of new neighbourhoods in Test Valley
- JAF 9** Reducing obesity in Test Valley
- JAF 10** Reducing the rising trend of teenage pregnancy in Test Valley
- JAF 11** Reducing health inequalities in targeted areas of Test Valley and amongst vulnerable groups
- JAF 12** Supporting businesses, organisations and communities in Test Valley to act sustainably and to reduce their carbon emissions.
- JAF 13** Supporting the development of the rural economy
- JAF 14** Partners and local communities to identify innovative solutions so that vulnerable and isolated groups can access key services

CDAG Joint Areas of Focus

To achieve the outcomes in the Community Plan, partners through the Test Valley Partnership, identified that CDAG should lead on the delivery of two JAFs for 2009/11:

JAF 4	Support more cohesive and resilient communities in targeted areas of Test Valley
JAF 8	Coordinating the delivery of new neighbourhoods in Test Valley

It was also agreed that CDAG would contribute towards the delivery of a further four JAFs:

JAF 2	Alcohol
JAF 3	Anti Social Behaviour
JAF 7	Breaking down barriers to Adult and Community learning opportunities in Test Valley
JAF 11	Reducing Health Inequalities in targeted areas of Test Valley and amongst vulnerable groups

CDAG Action Plan

This Action Plan sets the direction for community development activity within Test Valley between 2009 and 2011. It has been developed around the 6 JAFs that CDAG will lead on and contribute towards, beginning with the two JAFs that CDAG are leading on:

JAF 4: Support more Cohesive and Resilient Communities in targeted areas of Test Valley

JAF 8: Coordinating the delivery of new neighbourhoods in Test Valley

The Action Plan then outlines the actions in the JAFs that CDAG are contributing towards. Where the actions identified address more than one JAF, the JAFs have been combined.

The Action Plan has been informed by the findings of four workshops held across the Partnership as part of the JAF consultation process. Alongside this, it builds on the achievements of the previous CDAG Action Plan, and further develops the valuable roles that CDAG currently play in the Partnership. These include providing a forum for sharing information and good practice on community development activity in Test Valley and making recommendations to the LSP board on the endorsement of Parish Plans and service delivery, based on the identified needs of our communities.

The Action Plan identifies key actions under each JAF that we will work towards as an Action Group. It also identifies milestones in order to check progress, the organisation and/or individual who will lead on delivery of the action – and the other partner organisations that will be involved in supporting delivery.

Action Plan 2009-2011

JAF 4: Support more Cohesive and Resilient Communities in targeted areas of Test Valley

Supporting communities to be more cohesive and resilient enables local people to tackle the issues they face in their area. This generates a sense of ownership and enables a more sustainable approach to developing local communities and shaping services. CDAG is leading on the delivery of this JAF. The targeted areas of Test Valley that CDAG will work with, refers to geographical areas and also communities of interest. Particular targeted areas identified by CDAG are:

- Communities living in our most deprived areas
- Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities
- Rural communities, and particularly residents facing isolation

In order to achieve this JAF, it is important to coordinate community development activity across Test Valley to ensure that all communities in need are supported, and to avoid duplication.

Commitment to Action

Over the next 18 months we will:

- Continue to target resources in the most deprived wards in Test Valley and contribute to the work of the Turnaround project, considering how it might be replicated in other areas in the medium term.
- Work with ethnic minority communities across Test Valley, to support those facing social exclusion and promote cultural diversity as a means of community integration.
- Strengthen work within targeted rural communities to address issues of isolation and access to services.
- Coordinate community development activity across Test Valley to make most effective use of resources in order to reach a greater number of communities in Test valley.

Objectives for this priority:

- Develop the Askalot shop and neighbourhood activities in Alamein, and undertake an evaluation of the Turnaround project to identify how the project should continue in the medium term
- Engage with and support members of the BME community to improve their well being and access to services, through 'drop in' sessions, cultural events and involving service providers in the Andover Cultural Diversity Forum
- Increase the number of Parish Plans and hold Parish Plan training and networking events
- Develop a network for community development practitioners and develop a calendar of events across Test Valley. Support large community events.

JAF 8: Coordinating the delivery of new neighbourhoods in Test Valley

The Borough is going to experience high levels of housing growth over the next 20 years with developments planned in and around both Andover and Romsey. The implications of these “new neighbourhoods” are significant not only in creating new communities but also in relation to existing ones.

It is therefore essential that partners consider the impact and service delivery implications in relation to the new neighbourhoods across Test Valley. Over the next twelve months, residents will begin moving in to East Anton, the first of the new neighbourhoods.

CDAG are leading on the delivery of this JAF.

Commitment to Action

Over the next 18 months we will:

- Establish a mechanism for involving partners and communities in decisions around what and how services are provided in the new neighbourhoods (and particularly East Anton)
- Empower new and existing residents in and around the new neighbourhoods to be informed, consulted and involved as far as possible, in how the new developments progress.
- Help build a sense of ‘community spirit’ in the new neighbourhoods and develop links between new and existing communities

Objectives for this priority:

- Set up and coordinate ‘Delivery groups’ involving key partners and residents (as they arrive) that prepare for the arrival of the new communities, and are built into the LSP structure.
- Hold information/activity events to inform and engage existing residents on progress at the new development
- Provide learning experiences for schools and colleges in the development and construction process

- Employ a dedicated community officer to work with local communities to find out what community activities should be offered in the new neighbourhoods, and how to link new and existing communities.
- Identify regeneration opportunities in the adjacent existing housing areas arising from the direct impact of the new communities.

JAF 2: Alcohol

Alcohol is a cross cutting issue that runs through many of the community plan themes as it impacts on a number of public and voluntary sector services and can have a major affect on local communities.

Alcohol related violence is one of the key drivers for crime and offending in Test Valley and it is estimated that around 52% of children and young people drink alcohol.

The Annual public health report, the sustainable community strategy for Hampshire and the Test Valley Community safety Strategic Assessment all highlight Alcohol as a key area for focus. Tackling alcohol requires a multi agency approach in order to slow the rate of impact on individuals and communities. CDAG are contributing towards the delivery of this JAF.

JAF 3: Anti Social Behaviour

Perception of how safe people feel remains disproportionate to the reality, and Test Valley is no different as people's perceptions are driven both by what they see locally and what they see and hear nationally. This is an issue in both our urban and rural areas. Communicating with the local community about the action taken to tackle the problems they are facing is vital. CDAG are contributing towards delivery of this JAF.

Commitment to Action

Over the next 18 months we will:

- Develop closer links with the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) and Health and Wellbeing group to develop shared projects around alcohol and realities and perceptions of antisocial behaviour.

Objectives for this priority:

- Support the delivery of the successful 'Alcohol Theatre project' in community settings across Test Valley.
- Support the development of diversionary activities for young people, including an intergenerational pilot project in a rural area facing antisocial behaviour issues
- Work with CDRP to pilot 'Neighbourhood Management' in targeted areas of Test Valley. Neighbourhood management means residents working in partnership with

mainstream service providers, the local authority, businesses and the voluntary and community sectors, to make local services (e.g. policing) more responsive to the needs of their area

JAF 7: Breaking down barriers to Adult and Community learning opportunities in Test Valley

Supporting adults and families to learn and develop their skills through informal techniques within their communities can help embed a culture of learning and remove potential barriers to education and isolation suffered as a result. Volunteering can provide an excellent mechanism of acquiring these skills.

CDAG will contribute to the delivery of this JAF.

Commitment to Action

Over the next 18 months we will:

- Work with the Education Action Group to support the development of adult learning
- Coordinate, promote and develop Volunteering opportunities in Test valley

Objectives for this priority:

- Support the development of adult learning through the Alamein 'jobclub' and the promotion of community based learning across Test Valley
- Develop volunteering across Test Valley in line with the increased demand

JAF 11: Reducing Health inequalities in targeted areas of Test Valley and amongst vulnerable groups

Health inequalities can be one of the major challenges facing local communities. Often where there is a higher score of deprivation there are usually poorer levels of health. Rural deprivation can also lead to health inequalities as higher scores in this domain are usually associated with difficulties in accessing local services such as GP surgeries given the remote nature of some of our communities.

Reducing health inequalities in targeted areas and amongst vulnerable groups focuses around life expectancy rates, smoking, physical activity and accessibility to local services. Although these issues relate to health many of them require a partnership approach in order to tackle some of the wider factors facing these communities.

Commitment to Action

Over the next 18 months we will:

- Work with the Health and Wellbeing Action Group to develop community based health promotion activities in the most isolated and deprived communities in Test Valley.

Objectives for this priority:

- Work with the Health and Wellbeing Action Group to extend the health walks into further community settings and support volunteer training
- Work with Health and Wellbeing Action group to develop the smoking cessation service into further community settings
- Work with community and voluntary groups to increase the number of local food projects in targeted areas in Test Valley
- Support the development of health and wellbeing diversionary activities for young people, including an intergenerational pilot project in a rural area facing antisocial behaviour issues