

Test Valley PARTNERSHIP



News Update

December 2006

I can hardly believe that December is already upon us and almost in sight.

the end of the year

I will start with some regrettable news of which some of you may already be aware; Barbara North, our current chair, is to retire from her post as non-executive chair of Winchester and Eastleigh Health Trust in December. This effectively means that we will also lose Barbara as chair of Test Valley Partnership.

Barbara's decision is based upon her wish to spend more time with her family. She will be greatly missed as she brought a dynamic style of leadership to the Partnership which has really helped it to mature. This, and her focus on delivery and accountability, has helped to really move us from 'talk to action' and our reputation throughout the County has grown accordingly. We have much to thank her for.

Barbara's message to the Partnership is as follows;

'As many of you know, I have decided to retire at Christmas. One of the things that have given me most pleasure over the past five years is to have been a founding member of our successful Partnership. There are two things of which I am particularly proud; firstly that we had the courage to add "especially those in most need" to our founding purpose and secondly that we have been brave enough to want to measure and monitor our performance. As a resident of Test Valley I really hope that you will all strive to continue in this way. Janet knows so much more than I about the detailed needs of our communities and I am really confident that she will provide the right sense of direction, supported by Marion. I thank you all for your support and wish you every success. Barbara'

I am sure that I can speak on behalf of all partner organisations in wishing Barbara a well earned and happy retirement. I somehow imagine that she will still be involved with the community in one way or another as I cannot imagine that she will be sitting still for very long!

as I cannot imagine

With regard to future Partnership arrangements, Janet Blann, currently vice-chair, has kindly agreed to be acting chair until our AG in June when officers for the coming year will be appointed. I know that she will be well supported in agreeing to undertake this and thank her on behalf of the Partnership for a interim role.

Blann, currently vice-Min June when officers will be well supported in agreeing to undertake this

The Local Government White Paper 'Strong and Prosperous Communities'

Two weeks ago, the long awaited White Paper 'Strong and prosperous communities' was published, which includes an indication of the direction of travel for Local Strategic Partnerships. More detailed government guidance, specifically about the future of LSPs, is likely to be published in the second half of 2007.

Ruth Kelly states in her introduction that the aim of the White Paper is "to give local people and local communities more influence and power to improve their lives. It is about creating strong, prosperous communities and delivering better public services through a rebalancing of the relationship between central government, local government and local people". Local democracy and strong local councillors are the bedrock of this approach and there is a clear expectation that local authority leaders will play an increasingly important role in LSPs by effectively contributing to strategic leadership both through participation and scrutiny processes.

The paper reflects a growing recognition of the importance that Local Strategic Partnerships bring to this agenda. As well as providing leadership they are responsive to the needs of communities by bringing together local partners to improve services and shape the places where they live. They will be strengthened by the introduction of a new duty on relevant partners to have regard to the delivery of agreed targets through the Local Area Agreement. The Paper describes a new relationship between central and local government and the community, one where the priorities of each are understood and accepted and brought together in a single vision; the Sustainable Community Strategy.

The development of a Sustainable Community Strategy for Test Valley

It is intended to be an overarching plan that sets out the strategic vision for an area. It should align all strategic plans of partner organisations in the district and beyond. The emphasis on sustainability is based on a need to address difficult cross-cutting issues such as the economic future of an area, social exclusion and climate change.

Test Valley Partnership is currently in the process of developing a new Sustainable Community Strategy. Although the first Community Plan was originally intended to cover a 5-year period, it is already outdated in many respects and in need of a thorough overhaul. A series of planning workshops, one for each Action Group, will shortly be taking place using the Outcomes Framework process. This is a simple approach to community planning which first of all identifies the desired outcome and then works through a series of steps to develop an action plan. It builds in performance measures as part of the process. The Test Valley Sustainable Community Strategy will be launched at the Partnership Annual General Meeting next June.

The October Partnership Management Board Meeting

Amongst other items that contributed to a very full agenda the Board was pleased to hear of good progress being made relating to many of the projects that it supports at a local level. There was some welcome news in relation to two projects which support the priorities of the Education and Learning Action Group. The Coffee Pot at Long Meadow and the Teapot at KAW Hall are both groups where parents and children come together to socialise and to learn in creative and imaginative ways. This softer approach to learning is often more attractive than conventional methods and seeks to draw attendees into adult learning in a very creative way. For example, as well as learning about different fruit and vegetables there is a mathematical element in weighing and cooking food; singing with children is important to child development and to the parent/child relationship. These projects have received finance of £12,000 for the next year through Hampshire County Council. Linked to this The Healthy Eating Fruit and Vegetable Market, a joint initiative with Waitrose Supermarkets, has been successful in securing funding support of £8000. This will fund a development worker who will be paid on a part-time basis to drive the initiative into schools which are eager to be involved. These projects contribute to wider national targets on reducing obesity.

The long term viability of projects such as these that do not have sustained funding is always an issue and the Partnership is committed to providing support and to use its influence to help secure alternative sources of funding wherever possible.

Environmental issues are very topical in the media and in public awareness and there was more welcome news reported to the Board from MTest Valley Borough Council. Early indications from the first phases of the Alternative Bin Collection scheme (ABC) suggest a significant increase in re-cycling rates in support of the Environment Action Group's priority.

Sustainable consumption and production will be very much at the forefront of our new Sustainable Community Strategy and will continue to be a high priority for the Partnership as we plan ahead and shape the Borough for future generations.

The progress report in full that was presented to the Partnership Management Board can be found, together with the agenda and notes of the meeting, on the Partnership website at www.yourtestvalley.com

Andover Vision

A 'Stakeholder Thank You' event took place earlier this month at The Lights. Those attending enjoyed a tour of this very stylish refurbished theatre which is one of the manifestations of the Vision. Attendees contributed to a consultation exercise led by Councillor Ian Carr which considered next steps following the publication of the Vision document which has been circulated to the residents of

Andover. Public involvement in taking the Vision forward is seen as key and some interesting ideas were shared about the best way that this can be achieved. These are exciting times for Andover with more to come; if you feel that either you or your organisation have a part to play in the Vision or you wish to comment on the document please contact Brian Cowcher, Head of Housing and Community Services at Test Valley Borough Council on 01264 368615 or alternatively e-mail him at bcowcher@testvalley.gov.uk

The Local Development Framework

The Local Development Framework is a set of new planning policy documents which replace the Test Valley Borough Local Plan. A consultation is now taking place which seeks views on what planning issues are important to this Borough. This is the first stage of the process in producing a Core Strategy. The consultation is based upon an Issues and Options paper which is accompanied by a questionnaire. This has been circulated widely and the closing date for the consultation is 15th December. Responses will be used to develop preferred options for the broad location of development and draft policies.

If you would like to receive a copy of the Issues and Options paper please contact the Planning Policy Team on 01794 527816 or e-mail planninguser@testvalley.gov.uk

News of a project to assist young people comes from Test Valley Community Services

Do you know any one aged between 16 and 25 who has difficulty getting to work? The WheelstoWork Moped Loan Scheme is designed to enable anyone between those ages who lives in the Borough of Test Valley to access employment.

Applications must have the support of an employer or some sort of recognised organisation (generally a statutory agency). Test Valley Community Services would be delighted to hear from any young person, or anyone who wishes to get more information on their behalf. Please ring Zoe or Dickon 01264 362600, or email transport@tvcs.org.uk."

Test Valley Business Awards

Lastly, a mention for Test Valley Business Awards. This scheme is developed in partnership between business representative groups and public agencies such as the Borough and County Councils. It promotes business excellence through friendly competition and is supported by high profile Test Valley organisations. Entry to the Test Valley Business Awards 06/07 is open to all businesses with an operating address within the Borough of Test Valley. If you are a business, or know a likely contender then e-mail: info@tvbawards.org.uk or telephone 01264 368303 for more information.

Dates of future meetings

Action Group Chairs and Co-ordinators Joint Meeting – 1st December 2006

Partnership Management Group – 8th December 2006

Partnership Management Board Meeting – 24th January 2007

It seems a little early for Christmas wishes now but this may be the only opportunity for me to send you seasonal greetings.

With best wishes

Marion Woods

Partnership Manager

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