



YOUR TEST VALLEY

A community plan for the future



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An introduction by Cllr Ian Carr, Chairman of the Test Valley Partnership and Leader of Test Valley Borough Council

“Test Valley has a great deal going for it. It is a beautiful place. It is a safe place. It has a dynamic and mixed economy, and it offers residents a wide range of cultural and leisure opportunities.

When the organisations that make up the Test Valley Partnership set out on the task of drawing up a Community Plan for Test Valley, we agreed that our approach should be to preserve the best of what we have, to build on the many strengths that go to make this such a thriving community, to identify problems where they exist and to draw up an action plan to improve the quality of life of the people who live, work and visit Test Valley.

We hope that this Community Plan does just that and that it reflects the things that are important to you. We have called the Plan ‘Your Test Valley’ because it is up to all of us to work together to bring about the objectives set out in the Plan for the benefit of present and future generations of Test Valley residents.

We know that resources are limited and that new sources of funding are unlikely. We will continue to lobby to ensure that Test Valley receives its fair share of the resources that are available, and make the best use of the resources we have by agreeing the priorities for action and improving our joint working. In doing so, the new Test Valley Partnership aims to:

Create a Test Valley community where everyone has the opportunity to fulfil their potential and enjoy a good quality of life.

I hope you will do everything you can to support the Partnership in its work.”



Cllr Ian Carr
Chairman, Test Valley Partnership



'Your Test Valley' A Community Plan for the Future...

Has been prepared by a number of local organisations and agencies working together through a new Test Valley Partnership. The Community Plan describes:

- what you think of Test Valley today
- what sort of place you want Test Valley to be in the future and
- what actions the Test Valley Partnership proposes to take to tackle the problems of today in order to make Test Valley a better place to live, work and visit in the future.

The Plan brings together a great deal of work that has been carried out by the different organisations that form the Test Valley Partnership. It commits each of the partners to work together to improve the social, economic and environmental conditions that influence overall quality of life for local people.

Commitment must come in the form of action and not just words. The Community Plan provides some examples of the sort of actions the Partnership is committed to taking. The detail of this action can be found in a series of action plans listed in a full reference section at the end of the Plan. The reference section also lists other key strategies and plans which help to support the delivery of the Community Plan and which provide much additional information.

As a **community** plan, it is vital that the Plan not only reflects local people's views but also encourages everyone to play their part. Ensuring a better quality of life for all is not something that statutory bodies can achieve working on their own. Test Valley is fortunate in the range and quality of voluntary organisations that provide a variety of much-valued services. Their continued contribution and the involvement of the business sector is essential, and, indeed, everyone can contribute in some way. Your efforts to recycle more waste, for example, is one way in which individuals can help to sustain the high quality of the beautiful Test Valley environment for future generations.

The Community Plan is a plan for the long-term; many of its objectives will take some time to achieve. In many respects, making Test Valley a better place means making Test Valley a better place for future generations.

Your Test Valley – Your Community Plan

The Community Plan aims to reflect the needs, wishes and aspirations of *all* local people, which means recognising and welcoming diversity such as gender, ethnicity or sexual orientation. In implementing the Community Plan, the Partnership will try to take account of the particular needs of, for example, the disabled, elderly and young people. It will also try to ensure that all local people have the best opportunity to fulfil their potential. This means helping those in less advantaged parts of the borough and recognising the distinct needs of those living in rural and urban parts of the borough.

Your views are at the heart of your Community Plan. In preparing the Plan, the Partnership asked local people to identify the issues that most affect their quality of life. Each of these priority issues is dealt with in one of the eight chapters that follow.

However, it is important to recognise the links that exist between the different issues and the possible impact that action in one area may have on another. A key function of the Test Valley Partnership is to be aware of these links and to bring some added value to local service delivery as a result of our joint working. Like all good partnerships, the Test Valley Partnership aims to be greater than the sum of its parts.

To check that the Partnership is addressing the key local issues, a draft Community Plan was published for consultation between June and September 2003 and revised to take on board feedback before publication in January 2004.

The Test Valley Partnership

In April 2002, a number of local organisations sharing an interest in the quality of life within the Borough, came together to form the 'Test Valley Partnership'. There are now over 250 organisations in the Partnership ranging from public sector organisations to private sector businesses and voluntary and community groups. The organisations have all committed themselves to working together to improve the things that you feel are priorities. Joint working is not limited to working across organisational boundaries within Test Valley. The Partnership also seeks to work across borders with neighbouring areas.

A smaller number of members of the Partnership have formed a Steering Group to oversee the implementation of the Community Plan and their names are shown at the end of this document.

The situation now

Test Valley is a good place to live and work. It consists of an area of some 250 square miles and has a population of approximately 113,000. It has some of the most attractive scenery in the south of England, with the renowned River Test running the length of the Borough, bordered by large areas of green landscape and farmland. Traditionally an agricultural area, the Borough retains much of its rural character, with a wide scattering of villages set in attractive countryside and centred around two market towns at each end of the Borough. But Test Valley is no rural backwater. It is very much part of the buoyant south east economy with a thriving and competitive local economy.

In Andover, where there was significant expansion in the 1960s as part of the London overspill, there is a largely self-contained local economy. While employment levels are high, local jobs are typically low paid. With high house prices this means that employers are finding it increasingly difficult to fill vacancies.

Romsey's close proximity to Southampton helps to link the local economy to the south Hampshire sub-region, offering more in the way of high-skilled employment and giving rise to a good deal of commuting between Romsey and neighbouring centres.

The rural backbone of Test Valley remains essentially an agricultural area but, as in many other rural parts of the country, there has been something of a decline in farming and traditional industries. In recent years, tourism has become increasingly important.

Although the borough as a whole is relatively affluent, there are pockets of deprivation where quality of life is much poorer and opportunities for residents more limited.

The deprivation is heightened by the presence of wealthy areas next to relatively disadvantaged ones.

The next ten years will see further growth in housing numbers with 6,000 new houses planned by 2011. The challenge for the Partnership is to continue to balance future growth and development whilst preserving the attractive setting of the Test Valley - to balance sustainability and conservation with the growth pressures associated with an economically prosperous area.

While the Partnership aims to improve the quality of life for all in Test Valley, it recognises the need to concentrate its efforts where they will make the most difference. This will mean giving priority to assisting those whose needs are greatest. It also means helping people to help themselves.

You told us

That there are a number of things you like about living in Test Valley and you want to keep, including:

- the attractive green landscape in which our local community is set; you want to ensure that the natural heritage and character of the area is not threatened by new building.
- our thriving local economy with low rates of unemployment
- our low rates of crime

In recent surveys 92% of people said that Test Valley was a good place to live, of which 27% rated life in the borough as excellent. You know there are areas that could be better and you want to see improvements in:

- education
- healthcare services
- community spirit
- leisure and culture, particularly in terms of providing more activities and interests for young people

You also recognise the need to move with the times and plan for the future to provide

- more affordable housing
- better public transport
- better use of new technologies, including Broadband, to improve access to information for Test Valley residents

Our aim

Is to create a Test Valley community where everyone has the opportunity to fulfil their potential and enjoy a good quality of life.

We Will

Work together to improve the priority areas in this Community Plan which are the areas that you have told us are important to you. In the pages that follow we outline the goals that we want to achieve in each of these areas. Some apply to more than one priority. It is also important, and much more likely that we will be successful, if everyone can be

encouraged to give some thought to what they can personally contribute to making Test Valley a better place.

How will we show our progress?

The Community Plan sets out our objectives, but provides only a summary of the actions that will be taken to achieve those objectives. Full details of the action required, together with targets and timescales, are shown in the action plans for each chapter. In some cases, these action plans are still being developed. In others, they are to be found in the relevant supporting strategy (eg the Community Safety Strategy contains the community safety action plan). In all cases, the action plans will be kept under regular review, to reflect the dynamic nature of the planning process.

While there are detailed measures in the action plans for measuring the Partnership's progress, there are also a number of 'headline' indicators that help to provide a snapshot of progress. These include:

- ❑ whether people feel safe in their local area and how clean and attractive it looks
- ❑ whether services such as public transport, health services and education are good
- ❑ whether there is access to good facilities in terms of jobs, housing & community spirit and leisure and cultural facilities

The Partnership will also publish progress against the detailed action plan measures by:

- publicly reporting on its progress in achieving the targets in the action plans each year
- carrying out a full review of the Community Plan every 5 years
- measuring quality of life by an increase in the percentage of residents who feel that Test Valley is a good place to live

It will also develop other measures to assess the overall impact that 'Your Test Valley' is having on quality of life in the borough.

Where can you find out more?

In this summary document it has only been possible to describe some of the issues and to highlight some of the actions that the Partnership proposes to take. Further details, together with a considerable amount of supporting information, are contained in the various documents listed in the reference section at the end. Please contact the Test Valley Partnership Co-ordinator, email: egault@testvalley.gov.uk telephone: 01264 368105, or visit the website www.testvalley.gov.uk for further information

PRIORITY 1 – A Safe Community

The situation now

Compared with many other parts of the country, Test Valley is a safe place to live. Within Hampshire too, Test Valley has one of the lowest rates of recorded crime. In the last year there has been a significant reduction in house burglary and vehicle crime and work is going on to maintain this reduction in the coming year. Although disproportionate to the actual levels of crime, fear of crime remains a significant issue. The Partnership is committed to taking steps to reduce this level of fear.

There is concern over the level of anti-social behaviour and the Partnership is working together to reduce these problems, actively promote good behaviour and deal with persistent offenders. In the last year, eight neighbourhood wardens have been employed to patrol local estates in Andover, Romsey, North Baddesley and Valley Park, providing a reassuring presence and deterring low-level crime that can lead to more serious criminal activity.

You told us

The things that most concern you are youth nuisance, underage drinking and anti-social behaviour. You want more police, wardens and CCTV. Despite the relatively low rates of recorded crime, fear of crime continues to run at a high level.

Our aim

Is to maintain our low crime rates and to make Test Valley streets feel safer for local people.

We will

Reduce crime and the fear of crime to improve quality of life for local residents by

- addressing issues of anti-social behaviour, preventing its occurrence and taking action against those who cause offence through anti-social behaviour
- providing a range of constructive activities and facilities, which will enable young people to make better use of their time
- developing the work of the Neighbourhood Warden scheme
- adhering to the principles of 'Secured by Design' in both rural and urban developments

Reduce burglary by

- targeting those persistent offenders who commit burglary
- giving advice on crime prevention and security in the home and making use of the 'Bobby' scheme (a national scheme offering practical home security assistance)
- continuing to support Neighbourhood Watch

Reduce vehicle crime by

- targeting those persistent offenders who commit vehicle crime
- developing high profile vehicle crime prevention initiatives using the local media

Reduce violent crime by

- effectively supervising licensed premises to ensure incidents of violence are reduced
- encouraging reporting of domestic violence and providing support for victims during the prosecution process

Address the problems related to drug and substance misuse by

- providing a programme for persistent offenders who have substance misuse dependencies to help prevent re-offending and enabling access to treatment
- providing young people with advice, support and education on alcohol misuse
- actively targeting unlawful drug dealers through the use of search warrants and positive policing to disrupt and prosecute offenders

Support vulnerable victims by

- offering personal contact to all victims of crime
- providing supported housing for street homeless, substance misuse clients and young people

Improve communications and future planning of community safety issues by

- developing a media strategy for the crime reduction partnership to provide regular positive news to reinforce the message that Test Valley is a safe place to live and so reduce the fear of crime.

How will we show our progress?

You will be able to measure improvements in the safety of our local community by

- A reduction in house burglaries
- A reduction in violent crime
- A reduction in vehicle crime
- A reduction in fear of crime

Where can you find out more?

For full details of the proposed actions and targets, please see the reference section at the end of the Plan. The key document in which these details can be found is the Test Valley Community Safety Strategy.

Cllr Marion Kerley leads the Partnership's work on community safety. She can be contacted at: The Test Valley Partnership, Beech Hurst, Weyhill Road, Andover. Hants SP10 3AJ or by e-mail at: m.kerley@yourtestvalley.com

PRIORITY 2 – A Clean & Attractive Community

The situation now

Test Valley is the third largest district in Hampshire and has the advantage of having beautiful countryside, 40% of which has a landscape, ecological or heritage area designation. It contains 20 Sites of Special Scientific Interest, an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the River Test Heritage Area, an Environmentally Sensitive Area and a proposed National Park. But modern lifestyles are increasingly putting this green environment under pressure. The environment is under substantial pressure from Government targets for new housing, increases in traffic, intensive agriculture and increasing levels of waste.

You told us

You want more recycling, a reduction in waste and pollution, better street cleaning and measures to improve energy efficiency. You also want to enhance the quality of our towns and villages and to keep a variety of plant and wildlife in Test Valley.

Our aim

Is for everyone in the local community to take personal responsibility for maintaining the local environment and keeping Test Valley a beautiful place to live.

We will

Deal with waste responsibly and minimise the amount of waste created by

- identifying ways of reducing household and business waste
- increasing participation in recycling
- involving schools in recycling

Promote energy conservation by

- encouraging businesses and residents to use alternative sources of energy, such as: solar, water and wind
- encouraging 'Combined Heat and Power' schemes in new developments

Promote environmentally friendly practices to businesses by

- providing information and advice to local businesses
- working with partners to ensure future economic development does not damage Test Valley's environment

Keep our streets clean and tidy by

- tackling litter through education and enforcement
- improving uneven pavements to reduce trips and falls
- rapidly removing graffiti

Improve air and water quality and protect water resources by

- tackling polluters through education and enforcement
- supporting the national target to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 20% by 2010

Increase awareness of the Test Valley environment by

- promoting the beautiful Test Valley landscape and biodiversity
- working with community groups to educate people on recycling and home energy conservation
- developing environmental work in schools to help children and young people realise the importance of each person playing their part in the environment

Protect and increase the variety of plants and animals by

- working with partners to protect and enhance the wildlife of Test Valley
- encouraging residents to conserve wildlife in the garden and local environment.

How will we show our progress?

You will be able to measure improvements in your local environment by

- ❑ A percentage increase in recycling rates
- ❑ An increase in key indicator species as identified by the Test Valley Biodiversity Action Plan
- ❑ A percentage increase in working with schools

Where can you find out more?

For full details of the proposed actions and targets, and other information about local environmental issues, please see the reference section at the end of the Plan

Lead responsibility for the Partnership's work on the environment has yet to be established. In the meantime, please contact Laura Taylor at: The Test Valley Partnership, Beech Hurst, Weyhill Road, Andover. Hants SP10 3AJ or by e-mail at l.taylor@yourtestvalley.com

PRIORITY 3 – Meeting transport needs in your area

The situation now

Much of Test Valley is rural. Less than 5% of the borough can be considered as urban and 40% of the population live in a large number of relatively small communities outside the principal settlements. Many people choose to use the car as their main means of transport. However, 20% of households in Andover, 9% in Romsey and 13% in rural areas do not have a car. Test Valley is served by a number of bus operators and a network of services serve the towns and villages; two main rail lines also pass through the borough. Some rural communities only have limited bus services or none at all. Within the larger settlements public transport does not provide early morning and late evening services and some areas are served infrequently. A number of communities are served by voluntary transport schemes. Failure to provide local people with the transport services they need can compromise their ability to access places of work, leisure, health and education facilities, which can have a detrimental impact on their quality of life.

You told us

You want good quality transport services, particularly to popular locations. You also want the different transport providers to connect the times of their services to reduce delays to your overall journey.

Our aim

Is to ensure a sustainable, efficient and integrated transport network, based on the real needs and choices of local people and visitors. A transport network that achieves this will help to maintain the economic vitality of the area and meet the quality of life needs and aspirations of Test Valley as a whole.

We will

Support the development of innovative transport solutions that offer reliability and flexibility and make the best use of limited financial resources by

- developing, in partnership with Hampshire County Council, existing demand responsive bus services (e.g. Cango in northern Test Valley).
- encouraging communities to support community transport providers (as volunteers) and by making use of services where provided.
- investigating ways to enhance existing services by studying examples of best practice elsewhere.
- ensuring that all new development is sustainable and takes into account the needs of all transport users.

Maximise available resources by participating in future bids for new transport initiatives by

- co-ordinating and supporting bids.

Encourage transport planners to take into account the differing needs of both residents and visitors and other groups such as, young people, older people and those with mobility difficulties by

- encouraging transport schemes to meet all community needs.
- working with the Test Valley Transport Forum to develop specific initiatives.
- listening and responding to feedback from young people on their transport needs.

Co-ordinate transport services by

- encouraging the integration of transport services so that users can easily move between different modes of transport (e.g. bus to train or car to foot).

Promote and provide information about transport services by

- providing information on new and existing transport services to encourage their use and help them to remain economically viable.
- gathering information and research on local transport needs.
- exchanging information between voluntary community transport providers to encouraged the efficient use of resources

Provide adequate facilities for transport users (e.g. bus shelters, bus stops, cycle storage, cycle routes, cycles stands, lighting, pedestrian crossings, more rail station car parking) by

- identifying inadequate facilities and making recommendations for improvement
- co-ordinating requests from the community for improved facilities and passing on to the relevant bodies for action.

Promote the benefits of alternative modes of transport by

- investigating the provision of frequent local bus services to reduce car use and the demand for car parking.
- encouraging people to walk and cycle for shorter journeys.
- encouraging local organisations and companies to develop and support workplace travel plans
- promoting car sharing.
- encouraging schools to introduce travel plans (with measures such as walking buses, cycle storage, car share and promotion of school buses)

How will we show our progress?

You will be able to measure improvements in your local transport by

- Change in travel behaviour as identified by transport surveys
- An increase in the availability of and access to up-to-date information on transport services within Test Valley to both residents and visitors
- An increase in the efficiency of existing community transport services and vehicles
- An increase in the number of passengers using demand responsive transport
- An increase in the number of high frequency bus services
- An increase in the transport links between bus and rail services
- An increase in the number of schools and businesses with green travel plans.

Where can you find out more?

For full details of the proposed actions and targets, and other information about local transport issues, please see the reference section at the end of the Plan

Greg Davies leads the Partnership's work on transport. He can be contacted at: The Test Valley Partnership, Beech Hurst, Weyhill Road, Andover. Hants SP10 3AJ or by e-mail at g.davies@yourtestvalley.com

PRIORITY 4 – A Community that values Education and Lifelong Learning

The situation now

Educational attainment in the borough is mixed and reflects the different character of its towns. In parts of Andover for example, two wards rank among the bottom fifth of all wards in England in terms of Education/Skills/Training deprivation (Index of Multiple Deprivation 2000). Qualification rates are also a little below the regional average with just less than one quarter of adults in Test Valley having no qualifications.

In the adult population, only 1 in 9 persons over 55 is actively learning in Test Valley compared with 1 in 4 adults nationally. Learning in less formal settings in later life is shown to promote a more healthy, active and independent life.

Despite significant variations in published attainment levels, schools are making a big difference to children's achievements and resources are being channelled where they are needed most, including the vital area of family learning.

You told us

You want us to enable young people to develop personal, social and lifelong learning skills and to increase opportunities for people of all ages to pursue education.

Our aim

Is to promote education and learning in a way that best suits the needs of the individual and to promote a learning culture in the whole community.

We will

Encourage a culture of learning by

- developing locally based practical skills programmes for those with learning difficulties to enable them to live independently
- improving access to learning and training by creating more locally-based environments for learning by a range of measures
- developing the network of family-based learning in existing and new community facilities

Increase the supply of good quality, accessible and affordable early education and child care by

- encouraging an increase in child care and after schools places

Work with parents to raise educational attainment levels in schools by

- supporting and promoting family learning throughout the borough as a foundation for formal education
- continuing support for the bids by the three Andover secondary schools for Specialist School status and support for any new bids

- promoting and developing extended schools following good practice in Andover and Romsey

Improve levels of basic skills both in the community and through workplace skills training by

- implementing Learning and Skills Council funded projects such as Cricklade College's "Works-4-U" scheme, which entails working with 100 employers to improve basic skills in the workplace.

Develop long term relationships between training providers, local employers and schools by

- providing Modern Apprenticeships for skilled trades
- putting local businesses in touch with relevant training services

Encourage post-16 participation in Further Education and Higher Education by

- working with King Alfred's College, Cricklade College and local schools to develop and promote opportunities including "taster sessions" and summer schools

Encourage life long learning by

- working with established lifelong learning partnerships to promote projects like the Family Learning Weekend and Adult Learners' Week
- supporting Andover Family Learning Project to improve basic skills among adults and support parents to encourage their children to do well at school
- encouraging a broad range of community based learning, from leisure activity to work based learning
- supporting voluntary learning programmes

How will we show our progress?

You will be able to measure improvements in local education and learning by

- ❑ An increase, subject to demand, in the number of additional childcare places meeting need
- ❑ An increase in the percentage of 15 year old pupils, in local authority maintained schools, achieving 5 or more GCSEs at A*-C or equivalent
- ❑ An increase in the percentage of 15 year old pupils, in local authority maintained schools, achieving 5 or more GCSEs at A*-G or equivalent
- ❑ An increase in total attendance in Test Valley Schools
- ❑ An increase in the percentage of people participating in further education
- ❑ An increase in the percentage of people participating in higher education
- ❑ Increased participation in family learning
- ❑ An increase in the percentage of people over 60 engaged in lifelong learning
- ❑ Increase in the number of people undertaking Modern Apprenticeships
- ❑ Decrease in the number of people aged 16 - 18 not in employment, education or training

Where can you find out more?

For full details of the proposed actions and targets and other information about local education issues, please see the reference section at the end of the Plan

Dr Tom Johnson leads the Partnership's work on education and learning and can be contacted at: The Test Valley Partnership, Beech Hurst, Weyhill Road, Andover. Hants SP10 3AJ or by e-mail at t.johnson@yourtestvalley.com

PRIORITY 5 – A Community that encourages Healthy Lifestyles

The situation now

Test Valley is a relatively healthy and wealthy borough that enjoys high quality health care. However, some people suffer ill health caused by such things as stress at work or home, accidents that can affect their lives, or problems with alcohol or substance misuse. An unwanted pregnancy can also cause mental distress. The main causes of death in Test Valley are cancer and diseases of the circulation, such as coronary heart disease and stroke. Some ill-health can be prevented through improving lifestyles. Many people in our community suffer preventable ill-health, through low income, life-chance, poor education and employment opportunities, difficulty in getting to health and social services or the environment in which they are raised.

You told us

You want improved understanding and promotion of the benefits of healthy lifestyles. You also want better co-ordination of resources towards identifying and tackling health problems and a reduction in causes of ill health such as low income, isolation and social exclusion. In addition, you want to see access to services improved, in imaginative ways, for people who are disadvantaged by their health.

Our aim

Is to promote and improve the physical, mental and social health and well-being of residents within Test Valley.

We will

- Support the Primary Care Trusts and National Health Service Trusts in delivering the targets set out in the Local Health Delivery Plans
- Work to retain, strengthen and improve the healthcare facilities available to the residents of Test Valley, particularly the local hospitals at Andover and Romsey
- Recognise the contribution made by voluntary groups and provide them with appropriate support.

Tackle health inequalities such as low income, isolation, education, food and housing by

- working with key groups providing services to improve lifelong/life skills learning and work opportunities in Test Valley
- finding measurable ways to support teams working on accident prevention in the home
- supporting the warm homes scheme by promoting awareness through the local media
- supporting healthy eating initiatives such as the food forum event "Good for You" and identifying new initiatives to make local food more accessible and affordable
- supporting initiatives developed through the Social Isolation Forum
- providing a network of Healthy Living Centres for young people

Improve access to services and amenities such as shops, hospital and doctors surgeries by

- working with public, private and voluntary transport providers to make it easier for people to travel to the services they need
- exploring the possibility of taking services out to the community (eg mobile shops, health workers and co-ordinated packages of care)

Promote ways of reducing the number of people dying from the primary causes of death (coronary heart disease and cancer) by

- developing a programme of healthy lifestyle initiatives (eg. Health walks, smoking cessation programmes, healthy schools) in order to encourage a change in the behaviour of individuals and communities
- support suppliers of schools meals in providing fresh food, locally sourced where possible

Improve mental health and social well being in the local community by

- identifying the main mental health issues that affect children and families in order to make recommendations for action to the relevant agencies
- identifying the mental health issues that affect young people and drawing up priorities for action e.g. covered meeting places
- identifying the mental health issues that effect older people and drawing up priorities for action
- holding discussions with carers to identify ways in which to offer better support in order to make recommendations for action to the relevant agencies

Tackle drug and alcohol misuse by

- Supporting the work of the substance misuse services

Improve sexual health and decrease teenage pregnancy by

- promoting awareness of issues relating to unwanted teenage pregnancy and sexual health
- promoting World AIDS Day

How will we show our progress?

You will be able to measure improvements in health and social well being by

- A reduction in the number of teenage pregnancies and an increase in the number of teenage mothers who have access to education and training
- A reduction in the number of people who smoke
- An increase in the participation of problem substance misusers in drug treatment programmes
- An increase in the number of schools participating in the Healthy Schools Award

Detailed targets, some of which have been set by the Government, can be found within the Health Delivery Plans of the two Primary Care Trusts operating within the borough.

Where can you find out more?

For full details of the proposed actions and targets, and other information about local health issues please see the reference section at the end of the Plan.

Rev. Derek Overfield leads the Partnership's work on health and well-being and can be contacted at: The Test Valley Partnership, Beech Hurst, Weyhill Road, Andover. Hants SP10 3AJ or by e-mail at d.overfield@yourtestvalley.com

PRIORITY 6 – A Community with a thriving local economy

The situation now

Test Valley has a relatively prosperous economy. It ranks in the top 12% of council areas in England and is the fourth most affluent borough in Hampshire. Its character is varied and reflects the three distinct parts of the Borough:

- the major industrial base at Andover, strongly influenced by larger and manufacturing businesses;
- specialist sectors in the south of the Borough which relate closely to the south Hampshire sub region, including Chilworth Science Park - which alone generates between £15-20m into the local economy; and
- the rural area where tourism is beginning to outpace farming as the major source of employment.

However, future economic growth is threatened by the lack of affordable housing, mixed levels of educational attainment, and overseas competition. With growing pressure for housing on every vacant site there is also a need to maintain a supply of readily available land for business and industry.

You told us

You want more high-skilled work that will provide better-paid employment. You also want to support local businesses including those in villages and small businesses employing less than 50 people.

Our aim

Is to promote continuing economic growth and prosperity for local people and the local business community and to ensure that our local economy remains competitive.

We will

Promote a long-term vision for Andover's economic future by

- enhancing Andover Town Centre to include a reduction in the number of empty shops and attracting more shoppers and visitors into the shopping areas
- promoting the Andover Business Park at the former Andover Airfield.
- establishing and promoting the Andover Business and Innovation Centre on the East Portway Industrial Estate . A development comprising 66 small business units on "easy in - easy out" terms
- working to retain existing employers in the borough
- promoting the importance of tourism across the whole of the borough.

Ensure the Borough has an effective and competitive workforce by

- securing sufficient affordable housing
- improving education and business skills training by working in partnership with a number of agencies including Cricklade College, IBP Training Ltd, Jobcentre Plus, South East Economic Development Agency.

Promote the key business sites of southern Test Valley and enable the local business community to prosper by

- working with other agencies to ensure the ongoing development of Chilworth Science Park
- promoting Adanac Park (east of M271) as a strategic site
- promoting Romsey as a visitor destination
- actively participating in economic partnerships for Southampton/South Hampshire
- supporting the provision of additional industrial land to address the needs of business(es) in south Hampshire, including southern Test Valley.

Promote the rural economy by

- encouraging business activity and employment in the rural area and the re-use of buildings in the countryside
- developing tourism in the rural area.

Support small businesses across the borough by

- contributing to the running of the network of business support organisations
- supporting the Borough Council's programme of Business Incentive Grants and Discretionary Rate Relief
- developing sector partnerships on Tourism, Town Centre Management and Environment and Health links (Health & Safety, Food Hygiene etc)
- the provision of small commercial premises on very short term licenses
- promote the availability of Broadband Internet to keep businesses and the area as economically competitive as possible.

Foster a mutually supportive relationship with the Test Valley business community by

- ensuring that all regulatory authorities, including the Borough Council, perform their jobs in a timely fashion in order for local businesses to thrive.

How will we show our progress?

You will be able to measure improvements in your local economy by

- An increase in the total number of VAT registered businesses in the borough (per 10,000 population)
- An increase in the number of jobs in the borough (per 10,000 population)
- An increase in the number of people of working age in employment
- An increase in the percentage of people with Level 2 qualifications
- An increase in the number of businesses and employees involved in training
- An increase in new land allocated and permitted for business use

Where can you find out more?

For full details of the proposed actions and targets, and other information about local economic issues, please see the reference section at the end of the Plan

The lead responsibility for the Partnership's work on economic matters has yet to be established. In the meantime please contact David Gleave at: The Test Valley

Partnership, Beech Hurst, Weyhill Road, Andover. Hants SP10 3AJ or by e-mail at d.gleave@yourtestvalley.com

PRIORITY 7 – A Place with strong local communities

The situation now

There are many strong and active local communities in Test Valley. In some areas, the sense of local community is less well developed. A significant amount of community and voluntary based activity already exists, but there is a need to improve co-ordination to meet the needs of diverse communities in both urban and rural areas.

House prices in Test Valley are higher than average for Hampshire and for the south-east as a whole. While employment levels in the borough are high, local jobs are typically low paid and, with average house prices of over £200,000, employers are finding it increasingly difficult to fill vacancies; a particular problem for keyworker posts. Over the next 8 years, a further 6,000 new homes are planned of which up to 40% will comprise affordable homes for people on lower incomes. The recent housing needs survey has shown that there is a shortfall of 832 affordable homes per year. The need for affordable homes is particularly acute in the rural areas where prices are higher. If strong local communities are to be created, house types must reflect the needs of the local community in terms of providing more affordable housing and housing for smaller households as well as those with disabilities. Local housing needs are fully detailed in the Test Valley Housing Strategy.

New housing areas must also include community facilities to encourage new developments to integrate and to foster community spirit. Both new and existing communities must be able to articulate their needs and shape their future and where required be provided with support to achieve this.

You told us

You want to foster community spirit and you want local communities to be given a 'voice' in local affairs and decision-making. You believe that strong local communities will help to reduce isolation and social exclusion, improve access to facilities and encourage people to feel safe and positive about the area in which they live. You also want more affordable housing.

Our aim

Is to support and encourage a strong sense of community. We will do this by enabling local people to articulate their needs and influence local decisions and to encourage pride and a feeling of safety in their local area. We will also ensure there is a suitable range of good quality housing in terms of cost, type, tenure, size and location.

We will

Support community groups and individuals in setting up and managing community projects and facilities by

- identifying local needs and resources
- setting up project groups to plan a co-ordinated approach to meeting identified needs
- supporting the production and distribution of community information

Improve the skills, confidence and well being of communities by

- identifying more community leaders, encouraging others to take on both formal and informal leadership roles and reach their potential
- identifying training facilities and resources
- prioritising action

Improve the co-ordination of community-based activities and resources by

- enabling the formation of community associations and groups
- sharing good practice between agencies and community groups
- working together

Equip residents to take part in influencing decisions by

- developing the role and raising the profile of community leaders and representatives
- identifying opportunities to seek the opinions and involvement of residents
- valuing our diverse communities
- ensure people know where to obtain information and how to influence decision making

Enable at least 100 new affordable homes to be provided per year by

- attracting public funding into the borough
- securing land and funding from developers
- ensuring affordable planning policies are fully implemented
- ensuring housing development helps to sustain existing settlements and contributes to establishing new communities that are balanced and inclusive
- ensuring new neighbourhood facilities are planned for and provided within new developments

Promote choice and increase resident satisfaction by

- providing more choice through the house letting process
- improving the environmental quality of residential areas and reducing the fear of crime

Ensure the Decent Homes standard is met by

- encouraging Housing Associations to improve their homes to meet the standard
- investing in the private sector to improve the homes of vulnerable people

Ensure there is a range of housing where support is provided to enable vulnerable people to live independently by

- assessing needs and priorities
- directing revenue towards flexible schemes which meet the needs of individuals in their own homes

Improve homelessness prevention and the quality of temporary accommodation by

- developing a homelessness strategy
- improving partnership working with landlords and housing providers
- increasing homelessness staffing resources
- improving the quality of the existing temporary housing provision

How will we show our progress?

You will be able to measure improvements in the strength of your local community by

- ❑ The number of new affordable homes provided per annum
- ❑ Numbers of applicants placed in bed and breakfast accommodation
- ❑ Percentage of homes complying with the Decent Homes Standard
- ❑ Resident satisfaction levels with their home and environment
- ❑ The percentage of people who feel they can influence decisions affecting their local area
- ❑ The percentage of people belonging to new and existing community/residents associations
- ❑ The number of successful lottery bids submitted by local organisations to develop new community initiatives

Where can you find out more?

For full details of the proposed actions and targets, please see the reference section at the end of the Plan. The key documents in which these details can be found are the Housing Strategy and Community Development Strategy.

John Spens and Janet Blann lead the Partnership's work on housing and community development matters and can be contacted at: The Test Valley Partnership, Beech Hurst, Weyhill Road, Andover. Hants SP10 3AJ or by e-mail at j.spens@yourtestvalley.com or j.blann@yourtestvalley.com

PRIORITY 8 – A Community that knows how to enjoy itself

Where are we now

Test Valley is a community of rich and varied cultures. Culture is often seen as a highbrow activity, but we use the term in the widest sense to include not just the arts, media and creative industries, but libraries and information, parks, gardens and nature reserves, heritage (museums and archives), tourism and visitor attractions, special events, sport and recreation, the built environment, countryside and landscape, traditions and customs, and so on. In Test Valley it can mean the poems on the pavements, classical music in Romsey Abbey, the Andover and Romsey Shows, motor racing at Thruxton or the floral promotions and contemporary sculpture that adorns some of our roundabouts. It also includes the host of organised activities that abound throughout the Borough. Test Valley is a happy blend of rural and urban communities with 900 different volunteer groups to prove the great diversity of our culture.

The 60% of the Borough's residents who live in urban surroundings enjoy the atmosphere of our two bustling market towns and at the same time have easy access to parks and playing fields. Wherever people live, they are only minutes away from a rural landscape, 40% of which has a landscape, ecological or heritage area designation.

But there are concerns that the area could become a cultural backwater if the major leisure facilities that a community this size expects are not provided. We have a good major road infrastructure giving those who have private transport easy access to the night life of Salisbury, Southampton and Basingstoke. But the Borough itself has only limited facilities to offer and lacks a cultural centre. Add to this poor public transport, rural isolation and a general feeling of low expectation and quite clearly "a need" is established. The future challenge will be to satisfy this need.

You told us

You told us that the standard of cultural provision varied within the Borough and that many facilities were in need of modernisation. You wanted improvements in activities for younger and older people, swimming pools, and public transport networks. You were particularly keen that there should be a cinema (or cinemas) in Test Valley. Many of you also told us that Andover town centre lacks a good choice of quality shops, restaurants and entertainment venues. You also think that if the town centres of Andover and Romsey felt safer, you would be more likely to visit them in the evenings.

You also told us that we had good walking and cycling routes and you'd like to see more of them and for them to be better publicised.

Our aim

Our aim is to enable all residents and visitors to enjoy the best in sports and cultural activities as healthy, happy residents make for a successful community.

We will

Improve the quality of existing cultural activities and create new opportunities for the community by

- developing more culturally vibrant town centres
- promoting the need for a new flexible arts and entertainment venue for Andover (to include cinema screens)
- employing planning policies to ensure new and existing developments are provided with appropriate leisure and cultural facilities.

Do our best to see that new and existing cultural activities

- are considerate to the needs of those living in areas of deprivation
- have better links with public transport
- increase participation amongst young people, the elderly and disabled people
- are used to divert people away from crime and anti-social behaviour

Use education and training to promote involvement in cultural activities by

- building on existing partnerships with local schools to increase the use of local sports facilities, arts venues, parks, woodlands and visitor attractions as part of the curriculum
- increasing the use of innovative library and museum resources

Encourage residents to improve their health and well-being through involvement in cultural activities by

- developing a network of Healthy Living Centres for young people.
- extending the range of activities available under the existing GP Referral Schemes
- co-ordinating 'Healthwalks' for those who can benefit from an increase in moderate physical activity

How will we show our progress?

You will be able to judge the way in which leisure and culture is improving your local community by reference to:

- Achievement of actions set out in the Partnership's recently published Cultural Strategy
- Records of participation rates in leisure and cultural activities (broken down into different activities)
- Records of satisfaction levels with leisure and cultural provision (broken down into geographical areas)
- Records of reported vandalism/anti-social behaviour incidences in public parks and open spaces

Where can you find out more?

For full details of the proposed actions and targets, please see the reference section at the end of the Plan. The key document in which these details can be found is the Cultural Strategy.

Madeline Edmonds leads the Partnership's work on the leisure and culture and can be contacted at: The Test Valley Partnership, Beech Hurst, Weyhill Road, Andover. Hants SP10 3AJ or by e-mail at m.edmonds@yourtestvalley.com

Words into Action

Making a difference: Each chapter of the community plan states the Partnership's aims and objectives for improving quality of life in the borough. Ultimately, the Partnership will be judged not by its intentions but by its actions. Of course, we must be realistic. The Partnership can't promise to work miracles, but it does believe that it can turn words into action. The Partnership's style of working will be one that focuses on achieving results and making a real difference. The cornerstones of this approach will be an emphasis on delivering action plans and publicly reporting progress. Above all, the style will be about people, not processes. The Partnership will not be a 'talking shop' where actions and progress are weighed down by bureaucratic processes.

Action plans: From April 2004, delivery of the aims and objectives in the community plan will be underway with the publication of an Action Plan for every chapter of the Plan. The Action Plans will set out in detail the steps needed to achieve the Partnership's objectives and will show which organisation or agency has agreed to be accountable for delivery of each action and by when. The Action Plans will be realistic. They will take account of the need to work within existing resources and include actions that can be achieved quickly and those that will take some time.

Progress: Beginning in April 2004, each year the Partnership will hold a Community Conference to publicly report its progress. The conference will bring together all local agencies and organisations and will be an opportunity to question those local representatives on any matter that affects quality of life in the borough. It will invite local organisations, agencies and individuals to help to update and refresh the community plan by telling the Partnership what are the local issues that need addressing. It will also encourage the local community to consider how they can contribute to the action plans and how we can all work together to be more effective without adding to costs.

People not processes: At the core of the Partnership is a belief that the key to making a real difference lies not in structures and processes but in hearts and minds. What the Partnership is really all about is connecting people and encouraging us all to work together towards the common goal of improving quality of life in the borough. For the first time, one Partnership brings together public, private, voluntary and community sector organisations and agencies across the borough. For the first time, the key players within these sectors have agreed to meet regularly as a 'Steering Group' to guide the work of the Partnership. And for the first time, everyone in the local community has the opportunity to attend a community conference where all sectors will be represented so that whatever the issue raised, there will be someone to take responsibility.

What other information is available?

A considerable amount of further detailed information can be found in a range of other plans, strategies and reference documents. The following selection may be of some interest. The following existing strategies incorporate the Partnership's proposed actions for the chapter in question:

A Safe Community - Test Valley Community Safety Strategy
A Thriving Local Economy - Test Valley Long Term Economic Strategy
Strong Local Communities - Housing Strategy and Community Development Strategy
A Community that knows how to enjoy itself - Cultural Strategy

For information on how to contact any of the organisations or obtain any of the publications listed below please contact the Partnership Co-ordinator.

Priority 1 - A Safe Community

- Test Valley Community Safety Strategy (TVBC, HCC, Hampshire Constabulary 2002 - 2005)
- Hampshire Constabulary:
 - i. Andover Division Annual Service Plan
 - ii. Eastleigh and Romsey Division Annual Service Plan

Priority 2 - A Clean & Attractive Community

- Partnership Action Plan (to be developed)
- Local Agenda 21 Strategy (TVBC December 2000)
- Hampshire Biodiversity Action Plan
- Test Valley Biodiversity Action Plan (under draft)
- Borough Local Plan (Draft Deposit) (TVBC January 2003)
- Project Integra
- Walworth Industrial Estate report
- Environment Agency www.environment-agency.gov.uk
- South East Climate Change partnership www.climatesoutheast.org.uk

Priority 3 - Meeting Transport Needs in Your Area

- Partnership Action Plan (to be developed)
- Borough Local Plan (Draft Deposit) (TVBC January 2003)
- Local Transport Plan 2001-2006 (HCC 2001)
- Cycle Strategy (TVBC February 2003)
- Test Valley Transport Report (TVCS November 1997)
- Accessible Transport Strategy (HCC)
- Area Transport Strategies (HCC)

Priority 4 - A Community that Values Education and Lifelong Learning

- Partnership Action Plan (to be developed)
- Hampshire County Council Early Years Development and Childcare Plan (2001-2004)
- Hampshire County Council Education Development Plan (2002-2007)
- Hampshire County Council Local Public Service Agreement (2002-2005)
- Hampshire County Council Hampshire Adult Learning Plan (2003-2004)

- Hampshire County Council Hampshire Youth Strategy (2003-2006)
- Hampshire County Council Behaviour Support Plan (2001-2004)
- The South Central Connexions Partnership Business Plan (2002-2005)
- Hampshire and the Isle of Wight Learning & Skills Council Workforce Development Implementation Plan (LSC 2003-2004)
- Learning and Skills Council Basic Skills Strategy
- Learning and Skills Council Annual Plan (LSC 2003-2004)
- Higher Education Funding Council “Partnership in Progression” (2003)
- Skills Strategy for Great Britain – Government White Paper (June 2003)

Priority 5 - A Community that Encourages Healthy Lifestyles

- Partnership Action Plan (to be developed)
- Mid Hampshire Primary Care Trust Health Status Report (September 2001)
- Mid Hampshire Health and Modernisation Programme (2002 - 2005)
- Eastleigh and Test Valley South Primary Care Trust (Source Document for Implementing the Local Health Delivery Plans) (November 2002)
- Eastleigh and Test Valley South Primary Care Trust Health Improvement and Modernisation Plan, Stakeholder Event (August 2002)

Priority 6 - A Community with a Thriving Local Economy

- Test Valley Long Term Economic Strategy (TVBC 2000 - 2005)
- Test Valley Economic Development Strategy (TVBC 2000/01, 2001/02, 2002/03)
- Revised Regional Economic Strategy (SEEDA 2003)
- Test Valley Rural Strategy (TVBC August 2002)
- Borough Local Plan (Draft Deposit) (TVBC January 2003)

Priority 7 - A Place with Strong Local Communities

- Housing Strategy (TVBC 2002 - 2007)
- Community Development Strategy (TVBC June 2003)
- Homelessness Strategy (TVBC 2003 - 2004)
- Borough Local Plan (Draft Deposit) (TVBC January 2003)
- Supporting People Strategy (HCC 2003 - 2004)
- Housing Conditions Survey
- Housing Needs Survey (TVBC 2002)
- Nominations & Allocations Survey
- Registered Social Landlords Development Charter
- Community Safety Strategy (TVBC, HCC, Hampshire Constabulary)
- Achieving Developing Communities – School of Public Policy, Birmingham University (November 2001)
- Community Development Best Value Review (TVBC November 2001)
- Audit Commission – Quality of Life Indicators
- Leisure Service Business Plan (TVBC April 2003)
- Housing Service Business Plan (TVBC April 2003)
- Andover Family Learning Project, Longmeadow Centre, Cricketer’s Way, Andover

Priority 8 - A Community that knows how to enjoy itself

- Cultural Strategy (TVBC 2003 - 2004)
- Leisure & Culture Action Group minutes and agendas
- Best Value Improvement Plan

- Leisure Service Business Plan (TVBC April 2003)
- Leisure Services Performance Plan

If you would like any further information on 'Your Test Valley' Community Plan or require a copy of the Plan in a different format, please contact the Partnership Co-ordinator on tel: 01264 368105 or e-mail: thetestvalleypartnership@testvalley.gov.uk

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