

ITEM 8 Test Valley Partnership Annual Review

Briefing Note of the Policy Manager

(Portfolio: Leader)

SUMMARY:

- The Test Valley Partnership is the single strategic partnership for the Borough. Its role is to bring together key partner organisations who can then work jointly on the things that can't be achieved by any one organisation alone.
- The Partnership meets as a whole group twice a year (April and November). In between these meetings partners work together on delivering joint activities. Examples covered in this briefing note include; Local Resilience Planning, Supporting Families programme and the Our Place project as part of Romsey Future.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This briefing note is to provide members of OSCOM with an update on the work of the Test Valley Partnership.

2 Background

- 2.1 The Test Valley Partnership is the single strategic partnership for the Borough. Its role is to bring together key partner organisations who can then work jointly on the things that can't be achieved by any one organisation alone. It also provides an important communication network in which partners can get to know each other more and, as a result, break down organisational barriers. The Partnership is chaired by the Leader of the Council.
- 2.2 The Test Valley Partnership was established in its current form in 2013. Previously two key strategic partnerships existed in the Borough, namely the Test Valley Partnership (the Local Strategic Partnership) and the Test Valley Community Safety Partnership.
- 2.3 It became clear to partners that the national and local level environment in which both partnerships operated changed considerably since their initial creation. Following a review of how the partnerships were working in 2012, a proposal to bring together the Community Safety Partnership and the LSP as one body was endorsed and a merger was undertaken. The benefits of establishing a single partnership for Test Valley has enabled working efficiencies to be made whilst ensuring that the benefits of partnership working are not lost. This approach is unique in Hampshire.

3 How the Partnership operates

3.1 The new Partnership was launched at a conference in summer 2013. It brought together a wide range of stakeholders from across the Borough who helped set the strategic focus for the Partnership. The four areas that have emerged as the strategic focus are:

- **Going Local** which focuses on opportunities for how services can collaborate more closely thereby improving access to them across rural and urban areas.
- **Living Well** which focuses on developing sustainable community-led approaches to health and wellbeing.
- **Supporting Families** which focuses on delivering the Government's "Troubled Families" agenda. The work in Test Valley has an emphasis on improving quality of life for families who need the most support so that in time their reliance on services will reduce.
- **Communities**, which focuses on building the capacity and skills of local areas so that they can address the issues that matter most to them.

3.2 The Partnership meets as a whole group twice a year (April and November). In between these meetings partners work together on delivering joint activities. For example, the Community Safety Management Group works throughout the year on addressing more localised and tactical issues; the Supporting Families group of partners works throughout the year on delivering the Early Help Hub; finally, partners have been working with parish councils on strengthening local resilience which came out of the flooding events of 2014.

3.3 By streamlining partnership arrangements, which included practical measures such as reducing the number of meetings, we have seen a sustained engagement of partners and more of a focus on delivering together on the ground. As a result, the Test Valley Partnership has reinvented itself in a time when many other strategic partnerships in other areas have fallen away.

4. Examples of recent work developed with partners through the Test Valley Partnership

4.1 *Test Valley Resilience Forum*

The Test Valley Resilience Forum has been in existence since November 2014 and has been very successful in encouraging communities to develop their own Local Resilience Plans. The Forum was brought together through the Test Valley Partnership, as the floods of 2014 had highlighted some excellent examples of communities working together with the emergency services and statutory agencies to deal with some very difficult circumstances in their towns and villages.

Whilst the floods provided the catalyst for the creation of the Forum, there are a number of other scenarios where having a Local Resilience Plan in place can greatly assist communities and service providers in coordinating a successful response to an incident.

Due to the established relationships that have been fostered through the Test Valley Partnership, stakeholders quickly came together around this area of work with real commitment and resources.

4.2 *Supporting Families*

The Government's Supporting (Troubled) Families Programme was launched in April 2012 with the aim of 'turning around' the lives of some 120,000 troubled families by the end of May 2015. This was a unique opportunity to explore how the public sector can work in new and joined up ways to improve and transform the lives of families and communities across Hampshire.

The families supported by the programme have long standing and complex issues, which the Government estimates costs the taxpayer approximately £9billion a year, most of which is spent on reacting to their problems. The three most common issues which lead to problems within families are mental health, violence from child to parent and debt management.

The Supporting Families programme is now in its second phase, having exceeded its targets in phase one. Although funding has been reduced, the number of families supported by the programme has tripled. In Test Valley, the Early Help Hub, which brings together the key agencies, is working well. For example, cases are being reviewed on the same week that they are submitted, which has ensured that the next steps to support families can be arranged as quickly as possible.

A number of partnership projects are being developed through the programme. A recent example is where Supporting Families are working with schools, parents and the Fire Brigade to provide a mentoring service to support those children in danger of dropping out from education.

At the last meeting of the Test Valley Partnership, Supporting Families and Andover Mind discussed with partners their plans to deliver a youth counselling service, which provides support to young people aged 13-23 in both one-on-one and group settings. Andover Youth Counselling are running in all the towns schools and in Andover College and are currently running a waiting list, which shows how well received and supported this service has been.

The Supporting Families programme will now be funded until 2020. Partners will be shortly coming together to develop the ongoing priorities for Test Valley.

4.3 *Romsey Future & the Romsey Rendezvous Our Place project*

Over the past two years, local people and organisations in Romsey have been working together to create a strategic vision for the town. Through extensive consultation, the Romsey Future vision document has been produced which sets out a vision and set of ambitions that will guide the town's development over the next twenty years.

As part of developing Romsey Future, a number of key projects have already been delivered with the support of partners who form the Test Valley Partnership. A good example of this was the Our Place project which focused on developing the Romsey and Woodley Rendezvous model. Our Place is a Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) programme which provides support to communities to develop more community based services which have been prioritised by local people.

The Romsey and Woodley Rendezvous initiatives are pop-up cafes which are run by local volunteers with the support of a range of organisations. The overall aim of this work is to support people to live independently for as long as possible and to explore the role the community can play in shaping services at a grass roots level. The focus of the Rendezvous project is to join the dots together within the community to help make it easier for older people, disabled people and those that care for them to access the right information, advice and support at the right time and in the right place.

Through the Our Place programme, organisations who form the Test Valley Partnership worked alongside community organisations based within Romsey to pilot the approach and to develop an "operational plan". The plan has been reviewed and endorsed by Government which has meant that partners have been able to use the plan as a basis on which to draw in new support and use as part of the business case for future funding. Over the last twelve months the project has grown and there are new pop-up cafes being developed across southern Test Valley.

5. **Conclusions**

- 5.1 Partnership working in Test Valley has always been very strong. Partners have developed good organisational relationships and there is a clear purpose about what is trying to be achieved overall rather than focusing on overly complex partnership structures.
- 5.2 With this outlook in place, partners could see that in order to safeguard and improve on the very best of what partnership working can deliver, there was a need to re-shape the strategic partnerships in Test Valley. Having taken this step it means that there is still a strategic partnership in the Borough when other areas have lost theirs and most importantly, the track record of taking forward joint work and delivering real results for local communities has been sustained.

<u>Background Papers (Local Government Act 1972 Section 100D)</u>			
None			
<u>Confidentiality</u>			
It is considered that this report does not contain exempt information within the meaning of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, and can be made public.			
No of Annexes:	Nil	File Ref:	
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