

Item 6

REPORT TO CABINET

28 JULY 2005

REPORT OF CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

All Portfolios

SEDGEFIELD BOROUGH COMMUNITY STRATEGY 2005-2008 ACTION PLAN

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report seeks approval for the first three-year Action Plan (for the period 2005-2008) developed through Sedgefield Borough Local Strategic Partnership in support of the Community Strategy for the Borough approved by Council in July 2004. The Plan is attached as an Appendix to the report.
- 1.2 The report outlines the development process for the Plan, how it will be performance managed, how progress will be reported to stakeholders and the local community and how it will be refined and developed in the future.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Cabinet...

- 1 Approves the first three-year Action Plan prepared in support of the Borough's Community Strategy.
- 2 Delegates approval of amendments to the Action Plan to the Chief Executive Officer in consultation with the LSP Chair.

3 COMMUNITY STRATEGY ACTION PLAN

Community Strategy

- 3.1 Part 1 of the Local Government Act 2000 places a duty on local authorities to prepare a Community Strategy to improve the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of their areas. A Community Strategy will...
 - Allow local communities (based upon geography and/or interest) to articulate their aspirations, needs and priorities
 - Co-ordinate the actions of the council, and of the public, private, voluntary and community organisations that operate locally
 - Focus and shape existing and future activity of those organisations so that they effectively meet community needs and aspirations; and

- Contribute to the achievement of sustainable development both locally and more widely, with local goals and priorities relating, where appropriate, to regional, national and even global aims.
- 3.2 The Act also provides the opportunity to utilise a Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) – comprising representatives from across the public sector, business interests and the local community – as the vehicle for the development and implementation of the Strategy.
- 3.3 Legislation and statutory guidance requires that a Community Strategy have four key components...
 - 1 A long-term vision for the area focusing on the outcomes that are to be achieved
 - 2 An action plan identifying shorter-term priorities and activities that will contribute to the achievement of long-term outcomes
 - 3 A shared commitment to implement the action plan and proposals for doing so
 - 4 Arrangements for monitoring the implementation of the action plan, for periodically reviewing the community strategy, and for reporting progress to local communities
- 3.4 The Council delegated the development of the Borough's Community Strategy to Sedgefield Borough LSP in 2002 and subsequently approved a Strategy for 2004-2014 in July 2004. This Strategy was based on needs and aspirations identified through the community appraisals process and shaped by an extensive consultation process involving local communities and LSP partners.

Action Plan

- 3.5 The Community Strategy identifies four ambitions – for the Borough to be healthy, prosperous, attractive and strong – and outlines how this will be achieved over the next ten years. However, the development process emphasised that the Action Plan element required further attention and in approving the Strategy, the Council committed itself to developing with partners a separate, comprehensive Action Plan document, which would...
 - Identify appropriate and SMART shared outcome measures against the aims and objectives of the Strategy
 - Baseline these measures to establish the current situation prevailing in the Borough
 - Establish short, medium and long-term targets for the outcome measures taking into account national targets and local needs and aspirations
 - Identify the short to medium term activities, resources and responsibilities of partners that will move the Borough from the baseline towards the target position over the next three years
 - Provide an opportunity for partners to begin to align their operational budgets for the Borough in support of the jointly agreed aims and to secure sustainable improvements
- 3.6 This Action Plan has been in development since September 2004. The process has been coordinated by Strategy and Regeneration and involved...
 - Meetings with key service providers to complete an agreed Action Plan template
 - Drafts considered by Policy Groups and key personnel and signed-off by the LSP Board
 - A Data Management Group comprising key statistics/research personnel from each thematic area to populate the template with performance data and targets

- 3.7 The value of the Action Plan is that it collates all partners' key targets and activity related to Community Strategy objectives in one document for the first time. It also takes into account targets set in the development of the Shared Priorities between Central and Local Government; National and Local PSA targets; the Safer and Stronger Communities Fund agreement for the Borough; relevant national, regional and sub-regional strategies; the County Durham Strategic Vision and the needs and ambitions of local people.
- 3.8 At the same time it is important to recognise that the Plan is an early milestone in the development of LSP joint working and will be a platform for further development, particularly in relation to LSP Performance Management Framework.

LSP Performance Management Framework

- 3.9 In addition to the routine performance monitoring and management of improvement programmes via the partnership structure, the LSP is subject to a Government prescribed Performance Management Framework (PMF). Specifically, the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit (NRU) has established three core criteria for LSP performance management...
1. An annual **Review of Outcomes** – measuring progress on achieving Neighbourhood Renewal related National Floor Targets and supporting local targets in each thematic area (including narrowing of the gap between deprived communities and the rest) and the plausibility of LSP activity designed to achieve these targets, including the allocation of NRF.
 2. A triennial **Review of Partnership Working** – an evolution of the LSP accreditation arrangements.
 3. **Improvement Plans** flowing from both reviews to be approved by Government Office at Annual Review meetings and progressed by the LSP in the interim period, with the Outcomes Improvement Plan focusing on priority neighbourhoods and directing the use of NRF.
- 3.10 Clearly the annual Review of Outcomes will usefully double as an opportunity to review progress against the Community Strategy Action Plan and so add value to the action planning process.

Next steps

- 3.11 The Action Plan offers a firm platform for the further development of joint working and performance management across the LSP. Specifically this will include the following initiatives...

Improving efficiency

The Action Plan sets out the key issues and challenges for partners to address in the development and delivery of services. Activity to improve services and narrow the gap have been undertaken to date in line with the Local Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy (LNRS) 2002-2007 utilising partners' mainstream budgets and amongst other resources, Neighbourhood Renewal Funding (NRF). NRF in particular has been used as a lever to begin to steer the way that core funding is spent by organisations operating within the Borough in order to increase focus on disadvantaged areas.

However, NRF is currently identified as being available only up to 2006 and other funding streams are likely to expire over the next two years. It is recognised that in order to achieve the Vision for the Borough within the specified ten-year period, partners must improve capacity and effectiveness through joint working and identify and secure additional resources to support the delivery of the Community Strategy and contribute to Government requirements in respect of public sector efficiency. This will involve...

- Mapping the resources flowing into the Borough from all partners and from grant funding and comparing this with the other Durham Districts and areas of comparable disadvantage
- Joining up research, survey and strategy development and rationalising current activity where appropriate
- Identifying further areas of shared responsibility where multi-agency planning and delivery will increase the benefit to local people and progressing these accordingly
- Ensuring that all partners adhere to appropriate sustainability appraisal and risk management procedures in the planning and delivery of services

Area Frameworks

Area Framework documents will also be developed in order to drive down Strategy objectives to local community level and to address specifically areas of disadvantage. These communities have been defined in line with the Borough's five Area Forums – Newton Aycliffe, Spennymoor, Shildon, Ferryhill, Chilton and West Cornforth and the Rural East of the Borough (the Trimdons, Fishburn, and Sedgfield Village). The Frameworks will provide a vision for how areas will develop over the next ten years and will be developed, in close consultation with the local communities and Town and Parish Councils over the next three years. The development of the Frameworks will be aligned with the pilot Local Area Agreement for County Durham (and the neighbourhood arrangements that will be introduced to support this), the emerging Local Development Framework and existing Parish Plans.

- 3.12 The Action Plan is a rolling three-year document and it is anticipated that this first plan will be the basis for future development and refined significantly, particularly in its first year of operation. Consequently it is proposed that to improve flexibility Cabinet delegates approval of amendments to the Action Plan to the Chief Executive Officer in consultation with the LSP Chair and that the Plan be reviewed at the end of its first year and at regular intervals thereafter, with the frequency to be determined following the first review. Furthermore, in order to ensure that the Community Strategy continues to reflect the priorities and aspirations of the local community, it will be fundamentally reviewed every three years and republished accordingly.

Reporting progress

- 3.13 Following the annual Review of Outcomes, the LSP will prepare an Annual Report setting out progress against the Community Strategy and make this available to the local community to coincide with its Annual General Meeting in July. The report will focus on key Community Strategy indicators only in order to illustrate the general direction of travel.

Corporate policy implications

- 3.14 The Community Strategy and its Action Plan are closely aligned with the 20 year Strategic Vision for County Durham and fulfil a central role in the Council's strategic policy framework by clearly articulating a joint community and stakeholder vision for the Borough and providing the context for the Council's corporate strategy development and service planning.
- 3.15 The Corporate Plan will demonstrate those areas of activity that the Borough Council will undertake as part its commitment to the delivery of the aims of the Community Strategy. Council activity and performance-related data contained within this Action Plan are consistent with the recent second iteration of the Corporate Plan.

4 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The only costs incurred during the development of the Action Plan have been in respect of officer time. The costs of printing/publishing the Plan will be met from within the existing Community Strategy budget.
- 4.2 The Action Planning process will proceed to identify areas and resources to be utilised in delivering the Community Strategy. It is acknowledged that partners must improve capacity and effectiveness through joint working and identify and secure additional resources to support the delivery of the Strategy and contribute to Government requirements in respect of public sector efficiency.

5 CONSULTATIONS

- 5.1 The Community Strategy is built upon consultation as a core principle. Beyond the initial priority setting exercise, based on a number of local community appraisals, the draft consultation Community Strategy was developed as a progression of the LSP's Local Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy and was subject to public consultation that commenced in August 2003 and concluded with the LSP's Annual Conference in November 2003.
- 5.2 Whilst no additional public consultation was required for the supporting Action Plan, its development has been discussed in detail with partners both within and outside of the LSP structure.
- 5.3 Further consultation will be necessary during the refinement of the Action Plan over time (e.g. with Town and Parish Councils in the development of the Area Framework documents) and specific consultations with the public to identify local perceptions of improvements in quality of life may be commissioned.

6 OTHER MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

6.1 Legal Implications

The CSAP ensures compliance with the provisions of Local Government Acts 1999/2000 and associated statutory guidance.

- 6.2 **Risk Management**
The Plan facilitates the management of high-level risks to the Council by acting as a springboard for the development of partnership and joint-working arrangements.
- 6.3 **Efficiency/ Procurement**
The Plan facilitates required efficiency gains by identifying opportunities for the development of partnership and joint-working arrangements.
- 6.4 **Sustainability**
Sustainability is a core principle of the Community Strategy. Following an assessment of the Community Strategy by partners at a GONE event in February 2005, the Plan covers the issues set out in the Integrated Regional Framework for the North East and in addition will be subject to comprehensive sustainability appraisal when the process is established, in line with the move towards 'Sustainable Community Strategies'.
- 6.5 **Information Technology**
ICT is a crosscutting theme of the CSAP, which is aligned with the E-Government agenda.
- 6.6 **Human Rights**
The Plan in no way contravenes the Human Rights Act 1998.
- 6.7 **Equality and Diversity**
A key principle of CSAP – LSP has assumed responsibility for coordinating partners' equality strategies and developing a Community Cohesion Strategy for the Borough.
- 6.8 **Social Inclusion**
Accessibility is a crosscutting theme of the Community Strategy. The CSAP outlines the approach to promoting the wellbeing of the whole community, but explicitly addresses those neighbourhoods and groups that experience particular disadvantage.
- 6.9 **Neighbourhoods**
The Borough's Local Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy has been subsumed within the Community Strategy and the CSAP will develop a pronounced neighbourhood focus over time through the development of Area Frameworks.
- 6.10 **Children and Young People**
A third crosscutting theme of the CSAP, which is aligned with the ongoing preparatory work for the County Durham Children and Young People's Plan.
- 6.11 **Crime and Disorder**
The CSAP summarises arrangements within the Borough to address the requirements of crime and disorder legislation and furthers the process of mainstreaming required by the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.

7 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 Whilst there are no specific Overview and Scrutiny implications arising from the preparation of the Community Strategy Action Plan, the Community Strategy and/or

any of its related documents could be subject to overview and scrutiny if this is considered appropriate.

8 LIST OF APPENDICES

Community Strategy Action Plan 2005-2008

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Wards: Impacts on all wards, but as a summary of existing plans and strategies, contains no new information for approval.

Key Decision Validation: Development of the Plan was approved in July 2004; approval is not a key decision as no new information is included.

Background Papers:

- Local Government Act 1999
- Local Government Act 2000
- Sedgefield Borough Community Strategy 2004-2014

Examination by Statutory Officers

	YES	N/A
1 The report has been examined by the Councils Head of the Paid Service or his representative	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 The content has been examined by the Councils S.151 Officer or his representative	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3 The content has been examined by the Council's Monitoring Officer or his representative	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4 The report has been approved by Management Team	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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