

Overview and Scrutiny Management Board



25 March 2014

Cabinet

19 March 2014

Sustainable Community Strategy

Report of Corporate Management Team

Report of Lorraine O'Donnell, Assistant Chief Executive

Councillor Simon Henig, Leader of the Council

Councillor Brian Stephens, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhoods and Local Partnerships

Purpose of the Report

1. To consider a draft of the renewed Sustainable Community Strategy for County Durham, prior to consideration by full Council on 2 April 2014.

Background

2. The Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) is the overarching plan for County Durham which sets out our optimistic and ambitious vision for the future and sets the direction for the work of the County Durham Partnership.
3. The present strategy, covering 2010 – 2030, has been in place for the last three years and is now being refreshed to reflect the changing landscape and need to deliver services with fewer resources. The new strategy will therefore embed strong cross thematic work, build on community strengths, support local communities to help themselves, promote and guide collective action, help us to focus interventions in localities and make the best use of existing networks.
4. The SCS has been amended to reflect changes in local priorities as well as national policy changes. The Council and partners have maintained and strengthened partnership working in times of significant national and local change to ensure service delivery continues to meet existing need and where possible to prevent the need for costly services in the future. There is a continued focus on improving the quality of life for people and reducing inequalities within across the county.
5. Cabinet agreed the SCS high level objectives listed in appendix two for all five priority themes at the meeting held on 20 November 2013, and these were also considered by Corporate Issues OSC on 25th November 2013.

Overview

6. Significant elements of the renewed strategy include:
 - a. Showing that the partnership has a clear strategic direction and is ready to seize opportunities and face challenges together;
 - b. The economy remains the county's top priority;
 - c. The delivery of the SCS is underpinned by the County Durham Plan which is the spatial expression of the strategy and as such provides details on proposed housing, employment and retail developments across the county;
 - d. There are many successes to build on, however all partners recognise there are challenges ahead;
 - e. We are maximising benefits by working with our wider networks including the voluntary and community sector, local councils, armed forces and faith communities;
 - f. All partners understand the interdependencies of their work as well as that the needs of communities are different across the county;
 - g. We are supporting local communities through building capacity and utilising the skills, knowledge and experience within them;
 - h. Moving forward there will be a need to make tough decisions in a timely manner;
 - i. With all of these in mind we can still be optimistic about the future.

7. The five thematic partnerships show how they have developed their work plans and individual strategies since 2010 and have many strengths and achievements on which they can build upon when looking to the future to meet the challenges they have identified.

Cross Thematic Focus

8. In addition to the existing work of the thematic partnerships and high level objectives, it has been agreed that the renewed SCS should target a number of areas that need additional joined up working. The revised SCS will therefore have a stronger focus on issues that cut across more than one thematic priority, particularly those that will have a significant impact on the high level objectives of more than one thematic partnership (wider determinants and interdependencies).

9. Six most frequently mentioned issues were:
 - a. Job creation
 - b. Mental wellbeing
 - c. Stronger families
 - d. Volunteering
 - e. Alcohol
 - f. Reducing inequalities

10. These are being pursued as the focus of further work for the CDP Board and for inclusion within the SCS. Scoping work around the areas of cross thematic focus will consider how we can work differently to have a bigger impact on these issues over the next three to five years.

Approach

11. Over the last three years the commitment to work in partnership has grown and there is broad support that, at a time when we are facing increasing challenges, there is an even greater need to work together. The support for the partnership is based on the many achievements that have been made over recent years.
12. To be most effective it has been agreed that the CDP and particularly the CDP Board adopt a more proactive approach around the cross cutting themes detailed above. It will encourage community independence and support local people to take ownership to allow partners to focus on meeting the needs of the most vulnerable.

Recommendations and reasons

13. Members are asked to endorse the renewed Sustainable Community Strategy (appendix three) for presentation to Full Council on Wednesday 2 April 2014.

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Appendix 1: Implications

Finance - Area and Neighbourhood budgets are utilised and delivered through the 14 AAPs and ensure the Council (and AAPs) receive improved information on the outputs achieved through use of locality budgets.

Staffing - None

Risk - None

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty - The actions set out in this report aim to ensure equality and diversity issues are embedded within the working practice of AAPs.

Accommodation - None

Crime and Disorder - Altogether safer is the responsibility of the Safe Durham Partnership.

Human Rights - None

Consultation - The County Durham Partnership framework is a key community engagement and consultation function of the Council and its partners. The recommendations in the report are based on extensive consultation with AAP partners and the establishment of a Sounding Board to progress the recommendations will continue this consultative approach.

Procurement - None

Disability Issues - None

Legal Implications - None

Appendix two – high level objectives

- Altogether wealthier
 - Thriving Durham City
 - Vibrant and successful towns
 - Sustainable neighbourhoods and rural communities
 - Competitive and successful people
 - A top location for business
- Altogether better for children and young people
 - Children and young people realise and maximise their potential
 - Children and young people make healthy choices and have the best start in life
 - A think family approach is embedded in our support for families
- Altogether healthier
 - Children and young people make healthy choices and have the best start in life
 - Reduce health inequalities and early deaths
 - Improve the quality of life, independence and care and support for people with long term conditions
 - Improve the mental and physical wellbeing of the population
 - Protect vulnerable people from harm
 - Support people to die in the place of their choice with the care and support they need
- Altogether safer
 - Reduce anti-social behaviour
 - Protecting vulnerable people from harm
 - Reducing re-offending
 - Alcohol and substance misuse harm reduction
 - Embed the Think Family approach
 - Counter terrorism and prevention of violent extremism
 - Reduce road casualties
- Altogether greener
 - Deliver a cleaner, more attractive and sustainable environment
 - Maximise the value and benefits of Durham's natural environment
 - Reduce carbon emissions and adapt to the impact of climate change
 - Promote sustainable design and protect Durham's heritage