

## SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

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**REPORT TO:** Leader and Cabinet 8 March 2007  
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### SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY (SCS) FOR SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE 2007 TO 2010

#### Purpose

1. To update Members on progress on the review of the Community Strategy.

#### Background

2. South Cambridgeshire Strategic Partnership (LSP) currently has a Community Strategy covering the period 2003-2006.
3. The recent White Paper, *Strong and Prosperous Communities*, and the current Local Government and Involvement in Health Bill include new requirements and an central role for community strategies - now to be called Sustainable Community Strategies (SCSs)
4. Accordingly, the LSP is reviewing and revising the current strategy to cover the period 2007-2010 in accordance with the new requirements.
5. The current strategy has the following six aims:-
  - a) Active, Safe and Healthy Communities
  - b) Good Access to services
  - c) Successful new communities
  - d) A prosperous district
  - e) A good environment
  - f) Quality homes for all

#### Consultation and Research

6. Over the last few months the LSP has undertaken a programme of consultation and research – consisting of:-
  - a) Analysing existing consultation results and parish plans
  - b) Carrying out the Quality of Life survey and a Community Strategy postal survey
  - c) Holding discussion groups with residents from different parts of the district and at different life stages
  - d) Holding stakeholder workshops which have attended by Members of this Council, representatives of parish councils and voluntary/community groups and LSP partners.
  - e) Carrying out other statistical research
7. The results of this work was reported to the LSP Board on 9<sup>th</sup> January 2007 – some of the key results arising from the research are:-

- (a) The priorities arising from public consultation were:
- transport and traffic
  - housing and development
  - preservation of the environment
- (b) Other important issues identified for the SCS were:
- facilities for young people
  - health needs of older people
  - provision of sport, recreation and culture
  - addressing climate change (in particular the means to enable residents to recycle)
- (c) It was generally felt that the current six aims of the community strategy reflect the needs the SCS needs to address. However, some change may be necessary to reflect changes in needs or circumstances since 2003. For example, climate change, traffic and transport and community cohesion issues surrounding the traveller community are now stronger themes than three years ago.
- (d) Discussions at the stakeholder groups tended to reflect broader and longer term issues – for example, the future change towards a district of a more urban character as a result of the growth areas; the growing importance of tackling climate change; and the impact of demographic changes.
- (e) It was recognised as important to prioritise. All major public sector partners are experiencing acute resource difficulties and there are major issues which the district must address. In this context it may be appropriate to pursue some of the six aims more vigorously than others in the next three-year period.
- (f) There was a strong view from parish council and voluntary sector representatives that there should be greater involvement of parish councils and the voluntary sector in the development and delivery of the strategy.
8. A full copy of the consultation results can be obtained from Paul Swift - contact details are given at the end of the report.

### **Current Activity**

9. The current stage in the development of the SCS is the involvement of partners in the more detailed development of priorities and actions for strategy. The views of partners are being particularly sought through current partnership meetings of the Voluntary Sector Forum, Improving Health Partnership, Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership, Transport and Access Group, Children and Young People's partnership etc.
10. As part of this phase, it is intended to involve Members and officers of this Council in further work to develop the strategy – probably by way of workshops.

### **Overall Timetable and Links with the Local Area Agreement (LAA)**

11. All the five local strategic partnerships in Cambridgeshire are currently preparing their sustainable community strategies in line with the requirements in the recent White Paper and the legislation currently going through Parliament. It is expected that the

legislation will receive royal assent by autumn at which time final guidance will be issued by the government. However, local authorities and LSPs are advised not to delay the revision of their SCSs, as the guidance is not expected to make significant changes to the White Paper and previous guidance. However, there is a risk of amendments in the legislative process.

12. The Local Government and Involvement in Health Bill also includes proposals to formalise the requirement for local authorities to enter into Local Area Agreements (LAAs). LAAs will include central and local targets. It is expected that Sustainable Community Strategies will exert a considerable influence on the contents of LAAs. In fact LAAs are seen as the “delivery vehicle” for sustainable community strategies.
13. In this situation the five Cambridgeshire LSPs are working to the following timetable:-
  - a) to substantially approve their new SCSs by September or October.
  - b) to hold an LAA Board and LAA Reference Group workshop in November to identify priorities for the new LAA based on the priorities in sustainable community strategies
  - c) to prepare the new Cambridgeshire LAA (for April 2008 onwards) for submission in accordance with the required timetable in early 2008
14. To achieve this timetable we will need to complete our Sustainable Community Strategy by September/October 2007, which will therefore require the following steps:-
  - (a) Completion of the current stage of involvement of partners, Members and officers
  - (b) Draw up draft plan, action plan and targets for further discussion with partners
  - (c) Prepare final plan for consultation and approval of the LSP, Council and partners

#### **Links with the Council's Objectives and Priorities**

15. The Council has had the same Corporate Objectives for six years and the current priorities for three years. It has been agreed for some time that the Council needs to review and revise those objectives and bring them more into line with the Community Strategy.
16. It is therefore important for the Council to be fully engaged in the development of the Sustainable Community Strategy and for the process of setting clear priorities for this Council to reflect the emerging priorities for the Sustainable Community Strategy.

#### **Financial and Staffing Implications**

17. It will be important for the review of the Medium Term Financial Strategy and the Workforce Plan next September-November to take into account the plans in the Sustainable Community Strategy and also (as mentioned above) for the Sustainable Community Strategy to be realistic and focused, in view of the resource position of all the major partners.
18. Staffing resources for the development of the Sustainable Community Strategy are very stretched as a result of capping and the need to respond to other pressing needs such as the CGI report. Supporting the LSP and the Sustainable Community Strategy will be a high priority to be met from the £300,000 approved by the Council to respond to the CGI.

## **Recommendations**

19. Cabinet is recommended to:-

- (a) note the progress on the development of the Sustainable Community Strategy and the timetable to complete the strategy in time to influence the Local Area Agreement from April 2008.
- (b) request all Members to take advantage of opportunities to take part in the development of the Sustainable Community Strategy.
- (c) take account of the emerging priorities for the Sustainable Community Strategy in developing new priorities for the Council.

## **Background Papers:-**

- Existing community strategy
- Consultation and research report
- LAA Reference Group papers

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