

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Cabinet 13 July 2006
AUTHOR/S: Executive Director / Head of Community Services

REVIEW OF THE SOUTH CAMBS COMMUNITY STRATEGY

Purpose

1. This monitoring report sets out the progress made on delivering the priority actions in the Community Strategy.

Effect on Corporate Objectives

2.	Quality, Accessible Services	Coordination of partners' services through the strategy has enabled improvements to local service delivery.
	Village Life	The strategy promotes active, safe and healthy communities, where residents can play a full part in village life.
	Sustainability	The strategy has a role in developing sustainability, particularly through minimising waste and tackling climate change.
	Partnership	Development, delivery and monitoring of the strategy undertaken through the Local Strategic Partnership

Background

3. The Local Government Act 2000 requires Local Authorities to work in partnership with other agencies to agree and deliver a Community Strategy, to improve the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of residents. The purpose of the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) has been to deliver this, and the South Cambs Strategic Partnership was set up three years ago.
4. The South Cambs Community Strategy was agreed by the LSP in early 2004, and approved by our cabinet in April 2004. The strategy contains 25 priority actions within the six agreed aims of the strategy, to be delivered during the period April 2004 to March 2007.

Considerations

5. The **appendix** sets out the progress made in delivering the priority actions, which have been led by different partners and partnership delivery groups. The milestones in the middle column are those identified in 2004, with the right hand column setting out the progress made. After two of the three years of the strategy, good progress has been made on many of these actions.
6. For a number of the priority actions the milestones were not set at the time of the strategy's agreement; the LSP identified that they should be agreed as one of the Local Public Service agreement (LSPA or Local PSA) targets. These are measures agreed between central and local government, and whose achievement can earn significant sums in 'reward grant'. The LSPA targets were subsequently negotiated between central government and a partnership led by Cambridgeshire County Council working with the Districts. In most cases the LSPA anticipated in our strategy

were agreed later in 2004, though there were two actions, on Affordable Housing and Youth Provision, where the government did not agree the Cambridgeshire proposal.

7. The extent of progress made during the last two years has been affected by both local and national factors. Locally the amount of resources put in to the delivery has varied between different actions, and some of these have been affected by the Council Tax capping of this Council; for example, the amount of new cycleways in Action 18 has been affected by our budgetary reductions in this area.
8. National factors have affected Action 11, on Lifelong Learning, as central government changed the priorities of the Learning and Skills Council to concentrate on certificated skills development, with reducing resources available for 'leisure' courses delivered through village colleges. They have also affected Action 16, as government funding for community transport schemes has now been reduced with the demise of the Countryside Agency.
9. Some of the priority actions identified in the strategy were expected to be delivered for the whole of the three year period, while others were not expected to start until the second or third year. For example, Action 5 on play opportunities was not expected to be made until 2006/07, once the new Children and Young People structures in the County Council had been established; these are now in place.
10. Some of the priority action targets have already been exceeded, or are well on track to be exceeded. These include Action 7, on Parish Plans, and Action 22 on Access to the Countryside. In both these areas there has been strong local partnership work which has made great progress since 2004.
11. The delivery and coordination of the Community Strategy has been hampered by the limited resources available from partners to support the partnership work. A temporary 'non-establishment' post was created in 2004, to provide support for this work, but unfortunately once we were 'capped' this post was not able to continue. Since then there has been no dedicated officer time to support the LSP.
12. During the next 9 months a new Community Strategy will be developed for the period April 2007 to March 2010. Under revised government guidance this will now be termed our Sustainable Community Strategy. Work is currently underway to analyse the findings from a 'quality of life' survey and a resident survey to determine the wellbeing issues which most concern South Cambs residents. These views, together with the common issues from the completed Parish Plans in the district, will inform the development of the new strategy. It is anticipated that this will come to cabinet in March 2007 for approval, after it has been approved by the LSP.

Options

13. None.

Financial Implications

14. There are no direct financial implications of this report. However, the achievement of the LPSA targets should bring in reward grant funding to be shared between the 5 LSPs in the county. This funding can be used, at the discretion of the LSP and within the guideline agreed within Cambridgeshire, to support new projects/development work in the district.

Legal Implications

15. None.

Staffing Implications

16. Delivery of the Community Strategy depends on continued staff input within this Council as well as partner agencies.

Equal Opportunities Implications

17. The Community Strategy aims to improve the quality of life for all residents in the district. In recognition of the specific needs of Travellers, who are the largest minority group in the district, priority action 21 is aimed at identifying and meeting their needs.

Risk Management Implications

18. The government expect the Council to provide 'community leadership' of the LSP, ensuring the delivery of the Community Strategy. The risks of not fulfilling this role would affect the government's assessment of our performance.

Consultations

19. The progress in the appendix has been considered and noted by the LSP, which includes a wide range of partner organisations.

Conclusions/Summary

20. The progress on delivering the priority actions in the Community Strategy is on track to achieve most of the targets, and to earn significant sums of LPSA reward grant for the benefit of the district.

Recommendations

21. It is recommended that this progress report be noted.

Background Papers: the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report: Cabinet Report in April 2004 entitled South Cambs Community Strategy.

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