

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Planning and New Communities Portfolio Holders' meeting 20 May 2010
AUTHOR/S: Executive Director (Operational Services) / Corporate Manager (Planning and New Communities)

NEW COMMUNITIES PERFORMANCE REPORT 2009/10

Purpose

1. This report outlines the progress made by the New Communities Service in meeting its targets, as set in the published 2009/10 Service Plan. The Portfolio Holder is asked to note the progress made.
2. The information presented details the service performance for the period up to the end of quarter 4 (31 March 2010), with one or two exceptions where data is not yet available.
3. This not a key decision, and has been brought forward to inform the Portfolio Holder of the progress made over the last year, and was first published in November Forward Plan.

Recommendations

4. It is recommended that the portfolio holder note the progress made to date against identified targets, and notes the action taken on the exception areas.

Background

Overview

5. Overall the team has generally delivered strong performance against targets.

Council Actions

6. In 2009/10 The New Communities Service was charged with the delivery of eight Council Actions and a number of the Council's key indicators. The summary report (Appendix A) summaries progress made over the last year.
7. Of the eight Actions, six are complete and in some instances target have been exceeded for example, double the number of parishes (12 in total) have signed up to the Sustainable Parish Energy Project.
8. The remaining two Council Actions (promoting the development and take up of small businesses and identifying spin-offs from London 2012) are subject of on-going work with good progress having been made. The baseline study of business space is complete and will shortly be on the Council's website and a programme of events and possible spin-offs leading up to the Olympics has been developed and is being kept

under review. The first significant event in the countdown to the Olympics will be 'Park Life' to be held on Sunday 25th July at Milton Country Park.

Exceptions

9. Red indicators NC5 (Number of events in arts guide) did stand at 68% at quarter 3, however the Guide has since been discontinued as part of the Council's budgetary savings.
10. Amber indicators
 - (i) NC8 (Action plan to improve communications). The production and adoption of the engagement strategy has been reviewed in discussions with partners. It has been agreed that site specific strategies will now be produced for each growth site, overseen by the: Community Infrastructure and Services made up of Directors and Service Head from partner organisations and chaired by SCDC Corporate Manager - Planning and New Communities.
 - (ii) In some instances, the indicators are to be assessed annually for example N1008 (Adult participation in sport), N1010 (Young people's participation in positive activities), NI 011 (Engagement in the arts) N1 171 (Vat registered rate) and for these the data will not be available until Q3 of 2010/11. SCDC is involved in activities which will influence outcomes and it is anticipated that these will remain green.
 - (iii) N185a and b (CO2 reduction from local authority operations). Target of 10% reduction was agreed at the January Portfolio Holder meeting to be delivered by the end of 2010/11.
 - (iv) NI186 (per capita CO2 emissions in the local area). This indicator will always remain amber. The council is a key contributing agent, but precise quantification of this contribution will never be possible. The indicator value is provided annually by DEFRA and is subject to an 18-24 month time lag in reporting. NB. DEFRA have recently recalculated the 2005 baseline figure for South Cambs as 9.39t co2/year, the most recent figure shows a slight reduction to 9.7 t co2/year. The Sustainable Energy Parish Partnership is one example of a project run by SCDC to influence these figures.
11. Other areas of recent work to be noted include:
12. Customer satisfaction
 - a) The first survey of applicants of growth sites was carried in April 2010, conducted by way of a telephone survey. Out of 32 applicants/agents, 13 took part (40%). The majority of respondents were very satisfied with the service they received (54% rated the service 8 out of 10 or above, 31% rated the service 7, 15% rated the service 6).
 - b) Respondents find the service accessible, courteous and professional; a number noted the improvements since the dedicated New Communities Service was formed and several commented that SCDC were easier to work with than neighbouring authorities.

- c) Areas where improvements should be focussed are working with third parties and external consultees particularly Parish Councils and Cambridgeshire County Council. This could be in the form of more pre-application advice and providing developers with clear direction once comments are received from these parties. Timely discharge of planning conditions is an area where it is recognised that progress has improved. The Planning IT system will assist further.
- d) The survey will be conducted on an annual basis in future.

13. Northstowe Ecotown Bid

Officers from New Communities Service coordinated a joint authority working group which made the successful Ecotown bid in February 2010. The bid was awarded £1.135m March 2010 and officers are now taking forward the Demonstrator Project at Rampton Drift and refining the brief for additional studies.

Implications

14.

Financial	None. It should be noted that the performance of the service has been achieved against a background of a reduction in expenditure.
Legal	None
Staffing	The New Communities service was undergoing a restructure during the quarter. Service performance has generally been maintained at high levels. Exceptions to this are highlighted with this report.
Risk Management	The New Communities service maintains a comprehensive risk register, which feeds major and significant risks to the corporate risk register. The Service is a contributor and key partner in wider strategic risk management regarding the delivery of growth sites, working with the City and County Councils within the Cambridgeshire Horizons Partnership.
Equal Opportunities	None.
Climate Change	Type here

Effect on Strategic Aims

15.

(a) Commitment to being a listening council, providing first class services accessible to all.

Action 06, to review grant system has been successfully completed.
NC9 Telephone survey of growth sites applicants completed April 2010.

(b) Commitment to ensuring that South Cambridgeshire continues to be a safe and healthy place for all.

Action 11 & NI110 are both green. Good progress is being made in this area.

(c) Commitment to making South Cambridgeshire a place in which residents can feel proud to live.

The Climate Change Action Plan will be presented to Council later this year. Strong delivery in the Sustainable Parish Energy Plan, with targets for number of Parish Councils engaged exceeded.

(d) Commitment to assisting provision for local jobs for all.

Economic Development indicators show that strong progress has been made in this area. The Economic Development strategy has, however been delayed, will be considered at July PFH meeting.

(e) Commitment to providing a voice for rural life.

(i) Improved work in the delivery of Section 106 agreements has been carried out. The establishment of a single database of agreements and the monitoring of existing agreements has been put in place.

Conclusions / Summary

16. The service has performed strongly and generally met its aim of delivering the Council Actions and objectives within the agreed timescales. This has been completed against a backdrop of meeting identified savings targets within the year and undertaking a significant restructure.

Background Papers: the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

New Communities Customer Service Satisfaction Survey April 2010.
Arts Development Action Plan 2009-12 Update.

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