

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Leader's Portfolio Holder Meeting

15 July 2010

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CAMBRIDGESHIRE RURAL STRATEGY 2010-2015

Purpose

1. To introduce the final version of the Rural Strategy for Cambridgeshire 2010-2015 and highlight the key ambitions that relate to the Council and its strategic aims, approaches and actions.

This is not a key decision.

Recommendations and Reasons

2. That the Leader's Portfolio Holder meeting notes the ambitions within the Rural Strategy for Cambridgeshire 2010-2015, which will be taken forward by the Rural Forum on behalf of Cambridgeshire Together.

Background

3. Cambridgeshire Together commissioned the Cambridgeshire Rural Strategy in January 2009 to ensure that the partnership adequately reflects the distinct set of social, economic and environmental issues that impact the county's rural communities and businesses. Cambridgeshire Together previously supported the strategic work that underpinned the delivery of the Rural Strategy for Cambridgeshire 2006 - 2010.
4. The six local authorities in the county, NHS Cambridgeshire, Cambridgeshire Constabulary and Cambridgeshire ACRE jointly funded the development of the new strategy. South Cambridgeshire District Council provided £1,500, which is equal to the amount contributed by all other partners except the County Council who funded £4,000.
5. The strategy sets out a long-term vision and ambitions for rural Cambridgeshire.

Considerations

6. The key ambitions that are most relevant to the Council and its Aims, Approaches and Actions are:

Living in the Countryside

- (a) To ensure the allocation of resources takes account of all types of deprivation, including isolation and fuel poverty.
- (b) To work with planners to support the sustainability of smaller rural communities.
- (c) To provide more affordable homes in rural areas.
- (d) To understand the scale of hidden homelessness in rural Cambridgeshire.

- (e) To support communities so they are able to play a greater role in finding their own solutions for viable service provision.
- (f) To increase rural transport options.
- (g) To facilitate all rural communities in developing a clear vision for their own future through Community Led Planning.

Economic Well-Being

- (h) To build on the success of Cambridge to encourage more high skilled jobs and business growth in rural areas, reducing commuting.
- (i) To create the correct mix of business premises to allow business development and growth.

Land and Environment

- (j) To support communities with programmes of climate change adaptation and mitigation.
- (k) To develop a better understanding of food production.

- 7. An action plan for the period April 2010 to March 2012 has been produced to assist with the delivery of the strategy. The action plan includes target dates for completion as well as a lead organisation and key partners.
- 8. As would be expected of a rural district, the Council is already working on and prioritising the majority of ambitions for which it has a role. It is for each partner to decide upon its own priorities, but the strategy provides a framework for working with our partners where this is necessary to success.
- 9. It is acknowledged that financial constraints could delay the implementation of some actions, however, it was agreed that some ambition is good to ensure that we continue to strive to make a positive difference.

Options

- 10. To note the strategy and the similarities to the Council's strategic aims, approaches and actions.

Implications

11. Financial	The strategy will be delivered within available resources. Some priorities will take longer than others to achieve due to financial constraints.
Legal	None.
Staffing	None.
Risk Management	The main risks relate to
Equal Opportunities	The strategy provides an evidence base to ensure that strategic partnerships and Cambridgeshire Together partners have a balanced rural/urban agenda.
Climate Change	A priority of "adapting to and mitigating the impact of climate change" is included within the strategy.

Consultations

- 12. During 2009 Cambridgeshire ACRE held a number of consultation events across Cambridgeshire to gather the views of statutory agencies, community organisations,

rural business and individual residents on both the challenges and opportunities that living and working in rural Cambridgeshire presents.

13. At its meeting in December 2009 the Cambridgeshire Together Board agreed that the document headed Rural Cambridgeshire, Ensuring a Vibrant Future, A Rural Strategy for Cambridgeshire 2010-2015 should go out for consultation from 1 February – 23 April 2010 following which Cambridgeshire ACRE will produce a final document for consideration by Cambridgeshire Together.
14. The South Cambridgeshire Local Strategic Partnership Board commented upon the draft strategy on 17 February 2010.
15. Cambridgeshire Together was asked for final comments in February 2010 prior to the public consultation on the Strategy, which began on 1 February 2010 and ran until 23 April 2010. This was a 12-week period in line with the requirements of the Cambridgeshire Compact. There was a good response to the consultation, especially from parish councils.
16. Officers from various teams within the Council have provided comment on the strategy throughout its development.
17. All comments received were taken into consideration before finalising the strategy.

Effect on Strategic Aims

18. The findings from the research and consultation carried out during the development of the strategy will assist the Council in achieving its strategic aims, in particular the Council's commitment to providing a voice for rural life.

Conclusions / Summary

19. The Rural Strategy is a plan for the future viability of the county's rural areas by setting out a long-term vision for rural Cambridgeshire, along with a number of ambitions for partners to work towards. As a rural district, the strategy provides a basis for working with partners on some of our existing priorities as well as supplying an evidence base for future action.

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

- Rural Cambridgeshire: Ensuring a Vibrant Future – A Rural Strategy for Cambridgeshire 2010-2015
- Cambridgeshire Together Rural Strategy Action Plan for period running from 01-Apr-2010 – 31-Mar-2012

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