

Meeting of the Council – 5th December, 2005

Report of the Cabinet

Dudley Borough Challenge – Final Draft of the Community Strategy

Purpose of Report

1. To update Members on the progress of Dudley Borough Challenge and to consider the proposed content of the Community Strategy final draft document (attached).

Background

2. At its meeting on 15th July 2005, Cabinet endorsed that part of the Borough Challenge process leading through from the consultation phase to endorsement of a new Community Strategy. This is in accordance with the Local Government Act 2000, which requires the local authority to have a Community Strategy, developed in cooperation with those agencies that form the local strategic partnership. Consequently the Borough Challenge will act as a cornerstone for the future priorities and work of the Dudley Community Partnership.
3. Subject to the approval of the document, there will be a launch event for stakeholders on 13th December in Dudley Concert Hall. This will be followed in January by a public launch including a mobile road show.
4. On consideration of the information contained in this report, the Cabinet, at its meeting held on 2nd November, 2005, endorsed the final contents of the draft Community Strategy as submitted to the meeting for submission to the Council, subject to the views of members and partners. In this connection a meeting of the Dudley Community Partnership Board will be held on 1st December, 2005. Approval is now requested for the updated version of the Community Strategy attached subject to the incorporation of any minor amendments made at the meeting of the Partnership Board on 1st December.

Consultation

5. The consultation period was extended beyond April-July to late September, in order to allow groups meeting over the summer break a chance to participate. One of the last-run workshops involved day care centre users, who were keen to express their gratitude at being given the chance to have their say.
6. Consultation took several forms including workshops at events specifically organised for Borough Challenge; service provider meetings; household postal and email responses to the leaflet containing 15 suggested main outcomes; individual comments submitted; and by survey using the Citizens' Panel. In addition there are examples of consultation outside Borough Challenge that

nevertheless tie in, of which two examples are: “KidsMag” website survey for pupils; and consultation with young disabled people organised by Orchard House.

7. By these various means, the Council has received around 5000 responses - of which 3,100 are direct from the public leaflet delivered to every household. Over 40 “events” involving community groups and service provider staff have been held.
8. The collective response from consultation has resulted in:
 - Full endorsement of the overarching “Stronger Communities” central principle
 - Overwhelming endorsement to the priorities of:-
 - Prosperity
 - Well-being and Health
 - Heritage and Culture
 - Environment
 - Learning
 - Safe and Peaceful
 - The incorporation of the Challenges originally proposed within the Consultation document under the relevant priority heading
 - Otherwise, minor comment on wording, emphasis etc.
9. The content of the new Community Strategy reflects the public response from both phases of engagement – visioning and consultation - as can be seen at the head of each theme section of the document. Objectives contained within each theme are therefore expressed in a way that takes forward those aspirations. The document also contains a section on how it will be delivered.

Key Corporate Issues

10. As the overarching Community Strategy, Borough Challenge will exert influence over the hierarchy of the strategic plans of the Council, its partners and the themed partnership structure.
11. The Borough Challenge will be adopted as a “Sustainable Community Strategy” in accordance with latest government guidance. As such it will have implications for the Council’s policy response to environmental impact. In addition, the Borough Challenge will have embedded in it a revised Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy for the Borough, instead of the latter standing separately, as hitherto has been the case.

Finance

12. There are no financial implications for the Council at this stage.

Law

13. Under Section 4 of the Local Government Act 2000, every local authority must prepare a strategy for promoting or improving the economic, social and environmental well-being of their area and contributing to the achievement of sustainable development in the United Kingdom.

14. Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972 enables the Council to do anything which is calculated to facilitate or is conducive or incidental to the discharge of its functions.

Equality Impact

15. The underlying principle of Borough Challenge is that of fair and equal access to services and opportunities for all regardless of circumstance

Recommendation

16. That the draft Community Strategy, as attached to this report, be approved subject to the incorporation of any minor amendments made by the Dudley Community Partnership Board, at its meeting to be held on 1st December, 2005.

David Caunt

LEADER OF THE COUNCIL