

Agenda Item 10

Report of the Chief Executive to Stourbridge Area Committee, 20th June 2005

Dudley Borough Challenge – Consultation Phase III

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To update Members on the progress of Dudley Borough Challenge and proposals for consultation of the draft strategy document. “Dudley Borough Challenge” is the name given to the process of review of the Community Strategy.

2. Background

- 2.1 The first Dudley Borough Community Plan, prepared through the former Dudley Partnership Board, was published in 2000. It covered the five-year period to 2005. The plan was produced in advance of any statutory duty to publish a community strategy, but this is now a legal requirement arising from the Local Government Act 2000.
- 2.2 The Dudley Community Partnership Executive agreed a process for the production of a new community strategy, the Dudley Borough Challenge, to cover the period 2005 – 2020. Phase I (June - December 2004) was a pre-consultation stage in which members from a wide range of communities, together with service providers, articulated their visions of the kind of borough they would like to see developed by the end of this plan period. Over 700 individuals took part in that process. Phase II took those vision statements and coalesced them into a number of “areas of focus” in order to construct debates with expert service providers. The outcome of this is the draft strategy which now needs to be tested through consultation.
- 2.3 Consultation will involve the following groups:
- Customers/citizens
 - Local businesses
 - Partners in voluntary, public and private sectors
 - Service providers
 - Elected members
 - Key regional and subregional bodies
 - Neighbouring authorities
 - Government Office West Midlands

3 Content of the New Draft Strategy

3.1 At the core of the new strategy is the vision of “**Stronger Communities**” and the strategy sets out a number of aspects of life in a strong community. This is the aspiration. Leading on from this are **five themes**:

- 1 Making Dudley Borough a safe and peaceful place to live
- 2 Promoting good health and well-being for all
- 3 Creating a prosperous and attractive borough
- 4 A learning community
- 5 Safeguarding and improving our environment

3.2 Each theme contains (a) information on what has been achieved over the last 4 years; what more needs to be done; what more is already planned to do; and (b) suggestions on what the vision for that theme should include arising largely from the outcome of the earlier engagement phase.

3.3 These are then taken forward into a **set of challenges** - the attainment of which is seen as essential if we are to realise the overall vision of Stronger Communities. These are:

- Make Dudley Borough one of the best places in Britain for children & young people
- To have a strong and positive community spirit across our neighbourhoods
- Delivering excellent public services for everyone
- Safeguarding and improving the environment for future generations
- Celebrating our heritage and the diversity of local culture

The challenges each contain a set of proposed targets which will contribute to the success in attaining the challenges.

3.4 There are three versions of the strategy proposals that one can respond to.:

- The full consultation document – containing all listed in paragraphs 3.1-.33;
- The “Challenge” document – a shorter version focussing on the five challenges;
- A quick response leaflet, listing 15 key vision choices. This is aimed at residents who are asked to submit their top five priorities from that list (or suggest alternatives).

All three documents are available on a website known as www.dudleyboroughchallenge.org to which there is a link from the Council’s website. In addition, the leaflet has been distributed to every household in the borough as well as to 350 public venues.

3.5 The key phases that lie ahead now are:

- April – end of July 2005: consultation on the draft strategy document
- August – September 2005: production of the final draft in the light of consultation evidence
- October 2005: Cabinet endorsement of the new 15-year strategy and launch of the strategy by the Dudley Community Partnership
- November 2005: approval and adoption by Council
- November – March 2005/6: Implementation planning

4. Proposals

4.1 The report aims to make members aware of the overall process being adopted to develop the new Borough Strategy. In addition, Members of the Committee may wish to comment on the content of the key themes proposed by the consultation document either through the Committee, or individually.

5. Finance

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

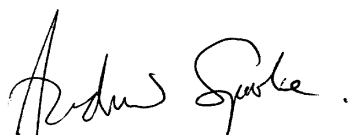
6. Law

6.1 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.

6.2 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.

7. Equal Opportunities

7.1 The programme of public engagement is intended to be as open and inclusive as possible and a wide range of groups from diverse communities will have the opportunity to contribute to the development of the strategy.



.....**Chief Executive**

Contact Officer: Andy Wright - ext. 4147