

Meeting of the Cabinet – 9th December 2009

Report of the Chief Executive

Review of the Community Strategy

Purpose of Report

1. To present to Cabinet the final draft of the 2010-2013 Sustainable Community Strategy for approval.

Background

2. The Cabinet approved Dudley's current Community Strategy in December 2005, with a public launch in March 2006. This was based on extensive engagement with the public, individuals and groups from the voluntary and community sector; public sector agencies and the private sector through a process called *Dudley Borough Challenge*. It focuses on a high level vision of creating Stronger Communities and spans 15 years, to 2020.
3. In 2008 Cabinet approved a review of the Strategy, honouring a commitment to a three yearly review cycle. The refreshed strategy will be an improvement on its predecessor in several ways:-
 - a. Providing a clearer relationship between this and the physical development planning framework for the Borough, recognising Dudley's element of the Black Country Core Strategy;
 - b. Building in the principle of sustainability into the strategy in order to create prosperous, thriving and inclusive communities that will stand the test of time, in terms of communities, places and economic prosperity;
 - c. Highlighting specific examples where there is evidence of inequality and disadvantage equalities;
 - d. Strengthening the link to the existing Local Area Agreement, which applies a performance focus to certain priorities;
 - e. Building a comprehensive performance delivery framework to ensure that each objective is translated into a way of measuring progress;
 - f. Building a framework for community engagement, for example through the scrutiny process and the Partnership Stakeholders' Forum, in order to provide a means of accountability to the public, a means of influencing the delivery programme, and evidence of such engagement.

4. The revised Community Strategy will act as the main strategic driver for other people or issue focused plans, such as the Children's Plan and the Economic Strategy. As a specific example, it provides the anchor and mandate for the Borough's ambitions for regeneration as implemented through New Heritage Development Ltd.

Policy Implications

5. The Strategy takes forward the original vision of "strong communities" and the six Themes from the 2005 Strategy, which arose from community and stakeholder engagement. They are:
 - a. Jobs & Prosperity
 - b. Health & Well-being
 - c. Heritage, Culture & Leisure
 - d. Environment & Housing
 - e. Individual & Community Learning
 - f. Community Safety
6. Essentially the strategy is built upon five key principles which are:
 - a. Promoting equality and tackling inequality;
 - b. Safeguarding the future (sustainability);
 - c. Reflecting Community Priorities through Physical Change;
 - d. Delivery in partnership;
 - e. Commitment to ongoing public engagement

What will happen next

7. The draft, subject to approval by Cabinet, will go forward for approval by Full Council on 22nd February 2010. Following this there will be a launch via the Dudley Community Partnership in March 2010, at which point the public version will be made available.

Finance

8. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. Both the Sustainable Community Strategy and Local Area Agreement to which the report refers will be used by the Council and partners to inform long term decision making.

Law

9. The Local Government Act 2000 requires that Councils have a community strategy, developed with their local partners. The Council acts as the lead partner in this respect.

Equality Impact

10. The report takes into account the Council's Equality and Diversity Policy. Addressing inequality is a guiding principle of the community strategy and seeks to ensure that by working in partnership with other local public and private agencies and the voluntary, community and faith sector, issues of relative disadvantage can be tackled. Consultation and engagement has been conducted in such a way as to maximise the possibilities for contribution from all communities.

Recommendation

11. It is recommended that: Council approve the draft community strategy.

John Polychronakis

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John Polychronakis
Chief Executive

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List of Background Papers

Appendix I: Sustainable Community Strategy 2010-13 final draft, viewable on CMIS
Appendix II: Executive Summary