

# Executive

## Cherwell Sustainable Community Strategy

6 July 2009

### Report of Chief Executive and Community and Corporate Planning Manager

#### PURPOSE OF REPORT

To agree a consultation draft of the Cherwell Sustainable Community Strategy.

This report is public
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#### Recommendations

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The Executive is recommended to:

- (1) Agree a draft of the Cherwell Sustainable Community Strategy prior to three months of public consultation.
- (2) Agree that any amendments on the draft arising from Cherwell Community Planning Partnership on 10 July be agreed with the Portfolio Holder for Policy and Community Planning prior to public consultation.

#### Executive Summary

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##### Introduction

- 1.1 The Cherwell Sustainable Community Strategy will be the top level guiding document for the Cherwell area. It will influence future policies and plans and it will be used to influence future funding including Local Area Agreements. It will be the key strategic document for Cherwell District Council and drive the content of the next Cherwell District Council Corporate Plan.
- 1.2 The current Cherwell Community Plan is becoming out of date, new requirements have been set by central government and the evidence base for the Plan needs to be refreshed. The Cherwell Community Plan will be replaced by the Cherwell Sustainable Community Strategy.
- 1.3 Cherwell Community Planning Partnership, Cherwell's Local Strategic Partnership, have drafted a Cherwell Sustainable Community Strategy following a trawl of current research, detailed analysis of relevant policies, and, extensive engagement with the people, businesses and organisations within Cherwell.

- 1.4 Appendix 1 sets out the draft Cherwell Sustainable Community.

**Proposals**

- 1.5 Executive Members are asked to agree the draft Cherwell Sustainable Community Strategy for three months of public consultation.

**Conclusion**

- 1.6 The Cherwell Sustainable Community Strategy is the key strategic document for Cherwell and Cherwell District Council. The Strategy is not owned by Cherwell District Council, it is owned by Cherwell Community Planning Partnership. The Council has a leadership role in developing the Strategy and will be responsible for the delivery of parts of it. It is therefore important to ensure that our policies don't conflict with it.

## **Background Information**

### **What is a sustainable community strategy?**

- 2.1 The Cherwell Sustainable Community Strategy will set an overall strategic direction and long-term (until 2030) vision for the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of the area. The vision needs to be ambitious and stretching. This is **not** a Cherwell District Council document. It is owned by Cherwell Community Planning Partnership which brings together the public, private and community organisations within Cherwell, Cherwell District Council is a key member of the Partnership.
- 2.2 The strategy cannot, and should not, cover absolutely everything; it is really important that it **prioritises** the most important issues for the district. Cherwell Community Planning Partnership is keen that the new strategy has fewer priorities than the current Cherwell Community Plan and that these are much more specific and measurable.
- 2.3 It is critical that the strategy is based on clear evidence and analysis. Considerable effort has been put into gathering information and analysis already but the public consultation is also a key part of this.
- 2.4 The new strategy will work alongside the Local Development Framework (LDF). The LDF will play an important part in delivering the spatial aspects of the strategy.
- 2.5 The strategy will be the key strategic document for the Cherwell area. It will significantly influence our future strategies and plans and determine the new Cherwell District Council Corporate Plan.

### **What do we mean by 'sustainable communities'?**

- 2.6 Sustainable communities meet the diverse needs of existing and future residents, their children, those who do business here, and other users. They contribute to a high quality of life and provide opportunity and choice. They make effective use of natural resources, enhance the environment, promote social cohesion and inclusion and strengthen economic prosperity.

### **What has been done so far?**

- 2.7 The strategy has been drafted taking into account an evidence base, relevant policy and local knowledge.
- 2.8 The evidence base has included; data used for recent policies, Parish Plans, recent surveys and statistical information.
- 2.9 Relevant local, regional and national policy has been explored including Oxfordshire 2030, the sustainable community strategy for the whole of Oxfordshire.
- 2.10 Local knowledge has been gained by talking to people. Much of this has happened one to one, but also special meetings and conferences have been held. These include two workshops with Cherwell District Council Councillors, one workshop with Cherwell District Council managers, workshops with Cherwell Community Planning Partnership, a rural focused

visioning event and a 'stakeholder' event. To date, local knowledge has been gained from numerous organisations and groups including; families, young people, older people, community groups, voluntary groups, carers, employers, employees, colleges, head teachers, public services, ethnic groups, faith representatives, rural representatives, and local Councillors.

### **Public consultation**

- 2.11 Following Cherwell Community Planning Partnership on 10 July the draft will go out for public consultation for three months. The document and associated questionnaire will be available online and hard copies will be sent to those that request it.
- 2.12 During the consultation period a number of special meetings will be organised including a special meeting of the Voluntary Organisations' Forum.

### **Key Issues for Consideration/Reasons for Decision and Options**

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- 3.1 Does the draft Cherwell Sustainable Community adequately reflect the priorities for the Cherwell area?
- 3.2 Is the draft Cherwell Sustainable Community Strategy consistent with Cherwell District Council policies? Are there any conflicts?

The following options have been identified. The approach in the recommendations is believed to be the best way forward

- Option One** To agree the draft Cherwell Sustainable Community Strategy for public consultation as set out in Appendix 1.
- Option Two** To make amendments to the draft Cherwell Sustainable Community Strategy set out in Appendix 1.
- Option Three** To delegate a decision on the draft Cherwell Sustainable Community Strategy to the Portfolio Holder for Policy and Community Planning.

### **Consultations**

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Numerous individuals and organisations have been involved in the development of the consultation draft, see paragraph 2.10 above.

### **Implications**

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(Financial, Legal and Risk and other implications e.g. Equalities, Human Resources, Data Quality and Environmental where relevant)

- Financial:** The Cherwell Sustainable Community Strategy itself has no financial effects. However, it should be noted that it will be used as the evidence base and set priorities for future Local Area Agreements. If it does not reflect Cherwell's priorities there is a real danger that they will not be included in future Local Area Agreements and

consequently will not get funding. It is important to note that the sums involved could amount to millions of pounds.

The costs of public consultation and publication can be met from existing budgets.

Comments checked by Sarah Best, Senior Accountancy Assistant, 01295 221736.

**Legal:**

Cherwell District Council takes a leadership role in the development of the Cherwell Sustainable Community Strategy. This means that our policies should not be in conflict with it or inconsistent with it. If they were this could be grounds for a successful challenge.

Comments checked by Liz Howlett, Head of Legal and Democratic Services/Monitoring Officer 01295 221686.

**Risk Management:**

The Cherwell Sustainable Community Strategy could commit the Council to delivering actions that either it may not agree to or it does not consider a priority.

Comments checked by Rosemary Watts, Risk Management and Insurance Officer 01295 221566.

**Comprehensive Area Assessment**

Under the new Comprehensive Area Assessment Cherwell District Council's contribution to priorities set within the Cherwell Sustainable Community Strategy will be formally assessed.

Comments checked by Mike Carroll, Head of Improvement 01295 227959.

**Wards Affected**

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All

**Corporate Plan Themes**

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All

**Executive Portfolio**

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**Councillor Wood, Portfolio Holder for Policy and Community Planning**

**Document Information**

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<b>Appendix No</b>	<b>Title</b>
Appendix 1	Draft Cherwell Sustainable Community Strategy
<b>Background Papers</b>	
None	
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