

Executive

A New Sustainable Community Strategy for Cherwell

16 November 2009

Report of Chief Executive and Community and Corporate Planning Manager

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To agree changes to the draft Cherwell Sustainable Community Strategy resulting from the formal public consultation and to confirm the District Councils representatives on the Local Strategic Partnership

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| This report is public |
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Recommendations

The meeting is recommended:

- (1) To note the results of the formal consultation on the draft Sustainable Community Strategy and to agree the changes resulting from the consultation.
- (2) To delegate authority to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council to agree further amendments to the strategy in line with council policy as the Local Strategic Partnership signs of the final draft on 19 November 2009.
- (3) To agree the proposed District Council representatives to the Local Strategic Partnership.

Executive Summary

Introduction

- 1.1 The Sustainable Community Strategy (appendix 1) sets out the long term strategic direction for sustainable communities in Cherwell. The strategy must link into the Local Development Framework and cover the elements that make up a sustainable community (economic, social, environmental and infrastructure).

- 1.2 The development of the draft Sustainable Community Strategy has been facilitated by Cherwell District Council over the last nine months.
- 1.3 The Chief Executive of Cherwell District Council District Council is the current Chairman of the Cherwell Community Planning Partnership (the Local Strategic Partnership for Cherwell). The Leader of the Council is also a member of the partnership. From November 2009 a new Local Strategic Partnership Board will be formed to ensure the Sustainable Community Strategy is delivered. Cherwell District Council will have three representatives on this board.
- 1.4 All Members of Cherwell District Council were invited to take part in workshops to shape the content of the strategy in February and April this year. All Elected Members and Parish Councils have been invited to comment on the draft strategy as part of the formal consultation process.
- 1.5 The content of the draft Sustainable Community Strategy is based on extensive consultation and research.
- 1.6 The draft Sustainable Community Strategy was published in draft for formal consultation between July and October. A number of changes to the strategy have been made as a result.

Proposals

- 1.7 That Executive agree the revisions to the draft Sustainable Community Strategy resulting from the formal consultation.
- 1.8 To delegate authority to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council to agree further amendments to the strategy in line with council policy as the Local Strategic Partnership signs of the final draft on 19th November 2009.
- 1.9 That Executive confirm that Councillor Wood, in his capacity as Leader of the Council, Councillor Mallon and the Chief Executive will represent Cherwell District Council on the Local Strategic Partnership for Cherwell.

Conclusion

- 1.10 The draft Sustainable Community Strategy is based on research and consultation and reflects the key opportunities and challenges facing the district. It articulates a long term vision for Cherwell and will be implemented through a delivery plan and this work will be coordinated by the Local Strategic Partnership for Cherwell. Cherwell District Council will be a member of the Local Strategic Partnership and will help shape the delivery of the strategy.

Background Information

- 2.1 Cherwell District Council has a track record of effective partnership working with regards to the existing Community Plan (recognised as part of our CPA inspection).
- 2.2 The existing Community Plan has a vision that runs until 2016 and a current action plan that completes in the 2010/11 year.
- 2.3 The new Sustainable Community Strategy (attached as Appendix 1) builds on the strengths of our existing work.
- 2.4 A number of factors led to the decision to develop a new draft Sustainable Community Strategy: the short time frame left to run on the current Community Plan; changes in the economic climate that are affecting the local community; our aspirations for the district; as well as changes in government policy requiring Community Plans to be longer term, more strategic and closely linked to Local Development Frameworks.
- 2.5 Cherwell District Council has been instrumental in working with the Cherwell Community Planning Partnership to develop the new strategy. This work has been based on extensive consultation, a policy review and an understanding of social and economic trends impacting upon the district.
- 2.6 Members of Cherwell District Council have participated in the development of the draft strategy. Two Members workshops were held at the outset of the project to develop content. Parish Councils have been involved through the Parish Liaison meeting, through the countryside forum and through specific interviews and presentations. All Members and Parish Councils were invited to take part in the formal consultation.
- 2.7 The draft strategy has been out for twelve weeks of formal consultation. Whilst people were encouraged to respond online hard copies of the consultation document were also available.
- 2.8 Over twenty written responses have been received from a variety of public, private and community sector organisations and individuals. In addition, the views of over 200 people have been heard at the various consultation meetings. A summary of consultation responses to the public consultation can be found at Appendix 2.
- 2.9 As a result of the consultation a number of amendments have been made to the document. An overview of changes made to the strategy is given below:
 - Greater focus on crime and community safety – although Cherwell is a low crime area and crime did not come out of the developmental consultation as a top priority feedback from the consultation suggests that a greater focus on community safety

issues is required. This greater focus will be reflected within priorities and also within the future challenges facing the district.

- The document will be clearer about how the priorities will be delivered. An additional section will be added to the strategy to describe this. A 5 year delivery plan will be developed to underpin the strategy. Members of the Cherwell Local Strategic Partnership will be asked to sponsor or champion priorities to provide a clear leadership or championing role.
- There will be a greater reference to biodiversity, the natural environment and the role of the rural economy.
- Improving the way consultation is undertaken across the district will be included within the leadership section.
- Many of the comments received were quite specific and will be directly reflected in the delivery plan which will go into greater detail about the actions and projects that will deliver the aims in the strategy.
- The use of the term pledge has been changed to ambition as several respondents disliked the term.

Key Issues for Consideration/Reasons for Decision and Options

- 3.1 The draft Sustainable Community Strategy is broken down into four ambitions. 'A diverse and resilient economy', 'Opportunities for all', 'Connected and protected, the infrastructure and environment' and 'Resourceful and Receptive, community leadership. These four ambitions have a number of objectives that underpin them and are based on the developmental consultation and analysis that has been undertaken.
- 3.2 Taken together these four ambitions reflect the bigger picture for Cherwell, reflecting all of the services the council and our partners deliver. Within the strategy specific issues relating to the urban areas (Banbury, Bicester and Kidlington) are identified as well as issues specifically relating to rural communities.
- 3.3 The draft sustainable community strategy outlines the key strategic priorities, opportunities and challenges for the district. The strategy will be reviewed on an annual basis and it will be actioned through a five year delivery plan which all local partners will be asked to contribute to. Performance will be reported on a quarterly basis.

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

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| Option One | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To note the results of the formal consultation on the draft Sustainable Community Strategy and to agree the changes resulting from the consultation. 2. To delegate authority to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council to agree further amendments to the strategy in line with council policy as the Local Strategic Partnership signs off the final draft on 19th November 2009. 3. To agree the proposed District Council representatives to the Local Strategic Partnership. |
| Option Two | Identify issues or omissions which the Local Strategic Partnership should reconsider for inclusion in the Strategy. |

Consultations

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| Developmental Consultation | The draft was developed through extensive consultation with stakeholder groups from across the district and also informed by the place survey (a survey of local residents). |
| Formal Consultation | The draft has been out for formal consultation for 12 weeks. Stakeholders have been invited to comment and the draft is publicly available on the Cherwell District Council Consultation Portal. |
| Formal Consultation Events | During the formal consultation period special consultation events have included: meetings with the town councils, a countryside forum, a voluntary sector forum, an event with college students, discussions with local stakeholders and an event with colleagues from across our county borders. |

Implications

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| Financial: | <p>No direct financial implication, but the strategy will influence the future priorities of the Council.</p> <p>Comments checked by Karen Curtin, Head of Finance, 01295 221551</p> |
| Legal: | There are no direct legal implications arising from this report although to subsequently act contrary to the strategy could leave the Council open to challenge. |

Comments checked by Liz Howlett, Head of Legal and Democratic Services, 01295 221686

Risk Management: The most significant risk with regards to the Sustainable Community Strategy is the failure to deliver. This will be mitigated by the development of a delivery plan

Comments checked by Rosemary Watts, Risk and Insurance Manager 01295 221566

Equalities: The SCS will require an equalities impact assessment. The developmental consultation has included hard to reach groups and the draft identifies specific equalities issues.

Comments checked by Caroline French, Equalities and Diversity Officer 01295 227928

Wards Affected

All

Document Information

| Appendix No | Title |
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| 1 | Sustainable Community Strategy |
| 2 | Summary of formal consultation responses |
| Background Papers | |
| N/A | |
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