
SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of the report is to present to Members a working draft of a revised Sustainable Community Strategy.

Background

2. A report was submitted to the last meeting of this committee inviting Members' comments on an updated version of the One Darlington : Perfectly Placed vision (the 'Vision on a Page') in advance of the preparation of a revision of the Sustainable Community Strategy document. A working draft document is now being prepared and is attached in its current form as **Appendix 1**.
3. One Darlington : Perfectly Placed was originally developed in 2008, as required by legislation. That requirement is no longer in place, but the Local Strategic Partnership has re-examined the original vision and decided that it should be retained as an effective framework for co-ordinating the work of partners towards shared outcomes.
4. However, the economic climate has changed radically since 2008, and public sector finances have entered a period of austerity. This is reflected in the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan. New ways of working are required, focused on managing down demand for services and promoting self-reliance, if needs are to be satisfied and Darlington is to be enabled to thrive through the economic rebalancing that is taking place.
5. Whilst the vision of One Darlington : Perfectly Placed remains relevant as a powerful statement of our overall purpose, the means of making progress towards it must change to reflect the new financial realities. The Money Talks events and Peer Review have helped us to re-examine the outcomes that we are working for, and identify those that really matter, and that are going to be the most cost-effective to pursue in this new climate. A set of three conditions have also been identified, describing what Darlington needs to be like to be able to deliver the priority outcomes with the limited resources likely to be available in future.
6. The draft conditions were presented to Darlington Partnership and to Cabinet in November. These outcomes and conditions were incorporated into the 'Vision on a Page', which was approved by the Partnership and Cabinet in January. The Vision on a Page was incorporated into the report presented to the last meeting of this committee. The outcomes describe **what** should be delivered; the conditions describe **how** they should be delivered and **who** will deliver them.

7. The draft document at **Appendix 1** incorporates the Vision on a Page and explains the context in which the plan has been prepared, describes the three conditions – Build Strong Communities, Spend Every Pound Wisely and Grow the Economy – and provides the headlines underpinning each outcome. However, in this high level document it is not possible or appropriate to provide detailed proposals and performance information, and a ‘map’ of the various plans and strategies that will deliver the detail is included in the document.
8. The document is a working draft and will be further developed and refined before it is recommended for approval. This further work will include discussion with Cabinet Members and partner organisations, and it is presented for scrutiny in this working draft form to give Members of the Committee the opportunity to contribute to the development of the document before it is finalised.

The Policy Framework

4. The Sustainable Community Strategy document is at the apex of the local policy hierarchy and must be approved alongside the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) in accordance with the Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules set out within the Constitution. The rules require that the MTFP (the budget) and all policies within the policy framework must be recommended by Cabinet to Council following consultation with Scrutiny Committees. It is intended that the revised Sustainable Community Strategy will be finalised and presented for approval to Council in May 2014.
5. Members’ views are sought on the areas of specific interest to the committee in the working draft document.

Recommendation

8. It is recommended that Members consider the working draft of the revised strategy document attached as **Appendix 1** and provide comments and suggestions from the perspective of this Scrutiny Committee to contribute to the ongoing development of the document.

Reasons

9. The recommendation is supported by the following reasons :-
 - (a) To ensure that the Council’s vision is articulated and explained.
 - (b) To approve the vision statement and MTFP at the same time to ensure that one informs the other.

Ada Burns
Chief Executive

Background Papers

No background papers were used in the preparation of this report

C.Whitehead : Extension 2306

S17 Crime and Disorder	The document sets out the Council's broad vision at high level which includes objectives specifically related to tackling crime and disorder.
Health and Well Being	The document sets out the Council's broad vision at high level which includes objectives specifically relation to improving Health and Wellbeing within the Borough.
Carbon Impact	There are no specific carbon impact implications in this report but the report does set out specific objectives in relation to sustainability.
Diversity	The report has no specific impacts on individuals but sets out an overall objective of fairness in relation to all that the Council does.
Wards Affected	All wards are affected equally.
Groups Affected	All groups are affected equally.
Budget and Policy Framework	This report seeks approval of an interim draft of the Sustainable Community Strategy which sits within the Council's policy framework.
Key Decision	This is not an executive decision.
Urgent Decision	This is not an executive decision.
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	This report articulates the overall vision for the delivery of One Darlington: Perfectly Placed.
Efficiency	There are no specific efficiencies arising from this report, however it sets out the vision alongside the Council's MTFP to ensure that the delivery of the vision is resourced.