

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL
PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT BOARD

21 AUGUST 2007

RESPONSE TO DRAFT COMMUNITY STRATEGY CONSULTATION

Responsible Portfolio Holder	Roger Hollingworth, Leader of the Council
Responsible Head of Service	Hugh Bennett, Assistant Chief Executive

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 To agree the Board's response to the draft Sustainable Community Strategy which is currently subject to consultation.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1. Consider the Chairman's response attached at Appendix 1 (and any further amendments based on discussions at the Board and Councillor Bunker's response – see Appendix 2).

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Sustainable Community Strategy is a key document within the Council's performance management framework (see Council Plan 2007/2010). The Council has a statutory duty to work in partnership with other public bodies, the voluntary sector and private sector for the good of the District. The recent co-operation between all the various agencies in responding to the flooding in south Worcestershire provides a very pertinent example of the need to co-operate.
- 3.2 The Sustainable Community Strategy is managed through the Local Strategic Partnership. Members are often concerned about the non-democratic nature of local strategic partnerships. The Performance Management Board has a key role in holding the District's Local Strategic Partnership (Bromsgrove Partnership) to account. The Board will shortly be receiving the Local Strategic Partnership's Annual Report. As per the recent training for Board Members, it is also a legitimate role of the Board to examine and respond to documents that set the strategic direction of the Council and other organisations.
- 3.3 The Board received the draft Sustainable Community Strategy at their July meeting and are requested to bring this report to the August meeting. The Chairman has drafted a response (based on questions from the Assistant

Chief Executive, who is the secretary of the LSP Board) on behalf of the Board, which is attached at **Appendix 1**. Councillor Bunker has also made a response to the Chairman. There was not sufficient time to incorporate this into the Chairman's response, so Councillor Bunker's comments are included separately at **Appendix 2**.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no immediate financial implications; however, the Strategy's priorities will feed through into the Council's priorities and therefore into the budget round for 2008/09.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 None.

6. COUNCIL OBJECTIVES

- 6.1 The Council is currently reviewing its objectives and priorities in advance of the 2008/09 budget round. The Sustainable Community Strategy will be considered as part of this work.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 Partnership working is a key risk within the Council's Corporate Risk Register.

8. CUSTOMER IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1. The Strategy details an extensive range of actions designed to improve the quality of life for our residents.

9. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The draft Strategy will be discussed at the Equalities Forum in August.

10. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Procurement Issues: None.
Personnel Implications: None.
Governance/Performance Management: None.
Community Safety including Section 17 of Crime and Disorder Act

1998: None.
Policy: See Council Objectives above.
Environmental: None.

11. **OTHERS CONSULTED ON THE REPORT**

Portfolio Holder	Yes.
Chief Executive	Yes.
Corporate Director (Services)	Yes.
Assistant Chief Executive	Yes.
Head of Service <i>(i.e. your own HoS)</i>	Yes.
Head of Financial Services <i>(must approve Financial Implications before report submitted to Leader's Group)</i>	Yes.
Head of Legal, Equalities & Democratic Services <i>(for approval of any significant Legal Implications)</i>	Yes.
Head of Organisational Development & HR <i>(for approval of any significant HR Implications)</i>	Yes.
Corporate Procurement Team <i>(for approval of any procurement implications)</i>	No

12. **APPENDICES**

- Appendix 1 Chairman's Response.
Appendix 2 Councillor Bunker's Response.

13. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Sustainable Community Strategy, Performance Management Board, 17 July 2007.

CONTACT OFFICER

Name: Hugh Bennett

E Mail: h.bennett@bromsgrove.gov.uk

Tel: (01527) 881430

APPENDIX 1

Chairman of the Board's Draft Response to Community Strategy Consultation

1. Do you agree with the expanded vision set out from page 229 (7) onwards?

A Thriving Market Town

Agree with broad vision. Perhaps adding that by increasing visitors to the Town could also attract more vandalism and anti-social behaviour therefore any vision must include designing out vandalism and anti-social behaviour particularly when thinking about entertainment such as bars and youth facilities. In addition with an increase of visits there will be an increase in litter. It is extremely important that the streets are kept clean. There has been discussions in the past about using the CCTV to catch people littering and anyone caught could be fined along with naming and shaming on the council website and in the local papers (like Peterborough City Council <http://www.peterborough.gov.uk/page-9191>).

Housing

Agree with broad vision. When thinking about the elderly, strategies must be in place to accommodate those elderly residents that do not want to move in to sheltered accommodation. As long as there is relative good health many elderly would prefer to remain in their own houses surrounded by a familiar environment. Therefore the housing mix must contain appropriate numbers of private bungalows and stop the practice of bungalows being sold and redeveloped into dormer bungalows or two story houses. This could be included for the plans for the Longbridge site.

Transport

Parking is a key feature of modern transport. Attracting larger retail stores to the area would provide extra parking. This parking should be made exclusive to shoppers of that store. Consider greater use of underground safe parking.

Economy

A mix of business and commercial organisations is essential to attract a mix of jobs including high calibre professions.

Environment and climate change

Agree that these are key concerns. The development and adoption of local Biodiversity action plans should be drawn up along with ensuring that new developments adopt the latest code of sustainable housing guidance to minimise waste and reduce energy and water usage in all new developments. Strategic Environmental Assessments are required to identify areas where the natural environment is threatened. Greater commitment to taking action where Air Quality is near or above acceptable levels is required. Greater use of tree planting, landscaping or priority traffic flow management are also essential.

Crime

We have a valuable source of information collected at the PACT meeting and this information could be collated to find what trends we have in the district which may or may not need action.

Health

Bringing health to the communities should be encouraged, for example bringing exercise classes to community centres for the elderly or exercise classes for young mums etc. Provision of mental health services for the young and elderly are also an area of concern.

2. Do you agree with the priorities set out on page 233(11)? If not, how should they change and why?

Yes, I would also include community leadership in there along with improving our relationships with our partners (e.g. County).

3. Do you agree with the Performance Management arrangements set out on page 234 (12)?

I would like to see the types of project groups that are set up and whether they adequately target key areas of the plan. The drive delivery and commitment of these project groups are the difference between achieving the objectives of the district or not. I would also like this explained by Hugh at the meeting.

4. Do you agree with the Governance arrangements set out on page 235 (13)?

I am not sure if Community partnerships will work at Parish level. They may do where parishes do not exist but these partnerships should be in the form of parish councils where they do exist. Parish councils are the eyes and ears of the communities and should know what is needed and what the priorities are.

5. Do you have any comments on the detailed action plans, page 244 onwards?

Appendix A – Target required ensuring the best use of CCTVs are being achieved.

Appendix B – Target to improve or control air quality levels at key traffic intersections such as Lickey end and Hagley etc. and would like to see recycling of broader range of plastics and corrugated cardboard. I would also like to see pressure applied to businesses in Town centres to reduce waste i.e. giving out plastic bags and reducing packaging and more tree planting and landscaping to help tackle impacts of traffic congestion etc.

Appendix C – Concern over completion dates. Why are they so long? Can these be moved along quicker?

Appendix D – High calibre jobs also required to ensure continued growth and wealth of area. Housing also required a mix of housing including higher valued properties.

Appendix E – Take exercise clubs into the communities targeting vulnerable and dependent groups.

Appendix H – Adopt Parish plans as community strength documents.

Appendix G - If elderly people are going to be a priority then the funding needs to be available.

Councillor Bunker's Draft Response to Community Strategy Consultation

- 1) As mentioned at Scrutiny, I feel that the needs of people with mental health problems and disabilities should be included in the strategy. 25% of people have mental health problems at some time in their lives in this country. In the 2001 census the number of people with a limiting life long illness in Bromsgrove was 14,683.
- 2) The performance management monitoring arrangements seems to indicate that BDC will only see performance information on the Community Strategy annually. I feel this need to be more frequent and it should also be presented to PMB quarterly.
- 3) In the section Evidence for selection of priorities, the statistics need to also include their source.
- 4) Some sections of the evidence do not show if the overall picture is getting better or worse over time, for example; there are no statistics for overall crime rate.
- 5) Some sections of evidence also need to compare the statistics with comparable statistics in Worcestershire or the UK.
- 6) I have concerns about the accuracy of some of the statistics, for example the fear of crime statistics are incredibly high.
- 7) The 2006 West Mercia crime and community safety partnership survey states that 27% of residents in Bromsgrove feel that using or dealing drug is a serious problem and 44% in Worcestershire. The community strategy has reversed these statistics.
- 8) Given that the police view would be that some level of fear of crime is a good thing as it encourages basic security conscious behavior e.g. locking doors, is the target to reduce fear of crime the most appropriate? Would it be better to focus on reducing the numbers of those whose life is adversely affected by excessive fear of crime?
- 9) For racial incident reporting the high level action plan suggests a 5% increase in the number of incidents reported however the baseline is zero.
- 10) Output should be delivery and not just reviewing. The output for the Travel Plan is a review and not a target for delivery as is the output for Worcestershire Biodiversity Action Plan.
- 11) The Community Strategy is a public document. I don't think it is helpful to include BVPI's without a definition.

- 12) In relation to the Longbridge action plan is there sufficient confidence in the proposed activity to set a target for a net overall increase in employment for the area?
- 13) The area action plan should also include housing for the elderly and disabled.
- 14) Where is the funding going to come from for the ageing well scheme, otherwise this key deliverable will not be successful?
- 15) How reliable is using the statistic of 24% of the population smoking as it is the national figure? Given that levels of smoking are skewed towards disadvantaged areas and Bromsgrove has above national average levels of affluence.
- 16) In Appendix F, Key Stage and GCSE results can only be monitored annually.
- 17) It is not clear in Appendix F how levels of attainment will be increased.