

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

3RD SEPTEMBER 2008

WORCESTERSHIRE SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY 2008-2013

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

1. SUMMARY

1.1 To present to Cabinet Members the refreshed Worcestershire Community Strategy 2008-2013. (Attached as Appendix 1).

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 Cabinet are requested to:

- i) note the progress to refresh the Worcestershire Sustainable Community Strategy;
- ii) give formal approval to the refreshed Worcestershire Sustainable Community Strategy;
- iii) note that Worcestershire County Council's Cabinet formally endorsed the Bromsgrove Partnership's Sustainable Community Strategy at its meeting on 17th July;
- iv) note the action being taken by the District Council to ensure both the District LSP and Council's strategies are aligned to the countywide Sustainable Community Strategy and Local Area Agreement; and
- v) note that this alignment is critical to the Council achieving a good rating under the new Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) inspection framework which starts in April 2009.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 The Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) is a statutory document that sets the overall strategic direction and long-term vision for the economic, social and environmental well-being of a local area, typically for 10-20 years. It is the place where difficult, cross-cutting issues are tackled by a wide range of public, private and voluntary sector partners and is, in effect, the long-term business plan for Worcestershire. Both district and county councils have a duty to prepare a SCS in partnership with those organisations that make up the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP).

- 3.2 The Worcestershire Partnership's ten year SCS "Partnership Towards Excellence" was published in 2003; however, it is recognised that both the policy context and the county's priorities have changed significantly in the last five years; therefore, the Worcestershire Partnership has been undertaking a refresh of the SCS. The refreshed SCS provides a robust 'story of place' – or evidence base – from which the new Local Area Agreement (LAA) has been developed, and to which the Bromsgrove Partnership and District Council are expected to contribute. (This contribution will be assessed under the new CAA framework starting in April 2009).
- 3.3 In accordance with the required timetable, the LAA final submission was made on 30th May 2008. Government Office West Midlands subsequently agreed the LAA without qualification, and submitted this to the Department for Communities & Local Government on 6th June 2008. The Worcestershire LAA comprises 32 National Indicator targets, 3 local indicator targets and 16 mandatory Department for Schools, Children & Families targets. All of the LAA priorities and targets are drawn from the refreshed SCS. (Attached as Appendix 2).
- 3.4 The refreshed SCS has been structured around six themes, which were developed as part of the first LAA:
- Communities that are safe and feel safe
 - A better environment for today and tomorrow
 - Economic success that is shared by all
 - Improving health and well being
 - Meeting the needs of children and young people
 - Stronger Communities (including housing, culture, poverty and volunteering).
- 3.5 Bridging all of these themes are three cross-cutting themes, which will touch on the work of all of the partners and the theme groups in which they are engaged:
- Tackling climate change
 - Community engagement
 - Community cohesion.
- 3.6 These themes and cross-cutting themes – and the actions and benefits that are defined within them – have been drawn from a robust evidence base that includes:
- Citizens' Panel Questionnaire June 2007
 - 1,352 responses (68% response rate)
 - Also circulated to County and District Elected Members
 - Best Value General Satisfaction Survey 2006
 - Key facts about the County
 - Input from the Partnership's Theme Groups
 - Input from District LSPs and their SCS documents
 - Elected Member Briefing (October 2007)

- Local and regional plans, policies and strategies
- Central Government Departments.

3.7 **Consultation**

The draft Worcestershire SCS was published for consultation and launched at the Worcestershire Assembly in November 2007. This was followed by a twelve-week consultation period.

- 3.8 Bromsgrove District Council submitted a robust response which was approved by Cabinet on 6th February 2008. The final document makes specific reference to Bromsgrove in respect of the Technology Park; ensuring a robust future economy by improving the skills of residents and creating good quality jobs; and developing proposals for improvements to railway stations, including Bromsgrove.

3.9 **Bromsgrove Sustainable Community Strategy**

It is critical that the District Council aligns both the work of the Bromsgrove Partnership and the District Council to the targets set out in the new county-wide LAA. The Bromsgrove Partnership is currently updating its own SCS to reflect the new LAA and new National Indicators (NIs). This updated document will be taken to November's Full Council for approval. The Council has already updated its Council Plan and corporate KPIs to reflect the new NIs and will update them further through the next business cycle to reflect the new LAA.

4. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 None.

5. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 None.

6. **COUNCIL OBJECTIVES**

- 6.1 The Strategy links to all corporate objectives.

7. **RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 7.1 Working in partnership is a key risk which is identified in the Corporate Risk Register. The Council and the LSP will not be able to deliver its priorities without working in partnership with the Worcestershire Partnership. The Bromsgrove Partnership's Sustainable Community Strategy 2007-2010 (ratified by Cabinet in November 2007) has been considered by the Worcestershire Partnership during the drafting of the county Strategy, and the Bromsgrove Partnership will be delivering actions locally against the themes in the document.

8 **CUSTOMER IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 Working in partnership delivers joined up outcomes, which is what customers want.

9. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Two specific exercises were undertaken as part of the redrafting process, in order to address the policy implications of the SCS on Worcestershire’s rural communities and to ensure that the needs and aspirations of everybody in the county are taken into account. These were:

- a) a rural proofing exercise; and
- b) an Equality Impact Assessments.

10. VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS

10.1 By formally endorsing the strategy, it demonstrates that Bromsgrove District Council is addressing the needs of residents of the district and ensuring that future plans and resources are included in the relevant strategic plans.

11. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Procurement Issues - None
Personnel Issues – None
Governance/Performance Management The Strategy will be managed by the Worcestershire Partnership, but the Bromsgrove Partnership has its own performance management framework which will ensure appropriate information can be provided when it is requested.
Community Safety including Section 17 of Crime & Disorder Act 1988 – The new LAA contains new measures on crime, with a stronger emphasis on perception.
Policy The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 illustrates that partnerships are central to building on achievements of recent years to embed them into lasting reform.
Environmental - None

12. OTHERS CONSULTED ON THE REPORT

Portfolio Holder	No
Chief Executive	No
Executive Director (Partnerships & Projects)	No
Executive Director (Services)	No
Assistant Chief Executive	Yes
Head of Service	Yes
Head of Financial Services	No
Head of Legal, Equalities & Democratic Services	No
Head of Organisational Development & HR	No
Corporate Procurement Team	No

13. WARDS AFFECTED

All Wards.

14. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Partnership Towards Excellence – The Sustainable
Community Strategy for Worcestershire, Second Edition
2008-2012

Appendix 2 Worcestershire Local Area Agreement 2008-2011

15. BACKGROUND PAPERS

No further background papers.

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