
Meeting: Customer and Central Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee
Date: 26th April 2010
Subject: Sustainable Community Strategy
Report of: Chief Executive
Summary: The report sets out the statutory requirement and process adopted by Central Bedfordshire to develop a Sustainable Community Strategy for the area. A copy of the latest draft of the Strategy document is attached as Appendix A.

Contact Officer: Peter Fraser, Head of Partnerships & Community Engagement
Public/Exempt: Public
Wards Affected: All
Function of: Council

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Council Priorities:

The Sustainable Community Strategy supports Central Bedfordshire Council's vision and priorities.

Financial: None

Legal: Implementing this strategy will support the Council's Strategic Plan.

Risk Management:

Risk management is a key part of the service delivery plan for the team and any risks will be managed through this process.

Staffing (including Trades Unions): None

Equalities/Human Rights:

An equality impact assessment of the potential effects of this strategy has been undertaken to establish whether it has a different impact on identifiable groups of people segmented by age, race, disability, gender, sexual orientation, religion or belief.

Community Safety:

The Strategy supports the Council's priority to tackle crime and reduce the fear of crime.

Sustainability:

The Strategy has been created with its long term sustainability in mind.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

- 1. that the Committee comments on and approves the latest draft of the Sustainable Community Strategy;**
- 2. that the Committee note the Sustainable Community Strategy will be going before the Local Strategic Partnership for final approval at their meeting on 13th May 2010;**
- 3. that the Committee note the Sustainable Community Strategy will be going before the Executive for final approval at their meeting on 8th June 2010; and**
- 4. that the Committee note the Sustainable Community Strategy will be going before the Full Council after 8th June 2010.**

Background

1. The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 places a statutory duty on all upper tier and unitary authorities to work with partners to produce a Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) that sets out a shared long-term vision for their area and the key strategic priorities and actions needed to deliver it. The SCS should reflect the wishes of local communities and be based on a robust evidence base.
2. At its meeting on 28th October 2008, Central Bedfordshire Council's Shadow Executive agreed to discharge its statutory responsibilities relating to the Act to the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP).
3. In November 2008, Central Bedfordshire's Shadow LSP adopted the Sustainable Community Strategies for South Bedfordshire and Mid Bedfordshire, which were published in June 2008 and January 2008 respectively, and the Bedfordshire county-wide strategy, which was published in July 2007.
4. A commitment was made to develop a new SCS for Central Bedfordshire during the first year of operation of the new unitary authority area.
5. The outcome of producing the SCS is to shape the future of Central Bedfordshire by:
 - (a) setting a collective local vision for Central Bedfordshire that we can all share; and
 - (b) making explicit our priorities for tackling local quality of life issues, which whilst having regard to national government's priorities for public services, must be soundly rooted in a clear analysis of local needs.

Consultations

6. Consultation, which is ongoing, has been carried out via the LSP Board and Thematic/Statutory Partnership discussions, the Town & Parish Council Conference, Central Bedfordshire Forum, Third Sector Assembly, Bedfordshire Advice Forum, Residents' Survey and Residents' Workshop and presentations to various partnership meetings.

The Strategy

7. Partner and stakeholder feedback confirms there is widespread support for the partnership's vision and key priorities. The draft vision for Central Bedfordshire is:

"Central Bedfordshire: delivering sustainable growth to ensure a green, prosperous and ambitious place for the benefit of all"

8. The 8 key priorities which have been identified are:
 - (a) Maximising employment opportunities and delivering housing growth to meet the needs of our communities
 - (b) Ensuring our local people have the skills to prosper
 - (c) Caring for and improving the quality of our diverse environment
 - (d) Supporting and caring for an ageing population and those who are most vulnerable
 - (e) Promoting health and reducing health inequalities
 - (f) Educating, protecting and providing opportunities for children and young people
 - (g) Keeping our communities safe
 - (h) Nurturing a sense of pride and belonging
9. A copy of the latest draft of the Sustainable Community Strategy document is attached as Appendix A.
10. The LSP Board has suggested that the document should:
 - (a) reflect the priorities of our residents and communities, and be backed up by a strong evidence base;
 - (b) be aimed at key partners and stakeholders, whilst also setting out for residents what we are accountable to them for;

- (c) be written in a way that enables partners to develop their own strategies and business plans, to ensure alignment with a joint vision and determine their contribution towards the delivery of a set of shared priorities and desired outcomes;
 - (d) be as concise and succinct as possible;
 - (e) set out the strategic direction rather than the operational detail;
 - (f) show the high-level actions that will be taken in the short term, medium term and long term;
 - (g) avoid the use of jargon or acronyms;
 - (h) capture the enthusiasm and positive feedback from the Forum, and seek input from young people;
 - (i) be energetic, vibrant and confident, and express the delivery of our ambitions; and
 - (j) emphasise the challenges of the growth agenda and the need for a strong economy.
11. At its last meeting the LSP Board suggested further changes to the current draft, which are currently being worked on. These are:
- (a) re-ordering the priority sections to better reflect the concerns raised by citizens in the Residents' Survey and Residents' Workshop Discussion;
 - (b) amending the section linking Anti Social Behaviour with teenagers, as the majority of teenagers were not a problem, and to include an action to improve facilities for teenagers - members were advised that the case studies would provide details on positive action that had happened;
 - (c) emphasising the plans to maximise jobs growth, and consider linking this with the section on skills;
 - (d) separating the housing section from employment growth;
 - (e) setting out what we mean by short-term, medium-term and long-term – and ensure this is consistently applied throughout the document; and
 - (f) reviewing the vision to strengthen its identity with Central Bedfordshire.

Conclusion and Next Steps

12. The LSP Thematic Partnerships will finalise the content under each of the agreed headings within their sections of the document.

13. The next step is for the final draft of the SCS document to be endorsed by the LSP at its meeting on 13th May 2010.
14. On 8th June 2010 the final draft of the SCS will go before the Executive for approval.
15. After 8th June 2010 the final draft of the SCS will go before the Full Council for formal sign-off.

Appendices:

Appendix A – draft Sustainable Community Strategy (to follow)

Background Papers: (open to public inspection)

Location of papers: Priory House, Chicksands