

STRONGER AND SAFER COMMUNITIES STRATEGY 2012-2017

Submitted by: Head of Business Improvement and Partnerships – Mark Bailey

Portfolio: Safer and Stronger Communities

Ward(s) affected: All

Purpose of the Report

To provide the Committee with a first draft of the Stronger and Safer Communities Strategy.

The Strategy has been developed in line with the other key Borough Council strategies on Economic Development and Health and Well-Being.

Following presentation at the Committee, the Strategy will be presented at Cabinet on 14 March 2012 and will be amended based on comments from the Committee and elsewhere.

Recommendations

- (a) That the Committee notes the contents of the Strategy.**
- (b) That the Committee make any amendments or suggestions to the content of the Strategy.**
- (c) That the Committee endorses the presentation of the Strategy to Cabinet on 14 March 2012.**

Reasons

The Strategy will provide the main framework for the work being done by the Borough Council in conjunction with its partners, communities and other key stakeholders in seeking to develop stronger and safer communities in the Borough and beyond.

The Strategy brings together previously disparate areas of work and provides a common basis for future work programmes as well as providing a set of key indicators and outcomes which those projects listed in the Strategy seeks to deliver.

It is proposed that the Strategy – as with the other key strategies mentioned above – will be subject to consultation with key sections of the Borough's population.

1. Background

- 1.1 An initial brief for the Borough Council's Stronger and Safer Communities Strategy was presented to the Cleaner, Greener, Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee in November 2011. The original Brief is provided with this report at Appendix A.
- 1.2 At its meeting in November 2011, the Committee agreed to proceed with work on the Strategy and asked that an initial draft of the Strategy be presented to the Committee at its meeting on 29 February 2012. The first draft of the Stronger and Safer Strategy is included with this report for initial consideration from the Committee.

1.3 The Strategy is presented here in draft form at Appendix B, with further work is needed with communities, partners and others to establish whether those areas included in the Strategy for delivery are achievable within the timescales (2012-2017). Some of the work around health, for example, is generational and may require a wider focus as a result.

2. **Issues**

2.1 The Stronger and Safer Communities Strategy itself has been developed along a number of key lines of enquiry/development.

2.2 There are a number of key drivers listed in the Strategy, including: -

- National developments
- Evidence/data
- Other plans/strategies developed in the Borough
- Previous experience
- Resource issues/prioritisation

2.3 Based on these drivers and the clear focus on delivery now demanded by communities and partners, the Strategy is focused heavily on action planning, and Appendix C of the document provides the outline of these action plans for the Committee.

2.4 As with the other key strategies being developed by the Borough Council, this Strategy responds to the issue often raised by the public and others that there are too many plans and too many strategies in place and not enough delivery. There are a range of existing plans in place for the Borough, including partnership plans and individual organisational plans. This Strategy seeks to codify large amounts of this work – putting the key areas in one Strategy in order to focus attention on the key projects developed on the basis of evidence and political priorities.

2.5 It is clear that, with the economic downturn in recent years and the subsequent tightening of the public finances, not everything can be done in terms of addressing the issues of the Borough. As a result, a clear focus has been made in this Strategy on a clear set of objectives, allied to the key priorities identified by the Newcastle Partnership of economic growth and vulnerability. The next step will be to secure commitment from partners and others in terms of delivering the key aspects of the Strategy itself over the next 4-5 years.

3. **Options**

3.1 There are no options to be considered at this stage. The Committee is asked to consider the draft version of the Strategy and make any comments as required. Further consultation will take place with partners and other key stakeholders following this meeting and a further version of the Strategy will be presented to Cabinet at its meeting on 14 March 2012. The report to Cabinet will include the views expressed by this Committee.

4. **Proposal**

4.1 It is proposed that the Committee consider the Strategy and make comments as required, in order that the Strategy can be considered by Cabinet on 14 March 2012, as per the original Scrutiny Brief.

4.2 It is proposed that the Strategy becomes the overarching document for work in these key areas of activity over the five year period up to and including 2017.

5. **Reasons for Preferred Solution**

- 5.1 The Strategy has been developed in order to organise the work being done under the headings of 'Stronger' and 'Safer' communities. The Strategy has taken note of key drivers as set out in this report and has also taken into account the restrictions placed on organisations and individuals due to the prevailing economic situation. The Strategy forms the basis for ongoing work in these areas over the next few years and provides a structure and coherence which will assist in moving forward in the areas covered by the Strategy.

6. **Outcomes Linked to Sustainable Community Strategy and Corporate Priorities**

- 6.1 The Strategy has potential to help deliver key outcomes across all the priorities of the Borough Council and a number of the priorities set out in the Sustainable Community Strategy for the Borough.

7. **Legal and Statutory Implications**

- 7.1 None at present – there is no statutory requirement to provide this Strategy, although it remains a statutory requirement to produce a Sustainable Community Strategy.

8. **Equality Impact Assessment**

- 8.1 An Equality Impact Assessment is being developed for the Strategy.

9. **Financial and Resource Implications**

- 9.1 There are a range of resource implications in terms of delivering the Strategy and these have been referred to in this report and elsewhere.

10. **Major Risks**

- 10.1 The GRACE risk assessment for the Strategy is being developed. The key risks include not committing enough resources to these areas of work and the community and Borough continuing to deal with the ongoing issues as a result.

11. **Sustainability and Climate Change Implications**

- 11.1 No direct implications, although these issues will be part of the projects set out in the Strategy.

12. **Key Decision Information**

- 12.1 This item is included in the forward plan.

13. **Earlier Cabinet/Committee Resolutions**

Cleaner, Greener and Safer Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 9 November 2011

14. **List of Appendices**

Appendix A – Brief for Scrutiny

Appendix B – Newcastle-under-Lyme Stronger and Safer Communities Draft Strategy 2012-2017

Appendix C – Action Plan

15. **Background Papers**

None.