

## **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 Cabinet with a draft of the Stronger and Safer Communities Strategy 2012-2017.

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

A version of this report was presented to the Cleaner, Greener and Safer Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 29 February 2012. Comments from the Committee are included in this report.

Cabinet is asked to consider these comments and also to approve circulation of the Strategy to partners and the community for further consultation.

### **Recommendations**

**(a) That the Cabinet notes the contents of the Strategy and notes the comments received from the Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview & Scrutiny Committee.**

**(b) That the Cabinet makes any further amendments or suggestions to the content of the Strategy**

**(c) That the Cabinet requests circulation of the Strategy to partners and communities following this meeting and requests further updates on the Strategy's development at future meetings of the Cabinet.**

### **Reasons**

The Strategy provides 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, together with partner organisations across all sectors.

## **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.

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. In line with this timeframe, the Strategy was presented to the Scrutiny Committee on this date. A number of comments were made by the Committee, including: -

- Greater reference is needed of the working being done in developing planning policies/urban design geared towards creating safer and healthier communities.
- A request was made to clarify issues around community engagement and, in particular, how LAPs and other bodies can raise concerns and where these concerns can issues go and how they are dealt with by public agencies and others.
- Concerns were expressed about the use of evidence and whether it could be used in a better way and whether issues can be dealt with in a more effective way by using evidence differently.
- The issue of fear of crime should be emphasised in the Strategy, together with actions designed to deal with it.
- A reference was made to dealing with violations of s.30 Orders and anti-alcohol abuse initiatives.
- A request was made to define vulnerability as a key concept and priority, by using the priority areas to set the boundaries for how the Strategy will tackle vulnerability in the future.
- The Strategy should focus on enhancing the role of Neighbourhood Watch in the Borough.

Where possible, changes to the Strategy have been made to reflect the comments made.

1.3 The Strategy is presented here in its latest draft form at Appendix A. It is planned that further work will take place with communities, partners and others to establish whether those areas included in the Strategy for delivery are achievable within the timescales (2012-2017) and whether any other aspects of the Strategy needs to be developed. 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 B of the document provides the outline of these action plans.

2.5 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.

- 2.6 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. Cabinet is asked to consider the draft version of the Strategy and to make any comments as required. Comments have been made during the scrutiny process and these are presented here, together with changes made to the Strategy where possible. Further consultation is due to take place with partners and other key stakeholders after this Cabinet meeting and a further version of the Strategy will be presented to Cabinet at a later date.

### 4. **Proposal**

- 4.1 It is proposed Cabinet consider the Strategy and make comments and changes, as set out in this report.
- 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**

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

14. **List of Appendices**

Appendix A – Stronger and Safer Strategy 2012-2017  
Appendix B - Action Plan

15. **Background Papers**

None