

CLEANER, GREENER AND SAFER COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

7TH JUNE 2012

UPDATE ON THE STRONGER AND SAFER COMMUNITIES STRATEGY 2012-17

This note is designed to supplement the outline report you have before you – prepared by the Democratic Services Manager – which sets out the resolutions agreed to at the last meeting of the Committee with regard to the draft Stronger and Safer Communities Strategy 2012-2017.

Members will recall that, at the meeting of the Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 29th February 2012, a draft of the Strategy was presented for Members' consideration and comment.

At this meeting, a number of areas were highlighted for possible amendment and further development. These are summarised in the outline report included on the current agenda.

Since that meeting, a number of changes were made to the draft Strategy as a result of comments made by the Scrutiny Committee. These comments were also included in the report which was presented to Cabinet on 14th March 2012.

The report presented to Cabinet, therefore, included the following extract: -

- 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.

As outlined in the extract, changes were made to the draft Strategy in order to recognise and reflect these comments. These changes included refreshing the performance management aspect of the Strategy to include a list of relevant indicators and targets; a greater focus on what is meant by 'vulnerability' in this context; and inclusion of the specific areas outlined above.

Following approval from Cabinet, the Strategy has now been circulated for consultation with the community and other key stakeholders.

The Strategy is, therefore, available online as part of the Council's website at http://www.newcastle-staffs.gov.uk/community_index.asp?id=SXB5C2-A7812FD3. In addition, work is being done with LAPs and other community bodies and agencies to ensure that comments on the document are able to be put forward and communicated to the Council.

The consultation period on the Strategy is due to last 12 weeks – as per the local Compact – from 16th May to 10th August 2012. A card has been produced highlighting the consultation, and this has been included on the agenda for this evening's meeting.

Following the closure of the consultation period and further changes to the Strategy, a further round of reports will be produced for the next meeting of this Committee (due on 5th September) and Cabinet on 19th September. It is hoped that the Strategy will become 'live' at that point, although it should be noted that work on a number of the projects included in the Action Plan has already begun.