

## **STRONGER & SAFER COMMUNITIES STRATEGY 2012 - 2017**

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

**Portfolios:** Safer Communities/Stronger and Active Neighbourhoods

**Ward(s) affected:** All

### **Purpose of the Report**

To provide the Cabinet with the latest 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 & Scrutiny Committee on 5<sup>th</sup> October 2012, following previous presentations of the Strategy at the Scrutiny Committee in February 2012 and at Cabinet in March 2012. The document has also been out for public consultation between May and August 2012, and has been amended as a result

Cabinet is asked to consider the Strategy and approve it as a final version prior to public distribution.

### **Recommendations**

- (a) That the Cabinet notes the contents of the Strategy.**
- (b) That the Cabinet makes any further amendments or suggestions to the content of the Strategy.**
- (c) That the Cabinet approves the Strategy and requests that it is made available throughout the Borough via the Council website and also in hard copy format where necessary.**

### **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.

## **1. Background**

- 1.1 An initial brief for the Borough Council's Stronger and Safer Communities Strategy 2012-2017 was presented to the Cleaner, Greener, Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee in November 2011. A draft version of the Strategy was then presented to the Committee in February 2012 and was also presented at Cabinet in March 2012.
- 1.2 The Strategy itself focuses on developing stronger and safer communities in Newcastle and brings together existing developing areas of work designed to deliver the Council's vision

and also to assist communities through partnership and community based activity. The Strategy links with the Council's developing outcome-based performance management framework and provides the basis for the organisation's policy framework together with economic development and health.

- 1.3 Following comments from the Scrutiny Committee and from the then-Cabinet, a series of changes were made to the Strategy in key areas such as performance management. A further draft version of the Strategy was then put out for public consultation between May and August 2012. The consultation was Compact complaint and the consultation was open on the Newcastle Borough Council and Newcastle Partnership website, was sent out via email to a number of groups including Partnership groups, Heads of Service, Locality Action Partnerships and a small number of copies were delivered into key locations across the borough along with a postcard identifying where the consultation documents could be located.
- 1.4 In total, 24 responses were received via the consultation process, and, following the consultation, a series of amendments were made to the Strategy.
- 1.5 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 2012-2017 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 this action plan.
- 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. Cabinet is asked to consider the draft version of the Strategy and to make any comments as required prior to approving distribution of the final version of the Strategy around the Borough via the Council's website and in other formats.

### 4. **Proposal**

- 4.1 It is proposed Cabinet consider the Strategy and make comments and changes, as set out in this report, prior to approving final sign off of the Strategy.
- 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

Cleaner, Greener and Safer Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 29 February 2012

Cleaner, Greener and Safer Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 5 October 2012

Cabinet – 14 March 2012

14. **List of Appendices**

Appendix A - Stronger and Safer Strategy 2012-2017

Appendix B - Action Plan

15. **Background Papers**

None.