

## **NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME CO-OPERATIVE STRATEGY 2013-2015**

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

**Portfolio:** Transformation, Communications and Partnerships

**Ward(s) affected:** All

### **Purpose of the Report**

To provide the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee with a draft of the Co-operative Strategy 2013-2015.

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

The Strategy sets out the details around the stated ambition of the Council to become a Co-operative Council, an ambition which is also reflected in the key priority on becoming a Co-operative Council within the Council Plan.

The Committee is asked to consider the draft version of the Strategy and make any comments and proposals as appropriate. The Strategy has been to Cabinet was approved at its meeting in February 2013.

### **Recommendations**

- a) **That the Committee notes the contents of the Strategy**
- b) **That the Committee makes any further amendments or suggestions to the content of the Strategy**
- c) **That the Committee considers Cabinet’s decision to circulate the Strategy to partners and communities and requests further updates on the Strategy’s development at future meetings.**

### **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 a Co-operative Council for Newcastle under Lyme B.C.

The Strategy brings together existing areas of work and provides a common basis for future work programmes as well as providing a framework for future development of the co-operative concept.

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 The background to the co-operative approach is set out in the strategy itself, found at Appendix A of this report.
- 1.2 The initiative has been developed by a series of councils nationally, and is a reflection of a number of legislative and policy changes, including the development of the ‘Big Society’ concept by central government.

- 1.3 The co-operative approach puts the local authority at the centre of a process of change in the local area, using its position as a civic leader to develop communities, staff, partners and other sectors to work together in order to continue to deliver high quality services against a challenging financial background.
- 1.4 The initial draft of the Newcastle-under-Lyme Co-operative Strategy is presented here for consideration by the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee.
- 1.5 It is planned that further work will take place with communities, partners and others to establish the content of the Strategy. This will include recommendations from the recent Peer Challenge in October 2012 (reported at the January 2013 meeting of the Cabinet) which include the introduction of a Co-operative Charter for the Borough and a range of other actions laid out in the Strategy, including:
  - Improving the 'customer journey' by simplifying the route the citizen must go along when doing business with the council as a customer
  - Including the co-operative principle in consultative processes
  - Using the co-operative approach as basis for workforce and organisational development – including through changed behaviours, culture and values (including the development of a co-operative code of conduct)
  - Developing elected Members to recognise and utilise the concept of the co-operative council
  - Developing Locality Action Partnerships (LAPs) along co-operative lines

## **2. Issues**

- 2.1 The Co-operative 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 other factors, the Strategy will be focused on action planning, and an action plan will be developed to support implementation of the Strategy.
- 2.4 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, including services of a high quality and with a community focus.

## **3. Options**

There are no options to be considered at this stage. The Committee is asked to consider the draft version of the Strategy and to make any comments as required. Further consultation is due to take place with partners and other key stakeholders after this meeting and a further version of the Strategy will be presented at a later date.

## **4. Proposal**

- 4.1 It is proposed the Committee 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.
5. **Reasons for Preferred Solution**
- 5.1 The Strategy has been developed in order to organise the work being done under the co-operative heading. 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.
7. **Legal and Statutory Implications**
- 7.1 None at present – there is no statutory requirement to provide this 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 Cabinet – 6<sup>th</sup> February 2013
14. **List of Appendices**
- 14.1 Appendix A – Draft Newcastle-under-Lyme Co-operative Strategy 2013-2015
15. **Background Papers**
- 15.1 None.