

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET - 25 SEPTEMBER 2008

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

A SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY FOR WIRRAL – PROPOSED CONSULTATION

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report sets out the statutory requirement relating to the production of a Sustainable Community Strategy for Wirral by the Local Strategic Partnership and sets out progress to date in developing this key document.
- 1.2 Given the council's leadership role in relation to strategic planning at a borough-wide level through the Local Strategic Partnership, cabinet is also asked to endorse the draft version of the Sustainable Community Strategy attached as Appendix A for the purposes of consultation with partners and the community, and to agree the proposed consultation timetable at Appendix B.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Sustainable communities are places in which people want to live, now and in the future. They embody the principles of sustainable development at the local level. This means they improve quality of life for all whilst safeguarding the environment for future generations. The UK Government's Sustainable Development Strategy, *Securing the Future*, was published in March 2005 and included the Government's definition and components of a sustainable community. Sustainable communities embody the principles of sustainable development at the local level. They:
 - Balance and integrate social, economic and environmental components of their community
 - Meet the needs of existing and future generations
 - Respect the needs of other communities in the wider region or internationally also to make their communities sustainable
- 2.2 The Local Government Act 2007 requires every local authority to develop a 'sustainable' community strategy.

3. PROGRESS

- 3.1 The development of Wirral's Local Area Agreement for 2008-11 was a robust prioritisation and negotiation process aimed at ensuring that partners and stakeholders clearly identified the right improvement areas for Wirral. The outcomes of this process have been key to the drafting of a sustainable community strategy which sets out Wirral's story of place and a shared understanding of local needs, both in the medium and long-term.

- 3.2 The council's corporate plan reflects and complements the vision in the draft sustainable community strategy for Wirral. Along with other key partner plans and strategies, the corporate plan will contribute towards the delivery of the over-arching vision set out in the community strategy.
- 3.3 Consultation has already been undertaken with a variety of partnership groups, key stakeholders and the community with regard to the proposed themes for the community strategy, for example through the area forums.
- 3.4 It should be noted that progress on drafting the strategy has been slower than anticipated at the outset of the process for a number of reasons, including the emergence of new guidance and a clear need to align the sustainable community strategy with other key plans and strategies, most notably the Local Development Framework. The Local Development Framework is the spatial delivery vehicle for the community strategy and, as such, a significant amount of preparatory work has been undertaken to ensure that these key strategies combined provide the right blueprint for the long-term future of Wirral.

4. PROPOSALS FOR FURTHER CONSULTATION

- 4.1 It is proposed that the draft at Appendix 1 is used as the basis for consultation. This document contains the following elements:
- An executive summary
 - Wirral's **story of place**, highlighting the key challenges faced by the borough
 - A partnership **vision and strategy for Wirral**
 - Wirral's **partnership agreement**, detailing Local Area Agreement priorities for 2008-11 and the shared values of the Local Strategic Partnership as it seeks to deliver improved quality of life outcomes for everyone in the borough

This proposed consultation draft provides a starting point for debate with partners and the community and it is anticipated that the content of the strategy will evolve to reflect contributions from a wide range of stakeholder.

- 4.2 A proposed timetable of key dates relating to the consultation process is attached as Appendix 2. This includes a formal twelve week public consultation period in line with Wirral's Compact agreement. Work will also be undertaken to ensure that consultation in respect of the Core Strategy element of the Local Development Framework (see 3.4 above) is appropriately linked to this timetable.
- 4.2 Work is also ongoing with press and PR with regard to the public consultation aspect to ensure that as wide a range of views as possible is reflected in the strategy. The recent community canvas survey also incorporated questions relating to the community strategy themes, and the results of this survey will be fed in accordingly.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The costs of managing the consultation process will be met from existing budgets.

6. STAFFING IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1** There are no additional staffing requirements required to undertaken the proposed programme of consultation.

7. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1** The views of Wirral's diverse communities will be sought as part of the consultation process through existing engagement mechanisms and Wirral's Voluntary and Community Sector Network (VCAW).

8. COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1** There are none arising from this report.

9. LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1** The role of the community strategy is to deliver long-term sustainable solutions. Work is already in place, through the establishment of an Environment and Sustainability Advisory Group, to ensure that such concerns are considered in long-term strategic planning and medium-term delivery through the Local Area Agreement.

10. PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1** There are none directly arising from this report. The planning implications of the final sustainable community strategy will be addressed through the Local Development Framework.

11. ANTI-POVERTY IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1** There are none directly arising from this report. Addressing issues of poverty and deprivation is, however, central to the proposed vision for the community strategy.

12. LOCAL MEMBER SUPPORT IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1** Efforts will be made through the consultation programme to ensure that all areas in Wirral are informed of the draft strategy.

13. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 13.1** None

14. RECOMMENDATIONS

That

- (1) the draft strategy at Appendix 1 be endorsed to be used for the purposes of consultation with key partners and the public;
- (2) the proposed timetable for consultation and approval of the sustainable community strategy at Appendix 2 be approved; and
- (3) delegated authority be given to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to approve any changes to the document arising from the initial consultation with partners, prior to the commencement of the public consultation period in mid-October 2008.

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CHIEF EXECUTIVE

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