

Meeting:	Cabinet
Date:	26 th March 2009
Subject:	Sustainable Community Strategy
Key Decision:	Yes
Responsible Officer:	Tom Whiting, Assistant Chief Executive
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor David Ashton, Portfolio Holder for Strategy, Partnership and Finance Councillor Paul Osborn, Portfolio Holder for Performance, Communications and Corporate Services
Exempt:	No
Enclosures:	<i>Draft Sustainable Community Strategy</i>

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

This report sets out the results of consultation on the draft revised Sustainable Community Strategy.

Recommendations:

That Cabinet considers the responses to the consultation, amends the draft Sustainable Community Strategy accordingly and recommends the Council to adopt the Strategy

Reason: (For recommendation)

To comply with the legal obligation to prepare a Sustainable Community Strategy

Section 2 – Report

Introductory paragraph

2.1 A Sustainable Community Strategy sets out a vision for the future of an area over a number of years and informs the planning processes of the partners working in that area. Harrow has previously adopted two such plans or strategies and this, third iteration, updates the aims and aspirations that the Council, its partners and the community have identified for the period to 2020.

2.2 This strategy follows the pattern of previous versions in proposing that the actions included in the Borough's Local Area Agreement form the short-term action plan while the medium to longer term aspirations are less clearly defined at this stage. These aspirations set the agenda to inform planning and prioritising for the future and which will, in time, become the ingredients of future action plans

2.3 While the Strategy has been developed in consultation with all of the organisations in membership of Harrow Strategic Partnership and with the community through summits and other consultation mechanisms, it is a statutory plan that needs to be adopted by the Council.

Options considered

2.4 The options considered were about the mechanism to be used to refresh the existing strategy and, after an officer assessment; the chosen methodology was agreed by the Board of the Harrow Strategic Partnership and the Council's Corporate Management Board.

Current situation

2.5 The existing Sustainable Community Plan was adopted in November 2006 and reflected the Local Area Agreement which runs from April 2006 to March 2009. The existing Plan was also developed within the Council and, although subject to wide consultation on the final draft, was not well rooted in

Why a change is needed

2.6 A new Local Area Agreement was put in place in June 2008 running until March 2011. The new agreement is much wider in scope than its predecessor and has more significant implications for service development and delivery. At the same time, the context within which the Council and its partners operate has changed, particularly in relation to the economic situation and this needs to be reflected in our thinking for the future. Finally, the introduction of the new Comprehensive Area Assessment regime places more weight on the success of Partnership working to secure a better future for local areas and looks to the Sustainable Community Strategy as a prime source of evidence that partnerships are planning and working effectively.

2.7 The Draft Strategy has been developed through a process of interviewing 50 significant opinion formers and asking similar questions of the Council's Residents' Panel, a group of 1,200 local people who are broadly representative of the population as a whole. The views and opinions of these groups were summarised and frequently mentioned topics identified. The two

summit meetings held in November were asked to rank these topics in order of significance to Harrow, now and in the future, so that issues that might be expected to arise anywhere in Outer London had a specifically Harrow blend.

2.8 The outcomes of all of this work were pulled together into the Draft that is attached and was then the subject of further consultation to ensure that the views expressed and the blend of issues raised had been properly captured.

2.9 In summary, the Strategy is arranged around six themes:

- Economic Development in Harrow
- Every Harrow Child
- Health, Well-being and Independence
- An Improving Environment
- Culture, Communities and Identity and
- The Future of Public Services and Democracy.

2.10 The responses to consultation are set out in the table appended to this report together with an officer comment/recommendation about its inclusion in the final Strategy. A tracked changes version of the strategy showing the alterations made in response to the consultation is available for members on request.

Implications of the Recommendation

2.11 Adopting the Sustainable Community Strategy gives the Council and its Partners an agreed direction of travel and ambitions at which to aim. These should be incorporated into the service planning of all of the organisations in membership of the Strategic Partnership. The extent to which the Council or any other Partner can progress action under any of the themes will depend on the financial and other resources available at the time, the other demands on resources and a range of other considerations. Adopting the Strategy does not constitute specific commitments other than to sharing the aspirations that it contains.

Equalities impact

2.12 The short term actions set out in the Strategy are drawn from the Local Area Agreement which was the subject of an Equalities Impact Assessment during the negotiations leading up to its adoption in June 2008. The longer term aspirations are very general in form and, while they appear to be intended to improve the quality of life for all groups in the Borough, detailed action plans to give these aspirations substance would need to be examined from an equalities point of view as and when they are developed. It is only at that detailed stage that the impact of these aspirations will be able to be properly assessed.

Legal comments

2.13 The duty to prepare a Sustainable Communities Strategy is set out in the Local Government Act 2000. This Strategy and any changes to it require consultation with partner agencies and local representatives. In accordance with the Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) Regulations 2000,

the plan must be adopted by full Council. Once adopted, due regard must be had to the Strategy when preparing the Local Area Agreement

Community safety

2.14 The short term actions contained in the Strategy are drawn from the Local Area Agreement which was developed to meet the requirements of the safer harrow Management Group along with the other partnership management Groups. As such, it addresses key issues such as perceptions of anti-social behaviour and reducing domestic violence.

Financial Implications

2.15 There are no financial implications arising from this report

Performance Issues

2.16 The Sustainable Community Strategy will be a key document used in the Comprehensive Area Assessment look at the Council and its Partners and how they understand local needs and translate these into local priorities; deliver improvements and outcomes for the area; and analyse gaps and plan for the future.

Environmental Impact

2.17 The Sustainable Community Strategy will be a key document in the development of the environmental policy of the Council and its Partners and reflects the policies outlined in the draft Sustainable Design SPD, the draft Waste Management Strategy and the draft Climate Change Strategy. As such, the revised Strategy will assist in delivery the council's environmental objectives.

Risk Management Implications

2.18 The short-term delivery aspects of the Sustainable Community Plan are represented by the new Local Area Agreement for which a detailed performance management framework is in place. As the medium term aspirations develop delivery plans, these will also be monitored and managed through the performance management system.

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Name: Sheela Thakrar Date: 5 th March 2009	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Chief Financial Officer
Name: Helen White Date: 16 th March 2009.....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Monitoring Officer

Section 4 – Performance Officer Clearance

Name: Liz Defries.



Acting Divisional
Director, Strategy and
Improvement

Date: 4th March 2009.....

Section 5 – Environmental Impact Officer Clearance

Name: Andrew Baker



on behalf of the
Divisional Director
(Environmental
Services)

Date: 4th March 2009.

Section 6 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Mike Howes; ext 5637

Background Papers:

Notes of interviews with opinion formers

Outcomes of the Resident's Panel

Notes of the summit meetings

Local Area Agreement

Current Community Plan