

Brighton & Hove City Council

Meeting: **Sustainability Commission**
Date: **30 November 2005**
Report of: **Director of Strategy & Governance**
Subject: **Review of the Community Strategy**

1. Purpose of the Report

1.1. To invite comments from the Sustainability Commission on the draft revision of Brighton & Hove's Community Strategy "*Creating the City of Opportunities*".

2. Recommendations

2.1. To note the information in this report and to provide any comments on the draft by 16 December.

3. Introduction / Background

3.1. The Local Government Act 2000 requires local authorities to prepare a community strategy for improving the economic, social and environmental well-being of their area and contributing to sustainable development in the UK. Local authorities may modify their strategy from time to time and in doing so must consult and seek participation from appropriate people and have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

3.2. The Community Strategy articulates the most important aspirations, needs and priorities for an area and provides a means to co-ordinate and focus work in partnership to address these. It shapes the way in which the local authority collaborates with other public, private, voluntary and community organisations to enhance quality of life in the area.

3.3. The Community Strategy should reflect local circumstances and needs, engage and involve local communities, involve councillors, be prepared and implemented by the Local Strategic Partnership, be based on an assessment of needs and available resources, and address economic, social and environmental well-being in an integrated way. In line with government suggestion, there has been an increased emphasis on sustainable development in the version currently being drafted.

3.4. The Community Strategy sets the context from a local perspective for our Local Area Agreement and changes in the Community Strategy will subsequently need to be reflected in changes flowing through to the Local Area Agreement.

3.5. The Community Strategy is central to the work of the Local Strategic Partnership (the 2020 Community Partnership) and provides an over-arching framework within which the LSP, its family of partnerships and their strategies operate.

3.6. The development of the Public Service Board and its focus on the delivery of outcomes in the Local Area Agreement for the City will enhance the significance of the Community Strategy as those outcomes will reflect and be derived from the priorities set out in the Community Strategy.

4. The current Community Strategy

4.1. Brighton & Hove's Community Strategy *Creating the City of Opportunities* was published in March 2003. It identifies 8 priority areas :

- an enterprising city,
- a safer city,
- a healthy city,
- an inclusive city,
- an affordable city,
- an attractive city,
- a mobile city, and
- a customer focused city.

It is based on 4 foundations :

- community involvement,
- equality and social justice,
- rights and responsibilities, and
- a sustainable future.

4.2. The initial set of targets included as an appendix to the Plan were the first attempt at a performance management framework for the strategy. As a consequence, they are not always well integrated into the Plan, in some cases are not accepted by all partners and have not always proven useful for monitoring efforts to tackle the priorities.

5. The Review process to date

5.1. A vision for the community strategy has been developed by the 2020 Community Partnership led by the Chair and Vice-Chairs. The vision is of "A dynamic city that improves and protects the environment, meets social needs and promotes sustainable economic success in an inclusive, just and harmonious way".

5.2. It was also agreed that as the strategy is being reviewed, rather than fundamentally re-written, the draft would retain the 8 priority areas and 4 foundations as listed above.

5.3. A draft revised version of the 8 priority theme chapters of the community strategy has been written with input from a broad range of council officers,

partners and partnerships. An early version was discussed at a workshop at a Community and Voluntary Sector Forum conference and that input has also been incorporated into the draft. The draft was published for public comment on 7 November, with the closing date for comments to be received by 16 December 2005. Copies have been sent to:

- all councillors and directors ;
- all LSP and PSB members ;
- chairs and lead officers of the family of partnerships ;
- Neighbourhood Renewal Review Group members ;
- a range of groups and organisations, including information of how to access the draft to all members of the Community and Voluntary Sector Forum.

The Sustainability Commission is asked to comment on the draft strategy to provide a sustainability check.

The draft has also been placed on The Wave and the Council's website. It is being placed on the 2020 Community Partnership's website as well. A press release has also been prepared.

5.4. The draft has been written to take into account :

- the need to have a greater emphasis on sustainable development ;
- work to develop the Local Area Agreement, the Local Public Service Agreement 2nd Generation proposals and the Local Development Framework ;
- Brighton & Hove and Adur Area Investment Framework ;
- the 7 "shared priorities" between central and local government ;
- strategies of the council and partnerships which cover more specific areas of work.

5.5. The draft also seeks to introduce a more rigorous logical progression in each chapter between the aim, issues of concern and current position on the one hand and our plans on the other.

5.6. A further aim has been to reduce the number of targets to around 4 – 6 per chapter. The current strategy has about 70 targets which leads to a lack of focus. An attempt has been made to identify targets which, taken together, should still give a flavour of whether things are improving in the city. The key task of the community strategy is to set out how we intend to approach tackling the issues facing the city. Other plans and strategies set out in a lot more detail action plans for individual areas and most include detailed targets and monitoring arrangements. Rather than reproduce these in the community strategy, a selection of targets have been chosen that will show us when we look back in 2 to 3 years' time how much things have improved.

6. Consultation

6.1. Comment on the draft priority theme chapters is being sought in a number of ways. In addition to the document containing the draft being distributed for formal comment as described above :

- a members' seminar to discuss the draft was organised. As relatively few members indicated an intention to attend, individual meetings were arranged with those who did so ;
- a public meeting is being organised for the evening of 12 December in the East Wing of the Brighton Centre to allow residents to feedback on the draft ;
- a small number of focus groups will be held in early December, targeting under-engaged groups, to provide verification for whether the issues they nominate as the most important issues facing the city are included in the community strategy.

6.2. On the basis of comments received, the community strategy will be further revised in late December / early January and submitted to the LSP for approval on February 16th. In a parallel process, it is proposed that the strategy will be submitted via TMT / Chairs on 1 February and Policy and Resources on 1 March and then to Full Council on 16 March 2006 for adoption.

6.3. A copy of the draft chapters and introductory paper seeking public comments is attached.

Contact Officer: Michael Casey, Chief Executive's Policy Team. Ext. 6805.