CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Cabinet

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Date of meeting: 8 September 2008
Report of: Partnerships Workstream, Performance & Capacity Block
Title: CONSOLIDATED (INTERIM) SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY
STRATEGY FOR CHESHIRE EAST

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1.0 Purpose of Report

1.1 To provide Members of the Cheshire East Cabinet with information, as a
consolidation of priorities already consulted upon, articulated and agreed within
the existing sustainable community strategies for Macclesfield, Congleton,
Crewe and Nantwich and Cheshire, upon which decisions relating to service
delivery and resource allocation can be made prior to vesting day.

2.0 Decision Required

2.1 The Cabinet to recommend to Council to receive the Consolidated Sustainable
Community Strategy for Cheshire East (Appendix 1) as an interim document
and agree its use as the basis for corporate and financial planning prior to
vesting day.

3.0 Financial Implications for Transition Costs

3.1 None identified

4.0 Financial Implications 2009/10 and beyond

4.1 Both the Sustainable Community Strategy and Local Area Agreement (as the
Delivery Plan of the SCS) are intended to influence the business planning
processes of the local authority and all partners from across the public, private,
community, voluntary and faith sectors within the local area.

4.2 In so doing, it is expected that priorities expressed within the Sustainable
Community Strategy inform how resources are allocated and services delivered
by the local authority and its partners.

5.0 Risk Assessment

5.1 In the absence of a robust new partnerships framework through which a new
Sustainable Community Strategy for Cheshire East could be developed,
consulted upon, agreed and implemented within the timescale of LGR
transition, it is proposed that a consolidation of the current community

strategies already in existence across Cheshire East be used as an interim measure.

5.2   Should this document now not be agreed as an interim measure, the Shadow Council would have no robust evidence base upon which the decisions it is required to make over the next seven months and beyond by the new Council could be made.

6.0   Background

6.1   The Local Government Act 2000 placed a statutory duty on all principal local authorities to promote the economic, environmental and social well-being of their area and improve the quality of life of local people through the preparation of community strategies or plans produced in partnership with others.

6.2   "Creating Strong, Safe and Prosperous Communities" published in July 2008 contains statutory guidance in relation to the preparation or modification of Sustainable Community Strategies replacing that issued previously under section 4 of the Local Government Act 2000. This statutory guidance reinforces the purpose of a Sustainable Community Strategy as setting the overall strategic direction and long-term vision for an area – typically 10-20 years – in a way that contributes to sustainable development in the UK. It tells the 'story of place' – the distinctive vision and ambition of the area, backed by clear evidence and analysis. The Sustainable Community Strategy is, therefore, the overarching plan for the area.

6.3   In addition, the creation of strong partner relationships and alignment of views around the Sustainable Community Strategy is the starting point for the negotiation of Local Area Agreements and provides the rationale for the identification of improvement targets. The refresh of the current transitional Cheshire Local Area Agreement will be the subject of a subsequent report to Cabinet in October/November.

6.4   The Sustainable Community Strategy should be the key document against which other organisational plans and strategies are produced, decisions made and budgets set, i.e. Corporate Plan, MTFS, Service Plans, Local Development Framework, etc. This requirement should apply to all partners, not just the local authority.

6.5   Within the Cheshire East area, there are currently four Sustainable Community Strategies in place. These are:

- Macclesfield Borough Sustainable Community Strategy 2007-2010
- Congleton Sustainable Community Strategy 2007-2016
- A Sustainable Community Strategy for Crewe and Nantwich 2006-2016
- A Sustainable Community Strategy for Cheshire – Interim Document (May 2008)

6.6 All four documents have been produced through existing partnership frameworks, are compact compliant (in that they have been subject to an extensive consultation process) and have been formally agreed by the four existing local authorities and LSP's in accordance with their statutory duty. They are, therefore, currently being used by the councils and their partners as outlined in paragraph 6.4.

6.7 It should also be noted that the transitional LGR regulations, including those in relation to the preparation of Local Area Agreements, recognise the existence of current plans and strategies and allow for them to be taken forward by the new unitary authority in the absence of new plans being produced within the transition period.

6.8 On this basis, it is proposed that a new Sustainable Community Strategy for Cheshire East be prepared during 2009 through a newly constituted LSP framework (to be in place by the end of January at the latest). In addition to providing sufficient time for partner engagement in the production process, this timescale for the development of the new Strategy will ensure that the results of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, Place Survey and other similar activity can be taken into account. It also aligns closely with the timetables for Corporate Plan and Local Development Framework Core Strategy development.

6.9 In the interim, it is proposed that the current strategies listed in paragraph 6.5 be consolidated, together with the 35 areas for improvement identified in the Cheshire Local Area Agreement, to inform the Corporate Plan and provide the basis for decision making (including budget setting) over the next seven months.

6.10 As a consequence of this exercise, 16 high level priority themes have emerged. In no particular order of importance, these are:

- Reducing inequalities / narrowing the gap between the most disadvantaged and successful areas of Cheshire East and sectors of the community
- Addressing the key issues surrounding our ageing population
- Addressing the priority services for children and young people
- Improving access to and availability of affordable and appropriate housing
- Reducing anti-social behaviour, arson and criminal damage
- Reducing re-offending
- Tackling the adverse effect of alcohol
- Achieving sustainable management of waste resources
- Responding to the challenge of climate change
- Reducing worklessness and improved skills
- Improving business and enterprise
- Improving road safety and maintenance thereby reducing accidents
- Improving environmental cleanliness
- Maintaining an efficient transport network

- Reducing the risk of industrial and commercial emergencies
- Improving access to and participation in sport, culture and leisure

It should be noted that, at this stage it is not appropriate for the Shadow Authority to amend these priorities though it is important for the Council to reach a view on the importance it attaches to those identified.

6.11 Appendix 2 maps the more detailed content of the current Strategies against each of the high level priority themes and, as such, illustrates areas of common ground. The shaded rows in Appendix 2 also highlight the designated Local Area Agreement indicators for which the local authority is the lead partner. These are:

NI4 Percentage of people who feel they can influence decisions in the locality
NI8 Adult participation in sport and active recreation
NI21 Dealing with local concerns about anti-social behaviour and crime by the local councils and police
NI125 Achieving independence for older people through rehabilitation/intermediate care
NI130 Social Care clients receiving Self Directed Support (Direct Payments and Individual Budgets – adults all ages)
NI135 Carers receiving needs assessment or review and a specific carer's service, or advice and information
NI141 Percentage of vulnerable people achieving independent living
NI142 Percentage of vulnerable people who are supported to maintain independent living
NI154 Net additional homes provided
NI155 Number of affordable homes delivered
NI156 Number of households living in temporary accommodation
NI168 Principal roads where maintenance should be considered
NI169 Non-principal roads where maintenance should be considered
NI186 Per capita reduction on CO2 emissions in the Local Authority area
NI191 Residual household waste per household

In addition to the above, there are a number of indicators delivered through more formalised partnership arrangements in which the local authority is a key player, e.g. Cheshire Children's Trust, Cheshire Domestic Abuse Partnership, Cheshire Safer Roads Partnership, etc.

6.12 Again it should be noted that whilst the Local Area Agreement review/refresh process will provide an opportunity to revisit 2009/10 targets, including those specific to Cheshire East, it is not anticipated that there will be a change in the targets identified for improvement or designated indicators.

7.0   Options

7.1   Not applicable

8.0   Reasons for Recommendation

8.1   The Shadow Authority needs firm evidence of community and organisational priorities upon which decisions can be made. In the absence of a new Sustainable Community Strategy for Cheshire East the content of the existing strategies, which has already been determined through robust partnership working and analysis of detailed qualitative/quantitative data, should provide the policy base that the Shadow Authority needs in the interim.

For further information:

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Background Documents:

Documents are available for inspection at: Westfields, Middlewich Road, Sandbach