

**A SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY FOR HUNTINGDONSHIRE
(Report by Head of Policy and Strategic Services)**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an opportunity for discussion on the review of the Sustainable Community Strategy for Huntingdonshire (SCS). It briefly outlines the process and current progress in developing the strategy. The attached draft strategy document is subject still to consultation and review, specifically by partnership groups, the Corporate and Strategic Framework Overview and Scrutiny Panel and the Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership Board and is still at a formative stage.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The District and County Council have a statutory duty to work with partner organisations to produce a Sustainable Community Strategy - a plan that sets out how the providers of local services – including the business and voluntary sectors - will work together to improve the economic, social and environmental well being of the area in which they operate.
- 2.2 A Community Strategy for Huntingdonshire was adopted in 2004 by the Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership and partner organisations. Each year there has been a desktop review with a substantial review planned after three years. This coincides with the duty to prepare and maintain a SCS reiterated in the Local Government White Paper; 'Strong and Prosperous Communities'. In particular the SCS will be an important means of informing and influencing the new Local Area Agreement and ultimately the allocation of resources.
- 2.3 The development of the strategy is being carried out in two parts, firstly the updating of the vision and identification of the outcomes and objectives that will help to ensure a good quality of life over the longer period. The second part will involve producing shorter term action or delivery plans to show how partners in the District will work together to help achieve the shared vision.
- 2.3 Currently, the Council is developing a new 'Local Development Framework', specifically a 'core strategy'. The importance of the link between the Sustainable Community Strategy and the Local Development Framework (which in practice will direct and determine much of the physical development needed to achieve sustainable communities) has been widely acknowledged. It is paramount that the two documents should, as far as appropriate, share a common vision, evidence base and, whenever possible, share engagement with stakeholders.

3. PROGRAMME OF REVIEW

- 3.1 **Stage 1 – completed**
Huntingdonshire District Council services, partnership groups and/or stakeholders have been asked to identify the issues that should be addressed in the SCS. This information, together with evidence from a range of strategy work currently underway has been collated and analysed to produce key issues for Huntingdonshire. The key issues highlight the evidence reviewed to date. Similarly the first stage of the Local Development Framework has been completed – issues and options papers- have sought the views of partners, stakeholders and the wider community.
- 3.2 **Stage 2 – completed**
The issues identified have been considered HSP partnership groups and key partners/stakeholders to prompt further discussion and debate
- 3.3 **Stage 3 – September/November 2007**
Outcomes and objectives for Huntingdonshire have been identified from the evidence from the first two stages of the process. The strategic themes and outcomes will contribute to the “County-wide Vision” process, which will help in the development of the new Local Area Agreement and will be used to develop both the Sustainable Community Strategy for Huntingdonshire and the Local Development Framework.
- 3.4 **Stage 4 – November 2007/Spring 2008**
Refinement of the specific objectives and action planning will start immediately after the HSP Board “signs off” the draft strategy.

4 RECOMMENDATION

That Cabinet consider and comment on the draft Huntingdonshire Sustainable Community Strategy generally and specifically:-

- **The appropriateness of the six strategic themes;**
- **Whether the outcomes and objectives sufficiently support the Council’s vision and priorities; and**
- **Priorities areas for Huntingdonshire which are not highlighted in the draft strategy.**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Huntingdonshire Community Strategy 2004
Local Government White Paper, ‘Strong and Prosperous Communities’

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