

REPORT TO CABINET

Title: **SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY - REFRESH**

Date: 28 January 2010

Member Reporting: Councillor Mrs Bateson

Contact Officer(s): Harjit Hunjan, Community & Business Partnerships Manager (6947), Nicola Davidson, Community Partnership Co-ordinator (6100)

Wards affected: All

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1.1 The Local Government White Paper, Strong and Prosperous Communities, describes the purpose of Sustainable Community Strategies (SCS) as setting out the overall strategic direction and long-term vision for the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of a local area – typically 10-20 years.
- 1.1.2 It tells the ‘story of the place’ – the distinctive vision and ambition of the area, backed by clear evidence and analysis. The SCS provides a vehicle for considering and deciding how to address difficult and cross cutting issues such as the economic direction of an area, cohesion, social exclusion and climate change’ and as a consequence, will need to be reviewed and refreshed regularly for accuracy.
- 1.1.3 The attached report sets out a refreshed vision and ambition for the area within an updated SCS, established through consultation with local stakeholders and partners undertaken by the Royal Borough’s Community Partnership Board.
- 1.1.4 The Strategy is being refreshed to account for statutory changes (see 3.1.2) relating to Sustainable Communities Strategies and to reflect the restructuring of the Community Partnership during 2009 - informed by a self assessment of the Community Partnership Board and supporting Ambition Groups carried out during Summer 2009.
- 1.1.5 This refreshed Strategy also reflects the views of local residents gathered through the Place Survey and other research, and accounts for the impacts of recessions and inequalities facing the more vulnerable groups within the Royal Borough.

2. RECOMMENDATION: That the attached Strategy be considered and endorsed.

What will be different for residents as a result of this decision?
The Sustainable Communities Strategy will provide a comprehensive guide to the Royal Borough and our partners on how to engage residents, lead our communities and find new and more effective ways to deliver high quality services and better outcomes for all residents.

3. SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 Background

3.1.1 The Local Government White Paper Strong and Prosperous Communities, describes the starting point for delivery of better local outcomes. It recommends that local partners in the Local Strategic Partnership create a shared vision and shared sense of priorities for a place. The vision needs to be articulated in a Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS).

3.1.2 The Borough's first Community Strategy was produced in 2002. The second (current) Strategy was endorsed by Cabinet in October 2007. The attached refreshed *Sustainable* Community Strategy takes into account the updated statutory guidance as provided within the Local Government White Paper, Strong and Prosperous Communities - which replaced previous guidance (Local Government Act 2000) and further recommendations made by the Audit Commission in the recent Comprehensive Area Assessment.

3.1.3 Sustainable Community Strategies should contain the following elements:

- **a long-term vision based firmly on local needs** – this will be underpinned by a shared evidence base informed by community aspirations
- **key priorities for the local area** - based upon this vision, which may realistically be achieved in the medium term. These will inform the strategy's delivery agreement – the Local Area Agreement.

3.1.4 The SCS is the overarching plan for promoting and improving the well being of the area and is required to take into account other local and (sub) regional plans.

3.1.5 When preparing or modifying an SCS, local authorities are required to consult with and seek the participation of each partner authority and other organisations, as they consider appropriate. This will help to ensure that the SCS represents shared long-term priorities across partner agencies.

3.1.6 Once prepared, the SCS must be agreed at full council in accordance with the Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) Regulations.

4. METHODOLOGY

4.1.1 Views of the stakeholders and partners representing on the Community Partnership Board (and supporting Ambition Groups) were articulated during two facilitated workshops. The priorities and aspiration captured during these workshops were summarised and widely circulated amongst partner organisations and internally within the Council for feedback.

4.1.2 The refreshed SCS articulates the needs and aspirations of the local community through a set of clearly defined challenges, priorities and actions. It recognises that the Total Place agenda will increasingly play an important part in the way that the Council and it's partners operate, particularly in a time of increasingly restricted public resources.

4.1.3 The SCS acknowledges the importance of communicating with local people by keeping them up to date on the progress of meeting strategic objectives. This will be formally reviewed on an annual basis, with progress against each of the challenges published by the Community Partnership Board. To support this review a detailed action plan summarising the targets against each of the challenges will be produced. This action plan will also detail all the relevant partners responsible for collectively ensuring the successful delivery of each of the challenges and will be made available for Cabinet.

Item	Action	Date
A.	Present draft report to CMT for consideration	November 2009
B	To present draft report to Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Panel for consideration	December 2009
C.	To present draft report to Community Partnership Board for endorsement	January 2010
D	Present final report to Cabinet for endorsement	January 2010
D.	Adopt Strategy	February 2010

5. OPTIONS AVAILABLE AND RISK ASSESSMENT

5.1 Options

	Option	Comments	Financial Implications
1.	Endorse Strategy (recommended option)	The Strategy will create a shared vision and sense of priorities for the Royal Borough to achieve better outcomes and services for residents.	Revenue: All costs from existing revenue budgets Capital
2.	Reject Strategy	This would mean that the RBWM does not complying with statutory guidance.	Revenue: As above Capital

5.2 Risk assessment

5.2.1 If the SCS is not refreshed there is a risk that the overall strategic direction and long-

term vision for the Borough will not be sufficiently articulated and coordinated, and that the Council would be failing in its duty to promote wellbeing throughout the local area and meet the needs of the Borough's various communities.

6. CONSULTATIONS CARRIED OUT

6.1.1 Extensive consultation has been carried out with the membership of the Royal Borough's Community Partnership Board, supporting Ambition Groups and officers and Chief Executives Management Team (CMT) 25th November 2009. To assist the consultation process an externally facilitated workshop was also held in October 2009. Further, findings from the Place Survey and other pieces of research have shaped the document.

7. COMMENTS FROM THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

The Panel (10th December 2009) endorsed the Sustainable Communities Strategy, subject to the following comments/suggested amendments:

- the document should be "branded" to better reflect that it is a jointly owned document with partner organisations.
- it was stressed that partner organisations should be required to identify how they are going to address and support key aspects of the document.

8. IMPLICATIONS

8.1.1 The following implications have been addressed where indicated below.

Financial	Legal	Human Rights Act	Planning	Sustainable Development	Diversity & Equality
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Background Papers:

The Local Government White Paper, Strong and Prosperous Communities, RBWM Community Strategy 2007.