

Report to: Cabinet
Council

Date: 27th November 2008
7th January 2009

Subject: Sustainable Community Strategy

Report of: Deputy Chief Executive

Contact officer: Simon Dale (01942 827320)

Purpose / summary:

Purpose of report

This report outlines the work that has taken place to develop the new long term Sustainable Community Strategy for the Borough. It reviews the core priorities within the strategy and their role as the focus for all local deployment plans, including the Local Area Agreement.

The report then finally explains how the Strategy will be used as the tool to underpin future partnership work (both at borough wide and locality levels) – and the importance of the Impact Assessment.

Alternative options considered and reason for selecting the one recommended:

No alternative. This is a formal Local Authority duty.

Recommendation / decision:

That this new Sustainable Community Strategy: VISION2026 be endorsed and implemented as the long term core plan for the Borough and that it form part of the Council's Policy Framework

That Council notes and endorses the alignment of the Local Area Agreement with this new strategy and the aspiration to further develop the LAA in localities.

That the Council offers its thanks to LSP partners for their support in the development of this new strategy

The decision will be made as a result of this report and will be published within 48 hours. This is a key decision (1) as it will have

significant effect in all wards of the Borough.

Risks / Implications:

Financial:	Although there are no specific funding requirements – this new Strategy will influence and direct the core priorities of all local action plans and will have significant impact on future allocation of resources.
Staffing:	Again – the strategy has no specific recommendations but is likely to have significant impact on staffing and other resource allocations in future
Policy:	All areas of policy will be affected. Close relationship with the priorities for the Local Development Framework
Equal Opportunities - Has a Diversity Impact Assessment been conducted?	Yes – but subject to ongoing development
Wards affected:	All

Property Implications – Does the proposal involve a reduction, addition or change to the Council’s asset base or its occupation?

No

Does this proposal have significant implications for the Council and the local population?

Yes

Does this proposal involve a new policy or procedure or significant changes to an existing policy or procedure?

Yes.

Has the Service Director - Borough Solicitor confirmed that the recommendations within this report are lawful and comply with the Council’s Constitution? **Yes**

Has the Service Director - Corporate Services confirmed that any expenditure referred to within this report is consistent with the Council’s budget? **Yes**

Are any of the recommendations within this report contrary to the Policy Framework of the Council? **No**

* delete which applicable

For Cabinet reports only:

Categorisation of the report:	X
Discussion leading to a decision	
Monitoring	
Sharing for corporate understanding	

	X
Discussion	X
Decision	
Information	

Tracking/Process:

	Consultation	Ward Members	Partners
	Local residents		LSP (10.11.08)
Panel	Overview & Scrutiny	Cabinet	Council
		27 November 2008	7 January 2009

List of background Papers in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

Vision2026 - Consultation report (September 2008)

Reported to Local Strategic Partnership Board

<http://www.wigan.gov.uk/Services/CommunityLiving/Partnerships/vision2026.htm>

Local Area Agreement 2008 – 2011 (May 2008)

Reported to Cabinet

<http://www.wigan.gov.uk/Services/CommunityLiving/Partnerships/LocalAreaAgreement/>

Wigan Local Story (December 2007)

Reported to Cabinet and LSP Board

<http://www.wigan.gov.uk/Services/CommunityLiving/Partnerships/LocalAreaAgreement/>

Government Guidance for preparation of Community Strategies

(Published July 2008)

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/localgovernment/pdf/885397.pdf>

Copies of the Wigan **Sustainable Community Strategy** can be downloaded from:

<http://www.wigan.gov.uk/Services/CommunityLiving/Partnerships/>

Copies of all documents are available online or directly from Simon Dale, Chief Executive Services.

Proper Officer S. Johnson

Date 12.11.08

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Under the terms of the Local Government Act 2000, all Local Authorities have a duty to develop a Sustainable Community Strategy – “as the **overarching plan** for promoting and improving the well-being of the area”

All community strategies are expected to have 2 main elements:

- a **long-term vision based firmly on local needs** – 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 (LAA)

Community strategies are also expected to follow 4 main conditions;

- allow local communities (based upon geography and/or interest) to articulate their aspirations, needs and priorities;
 - co-ordinate the actions of the council, and of the public, private, voluntary and community organizations that operate locally;
 - focus and shape existing and future activity of those organizations so that they effectively meet community needs and aspirations;
 - Contribute to the achievement of sustainable development both locally and more widely, with local goals and priorities relating, where appropriate, to regional, national and even global aims.
- 1.2 In accordance with the formal guidance this Strategy has been developed closely with partners and stakeholders from all sectors in the Wigan Borough Partnership, the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) for Wigan Borough. The Board of the LSP formally endorsed this new Strategy on 10th November 2008.

2. Developing the VISION

- 2.1 As described already, Sustainable Community Strategies are expected to be developed and led by the Local Strategic Partnership and to provide a balance between a long term vision and short term action. Over the past 8 years we have published 3 Community Strategies. Each of them has attempted to provide the focus for the development of shared working across our partnerships and communities.
- 2.2 For this latest version it was determined that there was a need for a much clearer focus on understanding the aspirations of local people – in order to provide a long term context for local delivery. It was understood that this would provide the drivers for the Local Area Agreement – and in turn - the future development of the Council’s own Corporate Plan (and other partners’ own business plans).
- 2.3 For that reason, over the past 6 months we conducted an exercise called VISION2026 to listen to what local people think need to be the long terms aims for the future of the Borough.

- 2.4 The VISION2026 process entailed a series of conversations with groups of local people about their positive vision of how Wigan will be in 2026, when babies born this year become adults. The reason for this approach was recognition that looking ahead for 18 years could dramatically expand the potential of what people feel might be possible to change. This optimistic approach was to enable people to see how we can work together to change the problems of today into the possibilities of tomorrow.
- 2.5 The strategy document provides a sample of the diverse things that people said:
- *“Less travelling abroad: people go to the Costa Del Douglas”*
 - *“Less work pressure gives a shorter working week helps to promote more volunteering”*
 - *“There’s more ‘community spirit’: we help each other in a crisis & take time to speak to each other”*
 - *“Better quality traditional houses; every house has a garden; allotments in gardens”*
- 2.6 We asked people to say what they wanted. We purposely did not brief them on the facts and figures about the Borough and then invite them to make an “informed” judgement. Having sought people’s views and perceptions we then brought together the factual evidence base about the needs of the Borough. This included both the traditional borough-wide statistics – as well as the neighbourhood level “400 babies” analysis that has recently helped to provide a focus for a much sharper debate about the need to address long term inequalities.
- 2.7 The focus on inequalities and disadvantage reflects concerns about both geographic concentrations of need as well as issues related to social identity and the communities of interest in the Borough who needs must be carefully considered in all our plans.
- 2.8 Having described local aspirations and views, and taking into account local needs, the strategy then highlights the 4 core long term priorities for the Borough:

a) Ambitious Communities

Opportunities exist that allow people to fulfil their ambitions within a local and regional economy that provides ease of access to jobs and services. People will have increased income levels and will be able to access better quality, affordable homes in safe neighbourhoods. Our communities will look to the future and protect our environment for future generations.

b) Living Healthier and longer

Providing opportunities that help support people to make choices that improve quality of life and enable people to live longer particularly for those from disadvantaged backgrounds

c) Realising aspirations

The people of the borough have raised aspirations for what they as individuals can achieve, particularly young people and people from disadvantaged communities. People of all ages are equipped with the right life skills and the qualifications employers need to achieve their ambitions and which enable them to participate.

d) Strong Community

Communities are at the heart of all we do, where people support and care for the wellbeing of others and the future. A community with a strong sense of what it is capable of achieving and where there are opportunities to get involved, particularly for young people, in shaping the future.

3. How does the new strategy fit with the Local Area Agreement?

- 3.1 The Sustainable Community Strategy is at the heart of the Local Area Agreement LAA. It sets out the long term vision and the overall direction and will provide the basis against which it and other action plans will be updated and refreshed. The 4 core priorities in the Community Strategy align directly with the 4 action themes of the LAA.

	Community Strategy Priority / LAA Theme	Partnership lead	Champions / Critical friends
1.	Ambitious Communities An ambitious community: strong skills that meet business needs and supports sustainable local economy where people can get round more easily (and more sustainably) – and live in affordable homes	Economy, Environment, Culture and Housing	Champion Martin Kimber Critical friend Joyce Redfearn / Kate Ardern
2.	Strong Community A strong community that provides positive activities for all with improved community confidence, participation and cohesion; safe and sustainable neighbourhoods.	Building Stronger Communities	Champion Lee Bruckshaw Critical friend Carol Bluer / Rodney Hill
3.	Living Healthier and Longer Living longer with a better quality of life: addressing inequality	Adults, Health and well-being	Champion Bernard Walker Critical friend Lee Bruckshaw / John Harding
4.	Realising aspirations Improved aspirations, attainment and life chances for children and young people (especially those in most disadvantaged communities)	Children and Young People	Champion Nick Hudson Critical friend Ashley Crumbley / Marie Gillott

- 3.2 In the past our early Community Plans were sometimes challenged because they were based on informal partnership agreements. With the alignment of the new Strategy with the LAA it gives a fresh impetus to our partnership

working, the development of joint commissioning and the move to new forms of delivery.

- 3.3 The performance management regime for the LAA will ensure that we can clearly report back to local communities on what has been committed and achieved against the long term aspirations.
- 3.4 Over time it is hoped that we will extend the ideas for “mini – LAAs” in local areas – perhaps under the umbrella of the updated Township Forums. This will help to ensure that we give the Sustainable Community Strategy and the LAA a stronger local flavour.

4. Delivery arrangements

- 4.1 Delivery of the Sustainable Community Strategy and LAA is now very closely aligned with the updated LSP structure.
- 4.2 Each of the themes is now matched with a thematic partnership – and each of these in turn has a named “champion” responsible for leading on delivery against shared targets. In addition a series of “critical friends” have also been appointed from an outside field. (Listed in table in Section 3)
Both of these roles are to help ensure that all core partners across the LSP share responsibility for delivery and ongoing development. The Council’s role is as much about enabling the effective participation of partners as it is about undertaking the delivery of the action.

5. Innovation in delivery

- 5.1 Throughout the development of the Sustainable Community Strategy and Local Area Agreement there has been a constant focus on what might be the key themes where we should focus in order to generate a clear and catalytic approach.
The list is based on a combination of factors including previous performance, public concern as well as an informed view of which issues appear to be connected – and where innovative thinking might produce more effective responses.

6 key themes that we have identified:

- Aspirations of young people
- Worklessness
- Access to public transport
- Extend length of life
- Teenage conception
- Reduce alcohol related harm and crime.

For each of these themes we have been working with the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) using a simple toolkit based on Outcomes Based Accountability. A series of workshops that engaged service users alongside chief officers and elected members has helped to create a powerful set of ideas for how we might start to delivery differently (and innovatively) on some of these persistent problems.

6. Measuring impact; getting effective delivery

6.1 In previous versions of the Community Plan the LSP articulated a series of principles and values. These were often viewed as the cross cutting issues where partnership working was most important. The process of developing this new strategy considered the role for values and principles and determined that the focus for the LSP Board should be towards a set of core impact issues:

- * Sustainability
- * Equality and Cohesion
- * Health and Well Being

6.2 These are 3 core areas which now need to be considered in the delivery of parts of the new Sustainable Community Strategy – as well as the LAA and all associated action plans. These are statutory duties within the Sustainable Community Strategy and will require the cooperation of a broad range of partners – within the Council and LSP.

6.3 The strategy proposes that the future role of the LSP Board will be to ensure that these 3 core elements are effectively considered and deployed across the LSP (including thematic partnerships and Townships, Partnership and Communities Together (PACTs) and Networks).

6.4 In practice this will mean the application of a simple (and robust) impact assessment approach for all key strategies, policies and plans that are developed within the LSP. This will build on much of the work that the Board has already supported – but will also require the LSP Board to adopt a more challenging role when needed.

7. Summary

7.1 This new Sustainable Community Strategy tells the “Wigan story” in a simple and direct way. It is not meant to be a detailed action plan although it will be the starting point for all future strategies and plans in the Borough.

7.2 It is important that the Council and all partners support this strategy and assist its deployment and development in all areas of our work; from informing corporate development to grassroots work in communities.

7.3 The Strategy is focused on 2026, although it is acknowledged that it is in fact a medium term plan that will need to be reviewed and updated within a 3 – 5 year time frame. The action plans that flow from this strategy are likely to be updated on an annual basis.

Diversity Impact Assessment form

Section: Chief Executive's

Policy/Service Area: Business Transformation

Person Completing Form: Simon Dale

Date: 9.11.08

Do any of the below groups suffer specific disadvantage (please indicate)

	Yes	No		Yes	No
Race	x		Disability	x	
Ethnicity	x		Gender	x	
Age	x		Religion	x	
Class	x		Sexual Orientation	x	

Is there evidence of disadvantage or associated problems?

The new strategy recognises that there are a range of inequalities facing the Borough – both in terms of socio-economic deprivation – as well as that disadvantage which affects people because of their social identity.

How was the information collected and/or who have you consulted with?

The strategy has been developed on the basis of significant consultation with LSP partners – this includes partners in thematic service areas – as well as locality partnerships and networks.
It has drawn factual and statistical evidence about local needs from government and statutory sources – and has utilised detailed analysis about disadvantage undertaken by the SMART neighbourhoods programme in 2007 (this often known as the “400 babies” analysis).

Action Plan – *What specific actions are planned to tackle any disadvantage identified?*

The core approach proposed in this report is that the LSP Board will take a leadership role in scrutinising the implementation of this plan by way of a structured programme of impact assessment that focuses on:

- Sustainability
- Diversity, Equality and Cohesion
- Health and well being

Workshops held to consider key issues for early attention have determined early priorities:

- **Health equality:** does the strategy give sufficient attention to improvements in quality of life and not just improved access to health provision? What more needs to be done – perhaps as part of our work to address inequalities?

- **Relationship to the regional agenda:** have we considered the potential impact of move to regional knowledge economy on local jobs prospects / access to employment as well as local economic development needs? As an example over reliance on cars for access to work will have serious environmental costs.
- **Demographic change:** have we planned sufficiently for changes in overall age structure – in particular an aging population and an ageing workforce? Living longer will put increased demand on a wide range of services and provision. How can we balance this with the overall aim to improve quality of life for local people?
- **Skills and capacity;** potential for us to focus too heavily on qualification and academic skills in the economy. Do we need to promote a broader view of social capital that promotes a more holistic approach to quality of life?
- **Cohesion:** if we are moving towards a more mobile community then what might be the impact on people’s sense of community? Will people still feel part of their neighbourhood if they commute on a regional basis?
- **Climate change:** this is a global issue that was highlighted in the vision workshops. Can the strategy take a stronger role in promoting local action to tackle climate change?
- **Social inclusion:** how does the strategy acknowledge individuals who are outside our mainstream systems (examples might include people who are homeless)?

Is the policy in line with current equality legislation and relevant codes of practice?

Yes - but acknowledges that further development work needed to ensure effective implementation across the LSP structure.

Timescale	This programme will be active for the duration of the development / implementation of this new Community Strategy (2008 – 2001)
Responsibility	Business Transformation Team (Simon Dale)
Comments	This is a complex area of work that relates to the development of impact assessment approaches in all key areas of policy. The approach outlined here focuses on the leadership role of the LSP Board.

Are the actions specified included in any other documents/plans?

Departmental Service Plan	
Section/Team Plan	
Other (Specify)	
Date for further review	