

# **Sustainable Community Strategy Stakeholder Workshop February, 2008 The Big Picture**

## Introduction

The Local Government Act 2000 obliged the County Council to produce a Community Strategy. The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act amended this to a duty to produce a Sustainable Community Strategy (the Strategy) which is to be drawn up with partners.

Whilst production of the Strategy is a Government requirement, it is a valuable and helpful process, and the resultant Strategy will help identify the aspirations and priorities of communities and individuals in West Sussex.

The Strategy will replace the former Community Strategy and may, perhaps, replace the County Strategy. The intention is to have the Strategy in place during the summer of this year.

The countywide Strategy is intended to bring together the key strategies of those stakeholders who have a "duty to co-operate" as set out by the Local Government Act. In two-tier areas this includes the Strategies prepared by each Borough and District Council.

The timescales for production of the SCS and 2nd Generation LAA are running in parallel. We aim to have the SCS considered at County Council in the summer of this year.

## The Local Area Agreement

The Strategy is intended to be delivered through the 2<sup>nd</sup> Generation Local Area Agreement (LAA).

The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 requires responsible authorities to have regard to their Strategy when preparing the Local Area Agreement (LAA). Draft Government guidance sees the LAA as the shorter-term delivery mechanism for the SCS. In West Sussex, the countywide Community Strategy was drawn up in 2004. That document, and the District-level strategies to which it is linked, are being revised. However, this revision, including consultation with stakeholders, will not be completed until after the deadline for the LAA.

Therefore, the drafting of priorities, indicators and targets for the West Sussex LAA, which is to be approved in 2008, is provisional, to be reconsidered when revision of the SCS is complete. However, the Government has made it clear it wants the LAA agreed this year to be as current as possible in terms of strategy and priorities.

At this stage, based on the views expressed in a major public survey in 2007 and by responses from stakeholders and the Public Service Board representatives, the priorities for the LAA are:-

- to level up the life outcomes and experiences for those in rural and deprived communities in crime, housing, health and employment;
- to increase the sustainable accessibility to jobs, education and essential services to all, particularly in rural areas and for those in deprived communities;
- to improve the health, educational attainment and access to activities of children and young people in all communities.

This will help to provide the framework for communities and individuals to help themselves, and to support a thriving third sector of community and voluntary groups locally.

The work we do today will influence the final choice of priorities, and the choice of indicators from the National Indicator set on which improvement targets will be set. Decisions on these will be made by the Public Service Board on 25<sup>th</sup> February. The emerging list of indicators is in Bulletin 16, which is about to be added to our website.

### Work to date on the Strategy

Initial work on the Strategy has drawn on:-

- existing county, district and other strategies which have previously been the subject of public consultation;
- surveys, such as the triennial public satisfaction survey; and
- the views of representative groups and organisations.

In further work with the West Sussex County Council Cabinet and the Public Service Board, three core themes, and one underlying requirement for working, have emerged:-

- Health for All;
- Staying Safe;
- Economy and Environment; and
- the need to deliver these in ways which meet the diverse needs of communities and individuals.

We want to explore and test these here and then use the work from today to create the 'vision' of the Strategy. The themes highlighted and the vision we identify here, will then be tested again in further consultations including with the wider public.

In arriving at the themes of Economy & Environment, Health for All, and Staying Safe, many areas of concern or opportunity were highlighted. However, what is clear from these issues is the extent of crosscutting and linkage with aspects important to other core themes. The underlying requirement for working is the need for provision of services to meet diverse needs.

Drafting a strategy for the next ten or more years for the County and its communities and individuals can be likened trying to complete a jigsaw puzzle for which we do not know the final picture. The specific issues equate to the individual pieces of the puzzle. These can, in turn, be grouped under the core themes, which could be likened to separating out the green bits and assuming they are vegetation, or that the blue bits are sky. However, as with a jigsaw, the groupings may not be entirely clear. For example, a green piece seen in isolation could go to make up either grass or a tree. So to achieve a manageable vision it will be necessary to 'locate' crosscutting issues in one place, while noting the links to other themes or specific issues.

One of the purposes of this workshop is to test the three themes, to ensure that issues relevant to you as stakeholder representatives under each theme have been taken note of, and to ultimately provide a sketch of what the final picture for our jigsaw should be – the vision. This work will illuminate the Strategy, which in turn will provide the broad direction for the County for the next ten or more years, and within which delivery plans and agreements can be shaped.

The reality of finite resources means that this vision should include the presumption that we all want to build strong and cohesive communities.

The vision resulting from this workshop will be tested through direct consultation with service users, the wider public and with under represented groups within the County. To help you start thinking about this in more detail our agenda today includes two opportunities before we start building the vision. The first is the West Sussex Perspective, and the second is a series of short presentations on the three themes.

### Next steps

Once the workshop is over, and we have shared notes of the proceedings, we shall put the vision at the fore of the Strategy. Drawing on the work to date, and the work done today, we shall work further with our stakeholders on elaborating the vision through the themes.

We shall also look at the priorities identified today and in other strategies to see how they will help achieve the vision.

All of this work will be brought together in a very early draft of the Strategy, sometime in late February or early March.

That document will be shared with stakeholders and the communities, inviting their inputs, comments and contributions. We shall, for example, take that document and the work behind it to:-

- the County Local Committees;
- Town and Parish Councils; and
- representative community groups.

All that work will also be available on the County Council's website so that people can access it and make their views known.

In the meantime, I invite you to share the work done today with your colleagues and groups, and to come back to us with further views and information.

The intention is for the Strategy to be signed off by the County Council in the summer this year; we are aiming for the County Council meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> July, 2008.