

West Wiltshire District Council

Council

10th November 2004

“Adoption of West Wiltshire and Wiltshire Community Strategies”

1. Purpose

To request that Council adopts both the West Wiltshire Community Strategy and the Wiltshire Community Strategy.

2. Background

Part 1 of the Local Government Act 2000 places on principal local authorities, which includes county and district councils, a duty to prepare “community strategies”. Their primary aim is for promoting or improving the economic, social and environmental well-being of their areas, and contributing to the achievement of sustainable development in the UK.

In order to realise this aim; a community strategy will have to meet four objectives:

- ✓ Allow local communities to articulate their aspirations, needs and priorities.
- ✓ Co-ordinate the actions of the council, and of the public, private, voluntary and community organisations that operate locally.
- ✓ Focus and shape existing and future activity of those organisations, so they effectively meet community needs and aspirations and
- ✓ Contribute to the achievement of sustainable development both locally and more widely.

The government recommends that the best way to achieve this is through Local Strategic Partnerships (LSP). Local authorities can and do achieve a great deal on behalf of their communities. However, only by working together with other public, private, business and voluntary bodies will it be possible to deliver the broad range of outcomes encompassed by community strategies.

3. Key Issues

3.1 How were the Community Strategies produced?

3.1.1 Wiltshire Community Strategy “A county fit for our children” 2004-2014

The production of the Strategy for Wiltshire fell into two stages. The first stage began at the Wiltshire Strategic Board’s inaugural meeting in February 2002, where it commissioned a strategic analysis of the key issues

facing Wiltshire. This document was produced as a base document for the Board's October 2002 conference at Kingston Manor.

The second stage started with the decision to commission work leading to the production of a Wiltshire Community Strategy taken at the Board's December 2002 meeting. This stage ended when the Board agreed the Strategy for Wiltshire at its meeting in December 2003. A final document was printed and circulated widely from the end of January 2004, onwards.

3.1.2 West Wiltshire Community Strategy "A place to be proud of" 2004-2014

In early 2004 the West Wilts LSP accepted a project proposal for the creation of a District Community Strategy. The project was launched at a conference on March 1st where delegates representing organisations across the district began the process of identifying the key concerns of the community. This was used as the basis for further consultation during April and May. At the same time two analysts were recruited to produce the heart of the strategy using the same format as the County strategy and area plans. To do this they took the outcomes from the consultation and community planning and identified the common concerns. In addition they gathered key documents from all partners, along with government guidance, and key statistics. In close co-operation with partner organisations and service managers they used this to comment on each of the communities concerns and identify where action was required.

At a second conference in July, the first draft strategy was presented. Over the next few months, the strategy was continually refined and consulted on, resulting in a working document being accepted by the LSP Board on Sep 27th. A final document is to be printed and circulated before the end of 2004.

3.2 How are the strategies going to be implemented?

The respective Boards have a responsibility to ensure that the whole of the community strategy is implemented and an appropriate mechanism for performance monitoring is put in place. However it is the commitment of each of the partner organisations, which is essential to ensure the strategy will result in positive change. As both are 10 year plans, the respective Boards need to decide on which areas they will initially focus on.

Wiltshire Strategic Board made a decision to initially champion four issues

- 1) To become the healthiest county in England in which to live by 2012
- 2) To become the most waste efficient county in England by 2010
- 3) To improve Wiltshire's Street Scene
- 4) To improve adult basic skills

As West Wiltshire LSP has only just signed off the District Strategy, it has not yet had time to fully decide where its focus will be. However the consensus of opinion is to follow a different but complimentary approach to that of the County LSP. This essentially involves looking at each of the priorities within the strategy, and asking what needs to be done in order for them to be

achieved, and then ensuring the necessary people are working together to enable this to happen.

3.3 Implications of adopting the strategies and links to other plans

The development of comprehensive community strategies is inextricably linked to the delivery of a local authority's duty of best value. These two community strategies should therefore provide the overarching framework within which the council can best determine its own contribution to the long-term economic, social and environmental well being of its community. The key local priorities that have been identified should in turn be reflected in the authority's corporate objectives, service planning and performance monitoring.

The council's corporate plan has been developed alongside and in close co-operation with the district community strategy. Any necessary alterations and additions should have already been made. In addition, careful consideration has been given to how the corporate plan can link to those priority areas within the county community strategy where the council can play an active role.

Full attention has been given to the implications for the council of supporting two community strategies, to ensure they compliment each other and there is minimal duplication.

Although a community strategy is a long term plan for improvement, it is not a static document. The strategies are required to be regularly updated and any changes to be reflected in the Districts corporate plan.

3.4 How will the implementation of the Community Strategies be resourced?

Government guidance is that partner organisations are expected to collectively bend their own plans and redirect their existing resources in order to implement the strategies. The council needs to understand that in adopting the strategies, it is making a commitment to play an active role in ensuring they are implemented.

However, there may also be opportunities to access external funding in the following ways:

- 1) Working in partnership with the LSP adds significant weight to any groups bid for external funding. This includes those projects that the LSP will take the lead on as well as those it will simply support.
- 2) Once projects have been identified, there may be additional external resources that can be accessed to enable them to be implemented
- 3) Local Public Service Agreements offer local authorities the opportunity to commit themselves to local and national priorities, in return for agreed operational flexibilities and pump priming grants of up to £1 million. The district council is involved in this process.
- 4) Local Area Agreements are being introduced which offers incentives for two or more local partners to work together to meet an agreed national or local target.

4. Financial Implications

The Community Strategy is one of the key strategies influencing the Corporate Plan and as such the financial implications will be included within the Medium Term Financial Plan, which provides the financial framework to deliver the Corporate Plan.

5. Legal Implications

Adoption of the Strategy is a Duty imposed on the Council by LGA 2000

6. Human Rights Implications

The human rights implications recommended in this report have been considered and are acceptable and the checklist has been addressed.

7. Recommendation

That Council

- 1) Adopts the District Community Strategy “A Place to be Proud of”
- 2) Adopts the County Community Strategy “A county fit for our children”

8. List of Appendices

Appendix 1 Priority areas of West Wiltshire Community Strategy and Wiltshire Community Strategy

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