

Chief Executives' Group – North Yorkshire and York

12 May 2011

Sustainable Community Strategy

1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To seek comments from members on the draft Sustainable Community Strategy.

2 Background

2.1 At the last meeting of the NYSP Executive on 10th February 2011, it was agreed that the Sustainable Community Strategy for North Yorkshire (SCS) would be refreshed for the period 2011/14, based around the following three key priorities:

- **protecting and supporting vulnerable people**
- **supporting economic growth and employment**
- **improving accessibility for all our communities**

2.2 These priorities were agreed following consultation with delegates at the NYSP Wider Partnership conference in November 2010 and also via the Thematic Partnerships at the end of 2010.

2.3 It was agreed that the new strategy would be a pared-down plan focussing on the above issues as those which are most critical to partners over the next few years and which can only be tackled effectively in partnership. Other key issues or features which were discussed included:

- the potential for framing the refreshed strategy around the differences in quality of life experienced by certain communities in North Yorkshire, by identifying some of these communities and how we could tackle these gaps;
- the refreshed plan will need to be pragmatic about what public sector partners are able to commit to achieving in the next few years, in view of the economic climate;
- there needs to be some reflection of the Big Society and community involvement in delivering against key SCS priorities.

2.4 There was also a brief discussion about whether a fourth priority should be included around the environment and climate change. Further discussion is needed on this issue, which is highlighted below at 3.2.

2.5 Some further work has therefore been done within NYCC and via partner contacts in the last two months to revise the draft strategy on the basis of the above priorities and the comments provided. A re-draft is enclosed at Appendix 1. It should be pointed out that the priority around supporting economic growth and employment is very much in draft at this point due to the development of the York and North Yorkshire Local Enterprise Partnership

(LEP) being at such an early stage currently. It is likely that as the LEP takes shape more and focuses in on its key priorities, there will need to be further changes made to the aims and targets set out in the SCS, potentially at the end of the public consultation period.

3 Issues to consider

Branding of the strategy

- 3.1 The refreshed SCS will be taken forward by the newly-formed sub-regional partnership. Members are asked to consider how the ownership of the SCS is branded. The consultation draft and finalised version of the strategy will be taken to appropriate meetings of both Local Government North Yorkshire and York and the Chief Executives Group for agreement.

Environment and climate change

- 3.2 At the 10th February NYSP Executive meeting, an issue was raised around whether the refreshed plan should include a fourth priority which would be explicitly around the environment. This was raised on the basis that the environment plays a vital role in enhancing communities' quality of life and should therefore feature more strongly within the suite of priorities. This has not been put forward as an explicit priority during the limited consultation which has already taken place at the NYSP conference and via the Thematic Partnership meetings, but it is quite possible that this will be raised by consultees during the public consultation period over the summer. The draft SCS does acknowledge the importance of sustainability and preserving our environment as a key, cross-cutting principle underpinning delivery against each of the SCS priorities.
- 3.3 If a fourth priority were to be included on the environment then clearly this would also bring with it additional commitments for partners. We have thus far agreed that, with limited public resources available over the next few years, the refresh will be about focussing on those issues and communities which critically need support within this timeframe and where this activity will only happen effectively through the partnership. Members are therefore asked to consider whether a fourth priority on the environment should be incorporated in the draft SCS, ahead of the public consultation.

4 Forward plan

- 4.1 As per the last NYSP Executive meeting, there will be a three-month stakeholder consultation period which will take place from 20th June to 16th September 2011.
- 4.2 Consultation and engagement will be undertaken via various mechanisms including local press, websites and direct engagement with some harder to reach groups. As part of the proposed timetable, drafts of the SCS will be provided to meetings of LGNY in June and September for comment.
- 4.3 A report on the consultation feedback will be brought to the CEO Group at the end of this period, with recommendations about how to move forward with the draft SCS.

- 4.4 The finalised draft will be submitted to a meeting of the full council at NYCC for approval on 14th December 2011.
- 4.5 A timetable highlighting key milestones and review dates is enclosed for information at Appendix 2.

5 Recommendations

- 5.1 That members comment on the revised draft of the SCS and agree any changes ahead of public consultation.
- 5.2 That members consider whether a fourth priority on the environment should be included within the suite of priorities ahead of public consultation.
- 5.3 That members agree on how the partnership arrangements should be reflected in the SCS in terms of ownership and delivery.

6 Appendices

- 6.1 Appendix 1 – Sustainable Community Strategy 2011/14 (refresh draft)
- 6.2 Appendix 2 – Communications and development timetable for 2011

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26th April 2011

DRAFT Sustainable Community Strategy for North Yorkshire 2011 - 2014

Introduction

North Yorkshire - a place of equal opportunity where all can develop their full potential, participate in a flourishing economy, live and thrive in secure communities, see their high-quality environment and cultural assets maintained and enhanced, and receive effective support when they need it.

Our vision

This strategy sets out the key priorities for North Yorkshire over the next three years. It is a refresh of the ten-year strategy published by the North Yorkshire Strategic Partnership in 2008. Whilst our long-term vision for the county remains the same, an awful lot of change has taken place both nationally and at a more local level over the last three years, including the considerable cuts to public expenditure and resulting changes in the public sector.

This update is essentially **a three-point plan** for the next few years, focussing on three critical areas which partners have agreed should be our focus to sustain our vision in the medium term. As this is also a refresh of our longer-term strategy (2008/18), we have deliberately kept the document brief and simple in format to help focus on the critical issues for the next few years.

This refreshed plan – and the longer-term vision - will now be taken forward by the newly-formed partnership structure within York and North Yorkshire, under the leadership of Local Government North Yorkshire and York (LGNYY) and the Chief Executives Group.

Narrowing the gap

North Yorkshire is a beautiful, predominantly rural, county which offers a high quality of life for many and a range of opportunities for those who wish to live, work or visit here.

However, this is not the case for all communities. The apparent affluence of the county's market towns and the 'picture postcard' scenery of its countryside mask a county of contrasts or 'gaps' between communities. These are gaps surrounding issues such as access, health and employment which represent a growing gulf between those experiencing a good versus a poor quality of life.

For example, 21% of people in North Yorkshire live in the two major urban centres (Harrogate and Scarborough), but the majority live in 'sparse' or 'super-sparse' areas. This makes it very difficult for some communities to access key services and to get the support they need, particularly for the elderly, the disabled, young people and those on a low income.

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There are also pockets of serious urban and rural disadvantage and deprivation within North Yorkshire. Relatively few areas in North Yorkshire fall within the national segment which indicates where the most serious deprivation lies. However, of those that do, the vast majority are located in Scarborough with some additional pockets of deprivation in Selby and Harrogate¹. There is also a strong correlation between deprivation and disadvantage and areas where health outcomes are poorer. For example, men living in the most deprived parts of Scarborough Borough have a considerably shorter life expectancy than men from the least deprived areas of the Borough – a difference of some seven years.

Whilst living in a rural area can be viewed as a marker of a good quality of life, rurality can also mean isolation and exclusion for some communities, particularly if a household does not own a car or is a low-income household. This can mean huge gaps between urban and rural areas in terms of ease of access to key services, to employment and other opportunities which make for a better quality of life. For example, 77% of residents in Harrogate can access a hospital with 30 minutes, whereas only 37% of the population in Ryedale can achieve this². Additionally, whilst broadband access is poor for many people in the county, this is particularly the case in the more isolated rural areas.

We need to work to close the gap between those whose quality of life, health and wellbeing is poor and those with a better quality of life. At the root of this issue is improving fairness, equality and accessibility to services for our communities. With significant cuts to public services remaining likely over the next few years, we need to ensure that we work effectively in partnership to mitigate the impact of loss of any key services – particularly in rural, isolated areas – on those particular communities where their quality of life and wellbeing is already much poorer than for others in the county.

These are just some of the issues facing communities and service providers over the coming years and have helped to inform where we should be focussing our efforts. We have drawn on a wide range of available data in identifying our priorities. This information can be accessed via STREAM, the local information system for North Yorkshire at *[insert web link]*.

Our key principles

In delivering against each of our three priorities, there are a number of key principles which will underpin our progress against this refreshed strategy.

- **Ensure equality of access to services**

No-one should feel that their opportunities in life are limited due to their age, gender, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, disability or

¹15 Lower level Super Output Areas within North Yorkshire fall within the most deprived quintile in England. 13 of these LSOAs fall within Scarborough Borough, 1 in Selby and 1 in Harrogate. Taken from the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2007

² Taken from the Local Transport Plan 3.

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where they live. We must adopt an approach that narrows existing gaps and provides accessible and affordable opportunities for everyone in the county.

- **Support the role of the voluntary and community sector in shaping vibrant communities**

In particular, partners in the voluntary and community sector will continue to play an increasingly prominent and vital role over the next few years in supporting communities as part of the principles of the “Big Society”. This will include both working with public sector partners in supporting the planning and delivery of solutions locally where public services have been cut and also in helping communities themselves to shape innovative community-based planning to make localities more vibrant and sustainable. The voluntary and community sector will therefore play a key role in helping to plan and deliver some of the key aims within this strategy.

- **Plan and deliver in a sustainable way**

To be really sustainable in our approach, we must plan and deliver services for the benefit of our communities in a way which does not compromise the quality of life and wellbeing of future generations. It is also important that we adopt a long-term, sustainable and integrated approach to use of energy and other resources and to ensure the environment we leave to our children is healthy and attractive.

Our three priorities

We believe that the following three priorities will also help us to make communities more sustainable and will focus efforts on areas of critical need. Our priorities for 2011 to 2014 are:

- **Protecting and supporting vulnerable people**
- **Supporting economic growth and employment**
- **Improving accessibility for all our communities**

This is not to say that other issues which are not explicitly included within these priorities, such as tackling climate change, and preserving and enhancing our natural and historic environment, do not play a key part in the longer-term wellbeing of communities. However, in such a challenging economic period it's about recognising that with increasingly limited public resources, we must focus our efforts on those areas where we really need to make a difference now to those who critically need our support, and where we can only do this effectively through the partnership.

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Protecting and supporting vulnerable people

In difficult economic times, the most vulnerable people in our communities can often suffer the most. “Vulnerable people” can include children and young people, older people and other, specific, groups such as people who have experienced crime (such as domestic abuse or anti-social behaviour) or people who are disabled, to name just a few. Partnerships such as the Safeguarding Adults and the Local Safeguarding Children’s’ Boards in North Yorkshire work to ensure that there are robust arrangements in place to keep vulnerable, adults, children and young people safe.

Factors which can contribute towards vulnerability include things like crime and anti-social behaviour, which compromise personal safety and lead to a reduced sense of wellbeing and security. Effective partnership working will continue to be critical in working to reduce crime and to protect the most vulnerable.

Another key factor is the general quality of life experienced by communities and we know that the more deprived areas of North Yorkshire suffer from poorer health and wellbeing. For example, while most North Yorkshire residents enjoy favourable health compared to the rest of the county, areas with significantly worse life expectancy, for example, are concentrated in Scarborough, Selby, and a few Harrogate wards where there are pockets of serious deprivation. The biggest contributor to differences in life expectancy for both men and women is coronary heart disease (CHD). There are a range of interventions that can prevent and actively manage CHD, as well as positively influencing people's overall health and wellbeing. As partners, one of the key areas for combined action is promoting healthier lifestyles and reducing risky behaviour in all ages - in particular alcohol, tobacco and obesity.

With an increasing older population in North Yorkshire, partners will be challenged in sustaining good quality health and social care provision for all who need it. We need to ensure that support and care is there for the most vulnerable, for example in enabling older people to live independently in their own homes and in providing support mechanisms such as Extra Care.

This agenda is therefore about **prevention, intervention** and **effective partnership-working** to improve quality of life and wellbeing for all those who are vulnerable in our communities.

What we will do

The partnership will focus specifically on:

- Ensure services are more joined-up to provide support for vulnerable groups and vulnerable localities.
- Continuing to work with our partners to safeguard and protect people of all ages at risk of significant harm.

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- Working in partnership to offer a range of choice to older and vulnerable people in North Yorkshire for their accommodation with care and support needs,
- Working jointly to reduce health inequalities within North Yorkshire.

Supporting economic growth and employment

Our vision incorporates an aspiration to develop sustainable communities which enable everyone who participates to flourish and which are a place of opportunity for all.

The current economic climate poses significant challenges in delivering our vision but there are also opportunities for us in tackling these and in preparing ourselves for a brighter economic future. Some of the challenges facing North Yorkshire include having a mixed economy which is reliant on a smaller working population than elsewhere in the region and the country and a need to overcome our access and connectivity issues through better transport links and high-speed broadband connections.

We will also, in the next few years, be faced with the prospect of tackling large-scale unemployment, particularly from the public sector, which accounts for around 30% of all jobs in some parts of the county. Our opportunities, on the other hand, include the county's stunning natural environment and heritage, which are key to its economic success, as well as doing more to encourage creative industries and investing in a sustainable, year-round tourist industry.

We must continue to develop employment opportunities across the county, improve our infrastructure and the quality of our workforce.

What we will do

The partners in North Yorkshire will work to achieving greater economic growth and supporting employment by:

- Working in conjunction with the York and North Yorkshire Local Enterprise Partnership to deliver sustainable economic development with a focus on the following –
 - Key themes - the provision of next generation broadband (see also *“improving accessibility for all our communities”*), promoting enterprise and raising aspirations, and reducing barriers restraining high growth businesses;
 - Geographical priorities – delivery of rural programmes, coastal regeneration and investing in York as an economic driver for the sub-region;
 - Key sectors – food and agriculture, business tourism and the visitor economy and the care sector.
- Co-ordinating effort to deliver strategic development sites.

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- Providing opportunities for vulnerable people to engage in paid employment, training and volunteering.

Given the pace of change in economic development policy and delivery mechanisms and the fact that the York and North Yorkshire Local Enterprise Partnership is at a very early stage of development, the priorities above may be subject to amendment during the life of the Sustainable Community Strategy.

Improving accessibility for all our communities

Difficulties in accessing the services people need can result from a lack of local services, a lack of electronic access or a lack of transport to get to the services, or in many cases all three. Other barriers to be considered surround personal circumstances, such as age, income or disability.

In isolation either of these can result in accessibility difficulties but in combination the problems can be significantly worse and the gaps between those who can and do access key services and those who are isolated from them is considerable in places. In the next few years, the impact of public sector cuts will also place considerable additional pressures on both service providers and communities, particularly in rural areas. It will be even more important for public, voluntary and community sector partners to help local communities to support themselves more, working in partnership to help shape local solutions where resources are scant but needs remain.

Access to transport is a key aspect of sustaining communities and ensuring a good quality of life is possible in all parts of the county. There are significant challenges to maintaining accessibility in a rural county through providing effective and adequate public transport services with a limited number of contractors and a constant upwards pressure on costs, particularly fuel. The challenge remains to increase bus patronage, work with partners and to promote the community sector in delivering viable transport so that the population of the county can access key services.

North Yorkshire also faces significant challenges in delivering broadband that is needed for people and businesses in the 21st century. Predominantly rural areas simply do not generate commercial returns on broadband investment and current broadband provision equates to approximately 66% of households across the county which is below the national average. Despite some of the challenges we can capitalise on previous broadband investment and build upon it as one of four of the government pilots for the rollout of super-fast broadband in rural areas; supporting businesses, the tourism sector and enabling greater independence and access to opportunities for older or more vulnerable people.

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What we will do

We will work towards improving accessibility for all people within our communities by:

- Maintaining and, where possible, improving access to key services through support for local bus services and community transport.
- Delivering a high-quality broadband service capable of supporting voice, video and data to meet the needs and long term growth of businesses and individuals in all areas of North Yorkshire
- Building capacity within communities to help them to play a bigger role in shaping and delivering local services.

How will this plan be taken forward?

The partnership, led by LGNYY, will be responsible for ensuring that progress is achieved against all of the key aims of this refreshed plan and progress will be reviewed regularly.

Our key priorities contain aims which link together the specific aims and action plans developed by our partners through a number of strategies and plans which are already in place. These are *[potentially to include hyperlinks online to each of the plans listed]*:

- Children and Young People's Plan 2008/11
- North Yorkshire Community Safety Agreement 2009/10
- Local Transport Plan 2006/11
- North Yorkshire Housing Strategy 2010/15
- North Yorkshire's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2008/11 (and 2010 Interim Report)
- Connecting North Yorkshire *[in draft – due to be finalised by June]*

We are operating within a changing partnership landscape and as such, whilst LGNYY will form the cornerstone for ensuring that this strategy is delivered, we will need to ensure that we link up where appropriate with other new and emerging partnerships such as the Y&NY LEP and the Health and Wellbeing Boards.

Whilst this document sets out our priorities for the next three years, these issues will continue to be important for some years to come. Maintaining effective partnership relationships and communications around our shared priorities will also continue to be important if we are to tackle the challenges of these tough economic times and prepare for longer-term sustainability. We will of course review our priorities in three years, to make sure that we continue to progress work based on evidence of need and where partnership efforts are most required.

Appendix 1

For further information about this strategy please contact

ppp@northyorks.gov.uk

or call 01609 532750

or write to

Policy, Performance & Partnerships
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County Hall
Northallerton
DL7 8AD

If you would like to receive this strategy in an alternative format, etc etc...

Appendix 2

Sustainable Community Strategy 2011/14 refresh

Communications and development work timetable 2011

Pre-consultation: April to June 2011
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify relevant communication mechanisms and plan out internal and external comms for the consultation period.• Identify and contact harder to reach groups (e.g. Learning Disability Partnership Board) to arrange direct engagement for consultation period (<i>groups identified via Equality Impact Assessment checklist</i>)• Develop consultation pages on partnership and NYCC websites.• Provide press releases and consultation info for local press and for inclusion in NYCC internal publications.• Develop Easy Read version of consultation draft.• Circulate consultation information to the Wider Partnership, LIOs, NYFVO and others for wider dissemination.
Key Meetings
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mid-cycle briefing of NYCC Corporate & Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny (<i>review and comment on draft</i>) – 3rd May 2011• Chief Executives Group for North Yorkshire and York (<i>review and comment on draft</i>) – 12th May 2011
Consultation period: 20th June to 16th September 2011
<p><i>Consultation period for draft SCS run from 20th June to 16th September 2011.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consultation draft (and Easy Read version) to be made available and circulated to all stakeholders and the general public• Release of press material and internal communications etc.• Engagement / meetings with identified groups to get their views.• Consultation draft to be shared with NYCC Scrutiny.
Key Meetings
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• NYCC Corporate & Partnership Overview and Scrutiny Meeting (<i>to review consultation draft and summary of responses to date</i>) – 12th

Appendix 2

September 2011

- *LGNY Y –take consultation drafts and summary of consultation responses to meetings of 24th June and 16th September 2011 (tbc)*

Post-consultation: September to December 2011

- Collate responses to the refresh consultation and draft summary report of key points etc.
- Draft changes to the strategy based on key points made in the consultation.
- Report back to LGNY Y / CEO Group with changes and to obtain final comments and agreement.
- Draft Easy Read version of final SCS.
- Prepare communications (press releases etc) for publication of refreshed SCS.
- Communications (internal and external) on release of new SCS.
- Ensure final publication is made available to all electronically, in hard copy and in Easy Read format (web site).
- Provide info to feed back to all stakeholders on how their comments have been used etc.

Key Meetings

- Informal NYCC Executive (*to review post-consultation draft*) – c. October / early Nov 2011
- Chief Executives Group for North Yorkshire and York (*review and comment on consultation responses and re-drafted strategy*) – 3rd Nov 2011
- NYCC Executive (*to review and endorse the finalised draft strategy*) – 29th November 2011
- NYCC full council meeting (*to give final approval to the strategy*) – 14th December 2011