

North Yorkshire Strategic Partnership - Executive

7 October 2010

Sustainable Community Strategy and LAA refresh: Update from Thematic Partnership Chairs' discussion and way forward

1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To update members on discussions regarding the refresh of the Sustainable Community Strategy and Local Area Agreement at the Thematic Partnership Chairs' meeting of 9th September 2010.
- 1.2 To propose a way forward with respect to the development of the refreshed Sustainable Community Strategy.

2 Background

- 2.1 The NYSP Executive agreed on 24th June 2010 that work on the refresh of the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) and Local Area Agreement (LAA) would be suspended. This was agreed on the basis that it would not be useful or realistic in the current climate to continue developing an SCS and LAA given that the Government is considering the future of LAAs and there are to be significant cuts in public sector expenditure. However there was general acceptance that NYSP partners should have an agreement in place which defines the key issues for North Yorkshire and how partners will work together to improve outcomes for local people, but that this agreement could be undertaken in a more streamlined way than was required by the current approach to the SCS and LAA.
- 2.2 We have no further information about the future of LAAs at this stage and this is still being considered by the Department for Communities and Local Government. However, key elements of the LAA regime are being abolished (e.g. government offices for the regions and many national indicators) and the whole LAA approach runs counter to localism.
- 2.3 The law requires that there is an SCS. The current version can continue to roll forward but it would not be sustainable to continue to try to direct efforts and resources towards the full range of current priorities in the longer term. In addition, the current SCS does not contain details of specific actions or outcomes as these are in the LAA.
- 2.4 It was agreed at the last NYSP Executive that the Thematic Partnership Chairs would explore the SCS refresh further in light of the discussions in June and in view of the changing policy contexts. Key discussion points from this meeting around the SCS refresh are highlighted below.
 - The NYSP is likely to work more sub-regionally in future and will be looking to rationalise its partnership structures, hence there is a challenge for Thematic Partnerships to consider if and how they fit into this structure. However, it will be important for Thematic Partnerships to play a role in shaping what are the key priorities for North Yorkshire going forward.

- It will be important in a revised version of the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) to emphasise what difference the NYSP will make to communities and explain how we will achieve this.
- It's important not to focus on the things which will happen anyway. There is a chance of economic resilience in North Yorkshire and a chance that people's sense of quality of life remains the same, in spite of the difficult circumstances we find ourselves in. Perhaps we should therefore be aspiring to plan for increasing prosperity and heightening our resilience – that is, focussing a revised plan on “How do we make North Yorkshire a more prosperous place?”
- The SCS needs to talk about the outcomes that will result from the NYSP's work; it needs to be more meaningful for local people.

4 Proposal for way forward

- 4.1 Following on from this discussion the Chairs reached a consensus that there is a need to revise the SCS to ensure that North Yorkshire has a plan which better reflects the current climate and our aspirations for the future. However, this plan would need to focus on three or four really critical priorities for North Yorkshire; namely, those things which will not be done anyway and which are perhaps the most difficult to tackle as partners.
- 4.2 The Chairs would therefore like to propose to the NYSP Executive that each Thematic Partnership spends some time in the next few months considering what the three or four key priorities for North Yorkshire might be, with a view to feeding these thoughts in to the next NYSP Executive on 10th February 2011. By this point, the NYSP should also have a clearer direction in terms of the LAA and related contexts. The Comprehensive Spending Review announcements on 20th October will also play a key part in considerations about priorities towards the end of the year. Consideration would also need to be given in due course as to how the action planning element is handled within a new SCS, bearing in mind that if the LAA does not continue beyond the current financial year, the SCS will still need to demonstrate how it will actually achieve its aims.
- 4.3 Assuming that revised priorities are agreed by the NYSP Executive in February 2011, work could begin on developing a short plan around these priorities early in 2011, to involve some degree of stakeholder consultation.

5 Recommendations

- 5.1 That members agree that a revised SCS is developed, focussing on just three of four key priorities for the county.
- 5.2 That members agree to the Thematic Partnerships considering the critical priorities with a view to feeding in ideas to the next NYSP Executive on 10th February 2011.