

EXETER CITY COUNCIL

SCRUTINY COMMUNITY 6 NOVEMBER 2007

REVIEW OF EXETER SOCIAL INCLUSION STRATEGY 2003-2006

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To update Members on the position of the Social Inclusion Strategy 2003-6 ('the Strategy'); and
- 1.2 To propose to Members a way forward in developing a new strategy for addressing issues related to community involvement and inclusion within Exeter.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Strategy was developed by bringing together the main priorities related to social inclusion in partners' strategies. The Social Health and Inclusion Partnership (SHIP) undertook the development and monitoring of the Strategy.
- 2.2 Members received updates during the life of the Strategy on the progress made within in addressing the priority areas. However there has not been success in identifying joint funding to support the Strategy and therefore efforts by the SHIP to create an updated action plan to deliver in partnership has been unsuccessful.

3. CONTEXT OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF A NEW STRATEGY

- 3.1 In anticipation of Exeter achieving unitary status, work has commenced on a fundamental review of the role, membership and structure of the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP)- the Exeter Vision Partnership- as this partnership will retain its existing responsibility for developing a Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS). This will identify local priorities and articulate how the council will work with local partners to develop plans to address the local priorities. The role of the SHIP is to help develop and then deliver on those priorities that relate to building stronger communities, promoting social inclusion and addressing public health issues.
- 3.2 However, in addition, the LSP will assume the responsibility for developing and delivering a Local Area Agreement (LAA) for Exeter, from April 2009. The LAA is the way that the Government increasingly allocates local funding. A fundamental part of the LAA will be delivering on the priorities within the SCS. There is likely to be a number of priorities that relate to inclusion and involvement that the SHIP or a body performing a similar role will have to develop and deliver. The LSP and the SHIP will also need to consider how the 'Health and Older People' strand of the LAA will be delivered. As part of the development of the SCS and LAA, a robust evidence-base of the needs of Exeter communities will need to be developed. As a starting point, there will need to be a focus on collating and verifying information held by the council and its partners and identifying any gaps.

- 3.3 It should be noted that Devon's LAA will be agreed in April 2008. The Government has indicated that in areas where districts are seeking unitary status, the LAA should be developed in a way that is possible to detach the part that relates to the district at the point where unitary status is secured in April 2009. In addition, Devon County Council has indicated that regardless of the decision on the council's submission for unitary status, they recognise the need for one part of the LAA to be customised for Exeter, in recognition of the particular needs of the City vis-à-vis the rest of the County. In order to ensure that this is an effective model, the work identified within this report will still need to be done whether or not unitary status is ultimately granted.
- 3.4 Members of the SHIP have been reviewing the role of the Group and in particular its relationship to Exeter's LSP. At its meeting in September, the SHIP agreed to focus its future work on issues related to the stronger communities element of the LAA, where it was felt that a geographic focus was lacking.
- 3.5 Data collation and analysis was reaffirmed as a key element in developing an evidence base, including the identification of gaps, to progress the SHIP agenda. It would help improve the identification of deprived neighbourhoods, establish delivery priorities and assist service providers review their delivery mechanisms and avoid duplication of work. The Council's neighbourhood engagement pilots would also help inform this process. It was agreed that that SHIP could continue to offer added value within the overall LSP structure and that the profiling work, at sub ward and other levels, was an essential prerequisite to inform the way forward, through identification of client groups, prioritisation etc. Additionally, it could offer direction and support for the neighbourhood engagement work through the fostering of inter-agency work.
- 3.6 The Council agreed in 2006 to develop and implement a programme for Neighbourhood Engagement that includes pilot projects in four areas of the City. The aim of these pilots is to identify best practice in community engagement with a view of improving the way the council engages with its communities. It is recognised that an integral part of promoting inclusion is ensuring that local residents are able to influence the design and delivery of the services that they receive and that as public agencies, we built up an accurate picture of the needs of our community.

4. TOWARDS A COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND INCLUSION STRATEGY

- 4.1 The work described in this report will provide accurate and up-to-date quantitative and qualitative information on priorities for Exeter, including those that relate to inclusion. It will therefore assist in the process of determining priorities for action in those areas. It will therefore facilitate the process of the Council working with its partners via the LSP structure to develop a Strategy to address the agreed priorities.

5. PROPOSAL

- 5.1 That officers develop a draft Community Involvement and Inclusion Strategy for consideration by Members once the relevant priorities in the SCS and the LAA have been developed. The Strategy will also be informed by an analysis of the Neighbourhood Engagement Pilots. The timing of this is likely to be December 2008.

6. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The Strategy will be developed using available resources.

7. RECOMMENDED

- (1) That Members note the process for developing the Council's new Strategy for Community Involvement and Inclusion.

ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE

S:LP/Committee/1107SCC3
18.10.07

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S DEPARTMENT

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1972 (as amended)
Background papers used in compiling this report:-

None