

EXETER CITY COUNCIL

**EXECUTIVE
7 APRIL 2009**

EXETER VISION: THE CITY'S SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report presents the Exeter Vision (the Vision), the city's Sustainable Community Strategy and seeks both Executive support for the Vision and for it to be adopted by the Council.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Local Government Act 2000 (as amended by the local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007) requires local authorities to produce a Sustainable Community Strategy for their area, which seeks to improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of the area in a way which contributes to sustainable development.
- 2.2 Sustainable Community Strategies should contain:
- The long-term vision based firmly on local needs – this will be underpinned by a shared evidence base informed by community aspirations.
 - Key priorities for the local area, based upon this vision which may be realistically be achieved in the medium term.
- 2.3 This updated Vision builds on Exeter's first Community Strategy (also known as the Vision) published in 2003, and sets out the long term sustainable ambition for Exeter , providing a framework to guide the work of all agencies and organisations in delivering this.
- 2.4 The Vision has been developed by Exeter Vision Partnership, the city's Local Strategic Partnership (LSP). The LSP reflects a wide cross section of key interests in Exeter covering economic, social and environmental areas. Council representation on the LSP comprises the Leader and Chief Executive.
- 2.5 In order to ensure the Council's work directly contributes to achieving the Vision, the Council strategic objectives are aligned with those Vision themes we can have most impact on. This relationship is set out in the Council's Corporate Plan.

3 DEVELOPMENT OF THE STRATEGY

- 3.1 The statutory guidance stresses the importance of seeking to consult representatives of local people, businesses and third sector organisations when developing Sustainable Community Strategies. In addition to this, research was conducted to assess the current state of Exeter in order to provide a measurable evidence base and ensure links to National Indicators within the Devon Local Area Agreement.

- 3.2 The Council commissioned Local Futures to produce a State of Exeter report in May 2008, which set out the economic, social and environmental issues for the city. The Exeter Vision Partnership adopted both this report and the Climate Change analysis undertaken by the University of Exeter's Centre for Energy and Environment in 2007 (CEE) as the baseline for the Exeter Vision. Analysis from the Council's Geography of Deprivation report (2008) has also been used to inform actions. The baseline will be updated with the results of the 2008 Place Survey once available.
- 3.3 Vision themes and priorities were developed and tested using both existing consultation information and through undertaking specific consultation:
- Best Value user satisfaction survey (2006)
 - Getting the Most Out of Life, older people's consultation event (July 07)
 - Communities First, voluntary and community networking event (Nov 07)
 - Youth in the City, where young people were asked what the ten existing Vision themes meant to them (Nov 07)
 - Information gathered through "My Neighbourhood" community engagement activities
 - Wavelength 18 survey questionnaire on the importance of themes and priority actions (Nov 08)
- 3.4 As a result of the Wavelength consultation, it was agreed the "Electronic City" theme should be removed as it had been linked to a specific initiative to install broadband across the city, and that "A Cultural and Fun place to be" is re-titled "An Inspiring City" to cover the full range of activities that fall under the definition of culture. The strategy now covers nine themes:
- A Prosperous City: The economy is buoyant, supported by a highly skilled resident workforce, sound infrastructure, and sustainable investment.
 - A Learning City: Aspirations and ambitions are high, learning is valued and people have access to quality learning opportunities, allowing them to fulfill their full potential.
 - An Accessible City: Transport infrastructure allows improved access to services and communities and there is reduced dependence on travelling by car.
 - A City with Strong Communities: Local governance and engagement allows individuals and organisations to play a full and active part in Exeter's social, economic, political and cultural life.
 - A City that is Healthy and Active: Well-being is promoted and ill-health prevented, so every citizen is able to live their life as fully, actively and independently as they want to.
 - A Safe City: Residents, workers and visitors enjoy being in a safe place, with low crime, where people with different beliefs are tolerant and respectful of one another.
 - A City where the Environment is Cared for: The environment and eco systems are supported and valued, and communities are developing in a sustainable way.
 - A City where Everyone has a Home: There are sufficient homes to meet housing need, with a range of appropriate developments which are well-designed, maintained and affordable.
 - An Inspiring City: Where residents, visitors and workers enjoy the vitality of the city and participate in a wide range of leisure, cultural, spiritual and community activities.

- 3.5 The draft Vision was circulated for comment to all LSP members and their networks, key Council staff and to a range of reference groups representing interests covered by the themes.

4 THE STRATEGY

- 4.1 It was widely agreed that a brief and engaging, summary of the Vision should be produced in the form of a booklet to act as a signpost to more detailed web-based information. The attached text forms the basis for the summary, setting out:

- The Introduction to the Sustainable Community Strategy.
- Our Strategy: A simple overview of what the Vision is and reflection of current challenges facing Exeter.
- Our Vision for the Future: Nine priority themes shown against the dimensions of economy, society and environment.
- Exeter Today: A summary of key baseline statistics against each theme.
- Making it Happen: Actions that will be taken over the next three years.
- Each theme will have a summary section at the rear of the document that sets out the aspirations in more detail (under "A city where" in the attached text) and sets out the scale of the challenge.

- 4.2 The desire to move to a web-based strategy is in-line with a number of leading LSPs, and means that the Vision is more dynamic, sustainable and accessible and easy to update. A wide range of detailed background information will be readily available with links to the substantial evidence base, the performance management framework, key strategies (Local Development Framework, Housing Strategy etc), detailed delivery plans, information about the Exeter Vision Partnership, the Local Area Agreement, Comprehensive Area Assessment and relevant government initiatives (such as the Sustainable Communities Act 2007).

- 4.3 This approach and the Vision content was approved by the LSP at their meeting on the 18 March 2009.

5 NEXT STEPS

- 5.1 A number of further areas of work are now underway:

- Development of comprehensive web pages.
- Development of detailed delivery plans.
- Reviewing the delivery mechanisms for the Vision priority areas and the membership structure.
- Development of key targets and a performance management framework.

6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 All costs for the development of the Vision summary are contained within existing budgets.

7 RECOMMENDED

- (1) That Executive support the Vision and recommend that Council adopt the Vision as the Sustainable Community Strategy for Exeter under section 4 of the Local Government Act 2000 (as amended).

- (2) That any necessary drafting amendments before publication be delegated to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader and the Chair of the LSP.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S DEPARTMENT

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1972 (as amended)

Background papers used in compiling this report:-

The Local Government Act 2000 (as amended by the local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007).

Date 23 March 2009