



OFFICER REPORT TO LOCAL COMMITTEE (ELMBRIDGE)

REFRESHING THE ELMBRIDGE SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY

22 SEPTEMBER 2008

KEY ISSUE

This report is for consultation purposes. The Elmbridge Sustainable Community Strategy is being updated and the Local Committee is asked for its views.

SUMMARY

The report outlines the process of updating the Borough's Sustainable Community Strategy, including emerging issues from consultation with residents and stakeholders, and asks the Local Committee whether there are any other quality of life issues that should be considered. Additionally, the Local Committee is asked to consider these changes in light of new legislation that is emerging which enhances local authorities' duty to work in partnership to sustainably improve quality of life for residents, as well as the emerging Comprehensive Area Assessment which will expect a greater role for local strategic partnerships.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS

The Local Committee (Elmbridge) is asked to:

- (i) Note the report and forward any comments to the Community Planning and Partnerships Co-ordinator, Elmbridge Borough Council, before 6 October 2008.

1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 Elmbridge Borough Council has a statutory duty to produce a Sustainable Community Strategy, which promotes the social, economic and environmental well-being of the area. The Borough's second Sustainable Community Strategy was published in October 2006 and focuses on six main themes:

- Protecting and enhancing the natural environment
- Promoting health and well being
- Enhancing the local economy
- Building safer communities
- Fostering inclusion
- Partnership development

Delivery of the Strategy is co-ordinated by Elmbridge Community Partnership (ECP) which is the borough's local strategic partnership (LSP), and has senior representatives from the public, private, voluntary and community sectors (including Surrey County Council). It is made up of a Board in addition to five themed delivery partnerships:

- Elmbridge Environmental Forum
- Elmbridge Health and Social Care Partnership
- Elmbridge Business Network
- Elmbridge Community Safety Partnership
- One Elmbridge Partnership

1.2 Since 2006, numerous achievements have been made in partnership to deliver on the Sustainable Community Strategy, for example:

- Over 3000 pledges received as part of the We Are What You Do campaign, encouraging residents to help make Elmbridge an even better place (copies of the pledge form will be available at the meeting)
- A traffic congestion conference for local businesses
- Environmental theatre workshops for primary schools
- A smoke free charter for Elmbridge
- A Drive Out Vehicle Crime campaign (part funded by the Local Committee)
- Holiday activities for young people at the Lower Green Community Centre

1.3 Given that the ECP has little funding at its disposal, the focus is on tangible achievements that improve quality of life in Elmbridge. However, the government increasingly expects local strategic partnerships to have an oversight of key strategic issues and public spending in an area and the ECP will need to strengthen its capacity in order to meet these requirements (as set out in statutory guidance, "Creating strong, safe and prosperous communities"). Performance in the new Comprehensive Area Assessment will be influenced according to how well local partners work together to meet the needs of the community.

2 ANALYSIS

2.1 Each theme of the Sustainable Community Strategy contains long term aims for 2015, medium term priorities and partnership action plans. Across the life of the Strategy, new medium term priorities need to be set for 2009-12 and 2012-15. The process of developing priorities for 2009-12 is now underway and has already involved:

- A sustainability appraisal of the Sustainable Community Strategy, funded through the South East England Regional Assembly.
- A stakeholder conference at Whiteley Village Hall on 16 July attended by approximately 100 people including councillors, funded through the South East capacity building programme for partnerships (Progress through Partnership)
- A questionnaire asking residents for their priorities
- Collation of statistics and key performance indicators

Subsequent stages are:

- Recommendation by the delivery partnerships of new priorities to the ECP Board on 6 October
- Development of new partnership action plans based on the new priorities
- Submission of the updated Strategy to Elmbridge Borough Council's Cabinet on 7 January and Full Council on 25 February (although the Strategy is developed and coordinated in partnership, it is the Borough Council that has the statutory responsibility to produce it). We will also ask partner organisations to take it through their approval processes.

2.2. The process so far has identified the following emerging issues, which will guide the ECP's delivery partnerships in selecting priorities:

Protecting and enhancing the natural environment

- Improving public transport e.g. frequency and routes
- Tackling traffic congestion
- Businesses reducing the negative impact they have on the environment
- Recycling – more facilities and public education about the process
- Street scene issues (need for clean and tidy streets)
- Reducing over-development
- Better play facilities
- Management of open space

Promoting health and well being

- Helping older people remain independent in their home
- More GP involvement with the Sustainable Community Strategy
- Tackling obesity and increasing physical activity
- Support for people suffering from mental health problems
- Young people's/family health
- Knowing where to go for health services

- Noise pollution

Enhancing the local economy

- More people visiting Elmbridge's shops, open space and other attractions
- Businesses helping to tackle quality of life issues such as health, traffic congestion and the environment
- Impact of parking charges
- Councils being able to act more quickly when working with businesses
- Not everyone has a car – better bus services and co-ordinated transport
- More support for smaller businesses e.g. range of offices/units, nursery units
- Possible problems due to current financial climate
- Maintain and improve relationships between businesses and local service providers
- Employers to recognise value of older employees and those with mental health problems

Building safer communities

- Diversionary activities for young people
- Parenting skills
- More community involvement e.g. Neighbourhood Watch
- Involving schools
- Reducing anti-social behaviour
- More visible policing
- Zero tolerance to crime and disorder
- More CCTV

Fostering inclusion

- All residents having equality of opportunity
- Communities of need are empowered to use their own assets and strengths to improve quality of life
- Everybody having access to social services
- Don't ignore the needs of average people
- Needs of single people
- Extending the work of the One Elmbridge Partnership to other areas
- Encouraging participation from people in more deprived areas in activities in the rest of the borough
- Find out whether ethnicity is an issue
- More information sharing between organisations
- Tackle isolation
- Access to vocational learning

Partnership development

- Improving performance management
- More communication with stakeholders
- Consideration of broader, strategic issues and finances

- Co-ordinating consultation

In addition to the main themes of the Sustainable Community Strategy, delegates at the conference were asked for issues relating to four cross-cutting themes, as set out below:

Local Development Framework

- Improve transport
- Provide housing (see also below)
- Improve energy efficiency
- Simplify the planning process
- Better partnership in delivery of Local Development Framework
- Promote health

Equality, diversity and faith

- Identify minority and hard to reach groups
- Empower communities to have a voice
- Promotion of Elmbridge Equality and Diversity Forum
- Greater awareness and understanding of different groups

Culture

- Recruit and recognise volunteers
- Identify cultural activities within the ECP
- Promote cultural activities
- Lack of transport to venues

Housing

- Affordability, including appropriate definition and need for community buy-in
- Increasing the supply of social rented housing
- Optimise existing stock
- Older people's accommodation
- Effect of credit crunch
- Making best use of publicly owned sites for affordable housing

The public survey gave space for residents to write any other comments about how to make Elmbridge a better place. Their responses included:

- Councils/councillors listening to residents' concerns e.g. public forum
- More interaction with young people
- Road safety e.g. Walton Road, Oxshott
- Maintaining roads and pavements

- 2.3 Priorities for the Elmbridge Sustainable Community Strategy will relate to those in the Surrey Local Area Agreement (LAA) where they are also priorities for Elmbridge. Work is currently being carried out by officers to look at how the local strategic partnerships in Surrey (of which the ECP is one) can help deliver the Surrey Sustainable

Community Strategy and how further links can be developed between it and the district/borough community strategies.

- 2.4 Performance management of the Elmbridge Sustainable Community Strategy is currently being improved, including establishing performance indicators related to the 2015 aims. Where possible, the new national indicator set will be used.

3 OPTIONS

- 3.1 The Local Committee is asked for comments on the above issues and whether any other, significant issues affecting quality of life should be addressed by Elmbridge Community Partnership in 2009-12. These will be fed into the ECP Board meeting on 6 October.

4 CONSULTATIONS

- 4.1 Consultation on the development of new medium priorities for the Sustainable Community Strategy has taken place as set out in paragraph 2.1. Consultation is also taking place with Elmbridge Borough Council's Corporate Affairs Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet.

5 FINANCIAL AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The cost of refreshing the Sustainable Community Strategy is being met by Elmbridge Borough Council and external funding. Through the Strategy, it is intended to encourage partner organisations to commit resources to joint projects.

6 EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Equalities and diversity is being developed as a cross-cutting theme of the Sustainable Community Strategy.

7 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 Community safety is a key theme of the Sustainable Community Strategy.

8 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 The Local Committee is asked for its views on the issues highlighted within the report and whether any other, significant quality of life issues should be considered when updating the Elmbridge Sustainable Community Strategy.

9 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 It is important to consult the Local Committee on refreshing the Sustainable Community Strategy as Surrey County Council is a key partner of the ECP.

10 WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

- 10.1 The Local Committee's views will be fed into the delivery partnerships to guide their recommendations regarding the 2009-12 priorities to be made to the ECP Board on 6 October. Further stages for updating the Sustainable Community Strategy are set out in paragraph 2.1. It is intended that regular reports will be made to the Local Committee on the Sustainable Community Strategy. For example, the Local Committee and Partnership Officer will report back on the agreed 2009-12 priorities.

LEAD OFFICER: Andrew Bircher, Head of Community Partnerships, Elmbridge Borough Council
TELEPHONE NUMBER: 01372 474384

E-MAIL: abircher@elmbridge.gov.uk

CONTACT OFFICER: Joy Willshire, Community Planning and Partnerships Co-ordinator, Elmbridge Borough Council
TELEPHONE NUMBER: 01372 474377

E-MAIL: jwillshire@elmbridge.gov.uk

BACKGROUND PAPERS: Elmbridge Sustainable Community Strategy 2006-15
http://www.elmbridge.gov.uk/documents/detail.htm?pk_document=8268
 Creating strong, safe and prosperous communities: statutory guidance. Available from <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/localgovernment/strongsafeprosperous> or from the Community Planning and Partnerships Co-ordinator.