

Report of the Director of City Strategy

PROGRESS WITH THE REVIEW OF THE SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY

Summary

1. The report sets out background information on progress with the review of the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS), and seeks comments from the Board on this matter.

Background

The original Community Strategy - 2004

2. The original City Vision and Community Strategy were launched in 2004 and based on extensive public consultation and community engagement called the 'Festival of Ideas'. At its launch a commitment was made to refresh the Community Strategy. The resultant City Vision, that is still in place and used, is:

York – A City Making History

Making our mark by:

- Building confident, creative and inclusive communities
- Being a leading environmentally-friendly city
- Being at the forefront of innovation and change with a prosperous and thriving economy
- Being a world class centre for education and learning for all
- Celebrating our historic past whilst creating a successful and thriving future

3. The original Community Strategy has seven themes and strategic aims:

The Thriving City: To support the progress and success of York's existing businesses and to encourage new enterprises in order to maintain a prosperous and flourishing economy that will sustain high employment rates.

The Learning City: To ensure all those who live and work in York have the education and skills that will enable them to play an active part in society and contribute to the life of the city. To ensure that the city is seen as an internationally recognised centre for education with a commitment to lifelong learning and creativity which is second to none.

A City of Culture: Celebrating both our uniqueness and our diversity, we will promote a culture that helps build a confident and creative community, welcomes and inspires resident and visitor alike, and encourages quality opportunities for fun and fulfilment open to all.

The Safer City: To be a safe city with a low crime rate and to be perceived by residents and visitors as such.

The Sustainable City: That York should be a model sustainable city with a quality built and natural environment and modern, integrated transport network.

The Healthy City: To be a city where residents enjoy long, healthy and independent lives through the promotion of healthy living and with easy access to responsive health and social care services.

The Inclusive City: To ensure that all residents and visitors can take part in the life of the city.

Developments since 2004

4. Since the launch of the City Vision and Community Strategy a number of significant changes have taken place and strategic drivers emerged that strengthen the case for refreshing the original Community Strategy. They include:
 - Growing evidence of York's success as a city (e.g. European Tourist City of the Year);
 - An increase in population that is forecast to continue along with a changing ethnic mix;
 - The outcomes of three public planning enquiries determining that significant developments will take place in the city at the University, Derwenthorpe and Germany Beck;
 - The emergence of York North West as a major development opportunity for the city;
 - Job losses in both traditional manufacturing sector (Nestle and British Sugar) and the financial services sector (Norwich Union);
 - The publication of an independent economic review of the city that identified that York has an opportunity to significantly increase its economic performance;
 - Development of York's first Local Area Agreement (LAA) that is widely regarded as moving the original Community Strategy forward by making it more York specific and updating the original measures.

5. At the same time national policy has increasingly focused on the role and importance of cities and city regions for improved national prosperity. There is also a growing expectation that the strategic leaders of a city will determine its long term direction - via the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP). In practice this means:
 - An enhanced role for LSPs;

- A need for the future of York to be planned in the context of its role within the Yorkshire and Humber Region, Leeds City Region and York and North Yorkshire Sub Region;
- That there must be a strong alignment between all strategies that impact on York. In particular the new 'Sustainable Community Strategy' and Local Development Framework need to provide a strong and clear strategic planning framework within which other key strategies can be developed and delivered;
- A requirement for all LSPs to produce a Sustainable Community Strategy which is defined as:

"to set the overall strategic direction and long-term vision for the economic, social and environmental well-being of a local area - typically 10-20 years - in a way that contributes to sustainable development in the UK. It tells the 'story of the place' - the distinctive vision and ambition of the area, backed by clear evidence and analysis." There is also an expectation that the SCS must provide 'a vehicle for considering and deciding how to address difficult and cross cutting issues such as the economic direction of an area, cohesion, social exclusion and climate change'. (Source: Creating strong safe and prosperous communities - Nov 2007)

Proposed Strategic Ambitions

6. The Chair of the LSP has made a case for updating the community strategy so it has a number of strategic ambitions that drive all other strategies and set the high level context for partnerships future activities.
7. The ambitions are underpinned by the basic premise that what makes York special and unique is its strength and this unique selling point should be used to ensure the future prosperity of the city. The strategic ambitions have been debated by the board and currently are:
 1. Use York's uniqueness as a way to improve the city further;
 2. Keep the economy strong and competitive and our employment levels high;
 3. Develop strong, supportive and durable communities;
 4. Strike a healthy balance between physical growth and environmental sustainability;
 5. Be proud of and promote our international significance;
 6. Work in partnership for the benefit of everyone;
 7. Assert our role as an important regional city.
8. It has been suggested that these ambitions need to be broadened to ensure the 'community' aspects of York are given as much prominence as the physical aspects of York. In addition it has been requested that an overall evidence base for the ambitions and final Sustainable Community Strategy is developed.

9. In accordance with the approved SCS project plan the SCS/LAA Steering Group is progressing the completion of the SCS and update of the LAA by April 2008. Partners are requested to update the parts of the current strategy that are relevant to them by 20 March, 2008. The Without Walls Partnership will develop and agree the sustainable community strategy for York. It will ensure that evidence has been properly and rigorously collected and analysed, will be the forum for debating and resolving matters of strategic direction for the city, and will set out the city wide vision, ambition and priority in the SCS. The LSP will also sign off the LAA, the Local Development Framework (LDF) and the thematic strategies to ensure they properly reflect the SCS vision and priorities.
10. In its role as 'place shaper', City of York Council is responsible for establishing and supporting key partnerships, making sure they work within a coherent framework, and ensuring they enhance decision making and deliver on actions. The council is currently developing an evidence base that will tell 'the story of place' for York which will be shared with partners to support the refresh of the SCS.
11. Beneath the Without Walls Partnership the eight thematic partnerships are established to support the SCS. They have 3 functions, each advisory to the LSP:
 - They provide evidence to the LSP to help it develop and refresh the SCS;
 - They recommend to the LSP the most appropriate LAA indicators;
 - They recommend 'thematic strategies' i.e. partners' commitments to actions, timetables and milestones.
12. The Without Walls (WOW) Executive Delivery Board monitors delivery of the strategies and tracks progress on the LAA. The refresh of the SCS needs to take place within this overall governance framework. In order to achieve the refresh it is proposed that the sequence, illustrated at Annex A, needs to take place.

Challenging Choices

13. In considering the evidence base and finalising the SCS some consideration will need to be given to what are being called the 'challenging choices' facing the city. It is proposed that the partnership will need to identify what are seen as the difficult issues, tensions and competing priorities in mapping out the future economic, social and environmental development of the city.
14. However it is important to emphasise that the partnership is not starting with a 'blank sheet of paper'. Nor does it have absolute discretion to determine all issues. The role of the WOW partnership is to influence and advise. In considering the refresh of the SCS it needs to be recognised that there are a range of 'givens' such as:
 - York is going to grow;
 - The special characteristics of York – built and natural environment – must be enhanced;

- Our total population will grow and its composition will change;
 - The level of inward commuting will continue to increase;
 - We will need to plan beyond our boundaries in order to address our housing needs.
15. These givens then lead to challenging choices such as:
- How to keep the economy thriving and ensure it provides prosperity for all;
 - How to minimise the gap between ‘haves’ and ‘have nots’;
 - How to address the challenges of climate change.
16. The nature of these choices has changed since the original strategy. For example: the level and type of jobs that York is expected to provide are largely a product of the Regional Economic Strategy and the level of housing units York is expected to build are largely a given from the Regional Spatial Strategy. As a result it is possible to influence what happens within this situation (e.g encourage the provision and use of sustainable transport) but many of the parameters are not within the direct control of the city. These issues are considered in more detail in the accompanying paper on the SCS and LDF.
17. In accordance with paragraph 9 above, the Economic Development Partnership Board is requested to review the “Thriving City” chapter of the Sustainable Community Strategy. A draft is appended and comments are invited. Following consideration of this draft chapter, it is proposed to prepare a more detailed economic development strategy and action plan for consideration by partners prior to the next Board meeting.

Consultation

18. Consultation has been undertaken over the summer and autumn through the Festival of Ideas 2 initiative with respect to the Future York Group report, the Sustainable Community Strategy and the Local Development Framework.

Options

19. Most of the proposals set out in the Sub-National Review (SNR) will be the subject of consultation with the local authority and an assessment of the options open to the Council will need to be undertaken at the appropriate time. At this stage, the key element for York is to maximise the opportunities presented by the Leeds City Region and to consider how best to respond to this. This is considered further below.

Analysis

20. Detailed analysis of the local economy has been undertaken in connection with the preparation of the Future York group report. The draft “Thriving City” chapter highlights some of the major issues and considerations in reviewing this chapter, together with providing a reason for any proposed change.

Corporate Priorities

21. Current corporate priorities that link with the focus on improving economic prosperity are:
- Increase people's skills and knowledge to improve future employment prospects.
 - Improve the economic prosperity of the people of York with a focus on minimising income differentials.
 - Increase the use of public and other environmentally friendly modes of transport.

Implications

22. Financial: none directly from this report although the Council's economic development budget will contribute to the achievement of the strategic aims and objectives set out in the "Thriving City" theme of the Sustainable Community Strategy.
23. Human resources: None directly from this report.
24. Equalities: None
25. Legal: None
26. Crime and Disorder: None
27. Information Technology: None
28. Property: None

Risk Management

29. In compliance with the Council's risk management strategy.

Recommendation

30. That the Board notes the progress in reviewing the Sustainable Community Strategy and comments on the proposed revisions to the "Thriving City" chapter.

Reason: To help shape the effectiveness of future action.

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**Report
Approved**



Date 25/02/08

Specialist Implications Officer(s)

Financial – Patrick Looker

Others – Report Author

Wards Affected:

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers: None

Annexes: Annex A – “York – The Thriving City” draft chapter

York – The Thriving City

Top Level Objective

To enhance the economic well-being of the City, being at the forefront of innovation and change with a prosperous and thriving economy supporting the progress and success of businesses and encouraging new enterprises that will sustain high employment rates whilst ensuring that all sections of the community are able to benefit from economic opportunities. (REASON FOR CHANGE: Amendment to take account of Future York Group report, progress against economic development indicators and targets as monitored by the Economic Development Partnership Board and as set within the LAA, and revisions to the Council`s corporate strategy).

Issues facing the City:

- Maintenance of York's position as a market-leader in the development of its knowledge and science base in an increasingly competitive global economy;
- Increasing competition in the leisure and business tourism markets;
- The on-going reduction of employment in York's manufacturing base;
- Lack of investment in the city's heritage and tourist industry;
- Lack of quality employment sites and accommodation particularly within the City Centre whilst recognizing the availability of significant brownfield land (REASON FOR CHANGE : Future York Group report).;
- Skills gaps and barriers to work facing York residents in an increasingly specialised workplace environment, and the need for quality jobs offering higher pay together with ensuring that as many residents and employees as possible can benefit from new economic opportunities (REASON FOR CHANGE: Future York Group recommendations, growing agenda from Government to tackle worklessness, Partner and stakeholder views, Council corporate strategy priority).;
- Need for a modern, uncongested transport infrastructure and improved international travel connections to meet the needs of a modern, knowledge-based economy;
- Balancing and using the successful economy to achieve high environmental standards and quality of life , taking account of the commitment to limit any impact on the carbon footprint of the City (REASON FOR CHANGE : Amendment to take account of the growing importance of the principles of sustainable development)..

Strategic Aims:

1. **To have a leading edge, modern, knowledge and science-based economy;**
2. **To be ranked as an international quality leisure and business visitor destination;**
3. **To have a broad based economic structure, characterised by good working practices, and with a highly skilled and motivated workforce;**
4. **To provide a strong and distinctive cultural sector, enriching the lives of residents and visitors;**
5. **To be a focus for high quality external investment and supportive of local business and small business development;**
6. **That the University maintains its top 10 position within the UK and acts as a key local and regional economic generator as well as increasing the scale and impact of Further and Higher Education in the city, ensuring that the expansion and diversification of learning opportunities are central to increasing economic activity and broadening cultural life (REASON FOR CHANGE: Future York Group report and stakeholder/partner views);**
7. **To play a full regional , City regional (REASON FOR CHANGE: To reflect a growing agenda for the City region as set out in the Government`s sun-national review of economic development) and sub-regional economic role;**
8. **To have a modern, sustainable and uncongested transport network;**
9. **To enable local people, including those with disabilities, to benefit from the new job opportunities and increased income levels from increased economic prosperity , with a focus on minimising income differentials in the City (REASON FOR CHANGE: To reflect Future York Group recommendations, growing agenda from Government to tackle worklessness, Partner and stakeholder views, Council corporate strategy priority)..**

Key Actions:

- To further develop York as a centre for leading edge, modern, knowledge and science-based businesses. We will achieve this by increasing the levels of start-ups, spin-outs and growing businesses through Science City York business development and skills development programmes.

- The leisure and business visitor market will be developed further through focused marketing activities. This will include investment in the heritage, cultural and conference infrastructure, and skills development activity through the new Visit York single tourism organisation (REASON FOR CHANGE: To reflect the establishment of the new partnership arrangements).
- The city's broad-based economic structure, including the cultural sector and city centre economy, will be maintained and developed. Business support services will be provided, there will be direct intervention with key sectors and businesses and important development sites will be advanced. Additional work will be undertaken to enhance the engagement of local businesses (REASON FOR CHANGE: To reflect the Future York Group report recommendations and partner responses to this).
- Joint working through york-england.com with regional and sub-regional partners will continue to promote York in order to attract high value external investment to support and add value to local business development.
- York University will be supported in its role as a key economic generator for the city through joint action between Science City York and the Higher York Partnership.
- • Increasing the scale and impact of Further and Higher Education in the city, ensuring that the expansion and diversification of learning opportunities are central to increasing economic activity and broadening cultural life (REASON FOR CHANGE: Future York Group report and stakeholder/partner views)
- Economic benefits will be maximised at a local and regional level through collaborative work in the region's Yorkshire Cities project, with Yorkshire Forward and the Regional Assembly.
- To contribute to the development of a modern, sustainable, uncongested transport infrastructure that meets the needs of the York economy. This will be achieved by strategic planning and investment through the Local Transport Plan and direct intervention with key rail and air operators.
- Skill levels within the York workforce will be enhanced through partnership working with the Learning & Skills Council, Lifelong Learning Partnership, education and training providers and Future Prospects.
- To address the issue of economic inclusion and worklessness so that as many residents and employees as possible can benefit from new economic opportunities (REASON FOR CHANGE: Future York Group report and stakeholder/partner views)
- To work with neighbouring council's to develop new approaches to affordable housing.

NEW SECTION - Cross-cutting issues:

Whilst the City of York has consistently adapted and changed over its long and successful history, it has faced a number of economic challenges in recent years

brought about by economic competition from within the UK but increasingly also from the effects of globalization. An independent group has reviewed the future of the local economy and has recommended that York has a tremendous opportunity to strengthen and grow the economy due to the large amount of brownfield land that is available for development. By making the best use of this land the economy of the City could grow by 3.7% per annum. The challenge is to seek to achieve this objective whilst maintaining York's very special historic environment, managing the impact on the City's carbon footprint, improving transport and ensuring the City's attractiveness as a place to live, work and invest.

The City has the scope to provide higher added value to the local economy by the further development of knowledge led businesses. In growing the economy, it will be important to be mindful on the impact on commuting rates and ensuring that an appropriately skilled workforce is available to meet employer needs, both now and in the future. Equally important, is to ensure that as many local residents and employees as possible are able to take advantage of new economic opportunities so that individuals and sections of the community are not left excluded.

It is important to recognize that the economy of York is integrated into the economy of the sub-region, City region and region. Its success contributes significantly to the success of the regional economy but is also dependent upon decisions taken outside the city. York needs to look across its boundaries and help shape sub-regional, City regional and regional partnerships to argue for the investment opportunities that will help shape the long term future of the City.

Success Measures:

- Overall employment rate and rate of unemployment compared to regional and national rates
- Average earnings compared to regional and national rates wage rates
- Skills qualifications of working age population
- % of businesses surveyed who are satisfied with York as a premier business location.

Partnership Arrangements:

The Economic Development Partnership Board (EDPB) are responsible for progressing the priorities set out within this theme. The EDPB representative and Without Walls Board Member who will take the lead on ensuring targets are achieved is Councillor Steve Galloway, City of York Council. The Economic Development Manager is Roger Ranson, Assistant Director, Economic Development and Partnerships, City of York Council, 9 St Leonard's Place, York, YO1 7ET

Key plans:

- Economic Development Strategy and programme
- Science City York Strategy
- Visit York business plan and action plan

- Regional Economic Strategy
- York and North Yorkshire Sub-Regional Investment Plan
- Leeds City Region development programme
- Yorkshire Cities mission and objectives
- York-england.com business plan
- Local Plan and Local Transport Plan
- Learning & Skills council strategy and business plan
- Lifelong Learning Partnership strategy/action plan (including 14-19 and adult skills strategies)
- York Cultural Partnership (York @ Large) strategy and plans
- Business Link and Sub-franchise business plans
- University of York strategic plan and Higher York strategy/action plan