

Developing the Sustainable Community

Sustainable Community Strategy Consultation Programme

1. Background

The North Somerset Partnership (NSP) approved the current Community Strategy in October 2004, and it was subsequently launched at the Stakeholder Event in Nailsea in November 2004.

Since the adoption of the North Somerset Community Strategy, a wide spread review of Local Strategic Partnership's (LSP's) has been undertaken by the Government. This national LSP consultation process outlined proposals to strengthen the role of Local Strategic Partnerships and to refocus Community Strategies. The Local Government White Paper (06) clarifies this approach and further guidance from the Department of Communities and Local Government will be available during 2007.

The NSP will be required to build on previous work to develop a 'Sustainable Community Strategy'. The new strategy will be required to include local responses to recent policy developments such as integrating the Core Strategy from the Local Development Framework. It will also need to ensure that the North Somerset Local Area Agreement is a clear delivery plan for implementing the strategy. The purpose of the strategy will be to demonstrate how partners will work toward the development of sustainable communities.

To co-ordinate and oversee this task the NSP has established a sub group of board members, and an officer project group will be established to support the Board.

2. Preparing for the development of the North Somerset Sustainable Community Strategy

To inform and help shape the new strategy, a wide ranging public consultation and engagement programme has been carried out from May 06 until early October 06.

This programme was developed following a review of a range of consultations that had been carried out by North Somerset Council and its partners over the last 18 months. The review, which used information sought from service users, communities (parish plans) and the general public, identified gaps in information from certain geographical areas. A specific need to consult with young people about their aspirations for the future of North Somerset was also identified.

3. Involvement in the Consultation and Engagement Programme

The consultation programme benefited from more than 1,100 people providing information to the NSP on community issues across North Somerset. More than 5,500 comments were noted from across the district. Feedback from participants demonstrated that many of the people involved in this process were residents who would not traditionally come forward to engage in more formal consultation exercises.

Within this involvement 356 young people from across North Somerset actively engaged with the programme giving their views through a range of methods.

4. Methods used for engaging people

The consultation programme used a range of methods to enter into dialogue with people and enable them to express their views about what is important to them within their communities. To avoid consultation fatigue, the programme was developed with the emphasis on making the process fun and relatively quick and easy for people to put their views across. The following methods were used:

- **Dairy Room Film Project**

The film project visited district wide events and rural locations on the Avon Youth Association Bus. The bus was turned into a Big Brother Style Diary Room Film Set. The Youth Parliament was also visited.

Young people who entered the Diary Room were asked to explain what they liked, didn't like, or would like to change about where they lived. Finally, participants were asked "if the Diary room could give them a magic wand that could only be used once what would they wish for that would benefit the whole community".

- **Audio Interviews**

Young people were invited to share their views within an audio interview using the same format as the diary room.

- **Schools Art Competition**

School pupils were invited to enter an art competition under the theme of "Aliens have landed near your home. They will grant you one wish. It must help people in your town or village now and in the future. What would you wish for?" The winners of this competition were three boys from Larch Centre Pupil Referral Unit

- **Community Snapshots**

People from targeted communities were invited to take photos of their local areas and write captions about what they liked, didn't like or would like to improve. These photos were used across the area in Libraries and at events to encourage people to give their views and agree or disagree with volunteer's comments.

- **Maps and Flags**

Two community events were hosted by the NSP. These events used a range of methods to encourage views. This included having large scale maps of the area where participants placed flags reflecting specific issues in locations within their communities. These comments reflected both reactive and proactive views about the area.

- **Plant your ideas**

At events run by communities, people were invited to write down their views on key issues and solutions on plant sticks that were placed in thematic flowerpots covering the themes of the community strategy. This enabled people to document their key issues simply and to prioritise their most important issues under each theme.

- **Speech Bubble display**

As part of Local Democracy week a summary of comments made by young people was put together using images and quotes. Pupils attending the Council's local democracy week activities were encouraged to plant their ideas on the display – using the plant your ideas method.

- **Questionnaires**

At each Plant your ideas event attended, people were also invited to fill in a questionnaire which considered which of the Community Strategy priorities were most important from their perspective. Each person was also asked if they thought anything was missing from the existing priorities listed.

- **On-line questionnaire**

During August and September an on line questionnaire was placed on NSC and NSP web sites. This enabled people who had not been previously involved to share their views and aspirations. A questionnaire design similar to the version used at shows and community events was used. The general public were asked to rate priorities within the community strategy, identify any gaps and add their specific comments about what they would like improved and how this could be done.

- **Sustainability Wheel**

The wheel was taken to appropriate events such as the 'Change One Thing' event and local community events hosted by the NSP. Participants were asked to record what the components of a sustainable community meant to them by placing ideas where the spinning wheel stopped.

6. Initial Analysis of quantitative and qualitative data collected

The majority of data collated is of a qualitative nature. To ensure that this data is helpful to the Sustainable Community Strategy sub group, delivery partnerships and action planning for the LAA, the data has been analysed on a thematic basis.

10 folders have been produced that provide:

- an overview of the process,
- an overview of the consultation results
- examples of the range of comments referring to each issue
- area specific comments where appropriate

Raw data has been made available upon request. Information can also be pulled out in relation to age, geographical area, and gender in most instances. Not all participants provided information on equalities issues such as sharing with us personal information about disabilities or ethnicity. However, all activities were carried out to enable all members of the community to engage. A range of methods and targeted advertising was undertaken to ensure an inclusive approach.

7. How the information gathered will be used

The primary focus of the consultation programme was to encourage people to influence and help shape the new Sustainable Community Strategy and to promote an understanding about the work of the North Somerset Partnership. Information collated from this programme will be used to complement existing base line data and service area consultations that have been undertaken over the last 18 months by NSC and its partners. The outcomes of this work will feed into NSP work programmes through the following methods:

• **Helping to shape the Sustainable Community Strategy**

An overall summary detailing key findings will be used to inform the SCS sub group and officer project group in helping to shape of the Sustainable Community Strategy as the long-term framework for the work of the NSP. The broad timetable to undertake this work is as follows:

- NSP Sustainable Community Strategy Sub and Project Group meet to oversee development of the strategy from **Feb 07**
- Write draft strategy with key organisations/sector representatives from **March to June 07**
- Consult on first draft strategy from **July 07**
- Final Draft Sustainable Community Strategy – **October 07**

• **Assisting Delivery Partnerships to develop action plans to support the implementation of the Sustainable Community Strategy**

A thematic folder providing an overview of the process, key issues and solutions (where appropriate) outlined by members of the public will be sent to each of the 10 Delivery Partnerships. Partnerships will be able to use this information when developing their action plans to support implementation of the Sustainable Community Strategy.

• **Providing evidence to support the development of the LAA and the associated action plans**

Initial raw data was circulated for use by each LAA block sub group. Delivery partnership folders were also provided to support the action planning process. Children and Young people's data has been fed into the specific consultation review that was undertaken to inform the LAA.

• **Supporting other initiatives**

Raw data has been fed into the work being undertaken to develop a play strategy for North Somerset. A witness statement using a range of comments about play by young people will be submitted in support of the Big Lottery Bid

Age related analysis has been undertaken to provide information to support the development of the North Somerset Older People's Strategy.

Parish Planning Teams will receive information collated on a geographical basis to support the development or review of their work. A number of parishes that do not have parish plans have also asked for area specific information to be shared with them.

Information has been collated and analysed to support the Nailsea School funding application to build a new school for the area.

Geographical information is being fed into the work to assist with the development of the 'Gateway' project in Pill, Yatton, Locking Castle and Nailsea

Service areas within the council will receive service-related information on a geographical basis as appropriate.

- **Sharing the information with Stakeholders**

Stakeholders were invited to consider the outcomes of the consultation process at the NSP Annual Event in November 2006. Stakeholders considered the priority status of issues and added further information and identified gaps where appropriate. This information will be added to the body of evidence and fed back to Stakeholders through an event report.

- **Feeding back to communities**

Key messages from the programme will be fed back to members of the public using existing resources such as the NSC and NSP web site, NSP Stakeholders bulletin, North Somerset Life. The diary room film will be shown at all locations visited and will be available for youth clubs to use if they wish. To date The Diary Room film has been shown at a range of NSC and partner meetings and copies of the film have been given to a range of voluntary organisations working with young people across the area either as a training resource or to inform work being undertaken.

8. Considering the information collated

To support the use of the data collated it has been analysed and presented within a suite of results folders. These contain:

- A table that collates all key issues and examples of **young people's** comments relating to these issues. Where comments have been registered with a geographical significance this has been noted.
- A table that collates all key issues and examples of comments from **adults** relating to these issues. Where comments have been registered with a geographical significance this has been noted.
- A table that collates all key issues and examples of comments from **all ages** relating to specific delivery partnership themes. (**Please note: Grid references have been used to assist with further analysis rather than to indicate a priority order**)

Raw data is available upon request in a thematic format; raw data will also be available in a geographical format.

To ensure that we can provide feedback to local people about how views are used it would be helpful for all users of this information to identify where data collated is being used to shape, support or influence objectives or actions, within NSP related work programmes. Please provide feedback to Lorraine Bush, Partnership Development Officer Tel: 01934 634888 ext 4888 or email lorraine.bush@n-somerset.gov.uk .

Developing the North Somerset Sustainable Community Strategy

Consultation Overview

1. What people valued.

The Community Snapshot activity provided people with the opportunity to photograph what was important to them within their communities. Volunteers were from all age ranges with the highest representation being from over 25 – 65 and 65 plus. Over 400 comments and 500 photographs were received from volunteers from the following areas.

- Weston- super-Mare
- Banwell
- Barrow Gurney
- Bleadon
- Clevedon
- Nailsea
- Pill
- Portishead
- Winford
- Winscombe

From the range of comments and photographs received a summary of comments could be classified under the following broad headings:

- **Protection of natural environment and preservation of heritage sites**
- **Maintaining and improving access to local services and community facilities/resources**
- **Supporting the local economy and encouraging variety in the retail offer**
- **Well designed built environments**
- **Maintaining open spaces**
- **Well designed highways and pedestrian access for all people**
- **A sense of belonging and feeling comfortable and safe**

Additionally, **young people** were asked as part of the dairy room film project and audio interviews to express what they valued within their communities. On a broad analysis the comments above also cover young people's views but with a **greater emphasis on improved retail offer and improved access to community facilities**. For many young people the **sense of belonging and feeling comfortable and safe within their village or town was most important**.

2. What people thought about the existing Community Strategy Priorities?

People from all ages were invited to complete questionnaires either on line or at events through out the programme. This was not the most popular method of giving views for young people 0-24 or older people 66+. The majority of respondents were from the 45-

65 age range. However, when the questionnaire was used at events its primary use was as a tool to encourage thoughts prior to participating in another activity. The on line survey was used to open up opportunities to contribute to the programme. 268 people completed questionnaires in total. From these responses the following analysis has been made:

For **all age groups** the following priorities were considered to be very important:

1. **73.9% reducing crime**
2. **71.6% increasing transport choice, promoting accessibility and improving transport infrastructure**
3. **63.8% improving health and wellbeing**
4. **49.6% improving economic sustainability**
5. **45.9% ensuring an appropriate range of housing**
6. **33.6% developing a wide range of arts, entertainment, recreational and cultural opportunities**

Young people aged up to 24 years old, viewed priorities slightly differently; these were as follows:

1. **78.9% increasing transport choice, promoting accessibility and improving transport infrastructure**
2. **73.7% reducing crime**
3. **63.2% developing a wide range of arts, entertainment, recreational and cultural opportunities and improving health and wellbeing**
4. **52.6% ensuring an appropriate range of housing**
5. **42.1% improving economic sustainability**

When asked about what was missing from the 6 priority objectives contained within the Community Strategy the majority of people in **all age groups** highlighted the following gaps:

- **Protecting the natural environment**
- **Addressing actions that have a negative impact on the environment - Climate Change**
- **Commitment to addressing rural and urban issues (balance)**
- **Fostering community spirit through increased sense of place**
- **Young people's services and facilities**

Young people in particular would also like to see the objective for economic sustainability to **include improving the retail offer in all main towns in the area and an additional priority that addresses improvements to the range of facilities and services for young people.**

3. Key issues that are important to young people

The table below combines the collated results from the following activities

- Audio Interviews (8- 16yrs)
- Diary Room film project transcripts (11 – 16yrs)
- Schools Art Competition captions (11 – 13yrs)
- Plant your ideas (under 24yrs)
- Speech bubble display (9- 15yrs)

Views have been collated around common themes as indicated by young people. These can be summarised as follows:

Children and Young People's Services and Facilities

Young people expressed a strong desire to be involved in helping to shape local services and facilities and felt access to a diverse range of activities could be improved. Young People were keen to bridge gaps between generations to combat negative images and stereo typical views.

Community Safety

Many young people were particularly concerned about their safety when using park facilities; often young people felt that they were unable to use their local facilities due to a fear of anti social behaviour.

Culture, Leisure and Recreation

Public play areas and parks were very important to young people.

There was a particular emphasis on improving skate park provision and access to football facilities and swimming. However, it was also apparent that young people were keen to try out a range of sports not only those traditionally provided.

Young people wished to see a wide range of leisure and entertainment facilities developed in the area.

Economy and Regeneration

The majority of young people's views reflected a need to increase the retail offer in all the towns across North Somerset. There was also a concern about maintaining and improving services within the rural communities.

Young people were keen to see some key development sites regenerated.

Environment

Key issues expressed by young people about the environment were relatively evenly weighted (please see Appendix A) addressing environmental concerns were one of the top priorities for young people.

Health and Wellbeing

Young people that expressed views about this theme mainly focused on access to health care services and local food issues.

Housing

Some young people expressed views about affordable housing and the quantity of housing in the area.

Transport and Access

Transport issues were a key area of concern for young people. Within this theme a particular emphasis was on improving road safety, reducing congestion and improving access to public transport. All other transport issues outlined within the table below were equally weighted.

Communication

Across all themes young people expressed concern about being better informed about what was happening in their area. This is also demonstrated through some comments being about activities that are already being undertaken. Despite efforts by service providers to inform people locally about services and facilities, there is still a feeling that information could be easier to obtain.

For more detailed information or to receive a full copy of the suite of documents that demonstrate the full range of key issues and their geographical significance please contact:

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