

LEICESTERSHIRE COMMUNITY STRATEGY

COMMENTS OF THE FIVE MEMBER PANEL

The Panel welcomed the consultation draft of the Strategy and in particular the change in the chapter headings. The following principal points emerged during the Panel's discussion on the consultation draft of the Community Strategy:-

General Comments

- (a) That when the Strategy is circulated for comment to members of the public and other organisations it should be made clear that the Strategy relates to the administrative area of the county, excluding the City. Mention should be made of the existence of a separate Strategies for the City, Rutland and of emerging Districts based strategies.
- (b) That there should be a very brief outline of the key areas of responsibility of the Partners to the Strategy, including a mention of the difficulties arising as a result of their administrative boundaries not being coterminous with the County Council. The existence of separate strategies/plans covering the work of these partners should also be mentioned.
- (c) That, whilst noting that the 'Vision Statement' was yet to be developed, it may be helpful to set out in any future consultation draft some general information on the County, the key issues facing the County and its 'identity' in order to set the context within which the draft strategy should be considered.
- (d) That the statistical information in the strategy should relate only to the county administrative areas and where this is not the case it should be highlighted.
- (e) That particular attention should be given to issues of presentation in the introduction with a view to making the document as accessible as possible to the general public.

Specific Comments

Chapter 1 – Leicestershire – A County to be proud of

A strong economy, with quality jobs opportunities and skills for the future

The specific inclusion of the need to attract 'graduates' was raised. The view of the Panel was that if specific mention is to be made of graduates then there should be, if possible, some comment in Section 2 of the current level of graduate employment and potential opportunities.

Safe roads, with a strong transport system that enable people to access key services they want

Consideration should be given to including a mention of the needs of the horse-riding community, particularly in relation to road safety. It may also be appropriate to include reference to horse riding as a leisure opportunity and in relation to support to the rural economy elsewhere in the document.

Thriving market towns and village centres and high quality built areas

The Panel was of the view that it would be more appropriate to include the section on homelessness in Chapter 2 under the section headed 'A range of housing and affordable houses for all'.

Strong communities where people feel they have a say in their future

With regard to the third point in this section, the Panel was of the view that the references in Section 1 to 'economy' and 'learning' should be removed as these were specifically covered elsewhere in the document. It also considered that in Section 2 reference should be made to museums, art galleries and theatres as well as the work of the County Council in relation to footpaths and bridleways thereby assisting access to the countryside.

It may be more appropriate to move the fourth point 'Lifelong learning opportunities to enhance skills and enrich lives' to the section 'Fair communities where everyone can achieve their potential'. [The Panel acknowledged that the issue could be referred to under a number of different headings]

Chapter 2 – Where there are quality services for all

Service providers to work together and deliver services in different ways to offer choices to those who use them

In relation to the third point a comment should be included about the opportunities offered by the introduction 'broadband' services. In this regard the lack of such services in some rural parts of the county could hinder the achievement of this aim.

Communities safe from Crime and where people do not fear crime

In the first point, reference should be made to the work of the Partnership for Safer Communities.

In relation to the point about 'a more visible and responsive police presence...', it was noted there was no comment in Section 2 – consideration should be given to including a reference to the Community Policing Initiative and statistical information which could be provided by the Leicestershire Constabulary.

Healthy Communities where people look after themselves

The Panel was of the view that this part of the Strategy appeared weak and should be developed further. No mention is made of the role of PCT's and other health partners. Issues relating to acute and primary/community health services were not identified and no reference was made to the range of providers, including those providing care in the independent sector.

A range of housing and affordable homes for all

In relation to the first point, the second column should include some reference to the impact of increasing house prices and the lack of affordable housing in rural areas. The work of district councils in promoting and encouraging social housing should be included.

Chapter 3 – Young People Leicestershire's Future

The separate chapter dealing with issues relating to young people was welcomed as a response to points raised in the consultation process. Consideration should be given to including a reference to the findings of the Review of Youth and Community Education, particularly those relating to the development of the Youth Service, which had been generally welcomed.