

REPORT TO CABINET

REPORT OF: Chief Executive

REPORT NO. CEX310

DATE: 9th January 2006

TITLE:	Community Strategy for Lincolnshire
COUNCIL AIMS/PORTFOLIO HOLDER NAME AND DESIGNATION:	Councillor Linda Neal, Leader
CORPORATE PRIORITY:	None
BACKGROUND PAPERS:	Draft Community Strategy for Lincolnshire at Appendix A

Introduction

1. Enclosed as Appendix A is a copy of the first draft of the Community Strategy for Lincolnshire which has been prepared by the County Council.

The primary driver for development of this document has been the requirement to have a community strategy in place in order to secure a local area agreement for Lincolnshire. Because this is the driving force behind its inception it is perhaps not surprising that the document is set up in accordance with the four service blocks that form part of the national shared priorities between local government and central government and are reflected in the guidance on Local Area Agreement. Those priorities relate to: children and young people; improving the health of the population; improving the quality of life through increased prosperity; and safer and stronger communities.

The draft Community Strategy is due to be considered by the Lincolnshire Assembly at their meeting on the 13th January where it is hoped that it will be formally approved. Copies of the draft strategy have been sent to key stakeholders including ourselves for consultation on the following aspects:

- 1) are the four priorities right
- 2) is anything missing
- 3) is the principal appearance of the document right.

Commentary on the Draft Community Strategy

2. 1) Vision.

If any community strategy is to be effective it needs to set out an inspirational vision for the community it represents. The draft strategy as presented probably falls short in this respect. There is a short paragraph emphasising the need for a new vision but the document quickly breaks up into the four components without adequately explaining how these are linked together and what overall vision is being followed.

2) Service Blocks.

The documents follows quite closely the national priorities and as such may undervalue local priorities for communities in Lincolnshire. In particular, issues of transport and rural deprivation do not come across coherently through the four service areas.

3) Targets

The columns headed 'Suggested targets' do not include time frames and often have text which is not 'smart'. For example, the section on 'Fear of Crime' is a target suggesting "Fewer than 30,000 anti-social behaviour incidents recorded" and the second on 'Domestic Violence' has a suggested target "continue increases in the reporting of domestic violence".

Other targets appear, I think, to be unrealistic such as reducing the proportion of the population reporting long term illness from 19% to 9% within 3 years and reducing all recipients of council tax benefits from 17.8% to 10%. Conversely some targets appear to be very modest. For example, 50% of migrants to Lincolnshire should be economically active and the targets concerned with increases in business activity do not include any numbers.

3. In terms of a vision for the strategy it would seem to me that the fundamental issue facing Lincolnshire is the severe problem of the county's gva which is, as the strategy identifies, at 75% of the UK average. Although the document includes targets for improving this, the fundamental point is that the county's economic development performance is in one aspect of the community strategy but should be the overarching ambition of the entire community strategy. If this philosophy was adopted many other aspects of the strategy such as health of the population, education, transport would naturally be integrated into this broader vision.

Recommendation

4. Members of the Cabinet consider the draft Community Strategy for Lincolnshire and decide whether they wish to resolve that the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, respond.

Duncan Kerr
Chief Executive