

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE

Agenda Item No.

meeting date: 24 JANUARY 2012
title: FUTURE OF LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP
submitted by: CHIEF EXECUTIVE
principal author: COLIN HIRST – HEAD OF REGENERATION AND HOUSING

1 PURPOSE

1.1 To consider arrangements to undertake a review of the role and function of the Strategic Partnership.

1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities

- Council Ambitions – the corporate ambitions of the Council are closely linked with those of the RVSP and the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS).
- Community Objectives – the SCS and its associated action plans form the basis of the sense of place in common vision of the communities in the Ribble Valley.
- Corporate Priorities – to be a well managed authority.
- Other Considerations – none.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 The Local Strategic Partnership for Ribble Valley was formed in 2002 and developed its first community plan that year. A new Sustainable Community Strategy was developed through 2007 and published in December 2007. The Partnership Board underwent a restructuring in 2008 to ensure that it was fit for purpose to deliver the objectives of the SCS. The current SCS runs to 2013 and consideration needs to be given as to how the role and functions of the partnership will be developed.

2.2 The RVSP is responsible for the Sustainable Community Strategy which forms the basis for defining the Council's ambitions. The strategy itself is adopted by the Council. The RVSP Board currently makes recommendations on how funds are allocated where derived from the discounted second homes council tax in the district through a series of bids made by the theme groups of the partnership. The existing partnership has therefore been instrumental in delivering a wide range of Council ambitions.

2.3 All the funding decisions of the RVSP are subject to agreements and protocols with Lancashire County Council which require that those decisions are progressed through the regular financial allocation and accounting procedures of the Council. Those protocols have been the subject of a number of previous reports. The current relationship between the work of the RVSP and that of the Council needs to be reconsidered in relation to the review of the community strategy and the changing working environment that local government and partner agencies now find themselves in.

3 THE ROLE OF THE STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

- 3.1 The partnership has played the key role in preparing and consequently implementing the Council's SCS. Working through a series of theme groups, the Chair of each group being a member of the Board to whom they report are responsible for identified actions in the SCS action plan. Themes cross a wide range of topics ensuring the Council is able to identify key issues relating to the economy, health, community safety, housing, the environment, community needs and so on. A principle aim of these theme groups is to draw together relevant public agencies, the voluntary sector and local community groups to work together to the benefit of the borough and its residents. Given the changes occurring with strategic partnerships, it is important that the current working arrangements are reviewed to ensure they are fit for purpose. The loss of project funding in particular for theme groups to deliver against actions is a major issue.
- 3.2 Previously, there have been very strong linkages between the work of the Local Strategic Partnership and that of the former Countywide Partnership that sought to co-ordinate delivery and activity across the county area. This, in itself, generated substantial amounts of income to deliver work across the borough. Whilst the Countywide Partnership no longer exists in its previous form and there have been many changes in the way public agencies and groups are set up and funded, there remains many areas of work that the RVSP covers that are still relevant to the wellbeing of the borough – and consideration needs to be given to those areas that remain to be addressed and inevitably the priority for resources.
- 3.3 What is also becoming increasingly clear however, is that the established working arrangements for the partnership need to reflect the challenges that the Council and its partners are likely to face going forward and the time is right to undertake this review now. These challenges are not just funding issues but also include the need for closer joint working and supporting and encouraging community engagement. It is recognised therefore that a review needs to be undertaken to determine the way forward. Given the need to address both a comprehensive route and branch review of structures, there is also a need to revisit the role and function of the partnership to ensure its framework and working arrangements are fit for future purpose and can meet the needs of the Council and the local community going forward.
- 3.4 The Chief Executive is commencing a review of the work of the Partnership and it is suggested that a member working group be established to steer the review and to contribute advice to this Committee. Funding is in place to support the existing partnership to 2013, therefore there is a need to align the review with the preparation of budgets for the next financial year 2013-2014.

4 RISK ASSESSMENT

- 4.1 The approval of this report may have the following implications
- Resources – None directly, however, the outcome of the review will need to be considered within the 2013-2014 budget process.
 - Technical, Environmental and Legal – none.
 - Political – none.

- Reputation – the work of the partnership interfaces with a wide range of local groups, public bodies and other organisations who may be affected by the review.

5 RECOMMENDED THAT COMMITTEE

- 5.1 Endorse the review of the role, purpose and framework of the Ribble Valley Strategic Partnership proposed by the Chief Executive and to agree the formation of a member working group to provide advice to this Committee in support of the review.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE

For further information please ask for Colin Hirst, extension 4503.