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Local Strategic Partnership tackles new challenges for the district

Developing a strong economy and meeting the needs of an ageing population have been identified by St Albans and District Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) as new challenges for the district following a consultation of residents and community groups.

These aims have been incorporated into the Sustainable Community Strategy which sets out priorities and ambitions for the district until 2021. Launched in 2007, the strategy has been updated to take into account the views and comments of residents and community groups collected during a consultation exercise which took place earlier this year.

The strategy recognises explicitly the need to ensure the district continues to be a great place to be. This means protecting its unique mix of city, town and villages that makes our area special and, above all, preserving the green belt from housing development.

A new priority - creating a diverse and sustainable economy for the 21st century - is being added to those already set out in the strategy:

- ensuring the district is a great place to be,
- keeping the district healthy, and
- supporting an active community that has pride in itself and cares for its future.

In order to deliver these three priorities, the LSP will tackle key areas not fully addressed by the activities of its members or other local organisations. These are: providing accessible facilities and activities for young people; helping to build the capacity of the voluntary and community sector to provide preventative and support services; encouraging and promoting community engagement and participation; promoting sustainable local economic development; meeting the needs of an ageing population; reducing our impact on the environment; and reducing inequalities.

83% of those that responded to the consultation agreed that these priorities and areas of work were right for the district.

Cllr Robert Donald, chair of the LSP, commented: "Strategies can too often just be about aspirational words. I am determined that our revised Sustainable Community Strategy turns the aspirations in this document into reality and makes a genuine difference for people locally with practical projects and real

improvements. I am particularly concerned to see initiatives to tackle our gap areas developed over the next two or three years.”

The overarching vision statement contained in the strategy has also been updated by strengthening the reference to the district’s ‘environment, heritage and culture’ and by including more detail, so that residents can understand what is meant by ‘a progressive, unique and vibrant district’.

Delivery of the strategy will be measured against key targets, such as the provision of 35% affordable housing across all new developments and achieving a 50% household recycling rate by 2010.

Following the approval of the strategy at a meeting of the Cabinet for St Albans City & District Council on 21st May 2009, a final draft of the strategy will be presented to a full meeting of the council on 17 June 2009. The document will then be made available on the Local Strategic Partnership’s and council’s website.

The Sustainable Community Strategy helps guide the development of the council’s long-term spatial planning, in the form of the Local Development Framework.

The LSP is a group of organisations representing local public bodies, businesses and voluntary and community groups that are working together to improve the quality of life for everyone in the district.

More information about the LSP is available at <http://www.stalbanslsp.org.uk/>

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Notes to editors:

The vision statement contained in the Sustainable Community Strategy now reads: *A progressive, unique and vibrant district, which values its environment, heritage and culture, and cares for the future: an outstanding place to live where everyone can flourish.*