

Sustainable Community Strategy 2006-2011 Annual review

Background

A Sustainable Community Strategy is a long-term strategic document, which sets out a vision for the borough and how it will be achieved. The Community Plan Partnership (a strategic partnership) was established in July 2005 and carried out a thorough review of the borough's first Community Strategy 'Stepping in the right direction'. This partnership was formed of representatives from the public, private, voluntary and community sectors and through these links, carried out extensive consultation with stakeholders and residents to develop a new plan. For example, resident's workshops were held in Cranbrook, Paddock Wood and Royal Tunbridge Wells to enable residents in these areas to help define the priorities for the borough over the five-year period. Following this consultation, the Sustainable Community Strategy 2006-2011 'Enhancing the Quality of Life for all' was adopted in December 2006.

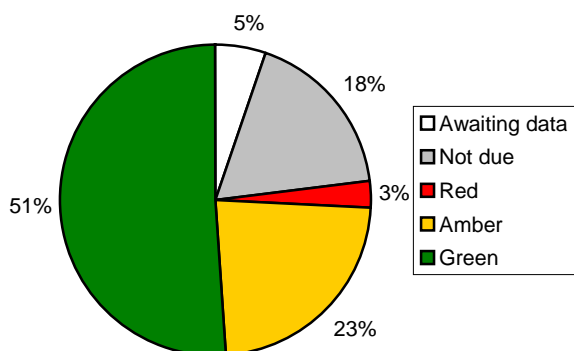
Priorities within the Sustainable Community Strategy

The strategy has nine themes, which cover a spectrum of objectives dealing with education, health, housing, leisure, transport, economy, environment, community safety and community engagement. Since adoption, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council and partner agencies have been working collectively towards meeting the targets set with the action plan. There are 152 actions within the action plan and the performance of these actions has been monitored on a six-monthly basis (June 2007 and December 2007) using the RAG (Red, Amber and Green) grading method.

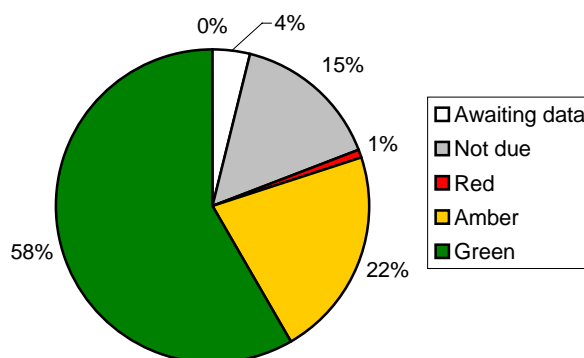
Annual performance update

Twelve months after adoption, 80% of actions within the action plan are on target or making some progress. This is a 6% improvement from that recorded in June 2007.

Performance at June 2007



Performance at December 2007



Themes that have already achieved high performance within the first year of the strategy period are:

- Safeguarding our environment
- Increasing community safety and reducing fear of crime
- Promoting health and improving well-being

A summary of progress made within each theme is detailed below:

Safeguarding our environment

Approximately 70% of this theme is currently on target or has already been achieved by December 2007. This shows a 6% improvement since June 2007.

Maintaining a thriving economy

At the end of December 2007, over 60% of actions were on target and a further 38% making some progress. This suggests that there has been a great improvement in the overall performance of this theme.

Enabling people to take part in and enjoy leisure activities

There has been an 8% increase in the proportion of actions on target between June and December 2007. 62% of actions are now on target and 15% making some progress.

Increasing community safety and reducing the fear of crime

Progress has improved by 14% between June and December 2007. All actions in this theme are now on target and progressing well.

Transport – getting around the borough

Thirty eight percent of actions within this theme are not due to commence until further within the strategy period. Although work has started on some actions since June 2007, it is unlikely that we will be able to assess the full outcome of this work until later on in the plan period.

Meeting the need for housing

Approximately 65% of actions are on target and a further 20% have made some progress. This is a 20% improvement from that recorded in June 2007.

Promoting health and improving well-being

This theme has seen a 7% increase in the proportion of actions that are on target. At present, 69% of actions are on target, with a further 19% making some progress.

Encouraging social inclusion by supporting independence

This theme is still performing well. 65% of actions are on target with a further 21% of actions making some progress.

Learning for all

This theme is still awaiting data on four actions. However, it is already clear that there has been a five percent improvement in the number of actions on target between June and December 2007. There are also a number of actions that cannot be reported at this stage within the plan period.

Achievements

There have been a number of achievements through the development of the action plan and some, which have occurred since adoption are listed below:

- 112 volunteer projects were carried out with local groups and volunteers to protect and manage the countryside, through Kent High Weald Project.
- Enterprise growth advice given to 35 existing businesses and 40 potential start-up businesses with Business Link Kent since April 2007.
- Play activities were provided for young people at various outdoor locations, which included Charlton Athletic FC schools workshops and evening diversionary sessions.
- Crimes in the night-time economy saw a 12.3% reduction from that recorded in 2006.
- 40% of primary schools and 56% of secondary schools have set approved travel plans.
- The Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning document was adopted in September 2007.
- Further development was made to the existing GP referral system, in co-operation with the Council's leisure contractor to enable a wide range of referrals, successful completions of programmes and monitored health outcomes.
- 'Making it' art workshops targeted at groups at risk of social isolation were established in Showfields Library and the 'Blingin project' with young people at St. Barnabas Primary School and Showfields Youth Club.

Future partnership delivery

Since the adoption of the Sustainable Community Strategy, a range of new drivers have emerged, which included changes in the structure of our partner organisations, placing Councillors at the frontline, the duty to co-operate (working jointly with key stakeholders) and the development of the Kent Agreement Two (2008-2011).

In response to this changing agenda, the Local Strategic Partnership will play a key role in delivering the long-term vision for the borough and in order to do this, it is important that the Sustainable Community Strategy is embedded and delivered within the wider context, particularly with the forthcoming Kent Agreement Two and local action plan.

Recommendations:

1. That TWT note the progress made in the first twelve months of the Sustainable Community Strategy.
2. That TWT agree that the monitoring of the Sustainable Community Strategy Action Plan be subsumed into the local action plan for Kent Agreement Two.