

<b>Title:</b>	Sustainable Community Strategy Refresh
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<b>Purpose/Key Messages:</b>	To outline the potential approaches to refreshing the Sustainable Community Strategy
<b>Significance to BHSP and Delivering SCS outcomes:</b>	The BHSP is responsible for the implementation on the Sustainable Community Strategy
<b>What is BHSP being asked to do?</b>	To agree the recommendations outlined in section 5 of the paper
<b>Next steps and report back mechanism:</b>	The BHSP board will receive regular updates on progress being made with refreshing the Sustainable Community Strategy.

This paper outlines the various possible options and formats for refreshing Brighton & Hove's Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS).

## **1. Background**

Following the publication of the Sustainable Community Strategy 'Creating The City Of Opportunities' in 2010, a refreshed version of the full document is required to reflect the current position of the Brighton & Hove Strategic Partnership (BHSP). The SCS explains how the BHSP will work together to improve, in a sustainable way, quality of life in Brighton & Hove. The BHSP is responsible for the strategy's development and implementation.

The SCS is the umbrella strategy in which all other strategies should come under. As the SCS should reflect the current policies & workstreams from across the partnerships, its content is largely derived from existing contributing documents. As such, the SCS is an amalgamation of other documents and represents the point as which these join together to form the overall, coherent strategy for the city of

Brighton & Hove. This has important implications for the scope of consultation that was appropriate for this level of document.

The SCS is:

- The overarching strategic document for the city
- The shared vision from all partners
- Develops and protects the long term vision for city
- Reflects the needs, desires and aspirations of the community
- Aims to enhance social, environmental and economic well being of all
- Provides the framework for policy development and performance priorities for the city as a whole

The remainder of this paper looks at the potential advantages, disadvantages and recommendations of three key areas that need to be considered when refreshing the SCS:

- Level of detail included in the SCS
- Format of the SCS
- Ways of updating the SCS

## **2. Level of detail included in the SCS**

This refers to the length of each chapter, whether we include the “what we plan to do’s” or simply include high level vision and objectives. The inclusion of targets within the SCS should also be considered here

### **Option 1 – Replication of strategy as is**

Include what has been done previously, with a lot of detail and going into specifics

Advantages:

- Long term strategy
- A ‘to-do’ list for the next 3 years

Disadvantages:

- Specifics can often change quite quickly
- Could become out of date and therefore be treated as irrelevant
- Too much detail could result in more political differences
- Would require a lot of resources to undertake the refresh

### **Option 2 – Replication of strategy as is with inclusion of targets**

Same as option 1, with local targets included

Advantages:

- Long term strategy

- A 'to-do' list for the next 3 years
- Clear direction
- Clearer accountability

Disadvantages:

- Specifics can often change quite quickly
- Could become out of date
- Too much detail could result in more difficulty in political management
- Would require a lot of resources to undertake the refresh
- Some potential overlap of targets could cause unnecessary confusion
- Some targets may be considered unreachable and therefore question the strategy's validity and usefulness
- If the SCS is not regularly updated, it won't take into account major changes (e.g.: the effect the recession has had on local businesses)
- Targets can become out of date or unnecessary if they're not changed
- The strategy may be considered irrelevant if enough of the targets become out of date

### **Option 3 – Document containing vision and aims with no detail around delivery**

Short strategy setting out only the city's vision and aims, not the delivery plans.

Advantages:

- Unlikely to quickly go out of date
- Easier to get consensus on the aims
- More flexibility in achieving the aims
- More environmentally sustainable - less paper to print
- Less resources required to undertake the refresh

Disadvantages:

- Lack of detail
- Little or no detail on who will be taking forward the aims
- Potential lack of accountability

### **3. Formats of the SCS**

This refers to the format we produce the SCS in, from having all of the information contained in a paper publication, having a shorter paper publication with more detail on the BHSP website or a website only version

## **Option 1**

To have the SCS as has been previously available. Have a large printed document; lots of detail (possibly include targets). The website would then replicate the printed document

Advantages:

- More physical presence
- Could add more gravitas to the strategy

Disadvantages:

- Expensive to print and distribute the document
- Not very environmentally sustainable – potential to have a lot of strategy booklets left over going to waste

## **Option 2**

A short printed document available for wide circulation with the key aims included. The booklet could then direct its viewers to the BHSP website for more detail. The website could then include these aims plus additional detail as to what is being planned for each area. The website could also contain relevant strategies/ plans from all partners/ partnerships under specific themes.

Advantages:

- Should have longer period of relevance
- More environmentally sustainable – small amounts of printing and paper required as opposed to a full size document
- The website could potentially be updated while the aims stay the same, therefore staying up to date
- Less expensive than printing out a full document
- Easier to change/refresh if required

Disadvantages:

- Danger of it being viewed as less important due to the strategy's smaller size
- Potential for the printed document and the website to not be cohesive – if the website is being continually updated, it may drift further and further away from what was originally agreed

## **Option 3**

The strategy is incorporated fully into the website. No actual printed booklet available, unless printed directly from the website

Advantages:

- More environmentally sustainable - no formal printed documents

Disadvantages:

- Less inclusive – some may not like having to read the strategy directly off the screen and may not have the facilities to print the SCS directly from the website
- Less coverage/ ownership fro partners who don't regularly look at website
- Danger of it being viewed as less important due to it having no physical presence
- Resource required to update website

#### **4. Updating the SCS**

This section refers to the way in which the strategy is reviewed, refreshed and kept up to date

##### **Option 1**

Update the strategy once every 3 years as has been done previously.

Advantages:

- Sets a long term course for the city
- Clear direction (a 'to-do' list for the next 3 years)
- Resource light – no need to update the booklet and website for another 3 years

Disadvantages:

- Can go out of date very quickly, particularly if a vast amount of detail is included
- New/updated strategies can't be included, after the SCS has been signed off, which contributes to the strategy going out of date
- Political priorities can change

##### **Option 2**

Update each section of the SCS on a 6-12 monthly basis where appropriate.

Advantages:

- Can keep it more up to date than a longer term strategy
- Can better reflect political priorities
- Can reflect the city's changing needs
- Can incorporate strategies as they're being re-done

Disadvantages:

- May be quite difficult to monitor version control (particularly if the document is printed out)
- The need to get each section signed off by the various committees/groups may take longer than initially expected
- Resource heavy – need to monitor the SCS and update the website on a regular basis as well as ensuring sections are signed off by the necessary people
- Potential for not consistently having a full strategy if sections are continually being signed off

### **Option 3**

Update specific sections of the SCS as and when needed on the website i.e.: when major cross cutting strategies are refreshed/ developed e.g.: Housing Strategy, Safe in the City Strategy, etc.

Advantages:

- What is on the website will be the most up to date and accurate for the needs of the city
- Can better reflect political priorities
- Can reflect the city's changing needs
- Can incorporate strategies as they're being re-done

Disadvantages:

- Difficult to monitor version control (particularly if printed copies are made available)
- Lack of clarity for those that use the SCS – if the detail is constantly changing this may cause problems in terms of direction change for some teams
- The need to get each section signed off by the various committees/groups may take long than initially expected
- Resource heavy – need to monitor the SCS and update the website on a regular basis as well as ensuring sections are signed off by the necessary people
- Potential for not consistently have a full strategy if sections are being signed off

## **5. Recommendations**

1. Produce a short strategy booklet that sets out a clear vision and key aims for the city. The document would be circulated widely and would provide Brighton & Hove with clear direction. It would remain relevant and up to date for at least 3 years. The strategy booklet would contain clear signposts to the BHSP website for more information.

2. The BHSP website would continue to link directly with the strategy, but would contain a lot more detail about each particular aim plus additional detail as to what is being planned for each area. The website would also provide links to other relevant websites
3. As the website will contain more detail, this would be updated bi-annually/annually as appropriate

If the recommendations above are agreed, a short booklet will be produced containing overarching aims and vision. The website will be transformed to reflect the changes required.

The content of the SCS on the website will be revised bi-annually/annually as appropriate. Maintaining a constant full strategy would need to be ensured. This will be particularly important to note when the website detail is refreshed and potential gaps in areas could form if left unchecked.

Thematic partnerships will be asked to lead on refreshing their particular area of the SCS, with some areas being taken forward by more than one single partnership.