

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Leader and Cabinet 14 December 2006
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CAMBRIDGESHIRE LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT (LAA): SIX-MONTH REVIEW AND PROGRESS TOWARDS THE ANNUAL REFRESH

Purpose

1. The purpose of this report is to inform Cabinet of the progress shown in the first six-month review of the LAA and to highlight areas to be included in the first annual refresh.

This report is a summary of the six-month review and the refresh of the LAA; more detailed papers can be obtained from the contact officers named at the end of the report.

Six-Month Review

2. The Cambridgeshire LAA is a three-year agreement for the period 2006 to 2009 between the Government and the County Council and its partners, setting out agreed targets which provide a framework for partnership working to improve quality of life. The process includes a six monthly review of progress, which is shared with the regional government office, and an annual refresh.
3. The first six monthly review has been completed and submitted to GO East. Overall progress on performance, at county level, can be summarised as follows:-

| | % PIs on course | % Interventions on course |
|---|-----------------|---------------------------|
| Block 1: Children and Young People | 47 | 100 |
| Block 2: Safer and Stronger Communities | 42 | 42 |
| Block 3: Healthier Communities and Older People | 34 | 76 |
| Block 4: Economic Development and Enterprise | 33 | 44 |
| TOTAL for LAA | 40 | 64 |

4. The majority of LAA interventions, or actions, are on track with nearly two thirds (64%) being delivered to plan. Overall progress on targets is less good with less than half (40%) being delivered to plan. Significant data is still not available for Block 2. Information on performance indicators relevant to SCDC is given in **Appendix 1**.
5. This is still relatively early days for the LAA and there has been other progress over the last six months in terms of strengthening partnership work; establishing the LAA Board; putting the mechanisms in place; and involvement of the voluntary sector; etc. The achievement of LPSA reward grant will be a key element in providing finance for LSPs. Joint projects such as a county-wide approach to community cohesion and the commissioning of demographic predictions in relation to the growth areas are also being initiated by LAA work.
6. There is still a great deal to do in terms of rationalising partnership structures;

development of the LAA Board; performance management mechanisms; and establishing scrutiny arrangements.

7. In terms of SCDC involvement, the district council is represented on the LAA Board (by the Leader of the Council) and on the officer-based LAA Reference Group. A South Cambs LAA Officer Group has been established to brief our LAA representatives; to co-ordinate the Council's contribution to LAA targets; and to develop links between the Council, the LSP and LAA structures.
8. The Council has contributed significantly to LAA targets in a number of areas including: street sweeping, recycling/waste minimisation; improvements in quality of life for older people; workplace smoking; and anti social behaviour. Many of these are relevant to LAA Stretch (LPSA) targets and the position on the amount of reward grant that this will attract for the LSP will become clearer over the next few months.
9. There is still progress to be made in developing arrangements to enable the Council better to influence and deliver LAA targets and this will become increasingly important given the enhanced role of LAAs envisaged in the recent White Paper, see below.

Annual Refresh

10. The process towards the annual refresh is continuing. The LAA Board received a draft on 22nd November with a view to a re-submission to central government in early January 2007. Deadlines remain very challenging. The draft refresh of the LAA –
 - a) Includes a number of new mandatory indicators
 - b) Omits some former LPSA targets, as the three year LPSA will come to an end at the end of 2006/07
 - c) Makes changes to reflect the questions in the 2006/07 BV three yearly surveys.
 - d) Adds new indicators in the following priority areas:-
 - Affordable housing
 - Sustainable Communities and Climate Change
 - Community Cohesion
 - Sport
11. **Appendix 2** summarises proposals for new indicators and those to be dropped in the refresh. Work is continuing to agree specific targets and interventions for the new targets. It will be seen that in particular there are new indicators covering Council services such as homelessness, sports, arts sustainable development and tourism. There are some areas where new indicators would have been a benefit (such as enviro-crime) and this will be discussed with LAA officers.
12. The refresh also presents an opportunity to look further ahead over the next two-year period and examine the potential outcomes, targets, funding streams and enabling measures for the remaining years of the LAA. To this end, aspirations will be incorporated into the new document under the following headings:-
 - Growth (building on recent discussions about sharing demographic forecasts to focus joint planning)
 - Migrant workers
 - Transport and Access
 - Culture

13. Some of the new indicators in **Appendix 2** reflect Council priorities (customer service, affordable housing and growth areas) and some do not. There are no additional resources within the Council to help the Council to contribute to these targets. However, other funding, such as LPSA reward money and external funding may be available. For example, the newly formed Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Sports Partnership, LIVING SPORT, has access to funding which might benefit South Cambs. In other case, the Council might be able to better direct the resources it does have towards LAA targets.
14. The new White Paper, *Strong and Prosperous Communities*, will introduce a duty for councils to have regard to LAA targets and accordingly, LAA targets will need to become an increasing consideration in the Council's financial and other planning processes. It also suggests that the Council needs to maintain and enhance its capacity to contribute towards the development and agreement of LAA targets.
15. For 2007/08, it is recommended that Portfolio Holders and services be requested to give realistic consideration as to how they can contribute towards LAA targets through the 2007/08 service plan process (in January, February and March) while still giving priority to the three Council priorities.

White Paper

16. A separate report on the Cabinet's agenda outlines the proposals in the White Paper, *Strong and Prosperous Communities*, to enhance the role of LAAs – including making them a statutory requirement; enhancing the role of LSPs in the development and implementation of LAAs; and focusing more strongly on councils' contribution to LAAs in the inspection and audit regime. As mentioned above, a duty will be placed on councils, and other major partners, to have regard for LAA targets.

Financial and Staffing Implications

17. The Council has made no specific provision in the MTFs for LAA targets in 2007/08 and future years. In many cases provision made for our priorities will also enable us to contribute to LAA targets. The Council will need to maximise resources from other sources and direct its resources to LAA targets where possible. The use of LPSA reward money may be of particular help in addressing the LAA. Whether the availability of LAA reward money will continue beyond existing agreements, will be considered by the government as part of the 2007 Comprehensive Spending Review.
18. As Members will be aware there is acute pressure on staff in delivering services within reduced resources and expectations on contributing to LAA targets will need to be focused and realistic.

Legal and Risk Management Implications

19. No specific legal implications other than, as mentioned above, councils will have a statutory duty to have regard for LAA targets, when/if legislation implementing this aspect of the White Paper comes into force. The major risks concern our relations with our partners and potential loss of funding opportunities through not engaging sufficiently in the LAA process – this will be particularly the case as the role of LAAs as a vehicle for redirecting government funding streams to local priorities at a County level develops.

Recommendations

20. Cabinet is recommended to:
- (a) note progress on current LAA targets and request portfolio holders and service heads to continue to maximise performance on LAA targets in general and in particular on those which will earn reward grant;
 - (b) support the direction being taken by the LAA refresh and to comment on and give advice to the Leader of the Council (SCDC representative on the LAA Board) on the changes in targets in the draft annual refresh; and
 - (c) request Portfolio Holders and service managers to give realistic consideration as to how they can contribute towards LAA targets through the 2007/08 service plan process (in January, February and March) while still giving priority to the three Council priorities.

Background papers:

- LAA six month review submitted to GO East
- LAA draft refresh

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