

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Leader and Cabinet 13 December 2007
AUTHOR/S: Improvement Manager / Strategic Partnerships Officer

LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT VISION FOR CAMBRIDGESHIRE 2007-2021

Purpose

1. To inform Cabinet of the recently announced national changes to the Local Area Agreement (LAA) and to provide an opportunity to comment on the draft long-term vision for Cambridgeshire, which will influence the new Local Area Agreement.
2. This is a key decision because
 - it is likely to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area of the District comprising two or more wards (all)

and it was first published in the November 2007 Forward Plan.

Background

3. Cambridgeshire's first LAA has been in place since 2006.
4. An LAA is a three year agreement, based on local Sustainable Community Strategies, that sets out the priorities for a local area. The agreement is made between Central Government, represented by the Government Office, and the local area, represented by the lead local authority and other key partners through Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs).
5. The Local Government White Paper 'Strong and Prosperous Communities' published in October 2006 set out fundamentally different arrangements for Local Area Agreements. New LAAs will no longer be an add-on to the multiple national performance frameworks under which local authorities operate - they are replacing them. They are about setting the strategic direction and focusing on the priorities that will make your town, city or community a better place to be. LAAs will continue to be three-year agreements with priorities agreed between all the main public sector agencies working in the area and with central Government.
6. The major changes are being made in 2008 with the remaining architecture of the new performance framework in place by 2009. This will mean:
 - (a) **more emphasis on area based service delivery** - a package of measures which mean stronger partnership working, alignment of local government performance management arrangements with that of partner agencies and replacement of authority-based inspection with an area-based assessment of risks to service delivery (Comprehensive Area Assessment);
 - (b) **more freedom in spending decisions** - the local authority will be able to make decisions about spending priorities with partners locally without these being conditioned by centrally imposed targets. The Comprehensive Spending Review 2007 reinforced the commitments in the Local Government White

Paper 'Strong and Prosperous Communities' to reduce the number of specific grants. The presumption will be against ringfencing grants unless there are strong reasons for doing so and these will be made public;

- (c) **fewer central targets and reporting systems** - the new LAAs are part of radical reforms to replace the multiple national performance frameworks under which local authorities operate with 198 National Indicators. These will cover everything local government does on its own or in partnership with others. Each LAA will have no more than 35 negotiated targets alongside 17 statutory education and early years targets, and any additional local indicators.

Considerations

7. The new LAA needs to have been negotiated for agreement by June 2008. The draft long-term vision draws together the objectives and priorities that have been identified for inclusion in the five new district-based Sustainable Community Strategies. The vision will influence the content of the new LAA and which of the 198 new National Indicators are to have targets set against them (up to 35) for inclusion in the Cambridgeshire LAA.
8. District Council Chief Executives have already commented that there should be more of a local flavour to the vision document and this is currently being developed.

Options

9. To endorse the draft vision for 2007-2021 (**Appendix A**), subject to additional local information.

OR

10. To suggest evidence based amendments to the draft vision.

Implications

11. Financial	Funding directed via the LAA will be focused on the priorities included within the vision.
Legal	Cambridgeshire is required to develop a LAA.
Staffing	The district council hosts Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership posts that are funded through grants that are directed via the LAA. Posts could be at risk if crime reduction and anti-social behaviour is not prioritised.
Risk Management	The vision must be evidence based.
Equal Opportunities	The vision document and priorities must comply with equalities legislative requirements.

Consultations

12. The vision has been drawn up based on the objectives and priorities that have been identified for inclusion in the five new district-based Sustainable Community Strategies. South Cambs' research and consultation included:
 - (a) Analysing existing consultation results and parish plans.
 - (b) Carrying out the Quality of Life survey and a Community Strategy postal survey.
 - (c) Holding discussion groups with residents from different parts of the district and at different life stages.

- (d) Holding stakeholder workshops that have been attended by Members of this Council, representatives of parish councils and voluntary/community groups and LSP partners.
 - (e) Carrying out other statistical research.
 - (f) Consulting with theme groups and key lead officers.
13. Cambridgeshire Together (Local Area Agreement Board), Local Strategic Partnerships and partner organisations are being consulted.

Effect on Annual Priorities and Corporate Objectives

14.	Affordable Homes	The vision relates well to the new corporate objectives and priorities, which will be in place for the LAA agreement by June 2008.
	Customer Service	
	Northstowe and other growth areas	
	Quality, Accessible Services	
	Village Life	
	Sustainability	
	Partnership	

Conclusions/Summary

15. The Vision for Cambridgeshire 2007-2021 will influence the content of the new LAA, which will be agreed by June 2008. The vision is based upon the objectives and priorities that have been identified for inclusion in the five new district-based Sustainable Community Strategies. The vision will influence which of the 198 new National Indicators for inclusion in the Cambridgeshire LAA.

Recommendation

16. It is recommended that, subject to any comments received at the meeting, Cabinet endorse the draft Vision for Cambridgeshire 2007-2021.

Background Papers: the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report: Cambridgeshire Together (LAA Board) – Agenda and Papers, 23rd October 2007

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