

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Leader and Cabinet

12 March 2009

AUTHOR/S: Chief Executive / Partnerships Manager

LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT 2008-2011: ANNUAL REFRESH

Purpose

1. To endorse the developing refresh of the Cambridgeshire Local Area Agreement 2008-2011, understanding that final amendments will need to be made by Cambridgeshire Together (LAA Board) before its final submission to the Government Office on the 31 March 2009.

Background

2. Once agreed by the Secretary of State the responsible local authority (County Council) and its partner authorities must, in exercising its functions, have regard to every local improvement target specified in the local area agreement that relates to it.
3. The County Council may amend or remove a local improvement target with the consent of each partner authority to which the target relates and after consulting each other person to whom it relates.
4. Cambridgeshire Together adopted the Local Area Agreement in June 2008. The LAA is based upon the Cambridgeshire Vision and includes 34 designated targets, 5 local priorities and 16 statutory Department for Children, Schools and Families indicators.
5. At the time of signing off the agreement in June, there were a number of gaps where targets had not been agreed for those priority indicators where baseline information was not available, and / or where final definitions were yet to be published by central government. It was then understood that 2008 would be a transitional year with a view to negotiate such targets at the annual refresh in 2009.
6. The process of developing action plans and gathering performance information has been very useful to determine whether the right interventions and partnership structures are in place to secure delivery, and to develop a much stronger position to negotiate new targets with government as part of the annual refresh.
7. It has also been recognised by the Cambridgeshire Together Board and constituent partner organisations that the current economic downturn will have an impact on Cambridgeshire's communities, businesses, and services delivered across sectors.
8. The new LAA is to be submitted to central government in March 2009.

Changes to the LAA Indicators and Targets

9. Four out of the five priority areas within the Cambridgeshire Vision and LAA contain targets that have been reviewed and negotiated with central government as part of the annual refresh. The only theme where no changes have been made to the targets agreed in June 2008 is Environmental Sustainability.

10. **Agreement of targets for performance indicators included in the LAA where performance data was not available** – targets have been agreed for priority indicators included in the LAA in June 2008 where performance information was not available at the time of signing off the agreement. Included in this category are four indicators measured by the Place Survey (NI 1, 4, 5 and 17) for which data is now available. The Chief Executive's Liaison Group will be discussing the setting of targets relating to the Place Survey targets on 5 March 2009.
11. **Review of targets for areas affected by the economic downturn** – targets on housing have been reviewed and resubmitted to government taking account of the impact of the economic downturn on partners' ability to deliver stretch targets on growth. It is likely an additional target on economic prosperity (NI 152 – working age people on out of work benefits) will need to be reviewed in January 2010 once partners have further evidence of the impact of the recession in this area. The potential review of targets for these indicators in 2010 has been agreed by government.
12. **Replacement of indicators (new indicator replacing an existing LAA indicator)** – a couple of changes have been made to the LAA where an existing LAA indicator and target has been deleted from the agreement and replaced by a new priority indicator /target, namely:
 - NI 15 (most serious violent crime) has been deleted from the LAA and replaced by NI 20 (assault with less serious injury).
 - NI 147 (care leavers in Education Employment or Training) has been deleted from the LAA and replaced by NI 117 (16-18 year olds Not in Education Employment or Training).

The above-mentioned changes were based on evidence of need for Cambridgeshire and were previously agreed by the Cambridgeshire Together Board and leading thematic strategic partnerships.

13. **Proposed new indicators for inclusion in the LAA (in addition to existing ones)** – two new priority indicators have been proposed for inclusion in the LAA under economic prosperity and safer communities respectively. These are:
 - NI 171 (new business registration rate). The LAA signed off in June 2008 had a local indicator relating to business growth (NI 172). The Greater Cambridge Partnership has considered the likelihood of setting and achieving targets for NI 172 considering the current economic climate. It has proven difficult to identify specific business support programmes delivered by EEDA, Business Link or other partners which specifically target employment growth in SMEs and which could act as drivers to support delivery of targets under NI 172. The Partnership therefore recommends the deletion of NI 172 from the LAA and supports the inclusion of NI 171 instead but the latter as a key indicator in the 35. The partnership felt in the current economic climate that it was important to keep a focus on business support as a key priority for Cambridgeshire. Business Link reports show that interest in starting businesses is currently strong with interest levels 50% higher than previous ones. Early discussion with the Government Office Lead in this area indicates it would be possible to set realistic stretch targets for NI 171 if it were selected for inclusion in the 35.

- NI 21 (dealing with local concerns about antisocial behaviour and crime issues by the Local Council and Police). The Community Safety Strategic Board has supported this indicator for inclusion in the LAA. The Place Survey provides data for target setting. It is worth noting that a proposed stretch improvement target of 15% has been suggested by GO East and could prove challenging for the local area.

The LAA already has 34 priority indicators and therefore partners will only be able to include a maximum of **one** of the above indicators as a key priority in the LAA. Either or both indicators may form part of the 35 can be included in the LAA as a local indicator.

14. A table containing the new targets and the status of on-going negotiations has been provided in **Appendix A** of this report.
15. Additional changes will also be reflected in the new LAA in 2009 regarding the statutory indicators on educational achievement due to changes in government policy, with the following indicators being dropped from the national indicator set and LAAs:
 - NI 74: proportion of pupils achieving level 5+ in both English and maths
 - NI 83: proportion of pupils achieving level 5+ in science
 - NI 95: proportion of pupils making 2 levels progress in English Key Stage 2-3
 - NI 96: proportion of pupils making 2 levels progress in maths Key Stage 2-3
 - NI 97: proportion of pupils making 2 levels progress in English Key Stage 3-4
 - NI 98: proportion of pupils making 2 levels progress in maths Key Stage 3-4

Timeline

16. Cambridgeshire Together will formally sign off the LAA annual refresh on 20 March 2009. The LAA is due to go to the County Council's cabinet, as responsible authority, on 24 March 2009.

Options

17. Members of Cabinet are asked to endorse the developing LAA, understanding that amendments will need to be made before its final submission on 31 March 2009.

Implications

18. Financial	The Local Area Agreement, based on the Cambridgeshire Vision, will influence spending of Area Based Grant. The designated targets will have a reward element attached to them (to be calculated based upon average performance across the up to 35 designated targets).
Legal	The district council is named as a partner authority. The statutory guidance places a responsibility upon named partners to have "due regard to" the delivery of an LAA. The new 'duty to cooperate' with LAAs came into legal effect on 4 March 2008.
Staffing	Officers will support the delivery of the new LAA.
Risk Management	Cambridgeshire Together has a Risk Management Policy.
Equal Opportunities	The first phase of Equality Impact Assessing of the LAA is complete. The second phase is due to begin shortly.

Effect on Corporate Objectives and Service Priorities

19.	Work in partnership to manage growth to benefit everyone in South Cambridgeshire now and in the future
	The LAA is based upon the Cambridgeshire Vision, which is based upon the five district-wide Sustainable Community Strategies. The South Cambridgeshire Sustainable Community Strategy used the same evidence base as that used to develop the Council's Corporate Objectives.
	Deliver high quality services that represent best value and are accessible to all our community
	See above.
	Enhance quality of life and build a sustainable South Cambridgeshire where everyone is proud to live and work
	See above.

Recommendation

20. That Cabinet endorses the Cambridgeshire developing LAA annual refresh, understanding that amendments will need to be made by Cambridgeshire Together (LAA Board) before its final submission on 31 March 2009.

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