

CANNOCK CHASE DISTRICT COUNCIL

COUNCIL

13 DECEMBER 2006

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

A LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT FOR STAFFORDSHIRE

PORTFOLIO LEADER: EXTERNAL PARTNERSHIPS

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To brief the Council on the development of the Local Area Agreement (LAA) for Staffordshire and seek the Council's endorsement of the latest draft of the LAA for Staffordshire and proposals for the governance arrangements to support its delivery.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That Council on the 13th December endorses the November draft of the Local Area Agreement for Staffordshire, whilst accepting that further work needs to be done to determine the priorities for Cannock Chase and how the Council and local partner agencies will contribute to its implementation, including the preparation of a District Delivery Plan.
- 2.2 That Council supports the proposal that the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) should include within its role that of the 'District Board' and endorses the proposed changes to the LSP structure to ensure it is fit for purpose.

3. Key Issues

- 3.1 The November draft of a Local Area Agreement (LAA) for Staffordshire (Annex 1) has been developed following feedback received from Government Office West Midlands (GOWM) in response to the first full draft that was submitted on 29th September. The Cabinet considered the first full draft at its meeting on 21st September 2006. This draft, published on 10th November 2006, is a work in progress and will be revised before the 'Second Full Final Draft Submission' is submitted to GOWM on 30th November 2006.
- 3.2 There will be further opportunities to refine the agreement before the LAA is submitted to Central Government on 24th January 2007. Ultimately the LAA will be signed off by Central Government by 31st March 2007. The LAA Core Team, based at the County Council, and the 'block' steering groups will be asking for, and listening to our comments over the coming weeks and this Council, through its lead officers (see Section 1 of this report), is represented on these groups. The deadline for comments from District/Borough Councils and their partners is 18th January 2007.

- 3.3 The next stage will be for the Council and its partners in Cannock Chase is to determine how they will implement the LAA through the development of a District Delivery Plan that sets out what should be done locally to support the delivery of the outcomes in each of the five 'blocks'. Further briefings, consultation and reports will be prepared to assist in this process. The Sustainable Community Strategy 2007-10 will be built around the five blocks of the LAA as it is envisaged that the LAA will be the primary, but not the only, mechanism for delivering the outcomes in our Community Strategy. The deadline for the preparation of the first draft of our District Delivery Plan is 30th January 2007.
- 3.4 The County Council's LAA Core Team, in conjunction with the Staffordshire Chief Executives and Leaders Group and the LAA Project Board, has drafted guidance on the purpose and structure of 'District Boards'. This is summarised in Section 1 of this report. However, consultants SOLACE have been commissioned to examine the governance and accountability issues thrown up by the LAA, including the remit of District Boards. A report will be presented to the Staffordshire Chief Executives Group meeting on 15th November 2006 and to the LAA Project Board on the 21st November and the LAA Strategic Board on the 24th November 2006.
- 3.5 The Agenda Group of the LSP considered the draft guidance on District Boards at its November meeting. It strongly recommends that the LSP should include within its role that of the District Delivery Board. In order to fulfill this role its membership should be strengthened to include the Leader of the Council and a representative from secondary education. It also proposed that the Leader of the Council should agree the Chair of the LSP. (Section 1 of this report contains further detail on the proposed structure of the LSP)
- 3.6 It is proposed that 'thematic partnerships' for each of the five blocks of the LAA will be put in place, where they don't already exist, with responsibility for the delivery of LAA and other outcomes contained within the Sustainable Community Strategy.
- 3.7 It is proposed that the District Council's Scrutiny Committee will fulfill the scrutiny role for the LSP, embracing all the performance issues of the partnership and the LAA.

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Section 1

Background

Local Area Agreement

The Local Area Agreement (LAA) is a three year agreement between central Government and the local authorities, and other partners in an area. It represents a fundamental change in the relationship between central government and local areas, to devolve greater decision making and flexibility to a local area so that local, joint action can be taken on local priorities.

LAAs have been developed and implemented in phases throughout the country. The pilot LAAs began in April 2005, whereas Staffordshire is a third and final phase LAA. This means that the Staffordshire LAA must be agreed and completed by March 2007.

LAAs are designed to deliver improved outcomes, which meet the needs of local areas by:

- Encouraging partnerships to reach a shared view of the outcomes for their areas;
- Sustaining the focus of different public, private and voluntary sector agencies working in partnership on the right priorities for local people;
- Allowing dialogue with Government for areas to agree freedoms and flexibilities;
- Removing bureaucracy and simplifying reporting and different funding streams;
- Promoting better partnership working;
- Ensuring the outcomes in community strategies are delivered.
- Improving efficiency so that funds can be released for frontline services.

Ultimately, the LAA will support efforts to address issues which concern local people and communities, giving partners greater flexibility to target resources where they are needed most.

The requirement to introduce a Local Area Agreement by March 2007 has the potential to have a significant impact on the working of the Council and the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) and in determining the priorities for the future consideration needs to be given to the impact of the LAA.

The Staffordshire LAA is being developed around the following five 'blocks'. The Council lead officer for each block is shown in brackets.

1. Children and Young People (Karen Bradford)
2. Safer and Stronger Communities (Jennifer Bond)
3. Healthier Communities and Older People (Judith Wright)
4. Economic Development and Enterprise (Bob Phillips)
5. Sustainable Development (Steve Shillock)

The targets under these blocks will be set for three years. These will be reviewed annually to ensure they are still relevant and reflective of key national and local drivers.

The above 'blocks' are underpinned by 4 Cross Cutting Priorities:

1. Closing the gap
2. Prevention as a Priority
3. Local Services for Local People
4. Promoting Respect and Taking Responsibility

'High Level Outcomes' have been developed for each 'block' through extensive consultation with stakeholders and a county-wide steering group of stakeholders, supported by a small multi-agency team of lead officers.

Children and Young People

Vision:

'Children, young people and their families experience Staffordshire as a great place to live, play, learn and achieve in, and somewhere where they will be supported to be healthy and safe from harm'

High Level Outcomes

Children and Young People	
Outcome 1	Improving the physical health and emotional and mental well-being of children and young people with a particular focus on vulnerable children and young people
Outcome 2	Improving the life chances of children and young people who are at risk
Outcome 3	Improving standards of enjoyment and achievement with a particular focus on vulnerable children and young people
Outcome 4	Increase the opportunities available for children and young people to make a positive contribution
Outcome 5	Achieve economic well-being

Block Lead:

The lead for the Children and Young People Block is Peter Traves. Peter is the Corporate Director for Children and Lifelong Learning at Staffordshire County Council.

Safer and Stronger Communities

Vision:

'To make a difference for the people of Staffordshire so that individuals, neighbourhoods and communities feel safe and are safe, being increasingly free from both crime and the fear of crime.'

Communities will become stronger and quality of life will be improved so that the County will become a better place in which to live, work and visit'

High Level Outcomes

Safer and Stronger Communities	
Outcome 1	Reduce overall crime in line with local Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership targets and narrow the gap between the worst performing wards/neighbourhoods and other areas across the district
Outcome 2	Reassure the public, reducing the fear of crime
Outcome 3	Reduce the harm caused by illegal drugs
Outcome 4	Build RESPECT in communities and reduce anti-social behaviour
Outcome 5	Empower local people to have a greater choice and influence over local decision making and a greater role in public service delivery
Outcome 6	Cleaner, greener and safer public spaces
Outcome 7	Improved quality of life for people in the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods; with service providers becoming more responsive to neighbourhood needs resulting in improved service delivery.
Outcome 8	Increase support and improve safety for survivors of domestic violence and their families
Outcome 9	Make the roads safer for all road users

Block Lead:

The Block Lead for Safer and Stronger Communities is Alan Doig. Alan is the Chief Fire Officer for Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service.

Healthier Communities and Older People

Vision:

"To improve health outcomes and narrow health inequalities through promoting healthy choices and tackling the key determinants of poor health and improving the quality of services;

Furthermore, wherever possible to provide older people with greater control over their own lives, to live safely and healthily, have an active role in the community, and access the support they need to be as independent as they choose".

High Level Outcomes

Healthier Communities and Older People

Outcome 1	Helping people to live a longer, healthier active life
Outcome 2	Better mental health
Outcome 3	Healthier, independent and included older people
Outcome 4	Healthier, independent and included disabled people
Outcome 5	Enabling carers

Block Lead:

As a result of the reorganisation of PCTs in Staffordshire the Block Lead will be confirmed shortly.

Economic Development and Enterprise

Vision:

"Staffordshire will be known for being a high knowledge, high value added, high skilled economy, with a high quality of life."

High Level Outcomes

Economic Development and Enterprise	
Outcome 1	Increase the levels of new business formations and their survival, especially in higher value added clusters and other locally important sectors.
Outcome 2	Increase the proportion of high value added economies in Staffordshire.
Outcome 3	Improve skill levels, especially to support growth in high value added businesses.
Outcome 4	Develop vibrant and sustainable town centres, market towns and surrounding rural villages.
Outcome 5	Ensure that those in the most deprived communities can access the economic opportunities created throughout Staffordshire.

Block Lead:

The Block Lead for Economic Development and Enterprise is Nina Dawes. Nina is the Chief Executive of Lichfield District Council.

Sustainable Development

Vision:

"Staffordshire will seek and adopt innovative and locally appropriate solutions to halt and, if possible, reverse environmental resource depletion and consequential problems such as climate change, caused

by the collective failure to account for the non-human elements of the economy, the aim of which will be to find more sustainable ways to meet the economic, social and environmental needs of present generations that will not compromise the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

High Level Outcomes

Sustainable Development	
Outcome 1	Enhance and ensure access for all to environments that are valued, protected and enjoyed.
Outcome 2	A sustainable transport system which improves access to essential services for all, reducing the reliance on the car.
Outcome 3	Reduce the volume of waste to landfill and increase recycling rates.
Outcome 4	Reduce carbon emissions.

Block Lead:

The Block lead for Sustainable Development is Stephen Brown, Chief Executive of Cannock Chase District Council.

District Boards

The term 'District Board' is used to refer to the body to be established at District/Borough level which will be responsible primarily for the delivery and performance management of the Community Strategy and LAA.

District Boards will undertake a key role within the agreed new LAA governance arrangements for Staffordshire and it is essential therefore that there is clarity on their role and how they relate to other key governance bodies within that structure. The purpose of District Boards is the bringing together of key decision makers of local authorities and partners at the local level to oversee delivery of the Community Strategy and LAA. Their specific role is:

- Identification of priorities for the area through the Sustainable Community Strategy
- Delivery of services/projects that address local need in line with the LAA and Community Strategies
- Encourage partners to align funding around priorities
- Commissioning and co-ordinating work at the local level
- Performance monitoring and management of Community Strategy and the LAA at District/Borough level
- Undertake performance management action as outlined below
- Liaison with LAA Block Leads and Block partnerships in connection with the above

Membership of the District Board

The membership and size of the District Board will be determined locally. However, it is recommended that the membership should include:

- Representation from the main public sector organisations in the locality and other stakeholders such as the Voluntary and Community and Business Sectors
- Democratic representation (including local county councillor)
- District Director (Social Care and Health)
- District Partnership Officer

The Board may choose to include block/thematic leads and advisors such as financial/performance management and legal advisors as members or invite their attendance as and when required.

Performance Management

The LAA submission will include targets expressed at either County, District or Neighbourhood level. While Block Partnerships are responsible for the overall delivery of the LAA Block outcomes, the District Board will be responsible for agreeing targets for outcomes measured at the District and Neighbourhood level in liaison with the Block Partnerships.

Boards will also liaise with Block Partnerships on their contribution to the delivery of Countywide targets taking account of local circumstances. This may involve the setting of specific local targets. Further guidance will be issued on the process for agreeing these local targets in the first year of the LAA as part of 'differential delivery'.

Where local targets are set, the District Board will be responsible for their performance management and will, in the first instance, be responsible for addressing any underperformance by holding partners to account. For persistent cases of underperformance the Board will need to liaise with the relevant Block partnership to agree appropriate further interventions.

Performance management processes at the local level will be consistent with the requirements set out in the Performance Management Framework for the LAA.

Responsibilities and Relationships

The relationship between the District Board and the Local Strategic Partnership is to be determined locally

District Boards will be responsible for ensuring that the LAA is properly embedded with the partners' plans, targets and action plans and those of the LSP. Boards will need to work with Block/'theme' groups at County and District/Borough level.

Boards will be responsible for ensuring that robust performance monitoring and reporting arrangements are in place.

Boards will need to ensure that there are adequate arrangements in place to support their work. The County Council's District Partnership Officers will work closely with District/Borough and LSP managers. The main responsibility for generating, servicing, and co-ordinating the work of the Board will be taken by the District/Borough Council.

The Children's Locality Board and the developing Health and Social Care agenda will need to be included in the governance processes at the local level.

Other Considerations

The Board should operate with an agreed terms of reference which should cover election of chair, arrangements for meetings, voting and quoracy etc.

The Board is expected to make its own suitable arrangements for the operation of its structure to include: arranging meetings; co-ordinating of the development and delivery of the Board's programme of work; supporting Board Members in carrying out their roles; effective communication and administration.

Scrutiny of the arrangements will apply at district/borough level. It is hoped that a local County Council Member will be co-opted on the relevant district/borough Scrutiny and Overview Committee.

Proposed Structure of the LSP

The membership of the LSP should be reviewed and the role extended to include that of the District Board. Membership should include:

- Leader & 2 other Members, Cannock Chase Council
- Chief Executive, Cannock Chase Council
- Deputy Corporate Director, Staffs County Council
- County Council District Partnership Officer *
- Partnership Development Manager *
- Chairs or Lead Officers of Thematic Partnership (5)*
- County Council Member
- Locality Director, South Staffordshire Primary Care Trust
- Chief Officer, Cannock chase CVS
- Representatives of voluntary and community organisations (2) #
- Director, Chase Chamber of Commerce
- Director, Federation of Small Businesses
- Chief Superintendent, Chase Division of Staffordshire Police
- Representative of the Police Authority
- Area Commander, Staffordshire Fire & Rescue
- Representative of the Fire Authority
- Director, Staffordshire Wildlife Trust
- District Director (Social Care and Health)
- Principal, Cannock Chase Technical College
- Parish and Town Council Representative
- Chair of Secondary Head Teachers group

** Supporting/advisory role # Elected by the Voluntary & Community Sector Network*

The Leader of the Council should agree the Chairmanship of the LSP.

The Agenda Group continues to meet to provide support and guidance to the LSP, but is renamed the Executive Advisory Group. The meetings of the Agenda Group will be formalised in as much as producing clear terms of reference and a record of decisions, but will be managed in such a way to continue to stimulate open and honest discussion and innovative thinking.

The Sustainable Community Strategy for Cannock Chase is developed around the five blocks of the Local Area Agreement and will reflect the priorities and targets for Cannock Chase contained within the LAA as well as locally identified priorities and targets.

Thematic partnerships reflecting the 5 blocks of the LAA will be responsible for driving forward and delivering the relevant priority outcomes within the Sustainable Community Strategy. The thematic partnerships will be:

- Children and Young People – The Children's Trust
- Health & Well Being Partnership – as proposed in the Local Government White Paper
- Safer and Stronger Communities – Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership
- Economic Development and Enterprise – Learning Education Employment & Prosperity (LEEP) Group
- Sustainable Development – a thematic partnership needs to be developed

The Thematic Partnership Chairs will be responsible for ensuring that LAA objectives and targets are reflected in their work programmes.

The Chair of each thematic partnership will be responsible for preparing performance reports for the LSP Board to consider. Progress against key projects will be reported as well as performance against agreed performance indicators. The thematic partnership will therefore need to ensure that performance data against targets contained within the LAA are gathered on a timely basis.

The Council Portfolio leader will sit on the relevant thematic partnerships and wider member involvement on the partnerships should be encouraged.

See Diagram 1 for the Proposed Structure of the governance arrangements and the relationship of the LSP to other bodies.

Section 2

Details of Matters to be Considered

Consultation on the initial draft of the LAA was undertaken with partners at an event held in the Ballroom at the Civic Centre on 13th September 2006. A report on this event has been circulated to stakeholders, including Cabinet members.

The November Draft of the LAA for Staffordshire was considered by the Board of the Local Strategic Partnership at an extra-ordinary meeting on 15th November 2006. Cllr. Reg Butler, Portfolio Leader for External Partnerships attended this meeting. The LSP Board members were asked to consider which of the sub-outcomes in the draft 'Outcomes Framework' are priorities within Cannock Chase and determine if the 'Indicator', or measure, is appropriate. Their recommendations and comments are highlighted in the copy of the Outcomes Framework attached to this report (Annex 1).

Section 3

Contribution to CHASE

The contribution the Local Area Agreement for Staffordshire makes to CHASE is captured by its vision:

“Improving the quality of life for all Staffordshire’s communities by making Staffordshire a safer, healthier, cleaner and more sustainable place for all to live, learn, work and invest in.”

Section 4

Section 17 Implications

Safer and Stronger Communities is one of five ‘blocks’ of outcomes in the LAA for Staffordshire.

Section 5

Human Rights Act Implications

There are no identified implications in respect of the Human Rights Act 1998 arising from this report.

Section 6

Data Protection Act Implications

There are no identified implications in respect of the Data Protection Act.

Section 7

Risk Management Implications

The key risk is to the Council's reputation as a partner and its commitment to improve its services if it fails to fully support the delivery of the Local Area Agreement.

Section 8

Legal Implications

As indicated above, this is a further draft of the LAA which Cabinet is recommended to endorse for consideration by the Council.

However, a full report detailing the provisions of the LAA and how they impact on this Council should be submitted to Cabinet and Council before the Agreement is finalised.

Section 9

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

The development and implementation of a Local Area Agreement will involve the prioritisation of key issues for the Cannock Chase area and the pooling or re-alignment of resources to deliver agreed outcomes.

The financial implications of the LAA to this Council will be subject to a further report as priorities and funding requirements are identified.

Section 10

Resource Implications

There are no resources implications arising from this report.

Section 11

Conclusions

That the recommendations at point 2 be approved.

Section 12

Background Papers

There are no background papers.

Annexes

Annex 1 – Draft November Submission of A Local Area Agreement for Staffordshire

Annex 2 – Diagram of proposed governance structure