
SUMMARY REPORT

LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT 2008 -2011

Responsible Cabinet Member – Councillor John Williams, Leader

Responsible Director – Lorraine O'Donnell, Assistant Chief Executive

Purpose of the Report

1. For members to agree the 35 indicators and three year targets for Darlington's Local Area Agreement.

Summary

2. Previous reports have outlined the purpose of a Local Area Agreement (LAA); i.e. to act as the delivery plan for the Sustainable Community Strategy. As such, the LAA is required to contain up to 35 indicators drawn from the national list of 198, the inclusion of which needs to be agreed with Government Office North East (GONE) along with a further 16 statutory Children and Young People indicators.
3. The LAA provides clear linkages to the new vision for Darlington : Perfectly Placed. Full LSP engagement in the selection of indicators has led to a strong agreement being developed, with the LSP Board having considered the LAA on 7th May 2008 and endorsed it for adoption.

Recommendations

4. It is recommended that Council:
 - (a) approve the Local Area Agreement attached in **Appendix 2**;
 - (b) delegate authority to Cabinet to make revisions and minor amends as may be necessary throughout the 3-year Local Area Agreement;
 - (c) designate the functions in relation to the LAA to Cabinet.

Reasons

5. The recommendations are supported by the following reasons:
 - (a) to ensure effective delivery of the new vision for Darlington;
 - (b) to fulfil the Council's statutory duties to adopt a Local Area Agreement;

(c) to comply with the latest Ministerial direction as to submission timetable.

Lorraine O'Donnell
Assistant Chief Executive

Background Papers

Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2008 SI 2008/516

Andy Robinson: Extension 2014
AR/jb

S17 Crime and Disorder	The LAA as a whole has been developed to be complementary to meeting the general duty to prevent crime and disorder in the area. Relevant targets have been selected in recognition of S17 requirements.
Health and Well Being	Relevant targets have been selected in recognition of the commitment to promoting health and well-being in the Borough. The LAA as a whole has been developed to be complementary to meeting this goal.
Sustainability	As delivery plan for the Sustainable Community Strategy the LAA incorporates and reflects the ethos of sustainability in each themed area. Individual targets have been assessed so as to promote a positive environmental impact in each case.
Diversity	The SCS, and LAA beneath it, are assessed as being compliant with all statutory obligations to eliminate discrimination and promote diversity.
Wards Affected	The LAA is a borough wide agreement meaning all wards are affected within the overarching priority of 'One Darlington' i.e. narrowing the gap.
Groups Affected	The LAA covers the whole area and does not single out one part of the community more than others, subject to the general SCS commitment on tackling disadvantage.
Budget and Policy Framework	This report does not represent a change to the Council's budget or policy framework.
Key Decision	This matter is currently a local choice function.
Urgent Decision	This is not an urgent decision.
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	As delivery plan for the Sustainable Community Strategy the LAA directly reflects the vision for Darlington as a whole and contributes to its implementation directly.

MAIN REPORT

Information and Analysis

6. Previous reports (ref: Council 26 March 2008) have outlined the purpose of a Local Area Agreement; i.e. to act as the delivery plan for the Sustainable Community Strategy One Darlington : Perfectly Placed. As such, the LAA is required to contain up to 35 indicators drawn from the national list of 198, the inclusion of which needs to be agreed with Government Office North East (GONE) along with a further 16 statutory Children and Young People indicators.
7. This report explains the following:
 - (a) a brief reminder of the process to date;
 - (b) those indicators selected, highlighting changes made since the report to Cabinet on 18th March 2008;
 - (c) setting and negotiating the targets.

Reminder of the process

8. Strong Project Management arrangements agreed in May 2007 has ensured that both the LAA and the development of the SCS have remained on track. In summary, the LAA has been developed as follows:
 - (a) November 2007: Initial ‘technical list’ of 35 indicators based upon a series of filters and the emerging draft Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS);
 - (b) January/ February 2008: LSP workshops instrumental in developing technical list into draft LAA;
 - (c) March/ April 2008: Ongoing negotiation with GONE on the inclusion of indicators. LSP and Cabinet approval of draft basket of indicators (subject to further work and negotiation).

Indicators selected for inclusion

9. Thirty-five indicators drawn from the national indicator set have been selected for inclusion in the LAA; further work is necessary to consider ‘local’ indicators to complement the 35, although these do not require negotiation with GONE. Members will be aware of the developing Multi Area Agreement (MAA) across the Tees Valley, with relevant targets also in development. Linkages between the LAA and MAA will be made as appropriate. Of the 35 LAA indicators, 33 indicators remain from the draft LAA approved by Cabinet on 18 March 2008. Two indicators have been removed, and a further two added i.e.:

Indicators removed	Indicators added	Reason
N1 157 – Processing of Planning Applications	N1 164 – Working Age population qualified to at least level 3 or higher	The skills indicator has excellent linkage with what the SCS is trying to achieve as part of the ‘Prosperous’ theme. Originally no skills indicator was included and Darlington was the only area regionally not to have included one.

		GONE requested the inclusion and lead officers agreed, although this meant one indicator dropping out; i.e. planning, the performance of which is being picked up by the Council.
N1 195 - Implement Street and environment cleanliness	N1 016 - Serious acquisitive crime	Street and environmental cleanliness is already performing at high levels. The CDRP had requested inclusion of N1 016 (acquisitive crime) and again this indicator links well with the SCS

10. This means that the LAA still consists of 35 negotiated indicators, and 16 statutory. These are detailed against SCS priorities and themes in **Appendix 1**.

Setting and negotiating targets

11. The LAA is a three-year agreement, therefore requiring targets to be set for 2008-09, 2009-10 and 2010-11. Due to the national indicator set comprising of mostly new indicators, target setting in a minority of cases is not possible until baseline information has been collected. GONE are aware of the difficulties in collecting some of the data and are in agreement with this approach. Performance Reward Grant (PRG) levels have still not been agreed, although as previous reports have outlined, levels of reward are much lower than for the previous LAAs. Current guidance indicates that any PRG will be paid per indicator on successful achievement of the 2010-11 targets and that levels involved will be relatively small.
12. The LAA process is subject to annual refresh and revision. As such, revisions and minor amends may be necessary throughout the three-year life of the LAA. Council are asked to delegate responsibility to make such minor amends/revisions to Cabinet.
13. Targets have been analysed to ensure they are sufficiently challenging for inclusion in the Local Area Agreement, whilst being achievable.
14. In terms of the 16 statutory children and young people indicators, Fischer Family Trust (FFT) estimates are used to calculate targets. FFT is a charitable educational organisation which hosts a national database to which all authorities subscribe. FFT estimates are widely recognised as an accurate indicator of future pupil attainment based on their prior performance. The targets have been set with reference to FFT estimates consistent with performance of the top 25% of schools. Targets are therefore consistent with top quartile performance but reflect the variability of the pupil cohort over each year.
15. A full breakdown of indicators and three-year targets is detailed in **Appendix 2**.

Outcome of Consultation

16. Consultation with a range of stakeholders in recent months has informed the production of the Local Area Agreement. Dialogue with key partners has informed the selection of performance indicators and the negotiation of targets. The LSP Board considered these on 7 May 2008 and endorsed them for adoption.

Next Steps

17. The Local Area Agreement is subject to ministerial sign off by the end of June 2008. Approval can be either a Council function, which would require any amendments to the targets to be approved by Council or one of its Committees, or an Executive function which will enable Cabinet to sign off the LAA. It is recommended that in recognition of the need for decisions to be taken at short notice that the approval and amendment of the LAA is identified as an Executive function.

Conclusion

18. The LAA provides clear linkages to the new vision for One Darlington : Perfectly Placed. Full LSP engagement in the selection of indicators has led to a strong agreement being developed.