
DARLINGTON'S DRAFT LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT

Responsible Cabinet Member - Councillor John Williams, Leader

Responsible Director – Ada Burns, Chief Executive

Purpose of Report

1. To present a draft copy of the Local Area Agreement (LAA) in development for Darlington.

Summary

2. Darlington Borough Council was successful, as part of Darlington Partnership, in gaining Government support in October 2005 to work up and develop a Local Area Agreement for the borough.
3. Officers of the Council's Policy Unit have subsequently been in regular liaison with Government Office North East (GONE) to co-ordinate and agree the overarching principles and scope of this initiative in accordance with the detailed guidance issued by the office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM). The process has been project managed in conjunction with the Darlington Partnership Secretariat and LSP partners.
4. Attached at **Appendix 1** is a copy of the draft Darlington Local Area Agreement developed as a result. This has been submitted to GONE for initial appraisal. We have proposed an innovative approach to LAAs which focuses on the theme of children and young people. In a formal feedback session on the 20th January 2006 the response was very supportive of the Darlington approach generally and gave broad endorsement to the overall content, concepts and proposals set out in our innovative approach. Resolution of fine detail is ongoing and as a negotiated process may lead to some revision in the final submission.

Information and Analysis

5. The main issues addressed by this report are:
 - (a) Background to LAAs;
 - (b) Darlington's LAA;
 - (c) Financial implications;
 - (d) Timetable.

Background to LAAs

6. A Local Area Agreement is an agreement drawn up between the local authority and its partners and central government. The agreement sets outcome targets reflecting local as well as national priorities. A successfully negotiated agreement will mean that certain existing funding streams can be pooled or aligned and the local area given discretion as to how to spend the money. LAAs have to satisfy some national priorities but these will be

fewer than is currently the case. Stronger central/local government relationships are anticipated as a key benefit. LAAs are also seen as a method of streamlining area based funding initiatives and one means of achieving Gershon efficiencies.

7. LAAs are in effect a natural extension of current developments nationally i.e. following developments in performance management, local strategic partnerships (LSPs), community strategies and neighbourhood renewal which accords well with the Darlington situation and which has lent itself to successful development locally.

Darlington's LAA

8. The attached draft document (**Appendix 1**) sets out the supporting text and themed material for our LAA submission as generated to date. The content is based on the feedback, returns and submissions from themed meetings and, incorporates input received from the various stakeholder groups.
9. The draft document is structured as follows:
 - (a) Executive summary – spelling out that our LAA is focused on change and improvement to outcomes for young people and our track record of delivery of step change;
 - (b) Overview – what we are trying to achieve – this explains why we have chosen the theme of children and young people, how the LAA fits strategically with the community strategy and developing children and young people's plan and other strategies. This section also outlines the outcomes we are seeking to address;
 - (c) Context – how step change is possible in Darlington – this section essentially outlines the innovation of our bid and the reasons why central government should support it;
 - (d) Four LAA blocks – all LAAs need to be presented in four centrally prescribed blocks¹. Since our theme is children and young people, this runs through each of the four blocks. We have presented this in an extremely accessible way. First we spell out the block specific outcomes we are seeking to influence through the LAA. Then we spell out particular issues for Darlington and the successes and developments we are seeking to build on. This leads on to a simple explanation of what we are trying to do differently through the LAA. We then spell out how we will use the additional funding, in alignment with existing mainstream funding to improve performance indicators. Finally we identify those indicators which we think will be stretched above existing targets. Each of the blocks is summarised very briefly below:
 - (i) Children and young people – to improve early and effective intervention in children's lives multi-disciplinary teams will develop close links with schools, communities, children, their extended families and social support networks. The approach will improve collaboration between the wide number of professionals that can be involved. The programme will deliver a range of specific projects and initiatives that enable the multi-agency team to address specific issues – improving attendance, improving parenting skills, and re-integrating excluded children.

¹ The blocks are Children and Young People; Safer, Stronger Communities; Healthier Communities and Economy and Enterprise.

- (ii) Safer and stronger communities – development of an intelligence-led approach to crime and anti-social behaviour; enhancing our response to crime and anti social behaviour; flexibility to respond to emerging problems. There is a significant focus on active citizenship - enhancing the engagement of children and young people; increasing community capacity through volunteering; and increasing community capacity through Street Scene.
- (iii) Healthier communities - mainstreaming effective health support within clusters of schools that are working together to improve nutrition, and encourage healthy lifestyles; and piloting a healthy eating initiative in schools in Eastbourne and Maidendale House.
- (iv) Economy and enterprise – developing programmes of business mentors for young people; bringing young apprentices into the new Street Scene service; and enhancing support for vocational training.

10. The following table presents a summary of the key meetings, events and discussions at which stakeholders have had the opportunity to contribute to, clarify and agree the development of the overall process and detail as to content. The draft document has been framed out of the results of these meetings.

Meeting	Dates
Darlington Partnership LSP Board	8/9/06, 9/11/05 & 12/1/06
Community Safety Partnership	20/09/05 & 21/12/06
Economy and Environment Themed Group	22/09/05 & 19/01/06
Learning Partnership Meetings	14/09/05 & 23/11/05
Health Improvement and Social Inclusion Group	10/10/05 & 7/12/05
Practitioners Workshop	12/10/05 & 24/01/06
CVS Workshops	22/09/05, 17/11/05 & 19/01/06
LAA Steering Group Meetings	11/10/05 & 5/12/05
LSP Lead Officers Meetings	18/10/05 & 13/12/05

11. In addition to the above, individual meetings with themed leads and the LSP Secretariat have taken place supplemented by meetings with key personnel with responsibility or knowledge around the themed priority activities identified.

Financial Implications

12. Local Area Agreements are intended as a means of rationalising area based funding streams. The opportunity exists to pool and align previously stand-alone funding allocations within each of the four blocks of the LAA structure. The attached document contains costed proposals over the three years of the agreement to the value of £7.5 million. A breakdown by project allocation and funding source is supplied for each block under the resources heading. The majority of this funding, some £4.2 million is made up from the allocation of two principal sources of new funding that are to be applied through Local Area Agreements. These are the Safer Stronger Communities Fund and funds allocated through the Local Public Service Agreement process as indicated below.

13. As part of a review of national regeneration funding, Darlington has become eligible for an allocation of Safer Stronger Communities Funding through ODPM as follows:

	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	Total
Neighbourhood Element	£413,000	£516,000	£413,000	£258,000	£1,600,000
Cleaner, Safer, Greener Element	£970,000	£1,130,000	£0	£0	£2,100,000
Total	£1,383,000	£1,646,000	£413,000	£258,000	£3,700,000

14. The funding is designed to support areas in promoting community cohesion, community safety, liveability and community engagement especially in the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods and is to be channelled through Local Area Agreements.
15. Local Public Service Agreements and the attendant funding are also to be fully incorporated into the LAA process. Appendix 2 of the attached document sets out the proposed stretch targets to which Pump Priming Grant of £848,600 will be allocated, as a one off payment in 2006/07 and upon successful delivery, Performance Reward Grant potentially of up to £2.8 million will become available in 2009/10.
16. Freedoms and flexibilities have been requested within our submission to gain maximum benefit out of these funding streams specifically and to stimulate further alignment of funding amongst partners. The final form of the LAA is therefore contingent on the results of negotiation with Government departments.

Timetable

17. The current round of LAAs is due to be formally signed off at the end of March 2006. In order to meet that deadline ministerial consideration is required in advance and accordingly government have brought forward a deadline for final submissions to the 10th February 2006.
18. Comments on this draft have therefore been invited from partners by 3rd February 2006 leading into this meeting. Feedback received will be used to produce a revised document for submission to GONE to meet the 10th February deadline. Subject to government review and any further amendment arising out of negotiations, a copy of the final proposed agreement will then be submitted.

Outcome of Consultation

19. This matter has been subject to ongoing consultation with the, chairs, lead officers and constituent members of Darlington Partnership (LSP) themed groups as set out at paragraph eight above. These partners are supportive of the initiative and have been instrumental in shaping the content of our LAA.

Legal Implications

20. This report has been considered by the Borough Solicitor for legal implications in accordance with the Council's approved procedures. There are no issues which the Borough Solicitor considers need to be brought to the specific attention of Members, other than those highlighted in the report.

Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998

21. The contents of this report have been considered in the context of the requirements placed on the Council by Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, namely, the duty on the Council to exercise its functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent, crime and disorder in its area. It is considered that the contents of this report will directly lead to a positive effect based on the better operational and performance management of relevant community safety elements plus integration with wider planning processes and cross cutting initiatives.

Council Policy Framework

22. The issues contained within this report do not represent change to Council policy or the Council's policy framework.

Decision Deadline

23. For the purpose of the 'call-in' procedure this issue represents an urgent matter.

Recommendation

24. It is recommended that:
- (a) Members agree the attached draft Local Area Agreement for Darlington for approval and submission to Ministers;
 - (b) Delegated authority is granted to the Assistant Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to oversee final amendments to the submission.

Reasons

25. The recommendations are supported by the following reasons:
- (a) to meet an ODPM/ GONE deadline of 10th February 2006 for Ministerial consideration of submissions prior to approval;
 - (b) to ensure content is as accurate and up to date as possible through an inclusive process, with the active involvement of key partners.

Lorraine O'Donnell
Assistant Chief Executive

Background Papers

ODPM – Local Area Agreements Guidance (June 2005)

John Bosson : Extension 2016
Jb/