

County Overview & Scrutiny Group Task & Finish Group – LAA for Cumbria

Key points from scrutiny presentations to CSP Executive; Chief Executive's Group and CLASB

Over the summer period the task and finish group, from the County Overview & Scrutiny Group, produced a report as the first part of a two-stage scrutiny review on the LAA.

Inevitably the first part of the scrutiny review has been about process – the next stage will be about the future role of scrutiny in monitoring the Local Local Area Agreement as it unfolds and is implemented.

In September 2006, this first joint scrutiny report was presented to both the CSP Executive, and to the Chief Executive's Group.

- Members of the CSP Executive accepted the recommendations of the report, highlighting the need for scrutiny members to recognise that many of the points raised are also relevant to the wider partnership, not just the local authorities.

Chief Executive's Group representatives were invited to give their comments and feedback to scrutiny's recommendations on 22 September 2006.

- With regard to membership of each thematic partnership, it was suggested that rather than have a wider representation, it might be more appropriate to review and reduce their size.
- The feeling of the Chief Executives was that it would be impractical (and wasteful) to have representatives from each local authority on every LAA thematic partnership.
- Adding more representatives could hinder progress rather than assisting it.
- It was generally agreed however, that effective reporting and feedback was vitally important and this will be dependant on having rigorous and robust mechanisms in place within all authorities and with partners.
- Chief Executive's would do all they can to encourage effective reporting and communication within their own and partner organisations, ensuring the prevailing culture is both positive and beneficial.
- With regard to a future role for scrutiny, the Group's discussion centred around the scrutiny and monitoring of the LAA which it considered should be undertaken by both CLASB, in order that the leaders of each Council understood the value of the LAA, and by a joint (CC/DC) overview & scrutiny process.

Appendix B

- Overview and scrutiny at a district-wide level it was felt should already be happening and scrutiny should be taking an active role in looking at the development of and the implications of the LAA.

Agreed:

- **That the County Overview Scrutiny Group be advised that the Chief Executive's group supported the view that the scrutiny and monitoring of the LAA should be carried out jointly, and that the County Overview Scrutiny Committee be asked whether it was considered appropriate for it to undertake this role or to establish a smaller group.**

At the CLASB meeting on Friday 6 October, leaders and Chief Executives were also given an opportunity to comment on scrutiny's recommendations and the feedback to date.

- CLASB were generally supportive of the principle of 'collective' representation at strategic partnership level. Recognising the benefits of the appointment of specialist members who would then feedback to their colleagues in other authorities and within the partnership.
- A strong emphasis was placed on the need to develop a common approach to communication across all local authorities and partner organisations, making best use of e-technology.
- All partners could feed their views back to key member representatives, quickly and effectively. This is seen as the best way of including everyone.
- Chief Executive's would sort out how to achieve 'collective representation' and commit to developing a common communication's system.
- CLASB members also agreed to the idea of a standing joint scrutiny committee which would monitor the implementation of the LAA.