

LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: Cllr E Woodburn

LEAD OFFICER: Hilary Mitchell

REPORT AUTHOR: Hilary Mitchell

Summary: This report seeks agreement of the Executive to participating in the arrangements for developing a Local Area Agreement in Cumbria

Recommendations:	That the Executive confirms its interest in developing a Local Area Agreement for Cumbria to commence in April 2007, and that it wishes to be included in future consultation on the proposals for Cumbria; and That Executive comments on the possible contents of the LAA as described in Annex A to the report
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Impact on delivering corporate objectives

Local Area Agreements confirm many of the corporate objectives identified by the Council and therefore will be consistent with their delivery..

Impact on other statutory objectives (eg Crime and Disorder and LA21)

Local Area Agreements include targets to improve outcomes in all the statutory objectives.

Financial and human resource implications

Resources to deliver the Local Area Agreement outcomes will be identified from agencies operating in Cumbria, according to their relevance to the outcomes, which in some cases may qualify for additional funding.

Project and Risk Management

Project management for this scheme is the responsibility of Cumbria County Council.

**Key Decision Status
Financial
Ward**

This is a key decision in that delivering outcomes in Local Area Agreements will be a key requirement for local authorities and other public sector agencies

Other ward implications?

Some outcomes in the future Local Area Agreement will be relevant to some wards more than others.

1. BACKGROUND

Introduction

1. A local area agreement is a three year agreement, based on local sustainable communities strategies, that sets out the priorities for a local area agreed between Central Government, represented by Government Office, and a local area, represented by the lead local authority (here Cumbria County Council) and other key partners through local strategic partnerships (here Cumbria Strategic Partnership).
2. The primary objectives of a local area agreement is to deliver genuinely sustainable communities through better outcomes for local people. LAAs also have the secondary objectives of:
 - improving central and local government relations;
 - enhancing efficiency;
 - strengthening partnership working;
 - offering a framework within which local authorities can enhance their community leadership role.
3. The LAA framework replaces a number of other Government programmes and special funding streams (such as Single Regeneration Budget, Health Action Zones, Sports Action Zones and so on) to simplify the benefit, and to improve efficiency in assessment.
 4. As described above there is a link between LAA and LSPs and their community strategies. The LAA will be the Cumbria-wide agreement with the Government that each LSP (such as the West Cumbria Strategic Partnership) seeks to deliver through its local community strategy. This is a new arrangement and will require even more accountability for the work of the LSPs to local people as well as to Government.
 5. The LAA comprises a number of outcomes with targets chosen from a generic list but shaped to suit local circumstances. The simplified list of possible outcomes is attached at Annex A (*NB Attach*). In agreeing the outcomes to be achieved in the LAA, targets will be set which could result in financial rewards if they are achieved. However it is unlikely that they will be of such an extent as to influence deployment of resources locally or prioritisation, although substantial failure to achieve them could result in clawback.

In Cumbria

6. There have already been two rounds of LAAs in other areas of the country and Cumbria is in the third and final round. In Cumbria a pilot for one aspect of LAAs activities (the safer, stronger communities theme) has already been concluded and has been in operation since April 2006. Development is being led through the County Council and a number of groups have been set up which are managing the identification and refinement of outcomes.

7. Cumbria County Council and the Cumbria Strategic Partnership (CSP) working with the constituent groups in the CSP, are proposing five themes for the LAA:

- safer communities
- healthier communities and older people
- children and young people
- economic development and enterprise
- sustainable communities

The thematic groups are actively working on the content of each of the themes and ensuring that there is cross-theme working to prevent the development of silos.

8. The timetable for negotiating and concluding the LAA is very compressed. Government Office for the North West requires the first draft of the outcomes for the Cumbria LAA is with them by 30 June. Thereafter work will continue over the summer to work up a draft agreement which is required by GONW by 30 September. The final draft agreement is required by 1 December, and it receives Ministerial sign off on 10 February 2007. Between 30 September and 1 December work will continue at local level to confirm or amend the content of the draft LAA outcomes. It is envisaged that this will be the opportunity for district councils to be consulted upon the detailed contents of the LAA.

9. There is a communications strategy associated with the work on developing the LAA and Copeland members will be provided with information as it becomes available. The West Cumbria Strategic Partnership is engaged on behalf of the Council in a number of the groups. Individual Council officers are supporting LAA thematic groups (see the report elsewhere in the agenda concerning the development of the economic and enterprise theme).

10. It is assumed that the Executive on behalf of the Council will want to be informed about the development of the LAA, be consulted on its contents in due course, and formally agree to it. In a two-tier area responsibility for this work lies with the largest authority, but by working in partnership in a LAA this Council can improve outcomes for service users. The partnership which will own the LAA will have the support, and possibly also rewards, from the Government to invest in relevant activities.

Annex A: Local Area Agreement Outcome Framework Summary

Background Documents:

ODPM : Local Area Agreements -guidance for Round 3

Report to Cumbria Chief Executives' Group 26 May 2006 by Cumbria CC Director of Strategy and Performance

Consultees: West Cumbria Strategic Partnership Chief Executives' Group, Leader, Corporate Team

