

CUMBRIA LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT – ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BLOCK

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Summary: The report outlines the work completed to date by the working group set up to develop the Economic Development Block of the Cumbria Local Area Agreement.

Recommendation:	Members are requested to support the Council signing up to the Economic Development Block of the Cumbria Local Area Agreement.
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Impact on delivering the Corporate Plan: The aims of the Local Area Agreement will support the Council's objective to create and sustain a healthy local economy.

Impact on other statutory objectives (e.g. crime & disorder, LA21): None.

Financial and human resource implications: No financial implications at this stage. However the Council's Economic & Tourism Development Manager will be involved in one of the working groups putting the Agreement together.

Project & Risk Management: None.

Key Decision Status

- **Financial:** N/A
- **Ward:** N/A

Other Ward Implications: None.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 There are many organisations in Cumbria that are working to improve the quality of life for residents and visitors in the county. A Local Area Agreement (LAA) is a statement of priorities for these organisations to ensure that resources are aligned to help us best address the challenges we face. The issues that need to be tackled may be associated with particular characteristics of Cumbria's society or economy, or targeted towards specific geographical areas where there is a disparity between county-level and local quality of life.
- 1.2 Through discussions with Cumbria Vision and the Cumbria Strategic Partnership, it has been recognised that there is an urgent need to progress the development of the Economic Development Block of the Local Area Agreement for Cumbria. Cumbria Vision had intended to establish a Policy Advisory Group (PAG) whose first task would have been to undertake this work. It was also recognised that the proposed membership of the County Economic Development Offices Group (CEDOG) and PAG were very similar. Therefore to avoid duplication and given the tight timescales, it is now proposed that CEDOG should be employed to undertake the work for the Local Area Agreement.

2. ARGUMENT

2.1 There is a vast amount of data related to all aspects of the LAA that can be tapped into to inform the development of the LAA. In an effort to filter out the key information needed to start the discussion a review of existing strategies was carried out. The priorities from the following strategies were identified:

- Regional Economic Strategy
- Sub Regional Strategy/Action Plan
- Rural Regeneration Cumbria Plan
- West Lakes Renaissance Plan
- Local Strategic Partnership Community Strategies
- Learning and Skills Council Strategic Plan
- LPSA Round 2 negotiation
- National PSA
- Sure Start
- Safer and Stronger Communities Fund Draft LAA submission
- Children and Young People's Draft Plan

2.2 Priorities selected for further development must meet a set of criteria before issues can be included in Cumbria's LAA:

- Issues where there is a demonstrable countywide weakness in Cumbria, even if there are specific pockets of disadvantage
- Challenges where organisations are already aligned, or can align easily to meet the targets set in the LAA
- Issues that can be tackled in partnership – where more than one organisation can influence performance
- Must be able to identify suitable indicators that allow us to monitor, report on and manage our success
- Must include all mandatory indicators (mostly related to Neighbourhood Renewal Areas)

3. OPTIONS TO BE CONSIDERED

3.1 The Council have the opportunity to sign up to the Cumbria Local Area Agreement – Economic Development Block and share in any 'reward' grant from Government Office North West, should we meet our targets.

3.2 The Council could decide not to co-operate with the county-wide initiative and only work within the enterprise framework of the West Cumbria Local Strategic Partnership.

4. CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 The four themes with the Economic Development Block of the LAA, improving skills, increasing enterprise activity, creating better paid employment opportunities and improving economic infrastructure are laudable objectives that Councils with an interest in promoting economic development should be promoting in any case. The 'stretch' targets which are now to be established by the work group should help the Council achieve some of its outputs relating to business start-up and creation of jobs within the Corporate Plan.

List of Appendices

[Appendix A – Economic Development Block – Proposed Outcomes and Comments](#)

Appendix B - <Appendix Title>

List of Background Documents: LAA for Cumbria – Evidence to inform Economic Development Block – May 2006

List of Consultees: Cllr Cath Giel, Corporate Team