

## CABINET ITEM COVERING SHEET PROFORMA

**AGENDA ITEM:**

**REPORT TO CABINET**

**19<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2009**

**REPORT OF CORPORATE  
MANAGEMENT TEAM**

### **CABINET DECISION**

**CORPORATE MANAGEMENT AND FINANCE - Lead Cabinet Member – Councillor Laing**

#### **LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT ANNUAL REVIEW AND REFRESH**

1. Summary

The purpose of this report is to provide members with the background and information pertaining to the discussions with Government Office North East on the annual review and refresh of the 2008-2011 Local Area Agreement (LAA) and the outcomes of the negotiation relating to some of the LAA targets.

2. Recommendations

- Members are asked to note the information in the report and the assessment of GONE in relation to progress against the LAA
- Members are asked to approve the refreshed targets ***indicated in Italics*** at Appendix 1 and to delegate approval for the outstanding targets to the Chief Executive.

3. Reasons for the Recommendations/Decision(s)

The Local Area Agreement is a performance contract between the Council and its partners, through Stockton Renaissance and the Government. It sets out how the Council and its partners will deliver the key objectives within the Sustainable Communities Strategy in line with agreed priorities and was approved by Cabinet in May 2008. All LAAs are subject to an annual review and refresh process and for the 2008-9 refresh that includes negotiating some of the targets in the original LAA which were still subject to definitions being finalised at the time the LAA was agreed. Cabinet approval is required under the Local Government and Public Involvement Act.

4. Members Interests

Members (including co-opted members with voting rights) should consider whether they have a personal interest in the item as defined in the Council's code of conduct (paragraph 8) and, if so, declare the existence and nature of that interest in accordance with paragraph 9 of the code.

Where a Member regards him/herself as having a personal interest in the item, he/she must then consider whether that interest is one which a member of the public, with knowledge of the relevant facts, would reasonably regard as so significant that it is likely to prejudice the Member's judgement of the public interest (paragraph 10 of the code of conduct).

A Member with a prejudicial interest in any matter must withdraw from the room where the meeting is being held, whilst the matter is being considered; not exercise executive functions in relation to the matter and not seek improperly to influence the decision about the matter (paragraph 12 of the Code).

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**SUMMARY**

The purpose of this report is to provide members with the background and information pertaining to the discussions with Government Office North East on the annual review and refresh of the 2008-2011 Local Area Agreement (LAA) and the outcomes of the negotiation relating to some of the LAA targets.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

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- Members are asked to approve the refreshed targets *indicated in Italics* at Appendix 1 and to delegate approval for the outstanding targets to the Chief Executive.

**BACKGROUND**

1. The Local Area Agreement is a performance contract between the Council and its partners, through Stockton Renaissance and the Government. It sets out how the Council and its partners will deliver the key objectives within the Sustainable Communities Strategy in line with agreed priorities and was approved by Cabinet in May 2008. All LAAs are subject to an annual review and refresh process. This is undertaken by Government Office for the North East on behalf of Central Government and receives ministerial signoff at the end of March 2009.
2. The annual review and refresh for 2009 deals mainly with the unfinished business from the negotiations relating to the 2008-2011 LAA due to the fact that the technical definitions and baseline figures for some of the targets were still being defined and collated at a national level. It is also aimed at capturing initial evidence of delivery. Discussions included acknowledgement and potential impact of the current economic climate on the measures included in the LAA.
3. The indicators held within the LAA fall into three categories, designated measures, which are all measures included in the national indicator set and all of which contribute to the performance reward element of the LAA, a maximum of 35 measures could be selected for inclusion in LAA's. Mandatory measures, which were prescribed by central government to be included in all LAA's, these do not form part of the reward element and all appertain to educational attainment. Thirdly, local measures which are either part of the national indicator set or a locally set measure, which reflect some of the key priorities for an area but were over and above the "up to 35 measures" that could be selected as designated measures. For Stockton we felt it necessary to include as local measures, those that were included in the MAA and other areas of priority such as recycling and household waste.

4. The table attached at Appendix 1 shows the measures held within the LAA. These are the same measures as those originally negotiated for year 1 of the LAA, indicating no changes to priorities but where targets have been renegotiated or baselines have changed, these are shown in *Italics*. Also included are the original negotiated targets and baselines, so that any changes are clear. The commentary reflects why targets have been renegotiated.
5. The guidance from the Department for Communities and Local Government indicates that the review and refresh process is clearly focused on a limited range of objectives; ensuring strong delivery arrangements are in place; reviewing new performance information relevant to the LAA and relevant contextual information; setting targets for the limited number of indicators where the definitions were not finalised at the time the 2008-2011 LAA was signed-off.
6. The intention of the 2009 refresh is to support progress towards success on the established LAAs, not to signal changes in direction.

### **PROGRESS AGAINST THE 2008-2011 LAA**

7. The Annual Review of the LAA conducted by Government Office North East shows Stockton has made good progress with developing and bedding down delivery arrangement across the majority of the designated targets. The review acknowledges the strong performance culture in place and identifies evidence of innovative practice. Stockton's approach to delivery planning is identified as being robust and inclusive and the Local Strategic Partnership is identified as being strong and inclusive. Areas of Best Practice are identified in relation to:
  - Preventing Homelessness
  - Working in partnership to reduce crime levels
  - Improving equality and diversity in partnership
  - Ensuring the involvement of all residents in regeneration
8. The potential impact of the economic climate on achieving some of the targets has been the subject of discussion with our partners, the Local Public Service Board and GONE with the outcome that it is too early to tell what the overall impact of the current economic climate will be across a range of the indicators within the LAA. It has been agreed that those measures affected by the current economic conditions will be the subject of further, more informed discussions, at the end of year 2 of the agreement and that the aspirations set out in the original agreement would remain in place for the time being.

### **THE 2009 REFRESH**

9. As identified in paragraph 2 above, 3 of the designated targets were not able to be set in the negotiations on the 2008-2011 signed off by Cabinet in May 2008. These have now been negotiated as part of this process. A further 8 targets have been renegotiated due to changes to baseline data, changes to definitions and the Place Survey results being published in February 09. These measures are listed below:
  - NI 11 Engagement in the Arts
  - NI 110 Young People's participation in positive activities
  - NI 187 Tackling Fuel Poverty
  - NI 1 The % of people who believe people from different backgrounds get on well together.
  - NI 5 Overall Satisfaction with the local area
  - NI 15 Serious Violent Crime
  - NI 17 Perceptions of Anti Social Behaviour as a problem
  - NI 130 Social Care Clients receiving Self Directed Support
  - NI 162 Number of entry level qualifications in numeracy achieved.
  - NI 195 Improved levels of litter

- NI 198 Children travelling to school by car

10. Nine other measures mainly those potentially affected by the current economic climate or those which are part of the Vital Signs PCT/ SHA negotiations were also included in the review process but it was concluded that no changes to the targets are required at this time. This position reflects the national picture and is not unique to Stockton.
11. The table at Appendix 1 identifies in italics those measures that have been either negotiated or renegotiated as part of the refresh process and in bold, those targets that remain to be signed off through Government Office.
12. The Department for Communities and Local Government issued guidance and negotiating briefs to support Government Offices and Local Authorities in establishing targets for the outstanding indicators, acknowledging the need for a tailored approach for each locality whilst providing a framework to ensure consistency of approach across regions.
13. The proposed targets presented in Appendix 1 are as a result of following the guidance outlined in the target briefs and numerous discussions with relevant officers, partners and Government Office.

## **FINANCIAL AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

### **Financial**

14. There is a performance reward grant attached to the Local Area Agreement which is awarded across the achievement of the 33 designated measures. A minimum achievement of 60% of each of the 33 targets will generate some reward element. This will increase on an incremental basis from 60% up to a maximum of 100% achievement of each target. Three of the measures are also subject to the Working Neighbourhood Reward Element, which is awarded on the same basis.

### **Legal**

12. The Local Government and Public Involvement Act require approval for the Local Area Agreement through the Local Authority.

## **RISK ASSESSMENT**

13. The systematic annual planning used to produce the plans to support achieving the LAA ensures that risks are minimised and are subject to regular review.

## **SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY IMPLICATIONS**

14. The Local Area Agreement is the delivery plan for the Sustainable Community Strategy.

## **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

15. An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken on the LAA.

## **CONSULTATION INCLUDING WARD/COUNCILLORS**

16. Extensive and continued consultation and engagement has informed the refresh and renegotiation process including work with Renaissance at the annual event in January 09 and with individual thematic partnerships.

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Background Papers

Local Area Agreement 2008-2011  
Sustainable Community Strategy

Ward(s) and Ward Councillors:

The Local Area Agreement is not ward-specific.

Property

Nil.