

**AGENDA ITEM**

**REPORT TO EXECUTIVE  
SCRUTINY**

**4<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2008**

**REPORT OF ASSISTANT CHIEF  
EXECUTIVE**

**LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT 2008 - 2011**

**SUMMARY**

1. This report outlines the emerging role for the Council's scrutiny function in Local Area Agreements (LAA), explains the LAA development process and welcomes comments on the attached draft LAA for 2008-2011 (Appendix 2).

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. That the Executive Scrutiny Committee note the emerging role of Scrutiny in the development and performance monitoring of Local Area Agreements.
2. That the Executive Scrutiny Committee consider and comment on the draft Local Area Agreement for 2008-2011.

**DETAIL**

Background

2. Stockton was one of the 21 local authorities that piloted LAAs in 2004, and also one of the 17 local areas that tested the "dry run" process (previously feasibility) for negotiating their new LAA 2008 - 2011.
3. Following the Local Government White Paper 'Strong and Prosperous Communities' (2007), all LAAs are being reinvigorated and refreshed. Some important changes were announced for LAAs which are outlined below.
4. The LAA will be the three year delivery plan for the new longer term Sustainable Community Strategy and should link to the Local Development Framework. The 'place-shaping' role of councils means the integration of an area's key strategies is important.
5. The LAA will be at the heart of the new performance framework with the LAA effectively forming the key performance contract between Central and Local Government.

6. There is now a statutory duty between councils and named partners to set targets, co-operate with negotiations and have due regard for achieving the targets, contained within the LAA, in producing their organisational plans. (Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Bill)
7. Councils are also be subject to a duty to prepare the LAA in consultation with others, including the voluntary/community and business sector.
8. The government also outlined in the White Paper a commitment to streamline the number of indicators that local government has been required to report upon from potentially over a thousand to a National Set of 200 (now 198). The NIS will supersede the old Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs).
9. Each Council working through the Local Strategic Partnership will be responsible for negotiating an LAA containing up to 35 indicators from the NIS list of 198. There are also an additional 16 mandatory Department for Children Schools and Families (DCSF) targets, which are focussed around educational attainment. In addition to the up to 35 from the NIS list the LAA can include a set of customised local indicators with locally determined definitions that partners will still be legally bound to co-operate in agreeing and having regard to in their organisational planning.
10. The new LAAs will be negotiated between Government Offices, on behalf of Central Government and Councils and their partners.
11. Government Office NorthEast has indicated that LAAs will be signed off by the Secretary of State in June. As Stockton's current LAA ends in March 2008 we are in negotiation with GONE and the Government's Department of Communities & Local Government for an earlier sign off, in line with our service planning processes, however this will be subject to GONE and Ministers capacity to achieve this in the time frame.

### **Guidance on the Involvement of Scrutiny and Overview Committees in the LAA**

12. There are three key documents that have recently been published that explain the role of the Council and partners in developing and monitoring the LAA. These are:-
  - The draft statutory guidance 'Creating Strong Safe and Prosperous Communities'.
  - The Phase 1 operational guidance 'Negotiating new LAAs'.
  - Development of the new LAA Framework.
13. The above documents include the following key messages on the role of councillors and scrutiny in LAAs:-
  - Engagement of elected Councillors: Elected Councillors have a critical role in shaping priorities and articulating political ambition, and partners need to be aware of their views. (Development of the New LAA Framework)
  - A strengthening of the role of overview and scrutiny with proposed legislation, which will allow committees to consider specific matters regarding the action of local public service providers and key public bodies. There is a requirement on all these named partners (named in the Local Government and Public

Involvement in Health Bill) to have regard to scrutiny arrangements. A list of these partners is attached at Appendix 1.

- The role of Scrutiny Committees is also important to the development of the LAA (Negotiating New LAAs).
- Robust local performance management arrangements should also cover – use of overview and scrutiny panels to raise questions on priorities, progress and action taken to tackle under performance. Access to the conclusions of scrutiny reviews of the LAA as part of local accountability is a way to support the empowerment and engagement of local communities. (Development of the new LAA Framework).

### **Developing the LAA 2008 – 2011**

14. Stockton's LAA for 2008 – 2011 will contain up to 35 indicators which will be chosen to support delivery of the priorities from the recently agreed Sustainable Community Strategy for the Borough for the next three years.
15. A cross agency project group, involving all key partner agencies including Cleveland Police, North Tees Primary Care Trust, Job Centre Plus, the Learning and Skills Council, the Council and Cleveland Fire Brigade worked up an initial draft list of indicators. This has been subject to further consultation and engagement including discussion at the Stockton Renaissance wider stakeholder event in January 2008 and robust negotiations with GONE.
16. Regular dialogue with GONE has been a key part of the approach to developing Stockton's LAA 2008 – 2011. As can be seen from the provisional list at Appendix 2 GONE is in agreement with 29 of the preferred indicators proposed by Stockton. Negotiation is still under way on the remaining priorities however the initial target setting process has begun for those preferred indicators where we are in general agreement. The target setting is at an early stage and will be influenced by the finalised national definitions for the National Indicator Set (which has yet to be published), availability of data, trends/ current baselines and stretching but achievable action plans. Government Office North East (GONE) will jointly agree the final document with the Stockton Borough Council, as the responsible body for the LAA prior to it going to Ministers for final sign off.
17. Information around performance will still need to be collected against all of the 198 measures contained within the NIS, although we will only be required to set annualised targets against the upto 35 in the LAA. The full 198 will nevertheless be audited as an integral part of the new Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA), the successor to the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA).

### **Consultation**

18. Consultation on the LAA 2008 – 2011 formally began in July 2007, linked with the consultation on the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS). As part of that engagement process stakeholders were asked to identify which of the ambitions in the longer term SCS we should concentrate on for the next three years, which would start to inform the LAA. This consultation included Member engagement through a dedicated Members Seminar held on 17 July 2007, involvement through

membership on Renaissance Partnership Board, Area Partnership Boards and Thematic Partnership Boards and a mail out. A wider event was also held, which included members and representatives from the Borough's Community Empowerment Network and Youth Assembly. The initial feedback on LAA priorities from this consultation is being used to inform the work on the draft LAA priorities and supporting indicators.

19. The wider stakeholder event on 9 January 2008, which gave Ward Councillors, representatives from Parish Councils, Youth Assembly, Area and Thematic Partnerships, Community Empowerment Network, Business Forum and other partners the opportunity to further influence the LAA for 2008 – 2011.
20. The feedback from this event will feed into further consultation on the local indicators for our LAA, which is underway with the Area Partnership Boards and Thematic Partnership Boards during February and March 2008.

### **The Role of Scrutiny in the development of the LAA for the Borough**

21. Scrutiny Executive is asked to review and comment on the LAA process and the attached draft LAA, which sets out those proposed LAA indicators where there has been general agreement with GONE that they would be preferred indicators for inclusion in the LAA.
22. The findings will be used to inform the final draft that is submitted to Renaissance and Council. Any areas for improvement on the process would be picked up and used to strengthen any future LAA development processes.
23. The Executive Scrutiny Committee will have an ongoing role in scrutinising and monitoring the annual performance of the LAA 2008 – 2011. It is therefore proposed to submit the annual end of year monitoring report on progress against the priorities and targets in the LAA to Scrutiny in July. This would allow a framework for Scrutiny to challenge both the Council and named partners on their contribution to delivery against their agreed targets and on action planning to address any areas of slippage.

### **The Way Forward**

24. It is proposed that Scrutiny consider the proposed arrangements for involvement in the LAA and the potential implications for the Scrutiny work programme.
25. The key milestones and dates for the LAA 2008-2011 development and performance monitoring are set out below-

4th March 2008	Presentation of the draft LAA 2008-2011 at Executive Scrutiny Committee
April 2008	Draft to Stockton Renaissance for agreement and sign off
April 2008	Draft to Cabinet for agreement and sign off
April 2008	Draft to Council for agreement and sign off
July 2009	Scrutiny of LAA 2008-2011 End of Year Performance Report

## **FINANCIAL AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no direct financial or legal implications arising from the report.

## **RISK ASSESSMENT**

The proposal is categorised as low to medium risk. Existing management systems and daily routine activities are sufficient to control and reduce risk.

## **COMMUNITY STRATEGY IMPLICATIONS**

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

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### Background Papers:

Local Government White Paper 2007 Strong Safe and Prosperous Communities'  
The draft statutory guidance 'Creating Strong Safe and Prosperous  
Communities'.  
The Phase 1 operational guidance 'Negotiating new LAAs'.  
Development of the new LAA Framework.

Ward(s) and Ward Councillors: Not Ward Specific

**Statutory ‘partner authorities’ and the duty to co-operate to agree targets**

The following are defined in the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act as partner authorities-

- Arts Council
- The Broads Authority
- Chief Officer of Police
- District authorities
- English Heritage
- The Environment Agency
- Fire and rescue authorities
- Health and Safety Executive
- The Highways Agency
- Jobcentre Plus
- Joint Waste Authorities
- Joint Waste Disposal Authorities
- The Learning and Skills Council in England
- Local Probation Boards
- Metropolitan Passenger Transport Authorities
- Museums, Libraries and Archives Council
- National Park Authorities
- Natural England
- NHS Foundation Trusts
- NHS Health Trusts
- Police authorities
- Primary Care Trusts
- Probation Trusts and other providers of probation services
- Regional Development Agencies
- Sport England
- Transport for London
- Youth Offending Teams
- Any other organisations added by an order under section 104(7) of the Act

## Preferred indicators:

Number	Description	Current Status at 04.02.08
NI 1	Percentage of people who believe people from different backgrounds get on well together in their local area.	Agreed as part of 35
NI 4	Percentage of people who feel they can influence decisions in their locality.	Agreed as part of 35
NI 5	Overall/general satisfaction with local area	Agreed as part of 35
NI 11	Engagement in the Arts	Agreed as part of 35
NI 15	Serious violent crime rate	Agreed as part of 35.
NI 17	Perceptions of anti-social behaviour	Agreed as part of 35
NI 40	Drug users in effective treatment.	Agreed as part of 35
NI 42	Perceptions of drug use or drug dealing as a problem	Still under negotiation.
NI 50	Emotional health of children	Still under negotiation.
NI 51	Effectiveness of child and adolescent mental health (CAMHs) services	Agreed as part of 35
NI 53	Prevalence of breastfeeding at 6-8 weeks from birth	Agreed as part of 35
NI 54	Services for disabled children	Still under negotiation.
NI 59	Initial assessments for children's social care carried out within 7 working days of referral	Still under negotiation.
NI 63	Stability of placements of looked after children: length of placement	Still under negotiation.
NI 80	Achievement of a Level 3 qualification by the age of 19.	Agreed as part of 35.
NI 109	Number of Sure Start Children centres	Still under negotiation.
NI 110	Young people's participation in positive activities	Agreed as part of 35
NI 112	Under 18 conception rate	Agreed as part of 35
NI 117	16 to 18 year olds who are not in education, training or employment (NEET)	Agreed as part of 35
NI 121	Mortality rate from all circulatory diseases at ages under 75	Agreed as part of 35
NI 123	16+ current smoking rate prevalence	Agreed as part of 35
NI 130	Social Care clients receiving Self Directed Support (Direct Payments and Individual Budgets)	Agreed as part of 35
NI 132	Timeliness of social care assessment	Agreed as part of 35
NI 135	Carers receiving needs assessment or review and a specific carer's service, or advice and information	Agreed as part of 35
NI 142	Number of vulnerable people who are supported to maintain independent living	Agreed as part of 35
NI 148	Care leavers in employment, education or training	Agreed as part of 35
NI 151	Overall employment rate.	Agreed as part of 35.
NI 153	Working age people claiming out of work benefits in the worst performing neighbourhoods	Agreed as part of 35
NI 157	Processing of planning applications as measured against targets for 'major', 'minor' and 'other' application types	Still under negotiation.
NI 162	Learners achieving an Entry level 3 qualification in numeracy.	Agreed as part of 35.

<b>NI 171</b>	VAT registration rate	Agreed as part of 35
<b>NI 185</b>	CO <sub>2</sub> reduction from Local Authority operations.	Agreed as part of 35.
<b>NI 187</b>	Tackling fuel poverty – people receiving income based benefits living in homes with a low energy efficiency rating	Agreed as part of 35
<b>NI 188</b>	Adapting to climate change	Agreed as part of 35
<b>NI 195</b>	Improved street and environmental cleanliness (levels of graffiti, litter, detritus and fly posting)	Agreed as part of 35
<b>NI 198</b>	Children traveling to school – mode of travel usually used	Agreed as part of 35

### Potential indicators:

Number	Description	Comments
<b>NI 7</b>	Environment for a thriving third sector	Still under negotiation.
<b>NI 25</b>	Satisfaction of different groups with the way the police and local council dealt with anti-social behaviour	Still under negotiation.
<b>NI 33</b>	Arson incidents	Still under negotiation.
<b>NI 55</b>	Obesity among primary school age children in Reception Year	Still under negotiation.
<b>NI 56</b>	Obesity among primary school age children in Year 6.	Still under negotiation.
<b>NI 81</b>	Inequality gap in the achievement of a Level 3 qualification by the age of 19.	Agreed as a possible local indicator.
<b>NI 116</b>	Proportion of children in poverty.	Agreed as a possible local indicator.
<b>NI 159</b>	Supply of ready to develop housing sites.	Still under negotiation.
<b>NI 165</b>	Working age population qualified to at least Level 4 qualification or higher.	Agreed as possible local indicator.
<b>NI 176</b>	Working age people with access to employment by public transport (and other specified modes).	Still under negotiation.