

Agenda Item

Executive Board

27 February 2008

PJ/smep/LAA



Local Area Agreement

Summary

This paper provides background on Local Area Agreements to be discussed with County Council officers at Executive Board.

Recommendation

That Members consider the Council's response and involvement in the next stages of the LAA process in the light of the presentations by County Council Officers.

a) Reasons for Recommendation

The LAA process will affect the Council's priorities and priorities addressed within East Devon.

b) Alternative Options

That the Council adopts the LAA priorities once agreed.

c) Risk Considerations

That the Council's reputation and ability to respond to local priorities may be affected.

d) Policy and Budgetary Considerations

Positive Impact Overall

Affordable Homes.

Thriving Economy.

Safe Environment.

Clean Environment.

Green Environment.

Recycling.

Young People.

Excellent Customer Service.

Inspirational Council.

Meeting our crime and disorder duties.

Meeting our Diversity and Equality duties.

Providing more service at same cost.

e) Date for Review of Decision

1 year

1 Background

Central Government has now agreed to be more flexible in target setting for Local Government to recognise different communities have different needs. The framework for this flexibility is largely through Local Area Agreements to which central government expects us to sign up.

These are, in essence, a “contract” between County/Unitary level authorities and their corresponding Government Office but, District Councils will also be bound.

The “contract” sets out what all the local statutory agencies will deliver locally (in partnership) over the following 3 years. It also sets out the way in which these will be monitored.

The idea is that we should choose to tackle local priorities as a partnership but in a way that central government can see are challenging us and delivering more for our communities.

No additional monies are allocated to the LAA and the government sees the process as improving efficiency of spend. However certain existing funding streams have been diverted to the LAA process. The LAA process is gradually absorbing the previous LPSA (Local Public Service Agreements) scheme which did have some financial rewards for meeting ‘stretching’ targets.

2 Performance Monitoring

The Government is committed to reducing the overall number of performance indicators that all local authorities are required to collect and publish to 198.

There are 16 statutory education and “early years” national performance indicators which the LAA authorities are obliged to use for local agreements and for the LAA they may then select a further maximum of 35 to reflect local priorities on which the LAA authorities intend to be ‘stretched’.

In addition we adopt local indicators to help us monitor progress on these ‘stretched targets’.

Many of the 198 indicators that we will publish in the future rely on surveyed public perception so there is a need to better publicise and market the Council’s actions, ambitions and approaches to get better community ‘buy in’. Through the LAA we can do this ‘marketing’ in partnership.

3 Assessments

To replace the Comprehensive Performance Assessment, the Government is proposing Comprehensive Area Assessment. Instead of auditing an individual organisation these reviews would look at delivery of services (with a likely emphasis on LAA targets) by all agencies in an area. Thus our co-operation, partnership and cross agency efficiencies will also be open to scrutiny.

4 Why is the development of the Devon LAA important to EDDC?

- 1) It will affect what services and issues are emphasised for action in our District by ourselves and our partner agencies.
- 2) It will affect what we are measured and audited upon.
- 3) It needs to dovetail with our own Corporate Strategy and East Devon Sustainable Community Plan.
- 4) It will help achieve partnership towards delivering the most important issues in East Devon.
- 5) It will assist us in holding partners to account (and vice versa).

5 How can we use our influence?

East Devon District Council and East Devon LSP were invited to comment on the initial county-wide, ideas for 25 priority objectives. A copy of our response to the Devon Local Area Agreement Officer at Devon County Council is attached as Appendices A and A1.

We have looked at how these priority objectives dovetail with the Corporate Strategy and Sustainable Community Plan for East Devon. Evidently where they complement each other we can support them. However where they do complement we have either suggested that the county-wide list is supplemented, or we have (where appropriate) made it clear that we do not anticipate contributing to the priority.

The county-wide LAA grouping have been seeking "in principle" agreement from the Government Office before working their final list (now more than 25 items) into more detailed targets for March 2008 and action plans for June 2008. We are being encouraged to also contribute to these.

Legal Implications

The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 contains provisions which will (once enacted) give the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committees the ability to require partner authorities to have regard to the Committee's report or recommendations which relate to local improvement targets which have been specified in a local area agreement. Regulations may be made enabling partner authorities to set up joint Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications contained within this report.

Consultation on Reports to the Executive

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Background Papers

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Executive Board
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