

Date of Meeting	18 January 2007
Title of Report	A Local Area Agreement for Wiltshire
Portfolio	Partnership Working
Link to Corporate Priorities	Partnership Working
Key Decision	No
Executive Workplan Ref	B319
Public Report	Yes

Summary of Report

An LAA can be described as an agreement between government and local areas which strikes a balance between the priorities of central Government, and those of local government and their partners. It involves negotiating a joint commitment to deliver services within a framework of measurable and accountable outcomes (or goals).

This report presents Members with the first working draft that has been submitted to the Government Office for the South West for negotiation.

Officer Recommendations

It is recommended that the Executive:

- 1. Note the process of developing an LAA and the first draft of the Local Area Agreement for Wiltshire.**
- 2. Give delegated authority to each of the NWDC Block Leads in conjunction with the appropriate Lead Member to submit responses to the LAA on behalf of NWDC where the timescale does not allow a fully informed report to be brought to the Executive.**
- 3. Agree that the final Local Area Agreement for Wiltshire be submitted to the Executive for approval.**

Other than those implications agreed with the relevant Officers and referred to below, there are no other implications associated with this report.

Financial Implications	Legal Implications	Community & Environmental Implications	Human Resources Implications	Equality & Diversity Implications
None	None	Yes	Yes	Yes

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. This report provides a short overview of the development of a Local Area Agreement for Wiltshire. The appendices to this report include the first draft of the Local Area Agreement as it stands at the beginning of the negotiation process with the Government Office for the South West. Members are invited to consider the process of developing an LAA, this first draft and how the Council will approach committing resources to the actions within the strategy.

2. Options and Options Appraisal

- 2.1. **Option One** It is recommended that Members approve the following
 - 2.1.1. That Members of the Executive note the process of developing an LAA and the first draft of the Local Area Agreement for Wiltshire.
 - 2.1.2. Members give delegated authority to each of the NWDC Block Leads in conjunction with the appropriate Lead Member to submit responses to the LAA on behalf of NWDC where the timescale does not allow a fully informed report to be brought to this Committee.
 - 2.1.3. That the final Local Area Agreement for Wiltshire be submitted to the Executive for approval.
- 2.2. **Option two** Members do not approve the recommendations listed in paragraph 2.1 above.

3. Background Information

- 3.1. Wiltshire Strategic Board, the Local Strategic Partnership for Wiltshire is currently developing both a Sustainable Community Strategy for Wiltshire and the first Local Area Agreement (LAA) for Wiltshire. The LAA is a Government requirement that affects all Local Authorities. Wiltshire is in the third and final wave of the development of LAAs.
- 3.2. At the December 14 meeting of the Executive Members considered a consultation draft Sustainable Community Strategy for Wiltshire. A Sustainable Community Strategy or a Sustainable Strategy is a follow on from a Community Strategy. In Wiltshire this will examine priorities and trends to identify the things that will need attention if Wiltshire is to continue to be a good place to live for the longer as well as the short term. Wiltshire Strategic Board will agree the final Community Strategy for Wiltshire and will monitor the achievement of the improvements set out in the LAA.
- 3.3. There is an opportunity for many agencies across Wiltshire to work in partnership with the community to help address quality of life issues identified in the Sustainable Community Strategy, the LAA provides one framework to enable this.
- 3.4. A Local Area Agreement can be described as an agreement between government and local areas which strikes a balance between the priorities of central Government, and those of local government and their partners. It involves negotiating a joint commitment to deliver services within a framework of measurable and accountable outcomes (or goals).
- 3.5. There are clearly defined roles within the LAA guidance for County Councils, District Councils and Local Strategic Partnerships.

- 3.6. In the case of Wiltshire, the County Council will be the accountable body for the financial management for the LAA. This role includes ensuring that robust performance management arrangements are developed, implemented and followed. This links to a requirement to ensure that individual partners are taking responsibility for actions that they sign up to and are held to account for actual delivery.
- 3.7. The LAA guidance describes District Councils as *critical partners* in the development of the LAA. The recent Local Government White Paper highlights the need for a framework for effective and co-ordinated delivery places a *Duty to Co-operate* on a number of public sector bodies including District Councils.
- 3.8. The role of Local Strategic Partnerships in the development of an LAA is also made very clear in the guidance. It is the upper tier LSP that is responsible for the overarching development and delivery of the LAA with lead partners accountable for the delivery of individual targets. That is to say that it is Wiltshire Strategic Board who are leading the development of the LAA.
- 3.9. Existing partnership work can be included within the LAA. The current Local Public Service Agreements and the associated reward grants for meeting the set stretch targets will all be included.
- 3.10. The message from Central Government is clear; public sector partners need to work together in effective partnerships to agree and achieve targets set out in an LAA that will strike a balance between national and local priorities and demonstrably meet community need.

4. Content and Structure of the Wiltshire Local Area Agreement

- 4.1. Wiltshire's LAA is being developed in line with a template provided by central Government which uses 'blocks' or 'themes' to identify the relevant areas of service delivery under the agreement. These are:
 - *Children and Young People*
 - *Economic Development and Enterprise*
 - *Environment*
 - *Healthier Communities*
 - *Older People*
 - *Safer and Stronger Communities*
- 4.2. Within each of the blocks there are a number of mandatory outcomes that each LAA in the Country must include. Other outcomes are being developed as the result of work in each of the block areas. The LAA can be viewed as one of the delivery mechanisms for the community strategy, as such many of the outcomes that are being put forward are relevant to issues within the North Wiltshire Community Strategy.
- 4.3. Each Block has a nominated block lead who is responsible for advancing work in that specific block across the County with a wide cross section of partners. To date Officers from the District Council have been actively involved with this work in the blocks although the level of influence as to what outcomes are included above and beyond the required mandatory outcomes varies.
- 4.4. It is important to stress that the draft LAA and set of details outcomes and actions included in Appendices One and Two are very draft. In this state they represent the

beginning of the process that will see the final LAA honed and negotiated ready for formal sign up by partners.

- 4.5. Members will see from the detail included in the first draft action plan at Appendix Two that NWDC will not be directly involved in each of the outcomes and actions within the LAA. What the Council must be clear on is what actions can and cannot be supported and resourced. As a part of the formal sign up process it is likely that the Council will be asked to sign up to the LAA in two ways. The first is expected to be at a high strategic level and include acknowledgement by all partners about the principles of joint working and partnership approaches to achieve the targets included within the LAA. The second level would then be more detailed sign up and commitment to specific activities and deliverables such as those included in Appendix Two.
- 4.6. A Countywide project group is currently working with SOLACE to develop a Governance Structure for the LAA. This will include the required performance management framework. This project is being overseen by Wiltshire Improvement Partnership, where there is senior management representation from NWDC. There is a strong link to the future capacity and strength of the LSPs in Wiltshire and as such Officers representatives who provide a management or support roll to each of the LSPs in Wiltshire are involved in the project.
- 4.7. It has become clear that it is individual partners who will be accountable for the delivery of actions not partnerships. NWDC must be very clear about what it can and cannot support and delivery within the Local Area Agreement for Wiltshire.
- 4.8. Until a final version is presented to partners with a request to formally sign up to the LAA and specific actions and outcomes consultation and opportunities to contribute to the continuing development process will be through the appropriate block meetings.
- 4.9. Decisions over what the Council will and will not formally sign up to delivering can be made at a future meeting of the Executive.

5. Timescale

- 5.1. The process for agreeing the LAA involves negotiations with Officers from the Government Office for the South West (GOSW). There is a strict timetable by which all LAAs must be negotiated and agreed. Work included in the LAA is effective from April 2007. Key dates in the development and negotiations for Wiltshire are;

30th November 2006: Wiltshire Strategic Board Executive considered the first draft LAA. This first draft has been formally submitted to GOSW as the first draft in the negotiation process.

24th January 2007: Wiltshire Strategic Board will consider a second draft LAA after comments have been received back from GOSW.

21st March 2007: final document submitted to GOSW ready for sign off by Whitehall.

- 5.2. There will be opportunities for this Council and representatives of the Council to comment and feedback on the draft versions of the LAA within the timeframe listed above. Officers from NWDC are currently involved in the development of the detailed outcomes and action in each of the blocks.

- 5.3. Officers across the Council are now reviewing this first full draft set of detailed outcomes and actions in line with existing resources. Initial feedback is being fed into the development process through the County level block leads and the block meetings.
- 5.4. To ease communication channels NWDC has nominated a lead officer for each of the LAA Blocks (see Appendix Three). Members may wish to consider giving delegated authority to each of the NWDC Block Leads in conjunction with the appropriate Lead Member to submit responses on behalf of NWDC where the timescale does not allow a fully informed report to be brought to this Committee.
- 5.5. Formal endorsement of a finalised Strategy or LAA and commitment of resources and agreement to any governance structure would be subject to Executive approval.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1. There is no requirement or request within this report for Members to commit financial resources. A future report to the Executive will request that Members sign up to specific actions committing resources from NWDC over the 3 year life of the LAA.
- 6.2. Implications that will need to be considered by Members in detail in context of a Governance agreement that will hold the Council accountable for those elements of the LAA that NWDC signs up to. The implications include financial and officer resource required to undertaking projects in the outcomes and actions section, commitment of expenditure, the timescales for commitment which span over three financial years and finally information on any reward grant elements attached to achieving particular outcomes.

7. Legal Implications

- 7.1. There are no legal implications arising from this report however this Council will need to give consideration and formal endorsement to any Governance framework that is developed as a part of the Local Area Agreement.

8. Community and Environmental Implications

- 8.1. There is a great opportunity for issues and priorities that affect North Wiltshire to be addressed through the actions and ambitions included within the LAA.
- 8.2. A good working relationship and contributions from Officers and Members will serve to ensure that North Wiltshire issues are championed through both the Sustainable Community Strategy and the LAA.

9. Human Resources Implications

- 9.1. Officers from across the Council are working at block level on the development of outcomes for each of the LAA blocks. Similarly Officers are contributing to the continuing development of the Sustainable Strategy. This work is included within team workplans. The implications of actions that are approved against outcomes within the final LAA will need to be considered as a part of the Council's Business Planning process.

10. Equality and Diversity Implications

- 10.1. The very nature of LAA and its ability to deliver against priorities in the Community Strategies across the County puts issues of equality and diversity at its centre.

There are opportunities for inequalities to be addressed as a result of the actions of many partners within the LAA.

Appendices:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Appendix 1 – first draft Local Area Agreement for Wiltshire as at Nov 24 2006• Appendix 2 – first draft detailed outcomes and actions as at Nov 24 2006• Appendix 3 – NWDC Block Leads and Lead Members
Background Documents Used in the Preparation of this Report:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• LAA Guidance for Round 3 and Refresh for Rounds 1 and 2 March 2006• Strong and Prosperous Communities Local Government White Paper October 2006