

**LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT FOR CAMBRIDGESHIRE  
(Report by the Head of Policy & Strategic Services)**

**1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an opportunity for the Cabinet to comment on the final draft (appended hereto) of a new Local Area Agreement (LAA) for Cambridgeshire prior to consideration of it by Cambridgeshire County Council's Cabinet and Cambridgeshire Together – the partnership Board established to oversee the development and implementation of the Agreement.

**2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The new style of Local Area Agreements builds on previous initiatives which sought to establish arrangements for the delivery of national and local priorities. As with earlier arrangements the LAA is based on a County or Unitary authority geography, but unlike previous agreements, it assumes extensive partnership and new ways of working. The Council, in common with a number of organisations, now has a duty to participate in both the formulation of the LAA and in its implementation.

- 2.2 The LAA is seen as an important element of a new national performance framework which consists of —

- ◆ a set of 198 National Performance Indicators (NPIs) covering national priorities;
- ◆ a Comprehensive Area Assessment to replace the Comprehensive Performance Assessment, which will be an evaluation on the relative performance of service providers working in partnership for the benefit of the (County) area as a whole; and
- ◆ an enhanced role for Local Strategic Partnerships.

- 2.3 In terms of the formal agreement the LAA consists of a number of indicators – up to 35 taken from the set of 198 national indicators, together with a further 16 indicators relating to educational attainment. For each indicator there will be a three year trajectory of targets to stretch performance. The indicators selected were intended to represent areas where there was a need to secure improvement. In addition there is scope to include local indicators and targets in the Agreement.

- 2.4 To negotiate the new LAA, partners locally have developed the 'Cambridgeshire Vision' based on the five Sustainable Community Strategies for each District in the County. This provides a long term plan for the county while the LAA represents a short term (three year) delivery plan. As such there will be a close correlation among

the local Sustainable Community Strategies, the Cambridgeshire Vision, the LAA and the delivery or action plans for those strategies

- 2.5 A schedule of 35 improvement indicators and 5 local indicators was agreed by Cambridgeshire Together in March 2008 for the purposes of negotiation. Since that time work has focused on developing suitable targets in negotiation with Government, although this has been constrained as some of the definitions for the indicators only recently became available and some have been delayed until 2009/10. As a result, some of the original indicators were not considered to be suitable for inclusion in the Agreement. For others the first year of the agreement will be used to establish the baseline and targets will be set for the succeeding two years. For many of the indicators in the draft agreement there is interdependency with other indicators from the overall set of indicators. Achievement of the targets in the LAA will therefore necessitate the achievement of a broader group of targets which will involve a wide range of partners working independently and collectively.
- 2.6 The attached table shows the status of the negotiations on the indicators/targets as at 9th May 2008. The deadline for agreeing the targets is the end of May. While commendable progress has been made across the piece, there are still some areas which require more detailed negotiation. An update on developments in these areas will be available at the meeting.
- 2.7 As with similar partnership arrangements and plans the scope for recommending significant changes at this stage is likely to be limited. However, both the County Council Cabinet and Cambridgeshire Together, which are required to formally sign-off the LAA, have invited partner organisations to comment on the draft agreement prior to their deliberations.

### **3. OTHER ISSUES**

- 3.1 As well as the formal agreement containing the indicators and targets, there are a number of other issues which will need to be addressed in the coming months as part of the implementation of the LAA, including –
- ◆ performance management arrangements which integrate with those of partner organisations and the monitoring of achievement against the sustainable community strategies;
  - ◆ the suitability of County-wide and local partnerships and the governance arrangements required to secure the achievement of the agreement;
  - ◆ financial arrangements around assumptions that both mainstream funding and specific grants will be required to achieve the National Indicators set generally and specifically the indicators selected in the LAA; and

- ◆ disaggregating targets to a local level and identifying and monitoring intervention and other arrangements that will help to achieve the LAA.

#### **4. RECOMMENDATION**

- 4.1 The Cabinet are invited to comment on the indicators and proposed targets which form the basis of the new Local Area Agreement for Cambridgeshire.

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Cambridgeshire Vision

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