

Meeting of the Council – 21st April, 2008

Report of the Cabinet

Local Area Agreement

Purpose of Report

1. To seek approval to the current draft Local Area Agreement framework, which is subject to negotiation with the Government.

Background

2. At the Cabinet meeting on 12th December, 2007, Members considered the work to date on the development of the revised Local Area Agreement for the Borough, and the initial long list of possible priority outcomes for inclusion. Since that report the draft submission has been subject to detailed negotiation with Government representatives to align local and national priorities. In addition, further analysis of available evidence has been used to help establish the relative importance of local priorities.
3. A revised LAA framework has now been developed involving partners, and community representatives through the Dudley Community Partnership. The revised framework now includes a proposed link to the new national indicator set which is itself currently being finalised. Appendix 1 (copies circulated to Members separately) outlines the current draft LAA schedule, based on four overall themes, these being:-

Wealthy Communities

Improving investment and enterprise
Reducing worklessness
Economic Wellbeing

Healthy Communities

Improving Peoples Health
Reducing obesity
Reducing the use of Substances
Improving Social care

Environmentally Aware Communities

Improving the environment
Improving Transport networks

Safe and Cohesive Communities

Improving Community cohesion and engagement
Reducing crime
Building resilience to violent extremism
Reducing anti-social behaviour

4. The national requirement is to have no more than 35 outcomes included within the LAA, in addition to the statutory children and young people indicators. The current draft LAA contained in Appendix A (circulated separately to Members) satisfies this requirement, although the final position may change marginally during the subsequent discussions with Government Office.
5. The Secretary of State has made a direction, which requires the Council to prepare and submit a draft Local Area Agreement on or before 30 May, 2008. The Government are seeking to finalise the agreement with each authority on the LAA by June 2008. This will be a three-year agreement, and a series of partnership based task and finish groups are meeting during March – May to help determine the range of improvement targets under each of the indicators, and develop joint action plans towards achieving these stretched targets.
6. Following approval by the Council, and the subsequent agreement with Government, these improvement priorities will be incorporated within the Council Plan to ensure that the Council and local strategic partnership performance targets are managed in a co-ordinated and consistent manner.
7. On consideration of the information contained in this report, the Cabinet, at its meeting on 19th March, 2008, approved the recommendations contained in paragraph 11 below.

Finance

8. The Cabinet report in February, 2008 outlined the changes represented in the Area Based Grant (ABG) regime. In Dudley, 36 separate funding streams are going into the ABG. A number of figures are provisional at this stage, but the expected three-year allocation is £14.5m in 2008/9, £14.6m in 2009/10 and £13.8m in 2010/11, with the funding for 2008/09 committed to existing programmes. The implications for Council and partner spending plans will need to be reviewed as part of the 2009/10 Budget and Medium Term Financial Planning process.

Law

9. Section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000, enables the Council to do any thing which it considers likely to achieve the promotion or improvement of the economic, social or environmental well-being of the borough, or any part of it. The Secretary of State has now made a direction requiring the Council to prepare and submit a draft Local Area Agreement on or before 30 May, 2008. The direction is made under section 106 of the Local Government & Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.

Equality Impact

10. The development of the LAA is being undertaken jointly with partners, including representatives of the voluntary and community sector, and children and young people. The aim is to ensure that we build upon the achievements in community inclusion made in developing the Dudley Borough Challenge. In addition the focus of many outcomes will explicitly address the needs for improved outcomes for communities experiencing disadvantage and discrimination.

Recommendation

11. That the Council approve the revised priority outcomes in the draft LAA as the basis for finalising negotiations with Government, and that the Leader of the Council be authorised to make the final submission of the draft Agreement by 30th May, 2008

David Caunt

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LEADER OF THE COUNCIL