

Cabinet 12th December 2007

Report of the Chief Executive

Local Area Agreement

Purpose of Report

1. To advise Members on progress in preparing the revised Local Area Agreement for the Borough which is to be adopted from June 2008.

Background

2. Following the publication of the Government's White Paper 'Strong and Prosperous Communities, all Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) have been required to undertake the review and reshaping of their existing LAA. As part of this process each area is required to identify up to 35 key outcomes, from a national indicator set of 198, for their locality (+17 statutory children and young people outcomes).
3. The first stage in negotiating these outcomes is to submit to Government Office for the West Midlands an overview of the Borough, which gives a view of the opportunities and challenges for the Borough from which a long list of priorities have been derived. These priorities will be reviewed alongside the new national indicator set and will eventually form the local outcomes. These outcomes will be based on local need and, as there will no longer be mandatory targets, will therefore need to demonstrate a strong evidence base on why they need to be included or why they are not included.
4. As part of this process a series of meetings have been held with key representatives from the Boroughs partnerships and organisations over the last few months to identify the key issues for Dudley. These have ranged from bilateral meetings with Government Departments, specific theme partnership events and two organised events on 29th October and 6th November.
5. Outlined below is a brief outline of the emerging priorities to date. Whilst there has not yet been formal agreement on the structuring of these priorities for the purpose of this report they have been placed under four headings.

Employment/Skills

Increasing skills level and employability
Inward investment
Low earnings
Tackling deprivation
Tackling education attainment all ages
Worklessness (City Strategy agenda)

Tackling Poverty
Infrastructure – e.g. Transport

Health

Substance abuse, but particularly alcohol (in relation to both violence and health issues)
Obesity
Closing health inequalities

Ambition/Aspiration/ Potential

Civic pride (strongly evidenced within community strategy)
Aspiration
Tackling ambition

Community

A general view of the need to create the sense of belonging and ownership
Capacity (concern that the capacity of individuals/groups within communities to engage is not being addressed)
The concern around anti social behaviour and the wider Respect agenda
Narrowing the Gap
Community Cohesion (the broadest sense of cohesion)
Green agenda

6. Whilst most of these priorities rest on a strong evidential base (e.g. employment and obesity) others are widely shared views but where the evidence to support them is difficult to quantify (e.g. Lack of ambition/ aspiration.). Work is being undertaken to explore these further. In addition there are issues arising from changes within our population which need to be reflected within the revised LAA for example, demographic changes indicate that an increasing percentage of the borough being above the age of 65 which raises questions on service provision for the elderly.
7. This current long list of priorities closely reflects the priority outcomes contained in the Council Plan. However Members are asked to consider if any other priorities which need to be considered within the draft LAA long list. Following discussions on the above long list of priorities with Government Office West Midlands during December and January, a revised list of LAA priorities will need to be submitted by the end of January 2008.

Finance

8. The costs of development of the revised LAA are being met from within existing budgets. Work, to assess the financial implications of meeting LAA outcomes, will be carried out during December and January.

Law

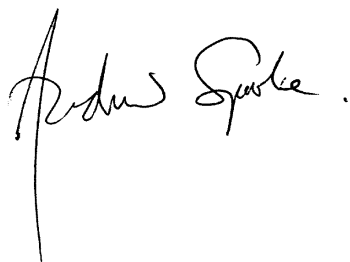
9. Section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000, enables the Council to do any thing which it considers likely to achieve the promotion or improvement of the economic, social or environmental well-being of the borough, or any part of it.

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. It is recommended that Members note the progress on developing the revised LAA for the Borough, and the range of issues comprising the long list of priorities.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andrew Sparke'.

ANDREW SPARKE
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

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List of Background Papers