

SCRUTINY COMMISSION – 28th MARCH 2007**REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE****LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT – OVERVIEW OF THE SAFER
COMMUNITIES THEME****Purpose of the Report**

1. To advise the Scrutiny Commission of the progress to date in achieving the outcomes and targets set out in the Local Area Agreement (LAA) for the Safer Theme.

Recommendation

2. That the Committee notes progress in achieving outcomes and meeting targets to help create safer communities in Leicestershire's priority neighbourhoods and comments as necessary.

Background***What is the LAA?***

3. LAAs are described by Government as 'the cornerstone of the new relationship between central and local government'. An LAA is a three-year agreement that contains targets for improving services and quality of life for local people. The agreement is made between Central Government (represented by the Government Office (GOEM)), and a county or unitary authority area represented by the principal local authority, (the County Council acting as the 'Accountable body') and other key partners (through the Local Strategic Partnership (Leicestershire Together)).
4. LAAs are a means by which Leicestershire Together Partners achieve key local and national priorities.

They identify outcomes that need to be achieved and measurable target(s) so that it is clear if the outcome has been achieved. They allow money to be used flexibly within four blocks to achieve the agreed targets, without having to consider the precise source of the funding. In theory the LAA allows for the streamlining, simplification and integration of performance management arrangements into one overall framework.

5. Nationally LAAs are grouped round 4 blocks:

- children and young people
- safer and stronger communities
- healthier communities and older people
- cleaner, greener communities and economic development and enterprise.

In Leicestershire some of these blocks have been separated, so apart from the Children and Young People block each of the others has been split into two, giving seven blocks in the County:

- older people
- healthier communities
- children and young people
- safer communities
- stronger communities
- cleaner and greener
- economic development and enterprise.

6. All areas within an LAA can request some freedoms and flexibilities, now called enabling measures:
- pool funds from central government (into one single budget for 2008/9)
 - carry over a reasonable level of unspent resources within the LAA from one financial year to another – up to 5% currently
 - invest any savings in delivering the objectives of the LAA
 - in theory the LAA is supposed to reduce the monitoring and reporting requirements (but any gain so far has been minimal)
 - vire or combine some mainstream funding (aligning budgets) between organisations to meet shared LAA outcomes
 - streamline payment mechanisms, including removing the need to submit claims forms.

Leicestershire LAA

7. The current LAA covers the period from April 2006 to March 2009 (the full LAA and related documents can be viewed at www.leicestershiretogether.org). Its progress is reviewed every 6 months by GOEM and every three months by the Strategic Senior Officers Group, Leicestershire Together and LCC Cabinet. Appendix 1 gives an overview of risks to achieving the year 1 target figures for the whole of the LAA.

Safer Communities Theme

Outcomes

8. The Safer block contains the following outcomes.

- Outcome 1 – Overall Crime Reduction
- Outcome 2 – Reduction in Offending by Prolific and Other Priority Offenders
- Outcome 3 – Reduction of Anti Social Behaviour
- Outcome 4 – Reduction in Harm Caused by Illegal Drugs and Alcohol Misuse
- Outcome 5 – Youth Crime Prevention
- Outcome 6 - Improving Public Confidence and Reassurance.
- Outcome 7 – Reduction of Vulnerability in Priority Neighbourhoods

9. From April 2007, some adjustments will be made to the Safer Communities outcomes and targets through the introduction of a number of new mandatory indicators, notably reducing re-offending by both young and adult offenders and a number of public perception indicators in relation to illegal drug use and “Respect” indicators.

Pooled and Aligned Budgets

10. The Safer Communities pooled budgets are:
- Safer and Stronger Communities Fund
 - DAAT Partnership Support Grant

The total pooled budget for 2006/07 is £1.08 million revenue and capital

11. There is one aligned budget within Safer Communities, the YJB youth crime prevention grant of £270k

Targets

13. Safer Communities has a total of 18 targets in 2006/07, of which 5 are Reward Targets. They are:
- a. To increase the number of reported incidents of Domestic Violence by 5% by March 2009
 - b. To reduce the percentage of detected domestic violence crimes by repeat offenders from 30% to 20%.
 - c. To reduce offending by prolific and other priority offenders in a particular cohort by 18.7%.
 - d. To reduce the level of overall crime categories associated with prolific offenders
 - e. To increase the percentage of young people subject to a police reprimand prevented from further offending by 6%.

Six Months Review

14. Overall good progress had been made at the six months stage with only three targets highlighted for further action in GOEM’s six months report – overall crime reduction, Class A drugs seizures and numbers

of first time entrants to the criminal justice system. However, despite conflicting Government targets the latter has been completely turned round and is now well on target through the development of a joint action plan. Appendix 2 gives a summary of quarter 3 performance for the Safer block and appendix 3 the detail against each indicator.

Performance of Safer Communities at Quarter 3 (April – December 2006)

15. The tables below summarises progress of all targets for the Safer block at the end of Quarter 3.

All Indicators

Outcomes	Green: 8	Amber: 4	Red: 0	Not Available: 6
Delivery	Green:13	Amber: 3	Red: 2	

Reward Indicators

Outcomes	Green: 3	Amber: 1	Red: 0	Not measurable yet: 1
Delivery	Green: 5	Amber: 0	Red: 0	

Targets on Red

16. As can be seen from the above table most targets are on green. However, there are 2 targets which have been categorised as red and where there are significant risks as a result of delivery arrangements not yet being in place. These relate to the outcome to reduce vulnerability in priority neighbourhoods. District LSPs are responsible for developing and setting up neighbourhood management processes.
17. Progress has been variable across the county and not all priority neighbourhood boundaries have yet been finalised. However as neighbourhood action teams begin to be put in place, particularly in Melton, Charnwood, NWL and Hinckley and Bosworth, delivery arrangements for reducing vulnerability in the priority neighbourhoods will also begin to be established.

Targets on Amber

18. The target which is of most concern in terms of outcome is the overall crime reduction target, also highlighted in the GOEM 6 months report. This target is off trajectory as a result of poor performance in a few Districts, most notably in Charnwood. This also has implications for the prolific offenders reward target “to reduce the level of overall crime categories associated with prolific offenders” which is directly linked to overall crime reduction performance. A project team is being established involving GOEM, Charnwood Borough Council, the County Council and the Police to work intensively with Charnwood CDRP to improve performance in reducing overall crime.

19. Other amber targets include numbers in drugs treatment. However, the National Treatment Agency is very satisfied with Leicestershire's overall performance against this target and reported recently that the Leicestershire DAAT is one of the best performing DAATs in the country for achieving increased growth in numbers of problematic drugs users in treatment.
20. Seizure of Class A drugs is another target classified as amber, but primarily because of problems around the lack of a clear definition of what constitutes a seizure when the baseline was established. This has now been rectified and a definition agreed. Recalculation of the number of drugs seizures based on the agreed definition is underway and should be soon completed.

Future Changes to LAAs

19. The Government proposes to strengthen the role of LAAs from April 2008. Their preparation will become a statutory requirement and the main service delivery agencies will have a duty to cooperate in their preparation and implementation. Their scope will be extended to include housing, transport and climate change within the economic development theme. More funding will be pooled and there will be flexibility to use that funding across the whole of the LAA. Targets will be selected from 200 national indicators – most LAAs will identify about 35 of these, selected to match local priorities, plus about 18 statutory indicators relating to children and young people.
20. The County Council has proposed that a single Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) is prepared for Leicestershire during 2007 to identify the priorities to be included in the LAA from April 2008. From April 2009 the SCS and LAA will provide the basis for the Comprehensive Area Assessment. This Assessment will judge how well public service agencies are working in partnership to achieve the priority outcomes jointly identified for the area. It is likely therefore that the scrutiny function will be more focused on the SCS and LAA in the future.

Resource implications

21. The resources available to achieve the targets within the Safer block include those resources that are included within partner organisations mainstream budgets. Additional funding of £332,500 will also be made available over the three years of the LAA to meet the cost of achieving the reward targets. For non reward targets £25,000 has been allocated from County Council resources and further cash and in kind contributions have been made available from partners. As set out in the report if all the reward targets within the Safer block are achieved reward funding of £2.54m will be received. Leicestershire Together will decide how this funding will be used. Pooled funding totals £1.08m in 2006/7.

Equalities Implications

22. Inequality is inherent in the criminal justice system and it is crucial that this is not perpetuated or reinforced in our attempts to drive up overall performance in respect of Safer Communities outcomes and targets.

Background Papers

23. None.

List of Appendices

- Appendix 1 Overview of risks in achieving LAA targets
- Appendix 2 Summary of Quarter 3 Performance for Safer
- Appendix 3 Safer Block Indicator Performance at Quarter 3 (end December 2006)

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