
Draft Cheshire Local Area Agreement– Progress Report & Next Steps

Introduction

The purpose of this report is to update the Communities of Cheshire Partnership on the current position concerning the preparation of the Cheshire Local Area Agreement.

Ongoing Progress to Date

In accordance with the Government's stipulated timetable for Round 3 Agreements, the final draft LAA for Cheshire was submitted to GONW on 20 December 2006. As with previous versions, electronic copies of the draft LAA were emailed on the same day to all relevant stakeholders and a copy was posted on the Cheshire Partnerships Framework website (www.cpframework.org.uk).

The final draft addressed many of the concerns raised by GONW following submission of the first full draft at the end of September, including the identification of automatically pooled funding streams; completion of gaps within the outcomes framework; work with the voluntary, community and faith sectors and the statement of community involvement; and further development of the performance management arrangements though the Agreement is by no means complete. Work is continuing to ensure the appropriateness of identified performance indicators and associated three year targets and this will continue in the run up to implementation of the Agreement, as will review and refinement of agreed sub outcomes in the first year in the light of experience and in readiness for the annual "refresh" process.

One of the main aims of the LAA is to co-ordinate partnership activity to improve the quality of life for people living in the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods in Cheshire. Whilst this is covered under Key Outcome 1 of the Cheshire LAA, there are many other aspects of the LAA where such targeting is required, e.g. health, education, employment, etc. As a result and where such targeting is highlighted, the final draft LAA includes a commitment to concentrate this activity as a minimum on those Cheshire wards containing Super Output Areas (SOAs) that fall within the top 20% overall in England within the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2004 and Congleton North ward as it features highly in four of the seven individual domains within the IMD and could slip into decline. This approach was agreed at the last meeting of the Partnership and endorsed by the Cheshire Governance Board. It is intended that the development and refinement of specific targets for these areas will continue through the work of the thematic partnerships and will be incorporated within the first annual refresh of the LAA if not before.

Since submission of the final draft at the end of December, further slightly amended versions have been sent to GONW for comment and agreement prior to forwarding to the DCLG and formal consideration by Government Departments.

Changes made since the 20 December submission include:

- Minor changes to the wording of some sub-outcomes on GO advice
- Inclusion of new sub-outcome and associated indicators and targets in CYP Block on advice of CYPSP - Identifying, protecting and supporting children exposed to domestic violence
- Inclusion of additional baselines and targets across the blocks
- Minor amendments to contextual statements for greater clarity
- Amendments to LPSA2 targets included in LAA
- Removal of all of the following potential Enabling Measures on advice from GO
 - Recognition of alcohol as a primary substance within DAAT NDTMS Young People in Drugs Treatment figures
 - Reassessment and revision of the method of calculating the number of young people in drug treatment and the national drug treatment target
 - Restorative intervention
 - Housing Corporation capital funding rules 1
 - Housing Corporation capital funding rules 2
 - Housing Corporation capital funding rules 3
 - Teenage Pregnancy Data Sharing
 - Teenage Mothers Enabler
 - Allow Connexions partnership funded Personal Advisers to engage in work with young people between 11-13
- Removal of the Version Control chapter
- Sub-outcome 12.1 (iii) and 2.2 (ii) removed on GONW instruction
- New financial resources added to the pooled and aligned tables at end of CYP matrix.

GONW have also confirmed our ability to continue to fine tune the document whilst the draft is being considered by the Government Departments and to respond to any comments received before the final deadline for Ministerial sign-off in March.

Next Steps

Now that the general thrust and content of the document has been agreed by partners and in preparation for implementation in April, work is beginning to focus on the production of Action Delivery Plans with key milestones and trajectory targets to underpin the delivery of the Agreement; performance monitoring, reporting and management requirements; financial processes and general support systems.

In order to progress this, a LAA Mobilisation Workshop is being held on Friday 9 February to which all identified LAA sub-outcome "owners" and other interested parties have been invited. In addition to delivery planning; performance management; financial management and audit requirements; risk management; and legal requirements (e.g. Equality Impact Assessments), the workshop will explore opportunities for the involvement of the third (community, voluntary and faith) sector in delivery; community focus approaches and the potential for working 'across the blocks'.

In addition, and preferably before implementation, the intention remains to undertake a full Integrated Appraisal / Impact Assessment of the LAA to measure and challenge the positive and any potentially negative impact of the Agreement.

Conclusion

As previously reported, whilst significant progress continues to be made in refining the Agreement, the more significant challenge of delivery, monitoring, review and refresh is still to come. This will require the ongoing participation, support and commitment of all partners if the LAA is to make a difference and secure better outcomes for the people of Cheshire.

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