

Interim Cheshire Sustainable Community Strategy and Proposed Indicators for Transitional LAA 2008 – 09

1. INTRODUCTION

Work is currently underway to develop the new interim Cheshire Sustainable Community Strategy and new style transitional local area agreement (LAA). The process has been simultaneous, as the two documents are inextricably linked, their relationship is summarised in the following extract from recent Government guidance:

“The starting point for negotiating the LAA is through the creation of strong partner relationships and alignment of views around the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS). The SCS provides visions, values and aspirations, and is rooted in the evidence base and analysis that tells the “story of the place” providing a rationale for the area’s “up to 35” improvement targets”

“Negotiating New Local Area Agreements”, CLG September 2007

The purpose of this paper is to update partners on progress in developing a draft sustainable community strategy ahead of a consultation exercise and to seek a recommendation for the Governance Board to approve the nominated LAA indicators ahead of submission to GONW.

2. DRAFT SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY

The purpose of the Sustainable Community Strategy is to identify the key issues facing Cheshire (or parts of Cheshire) as supported by evidence (e.g. from data, surveys, performance benchmarking) and to prioritise the actions needed to address them – either within individual organisations or through partnership working. Further work has been undertaken to develop the initial paper received at the CCP (01/11/2007) and evidence and contextual remarks have been included in the refined draft. The latest draft of the strategy is included at Appendix A.

The earlier identified priority outcomes (10) have so far remained unchanged;

- (i) reducing inequalities between the most disadvantaged and successful areas of the county;
- (ii) addressing the key issues surrounding our ageing population;
- (iii) delivering priority services to children and young people with a specific focus on tackling the adverse impact of alcohol on children

and their families and improving attainment in children and families from low income backgrounds;

- (iv) improving access to and availability of affordable and appropriate housing;
- (v) reducing the effects and consequences of excessive alcohol consumption;
- (vi) reducing re-offending;
- (vii) improving mental health and well-being;
- (viii) improving waste management;
- (ix) reducing the effects of climate change; and
- (x) reducing worklessness and improving skills

However, there appears to be compelling evidence to include an additional outcome concerning improvements to road safety. There are also questions as to whether mental health issues are significant enough in Cheshire to justify being a priority in their own right.

Following discussion and resolution of any outstanding issues such as those above, we recommend that the draft sustainable community strategy is now opened for full consultation across the Cheshire Partnership Framework over a 12 week period and used as a working document to set the context for the Transitional LAA 2008-9

3. 'NEW' LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT

The Local Area Agreement is essentially the main delivery plan for the Sustainable Community Strategy and will remain an agreement between the County Council (on behalf of the LSP) and the Government to deliver key outcomes on local priorities identified through the Sustainable Community Strategy over 2008/09. Due to the LGR circumstances however, it must be borne in mind that the emerging LAA will be an "transitional" LAA for the period 1 July 2008- 31 March 2009 only and will not be a 3 year arrangement. The new-style LAA is expected to:

- include 'up to 35' improvement targets which local authorities and their partners negotiate with central Government drawn from the new national indicator set developed as part of the Comprehensive Spending Review*. Whilst all local authorities/partnership will have to report against all 198 indicators to assist with national benchmarking, the Partnership will only be held to account for those included in the LAA.

- include 16 statutory education and early years' targets (In addition to the up to 35). These are also included in the new national indicator set of 198 and should not be viewed in isolation.
- underpin the new Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) regime to be rolled out nationally as the replacement to Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) from April 2009. A joint consultation on the overall shape and scope of CAA is currently underway by the Audit Commission; the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI); the Healthcare Commission; HMIC; HM Inspectorate of Prisons; HM Inspectorate of Probation; and the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted). This consultation closes on 15 February 2008.

The 'story of place' should be the foundation for shaping the LAA and identifying up to 35 priorities (although it is generally accepted that it will tend to be poorer performing areas that need the full 35). We should therefore be aiming to keep the LAA as focused as possible.

To date the Thematic Partnerships have identified a long list of 47 indicators for inclusion in the 2008/9 LAA. Appendix B (see below), demonstrates a balanced proportion of nominated indicators against the LAA "blocks" for the initial 'long list' and a potential 'short list' following evaluation. These are shown in the matrix at Appendix C alongside the criteria proposed for reducing the list.

These criteria comprise:

- relationship to emerging community strategy priorities,
- availability of evidence base and baseline (and therefore ability to set a stretch target for 2008/9),
- practicality of collecting the national indicator in the timescale
- dependency on partnership working
- current performance/benchmark

On this basis the matrix has categorised the proposed indicators on a green/amber/red basis to identify those that "score" most favourably (green) and those could be filtered out. In addition, a small number of suggestions have emerged directly from service providers, rather than via the partnership network.

It is also worth noting that all the indicators put forward to date are drawn from the National Indicator set. None are local indicators developed to address Cheshire specific issues. Whilst this is consistent with the Partnership's previously expressed wish to keep the performance management process as streamlined as possible; it may mean that we are not actually held to account on the best measures to support the outcomes we want to deliver.

The Partnership is therefore asked to consider the appropriateness of the indicators put forward and whether any additional indicators, over and above the 22 categorised as "green" should be included in the shortlist for submission to GONW.

4. RECOMMENDED

That the Communities of Cheshire Partnership:

- 1. agrees the priorities for inclusion in the draft Cheshire Sustainable Community Strategy;**
- 2. approves the draft Cheshire Sustainable Community Strategy for a 12 week consultation across the Cheshire Partnerships Framework;**
- 3. and recommends the nominated indicators for the 2008-9 LAA to the Cheshire Governance Board for onward submission to GONW on 29th January 2008.**

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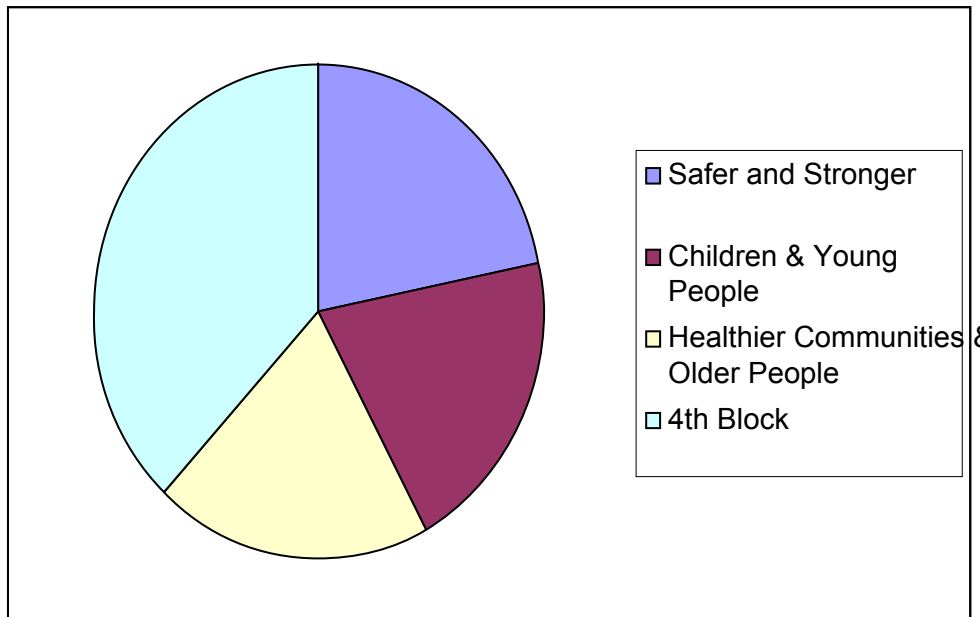
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** **NB.** Since the last meeting of the Partnership (01/11/2007): Government has published 'The New Performance Framework for Local Authorities and Local Authority Partnerships: Single Set of National Indicators' (December 2007).*

The Government introduced a consultation exercise on the new indicators at the same of publication, which related to the formulae and technical guidance underpinning the new framework (not on the indicators themselves). The Cheshire Information Liaison Group co-ordinated comment and responses on behalf of local partners and concern has been expressed with over 70 indicators. A further consultation exercise is underway regarding the 'Place Survey' questions that underpin a number of the quality of life measures in the new Framework; the consultation closes on 8th February 2008. The Place Survey questions also raise a number of issues related to the new LAA.

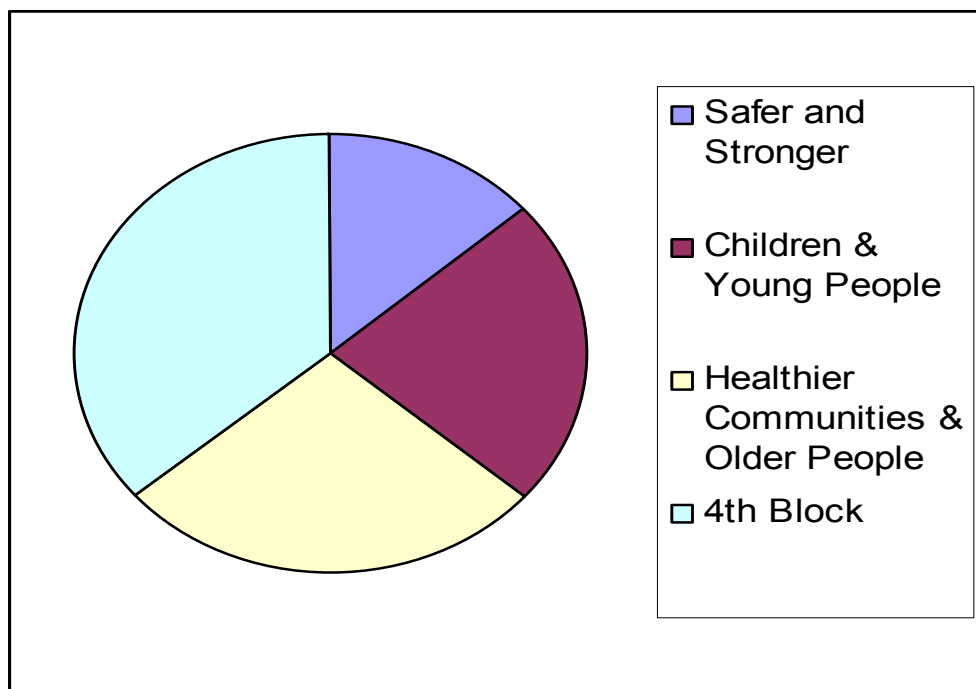
The 'Long List' of Nominated Cheshire 2008/09 Indicators: total of 47



4th Block includes:

Economic Development and Enterprise, Housing , Environment, Culture, Waste and Rural issues

The Potential 'Short List' of Green Nominated Cheshire 2008/09 Indicators: total of 22



* Alcohol included in Healthier Communities and Older People

** KSI indicator(s) not included