



local area agreements: a resource guide



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introduction

There is a lot that is new about the New Performance Framework for local government: a new set of indicators to reduce the reporting burden on councils; a new un-ringfenced area-based grant to support local priorities; a new sector-led approach to supporting improvement; a new area-based, outcome-focused assessment process and at its heart, a new generation of local area agreements.


LAAs provide a basis to take the next steps in the improvement of public services - in crime, health, education, economic development, the environment and beyond. Through strong local leadership and partnership working, they provide a once-in-a-generation opportunity to deliver on local people's priorities and take the tough decisions needed to make a positive difference to communities.

Seizing the opportunity provided by the new performance framework will require councils to rise to the increasing expectations that are part of the devolutionary deal. This will require a new, more active engagement from members and strong local leadership. It will require new relationships

to be formed with partners and existing ones strengthened. It will require innovative new approaches to dealing with important local issues, such as environmental protection, health and community safety. It will require more active engagement with citizens to shape local services.

Many councils are already preparing for business in the new world, developing better partnerships and building their vision for their communities. Some may want help to understand and adapt to the changes or take an ambitious step forward. The local government family sees its role as supporting councils and their partners in this change to achieve the most they can for local people and places.

One of the principles of the new performance framework is that the local government sector should lead its own improvement. The programme of support activities set out in this guide has brought together the Improvement and Development Agency for Local Government (IDeA), the Leadership Centre for Local Government, the department for Communities and Local Government, The Audit



Commission and the Centre for Public Scrutiny. It features many different opportunities for councils to support each other in learning and in identifying new ways to work.

To do this we are providing a comprehensive national support programme that offers a wide range of opportunities for both members and officers to develop skills, understanding and capacity. Each entry in this guide tells you who provides the activity or event on offer, and how you can access it. This could involve councils individually, in groups or as a region. The guide also points you in the direction of more information on LAAs and the new framework more generally.

In addition to this, Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnerships will be working with councils to prepare for LAAs and support delivery of the priorities identified through regional improvement and efficiency strategies. The partnership will be able to tell you about the programme offered in your region, including regional events which they may be organising. Information about RIEPs is given on the opposite page.

Councils and LSPs at a local level, and working together regionally, can decide what activities, events and other information will help them work better as partnerships and implement LAAs successfully.

Acknowledgements

The Improvement and Development Agency for Local Government (IDeA), the Leadership Centre for Local Government, the Department for Communities and Local Government, the Audit Commission and the Centre for Public Scrutiny have all contributed information for this guide.

Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnerships

Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnerships are being created out of the former Regional Centres of Excellence and local authority-led improvement partnerships. They are:

- South East Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership;
- LIFT South West;
- Capital Ambition;
- East Midlands Improvement and Efficiency Partnership;
- West Midlands Regional Improvement and efficiency Partnership;
- Building Capacity East;
- Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership North East Local Government;
- Yorkshire and Humber Improvement Partnership;
- North West Improvement Network.

Further information on RIEPs and full contact details are available in the LGA's *Regional improvement and efficiency partnership directory* available from the LGA website: www.lga.gov.uk/Publication.asp?lSection=0&id=-A7845614

everything you need to know about LAAs

Purpose

Understanding the significance and role of the LAA and key aspects of preparing, negotiating, and performance-managing the agreement. This aims to help members clarify their role and develop their approach to their own LAA

Intended audience

All nominated members, executive members and front-line councillors

Description

A regional or sub-regional event providing an introduction to LAA policy, the new performance framework and the role of elected members.

Format

Half-day workshop

Dates available

Negotiated with client

Location

Regional, sub-regional, individual authority

Cost/financial arrangements

Between £2,100–3k + expenses and VAT.

To be negotiated with the client

Who to contact

David Agnew

David.Agnew@idea.gov.uk

0207 297 6711

Organisation

Lead Organisation: IDeA

Delivery: IDeA, Office for Public Management

strategic LAA workshop

Purpose

To support a local executive or cabinet in strengthening their approach to their LAA

Intended audience

Executive/senior members in a single authority and/or senior members from county and districts with LAA two-tier areas

Description

To enable executive members to review arrangements for management of the LAA and LSP, and leadership challenges such as partnership working, aligning budgets, financial and performance accountability. An IDeA peer member will support delivery.

Format/time needed

Full or half-day workshop

Dates available

Negotiated with client

Location

Locality-based event within a single/two-tier LAA authority

Cost/financial arrangements

To be negotiated with the client

Who to contact

David Agnew
David.Agnew@idea.gov.uk
0207 297 6711

Organisation

Lead organisation: IDeA
Delivery: IDeA, Office for Public Management

engaging front-line councillors in the LAA

Purpose

To support members with their leadership responsibilities and opportunities within LAAs

Intended audience

Front-line councillors from the leading party and/or cross-party within single or two tier authorities

Description

To explore and agree the ways in which all elected members will be engaged in the agreement and performance review of LAAs. An IDeA peer member will support delivery.

Format/time needed

Full or half-day workshop

Dates available

Negotiated with client

Location

Locality-based event within a single/two-tier LAA authority

Cost/financial arrangements

To be negotiated with the client

Who to contact

David Agnew
David.Agnew@idea.gov.uk
0207 297 6711

Organisation

Lead organisation: IDeA
Delivery: IDeA, Office for Public Management

LSP peer challenge

Purpose

To help the LSP examine and review performance, and identify key strengths and areas for improvement

Intended audience

LSPs

Description

Peer challenge provides a constructive and mutually supportive process with the LSP to challenge performance, strengths and areas for improvement. Developed and delivered in partnership between SOLACE Enterprises, Warwick University Business School Local Government Centre and the IDeA, the peer challenge is carried out against a quality benchmark.

Format/time needed

Site visit by team: two days

Formal feedback: one day

Dates available

Negotiated with client

Location

Client authority

Cost/financial arrangements

£8,950 + expenses and VAT

Who to contact

Satvinder Rana

Satvinder.Rana@idea.gov.uk

07887 997124

Organisation

SOLACE, Warwick University Business School Local Government Centre

LSP development and improvement support

Purpose

To support identified leadership challenges and help build partnership capacity and learning.

Intended audience

Local authorities and partners
Regional and sub-regional improvement programmes

Description

Support is delivered through a peer mentor team approach, which aims to develop corporate LSP leadership and capacity to improve performance and help deliver significant transformational change by building trust, sharing knowledge and resources and working collaboratively across boundaries.

Aspects of LSP working that this could cover include:

accountable body status and implications; member development; partnership working and duty to cooperate; scrutiny and performance management; neighbourhood working; two-tier working.

Format/time needed

Tailored support to meet identified improvement needs

Dates available

Negotiated with client

Location

Client authority and/or partners

Cost/financial arrangements

Dependent on support required

Who to contact

David Agnew
David.Agnew@idea.gov.uk
0207 297 6711

Organisation

Sponsor: IDeA
Delivery: IDeA
and accredited peer members

Beacon councils: LSPs and LAAs

Purpose

Sharing good practice on partnership working

Intended audience

Councils, members and partners

Description

The National Beacon Scheme Round 9 will celebrate and showcase LSPs and LAAs under the specific theme on 'partnerships and agreements' (2007).

The scheme is aligned with LSPs and LAAs within service-specific themes, and will highlight and share good practice that will be of use in delivering LAA targets.

Format/time needed

Dissemination programme during 2007-8. Three open day events planned.

Dates available

Information available on IDeA website
November 2007 onwards

Location

Open days hosted within Beacon council winners

Cost/financial arrangements

No cost

Who to contact

Ben Spinks
Ben.Spinks@idea.gov.uk
07786 542309

Organisation

Lead: IDeA
Delivery: IDeA, Beacons team

strategic housing and LAAs: member mini-seminar

Purpose

To raise member awareness around housing issues and LAAs. For example how housing targets such as those relating to affordability or tackling homelessness can be incorporated within LAAs.

Intended audience

Elected members

Description

Local leadership support to provide members with an overview of strategic housing issues in relation to LAAs and LSPs

Format/time needed

Two–three hour workshop

Dates available

Negotiated with client

Location

Client authority

Cost/financial arrangements

To be negotiated with the client

Who to contact

Reniera O'Donnell
Reniera.ODonnell@idea.gov.uk
020 7296 6773

Organisation

Lead: IDeA
Delivery: IDeA, strategic housing team

strategic housing and LAAs: specialist workshop

Purpose

To bring in expert help for members and officers to clarify actions around specific issues

Intended audience

Elected members, housing officers and officers responsible for planning, regeneration and economic development.

Description

A one day workshop involving members and officers using expert peers to provide clarification and advice around specific issues relating to strategic housing such as two-tier working, cross-boundary issues and strategy alignment issues.

Format/time needed

One day seminar

Dates available

Negotiated with client

Location

Client authority

Cost/financial arrangements

To be negotiated with the client

Who to contact

Reniera O'Donnell
Reniera.ODonnell@idea.gov.uk
020 7296 6773

Organisation

Sponsor: IDeA
Delivery: IDeA, strategic housing team

place-shaping and spatial planning seminar

Purpose

Supporting local authorities and partners with integration of the Local Development Framework (LDF) core strategy within the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS)

Intended audience

Planning officers and elected members

Description

To help navigate the challenges of preparing local development frameworks and highlighting the ways in which the LDF system can help deliver strategic goals of their local authority.

Further information on related issues from the Planning Advisory Service via www.pas.gov.uk

Format/time needed

One day seminars

Dates available

Negotiated with client, available from early 2008

Location

On site, within client authority

Cost/financial arrangements

No cost

Who to contact

Jackie Leask
020 7296 6142

Organisation

Lead: CLG, IDEA
Delivery: IDeA, Planning Advisory Service

LSP governance and partnership ethical behaviour benchmark and health check

Purpose

To review local authorities' and their partners' governance arrangements that enable effective partnership working and robust citizen redress.

Intended audience

Leading members of the council (officers and members) to include chairs and members of standards and/or audit committees. Leading stakeholders within partnership organisations.

Description

To help support LSP partners in the delivery of good governance and ethical behaviour which are both considered important for the delivery of successful partnership working. The review process focuses on roles, relationships, culture and ethical behaviour within partnership working and may lead to the development new partnership protocols, revised governance arrangement or constitutional change.

Format/time needed

Two to three days on site/s for health check. Other support or development work negotiated with clients

Dates available

Negotiated with client

Location

Client/partner organisation

Cost/financial arrangements

Dependent on service(s) required
Health check between £6.5k-£8k

Who to contact

Vanessa Walker – Vanessa.Walker@idea.gov.uk

Organisation

Lead: IDeA
Delivery: IDeA with peer teams

Leadership Academy

Purpose

To improve leadership capacity for LAA and LSP planning and delivery

Intended audience

Leading members, which includes leaders of councils, leaders of political groups, executive and scrutiny committee members; portfolio holders; scrutiny chairs; and opposition spokespeople

Description

Effective political and managerial leadership provides one of the key building blocks for long-term success of LSPs and LAAs. The IDeA Leadership Academy offers customised leadership development activities designed to support those in leadership positions.

Format/time needed

Three modules of two days each during a period of three months. An optional fourth module takes place at a time

agreed by course participants.

Dates available

Upon negotiation with client

Location

Warwick Business School

Cost/financial arrangements

£1.4k (per set of three modules)

Who to contact

leadership team,
local.leadership@idea.gov.uk
020 7296 6863.

Organisation

Lead: IDeA
Delivery: Warwick Business School and accredited peer members

Local Leadership Academy

Purpose

The local leadership academy's (LoLA) development modules and workbooks focus on the key skills and knowledge that councillors need to be effective and equipped to guide the fast pace of change in local government.

Intended audience

Elected members

Description

Effective political and managerial leadership provides one of the key building blocks for long-term success of LSPs and LAAs. The IDeA Local Leadership Academy (LoLA) offers customised leadership development activities designed to build the capacity of front line councillors.

Format/time needed

One day workshop

Dates available

Negotiated with client

Location

Client authority

Cost/financial arrangements

Fees for each module vary according to the requirements of each council. Modules £1.5k + expenses and VAT

Who to contact

Leadership Team,
local.leadership@idea.gov.uk
020 7296 6863.

Organisation

Lead: IDeA
Delivery: IDeA and accredited peer members

voluntary and community sector partnership improvement programme

Purpose

To work with mixed groups from local authorities and the voluntary and community sector to build their capacity to work more effectively in partnership, and to model a new way of developing sustainable cross-sector relationships.

Intended audience

Senior staff in local authorities and voluntary sector personnel

Description

Work underway in identified areas to help improve partnership working between councils and the voluntary and community sector. Initially in three regions, it will roll out over three years. Case studies and reports available from ongoing roll-out across specific local authorities, online at IDeA Knowledge

Format/time needed

Tailored support to meet identified needs.

Dates available

Negotiated with client

Location

Client authority: in 2007/08 the programme is being offered in the north east, north west and London

Cost/financial arrangements

Dependent on services required.

Who to contact

Helen Hughes
Helen.Hughes@idea.gov.uk
020 7296 6887

Organisation

Lead: Cabinet Office, Capacity Builders, IDeA
Delivery: IDeA VCS team and consultants

councillor role mentoring

Purpose

Working with a group of councillors from one authority and/or with councillors in similar roles across the authority – committee or cabinet members with portfolio, corporate or service responsibilities or members of overview and scrutiny committees.

Intended audience

Elected members

Description

Support for individual and/or groups of councillors with LAA and LSP responsibility to enhance the effectiveness of the leader/councillor. Increasing individual capacity, competence, knowledge, learning and effectiveness within specific councillor skill areas; providing vision, managing performance, excellence in leadership, partnership and top team working.

Format/time needed

On site meetings during the relationship, telephone and e-

mentoring contact throughout

Dates available

Negotiated with client

Location

Client authority

Cost/financial arrangements

£4.5-£7k (depending on the number of peer days and consultant support required).

Who to contact

Charles Leslie
Charles.Leslie@idea.gov.uk
07771 931857

Organisation

Lead: IDeA
Delivery: IDeA peer member mentors

political group mentoring

Purpose

To mentor groups and manage change within the political environment, within the context of the new performance framework.

Intended audience

Political groups

Description

Support for political groups to enhance the effectiveness of the councillors, including partnership working. Helping increase group capacity, competence, knowledge, learning and effectiveness within specific councillor skill areas: providing vision, managing performance, excellence in leadership, partnership and top team working.

Format/time needed

On site meetings during the relationship, which may include an away-day or similar event

Dates available

Negotiated with client

Location

Client authority

Cost/financial arrangements

£4k-£7k depending on group circumstances and number of councillors involved

Who to contact

Charles Leslie
Charles.Leslie@idea.gov.uk
07771 931857

Lead organisation/delivery

Lead: IDeA
Delivery: IDeA peer member mentors

IDeA national and specialist advisors

Purpose

Online and on site support to service specific and cross-cutting LAA improvement targets and outcomes: children, adult care, healthy communities, strategic housing, sustainability, community cohesion, culture, procurement, and the voluntary and community sector.

Intended audience

Local authorities and partnerships

Description

Support in relation to particular skills or outcomes, and provide support to statutory and thematic partnerships.

Format/time needed

Agreed with client

Dates available

Agreed with client

Location

On site and telephone

Cost/financial arrangements

No cost and/or negotiated with client

Who to contact

David Agnew
David.Agnew@idea.gov.uk
0207 297 6711

Organisation

Sponsor: IDeA
Delivery: IDeA and associate advisors

creating excellent LAAs

Purpose

To develop a leadership approach amongst the senior leaders and partners in regions and localities that ensures the creation of an excellent LAA.

Intended audience

Senior councillors, senior officers, and other key senior leaders involved in the LAA process

Description

Offers support to LSPs and key regional bodies to help increase the leadership capacity of the system, to change the manner in which LAAs are created. The focus is on relationship-building between senior partners and stakeholders in the LAA process.

Although all workshops and projects are designed in a bespoke manner with the relevant locality, a typical workshop format may involve exploring the history of the LAA process for the participants, recognising what is happening currently, and using this information to create a picture of how places want the LAA process to work. This is

best achieved by focusing on a particular issue that is long-term in nature and proving difficult to resolve. By working together on this issue, senior leaders gain several advantages. First some progress is made on the issue. Second, this leadership group will experience how adopting different approaches can enable them to achieve a breakthrough in areas where they are 'stuck'. Finally, the combination of these first two benefits encourages this group to take these approaches into other areas of their work together.

Format

Variable according to need: ranges from one-day workshops to longer-term engagements of up to fifteen days work with the LSP.

Dates available

Present to March 2008

Location

In the relevant region/locality

Cost/financial arrangements

To be negotiated with client

Who to contact

John Atkinson, director of operations
john.atkinson@localleadership.gov.uk
020 7630 2180

Organisation

Sponsor: Leadership Centre for Local Government
Delivery: Leadership Centre for Local Government

confidence and ambition – a regional scrutiny programme

Purpose

To support councillors involved in overview and scrutiny to develop effective scrutiny of LAAs and partnership working.

Intended audience

Elected members

Description

The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 offers new opportunities and challenges to overview and scrutiny, especially when it comes to scrutinising partners in LAAs.

This programme will include an introduction to key leadership skills from Andy Holder Associates, an emphasis on working in a political context, led by the Political Skills Forum, and a focus on action learning that is responsive to participants' needs. It is aimed at scrutiny members who want to develop their skills in driving overview and scrutiny in their area, influencing their councils and partner organisations, and calling them to account on behalf of

their communities.

Format/time needed

One day

Dates available

Negotiated with client

Location

Regionally

Cost/financial arrangements

To be negotiated with the client

Who to contact

fateha.begum@cfps.org.uk
020 7296 6835

Organisation

Sponsor: IDeA/Centre for Public Scrutiny
Delivery: IDeA/Centre for Public Scrutiny

local partnership advisers

Purpose

To provide advice, training and support to build the capacity of partnerships to agree and deliver LAAs and local priorities.

Intended audience

All partnerships and organisations involved in the agreement and delivery of LAAs

Description

Local Partnership Advisers offer advice, training and support to partnerships across a number of thematic and cross-cutting areas to build the capacity to deliver. A panel of 150 advisers is available to share their expertise in thematic areas of health, crime, education, worklessness and housing; and cross-cutting issues of strategic planning, performance management, community cohesion, and community engagement.

Advisers have worked with LSPs to offer advice on partnership and delivery issues and have worked to support the agreement and delivery of LAAs.

Format/time needed

Most assignments are five to ten days long but will vary in length depending on the nature of the work

Dates available

This would be discussed individually with advisers

Location

Available in all regions

Cost/financial arrangements

Individual day rates will apply, to be negotiated with the client

Who to contact

Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnerships or government offices for your region

Organisation

Sponsor: Communities and Local Government (CLG)
Delivery: Communities and Local Government

partnerships performance improvement programme

Purpose

To drive sustainable improvement through more effective performance management for LSPs.

Intended audience

This programme involves a team of five participants from each LSPs preferably a cross-section of partners, including where appropriate elected members. A total of six teams participate on each cohort, providing opportunities to network with and learn from other partnerships

Description

Involving teams from six LSPs, there is a focus on real intractable performance issues to develop robust solutions which work. Key topics addressed include; governance and leadership, benefits realisation, and embedding performance culture.

In addition to developing solutions to performance issues, the aim is to develop a team of performance champions with the skills and behaviours required to drive change and sustain a culture of continuous improvement.

Format/time needed

The programme consists of an initial scoping workshop followed by three off site action learning events, scheduled at intervals over a six to eight month period. The total number of training days is seven per programme. (Scoping = one day; event one = three days, event two = two days and event three = one day).

Dates available

Contact the Regional Improvement Partnership in the first instance

Location

Programmes are normally organised on a regional basis

Cost/financial arrangements

£15,000 per team for total package of action learning events. A tailored package is available to support teams. This is optional and costs £10,000 per team.

Who to contact

Ciara Magee
ciara.m.magee@uk.pwc.com
0787 9634250

Organisation

PricewaterhouseCoopers & SOLACE Enterprises

web-based resources

IDeA

IDeA Knowledge provides up-to-date information and analysis as well as peer discussion, debate and networking within an LAA community of practice.

LAA library from April 2008, an online library of examples of good practice and innovation, research summaries and policy analyses. It will share learning about improved delivery of LAA outcomes and effective partnership working in localities. It will include information from Renewal.net with which it will be amalgamated.

Integrated Workforce Strategy Good Practice Project

A 'knowledge bank' of good practice examples where authorities are working jointly with their partners to tackle shared workforce issues. Includes a series of toolkits to assist LSPs and LAAs to assess and create the workforce/team necessary to manage the LSP and deliver agreed LAA targets.

The IDeA website is at: www.idea.gov.uk

Audit Commission

Knowing Your Communities a web based toolkit, which will help assess progress on equalities issues. This toolkit is designed to help councils assess their current progress, benchmark their progress with others, and understand what they need to do to improve their performance. The toolkit is closely linked to corporate assessments and service inspection frameworks where inspectors judge how well councils engage with service users and local communities, and what difference such engagement makes in practice.

www.userfocus.audit-commission.gov.uk/KycHome.aspx

Leadership Centre for Local Government

The Leadership Centre website has a database to other providers of leadership development and support.

www.suppliers.localleadership.gov.uk

Commission for Rural Communities

The Commission for Rural Communities has produced advice on rural-proofing LAAs, to take account of the needs of rural communities, available from:

[www.ruralcommunities.gov.uk/events/
localareaagreementsthinkingrural](http://www.ruralcommunities.gov.uk/events/localareaagreementsthinkingrural)

Renewal.net

This website supports neighbourhood renewal. It includes guidance relevant to LAAs, and case studies from existing LAAs.

publications

From the Audit Commission

(www.audit-commission.gov.uk):

Governing partnerships: bridging the accountability gap. (2005), this study urges local public bodies to take a much harder look at whether the partnerships they are involved in are delivering for local people.

Innovation report 'Seeing the light' (2007), this report is intended to encourage local authorities to consider innovation as one way of achieving sustained performance improvement. By providing practical advice and support, based on authorities' own experiences of innovating, it aims to assist in creating the conditions in which innovation is fostered, developed and managed effectively. It will be most valuable to senior managers, elected members and officers in local councils and fire and rescue authorities, and will be of particular interest to those managing strategic business processes or those involved in overview and scrutiny arrangements. It also has relevance for other local public bodies, particularly those involved in local strategic partnerships.

Stewardship and governance (2004), this report summarises the key findings of the Commission's auditors' work on the 2003/04 accounts. It identifies a number of important policy issues that need to be addressed in order to improve financial performance, financial reporting and corporate governance arrangements in both health and local government bodies.

From the Local Government Association

(www.lga.gov.uk)

Leading localities elected member information slides

A very English revolution, delivering bolder and better local area agreements (2007).

Prosperous communities II: vive la dévolution, promotes the case for multi-area agreements.

Pushing back the frontiers: the multi-area agreement pioneers, develops the debate about multi-area agreements (2007).

A partnership approach to well-being.

From vision to reality, paper on adult social care and LAAs.

Work to address domestic violence and LAAs, Where does it fit?

EU Structural Funds, the need for greater alignment with local mechanisms and priorities: makes the case for the alignment of European Structural Funds to LAAs.

From LACORS

(www.lacors.gov.uk)

Local area agreements, drivers; barriers; benefits and lessons learned from rounds 1 and 2. (2007), Wendy Martin.

Next generation local area agreements - introductory briefing for regulatory services (2007), Wendy Martin.

Local area agreements – menu of possible trading standards and environmental health related targets. (2007), Abigail Mahony

From the Improvement and Development Agency

(www.idea.gov.uk)

Delivering housing strategy through LAAs, IDEa and Chartered Institute for Housing

New-style LAAs: a checklist for the negotiations (November 2007)

Local Leadership Academy: member workbook (Local Area Agreements)

Forthcoming publication

How to win friends and influence partners: strengthening LAAs through scrutiny, Centre for Public Scrutiny: contains ideas and examples/case studies about how scrutiny can influence the LAA process, before, during and after.

To be published in December 2007, from CfPS: info@cfps.org.uk 020 7296 6835 or download from our website www.cfps.org.uk

For further information please contact
the Local Government Association at:
Local Government House
Smith Square,
London SW1P 3HZ

or telephone LGconnect, for all your LGA
queries on 020 7664 3131
Fax: 020 7664 3030
E mail: info@lga.gov.uk

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