

## CHESHIRE LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT UPDATE

### Introduction

1 The purpose of this report is to update the Cheshire Governance Board on the current position concerning the preparation of the Cheshire Local Area Agreement.

### Ongoing Progress to Date

2 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. Slightly refined drafts were subsequently submitted following further development and negotiation, the latest of which was sent on Friday 2 March. Appendix A details the further changes made since the February submission.

3 In addition to the ongoing refinement of the Agreement, work has begun 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.

4 This work has helped inform the development of options for the use of the additional income to be generated from second homes taxation, specifically the £47,500 to be earmarked for shared LAA/SSCF priorities. These options, considered by Cheshire Chief Executives at their meeting on 9 March, are detailed in Appendix B.

### Next Steps

5 It is expected that central Government departments will clear the final Round 3 LAA submissions by 9 March. There will then be a narrow window of opportunity for "tidying up" before GO endorse the LAA for signature by Ministers. A signing ceremony, hosted by Phil Woolas MP, Minister for Local Government and Community Cohesion, will be held at Church House, Westminster, London on Thursday 29 March from 11.00am to 1.00pm. Whilst one place has been allocated per authority, this invitation has been extended in two tier areas to include a representative from each of the district authorities. In the spirit of partnership working, a request has also been made to GONW for a further invitation to the Chairman of the Communities of Cheshire Partnership.

6 In addition to celebrating the signing of the Round 3 LAAs, the event will also provide delegates the opportunity to discuss the future of LAAs following publication of the Local Government White Paper and more recent thinking published in February. Operational guidance to inform the negotiation of new LAAs for 2008/09 is expected to be published in the summer and will be reported to Cheshire Chief Executives in due course.

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Cheshire LAA - Version 20 – 2 March 2007

<p><i>Economic Development and Enterprise</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sub-outcome 15.2 ii) - removal of the 'Train to Gain' sub-outcome. LSC do not have a multi-annual budget for this programme initiative and therefore do not have set targets as an organisation year on year. Subsequent renumbering of iii), iv) and v)</li> <li>• Sub-outcome 10.1 iv) - revised and increased baseline and three trajectories for new and sustained social enterprises</li> <li>• Sub-outcome 15.1 i) – wording changes to indicator on GONW advice and additional line to pick up other wards identified for targeting</li> <li>• Sub-outcome 15.2 iv) – revised lead partner</li> <li>• Sub-outcomes 9.4 i) &amp; ii) - LAA 4<sup>th</sup> Block Joint Strategic Group will assume responsibility and ownership of the sub-outcomes</li> </ul> <p><i>Healthier Communities and Older People</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sub-outcome 14.1 i) - baseline details added from year 2006/07</li> </ul> <p><i>Children and Young People</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Page 90 / 91 – revised Primary Strategy Central Co-ordination figure. Reallocation of School Improvement Partners, School Development Grant and Children’s Fund from pooled to aligned funding tables on advice of GONW</li> <li>• Sub-outcome 7.4 i) - baseline information and first two year targets added</li> <li>• Sub-outcome 5.4 ii) iii) &amp; iv) – revision of attainment levels of LACS (looked after children) following GONW comments. Will require further subsequent revision following direct DfES guidance</li> <li>• Sub-outcomes 5.2 – targets will be set during March 2007 when information becomes available</li> <li>• Sub-outcome 12.1 ii) - information concerning the three targets will be available in March 2007</li> </ul> <p><i>Safer and Stronger Communities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sub-outcome 1.1, 1.2, 2.1 and 2.2 – amended lead partners to Blacon Neighbourhood Management and Lache Neighbourhood Element Boards</li> <li>• Sub-outcome 2.1 iv) – additional wording to baseline</li> </ul>	<p>Simon Adderley (on behalf of 4<sup>th</sup> Block Joint Strategic Group) Damian Lally</p> <p>Simon Adderley / Pat Shilliday (GONW) Simon Adderley Robbie Taylor</p> <p>Cynthia Nelson</p> <p>Phillip Lomas (GONW)</p> <p>Dave Hagan Dave Hagan</p> <p>Dave Hagan Dave Hagan</p> <p>Gavin Butler</p>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sub-outcome 2.2 ii) – amended wording to baseline</li> <li>• Sub-outcome 3.3 iv) &amp; v) – rewording of indicators and amended baselines following amended definitions and figures from GONW</li> <li>• Sub-outcome 3.3 iii) –amended baseline following amended figures from GONW</li> <li>• Sub-outcome 4.1 i) and ii) – amended indicators, baseline and targets</li> <li>• Sub-outcome 11.1 iii) – removal of indicator. 82b in now included in the combined sub-outcome 11.1 ii)</li> <li>• Page 79 / 80 – Reallocation of Basic Command Unit funding from pooled to aligned funding table and of Rural Social &amp; Community Programme funding from aligned to pooled funding table</li> </ul>	<p>Michael Ryan (GONW)</p> <p>Gavin Butler Helen De Lemos</p> <p>Alison Stathers-Tracey (GONW)</p>
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PROPOSAL	COST
<p><b>1. Secretariat Support to the Cheshire Partnerships Framework*</b></p> <p>This particular need has been highlighted by the recent Audit Commission project, “Improving Partnership Working in Cheshire” and was the key message to emerge from the project feedback given by the Audit Commission to the Communities of Cheshire Partnership on 8 February. Whilst the Cheshire LAA Group currently fulfil this secretariat role, the arrangement was only intended to be a short-term solution and cannot be sustained in the longer term. In addition to the support needs of the new Communities of Cheshire Partnership and Cheshire Governance Board, other components of the Framework are also struggling to fulfil their expanding roles with limited support.</p>	<p><b>Total: £69,000</b> (staffing only incl. on costs based on one Partnership Manager plus admin support)</p>
<p><b>2. Proposal to Develop a Third Sector Hub*</b></p> <p>The LAA is intended to be a new way of joint working which seeks to engage as many partners as possible in delivering the outputs in the Agreement. This requirement is further developed in the ‘roadmap’ included in the new guidance which requires a joint sector development of a new Community Engagement Strategy to replace the Statement of Community Involvement.</p> <p>There are over three thousand voluntary, community and faith sector organisations in Cheshire, ranging from very small groups dealing at very local level with a small number of vulnerable/potentially vulnerable individuals through to larger organisations delivering multiple projects and large infrastructure organisations supporting and advising the others, which make up the Third Sector.</p> <p>These organisations have put forward the idea of a Hub to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provide LAA partners with a single contact for the Third Sector across Cheshire thereby saving valuable time and effort for non Third Sector partners;</li> <li>• provide an agreed means of consultation, ensuring that the same information has been distributed in an agreed format;</li> <li>• facilitate genuine engagement of the sector in the LAA by enabling views to be sought from a wide range of organisations with many interests;</li> <li>• enable LAA partners to benefit from knowing the contribution the sector can make to meeting LAA targets;</li> <li>• ensure that the action plan in the SCI is implemented and that an effective Community Engagement</li> </ul>	<p><b>Total: £31,000</b></p> <p>Staffing - £14,600 (p/t VCFS Co-ordinator + travel)</p> <p>Support - £6,800 (incl. printing, stationery, premises, hospitality, postage, training, etc.)</p> <p>Attendees - £9,600 (incl. travel, support, attendance)</p>

<p>Strategy is produced through a genuinely multi-sector approach;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provide the Cheshire LAA and its partners with an example of best practice by supporting a Third Sector led engagement programme;</li> <li>• facilitate a shared ownership of issues to be resolved and outputs to be met; and</li> <li>• open up opportunities to lever in additional funding to support specific LAA outcomes.</li> </ul> <p>Additionally it is expected that the ongoing development of the Hub would add value to the work currently being undertaken by the ChangeUp Consortium.</p> <p>The Hub would have a Co-ordinator who would distribute information and requests for proposals to a number of networks who would in turn pass on to their own members and feed back to the Hub and then to the LAA team. Whilst this officer will receive support in terms of staff time from local infrastructure organisations such as the CVS and in the additional workload of new LAA related consultations, the post and administrative costs need to be funded. An approach for funding is also being made to GONW.</p>	
<p><b>3. LAA Performance Management System Support</b></p> <p>Effective performance management will be critical to the delivery of the Cheshire LAA, both in terms of monitoring and reporting to the thematic partnerships, Communities of Cheshire Partnership and Governance Board as well as the performance management expectations and requirements of GONW. Performance management is more than a monitoring process. It is about learning from results and taking action where required. As a result, a robust performance management framework has been devised to ensure that the progress of the agreement is monitored, managed and evaluated on a quarterly basis.</p> <p>The Cheshire LAA contains around 190 indicators reporting to over 50 sub outcomes delivered in partnership by a large number of organisations. Based on latest estimates, the sub outcomes are 'owned' by over 70 responsible officers for development and reporting purposes.</p> <p>In order for this complex agreement to be effectively performance managed, an electronic system is currently being developed. Excelcis is an IT based system used by Cheshire County Council to support their corporate performance management arrangements. After an extensive feasibility study and in view of the County Council's role as Accountable Body, it has been decided that a parallel version of Excelcis should be developed for the purposes of the LAA. This would have separate Communities of Cheshire Partnership branding and reflect the structure and terminology of the LAA. It will also be accessible to partners to input data and monitor performance.</p>	<p><b>Total: £10,000</b></p> <p>i) Comprehensive training in order for the system to be fully understood and exploited by partners. (£5000)</p> <p>ii) External technical support (£3000)</p> <p>iii) Access to the system for partners (£2000)</p>

<p><b>4. Equality Strategy for Cheshire / Equality Impact Assessment for the LAA*</b></p> <p>The recent CLG publication – Developing the future arrangements for Local Area Agreements – signals the replacement of the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) with a new community engagement strategy to be adopted within the Sustainable Community Strategy.</p> <p>However, communities in Cheshire require different approaches and resources to become involved in engagement processes. An equality strategy needs to be developed to ensure that Cheshire’s minority communities are included and consulted in both the policy development and service planning exercises in a consistent and co-ordinated manner.</p> <p>Furthermore, in addition to existing practices required to respond to the Equality Standard, equality assessment statements are a statutory requirement and the Cheshire LAA will need to be assessed to ensure there are no negative impacts on race, disability, gender, age, religion and beliefs. The development of a Cheshire Equality Strategy can help to fulfil the requirements to be placed on LAAs and LSPs.</p> <p>Finally, LAAs and LSPs are expected to address the cross-cutting issue of community cohesion. This has different meaning across our communities and localities and an adopted approach developed through consultation to produce an equality strategy can help improve understanding.</p> <p>Investment in this area will provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Establishment and delivery of six minority community focus group sessions to produce first hand qualitative information concerning the Cheshire LAA.</li> <li>▪ Supporting evidence to undertake a full equality impact assessment of the Cheshire LAA.</li> <li>▪ Supporting evidence for the Cheshire community cohesion agenda and assist in the delivery of the respective LAA sub-outcome.</li> <li>▪ Supporting evidence to establish the basis of a co-ordinated equality strategy for Cheshire and ongoing expert advice to ensure its vision and action plans are universally adopted.</li> </ul> <p>NB. This work will need to be continually refreshed as new iterations of the LAA are produced annually.</p>	<p><b>Total: £8,000</b></p>
<p><b>5. Re-offending and PPO targets</b></p> <p>Within the LAA, measurement of the re-offending outcome 4.1 (ii) - Reduce the volume of convictions by Prolific and Priority Offenders who re-offend, measured by conviction rates pre and post entry to the scheme</p>	<p><b>Total: £2,500</b> (estimate based on five days work)</p>

<p>by 30% by 2010 - will require new work on managing Police National Computer data over the next three years. This will involve running checks on between 150 and 300 offenders, looking at their conviction in the last twelve months prior to a set date and then repeating the task at six monthly intervals. This is new work that the Administration of Justice office would struggle to prioritise and resource. No other agency has access to the relevant information.</p> <p>This is a mandatory LAA outcome under the Safer and Stronger Communities block. If financial support from this pot is unavailable, it is likely that Govt would expect the work to be funded from the Safer Stronger Communities Fund to ensure the establishment of the baseline and measurement of targets. This would require a recalculation and reallocation of the funding already agreed for next year to each of the six CDRPs.</p>	
<p><b>6. Partnership Training &amp; Development*</b></p> <p>The Audit Commission project identified the need for a development programme for partnership working at all levels across the Cheshire Partnerships Framework, from the Communities of Cheshire Partnership and the Cheshire Governance Board to operational on the ground delivery. The importance of this will be heightened as LSPs continue to develop and their roles strengthened in the context of the Local Government White Paper.</p>	<p><b>Total: £</b></p>
<p><b>7. Support to specific LAA priority sub-outcomes or actions struggling or failing to deliver</b></p> <p>This would support the “local ladder of intervention” principles identified within the Performance Management Framework of the LAA which aims to ensure that the appropriate package of challenge and support is directed towards targets and sub outcomes that are under-performing.</p>	<p><b>Total: £</b></p>

**NOTE:**

The Audit Commission project – Improving Partnership Working in Cheshire – identified a number of recommendations in relation to items 1, 2, 4 and 6 above. These were presented to the Communities of Cheshire Partnership on 8 February. The Audit Commission will review progress of partnership working in Cheshire over the next twelve months and will produce a progress statement in February 2008.