

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

TO:	COUNCIL		
DATE:	27 JANUARY 2009	AGENDA ITEM:	11
TITLE:	LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT 2 REVIEW AND REFRESH		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	CLLR LOVELOCK	PORTFOLIO:	LEADERSHIP
SERVICE:	POLICY & PERFORMANCE	WARDS:	BOROUGH-WIDE
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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The report provides an overview of the current review and refresh of the Local Area Agreement 2 (LAA2) and sets out the process for finalising the revised agreement.
- 1.2 The list of the indicators being considered as part of the review and refresh and the review timetable are included as **Appendices 1 and 2**.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 That the process for agreement of the revised LAA2 be noted.
- 2.2 That the final revised LAA2 be signed off by the Director of Resources, following consideration by Cabinet on 16 March 2009, in the absence of a suitable Council meeting for sign off prior to submission of the LAA to GOSE on 26 March 2009.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 The requirement to draft and publish a Community Strategy was contained in the Local Government Act 2000. The 2006 Local government white paper indicated that, following the Egan review, this should be recast as a Sustainable Community Strategy and relate more directly to sustainable development, sustainable communities and the Local Development Framework.

3.2 The Sustainable Community Strategy should be a partnership document developed through the Local Strategic Partnership. The recent Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 has placed a statutory duty on public sector partners to prepare a Local Area Agreement, which is the delivery plan of the community strategy.

3. LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT 2 REVIEW AND REFRESH 2008/09

3.1 The purpose of the LAA2 review is to help assess and benchmark progress over the three year span of the LAA. In addition, the review is also an opportunity to revise, by exception, particular targets to reflect changes in local circumstances or national priorities, where clear evidence is available.

3.2 Lead officers for the LAA have highlighted the likely impact of the economic downturn on achieving the targets and this is being considered further as part of the negotiations.

3.3 However, most changes are around refining targets for which information was previously unavailable rather than replacing them or changing agreed priorities. Therefore this year there will be a distinct 'refresh' element to the annual review.

3.4 The refresh element of the review is considering the 'unfinished business' from the LAA negotiations last year, relating to delayed indicators, revised indicators and targets that are inconsistent with their indicator definition.

3.5 The list of the indicators being considered as part of the review and refresh are attached as Appendix 1.

3.6 In terms of the timetable for the review and for finalising the revised LAA2, the draft revised LAA2 will go to GOSE by 2 March 2009, with the final version, which needs to have been signed off by the authority and submitted to GOSE by 23 March 2009. A more detailed timetable is provided as Appendix 2.

3.7 Therefore due to the timing of the final submission, Council is advised that the final submission will be signed off by the Director of Resources, who has delegated authority to do so, following its consideration by Cabinet on 16 March 2009.

4. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

4.1 The Reading 2020 Partnership structure includes community and voluntary sector representation as well as that from public and private sectors, at Board, theme partnership and Forum levels.

4.2 Stakeholder consultation across delivery partners and client groups has been central to the development of the Sustainable Community Strategy and key priorities which have informed the LAA as delivery plan.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Production of the Sustainable Community Strategy is a statutory requirement as set out in the Local Government Act 2000.

5.2 A further statutory duty for public sector partners to co-operate in the production of a Local Area Agreement is included within the recent Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.

5.3 Under the Local Authorities (Functions & Responsibilities) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2008, functions relating to Local Area Agreements are shared functions which may be, but need not be, exercised by the executive (Cabinet). Council, on 1 April 2008, resolved that such functions should be the responsibility of full Council, but delegated to the Director of Resources to exercise. As explained in para. 3.7 above, given the deadline for the final submission (23 March 2009), this report advises that the Council's submission therefore will be signed off by the Director of Resources following its consideration by Cabinet on 16 March 2009.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The development of the Sustainable Community Strategy and its attendant Local Area Agreement will have implications for resource allocation and use in the local area.

6.2 Achievement of the targets agreed as part of the LAA will attract Performance Reward Grant. The amount of PRG for LAA2 has not yet been announced.

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 Reading Local Area Agreements 2007-2010 and 2008-2011.

7.2 Local Government Act 2000.

7.3 Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.