

West Cheshire Together

Working in partnership for local people

Report title	Local Area Agreement - 2009/10 Annual Review
Description	Single tier and county councils have a duty under Sections 103 – 113 of the Local Government and Public Health Act 2007 to prepare and submit a local area agreement to the Secretary of State. This agreement, prepared and submitted by the former Cheshire County Council, has subsequently been disaggregated on a Cheshire West and Chester Council/Cheshire East Council basis following local government re-organisation in Cheshire.
Document purpose	To raise awareness of the annual Local Area Agreement (LAA) review process for 2009/10 and seek endorsement of proposed changes to designated targets within the LAA prior to agreement by the Council (via Executive on 10 th March) and submission to the Secretary of State in accordance with the requirements of Section 111 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.
Circulation list	West Cheshire Together; Cheshire West and Chester Council Corporate Management Team; and Cheshire West and Chester Council Executive.
Decision/Action required	West Cheshire Together is asked to approve the proposed changes to targets allocated to the following LAA priorities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LAA Priority 24: NI 153 working age people claiming out of work benefits in the worst performing neighbourhoods. • LAA Priority 25: NI 154 net additional homes provided. • LAA Priority 32: NI 171 new business registration rate.
Author	Alison Armstrong
Contact details	Alison Armstrong Cheshire West and Chester Council Tel: 01244 973336 email: alison.armstrong@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk
Publication date	25 th February 2010
Target audience	West Cheshire Together LSP, the Cheshire West and Chester public, Audit Commission, Government Office North West

Cross reference	West Cheshire Together Sustainable Community Strategy, identified Audit Commission Comprehensive Area Assessment areas for improvement, partner strategies and plans

BACKGROUND

- 1 The LAA sets out the 'deal' between central government and local authorities and their partners to improve services and the quality of life for local people. As such, the LAA is also a shorter-term delivery mechanism for the Sustainable Community Strategy with the Strategy providing the story of the local area and articulating a longer term ambition, evidence and rationale beyond the focus of the three-year LAA.
- 2 The LAA is prepared by a responsible local authority, as defined in Section 103 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health (LGPIH) Act 2007, who are also under a statutory duty to consult, cooperate and involve all partner authorities in identifying the content of the LAA. The Statutory Guidance – "Creating Strong, Safe and Prosperous Communities" – states that this should be done through the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) and its thematic partnerships to collectively agree a shared set of priorities for the LAA, before working with them to determine how each target is drafted.
- 3 The LAA for an area must contain up to 35 'designated' improvement targets drawn from the national indicator set published in March 2008 plus 16 statutory educational attainment and early years targets. The national indicators are the only indicators against which local authorities' performance, alone or in partnership, will be reported to Central Government. As such, they are the only measures against which Government can agree targets with a local authority or partnership (through the LAA).
- 4 In addition, local authorities and their partners may incorporate any number of 'non-designated' improvement targets for priorities of specifically local concern. In legal terms, the distinction between designated and non-designated targets is the circumstances under which they may be amended. Targets that have been designated by the Secretary of State, either following the submission and approval of the draft LAA or as part of a revision proposal, may not be altered without the agreement of all partners signed up to the target and the Secretary of State. By contrast non-designated targets may be amended or dropped without the approval of the Secretary of State – with only the agreement of the relevant partner authorities and after the responsible local authority has consulted those who have agreed to help deliver the target on a voluntary basis.
- 5 Once agreed, each LAA will be subject to an annual review intended to identify and address any issues around delivery, including risks and good practice, to help assess and benchmark progress of the three-year span of the Agreement. In addition, the review is an opportunity to revise, by exception, particular targets to reflect changes in local circumstances or national priorities.

THE 2009/10 REVIEW PROCESS

- 6 The 2009/10 annual review process is the last to occur within the lifespan of the current LAA. It is also the first to follow the Comprehensive Area Assessment process and, as such, will align with the complete Local Performance Framework for the first time. Guidance to support the review states that **the focus of this review will be firmly on delivery and will avoid any separate assessments of local performance**. This means deciding what more needs to be done to achieve agreed priorities, based on primarily on addressing risks identified by CAA – including but not limited to red flags, where identified – and resolving any outstanding issues arising from the last review. The review will therefore offer the ability to:

- i) refresh targets on an exception basis though renegotiations will be limited in scope to the nine economic targets exempted from reward lockdown in April 2009, four of which feature within the current LAA, i.e.:
- NI 153 – Out of work benefits in worst neighbourhoods
 - NI 154 – New homes
 - NI 155 – Affordable housing
 - NI 171 – New business registration rate;
- ii) finalise any targets deferred from last year; and
- iii) revise targets against the Place Survey indicators where baseline data has changed, two of which feature within the current LAA, i.e.:
- NI 4 - % of people who feel they can influence decisions in their locality; and
 - NI 21 – Dealing with local concerns about anti-social behaviour and crime issues by the local council and police.
- 7 To inform the review process, discussions have been held locally with each of the five strategic thematic partnerships which exist as part of the wider partnerships framework for the borough. As a consequence, the following amendments to the LAA are proposed for agreement:

Indicator description	LAA target commentary
<i>Economic downturn related indicators included in the LAA</i>	
NI 153 working age people claiming out of work benefits in the worst performing neighbourhoods	2010/11 target to maintain a gap of 2.7% between North West Region performance and CW&C performance.
NI 154 net additional homes provided	2009/10 target to be reduced from 1,217 to 704, 2010/11 target from 1,317 to 674.
NI 155 number of affordable homes delivered (gross)	No changes to target requested as 2010/11 LAA target expected to be achieved.
NI 171 new business registration rate	Negotiations have commenced with GONW on setting a more realistic target for this NI for 2010/11.
<i>Finalise any targets deferred from last year: none to finalise as all designated LAA indicators had targets assigned to them</i>	
<i>Place Survey indicators included in the LAA</i>	
NI 4 the percentage of people who feel they can influence decisions in their locality	The final Place Survey result was adjusted upward by 0.2% from 26.7% to 26.9%. The new baseline is 26.9%.
NI 21 dealing with local concerns about anti-social behaviour and crime issues by the local council and police (percentage of people satisfied with the effectiveness of this)	The final Place Survey result was adjusted downward by 0.2% from 26.7% to 26.5%. The new baseline is 26.5%.