



Haringey Council

Agenda item:

[No.]

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

On 10 September 2007

Report Title: **Scrutiny Review on Safer and Stronger Communities Targets – Resourcing of Action to Achieve Mandatory Targets**

Forward Plan reference number (if applicable): N/A

Report of: Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Wards(s) affected: **All**

Report for: **N/A**

1. Purpose

1.1 To approve the scope and terms of reference for the review.

2. Introduction by Cabinet Member (if necessary)

2.1 N/A

3. Recommendations

3.1 That the scope and terms of reference for the review, as outlined in the report, be approved.

Contact Officer: **Rob Mack, Principal Scrutiny Support Officer, 020 8489 2921**
rob.mack@haringey.gov.uk

4. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

4.1 Background Papers:
Haringey Strategic Partnership - LAA 2007 – 2010
Haringey Safer Communities Strategy 2005 - 08
Cutting Crime – A New Partnership 2008 – 11 – Home Office

5. Report

5.1 The Local Area Agreement (LAA) is a three year agreement between key partners that sets out the priorities for a local area. These are agreed via the Sustainable Community Strategy, which is approved by the government. Haringey's LAA started in June 2007 and comprises of indicators and targets, some which are mandatory and others which are optional. The LAA is made up of four blocks:

- Children and Young People
- Safer and Stronger Communities
- Healthier Communities and older people
- Economic Development

5.2 The targets within the Safer and Stronger Communities block cover a wide range of very important issues for local residents including reducing robberies, the level of youth offending, fear of crime, burglaries, motor vehicle thefts and violent crime. A full list of all the targets is appended to this report. The finance used to fund the activities necessary to achieve these targets comes from a range of sources, the vast majority of which are short to medium term time limited grants. Concern has been expressed about the sustainability of action to achieve these targets in the light of current uncertainty about future funding.

Changes to LAAs

5.3 The government's White Paper '*Strong and Prosperous Communities*' (October 2006), the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Bill and the Communities and Local Government department paper '*Developing the future arrangements for Local Area Agreements*' will lead to significant changes to LAAs. These new arrangements will come into effect from June 2008.

5.4 The changes to LAAs will put them on a statutory footing. They will constitute a binding agreement between central government and local authorities and their partners about improving performance against specified national priorities and local place shaping objectives. There is an expectation on named partners to co-operate in the agreement of the targets and to have regard to those targets in their work.

5.5 The key changes to the LAAs are as follows:

- LAAs will be the only place where central government will agree targets with local authorities and their partners. There will be up to 35 locally negotiated targets drawn from a national set of 200 indicators and a set of 18 pre-existing statutory educational and early years' targets.
- LAAs will no longer be about specific funding for specific targets. There will be an expectation that delivery of the targets will be supported by all resources in the area concerned.
- There will be a new unringfenced area based 'LAA' grant.

5.6 The government's autumn Comprehensive Spending Review will determine the overall funding levels that will be available. In addition, the finalisation of the 200 national indicators is awaited and the new Comprehensive Area Assessment framework will also affect the final position.

5.7 The timescale for the transition to the new LAA arrangements is as follows:

- By June 2008, all LAAs will have 35 improvement targets and 18 statutory early years/education targets based on the indicators in the national indicator set which are ready and on any existing indicators and targets for some service areas, plus any additional local targets from the Sustainable Community Strategy for the years 08/09, 09/10 and 10/11;
- By April 2009 all LAAs will have up to 35 improvement targets and 18 statutory early years/education targets agreed against the 200 indicators in the new national indicator set plus any additional local targets from Sustainable Community Strategies for the years 09/10 and 10/11.

5.8 In the meantime, the current set of targets will continue to be in operation. Until the new LAA improvement targets have been finalised, it will not be possible to assess the resources that will be necessary to achieve the safer and stronger communities targets in future years. In addition, the overall level of resources that will be available will not be known until after the government's Comprehensive Spending Review has been completed. This may lead to uncertainty and compromise the capacity of partners to deliver against the targets.

5.9 Many of the grants which fund current activities are due to expire in March 2008. The Community Safety Business Unit receives 89% of its funding from such grants and is therefore very vulnerable to such a loss of funding. The Unit includes several areas which are of key strategic importance in addressing relevant targets, including the Youth Offending Service, the Drugs and Alcohol Action Team, Community Safety Team and the Anti Social Behaviour and Action Team. In the light of pressure on resources, it therefore may be necessary to consider prioritising particular targets.

5.10 Due to these grants being utilised for salaries of key officers within the Community Safety Business Unit, any reduction in these grants will incur redundancies. To achieve a balanced budget for 2008/09, if there are significant reductions in these grants, redundancy notices will need to be served by the end of December 2007, and redundancy costs will need to be found within the 2007/08 budgets.

Aims/Objectives of Review

- To consider the future resourcing of actions to achieve targets within the safer and Stronger Communities block of the Local Area Agreement.
- To consider how comparable local authorities are addressing the issue and whether good practice elsewhere can be incorporated locally
- To obtain stakeholder views on the priority that should be given to potential targets within the Safer and Stronger Communities block of the LAA.

Terms of Reference

It is proposed that the terms of reference be as follows:

“To consider the future resourcing of actions to achieve strategic targets within the Safer and Stronger Communities block of the Local Area Agreement for Haringey 2007 – 2010 and to make recommendations thereon to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee”

Methodology

- Explanation of LAAs, improvement targets and how their delivery is funded
- Interviewing key stakeholders and community representatives
- Comparisons with practice in other local authority areas

Key Stakeholders

Councillor Canver – Cabinet Member for Crime and Community Safety
Jean Croot – Head of Communities Safety Unit
Simon O'Brien – Haringey Borough Commander, Police Service
Sean Sweeney – Police Projects Officer
Frances Palopoli - Head of Finance
Fred Ellis – Chair of Haringey Community and Police Consultative Group
Carolyn O'Sullivan – Government Office for London

Sources of Evidence

Haringey Local Area Agreement 2007 - 2010
Mandatory targets for Safer and Stronger Communities

Consultation and User Involvement

This will be obtained by interviewing relevant community representatives.

Membership of Panel

- Councillors Pat Egan (Chair), Jonathan Bloch and Catherine Harris

Independent Expert Advice

In addition, the Panel may wish to consider if their work would be assisted by the provision of some independent expert advice. This could “add value” to the review by:

- Impartially evaluating current practice providing advice on successful approaches and strategies that are being employed elsewhere
- Suggesting possible lines of inquiry
- Commenting on the final report and, in particular, the feasibility of draft recommendations.

Timescale

The effectiveness of the review in influencing policy will, to some extent, be dependent on the timing of its final report. In order to maximise influence over funding decisions, it is strongly suggested that the review aims to finish its work by December.

Provisional Evidence Sessions:

Meeting 1:

Aim: To gain a clear understanding of the key issues facing the Safer Communities Partnership in achieving the Safer and Stronger Communities targets within the LAA and meeting the challenges provided by the new sets of targets.

Background Information:

- Explanation of the LAA targets and their future development
- Details of the funding for the specific initiatives that have been put in place to facilitate the meeting of the Safer and Stronger Communities targets and

Possible Witnesses: Councillor Canver – Cabinet Member for Crime and Community Safety; Jean Croot – Head of Communities Safety Unit; Simon O’Brien – Haringey Borough Commander; Police Service, Sean Sweeney – Police Projects Officer; Frances Palopoli - Head of Finance.

Meeting 2:

Aims:

1. To obtain the perspective of the Government Office for London (GoL) on the target setting process and its relationship to funding, with particular reference to safer and stronger communities.
2. To listen to the views of community representatives on possible priorities for action in achieving targets.

Background Information: Relevant GoL guidance.

Possible Witnesses: Carolyn O’Sullivan – GoL; Victor Sylvester – Street Pastors Scheme/ or John Hadju – chair of the Independent Advisory Group to the Police; Nims Obunge – CE Peace Alliance; Fred Ellis - Chair of Haringey Community and Police Consultative Group

Meeting 3: Plenary Session - Conclusions and recommendations

Aim: Sift evidence gathered and make recommendations for improvements.

Background Information: Notes of previous Panel meetings, “Issues” paper outlining key points for consideration.

Implementation of Recommendations

As recommendations are likely to apply to a range of agencies, a composite response will be prepared on behalf of the Safer Communities Partnership so that all the issues can be considered together.

Monitoring of Outcomes:

This will be undertaken periodically, with the first update due 6 months after the response to the review has been approved by the Executive.