



HARINGEY STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

NEW STYLE LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT 2008/9

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1. Purpose

- 1.1 This report informs The HSP on the most recent developments in the 'new style' Local Area Agreements (LAAs) and sets out some initial actions and steps for the Partnership to take as it prepares for negotiating and subsequent implementation and delivery of Haringey's new-style LAA.

2. Recommendations

2.1 That the Partnership notes the arrangements for the new style LAA, the timetable for completion and the move to area based grant and more extensive pooled funding

2.2 That the HSP Performance Management Group oversees the development of the new LAA and will meet more frequently as required.

2.3 That officers supporting the thematic partnerships begin drafting text to update the Haringey 'story' in line with the Sustainable Community Strategy themes to inform the detailed work and priority setting for the new LAA.

2.4 That the thematic boards review their priorities and current funded against the emerging priorities and outcomes and that the PMG works with the thematic board chairs to ensure there is a joined-up and holistic approach to developing the new LAA

2.5 That officers produce brief guidance for thematic partnerships to assist them in doing this.

3. Background

- 3.1 Haringey partners signed a Local Area Agreement with central government in March 2007 as a third round authority, due to run for three years until 2010/11. The Local Government White Paper, Strong and Prosperous Communities published in October last year placed a high priority on partnership working with a strengthened role for local strategic partnerships as place shapers.
- 3.2 Supporting this aspiration for greater partnership working at local level is the development of a new style LAA, underpinned by a strengthened performance framework for local authorities and their partners with fewer central targets and reporting systems; more freedom in spending decisions with the removal of ring-fenced grants. In addition the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Bill will place a statutory duty on named partners to co-operate with the authority in developing the LAA. In this new model, the new LAA becomes the primary mechanism for agreeing improvement targets between central government, the local authority and partners. This in turn needs to be based on a common understanding amongst all partners of national, regional and local priorities.

As a whole, this approach reflects the greater importance Government is now placing on outcomes focused planning and delivery on the ground. The changed funding arrangements for 2008/9 and beyond make this approach explicit and mean that all local strategic partnerships have to negotiate a new agreement.

4.00 CURRENT NATIONAL POSITION – OVERVIEW

- 4.1 The Local Government and Public Involvement Act gives effect to a number of legislative changes which can strengthen partnership working. The Comprehensive Spending Review 07 (CSR07) now published, underpins the new LAA framework, as Government is pooling 39 disparate and separate funding streams into a new **Area Based Grant** (ASB) for partnerships to allocate. These are listed as appendix A.
- 4.2 In line with this more holistic approach which gives freedoms and flexibilities for local decision making, the CSR 07 also sets out the 198 National Indicators which are their key measures, and **from which** local partnerships can select and agree up to 35 (plus 16 DCSF targets) for their locality, based on their local circumstances. These are attached as Appendix B.
- 4.3 In pooling the funding and reshaping the performance framework, the government has an expectation that local partnerships can work to their agreed joint outcomes, allocate the funding to do this, meeting local needs and transforming services as necessary. From 2008/9 the link between LAAs and particular funding streams is broken, removing specific funding for specific targets and specific LAA grants. In combining the funding there is an even stronger imperative on partnerships to plan and work together. This forms the basis for the new style LAA which must be ready for implementation by June 2008. The new performance framework will be fully effective from April 2009.

- 4.4 As mentioned above in paragraph 4.1 the funding regime is changing. The Neighbourhood Renewal Funding (NRF) and Safer and Stronger Communities Fund (SSCF) both end in March 2008. A new fund – the Working Neighbourhoods Fund is created, but indications are that this will be more targeted at key areas having the highest levels of neighbourhood deprivation, with a focus on worklessness and reducing economic inactivity.

From April 2009 the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) will be replaced by the Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA). The CAA will be the main mechanism through which LAA performance will be managed and focus on all 198 indicators. A critical element of the new CAA will be the *area risk assessment* which 'will hold members of the local strategic partnership jointly to account for their impact on the priority outcomes for local people, as set out in the Local Area Agreement. (Gareth Davies, Audit Commission)'. This new CAA will

- be citizen/outcome focused
- reflect citizen and community perspectives and experience,
- take into account the views of more vulnerable and concerns of more vulnerable members of local communities.

Local perceptions of services and service delivery will form part of the assessment.

5.0 PREPARING FOR THE NEW LAA

- 5.1 Communities and Local Government issued the first of two part guidance on developing the new LAA in September. The guidance reinforces that the LAA is the delivery plan for the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS). In developing and negotiating the LAA there are four essential elements to success:

- **The story of the place** – a Sustainable Community Strategy which tells “the story of the place”: where an area has come from, where it is at, and where it wants to be. The story or ‘narrative’ should be evidence based - ***‘it is vital that the story itself demonstrates how it has been developed by a thorough and active engagement of the community. More generally central departments and their ministers will view the local story as an essential part of the evidence of delivery/performance’.*** (LAA Guidance 2007)
- **Identifying priorities** – the “story of the place” should be the foundation for identifying priorities for the partnership and is linked to *vision, ambition and outcomes.*
- **Involving councillors** – improving the role of local councillors is described as fundamental to making the LAA a document that genuinely sets a vision and is not just a technical exercise for officers. The guidance advises how councillors can be involved in driving the vision through drawing on their local knowledge; building on neighbourhood arrangements and community leadership to shape

priorities; having a political dimension to priority setting; leadership in the partnership and its thematic boards and scrutiny of the partnership and its delivery.

- **Relationship with GoL** – GoL act as a bridge between central and local government - both informing and feeding back government and local views on priorities to inform the national picture. It follows that agreeing a clear way forward with Government office which clarifies roles before starting negotiations will enhance the process and assist in resolving conflicts.

6.0 Implications and next steps for the Haringey Strategic Partnership

- 6.1.1 The Partnership has made significant progress in preparing for the new LAA. The SCS is launched, and following the HSP Seminar of June 29, the Partnership has begun identifying its top priorities which set the context for confirming our final 35 key indicators. The first draft of these has also been aligned to Community Strategy priorities, retaining the vital connection to the Community Strategy as the partnership's overarching plan. The positive meeting between the PMG/LAA Partnership Group and GOL on 14 September means that the HSP is on track in developing our new style LAA with our 35 priorities well-received as a starting point for the LAA negotiations. But there is significant work ahead for the Partnership in refining these and settling on the eventual list of priorities and targets which will drive the projects and activities to achieve outcomes.
- 6.1.2 This work provides the foundation for developing our '**Haringey story**'. GOL has advised that the narrative is central in providing the sense of place, which must then be underpinned by evidence and current data and that a first draft should be ready for early December.
- 6.1.3 All thematic boards have begun discussing their key priorities which should feed into the process. To prepare the narrative, it is proposed that officers supporting the thematic partnerships begin drafting text to follow Community Strategy priorities, and to which can be added illustrative local case studies and stories which link data and research evidence to experience. Officers have prepared a timeline (Appendix C) to ensure the Partnership remains on course, and that we undertake all the necessary tasks to support the negotiations and development of the new LAA between now and April 2008.
- 6.1.4 Thematic Board Chairs have a critical role to play in supporting this process, reviewing their priorities and whether current projects funded through their boards can achieve the outcomes for the new LAA. This is even more important with pooled funding commencing in April 2008 with no clear guarantee that all current projects and activities will be funded or can be sustained. It is suggested that the PMG oversees this process and that they work with Thematic Board chairs to ensure there is a joined up approach to developing the new LAA.

- 6.1.5 There are longer term issues which the Partnership also needs to address in relation to these changes. Would the HSP want to move towards commissioning projects which reflect these priorities and maximise partnership working? How does this impact on resources across the themes? Subject to the Partnership and the PMG's agreement officers could produce some brief guidance for thematic partnerships which could assist them in doing this.
- 7.0 Director of Finance comments:
- 7.1 The Director of Finance would draw attention to the fact that the actual level of LAA grant for the HSP in 2008/09 – 2010/11 is not yet known and will probably not be announced until middle of November or early December. There is a commitment from Government to mainstream £5bn ring-fenced/specific grants from 2008/09 however it is not yet clear whether they will come through the new Area Based Grant or move into Revenue Support Grant.
- 7.2 The HSP Members should also note the possible impact on existing programmes and activities currently funded by key LAA grants such as NRF/SSCF when developing the new LAA with GoL. Particular attention should be given to the issue of managing any redirection of funding and the impact this may have on customer perception and on-going work programmes. Given the over-arching message driving the new LAA is one of prioritising partnership working and a strengthened role for the local strategic partnership as place shapers and delivering key local outcomes, it is important that the HSP gives due consideration to sufficiently resourcing effective working and communication across the Partnership to ensure that agreed outcomes are delivered and value for money is achieved.