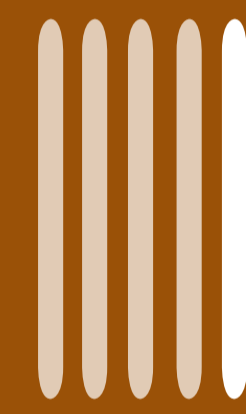


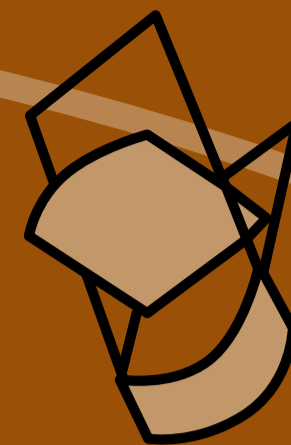
local area agreements preparing to negotiate and to deliver

improving places through partnership



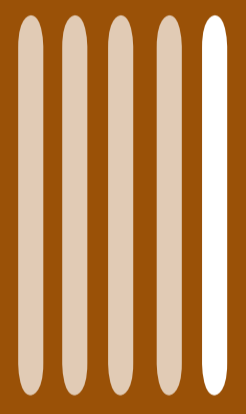
LAA's are of critical importance to local communities and to the new relationship between central government and councils. Between November 2007 and June 2008 all councils, and their partners, will negotiate and agree a new LAA with the Government Office (GO). The timescales and complexity of the negotiations means that early and detailed planning is essential if partners are to be involved and agree to the final LAA.

Local Area Agreements (LAAs) are:
 'A three-year agreement, based on the local Sustainable Community Strategy that sets out the priorities for a local area. The agreement is made between central government, represented by the Government Office (GO), and a local area, represented by the local authority and other key partners through Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs).'
 LAAs:
 • are integral to the new 'central-local' relationship
 • are a means to deliver better outcomes within the new performance framework
 • will be the only place where central government agrees targets with a council and its partners on outcomes to be delivered alone or in partnership
 • will include up to 35 targets drawn from the national indicator set, 16 statutory education and early years targets and any number of local targets
 • will no longer be about specific funding for specific targets. The Area Based Grant (ABG) is not ringfenced
 • will have reward funding available, recognising performance across all targets.



this map
 This is a checklist of milestones, issues and questions to help local partners and LAA lead officers plan for negotiations. It will also help councils and LSPs prepare for implementing and managing the LAA.
 The routemap is based on, and should be read in conjunction with:
 • LAA dry-run negotiations: Final Report (August 2007)
 • Negotiating New Local Area Agreements guidance (September 2007)
 • Development of the new LAA Framework – operational guidance (November 2007)
 • draft statutory place shaping guidance 'Creating strong safe and prosperous communities' (November 2007)
 • national indicator set (November 2007).
 Documents are available to download from Communities and Local Government (CLG) at www.communities.gov.uk

Thank you to CLG, LGA and DeA colleagues for providing support in preparing this routemap.
 Use the IDEA LAA Communities of Practice to ask questions, share ideas and offer answers to the questions and challenges set out in this publication. www.communities.idea.gov.uk
 Up-to-date developments and IDEA support offers for LAAs and LSPs are available online at www.idea.gov.uk/laa or email laa.lsp@idea.gov.uk.



The Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) has a programme to support local authorities and Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs), and assist them to negotiate and deliver excellent LAAs.

The LAA/LSP improvement support programme is available on a regional and sub-regional basis or to individual councils and partners to help:

- increase understanding of the LAA framework and the role of the LSP, as contained in the White Paper
- support the local authority's leadership role in the development and negotiation of the LAA
- enhance the LSPs' skills, capacity and capability to negotiate and deliver LAAs
- ensure that elected members play their full part in shaping the LAA priorities and the delivery arrangements in their area
- enhance local leadership and ambition in relation to place shaping and sustainable communities.

You can see details of the support offered by the LGA/IDeA by visiting www.lga.gov.uk or www.idea.gov.uk/laa.

LAA timetable Oct 2007 to Jun 2008

October/November

- all LSPs consult on their priorities, collate evidence and prepare a 'story of place' for discussion of new LAAs with Government Offices (GOs)

November

- lead LSP consults locally on their LAA priority outcomes
- GOs and central departments review their proposed priorities

December

- LSPs and GOs prepare a shared list of local priority outcomes
- LSP and GO negotiate and refine the local priority outcomes based on LSP and central departmental/GO discussions
- local authority (LA) children's directors discuss indicative statutory targets

January

- LSP and GO consult and negotiate on up to 35 indicators from the national indicator set and any local indicators to support their agreed priority outcomes
- 25 January, LSPs submit draft priority outcomes framework plus indicators to Government Offices
- 31 January, LAs submit statutory targets to Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF)

February

- LSPs consider what level of targets they may set for the selected indicators, in discussion with GOs
- continuing negotiation of DCSF statutory targets

March

- continuing negotiation of outcomes, indicators and targets based on central department and GO discussions, and LSP consultations
- LSPs submit revised outcomes framework to GOs and their proposed 'up to 35' improvement targets plus local targets
- 31 March, DCSF statutory targets agreed

April

- GOs consult with central government colleagues, particularly in relation to stretch targets

May

- continuing negotiation of the improvement targets based on central government department and GO discussions and LSP consultations

Beginning of June

- formal submission of LAAs to GOs
- GO Regional Directors make recommendations to central government
- Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government consults with Cabinet colleagues and signs LAAs

vision – a story about place

'What kind of place is this? And what do we want it to be?'

'All local authorities are unique with distinctive settlements, economic circumstances, histories and politics. These combine to produce individual social, economic and environmental challenges.'

the LAA will be based in 'the story of the place' – a distinctive vision of an area, backed by evidence and analysis

map local communities' needs, and refresh the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS). A shared vision and agreed ambitions for performance improvement will give the LSP confidence in its negotiations

is there a 'story of place'? Is it rooted in a local context and history? Is it distinctive and persuasive? Does it support your choice of priorities?

is the SCS 'fit for purpose'. Is it evidence based, forward looking, ambitious and informed by citizens and communities?

in two-tier areas, how are district SCSs and Local Development Frameworks (LDFs) aligned with the county SCS? How do they inform and reflect the LAA?

how do cross-cutting values and ambitions such as equalities, diversity and community cohesion fit?

data, analysis and intelligence

'An LAA based on rigorous analysis of data provides local partnerships with the confidence to prioritise, enabling them to take bold decisions in shifting resources to need.'

The evidence should demonstrate why certain issues are a priority, and be the basis for selecting indicators and negotiating targets.

can partners access robust data and analysis to support decision making? Does the evidence provide a rationale for your choice of priorities and indicators?

is there up-to-date performance data for all partners' services? Where are the strengths and weaknesses? Where are the areas that government and GOs are likely to ask for improvement?

share LSP data with the GO and agree a common basis for negotiations

local knowledge can be as valuable as hard data. What do community surveys, user feedback, or consultation data say about the local priorities? What do local councillors think are the issues?

does the data help the LSP set targets for neighbourhoods or for different communities?

GOs will develop their assessment of the area using all the information available. How much shared ground is there? Where are the differences in emphasis, priority, or understanding?

have all possible sources been used? These could include socio-economic and demographic data, floor target data, current LAA performance, BVPIs, Joint Strategic Needs Assessment health observatories, partners' plans and research, regional data sets, Audit Commission Area Profiles, CPA and inspection reports, citizen panels/surveys or user forums. It is better to rely on trends and trajectories than snapshots

identifying 'up to' 35 designated targets and any local targets

'Setting priorities is an art, not a science. Local views and political judgments are important contributions to the technical data and other evidence.'

start with a small number of priorities that reflect the LSP's 'story of place' and agreed improvement priorities. Are they:

- important to the vision and SCS
- where partnership working is key to improvement?
- challenging to the way things are done now?
- in line with regional or sub-regional priorities?
- important for central government?
- cross-cutting?

once you have established your priority outcomes framework, then look at the 198 national indicator set (NIS) indicators. Given your 'story of place', which of these indicators will best drive improvement in your priorities?

what targets are you going to set against each of your selected indicators? Do they reflect your ambitions?

which local indicators / targets will you include when the NIS doesn't 'fit' all the local priorities identified?

how will you translate long-term outcomes in relation to housing, transport, climate change, into milestones and targets that contribute to longer term goals?

assess your targets as a whole. Do they work together or pull in different directions?

ensure that you have a transparent and reasoned decision making process, that can stand up to scrutiny from government departments as well as from local stakeholders and citizens

have you considered where and why you might want to disaggregate targets for specific geographical areas or groups within the community?

reality check your targets. Are they stretching? Are they consistent and appropriate? How would you resource them? Are partners signed up to the scale of delivery and change necessary if you are to meet those targets?

will you do a sustainability assessment or an equality impact assessment of your LAA?

relationship with your GO

The Government Office (GO) connects local partners with central government. They can be advocate, adviser, critical friend, broker and negotiator. A mature, open relationship with the GO is key to the negotiations. GO will make sense of the complex requirements from central government at a local level.

involve the GO as early as possible, to improve understanding and help avoid conflict

make time to have exploratory discussions with the GO. Has enough been done to explain the LSP's long-term vision and SCS priorities?

the GO will have collated evidence about what it thinks the local priorities are. They may challenge some of the proposed targets and outcomes based on evidence and assessment of the local issues. Can your proposals be sustained?

is expert advice in relation to new policy areas, such as climate change or biodiversity, required?

councillors and citizens

councillors

Councillors provide leadership to the LSP. Local government needs effective and visionary leadership at all levels to meet its challenges.

The role of the elected council (or councils in two-tier areas) is fundamental to the success of the LAA. The LAA should not become a technical exercise excluding local politicians.

local councillors are vital to agreeing the story of place, identifying and agreeing priorities, contributing to the evidence base, providing leadership and holding partners and the LAA to account and scrutiny

leaders and cabinet members provide leadership to LSPs and thematic partnerships. How will the negotiation process involve them?

is there a cabinet champion for the LAA? How will different portfolio holders work with the different LAA outcomes?

how will county council and the district councils ensure that all elected members and the different leaders and cabinets are engaged with the LSP and LAA?

district cabinet members participate by advising on LAA targets, identifying where district-level or neighbourhood targets are needed, and allocating resources to LAA priorities

councillors often lead neighbourhood and area forums and other forms of community engagement. How do they feed into LAA development and monitoring?

consider how the new scrutiny arrangements will hold partnerships to account and scrutinise LAA outcomes?

citizens

Engaging citizens and communities is at the heart of the new performance framework, of which LAAs are a key element.

the 'duty to involve' means that local people and community groups must be consulted

is evidence about community and citizen priorities informing the prioritisation of targets?

the voluntary and community sector (VCS) is a full partner in the LSP. They will want to be part of decision making during the negotiations

does the selection of targets reflect the wider role of the VCS in stronger communities, cohesion and citizen engagement?

the VCS will be involved in delivering some LAA targets. Is it properly funded and prepared to deliver against LAA targets? Does the strategic commissioning approach ensure they do not lose out?

how will the LSP report on performance and achievements to residents?

has the LSP considered a shared community engagement strategy?

LSP: preparing to deliver

LAAs have made a real difference where they are about creativity and collaboration, involving new ways of partnership working that respond to what citizens and communities are saying.

LAAs are no more than a piece of paper if they do not result in change locally.

LSPs are responsible for ensuring that the LAA outcomes and targets are delivered. The new duty to cooperate requires partners to take account of LAA targets when planning their services and activities

which partnership bodies are accountable for which targets and outcomes?

is each target backed by a 'change and delivery plan' – what would partners have to do differently in order to achieve that target?

is the LSP using 'strategic commissioning' to secure delivery of the targets?

the LAA will have different themes, outcomes and new partnerships. Does this mean a review of LSP structures and processes?

have partners been briefed on the 'duty to cooperate'?

are the performance and financial management arrangements robust enough for the new demands on the LSP? How will pooled funding or ABG expenditure be monitored?

has the LSP considered how to share the costs of running the LSP and LAA?

LSP: preparing to negotiate

Local partnerships will be in a stronger position to negotiate if they can articulate a coherent story of place, linking their distinctive narrative with their choice of priorities.

Local negotiations will involve debates about what matters; they are a forum for creativity and problem solving as well as hard bargaining.

is there a project plan and process to cover the period from now to June 2008? Is it aligned with LSPs and other thematic partnership meetings? Is it aligned with individual partner meetings, including the cabinet(s)?

is enough time allowed after negotiations for the LSP and partners to consult and deliberate before sign off?

what communication routes will keep all partners in the loop as the negotiations progress and the LAA develops?

council – the accountable body

Lead councils are responsible for:

- the partnership's performance and financial management
- reporting mechanism between delivery partners and the LSP
- scrutiny arrangements
- ethical guidance standards.

The CAA will assess whether the partnership is likely to achieve its outcomes.

I&DeA
INTEGRATED
DEVELOPMENT
AGREEMENTS

local area agreements preparing to negotiate and to deliver