

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET - 15th APRIL 2010

REPORT OF THE DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE / DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES

WIRRAL'S LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT REPORT

1 Executive summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Cabinet with the final position of the 2009/10 review and refresh of Wirral's 2008/11 local area agreement (LAA). The review and refresh has been managed by the Local Strategic Partnership Executive Board, which reports to Cabinet given that Wirral Council is the accountable body for the LAA.
- 1.2 The report also provides Cabinet with Wirral's final performance reward grant allocation of **£7,933,232** for the previous LAA stretch targets. This successful achievement is 80.76% of the total performance reward grant available for stretch targets during 2006-09.
- 6.1 The report requests that £120,765 of the Council's performance reward grant allocation is approved to continue funding of three temporary partnership posts to support the ongoing delivery of Wirral's LAA and development of Wirral's LSP.

2 Background

- 2.1 In May 2008, Wirral submitted its 2008/11 LAA which include designated targets drawn from a rationalised national indicator set, plus statutory indicators from the Department for Children, Families and Schools (DCFS) and local targets which reflect Wirral's local partnership priorities. Wirral's designated targets were negotiated with Government Office North West (GONW) on behalf of Central Government.
- 2.2 Wirral's LSP Executive Board managed the negotiation of Wirral's 2008/11 LAA with regular reports provided to Cabinet. The Executive Board agreed the priority areas for improvement targets to be negotiated; these were agreed based on detailed and robust evidence bases, and consideration of the people and places within the borough where activity would need to be focussed.
- 2.3 Wirral's LSP Executive Board has monitored and managed the delivery of the 2006-09 LAA stretch targets with regular reports to Cabinet detailing the expected performance reward grant allocations.

3 Wirral's LAA Annual Review

- 3.1 Wirral's 2008/11 LAA is subject to an annual review by GONW. The purpose of the annual review is to identify and address any issues around delivery, including risks and good practice, and to help assess and benchmark progress over the three year span of LAAs.

3.2 Wirral LSP submitted a half year performance and risk report in November 2009 for the annual review which covered the following areas:

- Delivery arrangements for designated LAA targets
- Issues highlighted in Wirral's 2009 Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA)
- Wherever possible, an assessment of the risks to the achievement of designated LAA targets, together with brief explanations of mitigating actions and residual risks
- Exception reporting on progress against designated targets or other national indicators

3.3 The findings from Wirral's second annual review have been positive with feedback from GONW advising that, overall, good progress has been made and some excellent examples of good practice identified.

4. What's working well?

4.1 The Review considered the current Partnership arrangements which were felt to be operating more effectively due to:

- Improved governance and delivery structures
- Development of a Comprehensive Engagement Strategy as a framework to move forward
- Formal adoption of the Sustainable Community Strategy and framework for reviewing partnership delivery of Wirral's long term vision
- A performance management culture that continues to focus on addressing key challenges
- Improved analytical information supporting the performance framework

4.2 The half year performance and risk report highlighted the following indicators as achieving targets and where good progress is being made:

- NI 15 – Serious violent crime
- NI 20 – Assault with injury
- NI 39 – Alcohol-harm related hospital admission rates
- NI 55 – Obesity amongst primary school age children in Reception Year
- NI 123 – Stopping smoking
- NI 156 – Number of households living in temporary accommodation
- NI 192 – Household waste recycled and composted
- NI 195 a-d – Improved street and environmental cleanliness, good progress has been made particularly to reduce inequalities within the borough.

4.3 Areas which were judged by the joint inspectorate to be performing well in the CAA area assessment included the following:

- Response to the Recession
- Crime and Community Safety
- Children's Services
- Recycling

4.4 Progress will continue to be closely monitored by the LSP Executive Board through the regular performance and risk reports presented to the Board.

5. Areas for improvement

- 5.1 The area assessment element of CAA for Wirral identified the following as priority areas of improvement for the LSP over the next year:
- Adult Safeguarding
 - Health Inequalities
 - Tackling Inequalities
 - Impact of Recession
- 5.2 Additionally, the half year LAA performance and risk report presented to the Board in November 2009 identified indicators assessed as not on target as follows:
- NI 68 Percentage of referrals to children’s social care going on to initial assessment
 - NI 117 Young people not in education, employment or training
 - NI 130 Social Care Clients receiving self directed support
 - NI 151 Overall employment rate
 - NI 153 Working age people claiming out of work benefits in the worst performing neighbourhoods
 - NI 154 Net additional homes provided
- 5.3 The review considered each of these areas and identified a significant amount of partnership activity already underway. Discussions will be ongoing with GONW and sector support organisations to determine any additional support that may be required to assist delivery.

The following table outlines the review findings for each area of improvement and Wirral’s Partnership response:

Area for improvement	Review Finding	Partnership response
Adult Safeguarding	<p>Current activity should be sufficient to bring performance back on track.</p> <p>Support is available from Department of Health staff in GONW.</p>	<p>Additional resources and training now available should improve performance. A safeguarding strategy will be adopted by the Partnership.</p> <p>This will remain a priority for the Partnership.</p>
Percentage of referrals to children’s social care going on to initial assessment	<p>Current activity should be sufficient to bring performance back on track.</p> <p>Support is available from Department of Children, Schools and Families staff in GONW.</p>	<p>Additional resources, training and data flow improvements should address performance issues.</p> <p>This will remain a priority for the Partnership and is already subject to regular monitoring by the LSP Executive Board through the quarterly performance and risk reports.</p>

Area for improvement	Review Finding	Partnership response
Impact of the recession	<p>The Review concluded that the impact and recovery from the recession would have a significant impact on the Partnership's ability to successfully address a range of priorities including NEET, Worklessness and Housing.</p> <p>Despite Partnership efforts, concern remains about the two worklessness indicators – NI 151 and NI153 – and there is an opportunity, reflecting the national difficulties caused by recession, for the Partnership to renegotiate targets for these two indicators. There is a similar opportunity to renegotiate NI 154 to reflect the adverse impact that the recession has had on the housing market.</p>	<p>The Partnership is in the process of developing and implementing a recovery plan which will be regularly reported to Cabinet and the LSP Executive Board.</p> <p>The impact of the recession and Partnership response is subject to a regular report to the LSP Executive Board and a partnership group has been established.</p> <p>Targets will be subject to refresh negotiations.</p>
Young people not in education, employment or training	<p>NEET performance is improving against a very difficult economic backdrop, vindicating the Partnership's decision to focus Working Neighbourhood Funding very specifically on tackling worklessness, for example, the successful Apprenticeship Scheme.</p>	<p>This will remain a priority for the partnership and is already subject to regular monitoring by the LSP Executive Board through the quarterly performance and risk reports.</p>
Health inequalities	<p>The importance of Tackling Health Inequalities was covered during the Review, particularly the challenge faced by the Partnership in reducing premature mortality, rated as amber risk at quarter two. This area should continue to be a priority issue for the LSP over the next year.</p>	<p>The Partnership has approved a health inequalities action plan which will regularly reported to the LSP Executive Board.</p> <p>This will remain a priority for the Partnership.</p>
Tackling inequalities	<p>The Review discussed the progress that the Partnership was making in tackling inequalities generally within the Borough and considered how it could be more explicit about whether and how its activities were addressing inequalities.</p>	<p>The quarterly performance and risk reports include specific focus regarding how the Partnership is tackling inequalities within Wirral.</p> <p>Further work will be undertaken to define how partnership activity is narrowing the gap.</p>
Self directed support	<p>Pilot phase ready to be rolled out.</p>	<p>This will remain a priority for the Partnership and is already subject to regular monitoring by the LSP Executive Board through the</p>

Area for improvement	Review Finding	Partnership response
		quarterly performance and risk reports.

- 5.3 The annual review concluded that the LAA priorities should continue to be regularly reported to the LSP Executive Board with specific focus on the following areas:
- Tackling Health Inequalities
 - Impact of the recession
 - Adult Safeguarding
 - NEET
 - Self Directed Support for Social Care Clients

6. Wirral's 2008/11 refreshed LAA

- 6.1 The LSP Executive Board has overseen the 2009/10 refresh of the final year targets within the 2008/11 LAA. The refresh negotiations has been managed through discussions between officers of GONW and Wirral LSP theme leads. It has been confirmed that Wirral would be eligible to claim £2,281,175.95 performance reward grant if all targets are met by 2010-2011.

Appendix one of this report provides Cabinet with the refreshed version of Wirral's 2008/11 LAA.

- 6.2 Due to the challenging timescales involved in this process the LSP Executive Board gave delegated authority to the Council's Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council / Chair of the LSP Executive Board, to agree the final negotiated targets in the agreement.
- 6.3 Wirral submitted the final draft of the 2008/11 LAA to GONW on 17th March 2010.

7. PERFORMANCE REWARD GRANT ALLOCATION

- 7.1 The performance reward grant (PRG) for the achievement of stretch targets is payable 50% revenue and 50% capital over two years (2009/10 and 2010/11) as previously reported to Cabinet and the LSP Executive Board. A contribution (£100k) was agreed to be awarded to the community and voluntary sector (the "Network") from the overall PRG received. Indicative allocations were previously approved by Cabinet in January 2009.
- 7.2 The final allocations below have been updated to reflect final performance information and were approved to be spent within Wirral by the identified organisations / partnerships by the LSP Executive Board in March 2010. The allocations are based on a review of the contribution partners have made to the delivery of the stretch targets and previously agreed by Cabinet in January 2009.

Partner / agency	Capital allocation	Revenue allocation	Total allocation
Wirral Council	£2,942,618	£2,920,765	£5,863,383

Partner / agency	Capital allocation	Revenue allocation	Total allocation
NHS Wirral	£548,662	£504,248	£1,052,910
Wirral Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership	£439,685	£406,140	£845,825
Drug and Alcohol Action Team	£22,551	£22,363	£44,914
Community and Voluntary Sector (Network)		£100,000	£100,000
Citizens Advice Bureau	£4,258	£4,257	£8,515
Bebington TUC	£655	£655	£1,310
Age Concern	£8,187	£8,188	£16,375
Overall	£3,966,616	£3,966,616	£7,933,232

- 7.3 The payment of performance reward grant will be on the Department of Communities and Local Government condition that in overall terms the grant is allocated 50% to revenue and 50% for capital. As the accountable body, Wirral Council will be responsible for verifying that expenditure has met this requirement and would be liable for any breach in conditions.
- 7.4 In order to satisfy the grant requirement it is proposed that with the exception of the Third Sector recipients, the accountable body will distribute reward grant once confirmation has been received from partners that the monies have been expended in accordance with the grant conditions. Spot checks and/or the submission of supporting evidence may be required to verify compliance.
- 7.5 As cash flow is particularly important to Third Sector organisations and given the current economic climate it is proposed that these monies will be paid in stages in advance (early in 2010/11 and 2011/12). Appropriate guidance will be circulated and monitoring arrangements implemented to ensure that compliance to the grant conditions can be verified.
- 7.6 Cabinet have previously approved a £1.4 million revenue allocation from the LAA performance reward grant in the 2009/10 and 2010/11 Council budgets. Cabinet are requested to approve that funds achieved over and above this allocation be allocated to the continuance of temporary posts within the Corporate Performance Team. This would allocate £120,765 to continue to fund partnership performance and support officer posts, which provide an important resource to the Partnership and have made a significant contribution to the work of the Partnership. A robust performance management and risk framework has led to the successful achievement of LAA stretch targets performance reward grant. In January 2010, GONW led an annual review of Wirral's LSP and LAA and considered the current partnership arrangements were felt to be operating more effectively due to the work of the corporate performance team and these posts. (See 4.1 above)

8. Financial implications

8.1 The financial implications are set out in 5.1 and 5.2 of this report. £7,933,232 performance reward grant will be received over the financial years 2009/10 and 2010/11. The grant is 50% revenue / 50% capital, the amount available for Council revenue is £2.8 million and this was reflected in budgets for 2009/10 and 2010/11. This was agreed by Cabinet on 10 December 2008 and built into the projected budget for 2009/10 and subsequent budget projections for 2010/11.

9. Staffing implications

9.1 The staffing implications are outlined in section 5.6 of this report. The Local Strategic Partnership Executive Board allocated remaining LAA resources to part fund three temporary partnership posts within the Council's Corporate Performance Team. The posts were established to provide additional support to the LSP and delivery of Wirral's Sustainable Community Strategy and LAA. Additional funds were also allocated by NHS Wirral to fund these posts. The posts were recruited on a two year fixed term basis and are located within the Council's Corporate Policy Team. If no additional funding is allocated to fund these posts after July 2011, the posts will end and the staff will be treated in compliance with the Council's Redeployment Policy.

10. Equal Opportunities / Equality Impact Assessment implications

10.1 There are no equal opportunities implications arising directly from this report. The equality impact assessment for the 2008/11 LAA has been reviewed and is attached as an appendix to this report.

11. Health impact assessment

11.1 The delivery of Wirral's 2008/11 LAA will have positive impact on health. A programme to increase the capacity within the Council for conducting health impact assessments is being developed.

12. Community Safety implications

12.1 Community safety is a key theme which will be addressed through Wirral's 2008/11 LAA and associated improvement targets.

13. Local Agenda 21 implications

13.1 The environment is a key theme which will be addressed through Wirral's 2008/11 LAA and associated improvement targets.

14. Planning implications

14.1 There are no planning implications arising directly from this report.

15. Anti-poverty implications

15.1 Anti-poverty will be addressed through the Wirral's 2008/11 LAA and associated improvement targets.

16. Human Rights implications

16.1 There are no human rights implications arising from this report.

17. Social Inclusion implications

17.1 Social inclusion is a key theme which will be addressed through Wirral's 2008/11 LAA and associated improvement targets.

18. Local Member Support implications

18.1 There are no local member support implications arising directly from this report.

19. Background Papers

19.1 Cabinet report, 22nd May 2008: 2008/11 Local Area Agreement

19.2 Cabinet report, 10th December 2008: Projected Budgets 2009-2011

19.3 Cabinet report, 15th January 2009: Local Area Agreement Performance Reward Grant

19.4 Cabinet report, 9th April 2009: 2008/11 Local Area Agreement Refresh

19.5 Cabinet report, 22nd February 2010: Council Budget 2010

20. Recommendations

Cabinet are recommended to:

20.1 Note the report and findings of Wirral's LAA review and Wirral's refreshed 2008/11 LAA.

20.2 Approve the LSP Executive Board's recommendations for final allocations of performance reward grant as the accountable body for the LAA, as set out in section 5.2 of this report be approved.

20.3 Approve that funds achieved over and above the 2009/10 and 2010/11 £1.4 million revenue allocations previously agreed by Cabinet, be allocated to continue temporary posts within the Corporate Performance Team. This would allocate £120,765 to continue to fund partnership performance and support officer posts.

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