



South Bucks  
District Council



# Minutes

## LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT (LAA) JOINT SCRUTINY TASK AND FINISH GROUP

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**MINUTES OF THE LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT (LAA) JOINT SCRUTINY TASK AND FINISH GROUP HELD ON TUESDAY 30 OCTOBER 2007, IN MEZZANINE ROOM 1, COUNTY HALL, AYLESBURY, COMMENCING AT 2.00 PM AND CONCLUDING AT 4.10 PM.**

### Members Present

Mrs M Aston (C)	Buckinghamshire County Council
Mrs P Birchley	Buckinghamshire County Council
Mr S Chhokar	South Bucks District Council
Mr P Cooper	Aylesbury Vale District Council
Mr A Dibbo	Chiltern District Council
Mr A Hussain	Wycombe District Council
Mr T Jones (VC)	Aylesbury Vale District Council
Mr A Oxley	South Bucks District Council
Mr J Savage	Wycombe District Council

### Officers

Mrs J Fisk, Policy Officer (Local Area Agreement)  
Mrs A Macpherson, Policy Officer (Public Health)  
Ms H Wailling, Democratic Services Officer  
Mrs K Woods, Assistant Corporate Director, Policy Improvement & Overview and Scrutiny

### 1 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED

that Mrs M Aston be appointed as Chairman of the Group for the duration of the Group.

### 2 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED

that Mr T Jones be appointed as Vice-Chairman of the Group for the duration of the Group.

### 3 ATTENDEES AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Mr D Meacock.

### 4 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

## 5 PROTOCOL FOR THE OPERATING OF THE TASK AND FINISH GROUP

Katharine Woods, Assistant Corporate Director, spoke about the Protocol which had been agreed by the Joint Scrutiny Chairmen's Network. Katharine Woods thanked officers from the district councils who had worked on the Protocol. The following points were made:

- The Protocol had been drawn up as a basis for joint working across the five councils and would be reviewed after one year.
- The Joint Scrutiny Chairmen's Network had agreed that the Chairman and principal supporting officers should both come from the authority which was hosting the Task and Finish Group, to make administration straightforward.
- Two models for Task and Finish Groups would be piloted. The first was that each participating authority would have two seats on the Group (this was the option being adopted currently). The second option for the next pilot was that the County Council would have four seats, and each District Council would have one. The success of the different models would be evaluated at the end of the pilots.
- When reviewed it would be proposed that the title of the Protocol would be amended when possible so that the word 'committee' be removed and replaced with 'task and finish group.'
- The Task and Finish Group would report its findings to an Overview and Scrutiny Committee in each participating authority. Each authority would then use its own reporting arrangements to take forward the findings.
- Each authority would use its own substitution arrangements.
- In the event of a vote, only those Members in attendance would be able to vote.
- In line with County Council practice, the scoping paper would be sent to Cabinet at BCC so that they were aware of the work the Group was doing. District Councils would follow the locally agreed procedure within their own Councils.
- Recommendations from the Group would be followed through and implementation monitored by the chairing Council, in this case the County Council.
- Any press releases would be approved by both the Chairman and the Vice-Chairman.

The protocol was **NOTED** by Members.

## 6 INTRODUCTION TO THE LAA (DVD)

Members were shown a DVD about the LAA, which gave examples of the impact the LAA was having in the Community. The DVD had been produced to accompany the performance reports which had been submitted to the Government Office by the County in 2007, following the end of the first year of the LAA. The DVD had also been shown at the Voluntary and Community Sector National Conference and had received positive feedback.

## 7 LAA MEMBER BRIEFING

Jackie Fisk, Policy Officer, gave Members an overview of the LAA and its governance structure. Jackie Fisk made the following points:

- The Bucks Strategic Partnership includes representatives from a wide range of partners including the Primary Care Trust, the Voluntary and Community Sector, district councils, the County Council, the Police, Fire and Rescue etc. Not all the partners were involved in all areas of the LAA. Jackie Fisk agreed to provide details of the membership of the BSP to the working group. **ACTION: JACKIE FISK**
- The County Council will have a statutory responsibility to consult and negotiate on the LAA.
- The LAA was a way of delivering services, and not a strategy in its own right.
- The LAA is developing partnership working including those areas where partnership working was already evident, and gave an added focus to it.
- Since the LAA had been introduced there had been some very fast-paced national

changes to it. Key issues had been the publication of the white paper and the performance framework, which would be implemented next year. When the LAA was first introduced, it was in a sense additional to the existing performance framework and inspection regime. From 2008 it will be central to the performance framework for the County.

- Governance arrangements for the LAA in Buckinghamshire would be streamlined, and a consultation paper would be published in November 2007. Results of the consultation would be reflected in the priorities for the new LAA. The priorities would be agreed with GOSE (the Government Office for the South East).
- In Buckinghamshire the LAA is a delivery mechanism for the priorities set out in the Community Strategy.
- The Government had decided that the funding streams could be streamlined and therefore there is now an un-ringfencing of certain funding streams with an associated planned reduction in the reporting to government against this spend.
- Local Public Service Agreement (LPSA) targets had been agreed with the Government prior to the start of the LAA. In return for achieving stretch targets, partners have the potential to receive up to £12m in reward grant.
- Apart from the pre-existing LPSA targets, there is no additional funding attached to the LAA. However the Government had announced in the Comprehensive Spending Review 2007 that there would be a new reward element for the new LAA. No details have yet been given but it would probably be spread across all 35 targets, rather than being specific to individual targets.
- In the first year of the LAA, the Government had pooled some of the funding streams and had routed them through the LAA. This had now been increased, and the new total was £9m. Money which had been pooled now required only one joint return. However this LAA Grant would be replaced in 2008 with an Area Based Grant.
- The CAA (Comprehensive Area Assessment) would be in place from 2009 and would concentrate on whether outcomes had been achieved for local residents as opposed to individual performance of one organisation. This offers the opportunity to commission services differently, such as through the Voluntary and Community Sector.

## 8 SCOPING THE WORK OF THE TASK GROUP

Angela Macpherson, Policy Officer, said that the scoping document sent out with the Agenda was an outline document which prioritised the rationale and approach for the Group. The briefing note which had been prepared for Members looked at the proposals in more detail. The suggestion was that the Group looked at 1, 2 or 3 indicators to see how effective the LAA had been.

The Joint Chairmen's Network had suggested that the Group could concentrate on the Safer and Stronger Communities block as it was an area which would make a real difference to residents and included issues that the public viewed as high ranking priorities. Another consideration was that it was crucial that the Group did not overlap with topics being looked at by other overview and scrutiny groups or committees in the County.

The Chairman said that the Group should look at what contribution other organisations had made and whether funding had been forthcoming and well-spent.

Members **AGREED** that the Group should take the LAA Safer and Stronger Communities Block as its focus.

Members then suggested the following priorities for the selection of indicators within the Safer and Stronger Communities Block:

- What the public perceive as 'bad' in society (drugs abuse, alcohol abuse, robberies etc.)
- Some red and some green indicators

- Different partners (not just police)
- Issues which involve County and districts

Angela Macpherson said that she would circulate a table of possible indicators by e-mail before the next meeting with tick-boxes for the criteria listed, for Members to complete  
**ACTION: AM**

## **9 WORKING TOGETHER - MEETINGS AND COMMUNICATIONS**

Members agreed that communication between meetings should be by e-mail.

The next meeting would be on 13 November 2007, at which Dean Taylor, the block lead for Safer and Stronger communities, would be speaking to Members. There would also be training for Members regarding Performance Plus. Alan Oxley noted that he would be late for the meeting (AM to adjust time/agenda if necessary).

Angela Macpherson reminded Members that the Chairman of the County Council had invited the Group to a Chairman's briefing on 21 November 2007, which would take the LAA as its topic.

Katharine Woods noted that the meetings would be open to the public. Mr J Savage said that the Group was welcome to hold meetings at the Wycombe District offices.

It was agreed that meetings would not be held on Fridays or on Wednesday mornings.

**CHAIRMAN**