

## ‘Refreshing’ Bristol’s Local Area Agreement

A simple guide to the process of refreshing Bristol’s Local Area Agreement.

### Why should I be interested in the Local Area Agreement?

With the end of regeneration funding such as Neighbourhood Renewal in March 2008, and the pooling of a number of previously ‘ring fenced’ funding streams from 2008, the Local Area Agreement (LAA) will become a key part in deciding which areas of work should be the focus for funding.

In addition to the allocation of funding the LAA is about identifying what are the most important issues that need to be addressed in Bristol. If you think something is really important then you should make the case for why it should be included in the LAA by coming to one of the workshops listed on page 4.

### What is the LAA?

A Local Area Agreement (LAA) is a three year agreement that sets out priorities for a local area as agreed between central government and a local area represented by a local authority and Local Strategic Partnership (LSP).

### What is the purpose of the LAA?

The LAA is meant to help local authorities and local strategic partnerships work together to focus on the most important issues in their area. Each area will have identified what the priorities are in their Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS).

### What is a Sustainable Community Strategy?

The SCS will replace what is currently called the Community Strategy (CS). The SCS is a vision for what the council and members of Bristol’s local strategic partnership (the Bristol Partnership) want the city to achieve over the next 20 years. All councils and LSPs have a community strategy in place. The CS will become Sustainable Community Strategies with a stronger focus on social, economic and environmental issues and tackling the longer-term and global impacts on communities.

## **Didn't Bristol agree a LAA in spring 2007 – why is it changing already?**

LAAs were introduced by the Government in phases. Bristol's first LAA was in the third phase – 2007-2010. The Government now wants all local authorities to have LAA's that run over the same three-year period. This means that every local authority has to refresh its LAA now so they are all ready to start again in June 2008 (2008-2010).

## **So does that mean everything in the LAA is changing?**

Because the first LAA was agreed only last year, some of the priorities are likely to stay the same. However, as the number of targets is expected to reduce overall, some targets currently in the LAA may not be included in the new one. The new LAA will reflect the revised vision for Bristol in the SCS and so if there are new priorities in the SCS vision then these will need to be in the LAA.

## **What is different about the 'new' LAA?**

There are a number of differences. Key in the new Government guidance is that the LAA should "tell the story of the place" and focus on delivering the particular priorities set out in the SCS that are "the distinctive vision and ambition of an area".

One of the most noticeable changes is likely to be the size of the LAA. In the 2007-2010 Bristol LAA there are more than 90 indicators (or targets) set across 4 themed blocks. The Government has

reduced the number of national indicators and targets that councils are measured against from around 1200 to just 198. The 198 are the only Government targets local authorities will now be measured against. From the new 198 National Indicators (NI), Bristol will decide on 35 to include in the new LAA.

Find the full list of 198 National Indicators at [www.voscur.org/brispartnership/laa](http://www.voscur.org/brispartnership/laa)

In addition to the 35 NI, there are 16 statutory targets related to Children and Young People's attainment. There is also an opportunity to decide local indicator targets that are distinctive to Bristol. The local targets could be on particular issues or problems relevant to Bristol, or even something that focuses on a specific neighbourhood of Bristol. The local targets will not be measured nationally.

In the new LAA the four blocks will be replaced by four 'themes', these are:

- Children and Young People.
- Safer Stronger Communities.
- Healthy Communities and Older People.
- Economy and Enterprise.

These are almost the same as the blocks the Government wants, however, there will be more emphasis on joint working across the targets. Themes rather than blocks, is meant to encourage this.

## **How will the new LAAs be funded?**

A major difference is how the LAA will be funded. In the first LAA there was an LAA grant which included various funding streams that were 'ring fenced' to be spent only on certain themes within the blocks, for example Children and Young People. The new LAA has an Area Based Grant instead of a LAA Grant. The area based grant will include a minimum of 39 grants or funding streams\* that were previously, but will no longer be, 'ring fenced'. It will now be up to the local authority and the Bristol Partnership to decide how best to spend the Area Based Grant to meet the priorities identified in their LAA.

\*Find the full list of grants that will now form part of the LAA funding at

[www.voscur.org/brispartnership/laa](http://www.voscur.org/brispartnership/laa)

## **Who decides what changes in the new LAA?**

A working group of LAA lead officers; representatives from each Council department; Police; Primary Care Trusts; the Bristol Partnership and the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector\*\* are working together on the refresh of the LAA. Ultimately, the LAA will be agreed by the Bristol Partnership, but the local authority will undertake preparation work and negotiations with Government Office for the South West.

\*\*Voscur, The Care Forum and the Black Development Agency represent the voluntary, community and social enterprise (vcse) sector at the LAA officers group.

## **Who in the vcse sector has been involved in the LAA refresh so far?**

Each year Voscur members elect reps to sit on the Bristol Partnership and each of its themed Delivery Groups to represent vcse sector members. The Voscur reps and members of the Delivery Groups have been involved in discussions about the priorities for the SCS and LAA. Voscur reps also took part in a stakeholder conference organised by the Bristol Partnership in November 2007 to help agree the "story of the place" and the priorities for the revised vision in the new SCS.

The reps attend Voscur Assembly and network meetings to enable members to feed their views to them but you can also contact reps directly. Full details of the Voscur reps can be found at [www.voscur.org/representation](http://www.voscur.org/representation)

## **How else can the vcse sector have a say on the new LAA?**

Voscur, The Care Forum and Black Development Agency are organising five workshops in January 2008, for the vcse sector to influence what is in the new LAA. Each workshop will focus on a theme in the LAA and will give our sector an opportunity to say what they would like to be included in the 35 indicators for the LAA.

<b>When</b>	<b>Theme</b>	<b>Where</b>
Tues 15 January 1.30 – 4pm	Children and Young People	Southville Centre, Beaulley Road, Southville, Bristol
Thurs 17 January 10am – 12.30pm	Economy and Enterprise	The Gatehouse Centre, Hareclive Road, Hartcliffe, Bristol
Weds 23 January 6pm – 8.30pm	Safer, Stronger Communities	The Council House, College Green, Bristol
Thurs 24 January 1.30 – 4pm	Equalities Communities	Black Development Agency, Russell Town Avenue, Redfield, Bristol
Mon 28 January 1.30 – 4pm	Healthy Communities and Older People	The Vassall Centre, Gill Avenue, Fishponds, Bristol

## **What is the timetable for ‘refreshing’ the LAA?**

The Government published guidance on the new LAA in October 2007 and the new National Indicators in November 2007. By December 2007 the Bristol Partnership is expected to agree the “story of the place”, emerging priorities and key vision for the SCS.

By the end of January 2008, the 35 National Indicators (NI) plus any local indicator targets in the Bristol LAA will be decided. Between January and March the content of the LAA will be negotiated between the Council and the Government Office for the South West (GOSW). By the end of April 2008 the final draft LAA will be complete, and ready to be agreed by the Bristol Partnership.

## **Who will make sure that the new LAA targets are delivered and what happens to the National Indicators that are not included in the LAA?**

The Bristol Partnership (the Local Strategic Partnership) is responsible for the delivery of the LAA. Each theme of the LAA is monitored by the relevant Bristol Partnership Delivery Group. The Bristol Partnership will be largely responsible for reviewing its progress but GOSW will continue to be involved. The local authority will still need to report on its own performance against all 198 NI's, but the LAA is about keeping the focus on the important issues for Bristol.

## **How can I find out more about the Bristol LAA?**

Find out more details about the LAA at [www.voscur.org/brispartnership/laa](http://www.voscur.org/brispartnership/laa) or on the Bristol Partnership website [www.thebristolpartnership.org](http://www.thebristolpartnership.org)