

Date: 25 March 2008

Report: NORTH YORKSHIRE LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT

Purpose of the report

1. To inform members of proposed indicators and targets selected for the new North Yorkshire Local Area Agreement and to consider their relevance to this Authority.

Strategic Planning Framework

2. The information and recommendation(s) contained in this report are consistent with the Authority's statutory purposes and its approved strategic planning framework:

National Park Management Plan

Objective CC5 – Support and contribute to meeting targets set in local Community Strategies and sub-regional programmes for improving access to services within or closer to communities.

Background

3. At the January 2008 meeting of the Authority the Chief Executive gave a presentation on the implications of the recent Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR). This included a brief explanation of national indicators and how they would feature in the new round of Local Area Agreements (LAAs). Members requested a report be brought to this meeting providing an overview of indicators and targets to be adopted by the North Yorkshire LAA and offering comment on the relevance of these to the Authority.
4. LAAs are contracts between central Government and the upper tier of local government and its partners to drive forward improvements in public service delivery over a three year period. Local authorities agree to deliver on identified targets in return for more simplified and more flexible funding arrangements. Additional performance reward grant is available if authorities adopt and achieve extra (stretch) targets set at a level above what would have been achieved without the agreement.
5. The first LAAs were prepared in three rounds between 2004 and 2007, with refinements made along the way. In order to bring all into line the Government has required all existing agreements to be reviewed. They will all now cover the period April 2008 to 2011. These new agreements take on board the Government's decision to reduce the number of national performance indicators to a single set of 198. Each LAA is required to adopt up to 35 of these plus 16 'statutory indicators'. (These are all from the Department for Children, Schools and Families). These national indicators have precise

definitions and guidance is provided on how they should be measured. On top of the national indicators, local authorities have discretion to include local indicators. For all indicators, locally determined targets are set against which performance will be measured. Another significant difference from the first LAAs is that there will be a reduced number of specific grants and a move towards more flexible area based grant. Decisions about spending priorities will be made locally by local authorities and their partners.

The North Yorkshire LAA

6. The draft revised LAA for North Yorkshire was submitted to the Government Office for Yorkshire and Humber in early February 2008. However, it's understood that as a result of more recent meetings the number of indicators and targets have been reduced. This cannot be verified because an updated document has not been released. As the document is still the subject of negotiations with the Government Office further amendments are likely, meaning a final list of targets may still be some way off.
7. In the absence of an updated document, this report can only comment on the version submitted in February. This proposed 78 indicators (16 statutory, 35 national and 27 local). These corresponded to the themes of the LAA as follows:

Stronger Communities	12
Safer Communities	10
Children and Young People	28 (including the statutory 16)
Adult Health and Wellbeing	11
Tackling Exclusion and Promoting Equality	1
Local Economy	10
Environmental Sustainability	6

Implications for the National Park Authority

8. The new Local Government Act sets statutory roles for local authority leadership and imposes on partners, including this National Park Authority, a duty to co-operate. This means that we, and all the other recognised partners, will be held accountable for the delivery of the LAA targets. The Chief Executive has raised concerns about how such joint accountability would operate in practice, given that many of the targets lie well outside our statutory remit. There is also a question as to how it would be reconciled with the bespoke National Park Authorities Performance Assessment (NPAPA) regime currently being developed. No further comment on these wider issues is offered here.
9. The particular proposals of the North Yorkshire LAA (February version) are unlikely to create problems for this Authority. Many of the targets and indicators are of some indirect interest because of the Authority's socio - economic duty. However, only a limited number are of direct relevance to the Authority's work. These are set out more fully in the **appendix**, but can be grouped and summarised as follows:

Volunteering

10. Three indicators (one national and two local) will measure increases in participation in volunteering in different forms and by different groups. We can assume some of the work of the Dales Volunteers will count towards achieving the targets.

Young People's Participation in Positive Activities

11. Positive activities, as defined by Government, include a wide range of sporting, cultural and recreational activities and experiences and opportunities for volunteering, provided that these are structured and support 'Every Child Matters' outcomes. Activities can take place in a wide variety of settings including outdoor recreation centres. The County Council, as lead partner, needs to remember when setting targets and measuring performance that the indicator includes this breadth of activities. Regrettably the 'adult health and wellbeing' indicators and targets don't include any measure of participation in countryside recreational activities, despite the plentiful, local opportunities for using the county's countryside resources to improve health and wellbeing amongst all ages.

Housing

12. The document sets a target of 2,220 affordable homes to be delivered in the four years up to March 2011, which is significantly higher than the 290 delivered in 2005/06. This target does not appear in the Regional Spatial Strategy, which leaves the decision to individual Local Development Frameworks. This will happen in the National Park, where the level of provision will be determined through the LDF process. It's conceivable that the more ambitious target could increase pressure on the Authority, with the duty to co-operate, for the Park to accommodate more affordable homes than identified through the LDF. However, officers of the Authority were not consulted on the level set by the proposed target, which suggests the county and district authorities believe the figure is achievable without depending on extra provision in the National Parks.
13. A second housing indicator will quantify the supply of 'ready to develop' housing sites. The Park will have little relevance to this, because the scale of housing development is so small and because the Local Plan includes very little allocation of housing land.

Services

14. A single indicator will record access to services and facilities by public transport, walking and cycling. This corresponds closely to an objective in the National Park Management Plan which confirms a commitment in the North Yorkshire Local Transport Plan 2006-2011.

Economy

15. Increases in the value of tourism and the county's cultural offer and growth of creative industries will be measured by three local indicators. These roughly correspond with economy and employment objectives in the Management Plan, which identify these sectors as having potential and being important to the National Park. Most of the growth and increases proposed by the targets may take place elsewhere but the Management Plan's objective confirms the Park is able to make a contribution.

Environment

16. Of the six indicators, two refer to CO₂ emissions, two address waste and recycling, one flood risk management and coastal erosion and one biodiversity. All use indicators from the national set. At present only the two waste indicators have targets. While the indicators measuring emissions are welcome inclusions, it's regrettable that an indicator from the first LAA, measuring energy efficiency and CO₂ reduction in domestic, business, school properties and through community action plans, has been dropped.

17. It's also disappointing that monitoring of the natural and historic environment is to be limited to just one (national) indicator, measuring improvements to local biodiversity. When consulted on possible indicators for the new LAA last November officers of the Authority made a number of suggestions, including area of native woodland, populations of indicator bird species, and Listed Buildings and Monuments at risk. Clearly these recommendations have not been taken on board. This is regrettable when environmental richness and quality are such an inherent and important part of life in North Yorkshire.
18. Members should also note that – on the basis of the Government's current proposals – the various national indicators will be collected at the relevant local authority level (which excludes national park authorities). Thus, it will not be possible to get figures for the National Park (only for Craven, Richmond and South Lakeland). As a result, they will be of little use in helping to measure the 'state of the Park'.

Next Steps

19. The North Yorkshire LAA document submitted in early February is the subject of ongoing negotiation with the Regional Government Office and Government Departments. These discussions have been looking to see if the submitted list of indicators can be refined down. The results together with a firming up of targets and first thoughts on 'levels of ambition and stretch' were requested by the Government Office to be submitted in a second draft by early March. Despite the April 2008 start date of the new LAA, negotiations will continue into May. The agreed document will then be submitted to the Department for Communities and Local Government at the end of May, with approval hoped for in June.
20. As with the first North Yorkshire LAA, the Thematic Partnerships of the North Yorkshire Strategic Partnership (NYSP) will oversee delivery of targets against the indicators that fall within their topic area. All but one of the indicators referred to above will be within the remit of either the Stronger Communities or the Economy and Employment Theme Group. Environmental sustainability will remain in the remit of the former of these, membership of which includes the North York Moors Chief Executive as the representative of both National Park Authorities.

RECOMMENDATION

21. That the contents of this report be noted and the comments in paragraphs 10, 15,16 and 17 be conveyed to the Government Office.

Philip J Brown
Policy and Liaison Officer

27 February 2008

Background documents:

North Yorkshire Draft LAA2 post Jan 08 Submission

GOYH, 04.02.08, Letter for 5 March Drafts

Letter to NYCC, 29.11.07, Partners' Input to LAA2

APPENDIX - NORTH YORKSHIRE DRAFT LAA2 INDICATORS

Note: The Indicators support the priorities of the North Yorkshire Sustainable Community Strategy (2008 -18), which are:
 1) Access to Services; 2) Affordable Housing; 3) Alcohol; 4) Children and Young People; 5) Community Cohesion; 6) Economy and Enterprise; 7) Older People; 8) Health and Wellbeing; 9) Environment.

SCS Priority									NIS or Local Indicator	Designated, Local or Statutory	Brief Description	Baseline As LAA1. Subject to confirmation.	Improvement Targets 08/09 and 09/10 as LAA1 Subject to confirmation.			Lead Partners (Thematic Partnership allocation – subject to confirmation.)	Comments C = GOYH/NYSP SHARED Match/near match to LAA1 Indicator.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9					08/09	09/10	10/11		
STRONGER COMMUNITIES																	
				X					NI 6	D	Participation in regular volunteering.	06/07 3.9%		6.0% with stretch		Third Sector (Stronger)	C STR/1(c) STRETCH
				X			X		L 56	L	Volunteering by people who are BME or unemployed or disabled.	06/07 374	438 with stretch	472 with stretch		Third Sector (Stronger)	STR/1(e) STRETCH
				X			X		L 57	L	Volunteering in Special Volunteering.	06/07 347	410 with stretch	441 with stretch		Third Sector (Stronger)	STR/1(f) STRETCH
CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE																	
				X			X		NI 110	L	Young people's participation in positive activities.					NYCC (Children and YP)	C

SCS Priority									NIS or Local Indicator	Designated, Local or Statutory	Brief Description	Baseline As LAA1. Subject to confirmation.	Improvement Targets 08/09 and 09/10 as LAA1 Subject to confirmation.			Lead Partners (Thematic Partnership allocation – subject to confirmation.)	Comments C = GOYH/NYSP SHARED Match/near match to LAA1 Indicator.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9									
LOCAL ECONOMY																	
	X						X		NI 155	D	Number of affordable homes delivered.	05/06 296			2,220 with stretch Cumulative 1 Apr 07 - 31Mar 2011	Districts NYCC (Stronger)	C <i>STR/2(a)</i> STRETCH
	X						X		NI 159	D	Supply of ready to develop housing sites					(Stronger)	C
X							X	X	NI 175	L	Access to services and facilities by public transport, walking and cycling.					NYCC Districts (Stronger)	C
					X				L 35	L	Increase the value of North Yorkshire's cultural offer.	06/07 £91.)m	£99.5 m	£106. 5m		NYCC Districts (Economy and E)	<i>EE/1/(f)</i>
					X				L 36	L	Grow the Creative Industries sector.	06/07 1,900 business es	1,968 busin esses	1,999 busin esses		NYCC Districts (Economy and E)	<i>EE/1(e)</i>
					X				L 37	L	Increase the value of tourism earnings.	06/07 £943.64 m	£967. 38m	£979. 48m		NYCC Districts (Economy and E)	<i>EE/1/(d)</i>

SCS Priority									NIS or Local Indicator	Designated, Local or Statutory	Brief Description	Baseline As LAA1. Subject to confirmation.	Improvement Targets 08/09 and 09/10 as LAA1 Subject to confirmation.			Lead Partners (Thematic Partnership allocation – subject to confirmation.)	Comments C = GOYH/NYSP SHARED Match/near match to LAA1 Indicator.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9									
ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY																	
							X	X	NI 185	D	CO ₂ reduction from local authority operations (excl schools).	28,297	TBC	26,882	NYCC Districts (Stronger)	C STR/5/(a)	
							X	X	NI 186	D	Per capita reduction in CO ₂ emissions in the LA area.				NYCC Districts (Stronger)	C	
					X	X	X	NI 189	D	Flood and coastal erosion risk management.				NYCC Districts (Stronger)	C		
							X	NI 192	D	Waste recycled and/or composted	06/07 33.40%	37.80%	40.00%	NYCC Districts (Stronger)	C STR/6/(a)		
							X	NI 193	D	Municipal waste landfilled.	06/07 194,709 tonnes	179,680 tonnes	181,511 tonnes	NYCC Districts (Stronger)	C STR/6/(b)		
							X	X	NI 197	D	Improved local biodiversity – active management of local sites.				Districts NYCC (Stronger)	C STR/7/(b)and (c)	