

Leicester's Local Area Agreement

What are Local Area Agreements?

Local Area Agreements are a new initiative that allows the Council and the Leicester Partnership greater freedom to decide how large amounts of government funding will be spent locally. The idea is that government money can be used more effectively if there is less 'red tape' involved.

Under a Local Area Agreement we still have to deliver government priorities but we can also identify local priorities. Processes attached to a large number of funding streams will also be simplified so that local partnerships can focus more on service delivery.

No new cash is being provided. We expect that around £100million of existing funding will be included in Leicester's Local Area Agreement in the three years from April 2006. Even if the actual figure turns out to be less, tens of millions of pounds are sure to be involved.

Advantages include:

- Increased focus on shared priorities and a new more flexible approach to promoting local solutions
- We will report on far fewer performance indicators attached to funding. Derby saw a reduction from over 600 indicators down to 72.
- Funding streams are greatly simplified. Most of the funding streams from across central government can be included in the LAA.

How do Local Area Agreements work?

Local Area Agreements are built on four blocks:

- Children and Young People
- Healthier Communities and Older People
- Safer and Stronger Communities
- Economic Development and Enterprise

The outcomes selected for each block will reflect the major local priorities identified in the Strategy for Leicester (a document that brings together the Community Strategy and Local Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy). In addition to the outcomes selected by locally, there are eleven mandatory outcomes set by central government.

Delivery

Local Area Agreements will allow partner agencies more freedom to design and implement local solutions to local problems. How that delivery takes place will depend on the circumstances involved. The principle of 'joined-up' multi-agency working is central to the overall success of the agreement.

How long do Local Area Agreements last?

Three years. Central government expects every local authority in England to have a Local Area Agreement in place by 2007. 21 local authorities took part in the pilot phase and 66 local authorities (including Leicester) are now developing Local Area Agreements for delivery from April next year.

Future Developments

Looking ahead, Government is aiming to further simplify funding and allow greater local freedoms by 2008, probably by merging current funding streams into one 'single pot' per council. It is probable that the Comprehensive Performance Assessment will be changed at around the same time to reflect the growing government focus on local partnership and performance.

How will the LAA impact on the Aylestone, Eyres Monsell and Freeman Area?

There are a number of key themes being developed in Leicester's LAA. One of these is 'Neighbourhood Working'.

Leicester has a range of neighbourhood arrangements where agencies, services and communities come together and the LAA offers an opportunity to make significant improvements to how these align and work towards shared objectives.

We expect that Area Committees will make a major contribution to the delivery of our LAA. In particular 'area planning' will identify particular local priorities that can be addressed by actions at the local level.

Much of the funding within an LAA (e.g. NRF) is designed to tackle deprivation. As such, those 'super output areas' with the highest levels of deprivation will be targeted.

There is also a new funding stream included in LAAs, the Neighbourhood Element of the Safer and Stronger Communities Fund. We will use the Neighbourhood Element to create a major shift in the development of neighbourhood management for Leicester's deprived neighbourhoods.

We propose to split most of the fund between St Matthews/ St Marks and Saffron Lane Estate to appoint and support a Neighbourhood Manager in each area as part of setting neighbourhood management along the lines of the Government's pathfinder model.

How can I find out more?

By contacting:

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