

The local performance framework delivering the vision

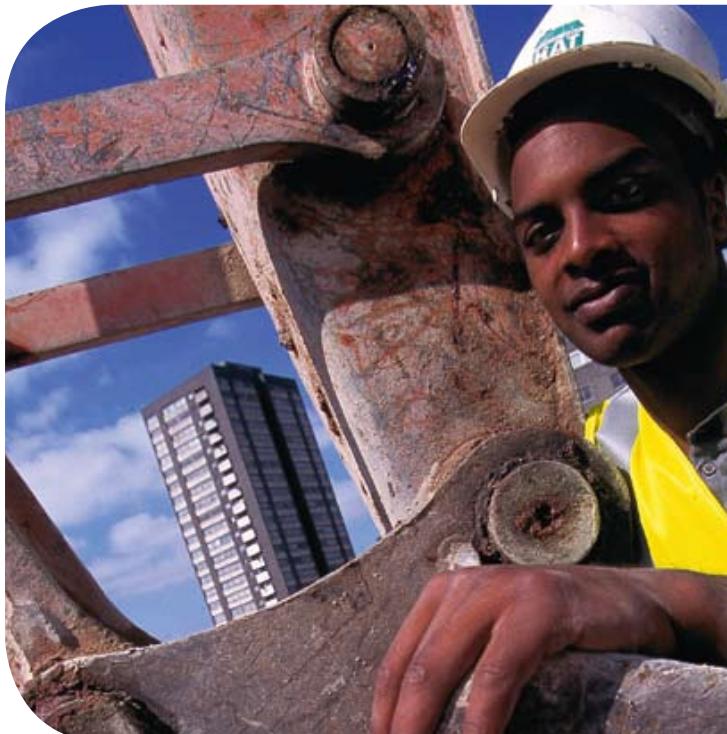


Putting local people first

In 2008 we introduced major changes to the way that national government, local authorities and local service providers work in partnership to deliver better services and an improved quality of life for local people.

These changes are all about finding out what local people need most, prioritising those needs and putting action in place to deliver results. They're about empowering residents and making sure that their needs are the driving force behind change.

And they're about holding service providers to account for what they deliver. Whether it's tackling crime, creating more jobs, improving social care, or cleaning up the environment, local services are at the heart of building the sort of places that people want to live in.



Local area agreements (LAAs)

Local authorities and other local service providers have come together with national government to develop local area agreements (LAAs).

LAAs cover all 150 local areas in England. No two agreements are exactly the same, because every area has different needs and one size does not fit all. Locally delivered services must reflect what local people need most.

What matters most

LAAs combine national and local priorities into a plan for prioritising and delivering local services through to 2011 and beyond.

Each LAA identifies a maximum of 35 priorities for the local area, agreed between local service providers and central government. These priorities are chosen from a list of 196 national indicators, and targets are agreed for improvement in each priority. While every local area is assessed against all 196 indicators, particular focus will be given to the identified priorities.

Over a third of all local areas have chosen the maximum number of 35 priorities, while the average number chosen across the country is 31.

Priorities can cover any subject, from the economy, to environmental issues, crime, and social and health care. Young people are a strong focus for LAAs. The most commonly chosen priority for local areas is helping young people not in employment, education or training (115 areas selected this).

Other key issues include crime reduction, availability of affordable housing, reducing teenage pregnancy and obesity among children, and cutting carbon dioxide emissions. You can find out more about the priorities that local areas have chosen on the public website www.localpriorities.communities.gov.uk



What local people want

Devolving power from national to local government needs to be matched by local authorities putting more power into local people's hands. Consultation with – and the involvement of – local people in the decision-making process is key to making the framework work. Local authorities should already have consulted residents about the priorities in their areas, while next year they will have a statutory duty to actively involve local people in shaping the future of the places where they live and work.





Cutting red tape and giving service providers room

Local service providers are much closer to local people's needs. Therefore they have been given more flexibility on how they prioritise their activity and resources in order to deliver good-quality services. This should be matched by improved performance. It is an exciting opportunity for local authorities and service providers to show what they can do.

The new set of national indicators and LAAs help to cut down on bureaucracy and red tape. Previously local authorities had to report against up to 1,200 indicators, whereas now they can concentrate on the issues that mean the most to local people. Fewer indicators mean less paperwork – and more time available to get on with the job.

Local authorities will also have much more freedom to prioritise their spending.

Making service providers accountable

Every local area will be accountable both to national government and local people for delivering on its LAA promises. Performance will be monitored through a robust and independent system called the comprehensive area assessment (CAA).

CAA will go live in April 2009 and will be carried out by the Audit Commission and six other inspection bodies. These are: Ofsted; the Commission for Social Care Inspection; the Healthcare Commission; HM Inspectorate of Constabulary; HM Inspectorate of Probation; and HM Inspectorate of Prisons.

Assessment and inspection under CAA will be proportionate, risk-based and focus on outcomes. It will find out how well local people's needs are being met, both by listening to their opinions and checking progress against the 196 performance indicators. It will also look closely at whether local services are efficient and provide the value for money that people are entitled to expect.

CAA will help to identify problems and areas that need urgent attention very quickly. It will also identify examples of good practice that local areas can share for maximum benefit.

Progress reports will be published annually so people can see how well their local service providers are performing and hold them to account for delivering results.



Next steps

Times and priorities change, so local areas and government will be reviewing LAAs annually to make sure they keep up to date and stay on track with meeting local people's needs. Little change is expected in this first year, with the emphasis on tying up loose ends. You can find out more about LAAs in the *LAA Annual Review 2008/09* online at: www.communities.gov.uk/publications/localgovernment/laaannualreview200809

Work to date has gone well, but this is only the start. Now the system is in place, the focus for the future must be firmly on delivering the results that local people want to see.

Increasing the benefits

While LAAs can apply at neighbourhood or county level, improvement initiatives and targets can also be set at sub-regional level through multi area agreements (MAAs). This may be particularly appropriate to deliver sustainable economic development and other outcomes best tackled on a wider scale. For example, many transport schemes could only work across a wider area than just a single local area.

July 2008 saw the launch of the first wave of MAAs. These were: Bournemouth; Greater Manchester; Leeds City Region; Urban South Hampshire; Tees Valley; Tyne and Wear; and South Yorkshire. We expect that the next wave of MAAs will be signed before the end of 2008.

**For more information on the local performance framework,
go to the Communities and Local Government website at:
www.communities.gov.uk/localgovernment**