

Delivering our Local Area Agreement

- A practical guide to LAA Performance Management

What is our Local Area Agreement (LAA)?

In June 2008 the Oxfordshire Partnership negotiated a second Local Area Agreement (LAA2) - part of the delivery plan for the Oxfordshire 2030 Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS). This covers the period 2008/2011.

The Oxfordshire Partnership supported by the Public Service Board, agreed a set of 35 targets to meet the priorities identified in Oxfordshire 2030 to deliver improvements for the people of Oxfordshire. In addition, there are 16 statutory targets related to Children & Young People. **All these targets together form the LAA.**

What about our existing 2006/09 LAA?

LAA2 does not replace the first LAA (LAA1) which runs until 2009, although we now only track LAA1 stretch targets as many of the non-stretch targets are superseded.

One key difference is that there is no concept of a 'stretch/reward' target in LAA2. Any reward grant for LAA2 performance is likely to be related to overall performance against targets rather than specific amounts being related to the achievement of individual targets.

Our shared ambition is to succeed at delivering all our LAA and Sustainable Community Strategy goals to do this we need to build on our experience of delivering LAA1 and apply the lessons learned.

What this guide covers

this guide outlines the performance framework which supports LAA1 & 2 and SCS delivery, outlining roles and responsibilities within the process.

- 1. Governance**
- 2. Roles and responsibilities**
- 3. Reporting requirements**
- 4. The 5 key principles of LAA Performance Management**
- 5. Support available**

1. LAA Governance hierarchy

The Government Office for the South East (GOSE) is our regional tier of government. We worked closely with our GOSE representative to negotiate our LAAs with central government. We are expected to provide six monthly and yearly performance reports to our GOSE representative who in their role as ‘critical friend’ raises any fundamental issues of concern with delivery of targets at the earliest possible opportunity.

Our GOSE representative attends quarterly Public Service Board Meetings to challenge our performance against agreed targets

The Oxfordshire Partnership is the over-arching strategic partnership for the county and provides the forum for setting the strategic vision for the county and for developing and delivering the Countywide Sustainable Community Strategy – Oxfordshire 2030.

The Partnership has delegated authority to the Public Service Board for managing the Local Area Agreement.

The Public Service Board comprises the key public sector organisations in Oxfordshire and includes representatives from the voluntary and community sector, Government Office for the South East (GOSE) and the South East England Development Agency (SEEDA). It is responsible for Oxfordshire's Local Area Agreement (LAA) on behalf of the Oxfordshire Partnership. The board is currently chaired by Councillor David Robertson, Deputy Leader of Oxfordshire County Council.

The Public Service Board monitors progress against targets each quarter during the Public Service Board Meeting.

Thematic partnerships operate under the umbrella of our overall strategic partnership ‘The Oxfordshire Partnership’. Different partnerships are responsible for target(s) based on theme. For example the ‘Children and Young People’s Partnership’ will be responsible for the targets related to Children and Young People. However, there are a number of cross cutting targets that all partnerships should accept collective responsibility for.

Thematic partnerships should take responsibility for their targets and monitor them regularly at partnership level meetings. These should be a forum for addressing areas of concern, considering risks to delivery, holding individuals to account and working towards joined up solutions

2. Roles and responsibilities

Key stakeholder	Role and responsibility
<p>The Public Service Board</p>	<p>monitors progress against targets each quarter during the Public Service Board Meeting</p>
<p>Thematic/Lead partnership</p> <p>– this is still out for consultation so we have put the main thematic partnerships in for now and we can revise once agreed)</p> <p>Oxfordshire Economic Partnership Environment Partnership Children’s Trust Board Health and wellbeing partnership Stronger Communities Safer Communities Partnership</p>	<p>Maintain a quarterly record of performance against targets they oversee.</p> <p>Actively discuss areas of poor performance and take appropriate remedial action to get performance back on track</p> <p>Maintain an up to date risk register and demonstrate how risks are mitigated</p>
<p>Target Lead – the manager with an understanding of the operational requirements relevant to the target</p>	<p>The TL should oversee the following general areas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Leadership and governance e.g. Set-up and lead the delivery group <u>OR</u> lead on actions related to this target on an existing group. - Data including data quality e.g. ensure systems are in place to collect data in a form that meets the requirements of the relevant indicator. - Risk management e.g. escalate risks/issues to the target sponsor when required - Reporting e.g. report progress to the target sponsor, the lead partnership and the delivery groups of related targets.
<p>Delivery Group – consists of representatives from the partner organization actively involved in work that supports the delivery of</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identifies actions required to deliver against the target and carry out these actions

the organisations with the duty to co-operate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensures that risks are allocated to actions - Raises any blockages in carrying out these actions and any new and emerging risks
Target Sponsor – a senior manager with a clear understanding of the strategies that will impact on and be affected by the work to deliver this target and a member of the lead partnership (new role)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - support the target lead and the other key stakeholders in relation to this target - ensure that that PSB are kept informed of progress - resolve risks/issues escalated by the target lead - consider the strategic context of the target making useful links to other targets - has overall responsibility for ensuring that the delivery group fulfils its responsibilities
LAA Central Support Team – County Council performance and partnership unit staff	Oversees the development and delivery of the Local Area Agreement. The team is responsible for collating and analysing performance data centrally and preparing performance reports for the PSB.

3. Reporting

Quarterly collection and reporting of data shows whether the agreed interim targets are being met. It is therefore important that we report on our progress against targets regularly and that target owners are held to account- performance management is a continuous process

As a **minimum**, Target Leads should ensure (on behalf of the partnership) that up to date and good quality data is uploaded into the central support team system Performance Plus (PP+) on a quarterly basis as follows:

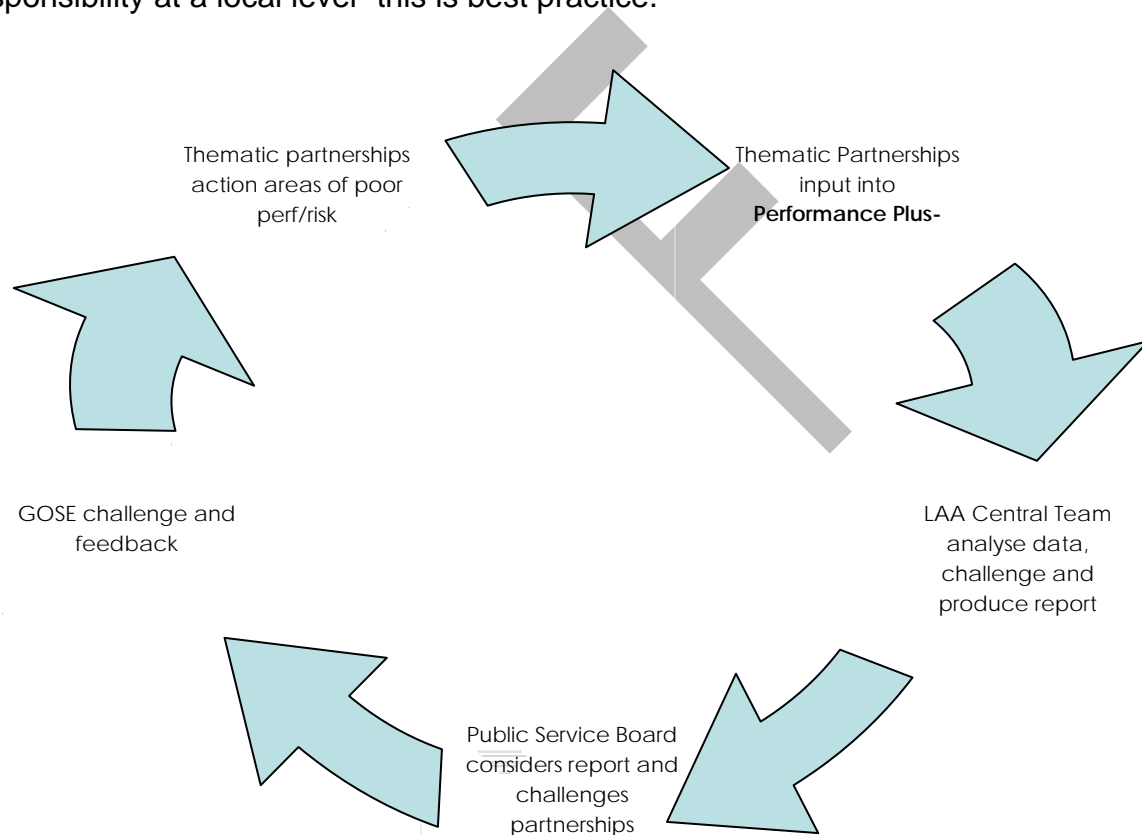
- Performance against target/milestone allocating a Red Amber Green (RAG) status and commentary where performance is red /amber around the causes of poor performance and intended action(Partnerships should work with the

Central Support Team to ensure there is a clear objective rationale for RAG target status which can be built into the PP+ system.)

- Risks and mitigation arrangements

The reporting cycle

GOSE will continue to receive six- monthly and yearly overviews of performance against all targets. The **PSB** will receive quarterly high level reporting covering data, activity, risk and finance. **Partnerships** must supply data as prescribed by the central support team (via PP+) to meet the expectations of the PSB .In addition they should maintain an overview of all the targets they have primary responsibility for delivering plus the targets where they can add value to but do not hold the primary responsibility at a local level- this is best practice.



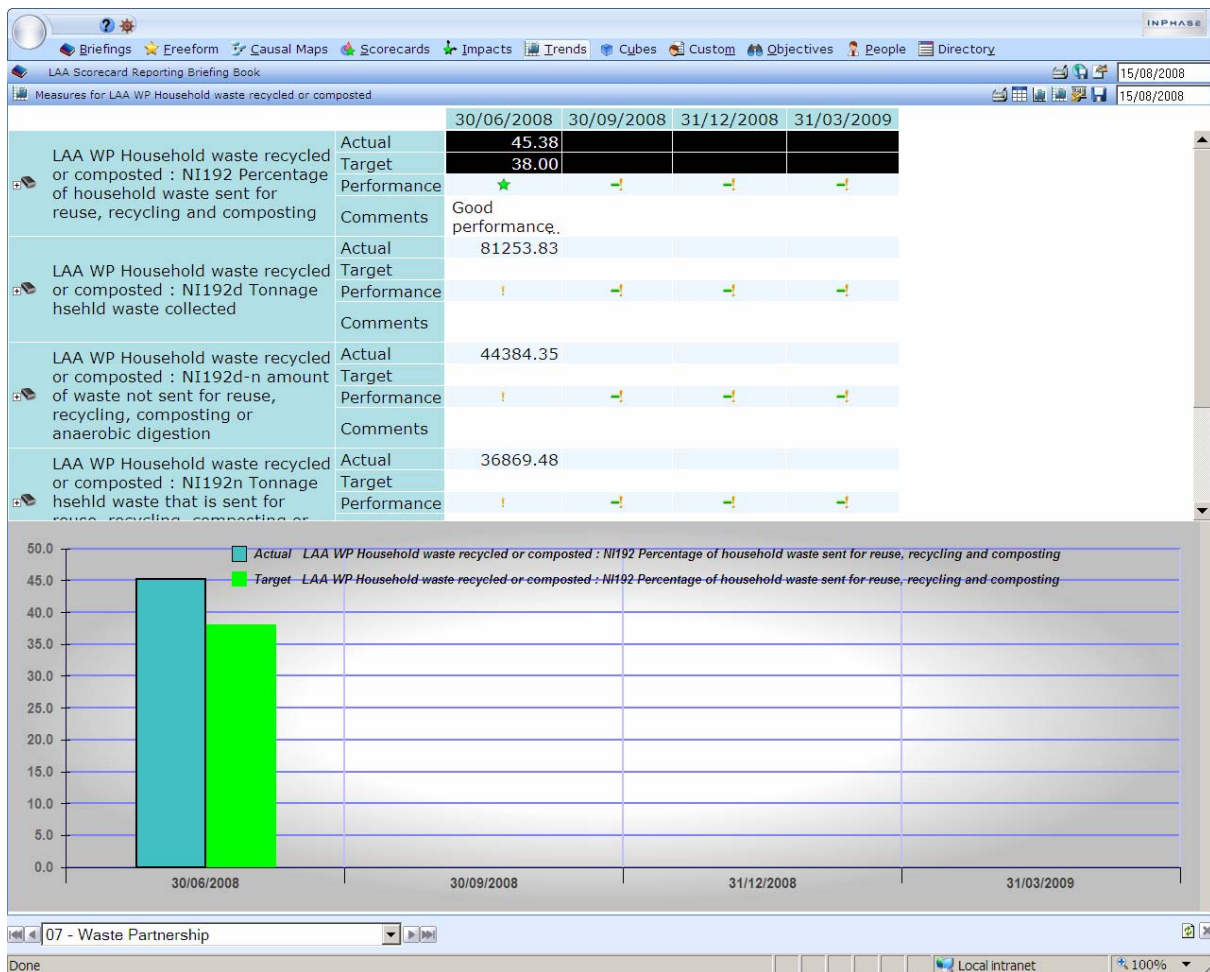
Timetable for reporting 08/09

Reporting period	Performance Plus open for data	Performance Plus lockdown deadline	PSB papers sent	PSB meeting

	upload			
Quarter Two (July-end Sept 2008)		TBC	12 November	19 th November
Quarter Three (October – end Dec 2008)		TBC	11 th February	18 th February
Quarter Four (Jan – end March 2009)		TBC		

Web – enabled reporting (Performance Plus PP+)


In April 2008 the Oxfordshire Partnership purchased 'Performance Plus' (PP+). This is a web enabled performance management system which will be accessible to all partners on a phased basis. The County Council central Support Team will be working with target owners to upload LAA data and will be rolling the system out for use. PP+ will enable partnerships to track their performance in a more streamlined way and will provide dynamic data for the Public Service Board and GOSE to review



4. The 5 principles of LAA Performance Management

Principle 1: Effective target setting

Each partnership must be in a position to inform the central performance team of progress against all of their targets. Targets need to meet **SMART** criteria. Where possible partnerships should look for comparative information to help them assess their targets. For example, are we setting targets which mean that our pace of improvement leaves us lagging behind our comparator groups in the long run?

 **Hot tips:** The County Council Central Support Team has a 'benchmarking specialist' who can offer support in this area upon request

S.M.A.R.T= Stretching, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Timely

Principle 2: Activity planning, keeping track of progress

The negotiations for each target have been underpinned by plans for delivery; some plans are very detailed, others are more high level. However, **all targets** need to have plans whose progress can be monitored alongside the relevant data. This


enables us to keep track of performance where solid figures can only be reported once a year, for example GCSE targets.

The County Council Central Support Team will be working with Target Leads to document key actions for each LAA2 target. In the longer term specific activity plans can be uploaded into the Performance Plus electronic performance management system and attached to targets.

Principle 3: Taking action, accountability and ownership

The performance management cycle is continuous as indicated by the reporting cycle diagram on page 4. Where areas of poor performance and risk are highlighted to the PSB, action to mitigate risks and recover performance must be taken by the relevant partnership. The Target Lead will be responsible at the subsequent meeting.


The Target Lead is, overall, responsible for the target and is considered the 'owner'. As such, this person must be prepared to respond to the challenge of the PSB/GOSE in areas of poor performance and inform the PSB of progress against action. Equally the Target Lead should look for opportunities to share successes as a result of effective partnership working.

 **Hot tip:** When uploading performance data into PP+, the Central Support Team will be requesting clear ownership structures for each target. The system will be able to automatically generate emails to move along an escalation process you provide.

Principle 4: Managing your risk - what stands in the way of where you want to be?

To ensure effective delivery of LAA targets, partnerships needs to continually ask themselves 'what will stand in the way of us achieving our target?'- the risks. Sometimes these are things that are out of our control, for example, downturn in the economic climate is likely to affect housing targets. However, there are other risks that we can address now 'mitigate', for example risks around resources.

The easiest way for partnerships to manage risks is to open a risk register and **actively** review this at partnership meetings. Risks are not fixed and new risks will emerge as others fade so it is important that the register is seen as an open document not something that is kept on file.

 **Hot tip:** The County Council Central Support Team has a 'Corporate Risk and Performance Advisor Manager' who can offer you guidance on the risk management process. You can find a template and advice on how to manage your risks on the Oxfordshire Partnership website

Principle 5: Performance Data

It is the responsibility of each partnership to ensure that all performance data they provide follows the agreed data quality standards.

The Public Service Board will receive quarterly performance reports on progress towards achieving LAA targets.

Performance will be assessed, decisions made and action taken based on information provided. It is therefore essential that data used for reporting performance is of good quality.

The Audit Commission have undertaken work on 'what makes data good data' and produced a list of 'six characteristics of good quality'¹ as described below. All data supporting the Oxfordshire LAA and CAA processes should adhere to these qualities. These are:

Accuracy	Data should provide a true account of what it is intended to represent to enable informed decisions to be made. The level of accuracy should be balanced with the need to provide timely data.
Validity	Data should appropriately reflect what it is intended to measure or report, e.g., in the case of performance data agree with any agreed NIS or local definition and relate to the outcome it is being used to measure.
Reliability	Data should be consistently calculated, recorded, analysed and reported over time in a way that provides a meaningful reflection of the situation. It is essential that definitions and guidance are followed each time performance data is produced to enable assessments to be made consistently over time.
Timeliness	Data should be available frequently and promptly enough (as near to 'real-time' as possible) for it to be valuable for managing service delivery and decision making, providing the opportunity to take corrective action where needed.
Relevance	Data should be defined/selected, collected, recorded and analysed with the intended use and audience in mind so that it is fit for purpose and adds value to the decision making process.
Completeness	Data should be complete and comprehensive to ensure it provides a full picture of the current situation, e.g., for performance data enabling assessment of how we are doing against our targets and/or others. Where it is incomplete and/or could be misleading this should be stated to enable appropriate judgements about its use to be made.

In seeking to achieve good quality data for the LAA and CAA, a balance may be required between some of these elements.


¹ Audit Commission: 'Improving information to Support Decision Making: Standards for Better Quality Data', pgs 7-8, November 2007.

In all cases, the resources used to achieve these characteristics should be proportionate to the perceived value it provides.

The Central Support Team manages not only the collection & analysis of data but also the **quality assurance** of the data that will be used to monitor progress towards:

- The 51 targets in the new LAA
- The stretch targets in LAA1 ending in April 2009
- Any further local targets agreed for inclusion in the Sustainable Community Strategy Delivery Plan

The team will also be collecting data for the remaining 147 national indicators.

 **Hot tip:** Remember the three Rs of performance data: Data should be: **Regular, Robust & Reliable**

5. Support available

Websites:

- **The Oxfordshire Partnership-** a plethora of information about the LAA, the structure of the partnerships, the sustainable communities' strategy. Performance reports are also uploaded here

www.oxfordshirepartnership.co.uk

- **Department for Local Government, Roles and Responsibilities in the local performance framework -** This document provides an overview of what councils, Local Strategic Partnerships, Government Offices, Inspectorates and central government departments will be doing to implement the new local performance framework following sign-off of Local Area Agreements in June 2008

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/localgovernment/pdf/906952.pdf>

- **The Improvement and development agency –** The IDeA is a good source of best practice in the field of performance management, forums can be a useful way to see how others are tackling LAA challenges.

<http://www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pageld=1>

- **Government Office for the South East** – Find out more about our regional government and their role in relation to the LAA

<http://www.go-se.gov.uk/>

Central Performance Team contacts

The County Council Partnership Unit and Policy Unit combine resources to form a 'Central LAA Support Team'.

For further advice about information provided in this document please contact the teams on one of the numbers below:

01865 815307 Performance Team

01865 816029 Partnership Team