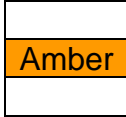


**GOVERNMENT OFFICE SOUTH EAST HIGHLIGHT REPORT ON  
OXFORDSHIRE LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT (LAA)  
Mid Year review April – September 2006**

**1) Overall progress**



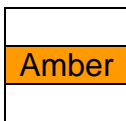
*Delete two of the above cells as applicable to leave the rating reached according to the criteria at Annex F of this guidance*

*Describe the key reasons why the above rating has been given, including which of the statements given in the RAG ratings definitions in Annex F of this guidance are true.*

Overall progress of the LAA in the first six months has been good, with most indicators on track or exceeding targets, and new information being gathered to assess performance. There has been an impressive early focus on establishing performance management and implementation frameworks to support the Public Service Board and Partners in management of the LAA

However one of the mandatory outcomes, 'to reduce crime' (as measured by BCS data for overall crime) is off track. Therefore the overall progress is amber at present as the following statement seems most accurate: 'The most likely outcome at the end of the three year period of the LAA is that a minority of the mandatory outcomes and other outcomes of key importance to the local partnership will not be achieved.'

**2) Direction of Travel**



*Amber - is addressing key weaknesses identified at the previous review (or sign off if this is the first review). But some of them remain.*

**Governance:**

From the outset, Oxfordshire established a strong and effective Public Service Board, which continues to run the LAA efficiently. The focus over the last six months has been on ensuring that the right Governance framework is in place and consequently, the Oxfordshire Partnership (County LSP) has been re-structured (effective from January 07) to enable the development of the new Sustainable Communities Strategy, which will shape the LAA work in future

**Performance Management:**

Oxfordshire have created a robust framework for delivering the LAA. This has moved the Partnership forward a long way from where they were at sign off in April 2006. The County's Corporate Performance Team, the Partnerships Team and the County Risk Manager continue to work together closely to ensure that effective performance and risk management processes are in place. The Corporate Performance Team have been tasked with developing the next phase of the performance management framework system that all partners will eventually be able to access to view and update information.

The newly appointed Head of Partnership Working has led the Partnership Team on the development of structured approach, which ensures that for each block, as well as for each mandatory outcome, there is an individual identified who is responsible for delivery.

The Partnership Team ensure that the Public Service Board have regular updates of all targets, using a comprehensive 'dashboard' of status information for all targets (stretch and non-stretch) containing notes on direction of travel, risk etc. as appropriate.

However, the process has been time consuming, so at this juncture, it is too soon to give a definitive assessment that all the weaknesses have been overcome. GOSE still maintains some residual concerns regarding the Safer and Stronger blocks, as at the time of the Review meeting the SSCF Board, responsible for the Safer Block had only met once. A Stronger Community Forum was formed in September 07 and is still developing its terms of reference and membership.

### 3) Risks to the achievement of mandatory outcomes

*List all mandatory outcomes in the LAA for which there is a residual risk that they will not be achieved at the end of the three year period of the LAA. For each, describe what the risks are and what is being or will be done to address these risks including what, if any, support of action by central government might be needed to mitigate any of these risks. Give an assessment of how likely it is that this will address those risks and which, if any, remain unaddressed.*

- **Crime:** Reduction in BCS crime this target is off track. Oxon has set up a strategic SSCF board to focus on performance management and they will need to develop a strategy to address the issue. However it is only recently established and GOSE will monitor progress.
- Oxfordshire's self assessment reports that on all **indicators** 32% are rated Red, 15% Amber and 53% Green. This calculation has been based on available data related to 78 out of 78 indicators in the LAA. Red rating includes those indicators where there is currently no performance information available. The actual number of 'off targets' indicators is 5/78 or 0.6%.

### 4) Risks to the achievement of other outcomes of key importance to the local partnership

*List any other outcomes of key importance to the local partnership for which there is a residual risk that they will not be achieved at the end of the three year period of the LAA.*

*For each, describe what the risks are and what is being or will be done to address these risks including what, if any, support or action by central government might be needed to mitigate any of these risks. Give an assessment of how likely it is that this will address those risks and which, of any, remain unaddressed.*

Other outcomes in the LAA have also undergone scrutiny by the Block Boards.

- **EDE:** There have been a couple of issues in the EDE block, the first one being an initial lack of funding for the project to increase employment and levels of business start-ups, however, they are negotiating this shortfall with SEEDA, which should enable the project to get off to a belated start. Secondly, there has been some refinement of the parameters of the Tourism target, which are being picked up in the Refresh document.
- **Health:** Reduce health inequalities in Oxfordshire (HCOP): Not on track, but Oxon would like to change the wording slightly as it will be a new mandatory outcome in the Refresh .

Reducing adult smoking and exposure to second hand smoking in Oxfordshire (HCOP). This target is off track, although it is acknowledged to be a very challenging one. The partnership will be increasing its public awareness campaign in the lead up to the national ban of smoking in public places in July 2007.

- **Reward targets** – these are mostly on track at present, but some of them cannot be measured until the end of the academic year, so cannot be fully gauged at this point, however the partnership believe them to be on track.

Those not on track are: Increase the number of older people supported to live in their own home (HCOP), which is slightly below target, and Increase the % of children looked after achieving 5 GCSEs A\*-G (CYP) where the partnership has urged remedial action to be taken.

## 5) The impact of the LAA and strong performance

*Describe what key differences the implementation of the LAA has made, including in terms of better delivery, strengthened partnership working including VCS engagement, innovation, improved local performance management, enhanced efficiency, improved central and local government relations or the impact that any specific initiative within the LAA is having.*

*Identify any outcomes, mandatory or not, against which there is particularly strong performance or activity is taking place that is expected to lead to such and describe this, including any examples of innovative ideas which are delivering, which could be of wider application, i.e. what, if any, transferable good practice this might include.*

**Partnership working:** One of the major issues at sign off was a perception of weak partnership working in Oxfordshire. From the outset, Oxfordshire established an effective Public Services Board, to ensure the LAA is progressed effectively. A re- formed Oxfordshire Partnership is being established (from January 07) to develop the new Sustainable Communities Strategy, which will shape the LAA work in future. The Partnership is also adopting a more robust approach to project

management across sectors, including development of a web based performance management system.

- **Voluntary Sector:** The inception of a Stronger Communities Partnership (the Oxfordshire Voluntary Sector Development Partnership OVSDP) is addressing previous criticism that the 3<sup>rd</sup> sector representation is weak in the LAA.

## 6) Missing information

*Identify any gaps in any indicators, baselines, targets and trajectories relating to mandatory outcomes where it remains unclear how and by when one or more of these gaps will be filled or removed and what action is being taken to address this, including what, if any, support or action by central government might be needed to address these.*

While some gaps in baselines and targets remain, these are covered in sections 3 & 4 above, with actions in hand to address through the Refresh process.

## 7) Other key issues for Government

*Describe any other key issues arising from the review that the local partnership and/or GO wishes to draw to central government's attention, including any feedback on how well LAAs are working for the local partnership and GO and what might be done to improve them and remove any persistent barriers to achievement.*

- The Partnership wishes to set a range of local targets and not have more mandatory targets imposed. – which are to be included at Refresh and feel that this is counter to the concept of 'Local Area Agreement'.
- As an area of **Good Practice**, the Partnership would like to draw attention to the success in the Reward target: 'To lower the incidence of Domestic Violence'. Closer coordination between agencies has contributed to a dramatic increase in both reports and sanction detections. The target to be achieved by March 2009 is likely to be exceeded by March 2007, and the sanction detection target is also likely to be exceeded this year.

[Ends]