
Issues raised by the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) during The Local Area Agreement Development and responses, where given

Issues across the whole Local Area Agreement

- In many blocks and outcomes the contribution that community, voluntary and faith organisations can make doesn't appear to have been acknowledged.
- There is a fear that the Local Area Agreement won't really make a difference and will be more of the same. A lot of the work relating to outcomes so far is work which currently exists.
- The voluntary sector may not be strong enough to bend mainstream funding into the sector for some specialised delivery which will really help to deliver outcomes.
- The outcome frameworks reference a range of strategies. There is some concern about the extent to which one can be assured that the goals in each strategy will be delivered, or that outcomes in the LAA won't take precedence over outcomes in the strategies.
- It isn't clear to the lay reader of the outcome framework who will take responsibility for the delivery against a given outcome.
- There hasn't been an Equalities Impact Assessment carried out on the LAA or strategies which relate to it.

See pages 2-4 for issues relating to specific proposed outcomes, indicators or actions.

Safer and Stronger Communities Block

| Outcome | Issues |
|-----------------------|--|
| Decent homes | What percentage of Dudley's houses fail the decent homes standard on thermal comfort? If it is high does that help to determine activities which would help to achieve the target on decent homes? Link this to climate change outcome on energy efficiency. |
| Safer outcomes | Issues like homelessness and domestic violence haven't been picked up as non-mandatory outcomes because of a view by the Safer sub-block that there are enough mandatory outcomes. This contrasts with the approach taken by the Stronger sub-block who have added a number of non-mandatory outcomes. |

Healthier Communities and Older People's Block

| Outcome | Issues | Responses from Brendan Clifford |
|--------------------------------------|---|---|
| All | Funds could be used more effectively through a commissioning process to address areas of greatest need. | We have commissioning processes in relation to health and social care. It remains a constant challenge to ensure that these link to local demand. There are no new resources with the LAA to go through a specific exercise for this purpose. |
| Better lives for older people | Health agencies are clearly not involved - there is nothing about prevention e.g. exercise and diet | We shouldn't assume that health is necessarily the responsibility of a health agency. For instance, the public health white paper reminds us that we are responsible as individuals for own health. Other agencies such as the Local Authority contribute to health gain e.g. through waste management and trading standards. Nevertheless, exercise and diet are features that have been discussed and clearly link to obesity work. |
| | Ref care pathways - has the culture of extended families been addressed? | The Older People's Strategy is explicit about seeking to counter discrimination (p.7). Adult Social Care definitely are committed and work to good effect in this area. |
| All | mental health - this has not been mentioned, and what is being done locally? | The HCOP Project Group has made similar comments. The objective re employment opportunities is the main way into this for the mental health issue we believe at the moment. |

Children and Young People's Block

| Outcome | Issues | Responses from Cindy Peek (posted to Dosti's website Forum) |
|-------------------|---|---|
| All | Services need to be improved for parents as well as children and young people | We are working from the position that if services are improved for children and young people this will also benefit the parents. |
| All | Some outcomes and activities appear to be single agency/statutory duties. Example 1: improve outcomes at the end of Foundation stage - this is an existing requirement upon schools, it's not partnership activity Example 2: Common Assessment Framework work - this is a statutory requirement and it was felt that it should not be funded through the LAA | Outcomes and targets cannot be achieved by a single agency (see next comment, below), and our statutory duties also relate to partnership working. We are trying to reflect this within the LAA block |
| Enjoy and Achieve | There is a gap around encouraging children and young people to learn. There is not always a culture of learning in families and communities. We need to work in areas where young people do not achieve - e.g. through Home Start/Sure Start. | This will fall within the outcome for achievement overall and will link to the 'raising aspirations' section which is a new addition to the outcomes. Suggestions for indicators really welcomed. This highlights earlier answer re. needing partners to work together to achieve targets for learning - schools cannot do this on their own. |
| All | There should be a stronger emphasis on narrowing the gap. | To be highlighted when targets have been agreed - awaiting trended information for achievement for particularly vulnerable groups and geographic neighbourhoods. |
| Enjoy and Achieve | There is a lack of anything about enjoyment in the enjoy and achieve outcome! | Work is underway for targets around culture which will enhance this outcome. Recent surveys do show a large percentage of children and young people who enjoy school and learning. |
| All | it would be helpful if the outcome frameworks were written in more accessible language | I will continue to try harder, it would be helpful if colleagues could contact me with specifics to be addressed. |

Economic Development and Enterprise Block

| Outcome | Issues |
|--|---|
| Entrepreneurial activity | Consider the role of voluntary, community and faith organisations as employers of staff and volunteers. The outcome targets deprived communities but there is nothing yet about involving those communities in thinking and decision making around this. |
| Employment in knowledge/higher value added sectors | There is no mention of manufacturing. How do you encourage high added value in manufacturing? Retail is not mentioned in this section. |
| Goods and services provides by SMEs to public sector | To encourage <u>local</u> enterprise you have to make it possible for them to compete with bigger contractors that are win contracts. |
| Culture of social responsibility | Why not include the voluntary sector, if it is not included in the term 'local businesses'? |
| Inward investment and local jobs | This does not seem to be phrased as an outcome, rather it is about how you create new jobs and get local people into these, particularly in regeneration areas. The Brierley Hill Regeneration Partnership could be a key partner. There needs to be reflection on how people enter learning - activities which are pre-learning which lead to people engaging in training. |
| Supporting those with health barriers into work | Are these things that the health authority should be already doing? What methodology will be used to engage people? The voluntary sector plays a significant role in engaging people socially. The voluntary sector is a provider of work experience for many people. |
| Increase employment rate | Are there significant levels of unfilled vacancies? Manufacturing is still a significant employer and yet is not referred to. Are the unemployed people economically inactive? The voluntary sector as an employer is missing entirely from this outcome. |
| Sustainable housing provision | The community needs to be engaged in this. At this stage there appears to be no engagement of local people considered in the potential interventions/actions. |
| All | There needs to be engagement of people before they start to get into learning - link to Stronger Communities outcomes and perhaps build in activities around listening to the needs of the community. |