



Welcome to the tenth edition of the

Partnership Bulletin

In this issue:

- the annual review of the Local Area Agreement (LAA), and the 'refresh' being carried out by Bedford and Central Bedfordshire unitary authorities;
- our performance against Performance Reward Grant targets; and
- the project we are carrying out to consider the benefits of a Multi Area Agreement (MAA).

In addition, we have feedback from November's Countywide Assembly conference and news of the Economic Participation Investment Programme.

■ COUNTYWIDE ASSEMBLY

The Countywide Assembly conference, held at Cranfield University on Wednesday 19th November, was well attended with 170 delegates from 88 organisations.

At this conference delegates received an update on the significant progress already being made against many of our LAA targets.

Partners showcased their delivery plans to tackle a number of important issues including: child poverty and obesity; carbon reduction, including the zero carbon community project in Castle ward; domestic violence; civic participation; and a presentation from pupils at Sharnbrook Upper School on a Young Enterprise project called The Green Elephant.

In addition, delegates heard first-hand from the new unitary authorities about their key strategic priorities and how they intend to work with partners, stakeholders and communities to tackle them.

You can view all of the presentations and delegate feedback by visiting our Partnership Website at:

www.bedfordshirecountywidepartnership.org.uk/?sID=8

■ LAA 2008 – 2011 REVIEW AND REFRESH

The current county-wide LAA is a three year agreement for the period April 2008 - March 2011. The LAA is an agreement between central government and local public service organisations in an area, and from 1st April 2009 responsibility for the development and implementation of the LAA will be the remit of the new unitary authorities for Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire. In both cases, the process for 'refreshing' the LAA to ensure it meets the needs and priorities of the area will be driven by the Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs). This will include disaggregating the countywide LAA, reviewing its evidence base, examining performance, considering any potential new indicators and negotiating outstanding targets. This work is expected to be completed by the end of February 2009 to meet the government's deadline of 2nd March 2009.

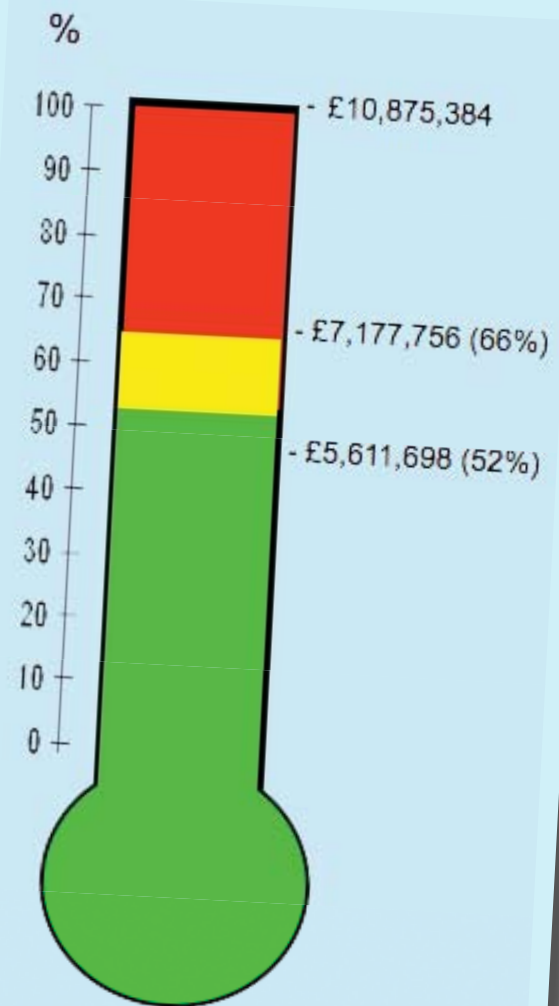
■ PERFORMANCE REWARD GRANT

There are 17 reward targets in our first LAA running from April 2006 to March 2009. Countywide Partnership uses a traffic light assessment to determine the likelihood of achieving the targets and, in turn, receiving Performance Reward Grant.

The Partnership Team and Theme Leads have assessed five of the reward targets as red (unlikely to achieve any reward), five as amber (we could still earn at least some reward) and seven as green (we are likely to achieve the full reward). Using the Rewardometer (see opposite), this latest assessment shows we are on track to achieve circa £5.6M Performance Reward Grant (PRG), which is 52% of the total value of reward available. If we manage the performance on all of the other reward targets sufficiently to turn amber to green, we could achieve up to circa £7.1M (66%) of PRG.

Although we will not receive a financial reward for five of these targets substantial improvements in performance has been achieved, which has made a significant difference to the lives of many people.

Looking forward, the main focus for delivery continues to be to ensure that we turn as many as possible of the current five amber risk assessments into green.



■ ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION INVESTMENT PROJECT

Economic Participation (EP) replaces the Investing in Communities programme (IIC). It is the East of England Development Agency's (EEDA's) primary mechanism to deliver the economic participation goal of the Regional Economic Strategy (RES).

In Bedfordshire two EP investment plans will be produced for Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire. The plans, which must be aligned to the LAAs, are intended to target locally agreed priorities across skills, enterprise and employment.

EEDA has given indicative allocations of EP funding for each area as per the table opposite:

Unitary Authority	2009/10 Indicative Allocation	2010/2011 Indicative Allocation
Bedford Borough	£838,994	£767,591
Central Bedfordshire	£1,062,866	£972,409

EP investment plans have been prepared by Bedford Borough Council and Central Bedfordshire Council and have been submitted to EEDA for approval. Copies of the plans can be viewed on the Partnership Website using the following link to access the papers for the November '08 Countywide Partnership meeting.

www.bedfordshirecountywidepartnership.org.uk

■ MULTI AREA AGREEMENT

Countywide Partnership is working with Luton Forum (the Local Strategic Partnership for Luton) on a joint project to consider and evaluate the benefits (or otherwise) of a Multi Area Agreement (MAA) covering some or all of Bedfordshire and Luton, and its potential to be expanded to cover the Milton Keynes and South Midlands Growth Area.

'Shared Intelligence' has been appointed to carry out this work, which included a facilitated discussion at the Countywide Partnership meeting on 26th November. The headline message from Shared Intelligence was that the key benefit of having an MAA is that it will enable Partnerships to lever into the sub-region considerably more resource and freedoms to tackle economic challenges across their areas. Therefore, those areas with an MAA will have a competitive advantage in negotiations with regional and national government than those areas without one.

Partners agreed that education and skills, housing, economic growth and infrastructure were all real and significant issues for Bedfordshire authorities that were potentially in scope for an MAA.

The project will help partners develop an understanding of what additional specific support we should ask of from Government

The decision whether or not to develop an MAA is for the new authorities to determine. The project being carried out now is about helping partners to prepare for those decisions by establishing a consistent and thorough understanding of the issues and challenges, and the potential benefits an MAA might bring.

The project is scheduled to be completed by March 2009. We will keep you informed in future editions of this newsletter, but do get in touch if you want any further information or want to participate in this debate.

Countywide Partnership's Website

Information on all of the activities of Countywide Partnership can be found using the link below:

www.bedfordshirecountywidepartnership.org.uk

■ COUNTYWIDE PARTNERSHIP MEETINGS

The next meeting of the Countywide Partnership will be held on 28th January 2009, 2.00pm – 4.00pm, at County Hall, Bedford.

If you would like to attend this meeting as an observer, please contact a member of the Partnership Team and let us know.

If you would like any further information relating to anything in this newsletter please contact a member of the Partnership Team:

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