

Report to: **Cabinet**

Date: **19 April 2005**

By: **Director of Policy Management and Communications**

Title of report: **Local Area Agreements - Second Phase**

Purpose of report: **To seek Cabinet's agreement to the County Council seeking to be a pilot for the second phase of Local Area Agreements**

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## **RECOMMENDATION**

**That the Cabinet agrees to the County Council applying to become a pilot in the second round of Local Area Agreements.**

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### **1. Background**

1.1 The Government published its Local Area Agreement (LAA) Prospectus in July 2004. There are 21 pilot areas in the first phase, spread across all the Government Office Regions. The initial pilots in the South East were Kent County Council and Brighton & Hove City Council. The first LAAs were signed at the end of March this year. On the 29 March 2005 the Deputy Prime Minister announced details of the second pilot phase of Local Area Agreements (LAAs) which will allow another 40 single tier and county authorities to negotiate an LAA by April 2006. Copies of the original prospectus and guidance are available from Jane Mackney (telephone 01273 482146), however, there may be changes in the second phase in the light of learning from the initial pilots.

1.2 The aim of LAAs is to give local authorities and their partners, working through their Local Strategic Partnerships, the flexibility to find local ways of delivering on national and local priorities and to direct spending to achieve the identified outcomes. The LAAs are agreed with the Government Office and in two/ three tier areas, the County Council and the County LSP are expected to lead the negotiations.

1.3 The original pilot LAAs were structured around three thematic blocks, drawn from the shared priorities agreed between central and local government. These are:

- o Safer and Stronger Communities
- o Healthier Communities and Older People
- o Children and Young People

A fourth block has now been added for the second phase relating to Economic Development.

1.4 The Safer and Stronger Communities block applies to all authorities from April 2005. This year, funding for this element was been passported directly to Districts and Boroughs, who are currently the accountable bodies for the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) funding. From 2006/07, however, the County Council and East Sussex Strategic Partnership (ESSP) will need to work with the CDRPs and District and Borough LSPs to agree the allocation of the Safer and Stronger Communities Fund (SSCF).

### **2 Implications**

2.1 A LAA should enable the County Council, together with its partners on the ESSP and the District and Borough LSPs, to focus further on priorities by agreeing a range of shared outcomes, knowing that funding from Central Government can be directed towards their achievement.

2.2 It is anticipated that LAAs will be rolled out to all County and Unitary authorities in 2006/07. Early participation in the second round of pilots during 2005/06 would, however, tie in neatly with several parallel processes.

- The proposals are that any LAA would be negotiated alongside the LPSA2, which the County Council has just started to develop (and not becoming a pilot will to delay negotiations).
- The County Council, through the ESSP will, in any event, need to establish a mechanism for working with Partners on the allocation of the SSCF. Undertaking an LAA now will tie in with that process and reduce future duplication. One of the mechanisms which could be explored is the establishment of a Local Public Service Board.
- The East Sussex Community Strategy is due for its three-year review in 2005/06, with a revised Strategy to be published by July 2006. The current intention is to use the LPSA2 process as a starting point for the review of priorities. A LAA negotiation process would also be able to feed directly into the review and, potentially, the LAA would form the basis of the new East Sussex Community Strategy, with the ESSP or a Local Public Service Board overseeing implementation.

### **3. Conclusion**

3.1 It is recommended that the County Council applies to become a pilot in the second round of LAAs, on the basis that it will not only enable the determination of local funding priorities, but that participation in 2005/06 will enable a more efficient negotiation, building as it will on both the LPSA2 and Community Strategy Review processes. The ESSP has been asked, on 14 April, to support in principle the County Council's application to participate in the pilot. Its views will be reported at the meeting.

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