



Improvement 2007

October Newsletter: Issue Four

Key updates:

- Comprehensive Spending Review brings a simpler performance framework a step closer
- Getting members talking about Local Area Agreements (LAAs) – LGA/IDeA launches a tool to help
- CSR announces £380m for improvement and efficiency support

Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR07) – financing services, measuring performance

The CSR07 included key announcements that reflected LGA lobbying success in developing a simpler performance framework, including:

Thirty national Public Service Agreements, which set out the national priorities for the government for this three year period, 2008-11.

198 national indicators to measure progress locally towards these priorities, confirming government's commitment to co-ordinate and reduce central government's various performance requirements imposed locally. The final list is a big improvement on earlier versions that the LGA called to be cut and more outcome focused. A six week consultation on the technical detail, setting out definitions, frequency of reporting and data source for each indicator will begin in November. The LGA will develop a response and would welcome views.

No mandatory Local Area Agreement (LAA) targets, which the LGA had previously argued would send entirely the wrong message to councils. LAAs should be a means for councils to focus on their unique role in place shaping, not being seen as simply a vehicle for delivering central government's priorities. The government commitment is to require a maximum of 35 targets to be negotiated between central and local government (and partners), plus 16 children and early years targets. These targets will form part of the new LAAs.

Financial arrangements related to the new performance framework are also now clearer. A large number of **specific grants have been unringfenced**. In a few cases this money will become part of Revenue Support Grant (RSG), but

in most cases they will form a new Area Based Grant (ABG). **ABG replaces LAA grant**, but is not ringfenced to issues covered by the LAA. Councils are free to determine how ABG will be used, and to negotiate with partner organisations how priorities set out in LAAs are to be funded. A list of grants to be incorporated into ABG will be finalised as part of the local government financial settlement in early December.

CSR07 also announced there will be some **reward funding** for Local Area Agreements, but less than in the past. Rather than being tied to local performance against specific targets, LAAs from 2008 will have a formula which reflects achievement across the LAA targets.

To read the LGA's response to CSR07 visit:
<http://www.lga.gov.uk/Briefing.asp?lsection=59&id=5XC6E9-A7848E12&ccat=97>

To view the new single set of national indicators visit:
<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/localgovernment/nationalindicator>

Future Events...

Wednesday 27 – Thursday 28 February, 2008

'Delivering better outcomes for people and places'
LGA Annual Improvement Conference and Exhibition 2008

Speakers include: John Healey MP, Minister for Local Government; Sir David Varney, Prime Minister's adviser on public service transformation; Annie Shepperd, Chief Executive, London Borough of Southwark; Kim Ryley, Chief Executive, Kingston upon Hull City Council

For more information visit:
<http://www.lga.gov.uk/Event.asp?lsection=46&id=5XB56C-A78484C3>

How are LAAs and LSPs making a difference?

The IDeA's LAA and LSP support programme (see September Newsletter) will include an online library from April 2008, containing practical, evidenced examples of how LAAs and LSPs are leading to better outcomes and partnership working. Before the library's launch, IDeA Knowledge LAA pages will share emerging examples to give you a taster.

You may have already been approached for a potential library case study but if not and you think others could learn from how LAAs and LSPs have impacted in your locality, please contact Vicki Goddard at the IDeA at vicki.goddard@idea.gov.uk

Delivering Improvement and Efficiency

The 1% real term funding increase for local government detailed in the recent CSR07 announcement means difficult choices for councils and the need to focus on improvement and efficiency is greater than ever.

The **National Improvement and Efficiency Strategy**, to be launched in late November, will bring devolved support a step closer, setting out the vision for support, a simpler architecture and how the overall resources available from CLG and Local Government will support improvement and efficiency over the CSR07 period.

CSR07 outlined a £380m package of support representing both CLG and RSG top slice resource made available over the CSR period to support an agreed National Improvement and Efficiency Strategy. This included an additional £150m to support the delivery of efficiency savings for which the LGA had lobbied. We continue to lobby for a significant proportion of this package to be devolved to RIEPs, alongside a small central resource

to enable a more strategic approach to supporting improvement.

The LGA also continues to lobby for the distribution of the £11million capacity building money from 2007 to be devolved to Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnerships (RIEPs); this is currently awaiting ministerial approval and details will be provided as soon as possible.

LGA Customer Insight work

For those who missed our conference on customer insight you can **view the presentations** at <http://www.lga.gov.uk/Briefing.asp?lsection=758&id=5X9569-A7849258&ccat=426>.

The conference also saw the launch of the joint LGA/NCC data segmentation tool. This provides councils with common ways to hold information on customers and to segment their customers to help them plan and improve services. **Read the report** and download the segmentation protocol at <http://www.lga.gov.uk/OurWork.asp?lsection=59&ccat=1244>

New LAA material available for members

Engaging members is crucial to agreeing and delivering successful LAAs. To assist discussions amongst local councillors the LGA and IDeA have designed 'Leading Localities' – a PowerPoint presentation focusing on the potential role of members in LAAs and partnership working.

The slides have been 'road tested' with different councillor groups and come with detailed speaking notes. However, colleagues should feel free to tailor the slides to suit your own local circumstances.

For more information visit:

<http://www.lga.gov.uk/Briefing.asp?lsection=59&id=5X8652-A7849382&ccat=724>

Future Events...

Tuesday 18 December 2007

'The Comprehensive Area Assessment'

An important opportunity for delegates to explore the key elements of the proposed Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA), set out in the forthcoming joint Inspectorate consultation paper on CAA.

For more information visit:

<http://www.lga.gov.uk/Event.asp?lSection=0&id=-A7848E23>

Future Events...

Wednesday 31 October, 2007

'Life in MAAs? – developing Multi Area Agreements'

This one-day conference will bring together key players involved in developing MAAs from both central and local government.

For more information visit:

<http://www.lga.gov.uk/Event.asp?lsection=46&id=5X96E8-A78475B2>

If you have any questions on any of the items covered here, would like to see particular issues featured in future newsletters, or wish to discuss any other elements of the improvement agenda please contact us at:

improvement@lga.gov.uk

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