

Report of	Meeting	Date
The Chief Executive (Introduced by the Leader of the Council)	Executive Cabinet	25 <sup>th</sup> March 2010

## MULTI-AREA AGREEMENT – MID LANCASHIRE

### PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. To update members on the development of a Multi-Area Agreement (MAA) for Mid Lancashire and to seek approval to the final submission to the Department of Communities and Local Government.

### RECOMMENDATION(S)

2. That the Multi-Area Agreement for Mid-Lancashire (see Appendix 1) is approved for submission to the Department of Communities and Local Government, subject to delegated authority being granted to the Executive Leader to agree any necessary amendments to the final version prior to submission, following consultation with the Executive Member (Business).

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REPORT

3. Multi-Area Agreements (MAA's) were first proposed in the Local Government White Paper (October 2006) as a way of helping councils work with their neighbours, Government and its Agencies to promote economic development at a city and sub-regional level. Their main focus is economic development in order to boost prosperity.
4. In Lancashire there is an approved MAA in Pennine Lancashire and an approved MAA for the Fylde coast leaving the Mid-Lancashire area (Chorley, Lancaster, Preston, South Ribble and West Lancashire) not covered. MAAs are becoming a vital pre-requisite for future infrastructure funding applications.
5. The Mid-Lancashire area is unique to the North West in that it provides a valuable link between different parts of the sub-region and the North West economies. In addition it has huge potential for economic growth and supporting the wider Lancashire economy.
6. In August last year Members agreed that a draft Multi-Agreement for Mid-Lancashire should be submitted to government for discussions in the line with the approved priority areas. Following discussions with a number of government departments the priority areas have been developed and refined. The next stage in the process is to set up a formal negotiation meeting prior to being formally signed by all parties.

### REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)

#### (If the recommendations are accepted)

7. To work in partnership across the area in order to maximise the economic development potential of the area.

## ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

8. To not be part of the emerging MAA – rejected.

## CORPORATE PRIORITIES

9. This report relates to the following Strategic Objectives:

Put Chorley at the heart of regional economic development in the Central Lancashire sub-region	√	Develop local solutions to climate change.	
Improving equality of opportunity and life chances	√	Develop the Character and feel of Chorley as a good place to live	√
Involving people in their communities		Ensure Chorley Borough Council is a performing organization	

## BACKGROUND

10. Multi-Area Agreements (MAA's) were first proposed in the Local Government White Paper (October 2006) as a way of helping councils work with their neighbours, Government and its Agencies to promote economic development at a city and sub-regional level. MAAs are seen as one way of supporting the ambition to drive growth in local economies, to boost prosperity although MAA's do not have to focus on economic development issues exclusively.
11. An MAA should bring together key players in flexible ways to tackle specific issues that are best addressed in partnership. The wider spatial level can include partners across towns, cities or sub-regions. Each MAA needs to be localised and respond to circumstances specific to its area. No two MAA's will or should look the same. The formal result of this partnership working will be a public agreement with Government, to work together with local authorities on specific issues with each side having responsibility for specific actions.
12. Essentially, MAA's are "deals" with central government by clusters of local authorities who want a greater degree of flexibility, and amongst the key elements of any MAA will be the need to have;
- robust governance arrangements,
  - strong political leadership, and
  - a focused performance and accountability framework

Two of the main benefits of an MAA are:

- formal recognition by the Government of the issues identified (in a national context, as opposed to a local or regional one)
- the ability to enter into detailed discussions with Government on long term solutions to important issues

Given the current economic climate and the cuts in public spending Government Agencies like the Homes and Community Agency and the NWDA will be operating on an MAA footprint and any funding will be directed through these partnerships.

## MID-LANCASHIRE MAA

13. Members will recall that in August last year it was agreed to enter into discussions with Government on an MAA for Mid-Lancashire. The Mid Lancashire MAA (which includes the Districts of Chorley, Lancaster, Preston, South Ribble and West Lancashire) is different from other MAAs as it aims to build upon current success by enhancing economic and jobs growth whilst improving opportunities for residents and ensuring that growth is managed and sustainable in the long term.
14. Lancashire that has had the most job and GVA growth over the past 5 to 10 years and is a significant contributor to the Lancashire and North West economy. An MAA (although not exclusively focused on economic issues) would support the continuation of this growth, and the opportunities it can provide, as well as supporting the constituent parts of Mid Lancashire to fulfil their economic potential and aspirations. Recognising and building upon the three relatively self contained economic sub areas of Central Lancashire, North Lancashire and West Lancashire and their specific issues, the MAA can act as a mechanism for addressing common barriers and relating them to specific localities and actions in order to support economic growth as the regional and national economy moves out of recession.
15. Mid Lancashire, due to its unique position in the North West can also act as a link between different parts of the sub regional and North West economies –it overlaps with and impacts upon the economies of Morecambe Bay, Greater Manchester and Merseyside and, within Lancashire, completes the spatial 'jigsaw' as it fits between Fylde Coast and Pennine Lancashire. The MAA would act as the basis for entering into discussions with other sub or city regions (Merseyside or Cumbria for example) based upon the needs of specific areas, functional economic areas (such as Pennine Lancashire) if it identified important joint issues - formal national recognition of the issues identified in the MAA would add weight to the need for such discussions.
16. Discussions or bi-laterals have been taking place over the last couple of months based on the indicative list of priority areas agreed by the Mid-Lancashire authorities. These have now been worked up and included within the attached MAA submission.
17. The key issues for Chorley are still included with in the MAA. In particular attracting inward investment into the Royal Ordnance Strategic Regional Site. In addition a number of the broader actions proposed will benefit Chorley for instance ensuring targeted local enterprise support and working with partners to address the pockets of deprivation which on their own are not substantial enough to attract funding.
18. The next stage in the process is a formal negotiation meeting between Government departments and the Districts. The agreement will then be amended to reflect what was agreed at the meeting. The MAA document will then be prepared in conjunction with CLG and will be signed by all partners at a formal signing event.

## IMPLICATIONS OF REPORT

19. This report has implications in the following areas and the relevant Directors' comments are included:

Finance		Customer Services	
Human Resources		Equality and Diversity	
Legal		No significant implications in this area	

## CONCLUSION

20. Overall this is an opportunity for Mid-Lancashire to highlight its aspirations and how it can assist the wider sub-region in addressing the economic recession. With regards Chorley this is an opportunity to work with partners to attract major inward investors into the SRS

and address pockets of deprivation, which on their own are not substantial enough to attract funding.

DONNA HALL  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

There are no background papers to this report.

Report Author	Ext	Date	Doc ID
Donna Hall	5104	8 <sup>th</sup> March 2010	***