

Report of	Meeting	Date
Corporate Director (Business) (Introduced by the Executive Member for Business)	Executive Cabinet	13 August 2009

MULTI-AREA AGREEMENT – MID LANCASHIRE

PURPOSE OF REPORT

- To brief members on the proposed Multi-Area Agreement (MAA) for Mid Lancashire and to seek approval to enter into discussions with Government on a MAA for Mid Lancashire.

RECOMMENDATION

- That a proposal for a Multi-Area Agreement for Mid-Lancashire is submitted to the Government for discussions in line with priority areas set out in Appendix 1.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REPORT

- 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.
- In Lancashire there is an approved MAA in Pennine Lancashire and a draft MAA for the Fylde coast leaving the Mid-Lancashire area (Chorley, Lancaster, Preston, South Ribble and West Lancashire) not covered.
- 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.
- It is therefore proposed to submit a draft MAA proposal to Government in August with a view that the agreement will be signed off in October/November this year.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

(If the recommendation is accepted)

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

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

8. None.

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 Government's ambition to drive growth in local economies, to boost prosperity although MAA's do not have to focus on economic development issues exclusively. The initial MAA policy has been developed and implemented through the framework of the sub national review of economic development and regeneration (SNR).
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
13. In Lancashire this has resulted so far in an approved MAA for Pennine Lancashire and a draft MAA for the Fylde Coast due to be approved in July 2009. Since the Pennine Lancashire MAA was signed the MAA partnership have entered into discussions regarding funding with the North West Development Agency and the Homeless Community Agency (HCA), in addition to discussion with the Department of Transport regarding transport

schemes. Although at a less developed stage the Fylde Coast MAA partnership have already entered discussion with Government departments on priorities for investment. None of these discussions are meant to circumnavigate agreed or future processes for allocating resources/nominating sites but having or developing an MAA has certainly improved the ability to lobby and get into detail more quickly.

MID-LANCASHIRE MAA

14. The Mid Lancashire area (the Districts of Chorley, Lancaster, Preston, South Ribble and West Lancashire) has been identified as the area within 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. Unlike other MAAs the Mid Lancashire proposal 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.
17. The MAA will concentrate on those things that are ***better done together*** and cannot be achieved separately or in other forums – the added value argument - and which are ***achievable*** in the short to medium term.
18. It is envisaged that a worked up proposal for an MAA will be submitted in draft form to the Government in August **2009 with detailed discussions with Civil Servants taking place in** September/October 2009 with a view to a final sign off in October/November 2009. This indicative timetable is based upon discussion with Government and reflects the requirement for agreement at the end of this year – the ability and/or capacity of the Government to agree an MAA in 2010 is uncertain, partly because of the political cycle.
19. Appendix 1 gives an indication of some of the topics that the Mid Lancashire MAA could include and would be important across the Mid Lancashire spatial footprint. The key issues for Chorley are attracting major inward investment into the Royal Ordnance Strategic Regional Site and working with other authorities to drive and to address the areas of deprivation.

IMPLICATIONS OF REPORT

20. This report has no implications in the following areas.

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

CONCLUSION

21. 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.

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There are no background papers to this report.

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Mid Lancashire MAA – Indicative list of priority areas

Economic development and regeneration:

- Encourage business formation and sustainability (business support and incentives)
- Encourage city and town centre regeneration – unlocking potential
- Encourage and develop the skills required to support business formation and city/town centre regeneration
- Bring forward and develop managed strategic economic sites and zones along the M6 corridor
- Culture and Heritage (including sporting heritage)

Improving infrastructure (road, rail and digital):

- Public transport (bus accessibility, innovative ideas such as ‘Park and Tram’)
- Digital infrastructure
- Improve strategic rail and road infrastructure to make areas accessible
 - New/renovated stations
 - Line electrification
 - Park and tram

Knowledge & Innovation

- **HE and business support/enterprise**
- Improve skills to support growth sectors and relationship with Mid Lancashire based Higher Education Institutions
- Health and Cohesion related barriers to skills development (and employment)
- Graduate retention (creation of life style and city-living choices, engagement with local universities and FE colleges)
- Improved pathways and progression through skills to employment
- Complete analysis of graduate retention issues

Improving coordination and communication regionally and nationally:

- Creation of the ‘single voice’ for Mid Lancashire
- Collective marketing and building of ‘the image’
- Implement a joint communications strategy
- Complete assessment of current gaps and opportunities
- Political capacity building

Strengthening collaborative working building upon Improvement and Efficiency objectives:

- Programme to achieve shared services where appropriate
- Potential for shared services or posts
- ‘Back office’ joining up
- Sharing of capacity, skills and intelligence
- Strengthen collaborative working; strategic support from LCC, joined up planning and highways