

CABINET

19th March, 2009

Area Action Partnerships – Launch Events and Procedural Arrangements



Report of Lorraine O'Donnell, Assistant Chief Executive

1 Purpose

This report outlines the arrangements for the inaugural meetings of the 14 Area Action Partnerships (AAPs) in April and May, 2009, seeks approval for a range of guidance notes aimed at ensuring the effective operation of the partnerships and proposes a change to the boundaries for the Teesdale and Bishop Auckland AAPs following new information from Parish Councils in the area.

2 Background

At its meeting on the 22nd January, 2009, Cabinet approved the key parameters for AAPs. These included their function, boundaries, relationships with the County Council's locality budgets and membership.

The report of the 22nd January also highlighted that a number of issues remained to be resolved prior to AAPs becoming operational. This report aims to address many of those outstanding issues, and in doing so, has taken into consideration, the views of Overview and Scrutiny when it commented on AAPs at its meeting on the 16th January, 2009.

Following Cabinet on the 22nd January, it was considered the boundaries had been finalised for the 14 AAP areas, the approach being to agree to the preferences expressed by town and parishes in affected localities. Subsequently, the Council has been informed that a number of Parish Councils in Teesdale district are reconsidering their original decision and, at the time of writing, three (Woodland, Cockfield and Lynesack and Softley) have now indicated they wish to be in the Teesdale AAP. The fourth, Evenwood and Barony, is still to meet. It is proposed to agree to the requests of the Parish Councils in this area given the launch events are still to be held. The decision of Evenwood and Barony will be reported verbally to Cabinet.

3 Inaugural AAP Meetings

AAP launch events will take place in all 14 areas agreed by Cabinet on the 22nd January, and the dates and venues for which are detailed in Appendix 1 of this report.

These events will be the inaugural meetings of the AAP Forums, and as such, will be open to all residents within the AAP boundary. Publicity for the events will be produced through a range of media and invitations have been sent to a wide range

of organisations operating in the County. In addition to invitations to organisations and community groups, members of the Citizens' Panels that have been established by the County and District Councils will also receive an invitation to attend.

A key driver for the arrangements has been to hold the meetings as soon as possible after Vesting Day. As a consequence, the meetings will be taking place within a tight timeframe and in some locations, there has been some limited choice with regard to venues. Cabinet is asked to note the venues listed in Appendix 1 will not necessarily be the same for future AAP Forum meetings, and a separate exercise is still ongoing to determine bases for AAP staff.

Those wishing to attend the meetings are being asked to register their interest. This will ensure attendees receive a pre-event information pack, and also manage the number of attendees in accordance with venue capacities. The purpose of the meetings will be to:

- Select a name for each AAP;
- Outline the purpose and key features of the AAP arrangements;
- Generate interest in those present to apply for the seven public places on the AAP Boards;
- To agree one to five annual priorities for the AAP.

Whilst this is an ambitious programme for the inaugural meeting, it is in line with the key conclusion of the consultation carried out on AAPs that they should be action orientated.

4 Operational Guidance

Appendices 2 to 7 of this report set out a range of guidance notes aimed at ensuring the effective operation of the AAPs. The notes attempt to incorporate key learning points from the extensive consultation carried out to inform the establishment of AAPs, the views of Overview and Scrutiny and best practice developed by the County's Local Strategic Partnership Framework.

The appendices include the following guidance notes:

Appendix 2	Draft Terms of Reference
Appendix 3	Draft Code of Conduct
Appendix 4	Draft Recruitment Arrangements for AAP Board Public Representatives
Appendix 5	Draft Area Budgets 2009/2010 Guidance Notes
Appendix 6	Draft Neighbourhood/MIF and Highways Budgets Guidance Notes 2009/2010
Appendix 7	Draft Training and Development Pack

The key features of the various notes are set out below:

Draft Terms of Reference – These are effectively the 'Constitution' for the AAPs and in addition to reiterating the functions as agreed by Cabinet on the 22nd January, detail the roles and responsibilities of the AAP Chair and Vice Chairs, the format for the meetings and critically the membership. With regard to the latter, the draft

guidance proposes that Unitary Councillors should sit on no more than one AAP Board at any one time, and the selection of the Unitary Councillors (where there are more Councillors than available positions) should reflect the political proportionality of each AAP.

Draft Code of Conduct – This sets out the behaviours expected of all members of an AAP, whether they be councillors, partner representatives or public representatives, as well as a whistle blowing policy and disciplinary procedures. Although relatively detailed, production of such guidelines was a key recommendation of Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Draft Public Representation Recruitment Arrangements – The note details the attributes and criteria for the selection of public representatives to sit on the AAP Boards. It proposes they are members of the AAP Forum and are selected by means of an application and interview process. It proposes assistance be available on request to members of the public to take part in this process, and that a selection panel is made up of the Vice Chairs selected from the elected Councillor and partner groups, the AAP Co-ordinator and a representative from a VCS umbrella organisation.

Draft Area Budgets Guidance – The guidance sets out a process for spend in 2009/10 against the allocation of £150,000 per AAP. The key driver for the spend are the priorities set for each AAP at their inaugural meetings.

Draft Neighbourhood, Member Initiative Fund and Highways Budgets Guidance – The guidance sets out a single reference point for the three locality budgets where Elected Members make the recommendations for spend. The note recognises that like the Area Budgets, whilst spend on these funds should seek to reflect AAP priorities (or in the case of the Highways Budgets the Local Transport Plan), they offer a vital resource for Elected Members to react to neighbourhood issues that may materialise throughout the year.

Draft Training and Development Pack – This details the training and development that members of the AAP Boards may need to operate effectively. It sets out a range of training and development opportunities that will be made available following completion of a Training Needs Analysis aimed at identifying if there are any gaps in the skills and knowledge of Board Members.

5 Conclusion

In addition to agreeing the key parameters for AAPs at its meeting on the 22nd January, 2009, Cabinet also recognised that AAPs will need to be reviewed and evolve over time. The need for review and improvement applies to the procedural guidance detailed in this report. The notes are intended to be a starting point and they will need refinement as the AAPs become operational and lessons are learnt from their practical application. Section 7 of Draft Terms of Reference in Appendix 2 recognises the need to monitor their effectiveness and proposes the establishment of a joint review arrangement, to include the partner organisations represented on AAP Boards and Elected Members. Appendices that form the basis of advice to the public for example on applying for AAP funding will be subject to a plain language review.

Subject to Cabinet's agreement of the procedural guidance set out in this report, the intention is to hold the first AAP Board meetings in late May, early June. In order to meet this deadline, it will be necessary for the political groups for Unitary Councillors to have selected their nominations for the AAP Board positions and the selection of the Vice Chairs by the 3rd April, 2009. This will then allow arrangements to be put in place for the selection interviews for the 'public' element of the Boards. It is aimed to have the interviews by the end of May, 2009.

6 Recommendation

Cabinet is asked to note the content of this report and is recommended to agree:

- The 'operating guidance' for AAPs as outlined in Appendices 2 to 7;
- The deadline of the 3rd April for the selection of Unitary Councillor AAP Board representatives;
- The amendment to the AAP boundary for Teesdale to include the parishes of Woodland, Cockfield, Lynesack and Softley, and possibility Evenwood and Barony, depending on the outcome of the decision taken at its Parish meeting.

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AREA ACTION PARTNERSHIPS

LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix Number	Title	Page Number
1	AAP Launch Events	6
2	Draft Terms of Reference for AAPs	8
3	Draft AAP Code of Conduct	19
4	Draft Recruitment of AAP Board Public Representatives	28
5	Durham County Council Area Budgets 09/10: Draft Guidance Notes and Application Process	36
6	Durham County Council Neighbourhood, Member Initiative Fund and Highways Budgets: Draft Guidance Notes and Application Process 2009/10	44
7	Draft Training and Development Information Pack: AAP Board Members	56

AAP LAUNCH EVENTS

AAP Launch Events

Date	Area	Venue
Wed 15th April	Ferryhill and Chilton	Ferryhill Leisure Centre *
Thurs 16th April	Crook / Willington / Tow Law	Spectrum Leisure Centre, Willington
Mon 20th April	Weardale	Wolsingham School
Tues 21st April	Newton Aycliffe	Leisure Centre, Newton Aycliffe
Wed 22nd April	Teesdale	Teesdale School
Thurs 23rd April	Consett	Consett Civic Hall
Mon 27th April	Chester-le-Street	Civic Centre – Restaurant
Tues 28th April	Stanley	The Lamplight Centre
Wed 29th April	East Durham Rural	Sedgefield Community College
Wed 6th May	Spennymoor	Leisure Centre
Thurs 7th May	Durham City	County Hall - The Durham Room
Mon 11th May	Easington	Shotton Hall, Shotton
Tues 12th May	Bishop Auckland and Shildon	Jubilee Fields, Shildon (Sports Hall)
Wed 13th May	Mid Durham Rural West	Durham Community Business College Sir Bobby Robson Centre (Ushaw Moor)

*** Note that this has changed from the original location of Ferryhill Comprehensive due to reported access problems with the school. The location has only been reported to date to elected members and they will receive a note of the change and the County Durham Partnership Board who will also receive an update. General publicity to date has not included venues.**

Draft Terms of Reference for Area Action Partnerships (AAPs)

Introduction

Area Action Partnerships (AAPs) have been established for 14 geographic areas within County Durham defined by the boundaries of town and parish councils and informed by extensive public consultation. They were a key facet of the original bid for unitary status and are the bridge between the unitary council and the diverse needs of the County's communities.

1. Purpose

The AAP is the mechanism through which the Council works with local communities and partner organisations to make sure those local services meet local needs and that the voice of the community is heard within the service development process. It enables councillors, residents and partners to come together to influence priorities and take decisions in the light of local needs and circumstances. It focuses on local actions to help the Council and its partners to tackle inequalities and narrow the gap between different areas and it also delivers locally agreed improvements that are important to communities within its area.

2. Principles

Members of the AAP agree to work together to achieve the aims of the AAP on the basis of the following principles:

- Mutual trust and respect
- Openness and transparency
- Effective communication and accountability
- Removal of barriers to equality of access and opportunity
- Effective performance management

3. Boundaries

An AAP cannot alter its own boundary but must request permission from Durham County Council to vary any boundary.

4. Function

i. Engagement

AAPs will provide a means:

- For the Council and partner organisations to engage in a meaningful, dialogue with people in their local communities.
- To build and shape local identity in order that communities can speak with a clear and strong voice.
- To promote community cohesion and support debate, ensuring that all voices are heard.
- To encourage local people to engage with the local democratic process and to be involved in shaping their communities.
- To recognise, celebrate and support the role and contribution of individuals in improving their communities.
- To streamline and focus cross-public sector consultation with local people.

ii. Empowerment

AAPs will provide a means:

- To clearly communicate local issues and priorities to public sector partners, based on an analysis of local data and opinions, and to develop a shared vision for the AAP area.
- To involve local people in the way local services are planned and delivered and to assist partners to meet their duty to involve people in decisions, policies and services that may affect them or be of interest to them.
- To assist partners to effectively combine their efforts in a local area to improve local outcomes, narrow gaps between different areas of the County and improve quality of life.

iii. Local Action

AAPs will provide a means:

- To resolve local issues through either:
 - Direct action through use of its own development funding or by means of engendering voluntary community action.
 - By dialogue with the County Council service departments and County Councillors with regard to influencing use of their delegated budgets.
 - Negotiation with the Council's partners.
- To develop a focussed Annual Action Plan for an area, targeting the key issues that the AAP will seek to resolve for a locality.

iv. Performance

AAPs will provide a means:

- To facilitate access to quality performance data to enable local people and service users to understand performance as it applies to their area.
- To support the impact of the County Durham Partnership and its thematic groups in achieving its priority outcomes.
- To input into the Comprehensive Area Assessment process for County Durham.
- To comment on public sector performance in the AAP area.

5. Equalities and Inclusion

- a. The AAP will actively value the benefits of diversity and ensure that it operates in ways that ensure and promote fair treatment and equality of opportunity.
- b. One Board member of the AAP will take on the role of championing Equality & Diversity issues

6. Accountability

The AAP will manage its affairs in ways that are clear and transparent and demonstrate proper accountability to the County Council, partner organisations, stakeholders and the wider community through clear reporting and effective communications of its performance, actions and decisions.

7. Performance Management and Review

- a. The AAP will develop arrangements to manage its own performance in achieving its agreed priorities and actions, focussing on up to five key priorities in a financial year. These arrangements will be mindful of the priorities of the Local Area Agreement especially as they relate to the AAP, whilst recognising the need to balance them with local issues as evidenced by robust local engagement mechanisms and local performance data.
- b. To reflect the partnership nature of AAPs, a joint review arrangement will be put in place between partner organisations represented on the AAP Boards and the County Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee to monitor their effectiveness. The review will focus on an AAPs impact on engagement, empowerment, local action and performance with suggestions for improvement as appropriate.

8. Membership and terms of office

a. Forum

The membership of the Forum will be open to all who live in, work in or represent any area within the AAP boundary.

b. Board

The membership of an AAP Board will be open to three categories

- i. Councillors
- ii. Partner Organisations
- iii. General Public

The three categories will each represent one third of the Board's total voting membership of twenty-one (21).

c. Councillors

- i. Of the seven places available for Councillors, six will be made available to Unitary councillors and one to a representative from the Town/Parish Councils within the AAP area (where they exist, where they do not, Unitary Councillors will take up the seventh place).
- ii. If there are fewer than six Unitary Councillors willing to take up positions on a Board, the remaining places will be made available to Town/Parish Councils.
- iii. Where a Unitary Councillor's electoral division straddles more than one AAP boundary they can only sit on one AAP Board in any one year, unless they do so in the capacity as an alternate. As Board meetings will primarily be open to the public, Councillors can attend more than one Board, but they cannot be a voting member of more than one.
- iv. If there are more than six Unitary Councillors within the AAP area, selection of the positions will be made to reflect the political proportionality of the AAP area. This does not apply to the Town and Parish Councils.
- v. Where there are more Unitary Councillors than places available on a Board, Unitary Councillor Board Members will select an alternate from those Councillors in an AAP area without a position on the Board.
- vi. Town/Parish Councillor Board members will select an alternate Town/Parish Councillor.

- vii. All the Councillors, both Unitary or Town/Parish, will serve no more than 24 months (two years) before requiring reappointment.

d. Partner Organisations

- i. These shall be represented by one officer from the following organisations: Durham County Council; Durham Constabulary; NHS Co Durham (or health sector organisation nominated by them); Co. Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue; the Registered Social Landlord covering the most properties within the AAP.
- ii. One further representative will be provided for by the lead Voluntary and Community Sector infrastructure organisation covering the AAP area¹.
- iii. A final person will represent the interests of the local business sector or recognised business network.
- iv. Partner organisations are expected to send an alternate if their main representative is unable to attend.
- v. Partner organisations have a standing place at the AAP Board.

e. Members of the Public

- i. Members of the public must live in or work in the AAP area. Work will include unpaid work. However, they cannot belong to more than one AAP Board even if where they live and work may qualify them for membership of two different forums.
- ii. Members of the public wishing to stand for the AAP Board must be a member of the AAP Forum.
- iii. Members of the public will be selected to serve for four years on the AAP Board.
- iv. A process agreed by Durham County Council will select this category of AAP member
- v. Unitary councillors cannot take up the position of a public representative on the Board.

f. Cessation of Membership of AAP Board

- i. If anybody fails to attend for three consecutive meetings, even with apologies, then the Board may proceed upon the basis that the person has resigned and seek a replacement, unless that individual has received dispensation from the Board to be absent (e.g. for reasons of ill health or maternity).
- ii. Any resignation must be in writing to the Chair of the AAP and copied to the AAP Coordinator

g. Board Vacancies

- i. Parent organisations Council, Police etc... must be informed as soon as possible to enable them to arrange alternative representation.
- ii. When a public member resigns or is unable to continue duties the AAP Board will select from a list of reserves to provide a replacement.

¹ As identified by One Voice Network

h. Non-voting co-optees

- i. Some AAPs may feel the need to engage some expertise outside of the Board membership so they will be allowed to co-opt up to three people to support the Board.
- ii. Co-optees must stand down after 6 months, although they can be co-opted back.

9. Roles and Responsibilities

a. Chair and Vice Chairs

- i. By the first meeting of the AAP Board after April 1st 2009 each of the Councillor and Partner Organisations have agreed a Vice Chair for each of their categories.
- ii. Once the Public category is selected they too will agree a Vice Chair.
- iii. Once all three Vice Chairs are known representing the three categories of membership a vote of the AAP Board will take place to elect a Chair for the first year.
- iv. Each Category will hold the Chair for one year out of every three.
- v. The Vice Chairs will stand down at the first Board meeting after April. Each category will then select a Vice Chair. Previous Vice Chairs will be eligible to stand. Any Vice Chair that needs replacing during the year must be replaced by the relevant category within the next two Board meetings following the vacancy occurring. If they fail to appoint the Chair will appoint and they will remain in place until the first meeting after April.
- vi. The Board can remove the Chair by exercising a vote of 'no confidence' that must be proposed and seconded before it is put to a vote. On a vote of 'no confidence' a chair must resign and return to being a member of the Board. The Category of membership holding the Chair for that year will propose another Chair from their ranks.

b. The duties of the Chair will include;

- i. Chairing meetings of the AAP Board and Forum ensuring that the meeting is able to conduct its business in an orderly and timely fashion, but on the other hand the Chair must ensure that all those entitled to do so may express their views and that the decisions taken by the meeting adequately reflect the views of the meeting as a whole.
- ii. Act as the focus for the AAP and represent the AAP at key events and act as media spokesperson where appropriate;
- iii. Work closely with the AAP Coordinator to agree agendas and minutes for issue to Partners;
- iv. Discuss reports and the direction of the AAP with the Co-ordinator and other relevant partners.
- v. Consider any criticisms or concerns Partners may have about the role or functioning of the AAP, bringing them forward for discussion at a meeting of the AAP if it is not possible to resolve them in any other way.
- vi. If a vote is called for, then following the vote (in which the Chair can vote), the Chair will exercise a 'casting vote' in the event of a tie. If an emergency decision is called for that does not allow time for a meeting to be called, the Chair will take the decision after consultation with the two Vice Chairs. This decision will be communicated to the rest of the Board as soon as it is taken.

- vii. Attend the County Durham Partnerships as set out in the County Durham Partnership's governance arrangements.

10. Meetings (see also Appendix 1)

- a. The **Forum** will meet twice per year and will be open to the public. Fifteen working days (Mon –Fri) notice will be given to invitees.
- b. The **Board** will meet at least six times per annum and five working days notice should be given of the details and business of the meeting. The Board meeting will be open to the public.
 - i. The Annual General Meeting of the AAP Board will be the first meeting after every April 1st.
 - ii. The public may be excluded, in whole or in part, if it is likely that in their presence information may be disclosed that has been requested to remain confidential or should remain so if they fall within the list under Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.
 - iii. Quorum - No business shall be transacted at a Board meeting of the AAP unless a quorum of at least three members from each membership category are present i.e a minimum of nine Board members.
 - iv. If the Chair is not present then the meeting will appoint one of the Vice Chairs. If neither Chair nor the Vice Chairs are present at a meeting then those in attendance should agree a chair by nominating and seconding an individual who must agree (if more than one nominee then there should be a quick show of hands to appoint a chair for the meeting). If the meeting cannot agree to appoint a Chair then the meeting will be reconvened in seven days.
 - v. The format for Board meetings should be as follows -Apologies, Minutes and Matters Arising followed by the relevant agenda to include a standing item on Local Issues brought to the attention of the AAP Co-ordinator by residents or businesses for consideration at the Board.
- c. Emergency meetings of
 - The Forum may be called by a petition of 50 signatures from within the AAP presented to the Chair.
 - For an AAP Board a motion to the Chair signed by at least a minimum of 9 Board members.

11. Decision making

- a. It is expected that the decisions of the AAP will be reached by consensus.
- b. If there is not a clear consensus, then a vote may be called for by the Chair on a show of hands or a secret ballot. In this case a simple majority will prevail
- c. Minutes of the AAP Board will be made publicly available once they have been agreed as a true record.
- d. Conflict of Interest
 - i. Any member (councillor, partner or public) present at a Board meeting who has a conflict of interest² in any item should declare that interest at the start of the agenda item and should leave the meeting until that agenda item has concluded.

² Conflict of interest – where an individual, their close associates, immediate family organisation, business employer are affected by the matter being considered to the extent that a reasonable member of the public, with knowledge of the facts, would believe that their ability to judge the public interest is harmed or impaired.

- ii. Those who have a conflict of interest may be present to make representations, answer queries and provide supporting evidence but should leave the meeting at the point the Chair deems that they have heard enough to reach a decision. Their leaving should also be recorded in the minutes
- iii. If any member fails to declare then they will stand accused of improper conduct as a member of the Forum or the Board. If the accusation is upheld then they will be barred from the AAP and the Chair will write to the individual and any organisation that need be concerned.

12. Finance

[All finance will require a comprehensive set of criteria to be developed in consultation with the Council's Section 151 Officer]

- 1. Each AAP will have an Area Budget to further the purpose of the Partnership and address the priorities set by the AAP Forum. The amount allocated in the Area Budget will be set annually by the County Council and recommendations for spend will be made by the AAP Board to the Assistant Chief Executive.
- 2. In addition to the Area Budgets, the AAP Board may make recommendations to Unitary Councillors for use of Neighbourhood Budgets. Proposals for use of Neighbourhood Budgets will be made to AAP Boards on a quarterly basis with the aim of ensuring impact is maximised against the priorities set by the AAP Forum. Final recommendations for spend will be made by the Unitary Councillors to the Assistant Chief Executive.
- 3. The financial year of the Partnership shall commence on 1st April in each year and shall end on 31st March of the next calendar year.

13. Representation to External bodies

- a. The AAP will determine who should represent them on external bodies
- b. Any appointee by the AAP to an external body who fails to attend two consecutive meetings of a particular body may be replaced by the AAP

14. Sub groups of the AAP

- a. The AAP will have the power to set up task and finish groups to support its own work and to agree who should populate and Chair the task group.
- b. It may be required to set up other arrangements to link in with countywide strategic arrangements as required by the County Durham Partnership (CDP). The AAP will agree to the requirements of the CDP in setting up any 'task & finish' or standing groups.

15. Engaging with neighbourhoods and communities of interest.

- a. Effective engagement with neighbourhoods and communities of interest will be a key role of AAPs. Each AAP will determine its own mechanism to engage with its neighbourhoods that best reflects local circumstances.

- b. In engaging with neighbourhoods the AAP will recognise the important role of town and parish councils and local community and voluntary groups.
- c. The AAP will ensure that it engages with and considers the needs and priorities of communities of interest such as disabled people, Gypsy and Traveller communities, young and older people, lesbian, gay and bisexual individuals, faith groups and black and minority ethnic communities.

16. Complaints

- a. If any individual AAP Board member or member of the AAP Forum wishes to raise a concern they should do so at the next available Board or Forum meeting.
- b. If a Board or Forum member feels unable to do so because of the nature of the issue or the urgency of the matter they should write to the AAP Chair and copy the AAP Coordinator at:
(Name & Address to be inserted)
- c. If a complaint is made an acknowledgement will be made within five working days either:
 - i. Outlining the procedure to be followed
 - ii. Or an explanation as to why the complaint will not be dealt with by the AAP Board.
- d. If a complaint either
 - i. Concerns the Chair or the AAP Coordinator; or
 - ii. You believe your complaint was not dealt with properly by the AAP;
 then the matter should be referred to

Head of Partnerships & Community Engagement
 Assistant Chief Executive's Office
 Durham County Council
 County Hall
 Durham
 DH1 5UL

The complaints procedure of Durham County Council will then prevail and you will be notified accordingly of its procedure.

17. Staff

- a. The AAP will be supported by staff employed by Durham County Council. This does not preclude other organisations locating staff within the AAP team but they will act under the direction of the AAP Coordinator.
- b. The AAP Coordinator will also represent the AAP at other meetings and is bound to ensure that where practicable they discuss such issues with the Board or the Chair but must give feedback at a Board meeting as to activities they have been involved with in the name of the AAP.

18. Review and alteration to the Partnership Agreement

The AAP will review this Partnership Agreement on an annual basis. If any member of the Partnership identifies a need to amend any aspect of this agreement, they will notify the AAP Co-ordinator, who will raise the issue for discussion at the Board.

19. Dissolution

The AAP can only be dissolved by Durham County Council.

Appendix 1

Standing Orders for meetings of the AAP Board

Duration

- Most agendas/meetings should be timetabled to last no longer than 90 minutes without an intervening break. Meetings of the AAP Board should aim to last no longer than two hours.

Agenda

- The Chair finalises the agenda beyond the set items but all have the opportunity to request items to be put on the agenda before it is sent out.
- Wherever possible tabling of agendas on the day of the meeting should be avoided. Good practice will be to give members at least 5 days notice of business of the meeting.

Protocol for All Meetings

- All attending are expected to abide by reasonable standards of behaviour. No shouting, swearing, threatening, accusing or other abusive behaviour will be tolerated.
- Everyone's viewpoint is to be respected.
- Everyone has the right to speak by indicating to the Chair his or her intent (usually by raising a hand). In most cases discussion should flow naturally but the Chair must ensure that all are given the opportunity to contribute and not the vociferous minority.
- The Chair does have the right to refuse any further discussion when a topic is either exhausted or reached a stalemate or the Chair has decided to move progress.
- It is the Chair's prerogative to call for a vote on any particular issue and he/she may seek a mandate from the meeting as to whether it will be a show of hands or a secret ballot.
- If an attendee oversteps the mark the Chair is entitled to ask for an apology and if an apology is not forthcoming has the right to insist that the person shall leave the meeting.
- Agreement is usually reached by consensus unless there appears to be 'no consensus then a vote will be taken. All are expected to abide by a decision outside of the meeting and must not use another forum to undermine a decision taken at the AAP.
- Conflicts of interest need recording

DRAFT AAP CODE OF CONDUCT

A. INTRODUCTION

A1 The Aim of the Code

The Area Action Partnership aims to provide a forum for solutions to common problems affecting the stakeholders of its area (as defined by the geographical boundaries of the 14 AAPs within Co Durham). To be successful, we must build strong relationships, with our partner agencies, customers, employees and residents. Those relationships must be based on trust.

The AAP expects high standards of behaviour from all those people who work within it either paid or non-paid. This Code sets out the standards of behaviour expected from all members. All references to members in this document also relate to all sub-groups and co-opted members.

A2 Principles

Common sets of principles underpin behaviour in our public and business lives. As a member of the AAP, you are expected to uphold these principles; which are:

- | | |
|------------------------------|---|
| <i>Selflessness</i> | Take decisions solely in terms of the values and mission of the AAP. You should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for yourself, your family, or friends. |
| <i>Integrity</i> | Do not place yourself under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might influence you in the performance of your responsibilities as a member of an AAP. |
| <i>Objectivity</i> | Ensure that in the decisions you make, you ensure impartiality and that choices are made on merit alone. |
| <i>Accountability</i> | Accept accountability for your decisions and actions and submit yourself to whatever scrutiny is appropriate. |
| <i>Openness</i> | Be as open as possible about all the decisions and action that you take. You should be prepared to give reasons for your decisions and restrict information only when individual or commercial confidentiality clearly so define. |
| <i>Honesty</i> | Declare any private interests relating to your duties, and take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that is lawful, and protects the reputation, values and mission of the AAP. |
| <i>Leadership</i> | Promote and support these principles by leadership and example. |
| <i>Ownership</i> | Accept and provide support for decisions of the AAP |

Inclusion

Understand the needs of others and question assumptions about individuals or groups of people

B. GENERAL STANDARDS

AAP members are expected to give the highest possible standard of service to employees, colleagues, and others with whom they work.

General Conduct

- B1.** High standards of personal conduct are expected, particularly honesty, fairness, openness, courtesy, reliability and sobriety.

Financial Conduct

- B2.** You must be aware that corruptly receiving or giving any gift, loan, fee, reward or other advantage in return for doing (or not doing) anything, or showing favour (or disfavour), to any person or organisation is unacceptable.
- B3.** AAP Members should also ensure that their personal funds are not involved in any way with AAP funds.

Conduct in Meetings

- B4.** Any members present at a meeting that is discussing any item that poses a conflict of interest should leave the meeting until discussion on that item has concluded. Any member may make representations, answer questions and provide supporting evidence in the part of the meeting where members of the public may speak, but after doing so should leave and not seek to do anything more to influence the decisions of the meeting on that item. Their leaving will be recorded in the minutes.

Whilst there are certain qualifications to the conflict of interest rule, if you are required or needed to present or provide information to the AAP Board upon which it needs to make a decision (see below) it is good practice to get someone else to present or answer those queries that is not a Board Member.

Those who have a conflict of interest may be present to make representations, answer queries and provide supporting evidence but should leave the meeting at the point the Chair deems that they have heard enough to reach a decision. Their leaving should also be recorded in the minutes

- B5.** As in all our dealings with each other, meetings of the boards, presence at other representative bodies you should be polite and professional:
- at all meetings, the Chair will preside over the proceedings
 - racist, sexist, homophobic or otherwise offensive/inflammatory language or behaviour, including swearing, will not be tolerated
 - abuse of other members or employees will not be tolerated

Suspension due to legal, civil or criminal proceedings

B6. AAP members carry special duties of accountability and, as a consequence, their conduct and personal integrity must always be beyond reproach. For this reason, any member who:

- Becomes subject to legal proceedings brought against them by any AAP organisation; (legal proceedings include disciplinary matters that are serious enough to warrant suspension from the parent body); or
- Brings legal proceedings against any AAP organisation; or
- Becomes subject to any criminal or civil proceedings, the nature of which could compromise his/her position as a member;

shall immediately become suspended from membership of the AAP until an outcome is reached or proceedings are terminated.

If proceedings are commenced involving a serious criminal offence then an individual should disclose this. If found not guilty or charges dropped the individual is re-instated immediately.

Alcohol and Drug Misuse

B7. The effect of alcohol and drugs is to impair performance and judgement. The AAP is concerned to ensure that drug and alcohol misuse does not pose a threat to the quality of service we provide or undermine our reputation for professionalism.

B8 AAP members will be expected to comply with any Drug and Alcohol Policy of their parent organisation. If there is a breach of this the AAP will report to the parent organisation. Where there is no parent organisation the AAP expects that such individuals will follow the spirit of the wording of B7.

Failure to follow Code of Conduct

B9. You should recognise that failure to follow this code of conduct may damage the reputation of the AAP and its work.

Accordingly, your role as a member of the AAP or one of its sub groups bears a degree of responsibility, and any proven breaches will put your role at risk and may result in your removal as a member of the Board.

C. WHISTLE BLOWING POLICY

The AAP is committed to the highest standards of quality, probity, openness and accountability.

As part of that commitment, we encourage those who work with the AAP who have serious concerns about any aspect of our work to come forward and express those concerns. In many cases, concerns or complaints will be dealt with through our normal procedures, such as mechanisms for resolving grievances, disciplinary matters, or concerns relating to equal opportunities, or through the employer's policies and procedures.

However, in some cases, we recognise that individuals will need to come forward on a confidential basis. Our Code of Conduct and procedures make it clear that they can do so without fear of reprisal or victimisation.

This statement is intended to underline our commitment to the process and our support for those who come forward to express their concerns.

Consultation and Information

- C1.** Through the AAP partners procedures, we feel sure that you will know how to recognise the following problems, and that you understand the effects they may have on the AAP and partner organisations and the service we provide:
- fraud, corruption and malpractice
 - abuse or neglect of vulnerable people
 - failure to deliver proper standards of service
 - damaging personal conflicts
 - bullying, discrimination, harassment or victimisation
- C2.** When a problem arises, it will always be dealt with seriously. We cannot expect anyone to practice higher standards than those we apply throughout the AAP. We will always pursue serious abuses as vigorously as possible though it may depend upon partners' disciplinary procedures. We hope that you will feel confident in coming forward, that we will share your sense of right and wrong, and act on what you tell us.

Confidential Reporting

- C3.** We know that it is never easy to report a concern but we urge you to come forward with any concerns at an early stage, and before problems have a chance to become serious.
- C4.** If you prefer, we are happy for you to come forward with another colleague, a friend or other representative to report a concern.
- C5.** We support AAP members and AAP staff. We protect all from reprisals or victimisation. If anyone comes forward with a concern they can be confident that this will not affect their position. This applies equally if anyone comes forward in good faith with a concern that turns out later not to have been justified.
- C6.** We will do everything we can to respect your confidentiality.
- C7.** If anyone tries to discourage you from coming forward to express a concern, we will treat this as a breach of the code. In the same way, we will deal with anyone who criticises or victimises you after a concern has been expressed.
- C8.** We must also have concern for the welfare and reputation of the individual against whom the allegation has been made. Allegations must be made in good faith and without malicious intent. All allegations will be investigated thoroughly by a Vice Chair and the AAP Coordinator. At all times all parties must respect confidentiality.

If the allegation is not proven then the individual against whom the allegation has been made is considered innocent and the matter must be dropped.

Who To Contact

- C9.** If any individual AAP Board member or member of the AAP Forum wishes to raise a concern they should do so at the next available Board or Forum meeting. If a Board or Forum member feels unable to do so because of the nature of the issue or the urgency of the matter they should write to the AAP Chair and copy the AAP Coordinator at:

(Name & Address to be inserted)

If a complaint is made an acknowledgement will be made within five working days either:

- outlining the procedure to be followed
- or an explanation as to why the complaint will not be dealt with by the AAP Board.

If a complaint concerns

- concerns the Chair or the AAP Coordinator; or
- You believe your complaint was not dealt with properly by the AAP:

then the matter should be referred to

Head of Partnerships and Community Engagement
Assistant Chief Executive's Office
Durham County Council
County Hall
Durham
DH1 5UL

The complaints procedure of Durham County Council will then prevail and you will be notified accordingly. For more info see
<http://www.durham.gov.uk/durhamcc/usp.nsf/pws/8025694D002ACDA4802571C3003C7DFE?opendocument>

- C10.** If policy and procedures of partners are working properly, you should not need to contact an external agency to express concerns. But there may be exceptional or urgent circumstances where it might be best to do this. It is not possible to give precise examples but, for instance, relevant situations might be:

- in the case of a criminal offence, the police;
- in the case of maladministration the Local Government Ombudsman.

We hope that none of these will ever prove necessary...

- C11.** You can also approach Public Concern At Work for confidential and independent advice - the address is: Lincoln's Inn House, 42 Kingsway, London, WC2B 6EX.
Tel:
0207-404-6609, Fax: 0207-404-6576, E-mail: whistle@pcaw.demon.co.uk.

Dealing With Concerns

- C12.** If you come to us with a concern, we will look into it confidentially, thoroughly and as quickly as possible. We must be aware of the well being of all parties involved. Initially we will seek to gather evidence objectively, neither seeking to disprove nor prove the allegations. However, we will also need to advise the person against whom the allegation has been made and find out their side of the story.

We will try to let you know the timescale for our investigations, the results and about any action that is proposed. However, in doing this, we have to respect the confidentiality of other members of the AAP as well. If the investigation proves that there is a case to answer then the AAP's disciplinary procedure will be invoked, or, if of a more serious nature then the parent organisation will be notified.

- C13.** The AAP Coordinator and a Vice Chair of the AAP will lead any investigation, unless it involves either one of those parties in which case the Chair will lead. Details of the allegations and the investigation should not be shown or discussed beyond those who need to know. (ie: the person making the allegation, plus potentially a supporter - see C4, the person accused, the AAP Coordinator and anyone else conducting the investigation). The only other person who will be informed is the Chair of the AAP.
- C14.** If you confidentially raise a concern, then you too should treat the matter as confidential, both during and after any investigation. If anyone abuses the confidentiality of the reporting process, for instance by maliciously raising unfounded allegations, we will treat this as grounds for disciplinary action. However, anyone who comes forward in good faith has nothing to fear and the AAP will fully support the individual. Any actions taken against the individual that might be viewed as reprisals will also be treated as grounds for disciplinary action.

D. Disciplinary Procedure

- D1.** At all times proceedings will observe the 'rules of natural justice'. Firstly, the person accused should know what they are accused of and be given a chance to defend themselves against an allegation. They do not have to take the opportunity but if they fail to do so a hearing can take place in their absence. Secondly, a person making the complaint must not be in a position of judgement nor inquisition. So if a person makes the complaint they cannot be part of the adjudication.
- D2.** Upon receipt of a complaint the identified persons (in most cases Vice Chair and AAP Coordinator) will undertake an assessment to see if there is a case to answer. If it is decided there is then they will write to the accused informing them of the

complaint and gather any further information in support of proving the allegation or disproving it. If it is found that there are grounds to invoke a hearing then a time and place will be set with the Chair and one Vice Chair. The accused will have the right to representation.

- D3.** The nature of the hearing will follow the rules of natural justice and all sides to a complaint will be given the opportunity to be heard. If persons cannot attend they can send in a written report.
- D4** Where a complaint is proven to be of a serious nature this will always be reported to an individual's parent organization.
- D5** The only sanction the AAP can exercise through disciplinary action is removal as a member.

E. BALANCING CONFIDENTIALITY AND OPENNESS

The AAP wishes to act in an open and accountable way in relation to its members and other interested parties. As a general rule, information about the AAP's work should be available unless there are good reasons of confidentiality or practicality why not. The right to confidentiality of AAP members is equally important, and must be respected. We must ensure however that we comply with the terms of the Data Protection Act.

- E1.** We believe that information about our work should be available to all members and other interested parties. You need to be aware of which information the AAP is open about, and act accordingly.
- E2.** You need to be equally aware about which information should be kept confidential. Personal information about your colleagues, employees, and other individuals must be regarded as strictly confidential.
- E3.** You should not use any information obtained in the course of your work with the AAP for personal gain or benefit, nor should you pass it on to others who might use it in such a way.

F. EXPENSES

The AAP will reimburse board members reasonable business expenses that are actually and necessarily incurred in the performance of their duties.

- F1.** Where members are entitled to claim from their parent organisation they are expected to do so as first point of call. The AAP will not reimburse where a claim lies to the parent organisation.
- F2.** If a member is likely to incur expense that is not reimbursable by the parent organisation they must seek clarification from the Coordinator before committing or incurring expenditure.

G. GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY

The principle of integrity requires that members should not place themselves under an obligation that might influence, or be perceived to influence the conduct of their duties.

Area Action Partnerships Boards

Draft Recruitment Process – Public Representatives

1. Introduction

This paper sets out proposals for the criteria and process for the recruitment of Area Action Partnership Board Public Representatives. Each AAP will have seven public representatives. As public representatives on the Board will be selected from the AAP Forum, reference is also made to the recruitment process for the Forum in this note.

Public representative positions on the AAP Forum and Boards are voluntary. Public representatives taking these positions will not receive payment, with the exception of reasonable expenses.

2. AAP Board principles

AAPs will seek to develop a 'One Board' approach, where board members work collectively on issues. Board members will have collective responsibilities regardless of their category of membership.

It is imperative that a set of principles exist to under-pin the work of the Board which are common across all categories of membership.

Common Board principles, as contained in the AAP Code of Conduct, include a commitment to demonstrating:

<i>Selflessness</i>	Take decisions solely in terms of the values and mission of the AAP. You should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for yourself, your family, or friends.
<i>Integrity</i>	Do not place yourself under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might influence you in the performance of your responsibilities as a member of the AAP.
<i>Objectivity</i>	Ensure that in the decisions you make, you ensure impartiality and that choices are made on merit alone.
<i>Accountability</i>	Accept accountability for your decisions and actions and submit yourself to whatever scrutiny is appropriate.
<i>Openness</i>	Be as open as possible about all the decisions and action that you take. You should be prepared to give reasons for your decisions and restrict information only when individual or commercial confidentiality clearly so define.
<i>Honesty</i>	Declare any private interests relating to your duties, and take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that is lawful, and protects the reputation, values and mission of the AAP.
<i>Leadership</i>	Promote and support these principles by leadership and example.
<i>Ownership</i>	Accept and provide support for decisions of the AAP

Inclusion Understand the needs of others and question assumptions about individuals or groups of people

The common principles should automatically be subscribed to by all the prospective Board members and it will be a commitment to these principles that drives and unites the Board.

3. Skills, knowledge, experience and perspectives

In the recruitment process for public representatives, it is deemed that all public representatives are bringing to the Board their skills, experience, knowledge and perspectives. These could include:

- A strong desire to improve their local area
- Willing to give some time to AAP issues
- Experience of leading and motivating others to take community action
- Relating their own experience of community issues to the wider community and to the wider Board
- Able to represent and respect the views of the wider community
- Some knowledge of community issues and/or community groups
- Communication skills
- Experience of working on a committee/board or of representing other people
- A proven track record of achieving tangible improvements for an area

It is important that during the recruitment process, all potential Board members are made aware of the training and development opportunities available to them, and, in-particular, that some training and development will be a mandatory requirement of all Board members on their successful appointment to the Board.

The training programme offered to public representatives should be accredited, if possible, but at the very least, a certificate of attainment should be presented. Any training and development opportunities delivered to the Board will be based on all members completing a Training Needs Analysis. The programme of training and development will be made available to all Board members regardless of category of membership.

4. Diversity

The Board will be committed to ensuring membership to the AAP Forum and Board is inclusive and that all sectors of the community are given the opportunity to get involved and express their views. The AAP positively welcome applications from all members of the community so that the Board represents a wide range of people. Support will be available for disabled people depending on individual requirements, we will also consider other requirements for support to encourage people to apply to be Board Members.

Equality, Diversity and Cohesion training will form part of the mandatory training programme for all Board members and it is proposed that following this, an Equality, Diversity and Cohesion Champion be nominated from within the current membership.

5. Feedback and communication

It is important that the AAP Forum and Board have a consistent and standardised mechanism for communicating and feeding back to the wider community. The role of disseminating information efficiently and effectively applies to all members of the AAP and

not just to that of the public representative, who although possibly representing a particular community group, has a role, which is more representative of their skills, knowledge and experience. Assistance to communicate with the wider community will be provided by the relevant AAP Co-ordinator.

6. Recruitment process

Recruitment to the AAP will be made up of two distinct phases; phase 1 outlines how members will be sought for the wider AAP Forum, while phase 2 sets out how AAP Forum members will be recruited to the AAP Board:

Phase 1 – Membership to AAP Forum – Unlimited number of members

- **Awareness and promotional campaign**

Phase 1 relates to the general awareness raising for membership to the wider AAP Forum via an extensive promotional campaign which will involve a range of mechanisms, including:

- Local press and media
- Inclusion in the County Council's newsletter and the County website
- A letter of 'invitation' to those residents who have taken part in the extensive consultation in the development of AAPs
- A meeting in each area to outline the purpose of the AAP, the role of the Forum and Board and the training and development opportunities on offer
- Targeted campaigns for under represented groups
- Utilisation of partner agency publications and websites

- **Membership pack**

Following the awareness and promotional campaign, those wishing to become Forum members will receive an AAP pack containing information relating to forthcoming meetings, how to express an interest in becoming one of the seven AAP Board members, along with details of the application process. Details of the role of a Forum member (which will be open to new members on an ongoing basis) will also be provided, along with a description on the role. .

Phase 2 – Membership to the AAP Board – Seven Representatives and Seven Alternates

- **Expressions of interest or nominations**

Following the above campaign, public members of the AAP Forum will be eligible to submit an expression of interest to join the Board. This must be undertaken using an agreed template and completed expressions must be forwarded to a nominated officer by a specified date.

- **Application packs**

On receipt of the expression of interest or nomination, a full application pack will be sent to the individual. The pack will include the role description, person specification, details of training and development opportunities, a Code of Conduct, request for the identification of skills and expertise and an application form.

The application form will enable the candidate to comment on their capacity to fulfil their role as public representative on the AAP Board and how the AAP will benefit from their existing knowledge, experience and skills.

Applicants will be made aware of the anticipated time commitment attached to being a Board member. Advice will be made available for those going ahead with an application should they request assistance.

- **Selection process**

On receipt of applications, there will then be a review and shortlist against the selection criteria by the Selection Panel. The Selection Panel will include an AAP Co-ordinator the Vice Chairs from the 'Councillor' and 'Partner' elements of the AAP Board and, protem, a representative from the local VCS umbrella organisation (unless they are the Vice Chair for the partner element). Once a Board is established, should new public representatives be required, to replace others that may have resigned, then the VCS position on the Selection Board will be replaced by the Vice Chair of the remaining public representatives. The selection process will be fair and standardised across all AAPs and the Selection Panel will be made aware of equality issues and be able to demonstrate fairness in their decisions.

- **Interview**

Candidates who pass the selection process will be invited to attend a short interview with the Selection Panel. Where requested, advice and support will be provided to candidates to prepare for the Panel.

- **Appointing and supporting representatives**

Both successful and unsuccessful applicants will be informed by letter of the final decision of the Selection Panel. Successful applicants will also be informed of the available support networks, training, development etc that will be on hand for them. All successful applicants will be expected to sign up to the AAP Board Code of Conduct.

Unsuccessful applicants will be encouraged to continue to be a member of the wider AAP Forum so that their participation and involvement is actively fed in to the AAP process and their continued input is valued.

Orientation training will be held as soon as possible for public representatives (and all other Board members). Please refer to the Training and Development Information Pack.

The post of public representative is voluntary but support will be offered to all Board members which will include:

- Reimbursement of out of pocket expenses incurred in attending AAP activities in your role as a public representative
- Providing education and training opportunities relevant to the role as public representative
- Providing support, information and guidance as requested or needed to carry out the role of AAP public representative
- Assisting public representatives to network with each other
- Responding to issues raised by the public and providing feedback (through the Board's agreed Communication and Feedback mechanisms)

- Identifying support within the AAP or wider unitary authority (e.g. a community development/engagement officer) to assist the public representative in their role

7. AAP Board Selection Criteria

During the application process for Membership to the AAP Board, individuals will be required to demonstrate an understanding of the issues facing their AAP area and will be asked to demonstrate an interest or knowledge in particular issues or themes relevant to the work of the AAP.

During the selection process for Board membership will require applicants to:

- Be over 16 years old
- Live or work within the designated AAP area
- Be a member of the AAP Forum
- Not be a serving Unitary Councillor
- Be able to report back to local community groups and/or the wider community using the standardised communication mechanism
- Effectively communicate on behalf of local residents
- Have an awareness of the needs of local community groups and/or the wider community and not just the individual
- Be reliable and responsible and willing to commit time to attending scheduled meetings
- Is able to represent other views with objectivity
- Complete a satisfactory CRB check, to be reviewed biannually
- Demonstrate the skills, knowledge, experience and perspectives set out in Section 3 of this guide

The primary aim of the recruitment process will be to ensure the Board recruits those representatives that have the skills and abilities to best articulate local needs and opportunities and help develop the best solutions to address them.

It is also recognised, that if possible, the selected representatives should be recruited from a range of communities both in terms of neighbourhoods within the AAP and communities of interest.

8. Removing barriers to participation and communication

We believe everyone should have an equal opportunity to play a full part in their community, regardless of their ethnicity, religion, geographic location, special needs, language differences, learning difficulties, sexual orientation, gender, age or disability.

We can produce this booklet in other formats, such as Braille; large print; on audiotape; on CD-Rom; and in other languages. You can get a copy by calling our Communications Team.

Next steps

Having read this information and are interested in becoming an AAP Board Public representative, then submit the Expression of Interest form and return it to _____ by _____. If you wish to express your interest by telephone, then please call _____ or _____.

alternatively an electronic form is available at _____ and should be completed and forwarded to _____. All expressions of interest need to be received by the

Expression of Interest

AAP Board Public Representative

Please complete all the details below so a recruitment pack for AAP Board membership can be posted or e-mailed to you.

1. Please write your name below:

2. Please write your address and contact details:

Address: _____

Telephone/Email: _____

3. Which AAP Board are you interested in becoming a member?

Easington	<input type="checkbox"/>
East Durham Rural Corridor	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bishop Auckland and Shildon	<input type="checkbox"/>
Chester-le-Street	<input type="checkbox"/>
Consett	<input type="checkbox"/>
Crook, Willington and Town Law	<input type="checkbox"/>
Durham City	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ferryhill and Chilton	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mid Durham Rural West	<input type="checkbox"/>
Newton Aycliffe	<input type="checkbox"/>
Spennymoor	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stanley	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teesdale	<input type="checkbox"/>
Weardale	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. If you would like us to send your information via e-mail, please indicate below:

Yes No

Please complete your form and return it to ? by ?

**Durham County Council Area Budgets
2009/2010**

Draft Guidance notes and application process

1. What's it all about?

Area Budgets (ABs) are devolved allocations of funds which are made to Area Action Partnerships (AAPs) for use locally. The allocations will support community led initiatives that meet local needs while impacting on county priorities, and to encourage community participation in decision-making. By bringing together communities to talk about and decide on local priorities and what locally allocated resources should be spent on collectively, both representative and participative democracy is strengthened and the role of the community in influencing decision making and service delivery is profiled in the locality.

2. How will it work?

Each Area Action Partnership will develop a local plan which will identify up to 5 local priorities. Priorities will be identified using local information drawn from the 35 indicators within the LAA, the Place Survey and LSP priorities along with local anecdotal and other evidence. This will mean that AAP areas may have differing local priorities.

Gaps in provision or for added value intervention to address these local priorities will be identified and specifications for commissioned activity will be issued and invited. Successful applications for AB funding must demonstrate impact that they contribute to the relevant AAP local plan priorities.

As local issues may span more than one AAP area, the scheme allows for the approval of collective applications that may involve communities from adjoining AAP areas. However it needs to be borne in mind that the larger the proposal in terms of geographical impact the less 'local' it becomes.

The ABs can be used to support either Capital or Revenue proposals. Proposals should not have recurrent costs attached to them, which extend beyond the financial year in which they are allocated except in exceptional circumstances and with approval from the Section 151 Officer.

The ABs cannot be used to fund retrospectively ie for expenditure already incurred before the application has been approved.

Applications which cannot be approved because they do not meet the criteria have the right to resubmit their application if they feel that additional information can be provided.

Eligibility

Eligibility for the allocation of AB will be limited to non-profit making groups and organisations. Applications which will only benefit individuals or profit making organisations will not be eligible. AB cannot be approved for use to provide a statutory service, where it is the responsibility to do so of the authority or an external agency, unless it can be demonstrated the commissioned activity is added-value activity.

Applicants will need to submit an Expression of Interest form that will be available from the AAP Co-ordinator..

Criteria

All proposals approved under the AB scheme will need to satisfy the following criteria:

- They will be identified from local priorities within the AAP local plan;
- They will meet identified need;
- They will contribute to locality and county wide outcomes and demonstrate impact towards LAA outcomes;
- They will improve social, economic and environmental well-being;
- They will not undermine council or partners' policies or service delivery;
- They will be lawful.
- They will not incur ongoing revenue costs without the approval of the relevant service provider.

Publicity

All proposals approved under the AB scheme will need to publicise the fact in recognition of the support received and use of the council logo will be a condition of the AB allocation being made.

3. The AB scheme 'At a glance'

The AB scheme provides an allocation of up to £150, 000 per AAP for 2009/10. Its overall purpose is to support the improvement of social, economic and environmental well-being.

The AB resources must be used to: support the effective operation of the AAP and new or additional projects, services or facilities identified in the Area Action Partnership (AAP) local plan, that meet identified need, contribute to the delivery of LAA and local outcomes, and add value to council/partners policies and or service delivery.

The AB scheme will	The AB scheme will not
Spend up to £150,000 per AAP. Fund individual schemes which cost a minimum of £5000 under the AB Scheme	Fund individual proposals which cost less than £5000 under the AB scheme
Fund added value proposals and attract match funding where possible	
Support proposals inside the AAP area or outside the AAP area where combining allocations with other AAP areas demonstrates cost effectiveness and added value	Support proposals that are unlawful
Obtain publicity for the scheme and celebrate success	
Supplement their allocations by joint funding proposals with NB budgets or other match-funding where possible	Fund proposals that can be funded from another source unless 'added-value' can be demonstrated
If possible, attempt to commit to proposals by 31 st March, 2010	Duplicate other proposals

The Area Budget Scheme is public money and is subject to the same rules as all other County Council expenditure. All spending will need to ensure compliance with County Policy, Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.

The rules which allow the County Council to make funding available for member budgets are under the terms contained in Section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000 (the "Wellbeing Power"). This provision gives local authorities the power to '**do anything to promote the social, environmental and economic well being of their area provided that it is not expressly prohibited by law**'. The well-being powers permit working with other partners by local authorities, even if the services are not provided by them and are not prohibited by statute.

4. What are ABs?

The role of the AAP is to identify and address local issues and concerns, through local action and influencing service provision. The AB is an allocation of financial resource for the AAP to operate effectively and to resolve local issues, allowing them to have a measurable impact both on their local area and on LAA outcomes. AAPs will provide communities with more influence and control over services in their area, maximising the complementary strengths of representative and participative approaches to democratic engagement. When looking at resolution of local issues which the AAP is able to resolve itself, AB's, and Neighbourhood Budgets can be utilised to support these partners.

The AAP Co-ordinator will administer the scheme. The Assistant Chief Executive, or an officer delegated by them, will sign off proposals. Proposals for AB resources will be discussed at AAP Boards quarterly, where the Board is able to comment on the extent they meet the scheme criteria and whether there may be duplication with mainstream budgets or the capacity for added value through matching resources. This will encourage collaborative working within the AAP, and provide opportunities for decisions to be taken in the light of local needs and circumstances.

The AB will	The AB will not
Only support proposals that: a) allow it to operate effectively or b) impact on local priorities and the LAA.	Approve the use of AB to other authorities or agencies where it is their responsibility to provide the services unless it is added-value activity
Attract and secure match funding where possible or sponsorship for approved proposals and ensure adequate support is available to all expressing an interest	Approve the use of AB which will finance the employment of staff beyond the period of the approved scheme unless approval (and additional funding) is secured from the relevant service provider
	Make payments from AB to individuals in their own right or support initiatives where the final beneficiary is an identifiable individual or family.
Use the council well-being powers as a vehicle for innovative service provision across all partners to support achievement of local priorities and LAA outcomes	
Ensure that they work collaboratively with the NB scheme and other funding sources to ensure maximum impact for resources committed	Commit to a scheme which could necessitate additional costs being incurred by council services without prior agreement

5. The When and What

By this date	This will happen
1 April 2009	Guidance issued to AAPs Publicity developed with communications and scheme advertised. Awareness raising session for AAP Co-ordinators Training event – Q & A session for AAP Co-ordinators
18 May 2009	Expressions of interest invited
30 June 2009	First deadline for submission of AB Expressions of Interest to AAP Co-ordinators
30 September 2009	Second deadline for submission of AB Expressions of Interest to AAP Co-ordinators
31 December 2009	Third deadline for submission of AB Expressions of Interest to AAP Co-ordinators
28 Feb 2010	Scheme update for AAP and potential deadline for submission of AB Expressions of Interest to AAP Co-ordinators (depending on availability of resources)

6. Publicity

AAPs will liaise with the Communications Team for assistance with the preparation of any press releases or publicity

ABs are public funds and therefore information on spend should be made available to any internal or external person upon request.

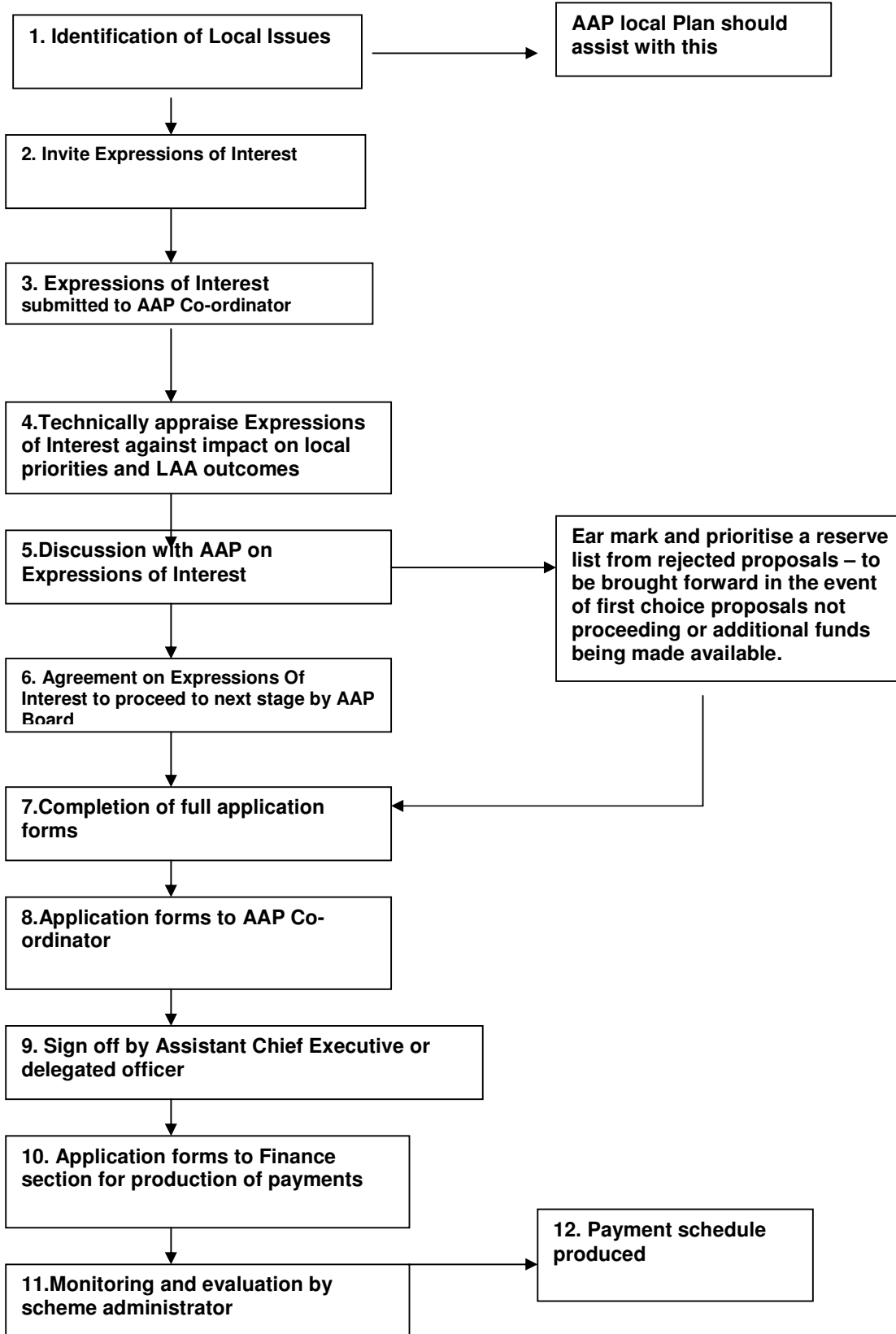
Publicity on the scheme will ensure its success, AAPs will widely publicise the scheme at a locality level.

Successful proposals should be promoted and publicised ensuring they are branded as being supported from the AB Scheme.

In election years, publicity on the scheme must not be issued within the embargo period, and must be suppressed until after the council election has taken place.

7. The How – the schemes will be administered through an 12 step process ensuring that the financial resources attached to the scheme are allocated within a consistent, robust, inclusive and open process, and takes account of both local and LAA priorities.

Procedure for AB scheme



AAPs do not have any legal powers to certify expenditure. Authorisation for Area Budget allocations rests with the Assistant Chief Executive. However it is presumed that schemes that pass the technical appraisal will be approved.

8. Who can help you

Approval of commissioned activity which match the criteria of the scheme will be a challenging exercise, however there are a number of potential sources of information and advice that will be made available.

Information:

AAP Area Profiles
AAP Local Plans
The County Durham Local Area Agreement (LAA)
The Sustainable Community Strategy for County Durham
Parish and Town Plans
Community Appraisals

Advice on procedure, applications forms and finance:

AB scheme support contact numbers

Scheme Administrator AAP area xx

Scheme Administrator AAP area yy

Scheme Administrator AAP area zz

9. Your questions answered

9.1. Q. Can I support individuals or profit-making organisations?

A. No the scheme criteria forbids support of this nature?

9.2 Q. How can I be sure that proposed schemes do not fall within the category of services normally provided by other agencies/authorities?

A. This is dependant on individual circumstances. The scheme does not allow payments direct to other agencies/authorities unless it is to enhance service delivery. If doubt exists then advice should be sought from the relevant AAP scheme administrator.

9.3 Q. Can I carry forward any unused funds from the financial year in which they were allocated into the following year?

A. Yes, although spend within the year will be encouraged, it is recognised that in certain circumstances this might not be feasible or advisable e.g. if the AAP chose to build up a reserve for a larger priority project.

9.4 Q. Is there a restriction on the use to the AB funds to support capital and/or revenue proposals.

- A. The ABs can be used to support either Capital or Revenue proposals, revenue schemes should not have recurrent costs attached to them, which extend beyond the financial year in which they are allocated unless approval (and additional funding) is secured from the relevant service provider.

**Durham County Council Neighbourhood,
Member Initiative Fund and Highways
Budgets**

**Draft Guidance notes and application
process 2009/10**

1. What's it all about?

Neighbourhood Budgets (NBs), Members Initiative Fund (MIF) and Highways Budgets are allocations of funds which are made to elected members for use locally. They provide the ability to take spending decisions back to local communities, and give elected members in consultation with their local Area Action Partnership (AAP) the opportunity to address local needs and priorities. The role of NBs, MIFs and Highways Budgets is to help support the development of the role of frontline councillors as community leaders and champions, to support and encourage community based initiatives that meet local needs while impacting on County priorities, and to encourage community participation in decision-making. Each Unitary Councillor is allocated NB funding of £25,000 (£10,000 capital and £15,000 revenue). MIF is £2,000 per member and the Highways Budget is £6,000 per member.

2. How will it work?

Each AAP will develop a local plan which will identify up to 5 local priorities. Priorities will be identified using local information drawn from the 35 indicators within the LAA, the Place Survey and LSP priorities along with local anecdotal and other evidence. This will mean that AAP areas are likely to have differing local priorities. These will act as a reference point for use of NB, resources as well as the Local Transport Plan for the Highways budgets.

Elected members will invite Expressions of Interest for NB, and invite applications only for MIF and Highways budgets, documentation will be made available from the AAP Co-ordinator.

The NB Expressions of Interest should demonstrate they meet the scheme criteria and contribute to the relevant AAP local plan priorities or local neighbourhood issues. MIF applications will be assessed against MIF scheme criteria. Highways Budgets impact will be assessed against Local Transport Plans (LTPs). All proposals whether Expression of Interest or applications should be submitted to the AAP Co-ordinator.

Standard agenda items will be placed quarterly on AAP Boards for all elected members within the AAP boundary to outline the Expression of Interests received for the use of NB funding. The AAP's role will be to comment on the impact the proposal(s) has on local priorities.

The NB and MIFs can be used to support either Capital or Revenue proposals, Highways Budgets are Capital only. However schemes should not have recurrent costs attached to them, which extend beyond the financial year in which they are allocated, unless agreement to meet these costs have been approved by the appropriate delivery agent ie Council Service or external agency.

The NBs, MIF and Highways budgets cannot be used to fund retrospectively ie for expenditure already incurred before the application has been approved.

Applications which cannot be approved because they do not meet the criteria can resubmit their application if they feel that additional information can be provided.

Eligibility

Eligibility for the allocation of NB, MIF and Highways resources will be limited to non-profit making groups and organisation. Applications which will only benefit individual or profit making organisations will not be eligible. NB, MIF and Highways resources cannot be approved for use, to provide a service where it is the responsibility to do so of the authority or an external agency, unless it can be demonstrated the commissioned activity is added-value activity.

Application Process

For NB proposals Members will need to submit an Expression of Interest Form to the AAP Co-ordinator. Expression of Interests will be assessed against the scheme criteria, local plan priorities and emerging neighbourhood issues and priorities. If impact is demonstrated* then it will be submitted to the AAP for information and discussion. Members will then endorse the Expression of Interest and complete a full application form with the support of the AAP Co-ordinator. The AAP Co-ordinator will submit full application forms to the Assistant Chief Executive for sign off. There may be occasions when a proposal needs to be approved urgently and the timescale does not allow for AAP comment to be obtained, in these circumstances the Assistant Chief Executive has delegated authority to allow the Expression of Interest to proceed to full application stage and sign off applications.

In the case of MIF, and highways budgets these are light touch fast track schemes schemes, with minimum bureaucracy. MIF is designed to tackle priorities in a dynamic proactive way, that otherwise would not be captured within the AAP local plan but nevertheless emerge during the year as a priority for local communities. Highways Budget is designed to impact on priorities identified within the Local Transport Plan (LTP). MIF and Highways budget do not have an Expression of Interest stage, members will submit application forms to the AAP Co-ordinator, before the application is signed-off by the Assistant Chief Executive/Technical Services Section.

For Highways budget applications, sign off cannot be made until each AAP Board receives a presentation on Local Transport Plan proposals for an area. Following which, applications will be submitted to the Council's Technical Services, Durham, via the AAP Co-ordinator.

A report on how MIF and Highways Budgets have been allocated will be prepared annually for the AAP's information.

*In cases where impact cannot be clearly demonstrated but members still wish to support the Expression of Interest then there will be a process of arbitration between the Head of Partnerships and Community Engagement and the Finance Director.

Criteria

All proposals approved under the NB scheme will need to satisfy the following criteria:

- They will be identified from local priorities within the AAP local plan or from emerging neighbourhood issues.
- They will meet identified need

- They will improve social, economic and environmental well-being
- They will not undermine council or partners' policies or service delivery
- They will be lawful
- They will not incur ongoing revenue costs without the approval of the relevant service provider

The MIF whilst needing to take account of the criteria above is designed specifically to be a 'light touch', fast track scheme for the purpose of a quick reaction to small scale neighbourhood level local concerns and priorities, which may not be in the AAP local plan, but that emerge during the course of the year and for which a rapid response is necessary.

The Highways Budget whilst needing to take account of the criteria above is designed to be a 'light touch' fast track scheme used to contribute specifically towards delivery of LTP priorities.

3. The schemes 'At a glance'

Members will be in receipt of £25,000 per member for Neighbourhood Budgets, £2,000 per member under the Member Initiative Fund (MIF), and £6,000 per member Highways allocation for 2009/10. The overall purpose of these allocations is to support the improvement of social, economic and environmental well-being.

All schemes will be administered through a structured process, however the MIF and Highways schemes because they are light touch, and are for small financial amounts will have minimum bureaucracy, allowing members to react quickly to local concerns, or neighbourhood priorities as they emerge.

NB schemes should be used for new or additional projects, services or facilities identified in the AAP local plan, that meet identified need, contribute to the delivery of LAA outcomes, and add value to council/partners policies and or service delivery. All proposals will need to demonstrate engagement with the AAP.

MIF schemes should be used for small scale neighbourhood level new or additional projects, services or facilities which may be identified in the AAP plan or that may emerge as local priorities or concerns during the year.

Members can	Members can't
Spend up to £25,000 per member under the NB scheme	Fund individual schemes which cost less than £2000 under the NB scheme
Spend up to £2,000 per member under the MIF	Fund individual schemes which cost less than £50 under the MIF
Spend up to £6,000 per member on the Highways scheme	Fund individual schemes which cost less than £500 on the Highways scheme
Support schemes inside or outside their electoral division (ED). Where spend is outside an electoral division, the scheme should benefit members from the Elected Members ED	Support schemes that are unlawful

Combine their allocation with other Members to support larger schemes	
Supplement their allocations by joint funding schemes with AAP budgets or other match-funding.	Fund schemes that can be funded from another source unless 'added-value' can be demonstrated
Observe the publicity, probity and conduct protocols for Members	
Obtain publicity for the scheme and celebrate success	Duplicate other schemes

The NB, MIF and Highways Schemes are public money and is subject to the same rules as all other County Council expenditure. All spending will need to ensure compliance with County Policy, Standing Orders and Financial Regulations. The rules which allow the County Council to make funding available for member budgets are under the terms contained in Section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000 (the "Wellbeing Power"). This provision gives local authorities the power to '**do anything to promote the social, environmental and economic well being of their area provided that it is not expressly prohibited by law**'. The well-being powers permit working with other partners by local authorities, even if the services are not provided by them and are not prohibited by statute.

4. What is it for?

The role of frontline ward councillors is to lead and shape their local communities. The NB, MIF and Highways budgets are allocations of financial resource for elected members to help support the AAP in meeting its priorities and to address quickly any local concerns or priorities as may emerge during the year.

Members will make the final recommendations for NB, MIF and Highways Budget allocations, but for NB proposals this must be in discussion with the appropriate AAP Board. These discussions should be quarterly, where Members outline proposed NB Expressions of Interest and the Board is able to comment on the extent these meet scheme criteria and whether there may be duplication with mainstream budgets or the capacity for added value through matching resources. These discussions will be made by all members in an AAP area and will not be limited to members nominated to the board. This will encourage collaborative working within the AAP, and provide opportunities for decisions to be taken in the light of local needs and circumstances.

Members funding will	Members funding will not
Only support proposals for NB that impact on local priorities.	Approve the use of NB, MIF or Highways budgets to other authorities or agencies where it is their responsibility to provide the services unless it is added-value activity
Support proposals for MIF that impact on emerging priorities and need a rapid response	Seek to use NB, MIF or Highways budgets for the purposes of lobbying, political activity or general electoral activity
Support proposals for Highways budget that meet identified priorities with the LPT	Approve the use of NB, MIF or Highways budgets which will finance the employment of staff beyond the period of the scheme unless approval and resources are agreed by the relevant service provider
Where possible attract and secure match funding or sponsorship for approved schemes where possible, and ensure adequate support is available to all expressing an interest	Make payments from NB, MIF or Highways budgets to individuals in their own right or support initiatives where the final beneficiary is an identifiable individual or family.
	Commit to proposals which could necessitate additional costs being incurred by council service groupings or partner agencies without prior agreement
Ensure that they work collaboratively with	

the AAP to ensure maximum impact for resources committed	
If possible, attempt to commit to proposals by 31 st March, 2010	

5. The When and What

By this date	This will happen
1 April 2009	Guidance issued to all members Publicity developed with communications and scheme advertised. Awareness raising session for members and scheme administrators Application process for MIF resources commences (on a rolling programme basis)
29 May 2009	NB Training event – Q & A session for members & Scheme Administrators Expressions of interest invited
30 June 2009	First deadline for submission of NB proposals to scheme administrators
31 July 2009	Presentation to AAP on Local Transport Plan proposals to guide spend of Highways budgets which will be submitted on a rolling programme basis
30 September 2009	Second deadline for submission of NB proposals to scheme administrators
31 December 2009	Third deadline for submission of NB proposals to scheme administrators for 2009/10 scheme
28 February 2010	Progress report to AAP on 'Member Budgets' and potential deadline for submissions of NB proposals to scheme administrators

Member changes

If a member ceases to be a member for any reason or retires, then any of their unallocated NB, MIF or Highways budget will be reallocated to the new member if the time frame as detailed below allows this. In the event there is insufficient time the unallocated budget will become the responsibility of the Assistant Chief Executive to re-allocate in consultation with the leaders of the council's political groups.

6. Publicity

Members are requested to liaise with the Communications Team for assistance with the preparation of any press releases or publicity

The NBs, MIF and Highways budgets are public funds and therefore information on will should be made available to any internal or external person upon request.

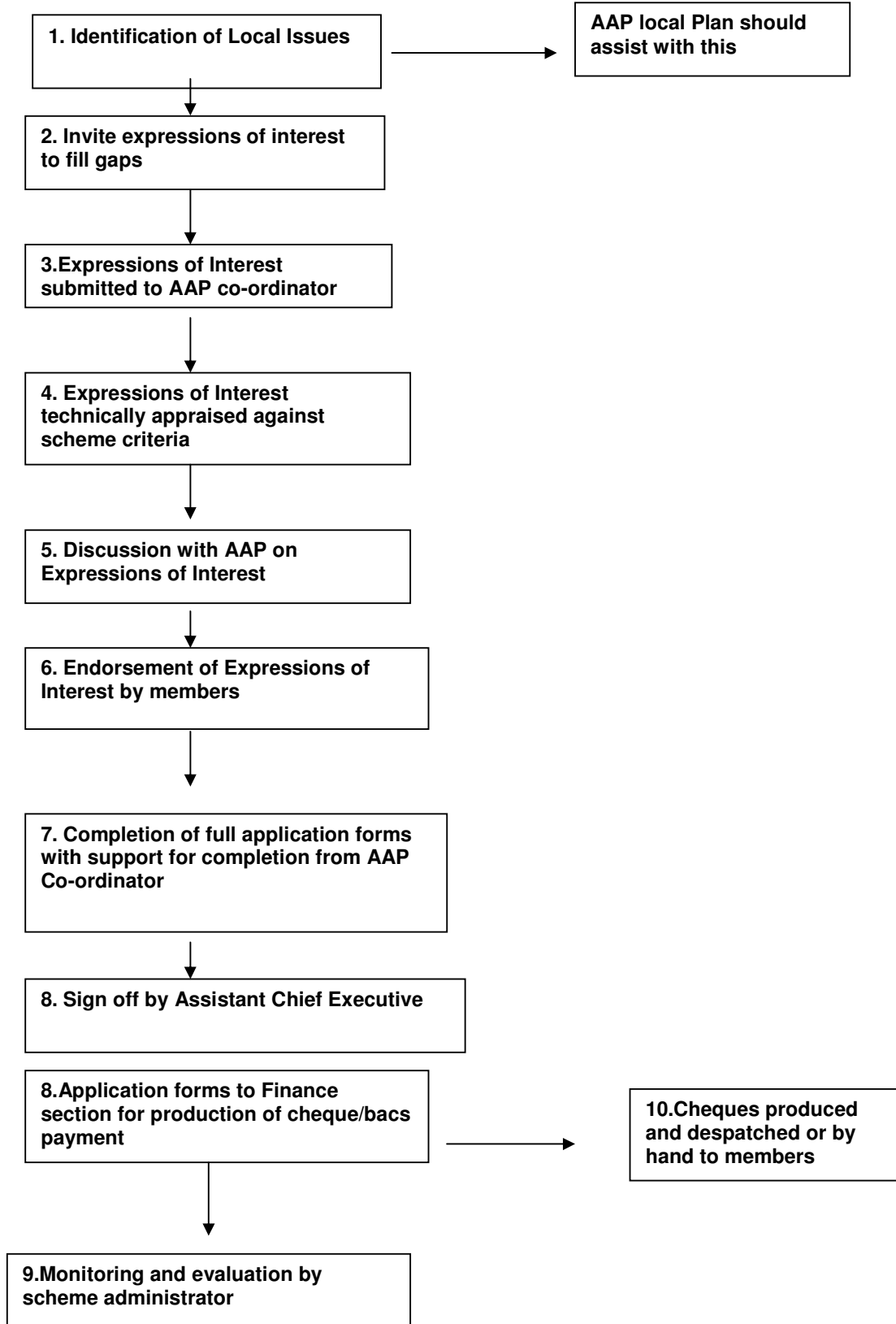
Publicity on the schemes will ensure its success, Members are therefore encouraged to widely publicise the schemes at a locality level.

Successful schemes should be promoted and publicised ensuring they are branded as being supported from the relevant scheme eg NB, MIF or Highways.

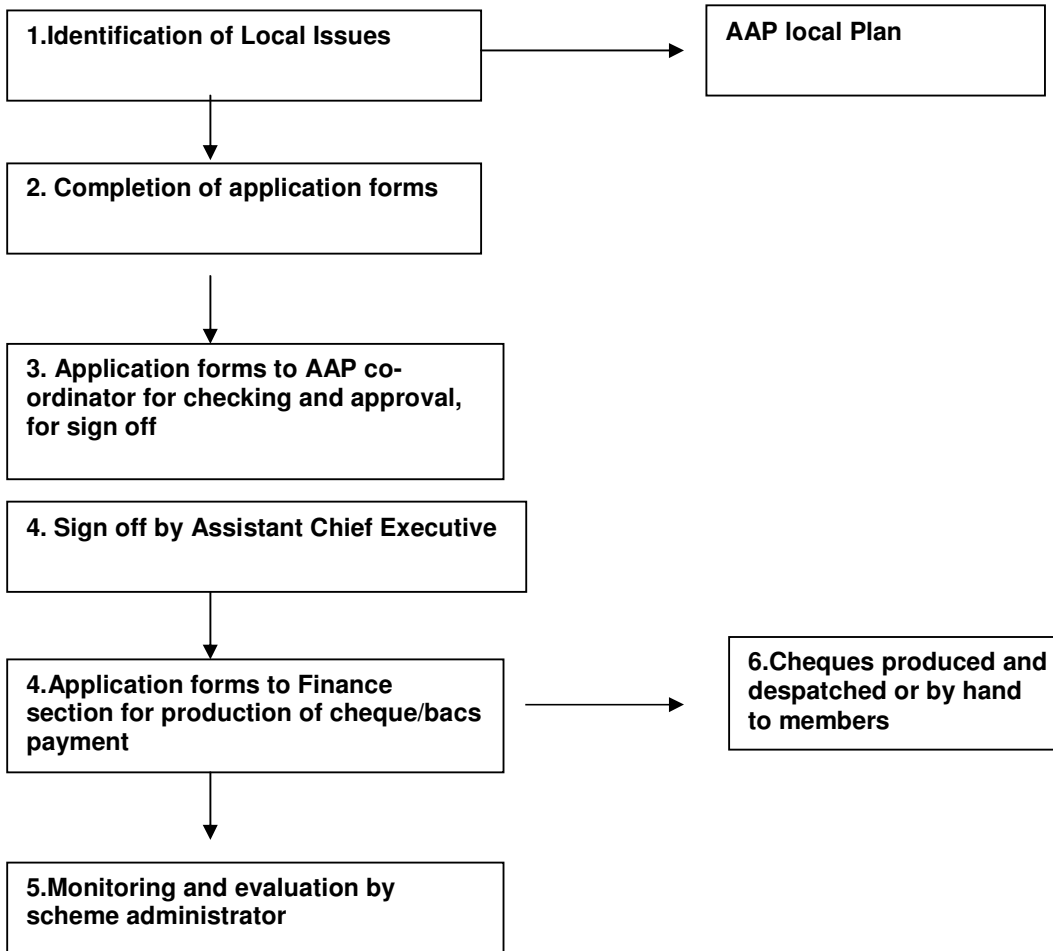
In election years, publicity on the schemes must not be issued within the embargo period, and must be suppressed until after the council election has taken place.

7. **The How** – the NB scheme will be administered through a 11 step process, 7 for MIF and 5 for Highways ensuring that the financial resources attached to the scheme are allocated within a consistent, robust, inclusive and open process, and takes account of both local priorities and LAA priorities.

Procedure for NB

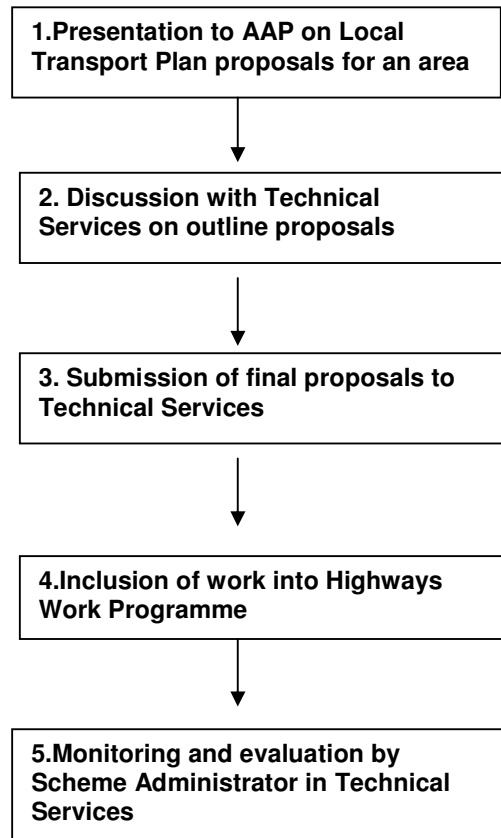


Procedure for MIF



Members do not have any legal powers to certify expenditure. Authorisation for Member Budget allocations rests with the Assistant Chief Executive. However it is presumed that schemes that pass the technical appraisal will be approved.

Procedure for Highways



8. Your questions answered

8.1 Q What will happen to the current Member Initiative Fund (MIF)?

A. The current MIF has been revised and will now be more light touch and less bureaucratic.

8.2. How does the NB, MIF and Highways budgets schemes differ?

All three schemes share the same ethos in that their overall aim is to enhance well-being. However the NB scheme is for larger scale proposals which are identified as priorities within the AAP local plan or emerge as a neighbourhood priority; The MIF is for small scale proposals at the neighbourhood level which may not be identified within the AAP local plan but which are emerging priorities and for which a rapid response is necessary; the Highways budget is specifically designed for supporting the priorities within the LTP.

The NB scheme will have a total allocation of £25,000 per member, designed for projects or initiatives which will have a minimum individual allocation of £2,000. The MIF will have a total allocation of £2,000 per member which will have a minimum individual allocation of £50. The Highways Budget will have a total allocation of £6,000 per Member which will have a minimum individual allocation of £500. All allocations for Members will support activity which is targeted at local priorities. .

8.3. Q. Can I as a member personally allocate less than £100 under MIF, less than £2,000 under NB and under £500 for Highways proposals provided the application(s) including other Members allocations exceed the minimums?

A. Yes. Individual schemes cannot be approved for less than the minimum but joint schemes can be approved as long as the joint scheme is for the minimum amount or greater.

8.4. Q. Can I support a scheme where I have a personal or prejudicial interest under Member publicity, probity and conduct protocols.

A. This is dependent on individual circumstances and must be clearly stated when the application is submitted.

8.5. Q. Can I support individuals or profit-making organisations?

B. No the scheme criteria forbids support of this nature?

8.6 Q. How can I be sure that proposed schemes do not fall within the category of services normally provided by other agencies/authorities?

A. This is dependant on individual circumstances. The scheme does not allow payments direct to other agencies/authorities unless it is to enhance service delivery. If doubt exists then advice should be sought from the relevant AAP Co-ordinator.

8.7 Q. Can I carry forward any unused funds from the financial year in which they were allocated into the following year?

A. Yes, although spend within the year will be encouraged, it is recognised that in certain circumstances this might not be feasible or advisable. However, allocations will not be carried over from one political term to another.

8.8. Q Is there a restriction on the use to the NB funds to support capital and/or revenue proposals.

A. The NB's can be used to support either Capital or Revenue proposals, however revenue schemes should not have recurrent costs attached to them, which extend beyond the financial year in which they are allocated. There is also a £10k/15k capital/revenue split within the NB scheme.

Draft Training and Development Information Pack

Area Action Partnership Board Members

Introduction

A key element in the development of strong local partnerships is ensuring that all members feel able to play a full part in meetings, discussions and decision making processes. In order to achieve this it is important to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to equip themselves with the necessary range of skills, knowledge and behaviours.

Skills, knowledge and behaviours can be developed through a range of courses and activities such as those listed within this booklet. For ease of reference, all courses and activities have been categorised under either:

- The Skills Programme
- The Knowledge and Awareness Programme
- Understanding Behaviour Programme
- Briefing sessions
- Bespoke training events

The Training and Development Snapshot document on page 3 enables you to review the training opportunities which may be available within each of the programmes identified above without the need to read this document fully.

It is important to remember that you as an individual Area Action Partnership (AAP) Board member will bring your own skills, knowledge and experience to your partnership and so any training and development opportunities should be tailored to you at the correct level and not delivered as a 'one size fits all' approach.

The training programmes detailed in this pack are not intended to represent an exhaustive list but provide examples and an indication of some of the programmes that may be available for you to undertake to ensure that you feel confident in fulfilling your role within the partnership. It must be noted that some development opportunities will be mandatory for all Board members.

All Board members will be asked to complete a Training Needs Analysis form to help with the development of a tailored training programme which will provide the most benefit to you whilst also being cost effective.

The AAP is committed to ensuring that everyone is treated equally and fairly. To ensure that the Training and Development opportunities detailed within this pack are accessible to all members, a number of facilities are available to ensure everyone can participate. These include:

- Documents and training materials (produced in large print, Braille or on audio tape/CD Rom where required)
- The provision of a hearing loop at training sessions
- The provision of a BSL interpreter at training sessions (on request)
- All training venues will be accessible and DDA compliant

Training needs analysis

To ensure you receive the training you need to undertake your duties as an AAP Board member, we will require you to complete a Training Needs Analysis form, which will identify the skills you already have whilst enabling you to identify gaps in your current skills

and knowledge. This analysis aims to highlight the training that will help you to function as an effective member of the wider AAP Board.

Additional needs

As part of the Training Needs Analysis, there will be an opportunity to highlight any training or capacity building sessions you feel would be beneficial to you which are not listed. These additional needs can be discussed with your AAP Area Coordinator and will be assessed against your overall Training Needs Analysis and the availability of funds for the provision of training and development. Any training needs that cannot be met due to budgetary restrictions will be recorded and addressed when resources become available.

Training and Development Snapshot

Examples of training and development opportunities that may be offered as part of the AAP training programme.

Programme	Content
The Skills Programme	Chairing meetings effectively
	Taking part in meetings and events
	Presentation and communication skills
	Managing conflict
The Knowledge and Awareness Programme	Principles of representation
	How the Council works
	Finance and budgets
	Performance Management
	Publicity and media
	Fund raising
	Data protection
	Monitoring and Evaluation
	The County Durham Partnership
	Comprehensive Area Assessment
Understanding Behaviour Programme	Assertion skills
	Equality, Diversity and Cohesion
	The AAP Code of Conduct
	Community Works
Briefing Sessions	Developments in Government policy
Bespoke Training Events	Team building days
	Visioning and action planning days
	Community engagement or consultation events linked to AAP Forum

(A) The Skills Programme

Training and development included in this programme is designed to help you develop your personal skills in order to enable you to play as full a role as possible in the activities of the partnership. The sessions include:

- **Chairing meetings effectively**

In order for meetings to be successful they require a strong and competent chairperson who can lead discussions, be decisive and ensure the meeting meets its objectives. This session looks at:

- The basic aims and objectives of meetings
- The role of the chairperson and their responsibilities
- The skills needed to be an effective chairperson
- Difficult situations and how to address them
- Opportunities to develop and practice chairing skills

- **Taking part in meetings and events**

Making contributions and getting your point across at meetings and events can be a difficult task for many people if they are new to this type of environment. To ensure everyone on the AAP Board has the confidence to express their views and thoughts this programme will look at:

- What can stop you speaking out
- Some tips and techniques to help you express your views
- Assertive behaviour, what it is and how to become more assertive
- Overcoming nerves and gaining confidence

- **Presentation and communication skills**

How we communicate with others around us can have a big impact on how seriously we are taken and whether or not issues we raise are acted upon. An AAP Board member must have good communication skills if they are to represent and express the views of their sector and must be able to present and communicate these views effectively to other Board members and their local community. The programme will look at:

- Process of communication and how we communicate
- Body language and non verbal communication
- Developing a strong presentation
- Delivering your presentation

Taking part in the Assertion skills training session and the Taking part in meetings and events session as detailed above will also help in the development of good presentation and communication skills.

- **Managing conflict**

We do not expect everyone to agree on the same issue but there are ways to ensure that everyone has a chance to express their views and that any conflict can be recognised and dealt with. This programme will look at:

- How to examine the nature of conflict and to see how it fits into our interaction with others
- How to recognise where and when conflict may emerge and to look at some responses to this
- The methods of dealing with people which will reduce the risk and escalation of conflict in the AAP environment
- How we can develop new skills that will assist us in managing conflict

(B) The Knowledge and Awareness Programme

Training and development in this programme is designed to give you a greater knowledge and understanding of various aspects of the work of Area Action Partnerships, the environment they operate in and the issues they work with. These sessions will include:

- **Principles of representation**

Individuals in partnership settings often act as a representative of wider communities, organisations or other bodies. It is important that the 'representation' element of the AAP Board member role is not lost. This session will look at:

- Individual responsibilities in a partnership
- How to make sure you are representing your community, organisation or agency effectively
- Conflict and differences
- Keeping your community, organisation or agency informed and involved

- **How the Council works**

The council is a major service provider and many local issues and problems local communities experience is in areas which the local council is the main service provider. As an AAP Board member you will find it particularly useful to learn about the new unitary authority and how it operates. This session will look at:

- The structure of the council and the services it provides
- How the council makes decisions
- Where the money comes from and how it is spent
- How the council works with its partners

- **Finance and budgets**

With the introduction of Neighbourhood Budgets and Area Budgets it is important that all AAP Board members have a basic understanding of finance and budget management.

This session will look at:

- What financial records need to be kept
- Planning, managing and monitoring a budget
- Setting grant criteria
- Legal requirements

- **Performance Management**

Improving service provision through clear and focussed performance information is a key expectation of public sector organisations. The ability to break this information down to

localities will be fundamental to the success of AAPs as it will help shape the priorities for the partnership. This session will look at:

- Understanding performance management terminology and the presentation of data;
 - Target setting;
 - The Local Area Agreements;
 - The balance between quantitative and qualitative data;
 - Focussing on outcomes and managing the risks associated with achieving those outcomes;
 - Identifying pockets of need.
- **Publicity and media**

The Chair of the AAP Board will have responsibility for being the AAP's media spokesperson but it is important that individuals involved in Area Action Partnerships understand the various media outlets available to them and appreciate the importance of effective use of the media. Effective publicity and media coverage will showcase the good work of the partnership; will help with recruitment, illustrate the outcomes achieved as a result of action and may encourage other local people to become involved. The media can also be the partnership's worst enemy and so needs to be approached in the correct way. This session will look at:

- Different types of publicity such as newsletters, websites, local press and radio
 - How to use different media and publicity routes successfully
 - Producing effective publicity and promotional materials
 - The do's and don'ts when using the media
 - Equality, Diversity and Cohesion implications
- **Fund Raising**

Partnerships may wish to raise additional funding for particular projects or initiatives or may be asked to give smaller groups advice or assistance with more local fund raising. This session will look at:

- Planning a fund raising campaign
 - Incorporating fund raising into the ongoing activities of the partnership
 - Where to look for grants for particular projects or initiatives
 - Legislation and do's and don'ts
- **Data protection**

Partnerships are often responsible for analysing local data which will help them to make their decisions. Data analysis is important but the data must be stored and used very carefully so as not to break any data protection regulations. This session will include:

- 1998 Data Protection Act
- Types of data we handle including Personal Data
- How data should be stored and disposed of appropriately
- Disclosing information
- Who is responsible?

- **Monitoring and evaluation**

Monitoring and evaluation are essential to improving the effectiveness of any partnership and careful monitoring allows those involved to make appropriate decisions and ensure the partnership is meeting its objectives. Evaluation enables partnerships to understand and demonstrate the actions and helps to provide 'lessons learned'. This programme will:

- Introduce the concepts of monitoring and evaluation
- Explain the difference between monitoring and evaluation
- Explore monitoring and evaluation techniques
- Highlight how monitoring and evaluation can help an AAP

- **The County Durham Partnership**

The County Durham Partnership (CDP) is the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) for the whole of County Durham which was formed in 2007. The partnership takes the lead on developing and delivering a number of County Durham's key strategies in partnership with the public, business, voluntary and community sectors. This programme will aim to:

- Provide a brief overview of the role of the CDP
- Examine the five thematic partnerships
- Provide an overview of the Local Area Agreement and Sustainable Community Strategy
- Explore the relationship between the CDP and the AAP

- **Comprehensive Area Assessment**

Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) is a new approach introduced by the Audit Commission to look at how well local services are working together to improve the quality of life for local people. This programme will:

- Explore the Local Performance Framework
- Highlight the role of the CAA and what it aims to achieve
- Link the CAA to the Strong and Prosperous Communities White Paper
- Question what impact the CAA will have on AAPs

(C) Understanding Behaviour Programme

Training and development in this type of programme relates to how we behave in certain situations and environments and also highlights how our behaviour can impact upon others. These sessions will include:

- **Assertion skills**

In many parts of our lives it is important that we behave in a positive and assertive way. The Board's activities and involvement in meetings and partnership events is no different. The programme will look at:

- Different types of behaviour and the advantages of behaving assertively
- Reasons why we may find it difficult to behave assertively in some situations
- Skills we need to develop in order to be assertive
- Ways/techniques for developing assertive behaviour

- **Equality, Diversity and Cohesion**

In order for Area Action Partnerships to be truly inclusive, AAP Board members must be aware of and behave in a manner which reflects the principles of equality, diversity and cohesion. As a Board member you must ensure that Area Forum meetings are accessible and also inclusive so all members of the community have an opportunity to express their views/concerns. This session will look at:

- Definition of equality, diversity and cohesion
- Communities of identity
- Why issues of equality, diversity and cohesion are of such importance when developing strong partnerships
- What discrimination is and how it works
- How our behaviour and partnership values should reflect the principles of equality, diversity and cohesion
- Becoming a 'Diversity/Cohesion Champion'

- **The AAP Code of Conduct**

Nearly all organisations and partnerships have a dedicated Code of Conduct which aims to ensure all employees and members behave in a suitable manner within the organisation, in particular, to each other. This session will look at:

- What is a Code of Conduct
- An in-depth look at the AAP Code of Conduct
- Implications for the Board and the AAP

- **Community Works**

This session will allow Board members to think about the community they live in and will use practical examples and Board members' own experience to explore how the community works.

(D) Briefing sessions

If you become an AAP Board member and would like to know about specific issues and pieces of legislation which are relevant to the ongoing work and development of the partnership, single briefing sessions can be arranged to help you explore these topics/issues in more detail. Examples of these could include;

- Communities in Control White Paper
- Duty To Involve
- Equality Bill
- Sustainable Communities White Paper
- Our Shared Futures – Commission on Integration and Cohesion

(E) Bespoke Training Events

Assistance can also be given to AAP Board members in developing, facilitating and commissioning bespoke training and developmental events for the individual partnership. Such events could include:

- Team building days

- Visioning and action planning days
- Community engagement or consultation events linked to AAP Forum

Removing barriers to participation and communication

We believe everyone should have an equal opportunity to play a full part in their community, regardless of their ethnicity, religion, geographic location, special needs, language differences, learning difficulties, sexual orientation, gender, age or disability.

We can produce this booklet and the expression of interest form overleaf in other formats, such as Braille, large print, on audiotape; on CD-Rom; and in other languages. You can get a copy by calling our Communications Team.