



SIX-MONTHLY REVIEWS OF LOCAL AREA AGREEMENTS

Summary

1. This note offers local partnerships and Government Offices (GOs) general guidance on the minimum requirements of the six-monthly reviews of LAAs and some suggested good practice on how to go about the reviews as effectively and efficiently as possible.
2. The primary objectives of the six-monthly reviews are for the local partnership to:
 - a) assess latest progress towards the individual outcomes in its LAA;
 - b) assess whether it is on track to deliver the outcomes in the LAA and identify the primary risks to delivery;
 - c) agree any action needed to address the primary risks to delivery, including what support, engagement or intervention by local partners, the Government Offices, central Government or any other bodies is necessary to address these risks;
 - d) address gaps in outcomes, indicators, baselines, targets, milestones and data;
 - e) highlight good practice and any available evidence of what difference the introduction of the LAA has made;
 - f) benefit from constructive external challenge from the GO; and
 - g) report to central government the information that it requires and any issues that the local partnership wants to raise with central government so as to inform central government's policy and activity.
3. The review process takes the form of a self-assessment by the local partnership, which is shared with the GO and discussed with the GO at a meeting or series of meetings between the local partnership's representatives and the GO, at which any necessary actions are agreed. The GO will draw out from this the information that central government requires and the information that local partnerships wish to raise with central government and report this to central government. Central government will respond to this as necessary and appropriate. GOs will give local partnerships feedback.
4. This note also offers Government Offices (GOs) and local partnerships some limited additional specific guidance on the next six-monthly reviews.
5. **All GOs and local partnerships are asked to complete the next six-monthly reviews of all round one (pilot) and round two LAAs in every region in good time for all GOs to submit their highlight reports to DCLG by 19 January 2007.**

6. Finally, this note recognises that the performance management of LAAs, including the six-monthly review process will continue to be subject to continuous improvement, drawing on local partnerships', GOs' and central government's increasing experience. It therefore provides an outline of how the further improvement of the six-monthly reviews might be taken forward over the coming months, including further increasing the effectiveness and reducing the total burden of this process itself and in combination with other remaining performance management arrangements.

Context

7. This note has been produced by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) in consultation with the LAA Performance Management Project Board (representing Government Departments, GOs, the LGA, the Audit Commission and the IDeA) and the GO network and the LAA Programme Board. It updates and replaces the previous guidance notes issued to the GOs in July 2005 and May 2006.
8. It has been written in light of some of the key issues raised by the summer 2006 six-monthly reviews, including the following needs:
 - a) reduce the overall burden of the process
 - b) maximise the value that the reviews add for all interested parties
 - c) minimise the amount of missing data
 - d) increase consistency between reviews
 - e) refine how overall performance is assessed and communicated
 - f) further reduce and align parallel performance management arrangements so as to reduce the overall burden
 - g) build on emerging good practice on local partnerships' performance management arrangements, governance and on partnership working
9. It has not been possible to address all of these issues in time to inform this note and some will require significant further work before they are addressed fully. This note therefore takes account of these issues and:
 - a) updates previous guidance as far as has been possible to date, and
 - b) suggests what further work might be undertaken to address them over the coming months.

The purpose of the six-monthly reviews

10. The performance management of LAAs is a constant process. Within that process, the six-monthly review is an opportunity for the local partnership as a whole to take stock and self-assess of progress against all outcomes in its LAA and share and discuss this with the GO. It should not be seen purely as an exercise in reporting performance but rather as a key tool for the local partnership to manage and raise performance in their local area to deliver better outcomes for local people.

11. The primary objectives of the six-monthly reviews are for the local partnership to:
- a) assess latest progress towards the individual outcomes in its LAA;
 - b) assess whether it is on track to deliver the outcomes in the LAA and identify the primary risks to delivery;
 - c) agree any action needed to address the primary risks to delivery, including what support, engagement or intervention by local partners, the Government Offices, central Government or any other bodies is necessary to address these risks;
 - d) address gaps in outcomes, indicators, baselines, targets, milestones and data;
 - e) highlight good practice and any available evidence of what difference the introduction of the LAA has made;
 - f) benefit from constructive external challenge from the GO; and
 - g) report to central government the information that it requires and any issues that the local partnership wants to raise with central government so as to inform central government's policy and activity.
12. The six-monthly reviews' objectives specifically exclude:
- a) renegotiation of targets, which is expected to form part of the refresh process (which will, however, take place alongside the autumn six-monthly reviews and be informed by them as an evidence based process consistent with local and national priorities and context), or
 - b) detailed discussion or judgements about the local area's options and plans for delivering stretch targets (see Annex A for more information).

The review process

- 13. The review process will take the form of a self-assessment by the local partnership, which is shared and discussed with the GO at a meeting or series of meetings between the local partnership's representatives and the GO, at which any necessary actions are agreed. The GO will draw out from this the information that central government requires and the information that local partnerships wish to raise with central government and report this to central government. Central government will respond to this as necessary and appropriate. GOs will give local partnerships feedback.**

Setting a Timetable

- 14. The local partnership and GO will want to agree what they require of each other from the review and a timetable for the review process, including the following milestones:**
- a) the local partnership completes and shares its self-assessment with the GO**
 - b) any preliminary meetings**
 - c) the review meeting or meetings**
 - d) agreeing the GO's highlight report to central government**
 - e) submitting the GO's highlight report to central government**

15. GOs and local partnerships will obviously both be aware of the competing priorities and burdens each other and the individual members of the partnerships face. All will want to be as accommodating as possible of each others' needs and constraints to reach an agreed timetable for the review. This will include taking advantage of as many opportunities available to align or even merge the review process with other events and activities.
16. For example, it may be possible to align or even merge the review process with the CDRP review meetings or the Children and Young People (CYP) Priority Meetings. In most cases there will be a degree of overlap between outcomes and targets covered by the LAA, CDRP and CYP processes. There need not therefore be any duplication between them and that they would be mutually reinforcing. There will however be circumstances in which:
- performance issues are not covered by both processes
 - there is performance that gives rise to such concern that it may merit discussion in both fora
 - areas wish to showcase strong or innovative performance.

Equally the scope of the LAA review is a matter for discussion and agreement with local partners.

17. Central government acknowledges that there is more it could do to further align the LAA performance management arrangements with others and will continue to try to identify and implement opportunities for alignment.

Local partnership's self-assessment

- 18. Local partnerships are primarily responsible for performance managing their own LAAs. It is therefore the local partnership's responsibility to produce a self-assessment of their own performance across their LAA as a whole and that they ensure that the GO receives the relevant parts of this and any other information necessary to meet the objectives of the six-monthly reviews described at paragraph eleven.**
19. At the outset of the process the local partnership and GO will want to agree what of the local partnership's self-assessment it will share with the GO but **this must include:**
- a) All outcomes, indicators, baselines, targets and milestones in the LAA or where any of these have yet to be established a clear but brief explanation of why this is the case and how and by when they will be. For the avoidance of doubt this does not mean any detailed project planning that explains how each target will be met.**
 - b) The most recent performance data for each target in the LAA, showing progress against the expected milestones or where any**

data is not yet available, a clear but brief explanation of why this is the case and how and by when it will be.

- c) An assessment of the risks to the achievement of each outcome in the LAA and where there are risks that an outcome will not be met, a clear but brief explanation of what is being or will be done to address these risks and what residual risks then remain.**
- d) A description of what, if any, key differences the implementation of the LAA has made, including in terms of, for instance: better delivery, strengthened partnership working, innovation, improved local performance management, enhanced efficiency, improved central and local government relations or any specific transferable good practice.**

20. In assessing risks to achievement local partnerships and GOs are encouraged to think about the risk to the final outcome itself. While any milestones can be a guide to whether progress has been made at the rate which was predicted when the outcome and its target(s) were first set, they should not be seen as targets themselves. For instance it may be the case that progress is currently behind milestones but it is known that a key action has or will be taken, which impact has yet to be seen but which there is a high confidence that it will allow the target to be met. Equally, progress may be ahead of milestones but there is a high risk that something that has happened or will do that will make it very difficult to achieve the outcome. Assessments should therefore be made not simply on the basis of performance to date but also on what is expected to happen over the rest of the life of the LAA and therefore on the risk to the final outcome itself.

21. As part of the review process, **GOs will use the GO Assessment Tool (<http://www.idea-knowledge.gov.uk/idk/aio/4542547>) to help them determine whether the local partnership has appropriate performance management arrangements are in place – or whether there are processes in place to develop them – at a local level.** Local partnerships are therefore encouraged to use this as they best see fit to inform their own self-assessment.

22. The format of the self-assessment is for the local partnership and GO to agree as they see fit. The important thing is that it can easily be understood by all members of the local partnership and the GO. Previous reviews have demonstrated that there are a variety of effective formats that might be used. This guidance does not intend to dictate what format should be used. In that context, Annex B offers just one example of a format that might be used if a local partnership so wished, which draws on a combination of some of the effective formats used by various local partnerships in previous reviews.

Minimising the Burden

23. Paragraph nineteen states the minimum requirements for what of local partnerships' self-assessments they must share with the GO. Local

partnerships may wish to provide further information. But neither the GO or central government will require any more information unless it is absolutely necessary to meet the objectives of the six-monthly reviews described at paragraph eleven.

24. Clearly the six-monthly reviews sit in the context of a wide range of other information flows. Taking into account the resources available, **Local partnerships, their individual members and GOs will want to agree how, between them, they can minimise the burden of the self-assessment and any other information needed for the review**, including by avoiding having to:
- a) collect any additional information unnecessarily,
 - b) re-report any additional information unnecessarily: for instance the local partnership and/or GO may be able to draw on a wider set of existing information in forming wider judgements, such as those listed at Annex C;
 - c) re-report wider information that other bodies hold. For instance by developing close working relationships with other bodies such as the Audit Commission, CSCI or Strategic Health Authorities.

Missing information

25. Ideally there must be no gaps in outcomes, indicators, targets and milestones, especially mandatory ones, whether at original sign-off or when they are introduced at refresh. However, sometimes it has not been possible to compile a full data set and where new indicators are being used it may be necessary to establish baselines, targets and milestones after sign-off or refresh. Where this is the case, the local partnership will have agreed at sign-off or refresh how and by when indicators, baselines etc will be established. Gaps should then be addressed as soon after sign off or refresh as possible. Unfortunately this has not always happened and to date a number of reviews have identified numerous remaining gaps in outcomes, indicators, baselines, targets, milestones and data. These should be a significant concern and their completion should be a priority, otherwise there can be no means of assessing performance or risk and consequently raising performance in the local area.

26. **The local partnership's self-assessment that it shares with the GO should include a clear but brief explanation of why there are any gaps in outcomes, indicators, baselines, targets, milestones and data and how and by when they will be addressed.** The reasons for gaps are numerous as are the responses to them but they include those listed at Annex D.

The review meeting(s)

27. **Once the local partnership has shared its self-assessment with the GO, this will be followed by an intelligent and mature dialogue through a meeting or series of meetings between the local partnership's representatives and the GO. The meeting(s) should**

discuss the local partnership's self-assessment so as to meet the primary objectives given at paragraph eleven.

28. The GO and the local partnership will want to agree who from each should attend the meeting(s) on the basis of who will best be able to represent and discuss the issues to be focussed on in the meeting(s) and to agree the actions coming out of it. That agreement is for the GO and local partnership to make but might include the Leader and Chief Executive of the accountable local authority, the LSP chair, the GO Regional Director of Practice or equivalent, GO area or block leads and/or any others necessary to fulfil the objectives of the meeting(s).
29. How many meetings there are and what format they take is also a matter for the GO and local partnership to agree but experience of the six-monthly reviews to date suggests that it can be useful to hold pre-meetings before the main review meeting itself, perhaps on a block or other thematic basis to cover and address significant issues specifically relating to those blocks or themes. This has allowed the main meeting to focus on the key risks and strategic issues identified in the pre-meetings. This has helped those GOs and local partnerships to streamline the main review meeting, maximise the value that it adds by concentrating it on the key risks and issues and on agreeing what action needs to be taken to address these and making it clearer who needs to attend the main review meeting.
30. In identifying what are the key risks and issues, local partnerships and GOs are encouraged to focus primarily on those outcomes which are of the very highest importance to the local partnership and/or central government (including but certainly not limited to any mandatory outcomes) and that are at the greatest risk of not being met plus any other key issues that the local partnership wishes to use the opportunity to raise with the GO or ask the GO to raise with central government departments.
31. **The local partnership's role is to communicate, explain and support its self-assessment and the action it is taking or plans to take to address the key risks and issues plus highlight any other key achievements or concerns that it wishes to.**
32. **The GO's role is to question and support the local partnership in identifying what are the key risks and issues and what action should be taken that will best address them.**
33. **The GO should also question and support the local partnership in agreeing what action should be taken to address any gaps in outcomes, indicators, baselines, targets, milestones and data. The outcome should be an agreement between the local partnership and the GO that leaves no doubt about how and by when every gap will be addressed.** The potentially technical nature of these discussions may make them more suitable for pre-meetings before the main review meeting itself, leaving the main review meeting to sign off what has been agreed

and/or consider any gaps that the pre-meetings have been unable to agree how to address.

34. **Levels of discussion should be proportionate, depending on performance and risk to delivery and should be tailored towards the individual circumstances of the area.** Where there are very few or perhaps even no significant risks to achievement of outcomes in an LAA the local partnership and GO could expect to hold a much lighter touch review than where there are a large number of significant risks. Where it is clear that there are no risks to the achievement of a target, it may not need to be discussed at all, unless the local partnership wishes to share or the GO wishes to learn about, what it believes to be good and/or innovative practice, which will normally be the case.
35. **Where it is agreed that there is a risk to the achievement of an outcome, the GO will explore, challenge, question, joint problem-solve and support the local partnership and/or agree appropriate support, engagement or interventions,** with reference to the ladder of intervention described in the LAA guidance (see the relevant extract at [Annex G](#)). **The local partnership and GO should agree any necessary co-ordinated and complementary package of support, engagement and/or intervention that they can be confident will address the risks identified to the extent necessary to ensure as far as is possible that the outcomes currently at risk will actually be achieved.**
36. Where a significant issue is raised in the review of particular relevance to a specific government department or other body, such as the SHA or IDeA, then the local partnership and/or GO may decide that it is appropriate to involve them before the review is completed, for instance to help decide what, if any, support, engagement or intervention might be most appropriate to address any specific and significant risk.

Links to the refresh

37. The six-monthly review meeting(s) will also provide an important opportunity to consider what, if any, changes the local partnership might want to make to its LAA through the refresh. In particular the refresh can provide an opportunity to amend any outcomes, indicators, targets or trajectories in light of the outcome of the review. The review might also identify that the key priority outcomes for a local area have changed in a way that could be reflected in the refresh. However, the emphasis of the review should be on supporting the partnership to achieve the outcomes that appear challenging, not on re-negotiating targets to make them easier to achieve.
38. Given the coincidence of timing of the submission of refreshes and GOs' highlight reports on the autumn reviews, **local partnerships and GOs will need to be careful to ensure that the timetable that they agree for both processes provide for the right order of events to allow the**

review to inform the refresh. It may even be possible to run the review and refresh together in a single meeting.

GOs' report to central government

39. **The GO must use the template at Annex E to highlight to central government the key issues arising from the six-monthly reviews,** including the specific information that central government requires. The template itself gives further guidance on what is needed.
40. **The GO should draft this highlight report, share it with the local partnership and, wherever possible, they should agree it.** In the hopefully very rare situation that the local partnership and the GO cannot agree the highlight report, then the GO may wish to record both views and the differences of opinion between them and the local partnership that explain this. Ultimately, the report should be cleared by and in the name of the Regional Director who will therefore have the final say.
41. This highlight report should be sent to both Richard Greenhous and Nick Gordon at:

LAA Performance
Management Team
DCLG
Zone J10 / 5th Floor
Eland House
Bressenden Place
London SW1E 5DU

Richard Greenhous
020 7944 2538
Richard.Greenhous@communities.gsi.gov.uk

Nick Gordon
Telephone: 020 7944 4025
Nick.Gordon@communities.gsi.gov.uk

42. GOs are no longer required to send the local partnership's self-assessment or any other information used in the reviews to DCLG. But GOs must instead be prepared to make any of that evidence available to any government department on request.

Central Government's response

43. **DCLG will circulate all of the highlight reports to the LAA Programme Board.**
44. **DCLG will draw the key points from the highlight reports in a summary report and present these to:**
- a) **DCLG Ministers in a submission**
 - b) **The LAA Programme Board**
45. **The LAA Programme Board will then agree, with any necessary reference to Ministers, the Central Government response to the reviews. This response will be sent to the GOs. The GOs will then liaise with local partnerships to provide each partnership with any relevant feedback contained in the Central Government response and follow this up as appropriate.**

Specific guidance on the first six-monthly reviews of round two LAAs

46. The following is guidance in addition to the above, which applies specifically to the first six-monthly reviews of the round two LAAs.
47. The first review will inevitably be different from subsequent reviews because a lot of the LAA systems and processes will only have been in place for six-months, will still be bedding in and are unlikely to have had any significant impact on performance at this stage. It may prove too early for all the necessary data to be available, especially where data may only be available annually, or even of all of the baselines, targets and milestones to have been set. Local partnerships may only be able to make a relatively basic or incomplete self-assessment at this stage.
48. That said, **local partnerships should still carry out a full self-assessment a and six-monthly review with the GO as described in this guidance in relation to as much of its LAA as it is possible to do so and reach the best possible assessment of residual risk to the achievement of outcomes given the information that is available.**
49. Where targets and indicators have only recently been agreed and data is not yet available, discussion should focus on general progress towards the outcome and what has already been put in place to ensure achievement of the outcome.
50. **Where there are still any gaps in outcomes, indicators, baselines, targets, milestones and data, the six-monthly review must ensure that clear plans are in place to fill these gaps**, in line with paragraphs 25, 26 and 33 in this guidance. Ideally all will have been filled by the end of the review.
51. **Local partnerships should self-assess and discuss with GOs the partnership's performance management arrangements**, using the GO Assessment Tool (<http://www.idea-knowledge.gov.uk/idk/aio/4542547>) as a guide, take stock on their development and integration with the LAA **and agree any further action that might be necessary to ensure that robust arrangements are being put in place that will allow for the successful delivery of the LAA.**
52. Similarly, **local partnerships should assess and discuss with GOs general progress on LAA working arrangements**, for instance, is the partnership working still secure and working effectively? Is the area developing a clear accountability framework?

Specific guidance on the third six-monthly reviews of the pilot LAAs

53. By the time of the third review, it should be possible to **carry out a full review in accordance with this guidance.**

54. **As a rule, the performance data used in the self-assessment should be that for the outcomes, indicators and targets signed off by the Secretary of State, either in the original LAA or through a subsequent completed refresh.** This is on the assumption that:

- a) it is the signed off targets against which data will be available and so which an assessment of progress and risk to achievement will be possible, and
- b) that there will not yet be any data for any proposed new targets or indicators that have yet to be signed by the Secretary of State, either in the original LAA or through a subsequent completed refresh.

If, however, a signed off outcome has proved completely impossible to measure and appropriate data is available against a proposed new indicator then the local partnership and GO may wish to agree to take into account data against the new proposed indicator when assessing progress towards achieving an outcome.

Timetable for the next six-monthly reviews

55. The timetable to be followed is as follows. Please note that all dates given are the latest on which the specified action can take place. GOs and local partnerships may need to agree earlier dates for some milestones in order to meet later ones.

Action	Latest date for the action to take place
GOs to send their highlight reports to DCLG, which DCLG will then circulate to the LAA Performance Management Project Board and the LAA Programme Board	19 January 2007
Discussion of the reviews by the LAA Performance Management Project Board	6 February 2007
Discussion of the reviews by the LAA Programme Board	28 March 2007
Central Government response to the reviews, cleared by the LAA Programme Board	30 March 2007
The next six-monthly reviews to be completed and GOs' highlight reports sent to DCLG	July 2007

56. It is recognised that local partnerships and GOs will already be well advanced in their preparations for the next six-monthly review and will almost certainly already have agreed a timetable already. But it is not envisaged that local partnerships of GOs should have any difficulty meeting the above timetable, which is later than had been proposed in earlier guidance.

Further development of the six-monthly reviews

57. The performance management of LAAs, including the six-monthly review process will continue to be subject to continuous improvement, drawing on local partnerships', GOs' and central government's increasing experience. The LAA Performance Management Project Board will continue to lead work with all interested stakeholders to identify and disseminate good practice and lessons learned and, where appropriate, to provide any necessary updated guidance.
58. Issues that the Project Board intends to try to address over coming months include:
- a) further embedding a proportionate risk based approach to LAA performance management and whether this might allow more differentiation between the summer and autumn reviews
 - b) reducing the administrative and reporting burden
 - c) further mapping and aligning LAA performance management, including reviews, with other performance management, audit and inspection arrangements, events and data availability
 - d) minimising gaps in outcomes, targets, baselines, trajectories and data and how to respond to these
 - e) increasing the consistency of reviews across different LAAs and with other performance management, audit and inspection arrangements
 - f) minimising any barriers to efficiently and effectively obtaining and sharing data on LAA targets
 - g) taking account of the forthcoming Local Government White Paper and the work of the Lifting Burdens Task Force
59. The LAA Performance Management Project Board and Communications and Research Project Board will also work closely together to better capture and disseminate the benefits and manage the expectations of LAA performance management and articulate that through the single benefits realisation strategy being developed for the LAA programme by the LAA Communications and Research Project Board.
60. In taking this work forward the Project Boards will seek any necessary further clearance from the LAA Programme Board and consult widely on proposals as appropriate.

**LOCAL AGREEMENTS AND PARTNERSHIPS DIVISION
DEPARTMENT FOR COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT
OCTOBER 2006**

STRETCH TARGETS

It is probably inevitable that, as GOs monitor areas' progress on delivering LAA targets generally, progress on achieving stretched targets (i.e. the difference between unstretched and stretched positions) is something that local partnerships will want to raise.

Once stretched targets, attracting performance reward grant, are signed off, they cannot be re-negotiated. The reason for this is that the Government and areas share any risk that the achievement of stretch becomes easier or harder than anticipated. It follows that GOs are unable to be drawn into detailed discussions or judgements about the areas' options and plans for delivering stretch. But this need not stop GOs from offering guidance, possible solutions etc as long as the local partnership is clear that they remain wholly responsible for achievement of any stretch target and the GO cannot be held to account if any of its' suggestions are taken up and prove to be unsuccessful.

There may be a range of situations in which GOs need advice. If so, they should contact Richard Anderson, head of the LAA reward team on 0207 944 6728.

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE FORMAT OF SELF-ASSESSMENTS

Experience of the six-monthly reviews to date suggests that amongst the clearest ways that some local partnerships have presented their self-assessments including the information described at paragraph 19 was as a single document, comprising:

- a) A table or tables (based around the blocks where these exist) showing for each outcome the:
 - i. indicators,
 - ii. baselines,
 - iii. targets,
 - iv. milestones,
 - v. most recent performance data,
 - vi. a self-assessment of the level of risk to the achievement of the targets, perhaps simply illustrated by means of a visual device such as a Red/Amber/Green, or ☺/☹/⊗ rating.
 - vii. direction of travel, perhaps simply illustrated by means of a visual device such as a ↑/→/↓ rating.
- } or where these are missing a clear but brief explanation of why and what will be done by when to remedy this
- b) A narrative overview, including:
 - i. any further necessary explanation of the self-assessment
 - ii. a clear explanation of what is being done to address any “red risks” and an assessment of the residual risk to delivery after this action is taken. This assessment may be presented in whatever format the partnerships chooses but it is helpful for it to be as clear as possible about where the key risks lie to achievement outcomes, especially outcomes of key importance to the local partnership and those which are mandatory, and what is being done to mitigate these risks and improve performance. Some local partnerships have also illustrated this by means of a simple visual device such as a further Red/Amber/Green, or ☺/☹/⊗ rating.
 - iii. a description of what, if any, key differences the implementation of the LAA has made, including in terms of, for instance: better delivery, strengthened partnership working, innovation, improved local performance management, enhanced efficiency, improved central and local government relations or any specific transferable good practice
 - iv. any other issues that the local partnership wishes to raise with the GO or for the GO to raise with central government, such as continuing barriers to achievement of targets that GOs or central government might be able to address

EXISTING WIDER INFORMATION SOURCES

- i. the relevant audited or un-audited Best Value Performance Indicators available
- ii. the Policing Performance Assessment Framework where LAA and police performance priorities and targets are aligned
- iii. Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships' Strategic Assessments;
- iv. Children and Young People Self Assessment sent to Ofsted / CSCI
- v. Childrens Annual Performance Assessment;
- vi. Social Care Delivery and Improvement Strategy sent to CSCI
- vii. NEXUS data from Connexions partnerships
- viii. IQuanta
- ix. Youth Justice Plans (sent to the Youth Justice Board)
- x. The Audit Commission's Area Profiles web site
- xi. Self assessments provided to the Audit Commission and reports published by the Audit Commission following annual or regular assessments. For example, relating to CPA Corporate Assessments, annual direction of travel assessments, and service inspections. Service inspections may relate to community safety, access to services, regeneration, environment services, Supporting People services, ALMOs, housing services, or culture services;
- xii. Annual assessments and self assessments provided to other inspectorates, and the related assessment reports which follow: such as the annual self assessment provided to DWP relating to benefits information, self assessments provided to HMIProbation relating to Youth Offending Teams.
- xiii. NRU's overall LSP traffic light assessment
- xiv. Local Development Plan
- xv. Places Database
- xvi. The statement of grant

POTENTIAL REASONS FOR GAPS IN DATA AND POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS

Potential reasons for gaps in data and potential solutions include:

- a) Data is annual (e.g. exam results) and out of sync with the LAA review timetable so the most recent data is simply not yet available. If there is flexibility, local partnerships and GOs may want to agree how the data availability and LAA review timescales could be aligned within any unavoidable constraints.
- b) A new activity, such as a survey, must take place to produce the data, in which case the local partnership and GO should agree when this will take place and, wherever possible, this should be in time to inform the next review.
- c) The local partnership has yet to identify how it can measure progress against an indicator, in which case the local partnership and GO should agree by when they will do so and what support they might need. Again, wherever possible, this should be in time to inform the next review.
- d) It has proven impossible to identify how or highly impractical to measure progress against an indicator, in which case the local partnership should agree whether to propose to change or drop that indicator at the next refresh
- e) It has proven impossible to identify a suitable indicator to demonstrate progress against an outcome, in which case the local partnership and GO should agree either whether there might be any other appropriate way of demonstrating progress towards that outcome or whether to propose to change or drop that outcome at the next refresh. In reaching any agreement, sufficient recognition should be given to outcomes that may remain of high importance to the local partnership and/or central government despite it having proven impossible to identify a suitable indicator.
- f) The necessary data is available but the local partnership and GO have yet to agree the baseline, target or milestones, in which case the local partnership and GO should agree when these will be agreed at the earliest possible opportunity.

**TEMPLATE FOR GOVERNMENT OFFICE'S HIGHLIGHT REPORTS TO
CENTRAL GOVERNMENT ON THE SIX-MONTHLY OR ANNUAL REVIEW
OF EACH LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT**

[INSERT NAME OF GOVERNMENT OFFICE] HIGHLIGHT REPORT ON

[INSERT NAME OF LAA] LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT

[INSERT PERIOD COVERED BY THE REVIEW]

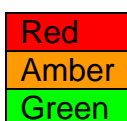
1) Overall progress



Delete two of the above cells as applicable to leave the rating reached according to the criteria at Annex F of this guidance

Describe the key reasons why the above rating has been given, including which of the statements given in the RAG ratings definitions in Annex F of this guidance are true.

2) Direction of Travel



Delete two of the above cells as applicable to leave the rating reached according to the following criteria:

- Red - has failed to address a number of key areas of weakness identified at the previous review (or sign off if this is the first review).
- Amber - is addressing key weaknesses identified at the previous review (or sign off if this is the first review). but some of them remain
- Green - all key areas of weakness identified at the previous review (or sign off if this is the first review) have been addressed.

Describe the key reasons why the above rating has been given

3) Risks to the achievement of mandatory outcomes

List all mandatory outcomes in the LAA for which there is a residual risk that they will not be achieved at the end of the three year period of the LAA. For each, describe what the risks are and what is being or will be done to address these risks including what, if any, support or action by

central government might be needed to mitigate any of these risks. Give an assessment of how likely it is that this will address those risks and which, if any, remain unaddressed.

4) Risks to the achievement of other outcomes of key importance to the local partnership

List any other outcomes of key importance to the local partnership for which there is a residual risk that they will not be achieved at the end of the three year period of the LAA. For each, describe what the risks are and what is being or will be done to address these risks including what, if any, support or action by central government might be needed to mitigate any of these risks. Give an assessment of how likely it is that this will address those risks and which, of any, remain unaddressed.

5) The impact of the LAA and strong performance

Describe what key differences the implementation of the LAA has made, including in terms of better delivery, strengthened partnership working including VCS engagement, innovation, improved local performance management, enhanced efficiency, improved central and local government relations or the impact that any specific initiative within the LAA is having.

Identify any outcomes, mandatory or not, against which there is particularly strong performance or activity is taking place that is expected to lead to such and describe this, including any examples of innovative ideas which are delivering, which could be of wider application, i.e. what, if any, transferable good practice this might include.

6) Missing information

Identify any gaps in any indicators, baselines, targets and trajectories relating to mandatory outcomes where it remains unclear how and by when one or more of these gaps will be filled or removed and what action is being taken to address this, including what, if any, support or action by central government might be needed to address these.

7) Other key issues for Government

Describe any other key issues arising from the review that the local partnership and/or GO wishes to draw to central government's attention, including any feedback on how well LAAs are working for the local partnership and GO and what might be done to improve them and remove any persistent barriers to achievement.

OVERALL PROGRESS RAG RATINGS - DEFINITIONS

Red	<p><u>Any</u> of the following statements are true:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The most likely outcome at the end of the three year period of the LAA is that the majority of the mandatory outcomes and other outcomes of key importance to the local partnership will <u>not</u> be achieved. • There are significant gaps in the indicators, targets, trajectories or data relating to the majority of mandatory outcomes and other outcomes of key importance to the local partnership and it remains unclear how or by when the majority of these significant gaps will be filled or removed. • There are significant risks to the achievement of the mandatory outcomes and other outcomes of key importance to the local partnership of key importance to the local partnership and it remains unclear how the majority of these are being or will be addressed.
Amber	<p><u>None</u> of the "Red" Statements are true but <u>any</u> of the following statements are true:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The most likely outcome at the end of the three year period of the LAA is that a minority of the mandatory outcomes and other outcomes of key importance to the local partnership will not be achieved. • There are significant gaps in the outcomes, indicators, targets, trajectories or data relating to a minority of mandatory outcomes and other outcomes of key importance to the local partnership and it remains unclear how and by when one or more of these gaps will be filled or removed. • There are significant risks to the achievement of a minority of the mandatory outcomes and other outcomes of key importance to the local partnership and it remains unclear how one or more of these are being or will be addressed.
Green	<p><u>All</u> of the following statements are true:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The most likely outcome at the end of the three year period of the LAA is that all of the mandatory outcomes and other outcomes of key importance to the local partnership will have been met. • If there are any significant gaps in any of the indicators, targets, trajectories or data relating to any mandatory outcomes and other outcomes of key importance to the local partnership, it is clear how and by when these will be filled or removed. • If any significant risks remain to the achievement of any of the mandatory outcomes and other outcomes of key importance to the local partnership, there are clear

measures in place which are most likely to address these risks fully if they arise.

1. It should also be clear that because different LAAs include different targets the RAG rating given to each LAA will mean something slightly different and will not therefore be directly comparable. It would not be appropriate to attempt to rank different LAAs on the basis of these RAG ratings and central government will not do so.
2. It is also acknowledged that the definitions given in this guidance have evolved quite significantly from those included in previous guidance. The changes have been made to try to make much clearer which rating should be given in what circumstances. It is hoped that this will increase the consistency with which it is applied. But these changes do mean that RAG ratings should not and will not be seen as comparable with those for the second six-monthly reviews of the pilot LAAs.

ADDRESSING UNDERPERFORMANCE

Extract from "Local Area Agreements - Guidance for Round 3 and Refresh of Rounds 1 and 2"

34. Areas need to identify their own weaknesses and support needs with their Government Office and agree with the Government Office how to address them. However, if sustained underperformance of a partnership is identified, the Government Office will act to ensure action is taken by local partners. This action will depend on the nature of the problems, but is likely to include the following progressive steps:
- engagement of external support from outside the partnership – e.g. to build capacity, such as access to LSP delivery support arrangements;
 - more regular monitoring of performance from the Government Office; and
 - agreement of diagnoses and improvement plans with the Government Office.
35. Where performance has returned to milestones, or shows every indication of doing so, partners and the Government Office (which will be in touch with the relevant Central Government department(s)) should agree the terms and process of disengagement to ensure continued improvement. The partnership will want to continue monitoring performance closely as support is disengaged. Local partners will need to respond rapidly, should performance once again dip.
36. In cases of chronic and/or sustained underperformance, i.e. over several consecutive quarters, the Government Office will work closely with the relevant central government stakeholders. 'Chronic or sustained underperformance' is defined here as when actual performance against LAA planned milestones presents significant risks to the timetable for achievement of agreed LAA targets. In consultation with the local partnership, the Government Office may require any or all of the following steps to be taken:
- a revised diagnosis and/or improvement plan led by central government or external experts;
 - the re-imposition of ring-fencing of funding streams and potentially separate reporting arrangements;
 - the dissolution of the LAA as a whole;
 - cessation of funding stream payments.