

**Devon Strategic Partnership Delivery Board  
1 May 2008**

**Agenda item 7: LOCALITY-BASED SELF-ASSESSMENT PROJECT: “AFFORDABLE HOUSING”  
PILOT**

**Recommendation:**

- a. that the Delivery Board note this project update, recognising the link with the wider Sustainable Community Strategy and LAA development work, and**
- b. receive a further progress report at the meeting scheduled for 5 June 2008**

**1. Background**

The Delivery Board noted an introductory report regarding this project at the meeting held on 7 September 2007.

The White Paper “*Strong and Prosperous Communities*” aims to give councils and their partners greater flexibility to respond to the needs of local communities; to do this requires not only partners to sign up to joint plans but that they develop new ways of working that are inclusive and mutually supportive.

This project supports the *Sustainable Community Strategy and Devon LAA 2008-11*. The LAA provides a new way of delivering services across Devon, with a focus on improved outcomes for local people. This project will provide some of the tools and governance principles to enable Devon to fully manage its own performance improvement efforts, i.e. “to self-regulate”. It is an essential part of preparations for the new Comprehensive Area Assessments (CAA); partners must be able to show how they intend to collaborate to address ‘high-risk’ themes ahead of the transition from CPA to CAA in April 2009.

In order to make this happen across Devon, the project was commissioned in July 2007 through the Devon Improvement Programme (DIP) to develop a self-assessment framework. The first step towards this was to work on a pilot to test a self-assessment methodology. After discussions with Chief Executives across the county, it was proposed that “Affordable Housing” be taken as a pilot theme across South Hams, Teignbridge and West Devon councils. We needed a cross-cutting theme where there was already interest in learning and further development.

**2. Benefits**

Ultimately, the pilot will contribute towards “*More ‘affordable homes’ in the South Devon cluster*” by:

- addressing key local ‘affordable housing’ issues that are more likely to ‘make a difference’ in the longer term;
- improved alignment of partnership working with enhanced mutual understanding;
- more efficient use of our resources and capacity to deliver our priorities;
- producing a comprehensive improvement plan to sweep up previous related and ‘unfinished’ improvement work across the cluster;
- evaluating the impact of our actions and identifying risks through the self-assessment process and citizen input.

The pilot self assessment framework is aligned to the principles of the new Local Area Risk Assessment approach under CAA.

### 3. “Affordable housing” pilot: current position and way forward

The main aim of the project is to improve the delivery of Affordable Housing in the cluster (of three authorities) via a high-level action plan. In doing so, it will test a methodology that with fine-tuning, can be rolled out more widely and the learnings will feed into the preparations for CAA in 2009.

At their meeting on 7 March, the Devon Chief Executives agreed the continuance of the pilot on a 'strategic', high-level basis across the South Devon cluster of districts on a 'strategic' (rather than 'operational') level. This means that new ideas around the big-picture issues like joint strategies and service delivery, standardisation of s.106 agreements and so on can be considered within the pilot. This will pick up and prioritise the key issues raised in the citizens' focus group and identified at Workshop 1 where there was a broad consensus about the set of issues to be addressed but no agreement as to the way forward.

The pilot milestones and timetable appears below:

<b>PILOT MILESTONES and TIMETABLE 2007-08</b>	<b>Completed</b>
Self Assessment overall framework agreed following consultation	Oct 07
Identify partner organisations and obtain commitment to support and ongoing participation in project	Nov 07
Citizens' focus group held in Totnes and meeting notes agreed and circulated	8 Jan 08
Workshop 1: <i>produced a consensus on a range of identified 'high-level' issues but no agreement on way forward</i>	18 Jan 08
	<b>By when</b>
Workshop 2 <i>To prioritise key issues, identify risks and agree draft self assessment 'high level' improvement action plan</i>	29 April 08
Workshop 3 <i>external 'peer challenge and review' to validate findings of self assessment and 'high level' improvement action plan</i>	23 May 08
Outcome of Pilot and recommendations to participating Chief Executives/elected members and DSP Delivery Board for approval	June 08
Overall 'Devon Strategic Partnership' approach to locality-based performance/self-assessment framework agreed	June 08
Implementation of agreed improvement plan through 'task and finish' teams across participating authorities	July 08 onwards
Evaluation of pilot: learnings and areas of good practice shared across wider Devon partnerships through a series of workshops	July 08 onwards
Learnings incorporated into LAA and CAA preparations	July 08