Leicester Economic Regeneration Partnership

Single Regeneration Budget Scheme

Delivery Plan 2004/05
Introductory Statement

1. Agreement of Partnership
   This statement and Delivery Plan has been agreed and signed by the Chair of the Leicester Economic Regeneration Partnership (formerly known as the Leicester Regeneration Agency), the Chairs of the Leicester SRB Partnership Boards, and the Acting Corporate Director of Environment, Regeneration and Development, Leicester City Council, on behalf of the Accountable Body.

   The Leicester Economic Regeneration Partnership (LERP) is the thematic sub-group of the Leicester Partnership that focuses on economic development issues and the regeneration of disadvantaged communities. LERP is responsible for the strategic overview and direction of SRB schemes in the City, and Leicester City Council is the Accountable Body for these schemes on behalf of LERP.

2. Purpose of the Scheme
   Leicester’s SRB Programme was established at a time when Leicester’s economy was in recession, manufacturers were facing increased overseas competition, and there was little developer interest or inward investment in new industries. Large-scale redundancies and a growing skills gap resulted in a citywide unemployment rate of nearly 14%. Thirteen of the city’s Wards were classified as being among the most deprived 10% in the country.

   Although Leicester’s manufacturing base has continued to decline, there has been a marked upturn in business and developer confidence in Leicester in recent years, encouraged by the City Centre Master Plan, produced by the Leicester Regeneration Company. The official unemployment rate has halved since 1996, although at 5.9%, it is still twice the national average.

   Improvements in economic performance and living standards for some have been offset, however, by widening disparities in income, health and life chances. Economic and social change has left some areas and communities in Leicester characterised by poverty, unemployment, and isolation. Expectations are low, and many families are trapped by low educational aspirations and attainment, lack of confidence and self-esteem, and a poor perception of the communities that they live in. Many people experience multiple problems with no effective means of addressing them.

   The measures proposed in this Delivery Plan aim to reduce isolation and exclusion, and to connect isolated communities to the opportunities and facilities now being created in Leicester.
3. The Leicester SRB Programme
The Leicester SRB programme is an amalgamation of seven local area schemes, each based in a neighbourhood facing severe deprivation as identified in the Index of Multiple Deprivation.

The Programme has five objectives, which support Leicester’s Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy. These objectives are:

SO1: To enhance the employment prospects, education and skills of local people
The LERP, in cooperation with local SRB Partnerships, aims to improve and enhance the employment prospects and skills of local people. The SRB scheme will provide support to unemployed people, disadvantaged and labour market returnees, and low earning groups wishing to access new and better paid employment and pre vocational and vocational training. A sustainable infrastructure will be developed to enable local people to expand their training and skills away from declining and low-paid industries. There will be an emphasis on skills in construction, health, sports, and ICT.

Over the final three years of the SRB programme, the infrastructure will be developed across the SRB area in agreement with mainstream agencies, to provide comprehensive and locally-based access to advice and information on training and employment opportunities. Linkages to the employment created by the major re-development of the City Centre will also be developed though the auspices of the Leicester Shire Economic Partnership and the Leicester Regeneration Company.

The Key Outcomes and outputs for 2004/2005 are:
A further 163 residents accessing employment through advice and training
A further 975 individuals gaining qualifications
A further 1,914 training weeks to be provided
A further 34 childcare places to be created

SO2: To address social exclusion and increase opportunities for young people and disadvantaged groups to access health, sports and cultural facilities
The scheme is actively working to address exclusion and increase opportunities in Leicester for the disadvantaged. In order to achieve these a number of projects have been designed. These range from capacity building projects and summer camps for young people to community chest and volunteering projects. All of the initiatives are encouraged to work with the government and local floor targets. They have also been designed to increase participation and awareness of the SRB Programmes.

The Key Outcomes and outputs for 2004/2005 are:
A further 26 Voluntary organisations supported
A further 1,374 young people benefiting from personal and social development
A further 200 residents accessing sports facilities
A further 110 residents accessing cultural facilities

SO3: To promote sustainability and community development
Improving the quality of housing and the environment is vital to restoring confidence in neighbourhoods. A number of projects have been designed to promote sustainable regeneration, improving the environment and infrastructure. These range from cultural projects and community events to capital works for the physical environment and local authority housing stock.

The key Outcomes and outputs for 2004/2005 are:
- A further 328 homes benefiting from improvements
- A further 270 homes benefiting from energy efficiency dissemination
- A further 38 community groups supported
- A further 40 capacity building initiatives supported

SO4: To support and promote growth in local economies and businesses
The scheme provides a limited range of support for developing the local economy and businesses in partnership with the principal agencies, including the Chamber of Commerce, Leicester Asian Business Association and the Leicester Shire Economic Partnership. SRB funding will be supporting a number of activities including local economic development plans, an employers’ forum, a business crime scheme, and locally delivered advice and support to SME’s.

The Key Outcomes and outputs for 2004/2005 are:
- A further 15 businesses will have their security upgraded
- Long-term economic development strategies for Belgrave and Humberstone
- A further 120 businesses receiving advice
- A further 12 new business start-ups.

SO5: To tackle crime and improve community safety
Crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour are major concerns for local residents across the SRB area. The scheme is working with its partners in the Crime & Disorder Partnership to address these concerns and improve the safety of the local community. A number of crime reduction initiatives that focus upon domestic households and local business premises that have been burgled or are ‘at risk’ have been set up and will continue to be developed. Support will also continue to be provided to the victims of domestic violence and witnesses to crime.

The Key outcomes and outputs for 2002/2003 are:
- A further 900 homes will have security upgraded
- A further 3,990 people benefiting from community safety measures

4. Target Population
The Leicester SRB Scheme is citywide with a strong area-based focus. This allows potential economies of scale for projects addressing interests
in common in different areas, while encouraging local residents and groups to become involved in the ownership of the scheme.

The areas selected for the Leicester SRB scheme are located in wards that have consistently ranked highly in the Index of Local Deprivation and Index of Multiple Deprivation. The Scheme covers all or part of the following Wards: Abbey, Beaumont Leys, Belgrave, Braunstone Park & Rowley Fields, Charnwood, Coleman, Eyres Monsell, Freemen, Humberstone & Hamilton, Latimer, Rushey Mead, Spinney Hill, Stoneygate.

The SRB area covers a population of over 98,000 people, 35,000 of who are members of ethnic minority communities. All of the areas share:
- High mortality rates
- Poor housing
- High levels of unemployment and low pay
- Low levels of educational achievement
- High crime rates and fear of crime
- Lack of community and shopping facilities

While it is recognised that the SRB scheme will benefit all these areas, the scheme will be actively targeting those groups experiencing the highest level of disadvantage. These include young people and children, the long-term unemployed, refugees and asylum seekers, those with few or outdated skills, and people with disabilities.

All project proposes are required to identify the impact of their projects in relation to ethnic minorities and other disadvantaged communities throughout the project proposal, appraisal and approval processes.

5. Management arrangements

The Leicester Economic Regeneration Partnership (LERP) is the multi-agency body that oversees the regeneration strategy for the city, and the vehicle through which SRB Challenge Fund programmes in the city are coordinated and endorsed.

The Board of LERP has representatives from the public, private, voluntary and community sectors in the City and County. They include the Leicester Asian Business Association, the City, County and District Councils, the Learning & Skills Council, Leicestershire Constabulary, Voluntary Action Leicester, the Leicestershire Chamber of Commerce, Leicestershire Health Partnership Board, De Montfort University, the Council of Faiths, Jobs Centre Plus, and the Urban Forum.

The Chair of the LERP Board is Cllr. Gary Hunt, Cabinet Link for Regeneration at the City Council. The executive Director, who will sign all papers on behalf of the Partnership and the Accountable Body, is Tot Brill, Acting Corporate Director, Environment, Regeneration, and Development, Leicester City Council. The lead officer for Leicester’s SRB Scheme is Andrew Ross, Head of Regeneration at Leicester City Council.
The LERP will regularly review the progress, lessons learnt and good practice developed by the Scheme. Operational management and the day-to-day decisions relating to each area programme are taken by the appropriate Programme Manager and SRB Partnership Boards. The Chairs and Programme Managers of each local area SRB partnership meet quarterly as a sub-group of LERP to review progress and best practice and to make recommendations to the main Board.

Leicester City Council will act as the Accountable Body, taking responsibility for the receipt and use of SRB grant and the realisation of the Delivery Plan.

6. Financial Management
Leicester City Council, as Accountable Body, will undertake financial management for the SRB Scheme. They have developed systems for effective arrangements for safeguarding public money, including the establishment of a clear line of responsibility and accountability for receipt and payment of public funds.

Leicester City Council will provide all relevant financial services required for the proper administration of SRB grant expenditure. They will use the District Auditor to examine and report on the accounts annually. Quarterly reports will be provided to emda, the Leicester Economic Regeneration Partnership, and the local SRB Boards.

Individual projects will continue to be approved within financial limits set out in their offer letter. Financial records and audit of individual projects will be managed by the agency delivering the project. They will be wholly accountable for their expenditure according to the agreement between them and the Accountable Body. Each SRB funded project is required to supply a mid quarter projection and quarterly expenditure and performance returns and to co-operate with reviews and reappraisals on request.

7. Project Appraisal, Monitoring, Review and Evaluation
Individual projects will be appraised and the scheme will continue to be monitored and evaluated in accordance with SRB guidance. A standard appraisal and application pack is used across the programme. During 2004/5 this pack will be reviewed and updated to bring it line with the latest guidance issued by emda. Discussions are being held with partners and funding agencies with a view to creating a single appraisal system and citywide panel of specialists and residents.

Any proposals seeking in excess of £250,000 in total of SRB funding will be referred to the Leicester Shire Economic Partnership for comment before submission to emda approval.

The project offer letter will form the contract for the delivery, monitoring, review and evaluation of each project. The overall progress of the scheme
and of individual projects will be reviewed during the year on a quarterly basis to ensure that any necessary variation or adjustments in scheduling or design can be made in good time.

In addition to the above, every project is reviewed and evaluated at the end of each year and those with a performance variance of more than 10% are reappraised.

During 2003/4, a final scheme evaluation was conducted of the area programme covering Highfields, St. Mathews, and St. Margaret’s, and mid-term programme evaluations were undertaken in Belgrave, Humberstone, and Leicester North-West. The recommendations arising from these evaluations have been incorporated in programme revisions, action and contingency plans, which will be implemented in 2004/5. LERP undertakes to participate in any reviews that may be carried out by emda.

8. Local Area and Strategic Partnerships
LERP is a thematic citywide partnership, and part of the citywide strategic framework overseen by the Leicester Partnership, the City’s formally accredited LSP. This relationship enables SRB funds to be combined with NRF and ERDF programmes run by LERP, and contribute to Leicester’s Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy, Community Plan, and the Leicester Shire Economic Strategy. Links with the Leicester Regeneration Company’s Master Plan for the City Centre are also being developed. The SRB programme is also a major partner in the City’s Crime and Disorder Strategy and the Life Long Learning Plan.

9. Involvement of the local community
The Leicester Economic Regeneration Partnership encourages participation and involvement from all sections of the local community. It is committed to delivering SRB funded activity in partnership.

Local forums have been set up to guide the implementation of individual area programmes. Management structures for each of the programmes have been designed to be inclusive, in order to involve local residents, community organisations, voluntary organisations and members of the business community in programme development and management. They are actively encouraged to be involved in management and delivery of projects. Furthermore the Programme Boards have appointed development workers to assist with longer terms strategies for their areas.

Capacity building initiatives will continue to provide support to local community forums. Community trusts will assist community participation in key projects. Five trusts are already operating in the SRB area.

Residents and businesses in the local community are encouraged and provided with training to take part in project appraisal panels. These are carefully chosen to give a balance of community, business and professional expertise and expression. To avoid conflicts of interest, representatives will not be permitted to take part in decisions directly
relating to a proposal in which they have an involvement and must declare any interests whether pecuniary or non-pecuniary (this applies also to all those participating in the SRB decision making process).

Other forms of community involvement are being developed. Patch walks around local neighbourhoods with residents to identify concerns and issues have proved very successful and will be extended. A number of open days will also be taking place around the SRB area during the year to raise the profile of the programme and encourage involvement.

10. Partnership policy on Inflation and VAT
All projects approved have been advised that increased costs as a result of inflation should have been identified in the project development stage and they have had to show how these are to be funded. Projects have produced detailed budgets that have been examined as part of the preparation of each annual Delivery Plan.

The LRA is confident that projects can be delivered within the overall SRB grant allocation over the lifetime of the programme, after making allowances for small increases in inflation i.e. approximately 3% per annum.

In line with financial guidance, the partnership encouraged systems to ensure that no SRB grant is used to pay for VAT where that is recoverable.

11. Publicity
A range of communication tools has been developed to keep all participants in the process aware of progress and developments, including beneficiaries and local communities. Local area forums and partnerships produce their own newsletters, bulletins and press releases, and a number of projects also produce newsletters about their activity. The programmes, project and activities are also promoted on websites, by Leicester North West and on the City Council’s own site. Review and research material generated by the programme is circulated to partner organisations.

Area forums hold a number of events locally to ensure that members of the community are aware of the opportunities available and that they can become involved in the partnerships to take an active role in the decision making in their area. Patchwalks and open days have also been very successful and will be continued.

Publicity measures will continue to raise awareness of benefits and opportunities arising from the scheme. These measures acknowledge emda’s support through the SRB grant wherever practical.

12. Forward Strategy
The LERP and local area and strategic partnerships are committed to continuing the process of regeneration beyond the end of the SRB Programme. The development of a Forward Strategy is necessary to
ensure that the foundations for regeneration, and the benefits and assets achieved over the lifetime of the programme are maximised and maintained.

As the Leicester programme moves into its final three years, projects are being encouraged to organise evaluations of their SRB experience, to identify best practice and the lessons learned, with a view to improving mainstream service delivery at a community level. Some projects will be taken up by statutory agencies, others will carry on providing a service locally through service level agreements. Some projects will be able to continue by attracting grant assistance from other funding regimes, while others will have completed their task and close down.

The City Council is already providing advice and support to final year projects, and a number have been successful in either being taken on by mainstream agencies or through continued funding from sources other than SRB. Most of the SRB budget for Leicester is now committed, and the LERP SRB Sub-Group has agreed in principle to fund an External Funding Team over the final three years of the Programme to ensure that the Programme’s objectives and targets are met.

Programme Evaluations are being used to update baseline information and identify continuing needs in the community. They will be used in conjunction with SRB funding during 2004/2007 to develop local community plans in agreement with local agencies and mainstream service providers.

Another strand of the forward strategy is the development of community trusts with assets of land or premises under the control of local residents. It is hoped that over time these trusts will develop the capacity to provide services locally and raise funds for the benefit of local residents and organisations. Any assets purchased or improved using SRB funds will be effectively redeployed for similar use within local communities, with the encouragement and assistance of the LERP.