# Annex 4

# The Rotherham learning and action alliance.

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# Summary

This note documents the process of setting up and maintaining the Rotherham Learning and Action Alliance.

It is based on the process developed in the North Sea Interreg IVB project MARE.

To date the focus has been on setting up the alliance. Progress is identified in Table 1: Setting up LAAs procedural check list

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# Introduction

A Learning and actions alliance is a network with the aim of improving performance though the introduction of new methods of working. In the case of city management the aim is to improve effectiveness by reducing the human input to mundane tasks, increasing added value and consistency and reducing duplication of effort to the benefit of the local authority, its citizens, its communities and its staff.

# Steps for setting up and maintaining Learning and Action Alliances (LAA)

This document aims to act as a procedural aid to the process of setting up a Learning and Action Alliance (LAA). This document is based on a similar guide for LAAs set up to promote water and flood management in the EU North Sea Region Interreg VI B project MARE[[1]](#footnote-1) which can be referred to for more detailed information, but it is anticipated that people involved in the promotion of LAAS will have the experience of the culture of their organisation and the way it works and will have their own views about the process should be applied.

Figure 1 presents the process as consisting of 5 phases with 17 steps. Whilst some steps are clearly sequential, the process may include internal feedback loops and cross-linkages, and is, at the least, a cyclical activity.

Table 1 on page 4 provides a check list to those engaged in the process to help ensure that each step has been sufficiently completed.



**Figure 1: Setting up LAAs**

Although there are many approaches to setting up LAAs, this document provides a starting point for those wishing to set up and maintain LAAs.

## Phase 1 – Initialisation

### Form initial team of interested parties

Establishment of the initial team is likely to be based upon the recognition of a group of people of the need to work together in new ways to improve the effectiveness of what they do. This may be within a single section, but it is likely to involve the way that they integrate with the work of other sections who also have recognised a need to improve the effectiveness of what they do.

## Phase 2 – Context and Scoping

### Identify scope and boundaries of the LAA

Identify the context within which the LAA will operate, and then the physical, political and institutional scope and boundaries of the LAA. Consider the wider regional, national and even international context within which the LAA will operate and how the LAA might interact with others. At this point it makes sense to get some form of approval from managers if this has not already been done.



### Identify coordinator and core members

Define a coordinator (ideally one will emerge from the initial stakeholders) and those who will be the core members to help organise the LAA. Remember that it may be necessary for practical purposes to amend the membership of the core group as the LAA develops.

### Stakeholder identification

Identify all groups from step 2 which can affect, or are affected by, the LAA to such a degree that they should be recognised as stakeholders. The coordinator and initial core members should encourage the identified stakeholders to become members of the LAA or failing this commit to actively engaging with the group.

## Phase 3 – Creating a Shared Vision

### Form a steering group

Form a steering group representative of all the members of the LAA - including both the coordinator and core members (as identified in step 3).

### Identify stakeholder interests and how they affect, and are affected by, the LAA

Consider the ways in which the LAA may affect and may be affected by each stakeholder. Focus upon identifying the potential contributions of stakeholders to the LAA and at the same time, identify the potential difficulties that may arise. Identify the interests of each stakeholder as LAAs will have to balance the interests of all its members, not just those of the original core group. Assess stakeholder interests to see how they ‘fit’ with one another with particular emphasis on identifying areas of potential conflict whereby consensus and “side payments” will need to be found.

### Formulate LAA terms of reference

Formulate terms of reference for the LAA (e.g. purpose, structure, rules etc.) in agreement with the stakeholders.

### Form shared vision and assessment of problem(s)

From step 4, identify the topics and issues which are relevant and pertinent to the stakeholders – LAA members and non-members. Develop a shared vision and assessment of the problem(s) being faced and how the might be addressed.

### Identify existing stakeholder network and potential improvements

Identify the existing ties and assess the nature of the relationships between the stakeholders (e.g. direct contact/ contractual). Assess how the existing network relationships can help deliver the shared vision and identify any changes to the network which may improve the delivery of the shared vision. Where possible implement those changes

### Identify demonstration project(s)

Identify project(s) within the scope and boundaries of the LAA (step 2), and relevant to the topics and issues outlined in step 8, which can be used to demonstrate the learning and its application in real actions.

## Phase 4 – Implementation

### Identify and act upon potential ‘quick-wins’

Identify some activities that the LAA can undertake that can deliver ‘quick-wins’; i.e. immediate benefits to the stakeholder group

### Develop longer term vision including scenarios for future changes

Develop a longer term vision for the LAA to work towards including scenarios for future changes and challenges. Develop some form of framework that will help integration and the achievement of objectives and effectiveness

### Plan and implement actions to respond to and deliver the vision

Identify those areas of activity that will benefit from the attention of the LAA and plan and implement actions to respond and to deliver the shared vision in both the short and long term.

### Apply actions to demonstration projects

Apply one or more of the actions to the demonstration projects.

## Phase 5 – Capture the learning

### Monitor, evaluate and document the actions and their performance

Monitor, evaluate and document the actions taken, their effectiveness and their performance – including those applied to the demonstration projects.

### Draw lessons and propose changes to policy, practice and culture

Draw wider lessons from the performance evaluation (step 15) and use these to propose changes to policy, practice and cultures within the organisation(s) via the LAA. Where appropriate widen the membership or help to create new LAAs to implement these.

### Review and revise vision and goals

Continue the work of the LAA on to the next priority topics, reviewing and revising the vision, goals and the process of active learning at the same time.

# Progress

**Table 1: Setting up LAAs procedural check list**

| Step | Check Question | Actions |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | Has an initial team of interested parties been formed? | The initial team has been identified as:  Asset Management  Regeneration Services  Emergency Planning  Planning and Development Control  Streepride |
| 2 | Have the scope and boundaries of the LAA been identified? | The scope is set within the context of Rotherham’s Corporate and Environment and Climate Change Strategies. The perceived areas of activity include.   * Improving awareness of adaptation, (Staff, members. Senior managers, public and business) * Improving support for raising and maintaining awareness * Developing strategic approaches to adaptation (e.g. provision for adaptation in planning strategy * Identifying lists of contacts for different aspects of adaptation. * Risk assessments for businesses and local communities. * Review risk register for adaptation |
| 3 | Has a coordinator been elected and core members identified? | The coordinator has been identified as Andy Newton who will also cover Economic Development Issues. Other core members are:   * Graham Kaye                     Drainage & Flood Alleviation Issues * David Rhodes                    Climate Change Issues * Carolyn Jones                    Ecology Issues * Peter Whitwell                  Emergency Planning Issues |
| 4 | Have all stakeholders been identified and encouraged to become LAA members? | Internal Stakeholders continue to be identified in terms of the delivery of the relevant aspects of the Corporate and Environment and Climate Change Strategies. This process is ongoing as specific projects meeting the various policy initiatives are developed and linked to various funding sources. |
| 5 | Has a steering group been formed? | Currently the core members are acting as the steering group |
| 6 | Have the interests of stakeholders and the ways in which they may contribute to the LAA been identified? | The interests of the stakeholders are defined by the Corporate and Environment and Climate Change Strategies. Contributions are continuing to emerge as specific activities are developed |
| 7 | Have the LAA terms of reference been formulated? | The terms of reference are to deliver actions which achieve the objectives of the Corporate and Climate Change Strategies |
| 8 | Has a shared vision and assessment of problems been developed? | Assessment of problems (Gap analysis) Shared vision is to implement the adaptation aspects of the corporate plan |
| 9 | Has the stakeholder network been assessed for potential improvements? | The initial network is illustrated in Figure 1 of the Rotherham LAA Scoping Document. However it continues to develop as it expands to meet the developments in Steps 4 and 6. In effect a nested series of project specific LAAs will emerge. |
| 10 | Has a demonstration project(s) been identified? | A large number of potential demonstration projects have been identified and linked to RMBC policy initiative and as an example to the NSR priorities |
| 11 | Have ‘quick-wins’ been identified and acted upon? | Quick wins were initially identified as the raising of awareness of adaptation issues and the formation of a Business Improvement District. However, as the list of potential demonstration project is developed and prioritised, this is likely to change |
| 12 | Has a long term vision been formed? | The long term vision is the achievement of the current and emerging Corporate and Environment and Climate Change Strategy objectives |
| 13 | Have actions to deliver the vision been planned and implemented? | The actions being undertaken in WPs 3, 4 and 5 of CAMINO provide the vehicle for the planning of the actions and the demonstration of their implementation |
| 14 | Have actions been applied to the demonstration project(s)? | Yes, though this is currently in the planning stage |
| 15 | Have the performance of the actions been monitored, evaluated and documented? | The actions linking policies, to demonstration projects and the policies of funding organisations are currently being documented and reviewed. Once these have been firmed up the specific needs for innovation and the potential for economic development options will be ascertained and the business cases will be finalized. |
| 16 | Have lessons been drawn and proposal for changes to policy, practice and/or culture been made? | Not yet |
| 17 | Have the vision and goals of the LAA been reviewed and revised? | Not formally |

1. http://www.mare-portal.eu/mare-output/1/work-package-1-learning-and-action-alliances [↑](#footnote-ref-1)