

## **IMPROVEMENT AND EFFICIENCY WEST MIDLANDS (IEWM)**

### **NOTES OF BOARD MEETING – 13<sup>th</sup> June 2013 Boulton Room, Austin Court, Birmingham**

**Attendees:** Steve Winterflood (Vice Chair, South Staffs); Mark Rogers (Solihull); Howard Davis (LGA); Jan Britton (Sandwell); Ian James (Solihull); Laura Johnston (Telford & Wrekin); Martin Reeves (Coventry); John Polychronakis (Dudley); Nigel Kletz (B'ham) Kevin Dicks (Bromsgrove & Redditch); Dawn Hewins (Stoke); John Atkinson (CAPITA).

IEWM: Sue Banks; Keith Gordon; Pete Jackson; Polly Reed; Tony Ashfield; Sonia Thomson (minutes).

**Apologies:** Trish Haines (Chair); Cllr Paul Middlebrough (Wychavon); John van de Laarschot (Stoke); Richard Partington (Telford & Wrekin); Colin Williams (WME); Andrew Burns (Staffordshire); Vanessa Bishop (Solihull); Peter Hay (B'ham).

#### **1. Welcome & Apologies**

Steve Winterflood (Vice Chair) welcomed everyone to the meeting on behalf of Trish Haines (Chair) and apologies were noted as above.

#### **2. Minutes of Board Meeting – February 2013 and Matters Arising**

The minutes were approved as an accurate record and there were no matters arising.

#### **3. John Atkinson, Leadership Advisor and CAPITA Associate for the West Midlands Transcend Programme**

John gave an overview of the Transcend Programme referring to the Transcend brochure and recent national coverage of the programme in the LGC. The unique element of this new Leadership programme is the involvement of our own regional Chief Executives in both mentoring delegates but more importantly setting challenges in the form of 'wicked' issues for the delegates to focus upon. To determine these issues and secure sponsors for the Programme, John had interviewed several of our chief executives earlier in the year and the results are written up in the Transcend brochure.

Recruitment for the 1<sup>st</sup> cohort took place in January 2013, the 2<sup>nd</sup> cohort is being recruited to now and is almost full and there is an intention to recruit for a 3<sup>rd</sup> cohort later this year. Each cohort is divided into 3 groups, each sponsored by a Chief Executive. The programme consists of a 2 day launch to connect participants with their work and 3 more days spread

over the next few months. The feedback so far from current participants is very positive and it has been found to be very enjoyable and rewarding; stretching and challenging; an opportunity to think further with colleagues from other authorities and also a little disconcerting as there are no set answers or any tools in place to find answers.

John Polychronakis (Dudley) said that there had been very good feedback from Andrea-Pope-Smith, Director of Adult Social Care at Dudley. He asked if the programme was solely about problem solving/team building or did it address leadership skills and if so did it produce an 'end product'.

John replied that there is an element of problem solving but it is essentially about participants finding solutions through leadership e.g. being able to align people to help them to find solutions and by working with their peers. The end product is to create a network of high quality people who can be called upon by authorities to support strategic change in individual authorities, thus allowing the network to spread and grow.

Dawn Hewins (Stoke) had also received good feedback from participants who said it had given them time out to think differently rather than focusing upon the 'day job'.

Laura Johnston (Telford) agreed that leadership should be the priority and highlighted the ADCS Adaptive model.

Steve Winterflood (Vice Chair) asked two of the Chief Executive sponsors for their feedback.

Jan Britton (Sandwell) said that his group were questioning if a social enterprise model for ASC was scalable and he was pleased with the progress they were making.

Mark Rogers (Solihull) stated that from his viewpoint the programme was about reciprocity as it is as useful to the sponsor as it is for the sponsored. He also recognised that the groups were inevitably 'forming' and 'storming' and that his group was therefore about where he expected them to be at the moment.

Howard Davis (LGA) asked if the programme covered management of the political environment and offered an opportunity to engage with politicians in a safe environment as this might create an interesting space for participants to look at their roles.

John Atkinson answered that there is intent to engage with participants on political issues but this would largely depend on the Chief Executive sponsor and the sub-group involved.

Martin Reeves (Coventry) commented that he thought the design of the programme was excellent and emphasised that in his view it is the way in which grounded problem solving is driven which then helps to deal with

significant leadership problems.

John Polychronakis agreed that whilst there is a need to have problem solving skills it is essential not to lose sight of skills required around organisational culture/values and influencing decision making.

Jan Britton added that his group were taking a far more expansive approach to problem solving which would demand all leadership behaviours.

Steve Winterflood concluded that the Board all thought the programme was going very well.

#### **4. Sector Led Improvement (Paper 2)**

Sue Banks (IEWM) invited Howard Davis to give a national update from the LGA.

Howard highlighted that the LGA has had to identify significant savings in recent weeks owing to an in-year cut in their 2013/14 budget of £2 million. This has been carried out in two phases, the first phase resulting in some 40 (of 280 employees) redundancies by the end of July 2013, the majority of which will be voluntary or achieved by deleting vacant posts etc. The second phase is to review all offers and associated funding arrangements.

Howard referred to the annual LGA Conference taking place on 3<sup>rd</sup> July and work with all main political parties to debate their manifestos before the autumn party conferences. Howard also referred to work on whole systems leadership/integration of health and social care and the pilots happening across Dorset and Bournemouth, Coventry and elsewhere.

Sue Banks then handed over to Mark Rogers to give an update from the Children's Improvement Board. Mark stated that whilst the significant funding cuts by the DfE/CIB had been a setback, it had also created an opportunity to have discussions around the big issues for both WMADCS and the Regional Children's Improvement Board without the constraints of national requirements. Mark stated that he was confident that at a national level, there was still a good commitment from Leaders and Lead Members and there is still a definite appetite to build on in terms of the Sector Led Improvement programme. A new Memorandum of Understanding will be discussed with key stakeholders at the LGA conference.

Laura Johnston added that there is a clear commitment from all DC's to SLI and that key aspects of the programme (albeit reduced) will continue. ADCS/IEWM is currently out to tender for sector led improvement support. There will be a meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> July to agree the approach to Peer Challenge/self assessment etc. and to look at how it can be taken forward. As a result of the withdrawal of CIB funding, DC's will also be looking at ways of supporting each other and establishing practical support to keep

the regional momentum going.

Ian James (Solihull) gave an update on the WMADASS network in terms of sector led improvement. He reported that there had been real progress in recent months to agree a framework, approach and local priorities. There is a strong Assistant Director's network which is now leading on different aspects of work and all 14 have/are signing up to a Memorandum of Understanding. A Peer Challenge framework up to 2015 has also been agreed which incorporates a common data set for self assessment and this is due to be signed off by 12<sup>th</sup> July. Martin Reeves has recently agreed to be the lead Chief Executive for ASC and to chair the new Improvement Board; Eddie Clarke has also recently been appointed via a tender process to lead on the sector led improvement programme for the region.

Mark Rogers added that at a recent meeting of CEX and Met Leaders all attendees gave their full support to sector led improvement and have asked for regular updates from Mark to secure ongoing commitment.

Sue Banks continued the presentation and talked about the Performance of the Region Report which has now been circulated to all authorities since our last meeting. Sue also talked about take up of Peer Challenge and highlighted the new public health offer from the LGA which is still in its early days.

John Polychronakis asked Howard Davies to send him further details about this initiative.

Sue went on to talk about the new West Midlands SLI Compact agreement which had been sent out by letter to all regional Chief Executives and Leaders. Sue confirmed that the West Midlands is the first region to take this approach and was pleased to report that the overall response had been positive. Sue referred to the tabled flyer and confirmed that there will be an official launch of the Compact at the LGA Conference on 3<sup>rd</sup> July. So far around half a dozen signed compacts had been returned with more expected over the next few weeks.

John Polychronakis asked why the take-up of peer challenge had been lower for upper tier authorities. Howard replied that it was largely to do with timing and recognising capacity issues. There is a real need to re-engage in dialogue and the Compact would be a good way to re-launch future debate.

Mark Rogers added that ADCS/CIB have been discussing with the LGA how peer challenge can prepare authorities for OFSTED inspections etc.

John Polychronakis said that it is about having a connection with both OFSTED and CQC and that there needs to be a valuable preparation before OFSTED.

Howard Davis agreed but highlighted that the purpose of peer challenge is not to replicate inspection (which for OFSTED can be up to 56 days) and that this cannot and should not be replicated by the LGA/sector; however work was ongoing in this respect.

Mark Rogers added that you 'get out what you put in' and that authorities needed to scope things well and to be transparent and open in their approach.

Steve Winterflood referred to the new Regional WMSLI Steering Group and asked the Board for their thoughts.

Jan Britton said that this would be an important vehicle and will need to challenge ADCS/ADASS and have a dialogue together about what is not working and where we need to be more radical to improve.

Mark Rogers asked if there is strong enough involvement of Leaders and whether we needed to get more involved. Sue Banks agreed that it would be useful to engage one or two more leaders in the suggested membership.

Howard Davis said that the LGA has 'regional improvement lead' members but these are not from the region; however we can look at how we might get more Leaders involved. Howard also said that he and Sue would happily come out to councils to talk about SLI/raise awareness etc. but would need to be guided by councils on what they need.

Jan Britton said that there needs to be a deeper understanding around Children's at a political level and for local cabinet members to drive change and make the process easier.

Mark Rogers said it was about strategic leadership as well and who is going to provide this level at strategic level for the Leaders.

Sue Banks continued the presentation and asked the Board how they felt about sharing details of the performance report and promoting the West Midlands' approach to national stakeholders and partners and if there are opportunities that can be built upon following the launch at the LGA conference.

Mark Rogers said that we should look to promote our activities but should be careful about sharing detailed performance analysis etc. John Polychronakis agreed with this and said we could produce a simple booklet setting out our approach.

## **Agreed**

Sue Banks will look at how we can involve more Leaders in the WMSLI Steering Group and will work on a simple publication highlighting the West Mids approach to SLI to share with key stakeholders etc.

## 5. Programme Update

### Financial Overview / Delivery Plan / Business Plan – Papers 3a/3b/3c

Sue Banks referred to Paper 3a and gave an update on the IEWM programme. It is proposed to continue (a refined) programme to March 2015; however, this would require some re-allocation of funding across the programme to support key priorities. Contingency funding of £136K would be retained and the SLI/Employee Reserve of £650K would remain fully intact and ready to be invoked in March 2015. Core staffing will start to reduce from April 2014 in line with the refined programme proposals. The ROI remains on track to deliver £350M by October 2014.

Sue confirmed that the Waste and Construction programme had closed in December 2012. The Climate Change programme will cease in March 2014 and will not be funded thereafter. Highways will largely be completed by March 2014 with ongoing network activity transferring to sector ownership in April 2014. Similarly, Asset Management will transfer to sector ownership in April '14, having a closer focus/alliance with regional LEPs. IEWM proposes to set aside up to £100K from residual resources within the Alliances programme to support the above transitions.

In terms of Adult Social Care there are no proposed changes. There is sufficient funding in place for a joint programme with WMADASS to continue to March 2015 and beyond. There is new funding from the LGA for Health Improvement/Capacity building activity and delivery arrangements are currently being reviewed with CLG-WM on behalf of the region. Recommendations will follow shortly.

There has been a significant cut in national funding for Children's services in terms of SLI and workforce development. It is therefore proposed to redirect £200K from core improvement funding to support the Children's programme to March 2015.

In terms of the Procurement programme, it is proposed to redirect £150K from the contingency to support activities to October 2014. There are a number of other potential opportunities under consideration which could extend programme activity further (potential partnership with the Government Procurement Service; potential European funding for a collaborative 'green' procurement programme across EU states; a potential partnering role for IEWM with the regional Buy for Good CIC/other WM LA's). IEWM will take stock of all the above in October 2013.

Nigel Kletz (Bham) talked about the key aspects of the Community Interest Company and its primary focus on Social Value procurement. He emphasised that it is a very effective means of collaborating and is also a neutral body not controlled by local authorities. Ideally it needs to work with IEWM to help sustain it and discussions are underway with Ged Bowles from IEWM to see how this might happen.

In terms of SLI, Transformation and Commissioning, it was proposed to redirect £160K core improvement funding to the Regional SLI Steering Group and associated activities. A review of the requirements for the District Council Network beyond March 2014 will be determined and there is some residual funding left to support this. The Vanguard Academy has funding up to March 2014 and Stoke and Bromsgrove councils are currently exploring a sustainability model beyond that date, no further IEWM funding is proposed. It is proposed that the Associate Framework will be re-tendered from existing resources as a legacy asset for the region.

Sue confirmed that based on current income projections and commitments, the end date for the IEWM programme is likely to be March 2015 when the Sector Transition Strategy would need to be invoked to support activity for a short period beyond that date. On this basis it is proposed that IEWM will begin a dialogue with the wider region later this year regarding the ongoing collaboration and support for major priorities (e.g. Sector Led Improvement).

Mark Rogers supported the proposal for wider dialogue with the region and asked that details be brought back to the October meeting as to how we would approach this/key activities to be considered etc.

### **Agreed**

The overall financial position was noted and the following recommendations were all approved:-

- the continuation of a refined IEWM programme to March 2015;
- the proposed re-allocation of funding within and across the programme to support ongoing regional/programme priorities as set out in Paper 3a;
- authority was delegated to the IEWM Director to agree arrangements with sector leads for those elements of the programme that will transfer to sector ownership beyond March 2014;
- the revised programme lifetime and associated dates to the Sector Transition Strategy were noted;
- to begin a dialogue with the wider region later this year regarding collaboration to support regional priorities beyond the lifetime of the IEWM programme;
- the latest Return on Investment was noted;
- the accompanying Programme Delivery plan (paper 3b) was noted.

Sue continued the presentation and talked about progress against IEWM's top10 targets within the Business Plan.

Sue confirmed that delivery against all key targets was on track with no issues or exceptions to highlight.

## **6. Verbal Updates**

### **District Council Network**

Steve Winterflood gave an update on the DCN's current activity and work programme. Steve commented that the calibre and quality of input to recent workshops has been excellent, however, attendance at the last few meetings has been poor. We are now working with the Chair/vice chair of the DCN to see how we can reinvigorate the network; the possibility of extending membership to senior practitioners on relevant topics is one possibility.

The programme is currently set to continue to March 2014 and requirements beyond that date will be considered with the sector.

### **Social Media**

Pete Jackson (IEWM) gave a brief update about our Social Media activity and highlighted the recent survey sent out to all 33 local authorities regarding social media activities; this received an excellent response with all 33 authorities responding.

The survey is being used to inform and support the production of a compendium of social media resources and information highlighting the excellent work that is taking place across the region. This will be produced shortly and published via blogs, twitter etc.

## **7. Any Other Business**

No other business was discussed.

## **8. Dates of Future Meetings - 2013**

- Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> October 2013 – 2pm to 4pm – venue to be confirmed.
- Dates for 2014 to be notified.