

IMPROVEMENT AND EFFICIENCY WEST MIDLANDS (IEWM)

NOTES OF BOARD MEETING – 21st June 2012 The Partnership Centre, Birmingham

Attendees: Trish Haines (Chair); Cllr Paul Middlebrough (Wychavon); Steve Winterflood (South Staffs); Andrea Pope-Smith (Dudley); Colin Williams (WMC); Martin Reeves (Coventry); John Polychronakis (Dudley); Kevin Dicks (Bromsgrove & Redditch); Richard Partington (Telford & Wrekin); Dawn Hewins (Stoke); Fiona Narburgh (Wychavon).

IEWM: Sue Banks, Matt Bowsher; Keith Gordon; Karen Marcroft; Maggie Sybilska, Tony Ashfield; Sonia Thomson (minutes).

Apologies: Nina Dawes (Lichfield); John van de Laarschot (Stoke); Barbara Peacock (Sandwell); Gail Quinton (Worcestershire); Nigel Kletz (Bham); Howard Davis (LGA); Andrew Burns (Staffordshire); Mark Rogers (Solihull); Kim Ryley (Shropshire).

1. Welcome & Apologies

Trish Haines (Chair) welcomed everyone to the meeting and set the context for considering IEWM's future beyond 2013.

Apologies were noted as above. Trish confirmed that absent Board Members had given their support for the proposals being discussed, as part of the consultation activities leading up to the Board meeting.

2. Minutes of Board Meeting - February 2012 and Matters Arising

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

3. IEWM Programme – Beyond March 2013 (Papers 2a-2c)

Sue Banks presented a series of slides, which summarised the detailed proposals for IEWM's future activity beyond March 2013, set out in the accompanying papers 2a to 2c.

Sue highlighted that IEWM had consulted with various stakeholders in developing the proposals to extend the IEWM programme beyond March 2013. This confirmed strong support from the sector for the programme to continue, as long as it is viable and continues to add value.

Sue also highlighted that financially the programme is in a stronger position than anticipated some 12 months ago, with some £4m funding now being available (from various sources) to support an ongoing programme, as opposed to the £2.8m originally predicted.

Sue summarised the emerging business models of other legacy RIEPs (the South East, East of England, Capital Ambition) and also Sustainability West Midlands (SWM).

IEWM's recommendation at this stage is that we do not need to consider establishing a new delivery vehicle as current legislation enables us to operate as per current set up.

However, IEWM is keen to adopt the SWM approach of operating a 'flexible end date' with the Board, provided good checks and balances are in place to protect the Accountable Body, the Board and the sector.

Sue proposed that a 'wind up' of the programme could be triggered in one of two ways; either by the programme no longer being financially viable; or by a majority decision of the Board, if the Board feel the programme is no longer adding value.

Whichever scenario is invoked, IEWM would then implement a fully planned and managed Sector Transition Strategy.

Trish Haines (Chair) invited comments and questions.

Martin Reeves (Coventry) declared an interest as a Director on the SWM. He highlighted that the SWM context is different to that of IEWM in terms of future growth potential etc. but he was supportive of the approach being proposed regarding an 'open end date' provided the IEWM programme is continuing to add value for the sector.

Steve Winterflood (S Staffs) asked whether the Sector Transition Strategy would hinder longer term projects.

Sue responded that IEWM can only run for as long as it is financially viable and IEWM would continue to review the programme annually. The nature of the programme is changing and we are generally supporting more projects of a smaller nature, with shorter timescales.

Trish Haines (Chair) added that IEWM would look for host authorities to take on work and projects beyond the lifetime of the programme.

John Polychronakis (Dudley) said it was a reasonable approach so long as

the necessary checks and balances were in place.

Cllr Middlebrough (Wychavon) asked that as part of those checks and balances, whether Worcestershire County Council, as IEWM's Accountable Body, would 'have an arbitrary guillotine' they could invoke to cease the IEWM programme?

Trish Haines (Chair) said that they could stop being the Accountable Body (though this was unlikely) but were not able to wind up IEWM. Trish confirmed she would take an item back to Worcs CC Cabinet to highlight the proposed extension to the Programme etc.

The presentation then turned to the future shape and content of the Programme and Sue summarised the proposed key principles underlying future delivery etc.

John Polychronakis (Dudley) said that there was an over-arching principle around supporting the quality of public services should be reflected within IEWM's business plan.

Sue continued the presentation around the core programme focus, highlighting the high level themes that will feature. Commissioning is a strong theme and IEWM is intending to have this as the major theme for the All Change event in December.

Sue also touched upon the Waste activity and highlighted that this is likely to come to an end in March 2013. Whilst there may be some value in continuing with an ongoing network, no further project funding would be available unless priorities change significantly.

John Polychronakis (Dudley) commented that commissioning and procurement is increasingly important in the context of further government cuts beyond 2015. Anything IEWM can do to assist local authorities to maximise spending power would certainly be well received at Dudley.

Andrea Pope-Smith (Dudley) also added that more needs to be done in terms of Transformation in Adult Social Care. IEWM could certainly help in developing a greater understanding in how to effect change and better engage Members within this.

Martin Reeves (Coventry) said that there was some exemplary work going on in certain pockets of the region and we need to look at how we can more widely share this across the region. There is a need for a better defined commissioning landscape which needs debate and dissemination around the key issues challenging local authorities e.g. judicial reviews, procurement law and OJEU, securing better commissioning outcomes, maximising social value etc.

Steve Winterflood (S Staffs) said that any IEWM support around procurement at the district council level was very important.

Martin Reeves (Coventry) added that there are lots of practical ways that IEWM can support the region in understanding commissioning activities and procurement spends.

Keith Gordon (IEWM) said that this was a big issue, particularly in the big spend areas for example in construction and highways where there is huge scope to standardise and aggregate etc. In theory it works however, in practice it is very difficult to achieve true sector collaboration.

Karen Marcroft (IEWM) highlighted the work that Martin Quinn (IEWM) is currently carrying out relation to commissioning in Children's Services.

Trish Haines (Chair) asked if the Board were happy with what IEWM is trying to do and happy to agree all recommendations in Papers 2a & 2b.

Agreed

The Board agreed all recommendations as follows:

Paper 2a:

- That IEWM continues to operate as part of Worcestershire County Council and that we do not seek to create an alternative delivery vehicle for our activities at this stage.
- That we now continue to operate the IEWM Programme on the basis of an 'open end date', but with appropriate checks and balances in place, with wind up either being invoked via reporting of the financial position to the IEWM Board, or via a majority decision from the IEWM Board themselves.
- That IEWM report the key outcomes of this Board meeting to WMC and explore how we can increasingly work together to support the improvement and efficiency agenda and sector self-sufficiency in the longer term.
- That we amend the IEWM Constitution to reflect the new arrangements to invoke 'wind-up' should this be agreed at today's meeting.
- That the proposed Sector Transition Strategy is endorsed and that Board members continue to work with us to firm up requirements on behalf of the sector.
- That the proposed continued focus, emphasis and high level content of the IEWM programme is approved as set out in this paper.
- That authority is delegated to the IEWM Director, in consultation with the IEWM Chair and IEWM Executive, to implement the necessary actions (e.g. HR issues, financial arrangements etc.) arising from the decisions of today's meeting.

Paper 2b:

- That the overall financial position is noted and approved.
- That the proposed new budget allocations set out in Table 2 and accompanying Paper 2c are approved.
- That the latest Return on Investment position (para 4.2) is noted including the projected estimates to June 2014 and beyond.
- That the new project approvals/allocations made since the last Board are noted.
- That the progress with the new Associate Framework is noted.

Trish Haines thanked everyone for a good and constructive conversation.

4. Strengthening our Communications

Sue moved the presentation to a short film on the Social Media Revolution and asked for the Board's support to help IEWM improve its' communications and knowledge management activities in future.

Sue said IEWM needed to 'up its game' in order to be more responsive and recognises that it needs to be more vibrant to reach beyond its existing customers and contacts. There is an opportunity to both raise the profile of IEWM, but also that of our local authorities nationally.

IEWM wants to be more 'real', accessible and part of an ongoing commentary in the sector. IEWM recognises it isn't making the best use of authorities' Communications teams and skills and wants to strengthen its networks and joint activities etc.

Sue handed over to Fiona Narburgh to pose some key questions of the Board.

Andrea Pope-Smith talked about having storyboards as opposed to case studies, which are really good in using the words of service users to describe how things have changed for the better. Short video links which can be posted on You Tube or taking sound bites and trailing them through Twitter are all exciting ways of communicating positive messages.

Martin Reeves (Coventry) said that there are some world class animators in the region who are leading on social media. It is a big challenge and there needs to be a distinctive and clear narrative to stimulate the public and elected members.

Steve Winterflood (S Staffs) said that the key thing is to focus on practitioners in organisations for example in transformation and

procurement. Where can they go and look to see what will help transform and impact on their organisation.

John Polychronakis (Dudley) said that how we use social media is important and applying the use of Twitter at events and training sessions etc helps to engage the audience more.

Dawn Hewins (Stoke) said that it is about being modern and giving people choices. Stoke on Trent City Council use storyboards and would be happy to volunteer to work with IEWM on this.

Colin Williams (WMC) added that he believed that attention span is important and there is a need to engage and excite managers with tools that get the message across simply. Colin also noted that each authority is doing its own thing and that we need to be more joined up and collaborate more.

Martin Reeves (Coventry) said that we need to speak to key managers across the region on certain themes and get their ideas on how we should be engaging with them.

Fiona Narburgh (Wychavon) added that gone are the days of a big Communications Strategy.

Fiona then asked the Board for volunteers to work with IEWM on some ideas.

Agreed

Martin Reeves (Coventry); Dawn Hewins (Stoke) and Kevin Dicks (Bromsgrove and Redditch) all agreed to offer their support to IEWM.

Trish thanked everyone for a good discussion.

5. Verbal Updates

Transformational Leadership Programme

In the absence of Kim Ryley (Shropshire), Colin Williams (WMC) presented the proposals for the Transformational Leadership Programme. Colin confirmed that Kim has given his full support to the proposals.

Colin went on to say that IEWM is investing £80K into the future leaders programme, this subsidy means that approximately 50 people can participate for around £1,000 per delegate.

- Colin gave a brief overview of the feedback paper which summarised responses to the recent questionnaire sent to all Chief Executives on the proposed leadership programme.

- There was unanimous support for the programme; CEX are supportive of this being competency based but added this should reflect work already done here (e.g. SOCITM) and there should be no reinventing of the wheel.
- There was support for a ‘locality focussed approach’ in terms of how cohorts are constructed and all CEX indicated their support for the proposed ‘mentoring’ role.
- Responses to the question to accredit or not accredit were mixed. Comments included: it costs money; it can shift the focus of the programme; we need to put it out to the vendor process which will then identify the potential or otherwise for accreditation of the programme.
- All CEX felt that delegates should sign up to participate in an ongoing Leadership Network and that this should be a pre-requisite of the programme.
- In terms of positioning, the Programme is targeted at future CEX and would sit above the current Catalyst programme.

Colin then invited comments and questions.

John Polychronakis (Dudley) said increasingly a locality champion role is important. Members do not accept their powers on health and community safety are waning for example.

Cllr Middlebrough (Wychavon) asked if Members could participate as he could see the benefit of mixed officer and member cohorts.

Colin Williams (WMC) replied that the programme is designed for future Chief Executives but that we would look to ensure that Members are involved in the Leadership challenges etc.

Steve Winterflood (S Staffs) supported this view.

Karen Marcroft (IEWM) highlighted the My Leadership Future programme in Children’s Services and an opportunity to link the two.

Martin Reeves (Coventry) was opposed to accreditation as he feels this will significantly dilute the focus, he also stressed that there needs to be a cohort of several public health people on the programme to support future integration etc.

Trish Haines (Chair) asked how we can ensure the programme reflects the key themes in the IEWM programme (i.e. the key challenges for the sector). Colin Williams (WMC) said the chosen providers would be asked to talk with Chief Executives to shape programme content.

Agreed

The proposal and £80k funding was agreed. IEWM and WMC will now work on a specification for the market which reflects feedback to date.

6. Future Events

Sue Banks (IEWM) talked about IEWM's forthcoming events for 2012 in particular its Fringe Event at the LGA Conference and the All Change Event in December. Sue Banks asked that if anyone wanted to contribute to All Change to let her know via email.

7. Any Other Business

Trish Haines (Chair) congratulated Matt Bowsher (IEWM) on his new appointment at Dudley MBC as an Assistant Director for Adult Social Care & Housing and wished him well for the future.

8. Dates of Future Meetings

- 15th October 2012 – 2pm to 4pm
- Dates for next year to be confirmed