

WM~RIEP BOARD MEETING ON 29th October 2009, 2 – 4PM
ROOMS 1&2, REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP CENTRE, BIRMINGHAM

Agenda

1. Minutes of July Board Meeting and matters arising	For Information
2. Asset Management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Civil Service West Midlands Estates Strategy – Trudi Elliott, GOWM • Local Government Property Asset Mangement - results from the WM Pilot Study - PWC • Next Steps – future RIEP action/scope for joined up work with CSWM – Keith Gordon 	-Presentation - 15 minutes -Presentation - 15 minutes (20 minutes)
3. Budget – Contingency Planning for Year 3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposed action to manage uncertainty around the timing of Year 3 funding - Andy Hancox (Papers 1 and 1a)	(10 minutes)
4. Developing Support For Localities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress with Relationship Management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Development of a Total Place Support package ○ Use of anticipated additional Capital & Efficiency funding of £3.2m (Paper 2)	(15 minutes)
5. Major strategic issues – Oral Updates/Discussion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Links between health strategy and practice in localities – DH discussion item • CAA – emerging regional perspective • Safeguarding/children's services 	(15 minutes)

WEST MIDLANDS REGIONAL IMPROVEMENT AND EFFICIENCY PARTNERSHIP

NOTES OF BOARD MEETING – 29th OCTOBER 2009

Attendees:

Paul Sheehan (Chair); Nina Dawes (Vice Chair); Cllr Ken Meeson (Chair IEWM Mbr Steering Group); Trudi Elliott (GOWM); Guy Brook (PWC); Dr Rashmi Shukla (DoH WM); Mark Rogers (Solihull); Annie Faulder (Herefordshire); Paul Lankester (Stratford-upon-Avon); Bev Messinger (Coventry); Glyn Evans (Birmingham); Linda Sanders (Dudley); Kevin Dicks (Bromsgrove); Shane Bryans (GOWM); John van de Laarshot (Stoke); Mike Barnes (RAWM); Mark Pearce (AWM).

WMRIEP - Andy Hancox (Director); Keith Gordon; Rebecca Davis; David Galliers; Sue Banks; Matt Bowsher; Polly Garnett, Sonia Thomson (minutes).

Apologies:

Howard Davies (IDeA); Colin Williams (WMLB); Olwen Dutton (WMLB); Laura Rowley (Shropshire); Trish Haines (Worcestershire); Phil Jones (Audit Commission); Chris Bull (Herefordshire); Victor Brownlees (Telford); Steve Winterflood (South Staffordshire); Sally Anne Chidwick (West Midlands Fire Service).

INTRODUCTION

Paul Sheehan (Chair) opened the meeting and welcomed everybody to the Regional Partnership Centre.

1. MINUTES

The minutes from the Away Day session in July 2009 were reviewed and accepted as an accurate record. It was recognised that there were lots of issues arising out of the day's session which were now being fed into the future work programme.

2. ASSET MANAGEMENT

Keith Gordon, IEWM Assistant Director (Procurement & Efficiency) gave a brief overview of current activity in the region regarding the 3 key areas of Construction, Highways and Asset Management; highlighting the efficiency savings made to date and priorities moving forward.

2.1 Civil Service West Midlands - Estates Strategy

Trudi Elliot from GOWM gave a presentation about the Civil Service West Midlands Estates Strategy. Key discussion points include:

- Asset Management as part of a broader focus on cultural change – aims to join up the whole civil service horizontally with strong staff engagement
- Links to the Operational Efficiency Review – 12 year strategy
- Synergies between the local government and civil service families
- Links to Total Place agenda (work underway to overlay LA and Civil Service Estates information in pilot areas)
- Highlighting key barriers to sharing accommodation (e.g. VAT issues)
- Strategy exciting national interest (Liam Byrne MP) and to be rolled out across Civil Service nationally

Trudi offered to make details of the Civil Service estate within local authority areas in the West Midlands available upon request.

2.2 Local Government Property Asset Management

Guy Brett (PWC) gave a presentation of the results from the pilot study of Local Government Property Asset Management in the West Midlands and set out how savings of c£640m could be achieved within the region over the next 10 years through collaborative working. Key discussion points include:

- Pilot with 7 local authorities in partnership with 4Ps
- Pilot has created a compelling business case to realise savings (cashable and non-cashable) through asset rationalisation; use of shared data; shared facilities; shared property functions and collaboration procurement etc.
- Wider benefits include a reduction in carbon emissions and cost avoidance of any future levies imposed on carbon emissions
- Pilot authorities taking a lead on various aspects of the programme
- Intention to now roll out across the region

2.3 Next Steps

Keith Gordon gave a brief presentation on the proposed way forward and to secure Board approval for the proposals:

- £1.4m hopefully secured from CLG to support roll out

- £400k sought from devolved Capital I&E Fund to accelerate roll out
- Creation of a West Midlands Property Alliance and Executive Board
- To ask for volunteers at CX level to Chair the Executive Board
- Several authorities now taking a lead in developing various strands of the project (e.g. data sharing)

Mike Barnes asked about how the project took account of community asset transfer. Keith Gordon commented that this featured within the programme and that Coventry was taking a lead on this aspect.

Linda Sanders asked about the partnership dimension and highlighted the need for service representative involvement. Keith commented that the project was being driven by service and asset management professionals working together. Worcestershire is heavily involved and learning from the TP pilot will be fed in.

Paul Lankester asked about savings and implementation costs. Guy stated that for every £1 invested there would be a £7 saving with some of the biggest returns coming through after around 6 years; although some substantial savings could be secured in the first 18 months. There are also a number of additional non-financial benefits associated with the project.

Mark Pearce suggested that the name of the project/alliance needs to make clear that it is local government based and that it does not include all assets/property within the private sector for example.

Glyn Evans echoed Linda's comments and highlighted the need to ensure a service focus on transformational activity. He also highlighted some learning from the TP pilot to date in terms of VAT issues.

Nina Dawes noted the Civil Service estates strategy was aligned to transformation and change. She suggested the terms of reference should clearly identify that the project is service led and not property led.

Andy Hancox summed up and echoed the comments made; he stated that the project is a key vehicle for driving transformational change and is a big project that is worth pursuing. Central Government are very interested in the project and are looking to provide some financial support.

Agreed

- The proposal to set up a West Midlands Property Alliance and Executive Board was agreed.
- It was agreed this should be chaired at CX level.
- The proposal to roll out across the region using CLG monies was also endorsed. Keith was asked to report back to the Board if CLG funding is not secured.
- A detailed costed programme of action will be developed and brought back to the Board to give a further opportunity to fine tune proposals

- (Agreement of £400K investment from the Capital I&E funding was agreed as a subsequent agenda item)

3&4. BUDGET – Contingency Planning for Year 3 / Developing Support for Localities

Andy Hancox opened the discussion and tabled a paper from Councillor Ken Meeson (appended to these minutes) which raises the question of whether we are investing sufficiently in some of the ‘big ticket’ items across the region. The paper also raises concerns about unallocated RIEP monies going back to the centre.

Andy then referred to Paper 1 which acknowledges some of these questions and sets out IEWM’s current financial position against associated uncertainty around Year 3 funding from CLG. Key points to note include:

- 20% of Year 2 monies have been received as capital. We think we have identified the necessary £1.4m capital funding and will keep the Board informed of any issues.
- There is not a significant amount of funding unallocated in Years 1 and 2. Of the c£17m, c£5m has been spent and the remainder has been clearly allocated to projects and localities as per the Delivery Plan (paper 1a). Therefore, in our view there is no danger of Year 1 and 2 monies going back to the centre.
- Due to the RIEP being established as a 3 year programme, there is some over-profiling of commitments in Year 2. Given the current uncertainties around Year 3 funding it would now be prudent to push this back to year 3 (c£1.05m). This is a sensible approach which is achievable without affecting delivery; this view is supported by Worcestershire (RIEP Accountable Body).
- We are working to try and accelerate release of Year 3 funding prior to the General Election. There is an opportunity to revisit commitments against Year 3 funding if and when it is received.
- We are due to receive c£3.3m in capital funding imminently and the Board can consider how best to invest this sum in the ‘big ticket’ items that will deliver a high return on investment.

Paul Lankester asked for clarification on the Programme Management costs. Andy confirmed that this includes core staff plus communications support etc. It also includes accommodation, HR and IT services etc. Andy confirmed that some other staff costs were included in project costs elsewhere within the programme.

Mark Rogers provided some further rationale for Cllr Meeson’s paper in terms of seeking clarity around priorities and outcomes for RIEP investment – focussed upon injecting fast paced innovation, service redesign and transformation. Given the current and future financial climate it is right to question whether the current IEWM programme is too wide and too thin; does it need to be narrower and deeper? Key questions to consider include what

are the 'big ticket' items that we should be collectively focussing on (e.g. asset management and carbon emissions etc.) and can we unpick what has not actually been spent and redirect it into these big ticket items?

Paul Sheehan emphasised that the Board needed to ensure that sufficient monies were retained to achieve a 'managed wind up' of the RIEP should Year 3 monies not be forthcoming.

Nina Dawes stressed that IEWM has always been driven by seeking 'big bangs for bucks' and that she would welcome a dialogue as to whether we are achieving that. However, speaking as the Waste Champion, Nina highlighted that there were several opportunities already promoted by the RIEP that have not been taken up (e.g. waste disposal). It would be useful to have a refreshed conversation around authorities' commitment to 'big ticket' items where we know they already exist. Nina also highlighted that the Board would need to understand the consequences of shifting resources within the programme and be clear about what would no longer be delivered.

Mark Pearce highlighted that there may be an opportunity to hand over some issues (e.g. climate change) to other agencies who may be better placed to deliver them.

Mike Barnes asked whether any efficiency savings realised to date had been paid back into the RIEP. Andy confirmed that this was not the case to date but we had considered some 'pay back' schemes in relation to the new capital funding. This was something that we were placing increased emphasis on in terms of considering the long term sustainability of the RIEP.

Glyn Evans stated that projects deliver products not outcomes and that it might be better to consider a commissioning approach whereby the outcomes are commissioned at the risk of the deliverer. Glyn also offered to be part of a small sub-group to consider any proposals further.

Paul Lankester reiterated concerns about money being clawed back by CLG and also questioned whether we should continue to provide support to individual under-performing authorities.

Councillor Ken Meeson emphasised that the region would not want to see any money clawed back and that all monies should be retained in the West Midlands. We need to identify the 'big ticket' items that are beneficial to the whole region and avoid a scatter gun approach.

Shane Bryans asked if money could be moved between programmes and if funding was not available would the sector fund projects themselves.

Nina Dawes highlighted that support for individual under-performing authorities was a requirement for RIEP funding; we made a commitment within the region to have no poor or weak authorities and this was achieved.

Paul Lankester stated the priorities for investment should be focussed upon up-skilling (officers and members); transformation and helping authorities to deliver more with fewer resources.

Linda Sanders agreed that the programme should be clearly focussed upon impact and outcomes but highlighted that we need to be aware of the consequences of shifting resources e.g. the JIP is predicting substantial savings over the next 3 years and it takes time to develop programmes and realise these savings.

Bev Messinger suggested that a small group should come together to take stock and agree some future areas of focus. This links to some of the discussions from the recent Board Away Session.

Andy Hancox said that he welcomed the debate and that we frequently ask this question within the RIEP. Andy also stated that he was committed to ensuring monies did not go back to the centre and reinforced the need for the Board to be aware of the implications of pulling some of the programme back, particularly in relation to commitments to individual authorities (e.g. the transformation allocations).

Paul Sheehan summed up and praised the work of WMRIEP to date. He commented that this discussion was not by any means a criticism of achievements to date but that we rightly need to ask if we are focussing on the right things. Paul then put a proposition to the Board which was agreed as set out below.

Agreed

- £1.05m Year 2 commitments are 'pushed back' into Year 3 to ensure financial prudence;
- Sufficient monies are retained to ensure a 'managed wind up' of the RIEP, should Year 3 monies not be forthcoming;
- £400k I&E capital fund monies approved to support roll out of the asset management programme;
- Any future package will need to consider possible support for CAA red flag authorities which may also mean helping with small ticket projects;
- Conduct some form of survey with Leaders and CEX to identify 'big ticket' areas for collaboration (non-responses will not count);
- A paper is brought to the January Board which tests what we currently do against what was set out in Councillor Ken Meeson's paper e.g. identifying fewer, bigger ticket items;
- The above paper also makes clear the implications of unstitching current commitments within the programme;
- Mark Rogers will work with Andy Hancox to develop proposals for the January Board to consider.

5. MAJOR STRATEGIC ISSUES – Oral Update/Discussion

5.1 *Links between Health Strategy and practice in localities*

Dr Rashmi Shukla highlighted a number of opportunities for the local government and health sector to work more closely together. Rashmi indicated that the desire is there but we need to find practical ways of moving forward. Key discussion points include:

- There are a lot of improvement agendas focussed vertically within organisations but they are not linked up at a local level and often focus more upon the organisation than the place/locality;
- Some good work with LAs and LSPs but this needs to go wider e.g. Health Inequalities etc. – not just about the NHS;
- Leadership development is perhaps a missed opportunity – we could develop joint leaders programmes;

Andy Hancox agreed there is scope to join up more effectively and suggested that some of the pending CAA outcomes may provide a focus to do this – particularly in terms of red flags where we suspect health issues will be significant. We could potentially identify a pilot area perhaps focussing on improving Health Inequalities for instance or similarly we could look at joint leadership programmes in that area.

Annie Faulder mentioned the current work being carried out at Herefordshire and offered to circulate an overview paper via Andy. This was welcomed by the Board.

Agreed

The Board agreed that there was future scope to join up more effectively and Paul Sheehan asked Rashmi to give the Board a “proposition paper” to consider at the next meeting.

5.2 *CAA – emerging regional perspective*

Andy highlighted that current anecdotal data indicated that there would potentially be 8 – 12 red flags within the region; although we are aware of several appeals which are underway so the final figure is unknown at this stage. Key themes emerging appear to be in relation to health and children’s issues generally.

Paul Lankester highlighted the varying quality of inspections and the lack of information sharing across inspection agencies which has not worked well; he would like IEWM to act as a voice back to the Audit Commission on this process once results have been published.

Linda Sanders highlighted that she was aware that there may be some red flags for 'delayed discharges' in the region and that this would be a key theme for regional improvement.

Shane Bryans talked about the need for a sector led response and reported that GOWM will be asked to report back to Ministers as they will be under pressure to say something publicly about red flags. IEWM, GOWM and IDeA are meeting on 10th November to discuss potential sector led support.

Rashmi highlighted that knee jerk responses to red flags will further encourage a focus upon individual organisations as opposed to places and localities.

Agreed

Paul Sheehan asked for consideration to be given to circulating a note to all Chief Executives about emerging red flags - the timing of this to be considered further.

5.3 Safeguarding

Mark Rogers gave an overview of current Safeguarding activity which is being developed by the Children's Forum and the RIEP. Sir Roger Singleton, the government's safeguarding lead, fronted our Safeguarding conference in September at which guidance for senior members and officers was launched (copies circulated at the meeting). Mark highlighted in particular the safeguarding responsibilities and accountabilities of Chief Executives.

Mark also highlighted that Solihull and Telford were undertaking a Safeguarding Peer Review and that a key aspect of the regional programme was to ensure we effectively share learning across the region.

Andy Hancox emphasised that safeguarding was a key improvement issue in the region at the moment. Linda Sanders confirmed that we are looking at ways to bring together work on children's and adult safeguarding with RIEP support.

Paul Lankester asked how WMRIEP were handling the linkages between Adult and Children's Services and Linda replied that work was underway to improve the links and that safeguarding provided a good vehicle to begin to address this.

Agreed

It was agreed to invite Peter Traves to the next Board meeting in his capacity as the new Chair of the West Midlands Children's Forum.

6. RECRUITMENT PORTAL

Rebecca Davis gave a short presentation in respect of Paper 3; seeking funding for the future development of the Regional Recruitment Portal into a full End to End Recruitment System (ETERS).

Rebecca highlighted that £650k had been awarded to the West Midlands as part of the first round of I&E capital funding for this initiative. Rebecca set out some of the potential benefits of the system (including a conservative £2.6m ROI) and identified this as one of the 'big ticket' items that had been referred to in previous discussions; essentially ETERS is capable of providing a full recruitment and talent management system for all public sector organisations.

Rebecca confirmed that all but 12 authorities were signed up to the new system.

Paul Lankester commented that this was an excellent project and also suggested that we look to bring in the voluntary sector if possible. He and Kevin Dicks would speak directly with 3 of the 12 authorities not currently signed up.

Mike Barnes highlighted that the costs were potentially prohibitive and that a proposal on potential financial benefits for the voluntary sector would be welcome.

Paul Sheehan stressed the need for a letter to be sent to the authorities who are not currently signed up emphasising the major benefits from being involved. Cllr Meeson suggested this letter should come from the Chair of the Board to CEX and Leaders.

Agreed

- A letter to be sent from the Chair of the Board to CEX and Leaders highlighting the benefits of the system and requesting them to consider signing up.
- Rebecca to consider how we can best support the voluntary sector to get involved.

7. UPDATES

Andy updated the Board in respect of the recent Audit of WMRIEP in October; early indications are that this has gone well and a report/action plan will be brought to the Board at the January 2010 meeting.

A draft paper from IDeA was circulated to Board members with the papers for this meeting re: a New Accountabilities Framework. Board members should feedback comments directly to Andy Hancox.

A provisional date has been put in the diary on 9th December for Sir Michael Bichard, the Chair of the national Design Council, to speak to Leaders and CEX in the region about future challenges/the principles of design and learning from the Total Place initiative to date. Details will be circulated next week.

8. GOVERNANCE

Cllr Ken Meeson has been appointed as the new Chair of the Member Steering Group and a number of new members have also joined since May 2009. Andy is working with Councillor Ken Meeson to particularly look at how we can improve engagement with Leaders and senior members in the efficiency agenda.

We are also making some positive links with the City Region development and Shire Leaders.

The draft Terms of Reference for the Member Steering Group and IEWM Board were considered and approved. It was noted that the Board requires 6 LA Chief Executives (or their representative) to be present for decisions and approvals in order for these to be quorate.

Paul Lankester proposed that one additional Unitary authority should be invited to sit on the Board and Andy Hancox agreed to look into this.

9. A.O.B

None discussed

10. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

- 21/01/2010 2-4 pm
- 22/04/2010 2-4 pm
- 22/07/2010 9-2 pm
- 21/10/2010 2-4 pm

BRIEFING NOTE

28 OCTOBER 2009

CHAIR OF THE IEWM MEMBER STEERING GROUP

PREPARED BY MARK ROGERS (CHIEF EXECUTIVE, SMBC)

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Local Government, indeed the whole public sector, is facing unprecedented fiscal constraint over next 5 years (at least). Estimates range from 20 to 30% real terms reductions in revenue into Councils.
- 1.2 The Government's Operational Efficiency Programme is driving ever harder to secure "more for less" – ie achieve better outcomes with our communities on less money, with services transformed to be customer-centric and "waste-free".
- 1.3 Now that the REIP programme is approximately mid-term, it seems appropriate to review what priorities should be focused upon in the coming 18 months to ensure maximum benefit to Councils, and the wider partnerships they operate in, and to tackle effectively the core challenges posed by such fiscal constraint – namely, effective prioritisation, super-efficiency, fast-paced innovation, genuine service transformation and the sharing and application of learning.
- 1.4 It also seems timely to review the mechanisms for agreeing activity and releasing funding. A perception has developed amongst some Councils that there is as much a bidding culture as there is a criterion-led programme of development, along with a higher than necessary level of bureaucracy and infrastructure, leading to a relatively high volume of small scale, lower impact initiatives. Given the approaching hard times, it seems that there is, at least, a case for considering a move to a small number of large-scale (£3-5m), possibly all-embracing, high-impact investments that systematically tackle the key issues that all Councils need to address.

2. THE PROPOSITION

- 2.1 As a result of discussions between a number of Chief Executives across the region, and a meeting with the new chair of the Member Steering Group, it is proposed that the RIEP, in partnership with the Chief Executive's Task Force (the group that is supporting the development of the WM Leaders' Board), undertake a rapid consultation/survey exercise with all Councils to establish if there is common ground for the development of a more focused, high investment-high impact suite of programmes to tackle head-on the financial challenges.
- 2.2 Existing projects and committed expenditure should, of course, be honoured, but if there was a swift move to a more concentrated programme then it would have the twin benefits of a "bigger bang" and the opportunity to allocate a significant level of unused funding that might otherwise be clawed back to the centre.

3. RECCOMENDATION

It is recommended that the IEWM, in partnership with the Chief Executives' Task Force, undertake a rapid survey and, assuming positive outcomes, assemble a slimmed down programme of "big ticket" initiatives that directly enable Councils to improve their capability and capacity to tackle the severe fiscal constraints ahead.

<p>6. Recruitment Portal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To consider a proposal for a major £650k project to take forward a regional end to end recruitment system – <p>Rebecca Davis/Bev Messinger</p> <p>(Paper 3 – Report and Project Assessment Form)</p>	<p>(15 minutes)</p>
<p>7. Updates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Audit - Feedback on the IEWM Audit which is currently nearing completion (oral) Developing a New Accountability Framework – LGA discussion paper (attached for comment) 	<p>(10 minutes)</p>
<p>8. Governance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actions to develop the work of the member Steering Group – oral Endorsement of updated Terms of Reference for Member Steering group and RIEP Strategic Board (Paper 4) 	<p>(10 minutes)</p>
<p>9. Dates of Future Meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 21st January 2010 2.00 – 4.00pm Birmingham - 22nd April 2010 2.00 – 4.00pm Birmingham - 22nd July 2010 half day 9.00- 2.00 Venue tba - 21st October 2010 2.00 – 4.00pm Birmingham 	