

DRAFT AGENDA
WM~RIEP BOARD MEETING 17th JULY

VENUE: HIMLEY HALL (tbc)

10.00AM – 4.00 PM

OBJECTIVES

- Develop Board Member understanding and association with RIEP
- Consider how the engagement of the RIEP with authorities can be developed and strengthened.
- Review the RIEP Delivery Plan and sign off those schemes at a suitable level of development
- Consider ways of engaging Board Members more closely in the work of the RIEP.

9.30am Coffee

10.00am 1. **Introductions/Scene Setting**

- Andrew Sparke – introduction
- Questions/discussions/issues for the day

2. **Workstream/Delivery Plans**

- 3 concurrent sessions (35 minutes each)
- Split attendees into 3 groups
- Brief introductions of what has worked/what is planned from officers (5 minutes per person max) Common format
- 3 sessions:
 - (a) Leadership and People and Improvement
 - (b) Transformation and Procurement and Waste and Construction)
 - (c) LAAs, Outcomes, Adults and Children

Plenary discussion

WEST MIDLANDS REGIONAL IMPROVEMENT AND EFFICIENCY PARTNERSHIP

NOTES OF BOARD MEETING 17TH JULY 2008

INTRODUCTION

Andrew Sparke, the Chief Executive of Dudley MBC and the newly appointed Chair of WM RIEP, opened the meeting and welcomed everybody to Himley Hall.

OVERVIEW OF RIEP WORKSTREAMS

Attendees separated into three groups and received a series of short presentations from the WM RIEP Workstream lead officers.

Feedback suggested members found the overview presentations a useful session for setting the context and for providing an update on current and proposed activity.

ENGAGING WITH THE REGION

Two groups, comprising one with a metropolitan/unitary interest and one with a county/district interest, held sessions on how to improve engagement between the WM RIEP and the officers and elected members across the region. Key points from the discussion included:

- RIEPs must not act or be viewed as another regulatory body (others such as GOs and Audit Commission fulfil this role) - they must be viewed as part of the local government family;
- As such there must be an open and honest relationship where authorities are encouraged to discuss their issues candidly to allow WM RIEP to fully understand the challenges faced and are thereby able to offer the most appropriate packages of support;
- Conversely, there must be a clear and transparent offer from the RIEP to enable authorities to easily see what support is available to them;
- There is a need for flexibility in the proposed funding arrangements with, for example, 'porous boundaries' to the clusters of authorities, ie. The option for Coventry and Solihull to join the Warwickshire cluster;
- A key role for RIEPs is to work on behalf of authorities in conjunction with the range of other support agencies such as GOWM, IDeA and AWM, acting as a conduit through which information flows so as to simplify and streamline the engagement process (which many feel is currently confusing);
- Effective engagement with elected members has been historically poor in the West Midlands despite a variety of projects and different approaches and is a weakness identified by CLG. Board members considered future engagement should concentrate on developing roles for elected members which are:
 - Ambassadorial; Reputational; Leadership.

DELIVERY PLAN AND PROGRESS

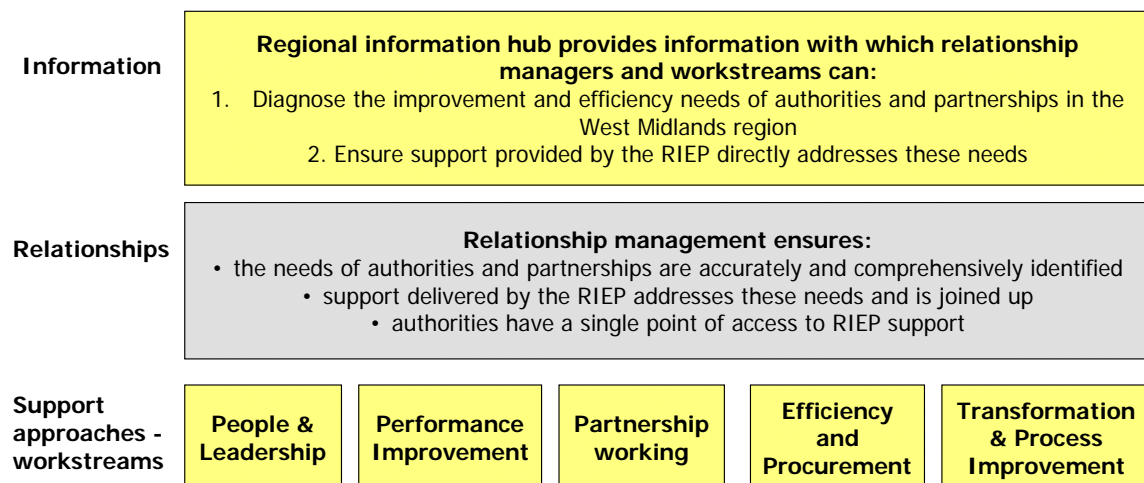
The WM~RIEP Delivery Plan and supporting arrangements are continuing to be refined. Key points from the meeting were:

1. Simplification of the Workstream Structure

It was agreed to simplify the overall Delivery Model down to 5 cross-cutting workstreams by combining Procurement/Construction/Highways into one workstream, Efficiency and Procurement, to reflect the strong procurement strand which runs across these areas of work.

These cross cutting themes are supported by a number of service and thematic themes - in particular Adult Services and Children's Services, and also climate change and economic development.

The model is set out below:



2. Funding of BPI Workstream.

The resource allocation approaches vary between workstreams depending on the needs in these areas. The funding approach for each workstream is very much as set out and agreed in the WM~RIEP Strategy with the exception of the Transformation/process improvement workstream. This is more challenging as the level of demand from authorities is proving to be significant and support clearly cannot be sustained in the long term with the funding available.

Going forward, following a discussion of the options, it was agreed that the funding approach should move to one based on indicative funding allocations for localities over the CSR07 period and specifically:

- **County/District areas: £350k, including the £100k already identified for enhanced two –tier working.**

- **Metropolitan and Unitary authorities: £175k.**
- **The 5 Fire Authorities (collectively): £175k.**

The exact phasing to be agreed but spend will be centred around a two year programme running from September 2008 to September 2010.

This approach was endorsed by the Board as it would support the move towards Relationship Management. In terms of the funding allocations this would require some re-jigging of budgets and the following financial transfers were approved: The revised approach would require additional funding of £1.6m in total to be found as follows:

- £300k for enhanced two tier working (plus £250k to assist Shropshire's transition to Unitary status)
- £500k from Improvement strand for innovative projects
- £400k from Efficiency and Procurement
- £180k from Adults and Children's Services
- £100k from LAA support
- c£120k to be secured by reviewing remaining CSR04 budget.

Approval to the principle of the new delivery approach, rationalised workstreams, transformation model and funding model was agreed.

Allocation and Utilisation of Resources

It was recognised that the RIEP budgets are committed in principle to the proposals outlined in the delivery Plan Summary in the Board paper. It was recognised that this meant that in general, ad-hoc bids for RIEP resources would not be fundable.

In term of moving from the outline budget approvals in the Delivery Plan Summary to firmly allocated proposals, clear arrangement of the sign off of resources were agreed by the Board. A detailed flow chart of how this would work was set out in the Board papers, but the main features are

- Clear documentation for all planned projects and activities
- A process of challenge for all areas of spend
- A formal sign off process that reflects the size and complexity of decisions
- Robust programme and project management arrangements in place for all projects

The process is designed to ensure spending plans are robust, without arrangements becoming overly bureaucratic. . Delegated limits for approval are agreed as:

£50k	Director
£100k	Board Chair
Above £100k	Partnership Board

This sign-off process was agreed. By the Board

Current Resource Issues and Bids

An update on a number of emerging proposals covering proposals for shared services across a number of County/District areas and several issues relating to underperforming authorities was provided..

It was considered that the concept of indicative locality budgets and joint business cases (to RIEP) will provide greater shape to the handling of shared service proposals and that **as a general rule the emerging proposals should be taken through the relevant cluster groups as presented.**

There was a short discussion on a proposal for 'Virtual Stratford' where £100,000 has been requested to employ specialist support to access substantial external resources. Members views were invited on whether to fund the project through the sub-regional resource allocation or through the RIEP's small Innovation Budget (£400K). **Members considered in principle that this should be addressed as part of the Warwickshire cluster funding.**

Philippa Holland said there was also a potential funding call to support the North Staffordshire MAA and the Black Country Consortium. These would need to be built into our plans as they evolve.

In summary the key funding and delivery plan recommendations agreed by the Board were:

1. That the overall approach set out in the WM~RIEP delivery plan based around the five cross cutting workstreams was endorsed
2. That the revised approach to the Transformation /Process Improvement Workstream was endorsed
3. That the revised funding allocation for the Transformation/Process Improvement workstream was agreed
4. That the emerging shape of the Programme was endorsed and the planned and potential projects framework used as a framework for committing resources – though this will clearly continue to develop and be refined
5. That the model of allocating resources and signing off resources set out was endorsed
6. That key elements of the Delivery plan are brought back to future meetings of the Board as they develop including detailed plans for adults and children's services.

12th August 08

c12.30pm **LUNCH**

c1.00pm **3. Engaging With The Region**

- (a) Overview - The RIEP Offer/Approach
 - the offer
 - working with authorities and sub regions
- (b) Discussion – **2 Groups**
 - County/District perspectives
 - Met Unitary perspective
- (c) Plenary -feedback

Coffee

4. Resources and Delivery Plan (collective session)

- o Summary of Delivery Plan
- o Resource Allocation Position and Process
- o Key Issues/Decisions

5. Board Members - roles/preferred working style

- Members views on how best to support and promote the RIEP

3.30pm Close – Feedback/Outstanding Questions