

Prospectus 2008: the guide to improvement and efficiency support



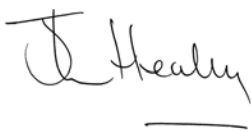
Foreword

The National Improvement and Efficiency Strategy, which we published in December 2007, was an important step in the journey towards supporting strong local partnerships to deliver better public services. It committed us to making it easier for councils and their partners to access the right support at the right time.

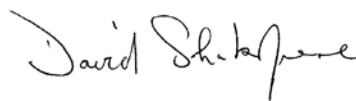
This Prospectus builds on that pledge. It draws together comprehensively the improvement support that is available from us to help local authorities and partners to meet the efficiency challenge, move beyond competence and importantly, deliver better public services.

Knowing the support is available however, is not enough. It needs to be the right support and be simple and easy to access. We are committed to taking this further over the coming months to ensure that the way in which we provide support is efficient and effective, so that councils and their partners can be sure that they'll get the right support at the right time. Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnerships are crucial in this, and will provide councils and partnerships with a mechanism to have a single conversation regarding improvement needs in their localities.

We believe this document provides a valuable, practical tool to make this happen. It offers elected members, Chief Executives, Chairs of local partnerships, and others, a valuable resource pack that will help them meet the challenge of delivering better public services.



John Healey
Minister for Local Government



David Shakespeare
Chair, LGA Improvement Board

introduction

Across the country, preparations are being made for new Local Area Agreements (LAAs), which will be in place from June 2008. These new LAAs will set ambitious targets for improving the quality of life at the local level; they are a central part of the new performance framework which seeks to reconnect citizens with government.

The delivery of LAAs will require – above all – strong local partnerships. Local authorities and their partners need to be able to understand what their communities want, and to work together effectively to provide the right services, with increasing efficiency and in ways that suit the needs of users and citizens.

The National Improvement and Efficiency Strategy, published last December, committed central and local government to working together in support of local partnerships.

What support is available?

This prospectus therefore includes practical offers of support to **build strong local partnerships to deliver better local outcomes**. It details the support available from the sector's own improvement bodies, along with support from central government, designed to help local authorities and their partners to achieve high standards of performance and deliver key national priorities. Alongside this, Regional Improvement and Efficiency strategies will set out support at a regional and sub-regional level, distinctly reflecting local needs and priorities. They will also set out strong mechanisms for **preventing and addressing underperformance**. Information on how to access this support can be obtained through the appropriate RIEP. Details on how to contact RIEPs are included on page 50.

How to access support:

Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnerships, working closely with the IDeA, through Regional Associates and Government Offices (GOs), will form a hub linking together this extensive programme of support, making it easier for councils and their partners to access the right support at the right time. This should be the starting point for councils and their partners. As RIEPs gain experience and develop their role, we expect to identify increasing opportunities to place them at the forefront of improvement in specific subjects.

Funding for support

Up to £185 million has been allocated to RIEPs. This is in addition to the £114 million of top-sliced Revenue Support Grant provided to the LGA central bodies to deliver programmes and tailored support to **strengthen local leadership of improvement** and value-for-money initiatives over the CSR period, and to embed this capacity for the future.

Supporting outcomes

We recognise that central government support will still be needed in some service areas where the sector's national architecture and RIEPs need to build capacity and capability. The first section of the Prospectus provides a comprehensive summary of the support on offer from government departments and the sector's improvement bodies to help local authorities and partners.

We recognise that there are some important connections between these outcomes and the need for an integrated approach to ensure genuinely sustainable communities.

However, for ease of reference we have broken this section down into eight subsections which highlight the support on offer from central and local government. The sections are as follows:

Part A: Stronger communities

Part B: Safer communities

Part C: Children and young people

Part D: Adult health and wellbeing

Part E: Tackling exclusion, and promoting equality

Part F: Local economy

Part G: Climate change and environmental leadership

Part H: Enablers

The second section of the Prospectus sets out the early steps we are taking to simplify delivery support arrangements.

part a: stronger communities

Central and local government share a commitment to building cohesive, empowered and active communities:

- *which maximise the benefits of diversity rather than fear it;*
- *where individuals are empowered to make a difference both to their own lives and to the communities and wider environment in which they live; and*
- *where individuals are enabled to live active and fulfilled lives.*

Community cohesion:

Communities and Local Government offers support to local authorities and partners to help them deliver improvements in community cohesion. They do this by providing access to:

- specialist cohesion teams to support local authorities facing cohesion challenges
- a range of practical resources such as a conflict resolution toolkit and a community cohesion impact assessment tool, and guidance on translation for local authorities, for example
- a single portal, hosted by the Institute for Community Cohesion, for cohesion guidance which will provide a continuously updated bank of guidance; and
- a cohesion delivery framework which will provide further advice for local authorities in delivering cohesion

Much of this support is already available, with the remainder in place by summer 2008. A comprehensive account of how Government is supporting the delivery of cohesive and integrated communities can be found on the Communities website at:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/communities/pdf/681624>

Culture and sport:

Information on how to access the support available for culture and sport is included in Part D: Adult health and well-being.

Active communities

The Cabinet Office through the Office of the Third Sector (and the Social Exclusion Taskforce) supports Local Authorities and partners in their roles to promote active communities. It does this by:

- Supporting the use of third sector organisations in the delivery of public services through:
 - A training programme run by IDeA to enhance the skills of public sector commissioners. See: www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/third_sector/public_services/commissioning.aspx
 - Pilots on the use of social clauses by local authorities in procurement contracts. See: www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/third_sector/public_services/social_clauses.aspx
 - Guidance on evidence-based commissioning. The guidance will support commissioners and providers in the selection and monitoring of programmes for vulnerable groups. See: www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/upload/assets/www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/social_exclusion_task_force/what_works/what_works.pdf
- Strengthening partnership working between local government and the third sector through the Partnership Improvement Programme, a joint venture between IDeA and the Institute for Voluntary Action Research (IVAR). Learning from this programme will be shared more widely through Communities of Practice being developed in each region and through an on-line resource. See: www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pagelid=5145516
- Investing in the capacity of the third sector, for example, through Capacitybuilders (www.capacitybuilders.org.uk) and Futurebuilders (www.futurebuilders-england.org.uk), and developing a guide to consortia building by third sector organisations. Capacitybuilders through their consortia development programme will invest £12m in 2008 – 11 on the basic standards and functions for consortia. This continued investment will enable local and regional consortia to lead longer-term strategic planning and investment in support services that meet the needs and potential of frontline organisations, and forge stronger links to local partnerships, decision-making and in particular Local Area Agreements. See: http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/third_sector/public_services.aspx

- Investing in the sustainability of the third sector, for example, through a £30m Community Assets programme: this aims to empower communities by providing capital grants to refurbish public assets being transferred to the third sector. Improving partnership working between third sector organisations and local authorities is a key objective of the programme; capacity building support over three years will help achieve this, further information can be found at www.biglotteryfund.org.uk The £130 million Grassroots Grants programme combines an £80 million small grants pot to support the smallest community groups, with an innovative £50 million endowment to provide sustainable income to provide grants for years ahead. The Community Development Foundation is the national delivery partner for Grassroots Grants and more information on can be found at www.cdf.org.uk

Empowerment:

Communities and Local Government supports local authorities in giving communities a stronger voice in reforming services so that they genuinely respond to local need. Communities and Local Government also supports increased opportunities for engagement and empowerment enabling people to have greater influence over local decisions. Communities and Local Government do this by working with the LGA, IDeA, Community Development Foundation and other national and regional partners, to offer support through:

- The National Empowerment Partnership and its regional empowerment consortia, which bring together in each region experienced community empowerment organisations with the RIEPs, GOs and local authorities to agree improvement priorities and develop and implement a joint programme of activity to improve the quality, co-ordination and evidence of empowerment practice in the region. Types of support available include learning events, peer support and best practice advice. They can be contacted through the Community Development Foundation (CDF) website: http://www.cdf.org.uk/POOLED/articles/bf_agendaart/view.asp?Q=bf_agendaart_298727
- A national programme of best practice development led by the local government sector to prepare for the new duty to involve. This will be co-ordinated by IDeA and CDF, working with the network of 18 Empowering Authorities, as well as other authorities engaged in innovative pilot, and demonstration projects, in particular policy areas.
- Sponsoring CDF as a leading source of intelligence, guidance and delivery on community development and empowerment in England and across the UK: <http://www.cdf.org.uk/>

part b: safer communities

Central and local government share a commitment to:

- *continue to build on the significant reductions in crime achieved over recent years, with fewer people being victims of crime and the public protected from the most harmful offenders. We also want local agencies to be accountable and responsive to the needs and priorities of the local community, leading to increased public confidence in those agencies*
- *build a criminal justice system which puts victims at its heart and in which the public are confident and engaged. It will be effective in bringing offences to justice through simple and efficient processes*

Crime reduction:

The Home Office provides Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships and Community Safety Partnerships with support to deliver safer communities through access to:

- good practice, toolkits, on-line expert chats and guidance, such as *Delivering Safer Communities: a guide to effective partnership working*;
- conferences, training and learning events on subjects such as problem solving, leadership, and performance management, aimed at crime reduction and community safety practitioners;
- on-going support and advice from performance support managers working with and through GOs;
- the Partnership Support Programme (PSP), delivered by joint Home Office/ Government Office teams taking a management consultancy approach to working with partnerships to help them meet national standards and achieve the hallmarks of effectiveness. The teams include secondees from across the community safety sector. They use diagnostic and action planning tools to share learning between areas. Further tailored support packages are developed following diagnostics; and,
- intelligence-led/priority driven funding and other resources to tackle specific problems within a single area or across groups of partnerships.

More information is available from Government offices and on the Home Office's crime reduction website: <http://www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk/cpindex.htm>

Offender management:

The Ministry of Justice provides a range of practical support to help councils and partners to reduce offending and re-offending. This offer includes access to:

- regional offender managers who can share and help partners and partnerships spread effective practice, and increase knowledge of what works;
- The National Offender Management Service Performance Improvement Unit (PIU) which has three performance improvement products :
 - a) a focus on delivery of performance targets and organisational capability as commissioned by the Director of Probation for Boards and the ROM for Trusts.
 - b) a focus on specific performance targets where improvement is required as determined by the Head of PIU
 - c) a programme of assistance as requested by the local Chief Officer

All three approaches include diagnosis, action plan delivery and review.

<http://noms.justice.gov.uk/noms-regions/>

- chief probation officers or regional offender managers can provide direct support where poor performance has been identified; and,
- The Youth Justice Board (YJB) has Regional Teams in place to monitor the performance of Youth Offending Teams (YOT) partnerships. Improvement support is allocated on a risk led basis and covers both strategic and operational issues. This is delivered by Regional Teams and by the YJB's Performance Improvement Team. <http://www.yjb.gov.uk>.

Road safety:

Department for Transport (DfT) provide a range of opportunities for local authorities and partnerships to share learning and good practice on reducing the number of road traffic accidents. This offer includes access to:

- 'Road Safety Time Bank' www.roadsafetyhub.co.uk – a web-based tool which enables local authorities to 'trade' knowledge and expertise;
- road safety health check for authorities to help them improve their casualty reduction performance;
- free educational and publicity materials to assist road safety officers in local authorities; and,
- Road Safety Partnership Grant to match-fund projects led by authorities keen to develop and share good practice in sustainable road safety measures. Further information is available at:

www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/roadsafety/rspg or from
sandra.armstrong@dft.gsi.gov.uk

Fire safety:

Fire and rescue authorities (FRAs) are able to access a range of specialist and technical support to the fire industry, that includes help from:

- a Communities and Local Government support team of experienced practitioners and the Chief Fire and Rescue Adviser's Unit who engage and support FRAs rated as poor or weak
- a bank of national research on what works in community safety programmes and models of effective practice. This will be published in due course at: www.communities.gov.uk/fire
- the Fire Service College who offer a range of training opportunities including leadership programmes: <http://www.fireservicecollege.ac.uk/>
- toolkits to provide technical support for target setting www.communities.gov.uk/publications/fire/
- good practice case studies on community safety initiatives undertaken by FRAs with a view to encouraging others to consider similar projects:
<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/fire/notablepracticecase4>
<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/fire/fireoperationalassessment>

part c: children and young people

Central and local government share a commitment to wanting England to be the best place for children and young people to grow up, which means:

- *a society which helps all children and young people achieve their full potential and where the momentum of success, enjoyment and learning continues into their adult lives; and,*
- *that all young people will be on the path to success and achieve the five outcomes set out in Every Child Matters: to be healthy; stay safe; enjoy and achieve; make a positive contribution; and achieve economic well-being.*

The Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) provides a comprehensive programme of support to help councils and local partnerships to deliver better outcomes for children and young people. This offer includes help to improve attainment and achievement, develop the workforce, improve leadership, and strengthen skills of practitioners. They do this through:

Children's services

- children's services advisers (CSAs) based within Government Offices (GOs) who provide high-level strategic support and challenge to local authorities and coordinate the flow of support from DCSF field forces through the development of an agreed Joint Improvement Support Plan.

Early years and schools

- Together for Children support local authorities to deliver the commitment to establish a Sure Start Children's Centre in every community by 2010. A range of support and advice is available on their website including an on-line tool designed to help with the development of children's centres. It provides, for example, step by step assistance in tracking progress of children's centres, and capturing data about the service offered in each centres. For further information refer to: <http://www.childrens-centres.org/>
- the national strategies provide advice and guidance to schools on good practice and what works in raising levels of attainment and achievement, and reducing levels of absence and improving behaviour <http://www.nationalstrategies.org.uk/>

Young people

- teenage pregnancy regional co-ordinators help local partnerships meet their teenage pregnancy targets and provide more intensive support for areas significantly off their trajectory for their 2010 target. This is supplemented by the Teenage Pregnancy National Support Team (funded by Department of Health) which offers an intensive four-day 'diagnostic' visit by an expert team and a package of follow-up support. Areas are selected for this support on the basis of high rates and the degree of challenge in meeting the target;
- The Youth Justice Board provide assistance with preventing and tackling youth crime, in partnership with DCSF, Home Office and the Ministry of Justice (see page 10) <http://www.yjb.gov.uk>
- the National Treatment Agency help local authorities and partners reduce substance abuse by young people by providing advice on drug and alcohol treatment services for under 18s. <http://www.nta.nhs.uk>

Workforce development

- the Children's Workforce Development Council helps to ensure that all people working with children, young people, and their families have the best possible training, qualifications, support and advice. It works to increase recruitment into the children's workforce and improve the retention of high-quality employees, helping councils deliver better services across a range of providers. <http://www.cwdcouncil.org.uk/>
- the National College for School Leadership (<http://www.ncsl.org.uk>) helps councils and schools ensure existing and future leaders are supported through the provision of a range of leadership programmes. Similarly, the Centre for Excellence in Leadership works within the further education sector to improve leadership through work shadowing opportunities, mentoring, coaching, and a career development service. <http://www.centreforexcellence.org.uk/default.aspx>
- the Training and Development Agency for Schools works with schools to develop the workforce and ensure that schools can recruit good-quality, well-trained people. They support schools to provide extended services for parents, children and young people and also provide support on the delivery of targeted youth support through events and good practice and the provision of tailored advice to local authorities working with GOs. <http://www.tda.gov.uk/>
- the National Youth Agency offers a broad range of support for workforce standards and development, which can include consultancy. <http://www.nya.org.uk>

Other support measures

- DCSF is establishing a Centre for Excellence and Outcomes in Children and Young People's Services (CfEO) to identify, co-ordinate and share national, regional and local knowledge and evidence about systems and practice, where services and outcomes for children and young people are improving. Expected to be launched in July 2008, the CfEO will help local partners cut through the extensive evidence base underpinning good practice, across key service areas, and enable them to use this to meet their needs.
- local authorities can access a range of potential suppliers that are able to support councils in their improvement through the Children's Services Framework Contract. Further information on the framework is available through children's services advisers.
- the Centre for Procurement Performance works across the whole of the education, skills and children and families system, promoting more effective procurement. They work with organisations to increase opportunities for achieving savings on the purchases of services or goods, and encourage collaboration. A range of advice, guidance and case studies can be found on the website. <http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/cpp/>

Child poverty

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and DCSF, through the Child Poverty Unit, provide advice and guidance on how to improve the life chances of all children to local authorities and partnerships to help them deliver radical and innovative services. This offer currently includes access to:

- a local child poverty toolkit (<http://www.cptk.org.uk/>) developed by the Child Poverty Action Group (<http://www.cpag.org.uk/>) which will support local authorities in identifying and addressing issues influencing levels of child poverty in their areas

In 2008-09 there will be a Beacon Council theme 'preventing and tackling child poverty', which will help identify and showcase the best in front-line service provision. Alongside this, the Child Poverty Unit will consider in conjunction with local government, the need for any guidance and tools for those developing, commissioning, and delivering services specifically relating to the eradication of child poverty.

Further information on Beacons:

<http://www.beacons.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pagelD=1>

Further information on the work of the Child Poverty Unit:

<http://www.dwp.gov.uk/childpoverty/>

Culture and sport:

Information on how to access support available on culture and sport is included in Part D: Adult health and well-being.

part d: adult health and well-being

Central and local government share a commitment to creating a health and adult social care service that genuinely focuses on the prevention of ill health and the promotion of health and well-being which is informed by what people have said they want, meeting their aspirations for independence and well-being.

Social care:

The Department of Health together with the LGA and the Association of Directors Adult Social Services (ADASS) are putting in place a comprehensive package to help councils and partners improve services in social care. This offer, which is part of “putting people first”, will include access to support for improvement and efficiency:

Joint improvement partnerships (JIPs) promote and co-ordinate a range of high quality support, mainly at no cost to the recipient, from existing agencies. They bring together ADASS, IDeA, LGA, Social Care Commission for Inspection (CSCI), Care Services Improvement Partnership (CSIP), English Community Care Association (ECCA), NHS Institute for Innovation and Improvement, Skills for Care, and the Social Care Institute for Excellence.

The partnership aims to add value by ensuring coherence and optimal use of resources in areas of shared interest and to avoid duplication of effort. This includes the dissemination of tools and technologies to support delivery and transformational change, commissioning of regional support, access to training programmes, and tailored hands-on support for under performance, all of which can be accessed through regional JIPs.

For further information and contacts:

<http://www.jointimprovementpartnership.org.uk/>

Care Services Efficiency Delivery (CSED) works collaboratively with all councils throughout England supporting them to achieve sustainable efficiency improvements in adult social care. Equally, CSED works to support the White Paper Our health, our care, our say to deliver person-centred care.

For further information on products, support and contacts:

Care Services Efficiency Delivery – <http://www.csed.csip.org.uk/>

At a national level, DH and local government leaders are proposing to develop a local government-led consortium to support the modernisation agenda, and for more on the support available to drive the transformation of social care: http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Lettersandcirculars/LocalAuthorityCirculars/DH_081934

The following bodies also have a key role in driving improvements in social care:

- **Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE)**

SCIE aims to improve social care services by identifying good practice and helping to embed it in everyday social care provision. This offer includes access to:

- knowledge-based good practice guidance;
- opportunities to involve service users, carers, practitioners, providers and policy makers in advancing and promoting good practice in social care; and,
- skills training and professional development for social care workers

<http://www.scie.org.uk/>

- **Skills for Care**

Skills for Care aims to help transform adult social care by ensuring qualifications and standards continually adapt to meet the changing needs of people who use care services. They do this in a range of ways, for example through developing national standards, creating a national workforce development strategy, collecting skills data and research. They also have regional committees which contribute to improvement through workforce development.

<http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/>

- **NHS Institute for Innovation and Improvement**

The NHS Institute for Innovation and Improvement supports the spread of new ways of working, new technology and leadership support to help the NHS transform healthcare for patients and the public. They aim to:

- inspire the NHS workforce, encouraging staff to adopt the knowledge and skills required to improve services and care;
- encourage and develop talented people to lead their teams through these series of changes; and,
- provide a range of learning opportunities, practical advice and tools to help organisations and staff achieve individual and collective goals.

<http://www.institute.nhs.uk/>

Health and well-being:**Healthy communities**

The Department of Health fund the IDeA to provide the Healthy Communities programme to help local authorities tackle health inequalities more effectively. IDeA do this in a range of ways, for example by providing peer reviews and peer support, web-based resources, and support for leadership, conferences and workshops.

For information: www.idea.gov.uk
or email healthy.communities@idea.gov.uk

Well-being and work

The Department of Health is piloting health and wellbeing schemes in several NHS trusts from which staff will be able to get confidential feedback on their health, alongside personalised advice on healthy lifestyles, and the trusts will get anonymised data on the health status of their workforce that can be used to target actions to improve health and wellbeing. Further details of support to improve health and well-being can be found at:

<http://www.peoplemanagement.co.uk/PM/supplements/healthandwellbeing/providers/default.htm>

Health and Safety Executive

Support for the improvement of health and wellbeing at work is provided by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). This offer includes access to:

- management and technical guidance on health, safety, and well-being;
- science and technology funding for research projects;
- analytical support to analyse injury/ ill health trends;
- information systems; and,
- strategic policy assistance (HSE strategic programmes such as Fit3, worker involvement)

Support can be accessed through the local authority's health and safety unit, regional partnership teams or local and regional offices. DWP can provide information and guidance on departmental strategies. The contact is: Andy Vickers – telephone: 020 7712 2846, email: Andy.Vickers@DWP.gsi.gov.uk

Culture and sport:

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) together with the LGA, IDeA, and other stakeholders have developed an improvement strategy for culture and sport. Support for change will be delivered through an offer which includes peer review, challenge and support. This will promote sport and cultural excellence, and will be supported by access to:

- a single improvement tool;
- best practice examples;
- voluntary business improvement benchmarks; and,
- a series of regional workshops in 2008.

The DCMS's family of non-departmental government bodies, including for example Sport England, Arts Council, and the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council offer local councils and partnerships access to a range of projects, tools and research to support improvement in their sectors. Direct support to some of these tools can also be accessed through the culture and sports improvement networks, and increasingly RIEPs. For information on how to access these contact Chandru Dissanayeke – telephone: 020 7211 6953, email: Chandru.Dissanayeke@culture.gsi.gov.uk

For further information refer to *A Passion for Excellence* www.culture.gov.uk

part e: tackling exclusion and promoting equality

Central and local government share a commitment to ensuring that the most vulnerable adults are offered the chance to get back on a path to a more successful life, by increasing the proportion of socially excluded adults in settled accommodation and in employment, education or training (EET).

Older people:

To support the implementation of the Opportunity age – Opportunity and security throughout life strategy, DWP offer access to:

- web-based materials such as community of practice, reference and self assessment tools links to which can be accessed at http://www.dwp.gov.uk/opportunity_age/
- free consultancy services and national events.

The DWP contact for this support is Gwen Wolf – telephone: 020 7962 8174, email: Gwen.Wolf@dwp.gsi.gov.uk

Culture and sport:

Information on how to access support available on culture and sport is included in Part D: Adult health and well-being.

Digital inclusion:

Communities and Local Government provides a range of support for digital inclusion including:

- access to local digital advisors;
- targeted approach to support local authorities interested in improvement;
- regional network of local authorities engaged in digital inclusion activities;
- beacon council theme; and,
- events, workshops and web services.

Social housing and vulnerable people

Communities and Local Government provides a range of support to help local authorities with their strategies to reduce homelessness, deliver independent living for vulnerable people and improve housing stock condition. Local authorities can draw on best thinking and practice through access to:

- **specialist advisors** for homelessness, choice-based lettings; supporting people regional resource; supporting people value improvement programme capacity building. Advisors provide advice and support, and share best practice for example on tackling homelessness and rough sleeping. Supporting people cross-regional resource teams focus on the housing and support needs of a range of vulnerable groups. Support can be accessed through Communities and Local Government.
- **Regional local authority champions for homelessness and supporting people** – regionally, local authority champions for homelessness offer support and guidance as well as disseminating good practice to local authorities and partners in preventing homelessness and developing alternative housing options through training and seminars and sub-regional and regional activities. There are 18 homelessness regional champions. In 2007/08 Communities and Local Government funded nine local authority supporting people champions to share good practice on issues such as joint commissioning, service-user involvement and local area agreements (LAAs).
- **National Change Agent for Housing** helps landlords set up procurement consortia to secure efficiencies in achieving the Decent Homes Standard through effective and economic procurement of goods and services. Applications for support are made to the National Change Agent for Housing who makes recommendations for funding to Communities and Local Government.

Further information on any of the above can be found at www.communities.gov.uk/housing/ or via the local government offices.

Neighbourhood renewal:

Communities and Local Government offers support for the delivery of neighbourhood renewal and LAAs by providing local strategic partnerships (LSPs) with access to a pool of experienced advisors known as neighbourhood renewal advisors, and a good practice website, via Renewal.net. Advisors, accessed via GOs, help LSPs equip themselves with the skills and capacity they need, such as partnership working, leadership, and strategic commissioning, to deliver better local outcomes. www.renewal.net provides access to case studies, 'how to' guides, and learning from evaluations. Renewal.net is currently being merged within IDeA Knowledge to create a new good practice website to support the delivery of LAAs.

To support the delivery of the Working Neighbourhoods Fund, Communities and Local Government and DWP are working together to ensure that employment, regeneration and neighbourhood renewal objectives are met. Through this arrangement a programme of support for LSPs will be developed in partnership with RIEPs which will include the design of tools to support local delivery and provide best practice and advice.

Communities and Local Government and DWP will also support the delivery of Working Neighbourhoods Fund objectives through promoting learning events, commissioning research and disseminating good practice through any existing or newly created tools to support delivery.

Advice services:

The Ministry of Justice and the Legal Services Commission are offering partnership arrangements with local authorities to deliver better co-ordinated advice on a range of social welfare issues.

The jointly commissioned community legal advice centres and networks will provide integrated advice services at all levels, including specialist legal advice on debt, employment, welfare benefits, community care and housing. They will also offer general advice tailored to local needs and will identify opportunities for tackling common causes of problems to deliver better local outcomes.

The aims of centres and networks are to;

- tackle disadvantage and promote social inclusion;
- enable local people to protect their fundamental rights and resolve legal disputes;
- deliver legal advice according to the needs and priorities of local communities;
- provide good quality integrated legal advice services ranging from basic information to representation in court; and
- tackle clients' multiple and often interrelated legal problems in one place, minimising the need for referral.

For further information, please contact sophie.brookes@legalservices.gov.uk.

part f: local economy

Central and local government share a commitment to raising the rate of sustainable growth and achieve rising prosperity and a better quality of life, with economic and employment opportunities for all. More specifically:

- *increased employment in all regions, with more economically inactive people helped and encouraged to find sustained employment;*
- *demonstrable improvements in productivity in all regions, and narrowing the gap in productivity between the regions;*
- *a skills supply more responsive to employers and a greater understanding of the value of skills among business, leading to more business investment;*
- *a transport system that enables sustained economic prosperity and addresses the needs of the travelling public; and,*
- *increase housing supply in England across all tenures to meet the target of least 240,000 net additional homes per year by 2016.*

Transport:

Department for Transport supports local authorities by providing access to guidance and good practice, peer learning, and research on a wide range of transport issues. They do this through, for example, a range of practitioner groups and bodies to help local authorities improve local public transport services, and tackle road congestion and transport infrastructure asset management and efficiency challenges. Key groups include:

Local Transport Planning Network

<http://www.ltpnetwork.gov.uk>

UK Roads Liaison Group

www.ukroadsliaisongroup.org

Highways Efficiency Liaison Group

www.highways.gov.uk/business/11635.aspx

Regional and National Traffic Manager Forums

Damian.De_niese@dft.gsi.gov.uk 020 7944 2150

North West Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership

<http://www.nwce.gov.uk/>

Regeneration and housing supply:

The Academy for Sustainable Communities is the national centre for improving the skills and knowledge needed to make better places. More specifically they raise awareness of sustainable communities, build capacity through new skills, and improve performance through setting standards and highlighting and sharing good practice. They work with local authorities and other organisations critical to the success of future communities.

<http://www.ascskills.org.uk/pages/home>

Communities and Local Government will bring together the Academy for Sustainable Communities with English Partnerships, and the Housing Corporation to form the new Homes and Communities Agency in April 2009. This will draw together expertise, resources and powers to transform delivery of housing and regeneration, and provide support to drive improvement across housing, regeneration and community work.

Homes and Communities Agency

As set out in the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) Concordat, the HCA will have a role in supporting councils by:

- using its powers to acquire (by negotiation or compulsory purchase), remediate and dispose of land, provide financial assistance, provide and/or facilitate housing, provide or facilitate the provision of infrastructure, and provide or facilitate the provision of community services in support of local projects which contribute to the delivery of national objectives;
- using its powers to provide information, advice, education, training and guidance services and support services to help councils unlock strategic land assets and develop innovative new approaches to delivery, such as through new local housing companies or community land trusts, and helping to drive more effective joint working with private sector partners;
- effectively discharging its responsibilities as a local area agreement partner authority and supporting the delivery of local improvement targets; and,
- effectively discharging its responsibilities as a statutory consultee on the formulation of local areas' sustainable community strategies.

Local regulation:**Local Better Regulation Office (LBRO)**

The Local Better Regulation Office (LBRO) has been set up by the Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (BERR) to drive the wider regulatory reform agenda at local level, and to stimulate, support and incentivise improvement. LBRO working closely with LACORS will offer local authorities access to best practice in local authority regulatory services and provide opportunities for sharing advice and guidance, and working directly with local authorities on pilot and project work.

The two bodies will:

- collaborate to ensure that council regulatory services are in the best possible position to protect consumers, workers and the environment and reduce unnecessary burdens on business
- work together to build a ‘world class’ system of local authority regulatory services and work together for better council regulatory services.

Further information can be accessed at:

<http://bre.berr.gov.uk/regulation/reform/lbro/index.asp>

<http://www.lbro.org/>

Economic development:

Regional development agencies’ (RDAs) agenda includes regeneration, taking the lead on business support simplification, inward investment and support for innovation and, working with regional partners, ensuring the development of a skills action plan to ensure that skills and training matches the needs of the labour market. RDAs will continue to have an important role in providing support for local authorities, particularly in delivering complex projects e.g. capital regeneration, to enable more effective economic development at local levels.

For further information refer to:

<http://www.englandsrdas.com/home.aspx>

Worklessness:

Department for Work and Pensions can offer advice on increasing employment. They do this, for example, by providing the cities and city regions covered by the DWP City Employment Strategy with access to a learning network led by the Centre for Economic and Social Inclusion (CESI).

For further information refer to:

http://www.dwp.gov.uk/welfarereform/cities_strategy.asp

or contact Damian Gibbons, CESI, on 020 7582 7721 or email him at Damian.Gibbons@cesi.org.uk

Department for Work and Pensions also provides information and guidance to local authorities and LSPs on increasing employment and reducing the number of people of working age on benefits. Contact Lee Crawford, on 020 7712 2562 or email Lee.Crawford@dwp.gsi.gov.uk; alternatively, on deprived areas, contact Oliver Phillips on 020 7962 8794, email: Oliver.Phillips@dwp.gsi.gov.uk.

Benefits:

The DWP Performance Development Team (PDT) provides free consultancy support to local authorities for their housing benefit and council tax benefit services. This is a bespoke service available to all local authorities administering these benefits across Great Britain.

For further information, or to request PDT help, please contact:

Cheryl Weaver 020 7712 2280 or 07771 844175

Email: cheryl.weaver@dwp.gsi.gov.uk

part g: climate change and environmental leadership

Central and local government share a commitment to tackling climate change through domestic action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, manage waste more effectively, and secure a healthy, resilient, productive and diverse natural environment.

Climate change:

The Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) provides a comprehensive offer of support that is designed to help deliver local priorities on climate change:

The **Energy Saving Trust** provides support, advice and guidance to local authorities on measures to help them reduce emissions from housing and transport, and the **Carbon Trust** provides support on reducing carbon dioxide emissions from the authorities', and other organisations' own estate and operations.

Together they manage a range of programmes which can be accessed by local authorities and their partners. For example: the Carbon Trust offers free energy surveys; and, the Local Authority Carbon Management Programme, runs energy manager networks and provides funding for Salix Finance (assistance on reducing carbon emissions by providing loans for capital investment in energy efficiency projects).

The Energy Saving Trust runs the Key Account Programme, offering tailored support to local authorities as well as offering the Housing Energy Efficiency Best Practice Programme resources, a national network of Energy Efficiency Advice Centres and the Community Action for Energy (CAfE) Programme.

More details on all of these programmes and more can be found at:

Carbon Trust – <http://www.carbontrust.co.uk/carbon/PublicSector/>

Energy Savings Trust – www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/housingandbuildings

Fuel Poverty

The National Energy Action (NEA) charity [part funded by Defra] works with Local Authorities and Local Strategic Partnership to develop affordable warmth commitments and strategies. They also offer toolkits, training for front-line staff and workshops for policy managers and elected members to help build capacity of local authorities. NEA would welcome enquiries from organisations developing and delivering Local Area Agreement outcomes. For further information go to <http://www.nea.org.uk/>.

EAGA (who manage Government's £800 million Warm Front Programme (www.warmfront.co.uk)) work in partnership with LAs and Local LSPs supporting local initiatives to ensure measures are delivered at a local level. There is also support for energy efficiency and other measures in low income, elderly and disabled households as part of the Carbon Emissions Reduction Target (CERT).

The **Energy Measures Report** (<http://www.berr.gov.uk/energy/environment/measures/page41270.html>), published jointly by BERR, Defra and Communities and Local Government in September 2007, sets out the steps which local authorities can take to tackle climate change and address fuel poverty.

The **Beacon Council Scheme** (including the 2006 'Sustainable Energy' theme, the 2007 'Promoting sustainable communities through the planning process theme' and the soon to be announced winners of the new 'Tackling Climate Change' theme) also provides a useful source of tools, advice and best practice examples:

<http://www.beacons.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pagelId=1>

<http://beacons.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pagelId=5098472>

<http://www.beacons.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pagelId=6070162>

Guidance on how to undertake climate risk assessments and action plan processes on the unavoidable impacts of climate change is available in the

Nottingham Declaration Action Pack.

www.nottinghamdeclaration.org.uk

In addition to the information provided here, other resources are available to support local authority work in this area:

The **UK Climate Impacts Programme (UKCIP)** www.ukcip.org.uk has a range of tools and resources, including information on the production of a Local Climate Impacts Profile (LCLIP).

Additional guidance is also available from statutory authorities, such as the Environment Agency and Natural England, on issues such as flooding, water resources, coastal management, waste, biodiversity, landscape and the natural environment.

Waste:

The Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs provides a comprehensive offer of support that is designed to help deliver local priorities on waste.

Waste Infrastructure Delivery Programme, a partnership between Defra, 4ps, and Partnerships UK, coordinates the waste PFI programme and offers support and technical expertise to assist local authorities with the planning, procurement, and build of large-scale municipal waste treatment infrastructure.

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/waste/wip/widp/index.htm>

Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) supports local authorities in achieving material resource efficiency in a locally appropriate and cost-effective way. They offer practical and expert support so that councils can deliver high quality recycling services, reduce the growth of household waste and 'close the loop' in recycling through buying recycled products.

<http://www.wrap.org.uk/>

The Environmental Services Efficiency Programme is a series of national and regional projects part funded by Defra and co-ordinated through South East Improvement and Efficiency Partnership, the national lead RIEP on waste. The programme will be rolled out through the nine regions. This includes guidance on where to find and how to secure efficiency improvements which will be hosted on the Waste Information Network website (see below). There will also be practical projects to enable authorities to improve procurement, work in partnership and save money. This can be accessed through:

<http://www.rcoe.gov.uk>

Local authorities can also find other means of support through the Waste Information Network:

<http://www.win.org.uk/>

Flood and Coastal erosion risk management

Defra and Environment Agency provide guidance on the preparation of Shoreline Management Plans (SMPs) and Catchment Flood Management Plans (CFMPs). These provide a large-scale assessment of the risks for lengths of shoreline and river catchments and present a long term policy framework to reduce these risks to people and the developed, historic and natural environment in a sustainable manner. CFMPs and SMPs are high level documents that form an important element of the strategy for flood and coastal erosion risk management.

EA can provide detailed information on the monitoring of actions and further information is available from <http://www.defra.gov.uk/enviro/fcd/policy/smp.htm> and <http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/subjects/flood/1217883/1217968/907676/>

Local environmental quality:

The Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs supports local authorities in this area chiefly through its sponsorship of the charity ENCAMS. ENCAMS campaigns on litter and anti-social behaviour and carries out the national Local Environmental Quality Survey of England. They share best practice through regional seminars, events, websites and the Cleaner, Safer, Greener Network. ENCAMS can provide campaign materials and also offer direct advice to authorities on the skills needed to address their specific local environmental quality concerns. For further information:

<http://www.encams.org/home/>

Natural environment:

The Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs provides a comprehensive offer of support that is designed to help deliver local priorities on the natural environment:

The Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs supports regional biodiversity partnerships and forums, who provide advice to local authorities on regional and local priorities and opportunities

http://www.ukbap.org.uk/EBG/local_reg_strat_imp_group.asp

Natural England are an advisor for biodiversity issues, and will provide advice and support to biodiversity partnerships both at the local and regional level.

www.naturalengland.org.uk/about/default.htm

On air quality, Defra will be publishing revised guidance on local air quality management carried out under Part IV of the Environment Act 1995 for consultation in Spring 2008, providing improved leadership and encouraging joined up working. Advice for local authorities on local air quality is available on <http://www.airquality.co.uk/archive/laqm/laqm.php>.

Better public places:

Communities and Local Government in collaboration with local government and other stakeholders, have developed an offer of practical tools and resources to help councils and partners enhance skills and capacity to enable better performance in creating and managing good quality places. These resources can be accessed through:

- support networks including the National Neighbourhood Management Network (www.renewal.net/NNMN/), (www.neighbourhoodmanagement.net) and the New Deal for Communities (NDC) Network;
- the regional warden and neighbourhood resource centres (www.neighbourhoodalliance.org.uk);
- knowledge and evaluation materials including the national evaluation of the neighbourhood management pathfinders (<http://www.neighbourhood.gov.uk/page.asp?id=1196>) and the NDC evaluation;
- practical guides, tool-kits, and “How to” guides on a wide range of subjects (www.cleanersafergreener.gov.uk);
- web-based resources including the cleaner safer greener website (www.cleanersafergreener.gov.uk) and green space database. (This will be launched in Autumn 2008); and,
- support via intermediaries, such as CABI Space’s work with local authorities to develop strategic approaches to their green spaces (www.cabi.org.uk).

Planning:

The Planning Advisory Service (PAS) is working with local authorities in England to strengthen their engagement with the Local Development Framework and enable them to deliver their Sustainable Community Strategies. PAS focuses on enhancing the performance of the best and accelerating the speed of improvement of the rest through provision of on-line assessment tools, support for elected members and senior managers, and advice on effective community involvement.

<http://www.pas.gov.uk/pas/core/page.do?pagel=1>

part h: enablers

Central and local government share a commitment to supporting councils as leaders of place working with their local partners to deliver better social, economic and environmental outcomes in an integrated way, improve quality of life, and improve public services. This includes developing the capability to make the important decisions between cross cutting priorities at a local level. Underpinning this, we want to support councils to improve value for money to meet the 3% efficiency target, and increase their innovative capacity.

The LGA and Central Bodies

The LGA and the Central Bodies – 4ps, IDeA, LACORS, LGE and the Leadership Centre – work at the national level to support local government improvement, complementing and linking closely with other support being provided at the national, regional and local level. The central bodies are funded largely from Revenue Support Grant topslice and together they combine to support community leadership and the delivery of improved local outcomes and value for money.

Community leadership and partnership working

The IDeA supports councils in their enhanced community leadership role, focusing on the issues for local people, and in particular partnership working, place-shaping and tackling cross-cutting issues. This includes support for councils and their partners in:

- **delivering the vision for their place and their communities** through: action learning, case studies and guidance on neighbourhood working, including with work with the National Police Improvement Agency on neighbourhood policing; the Planning Advisory Service and also the IDeA's strategic housing programme, commissioned by Communities and Local Government; and work with councils in responding to the Sub National Review of economic development and regeneration; and support on environmental and sustainability issues.
- **transforming children's, adult social care and public health services** through: a programme of sector-led support for improvements in the capacity and performance of these services; Leadership Academy programmes for elected members; communities of practice and good practice case studies and guidance; the IDeA's Health Communities programme; and support for outcomes-based commissioning

- **partnership working, particularly LSPs and LAAs** through: peer support and good practice guidance on good governance; a programme to support the delivery of LAA outcomes in two tier areas; the Partnership Improvement Programme, identifying new ways of working with the third sector; and as part of IDeA Knowledge, an on-line library sharing good practice and innovation to improve outcomes as well as partnership working
- **efficiency and service transformation** through: the development of the Local Government Workforce strategy including the dissemination of good practice in achieving culture change, and local partnership working on workforce issues; a programme of support for local government reorganisation; and delivery of the National Programme for Third Sector Commissioning.
- **equalities and cohesion** through: the development of the Equality Standard, and support to councils in achieving this; and good practice advice and tailored support on cohesion, migration and preventing violent extremism.
- **strategic HR, skills, recruitment and organisational development** through its promotion of the sector as an excellent place to work, and initiatives such as the Local Government Talent website, and the “Best Council to Work For” scheme; and development programmes, events and communities of practice for HR and OD practitioners.
- **maximising the benefits of the new performance framework including the CAA** through: support for self-assessments and peer challenge

The IDeA will provide and continue to develop the national spine of improvement, through:

- its national leadership programmes and resources, including the IDeA's flagship Leadership Academy, developing councillors and managers as leaders of local places and partnerships
- peers from all sectors, accredited by the IDeA's Peer Clearing House, and other local government-led support including a comprehensive programme of peer reviews
- support for innovation and excellence, including developing the Beacon Scheme to ensure that it showcases good practice in delivering LAA outcomes
- its on-line services such as IDeA Knowledge and the Communities of Practice to share and develop knowledge

- its clienting and commissioning on behalf of local government, for example with schemes such as the National Graduate Development Programme
- its work with other national improvement bodies
- regional and local support, in particular working with the Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnerships to ensure that councils receive a seamless service for councils and their partners.

www.idea.gov.uk

The **Leadership Centre for Local Government** helps local government and local partnerships create major and lasting transformation by bringing together politics, leaders and the technical job of delivering or commissioning services to genuinely improve residents' lives through leadership. The Leadership Centre for Local Government works at just this level and provides the following services:

- political development: groundbreaking work specifically within a party political setting under the banner of 'civic pride';
- major transformation programmes: work on transformational leadership projects with regional, sub-regional and locality-based organisations;
- Leeds Castle Leadership Programme: a skills development initiative uniquely bringing together political leaders and chief officers with the specific aim of taking good leaders and turning them into great ones;
- an Improvement Network (also sponsored by IDeA, Audit Commission, and CIPFA) which can be accessed through www.improvementnetwork.gov.uk. The network provides practical examples of cross-sectoral improvement, and helps partners to share learning and good practice.

www.localleadership.gov.uk

Role as Employer

Local Government Employers (LGE) works with local authorities, and regional employers to lead and create solutions on pay, pensions and the employment contract. It represents local authorities as employers to central government, public sector partners, European bodies and national trade unions.

LGE is developing a new pay and rewards strategy for the sector complimenting the Workforce Strategy, to help position local councils and the sector as a whole, as the employer of choice.

The Centre for Public Scrutiny promotes scrutiny as a part of effective government. It conducts research to develop understanding and best practice and creates links between different tiers of government. It is designed to be used by all council members and officers with responsibility for scrutiny. It offers web-based discussion forums and host events and seminars for exploring the latest developments in scrutiny. www.cfps.org.uk

Local Authority Coordinators of Regulatory Services (LACORS)

Local Authority Coordinators of Regulatory Services provides key advice, guidance and best practice to council regulatory services practitioners, to ensure the delivery of consistent, proportionate, fair and transparent, and joined up regulatory services in supporting local economies and protecting their communities.

For further information refer to:

<http://www.lacors.gov.uk/lacors/Home.aspx>

Sharing Good Practice

The Beacon Scheme is a best practice programme that recognises and rewards excellence in public services. The Scheme is funded, managed and delivered in a three way partnership by Communities and Local Government, the Advisory Panel for the Beacon Scheme, and the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA). Beacon authorities don't just receive an award and a share of a £3m award fund; they also agree to disseminate their good practice to the Sector throughout their Beacon year. Learning activities vary but normally include open days, learning exchanges and good practice guides. A recent independent evaluation by Warwick Business School confirmed that the Beacon Scheme has been very successful in improving local government performance since its launch in 1999. Further information can be found at www.idea.gov.uk 0207 296 6626

Information sharing and analytical support:

A range of tools are available to support the sharing of data between partners involved in LAAs, and improving local analytical skills, capacity and capability through a national framework and Information Management Programme.

These include:

- local information systems – external-facing websites managed by local authorities and their partners that focus on providing local evidence to support local policy makers and citizens to inform better policy and strategy formulation. A Community of Practice has been established, an on-line forum hosted by IDeA for the Local Information Systems Network.

www.esd.org.uk/esdtoolkit/Communities/LIS.

- Data Interchange Hub – will provide a single point of access to information on the 198 indicators in the National Indicator Set, using interoperable technology to enable better data interchange.
- neighbourhood statistics – an on-line data resource, hosting neighbourhood-level data from government departments and the Office for National Statistics.

www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk

- Data for Neighbourhood Renewal – a website that signposts neighbourhood-level datasets available for targeting, monitoring, priority setting and performance management.

www.data4nr.net

- Supporting Evidence for Local Delivery (SELD) is a pilot programme to promote better use of data, research and evidence in neighbourhood renewal through the provision of technical assistance to LSPs' neighbourhood renewal partnerships. (To be published in March 2008)
- Dissemination of tools and guidance formed under the national framework including front-line practitioner guidance, and good practice evidence project

In addition to the above, a piece of work was commissioned by Communities and Local Government and the RIEPs in response to the growing emphasis on the need for consistent, robust and effective end-to-end project management. The tool is designed to support local authorities in assessing, planning and monitoring the delivery of high quality, low cost public services. It allows senior officers to make decisions with confidence because it takes a consistent approach and is predicated on robust data. **Mietool** will also help councils work out how much a particular project will contribute to their total efficiency gain. Training for councils and fire authorities is being rolled out through the RIEPs.

Service transformation:

A key element of effective service transformation is close collaborative working between central departments and local government bodies. Cabinet Office is working with IDeA to deliver this aim through the Local Government Delivery Council, which sits alongside the cross-government Delivery Council. It works to promote:

- more effective delivery of face-to-face services
- 'Tell Us Once', a project to reduce the number of times that people have to contact public services to deal with a change in their circumstances, such as birth, death or change of address, currently being piloted jointly with DWP and local authorities
- improving the end-to-end customer experience of accessing public services to reduce 'avoidable contact', as measured by national indicator 14.
- facilitating data sharing and identity management across central and local government

Efficient procurement:

The Public Private Partnerships Programme (**4ps**) is the project delivery specialist, developing support for large-scale complex projects, enabling individual councils to learn from the experience of other councils, and representing local government's interests in major programmes such as Building Schools for the Future, waste and transport.

www.4ps.gov.uk

Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnerships have or are developing a range of support tools to help local councils to deliver efficiencies. They are doing this in a range of ways, for example through the creation of:

- The South East Centre of Excellence (SECE) has created a construction framework for building projects between £1 million and £30 million that can be used by any public authority in the South East.
<http://www.sece.gov.uk/page.asp?PageRef=194>
- SMARTE EAST is a jointly owned and managed not-for-profit limited liability company which has been developed by local authorities in the East of England, together with the Association of Chief Corporate Property Officers (COPROP) and the Regional Centre of Excellence East.
<http://www.essexinfo.net/smart-east/>
- Two complementary construction frameworks have been established for all East Midland councils with support from the East Midlands Centre of Excellence. <http://www.emce.gov.uk/>

- A document providing further information of the potential of construction frameworks can be found at <http://www.emce.gov.uk/>
- A wide range of expert guidance has been published by the Regional Centres of Excellence Procurement Programme to help councils transform services and deliver efficiencies in key areas of their activity. The 'How to be successful' guides are also complemented by 'On the money' guides which bring together good deals in key commodities for the benefit of all councils. The guides can be downloaded at <http://www.rcoe.gov.uk/rce/core/page.do?pagelD=22932>
- The pan-London online Contracts Register Service, contains details of over 3,000 contracts valued in excess of £4 billion and has been adopted by all London boroughs. The register seeks to help local authorities share and exchange information on major contracts. www.contractsregister.com
- The Docking Station, a one-stop shop for use by local authorities who are undergoing tendering and contracting procedures provides a full suite of 'off-the-shelf' documents that local authorities often need to use from the start of the tendering process through to the awarding of contracts. <http://www.nwce.gov.uk/docking-station/>
- The Supplier and Contract Management System (SCMS) provides a solution to e-sourcing and collaboration for authorities in the Yorkshire and the Humber region. <http://scms.alito.co.uk/>
- A national care costing toolkit will be available to all councils in the coming months – but visit www.sece.gov.uk or www.swce.gov.uk to find out more about its application in South East and South West local authorities.

Joining-up social, economic and environmental goals – genuinely sustainable communities

Communities and Local Government, Defra, SDC, LGA, IDeA, ASC and the Audit Commission are working together to explore the potential for:

- a local benchmark tool to help identify the success criteria for Sustainable Community Strategies, LSPs, and LAAs which promote a balanced and integrated approach
- giving local areas more capacity to pursue a joined-up approach to social, economic and environmental outcomes (sustainable development) via an analytical tool which can be applied to the existing 198 local performance indicators
- identifying local area case-studies which demonstrate an integrated approach to social, economic and environmental goals within a sustainable development framework.

This information will be disseminated via Idea Knowledge along with existing tools for measuring local sustainability and embedding sustainability principles in decision-making. A range of tools have been prepared by local authorities, local strategic partnerships and regional sustainable development champion bodies. Further tools are available from: <http://www.sustainabilityatwork.org.uk/>
www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/advice/local

Business process improvement:

The **Business Improvement Package (BIP)** www.bip.rcoe.gov.uk is an integrated set of resources to support the delivery of efficiency through transformed service delivery. The package brings together deliverables from national and local improvement projects and links to relevant national and regional sources of support. On line coverage includes:

- a generic change model;
- resources that have been developed by local government service redesign pathfinders such as the **National Process Improvement Project (NPIP)**;
- help in exploiting opportunities from partnership working and shared services; and,
- support for business improvement including process, transaction costing and customer insight.

The **Electronic Service Delivery (ESD) toolkit** provides a shared framework to record and benchmark information for optimizing resources across organizational boundaries to meet citizens' needs. www.esd-toolkit.org.uk.

Asset management (AM):

Communities and Local Government offers support to local authorities to help them deliver effective and efficient asset management. They do this through range of publications:

- RICS public sector asset management guidelines aimed at practitioners;
- local authority asset management framework, bringing together key policies and influences that shape local authority asset management
<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/localgovernment/assetmanagement>
- series of topic based local authority asset management pamphlets to reflect recent policy changes by Communities and Local Government and RICS (to be published Spring 2008); and,
- a risk management toolkit on transferring assets to the community sector (to be published Spring 2008).

section 2: what next?

What we will do to simplify support

This Prospectus demonstrates that central and local government are firmly committed to simplifying the current improvement architecture and providing increasing space and resources for RIEPs to lead and coordinate improvement locally. The following areas show where there is Government commitment to simplifying delivery support arrangements to provide better support to local authorities and their partners:

- resources for leadership of extremism and community cohesion, wardens, neighbourhood activity including neighbourhood renewal advisors, liveability and analytical support will come together through RIEPs from April 2009;
- Communities and Local Government will work closely with RIEPs, through the RIEPs' Chief Executives' Task Group, to agree a package of support to build knowledge, analytical capabilities, and capacity of local authorities and partners to make better public places in particular by promoting effective delivery of urban green spaces, place management, mixed communities; and business engagement and support;
- the work of the Academy for Sustainable Communities, English Partnerships, and the Housing Corporation will come together through the new Homes and Community agency. Over time, the agency, as well as the Planning Advisory Service, will evolve a stronger role with RIEPs to commission and deliver support on both the sustainable homes, and community and strategic planning agendas;
- in addition, Communities and Local Government is aiming to make resources available to provide training and capacity building advisors to support the better use of information and analytical capacity. This would be routed through RIEPs, and a network of digital advisors locally administered through a devolved framework contract. Communities and Local Government will explore how to design and deliver this programme with RIEPs through the Chief Executives' Task Group;
- Communities and Local Government-funded regional empowerment consortia will work with RIEPs to agree joint empowerment improvement priorities for their region, to ensure co-ordinated delivery of support;

- a number of Communities and Local Government web-based tools and toolkits such as Renewal.net will also be transferred to local government to create a national good practice website that will support the delivery of LAAs. The national resource will be hosted by IDeA and will be aimed at all partner organisations working to transform places;
- regional JIPs are expected to become integrated with RIEPs during 2008/09. Support for sustainable efficiency improvements in adult social care through the Care Services Efficiency Delivery (CSED) programme, which is active in all regional JIPs, will also be aligned with RIEPs;
- mirroring arrangements at a regional level, DH will work through the national JIP. The interface between DH and each region's directors for adult social services will be co-ordinated by DH's new deputy regional directors in GOs who will work through the regional JIPs and RIEPs;
- a protocol has been published by the DCSF (link below) which commits GOs to working with RIEPs to coordinate decisions on the deployment of support for children's services. In future when considering the means of delivering support for delivery and improvement, the DCSF is committed to working within the framework set out in the NIES to consider models other than field forces http://www.dfes.gov.uk/localauthorities/_documents/content/09070700062007-07-12DCSFImprovementSupportProtocol.pdf
- between now and Autumn 2008, DCSF will be reviewing how it might improve the impact and effectiveness of improvement support for local authorities by using RIEPs where possible. Proposals are also being developed for integrating delivery challenges and support to local areas on youth support;
- The Home Office will seek to agree a number of pilot service level agreements with specific regions on specific issues to test out how local ownership of performance support for crime reduction and community safety might be increased while retaining the ability to provide support on crime reduction and community safety directly where appropriate
- Over the next two years the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) will amalgamate the current Regional Offender Managers offices and Her Majesty's Prison Service regional structures. The outcome of this reorganisation review will consider how best to support greater sector involvement and local ownership in performance improvement by developing the capacity and capability of RIEPs and working with them and other improvement agencies to support improvement on MoJ business.
- The Youth Justice Board will be driving sector led support via the work of its Regional Teams and Performance Improvement Team. Close working with GO's is already established and there is a commitment to aligning support with RIEP's to minimise duplication and ensure resources are used to greatest effect.
- the Department for Transport are currently reviewing their priorities for

improvement and efficiency, and means of delivering support regionally and locally. The outcomes of this review will be taken forward in line with the National Improvement and Efficiency Strategy, working through RIEPs where possible. Opportunities to extend the work delivered currently by North West RIEP on local passenger transport efficiency to other RIEPs will be looked at as part of the review;

- Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and Communities and Local Government have committed to fund a new £4 million best practice climate change support programme in which RIEPs would play a central delivery role. Defra and Communities and Local Government are currently working with the RIEPs to consider how this might be delivered;
- Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs is also committed to looking for opportunities to align the work of the Carbon Trust and the Energy Savings Trust and other improvement bodies with RIEPs to create a 'single gateway' approach to supporting sustainable development improvement needs; and,
- Department for Culture, Media and Sport and its strategic non-departmental public bodies (NDPBs) are currently reviewing the way their structure comes together in the regions on cross-cutting work, like the cultural improvement agenda, to ensure they deliver a better and more effective service to local authorities. It is expected that in future improvement work will be delivered through the RIEPs. DCMS are suggesting that the chief executives of its strategic NDPBs act as a programme board for national collaborative work streams that relate to regional and local government issues, including improvement.

What we are doing to improve the strategic planning of improvement?

The National Improvement and Efficiency Strategy set out a vision for the delivery of support which government and the LGA are committed to, and is owned and driven forward by local government with its strategic partners. In support of that vision, we will be putting in place new governance arrangements for identifying shared priorities and allocating combined resources from 2009/10. This will bring together central government, the LGA, and the RIEP Chief Executives Task Group to consider work plans and make recommendations to Ministers and LGA members.

In practice these new arrangements will enable the identification of topics emerging from regional strategies on which joint work would be helpful to support stronger, more strategic commissioning of support, based on shared priorities, and align activities of the Revenue Support Grant funded bodies with overall improvement and efficiency objectives, and with the work of RIEPs.

Our aim is to have new governance arrangements in place for early Spring 2008, to allow a programme of work to be agreed and started in time for 2009/10.

What we are doing to create new arrangements for innovation and excellence?

The National Improvement Efficiency Strategy set out the need for a single integrated approach to supporting innovation and excellence, with proposals in place by April 2008. To take this forward, a consultation, and stakeholder workshop will be held in March 2008 to develop proposals that:

- ensure services are developed for tomorrow's challenges;
- encourage councils and partners to make today's innovation become tomorrow's best practice;
- builds on what currently exists, including the Innovation Forum and the Beacons scheme;
- identifies efficiencies by aligning programmes; and,
- develops a support framework that is rooted in, and owned by local government.

These proposals will focus on issues of governance, funding and priorities, and will address the sequencing of any developments in these three areas in 2008/09

What are we doing about building capacity and capability in commissioning?

The National Improvement & Efficiency Strategy identified building commissioning capacity as a priority area to support local government and its partners in community leadership. To this aim Communities and Local Government, DCSF and DH are working together with Local Authorities and NHS bodies to formulate a strategy to develop such a capability across local government, and building upon *World Class Commissioning*,¹ the NHS. This strategy will address:

- providing a common understanding of commissioning for commissioners, partners and providers;
- developing visible and effective leadership for the commissioning agenda;
- developing commissioning capability through facilitating the right structures, environment and competencies;
- investing in an effective, coherent and responsive infrastructure – nationally, regionally and locally and maximising existing and developing provider capacity in improvement and development support;
- finding inspirational commissioners, promoting and celebrating excellence and drawing from experience and lessons both here and overseas; and
- providing a basis for tackling the key national and local challenges which face the three Departments.

¹ See www.dh.gov.uk/en/Managingyourorganisation/commissioning/index.htm

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