

**Agenda item No: 15**

**EAST MIDLANDS IMPROVEMENT AND EFFICIENCY PARTNERSHIP BOARD  
MEETING: 3<sup>rd</sup> JANUARY 2009**

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**Report of the Director**

**RIEP Chief Executives Monthly Newsletter – December 2008**

1. Purpose of the report
  - 1.1 For Information - to present the new format electronic briefing for RIEP Chief Executives
2. Background
  - 2.1 At the meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> January the Officer Steering Group received the attached report and commended it to the Board for information.
3. Recommendation
  - 3.1 The newsletter be noted for information

**Chris Allison  
Director EM IEP**

**EAST MIDLANDS IMPROVEMENT AND EFFICIENCY PARTNERSHIP  
OFFICER STEERING GROUP MEETING: 15<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 2009**

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**Report of the Director**

**RIEP Chief Executives Monthly Newsletter – December 2008**

1. Purpose of the report
  - 1.1 To present the new format electronic briefing for RIEP Chief Executives
  
2. Background
  - 2.1 The recently appointed Communications Officer for the RIEPs National Programme Office, based within the IDeA in London, has revamped the RIEP Chief Executives Newsletter.
  - 2.2 A copy of the new format produced in early December is **attached** for information.
  
3. Recommendations
  - 3.1 The newsletter be noted and comments invited from the Steering Group.

**Chris Allison**  
**Director**  
**East Midlands Improvement & Efficiency Partnership**

**News in brief****Key issues featured this month include:**

- RIEPs demonstrate positive engagement with councils and chief executives
- Progress update in key areas including procurement and social care
- Strategic communications
- Dates for your diary

**Demonstrating success and cross sector teams**

Cllr David Parsons, Chair of the LGA Improvement Board and John Healey MP met on 25<sup>th</sup> November to share progress and key achievements on the RIEP agenda. As a result, they will be writing jointly to all RIEPs to encourage ways in which we can keep the sector updated on progress and build confidence with key stakeholders.

The RIEPs and the RIEP Programme Office have also been discussing ways to share practice regularly and update the sector on the benefits RIEPs are delivering. Our suggestion to improve information flow is to build on the updates directors provided at the last CEXTG/IEAN meeting by using existing regional reporting mechanisms to populate a concise summary of key progress and issues in each RIEP. The RIEP Programme Office would assist in pulling this information together for each meeting to save overburdening the RIEPs. We welcome your views on this.

The first meeting of the **business transformation** cross sector team took place in November attended by representatives from across the RIEPs, IDEA, LGA and partners. This was a productive meeting where the group agreed core collective deliverables including improving skills, business process improvement and performance information. The **adult social care** leads group also met with a revised membership, agreed new terms of reference and discussed areas of joint working.

**Engagement with councils:** Results from a survey undertaken amongst Chief Executives by the LGA in September has shown that all RIEPs have built strong relationships with councils in their first six months. A strong 86% of respondents stated that they already felt very well or fairly well informed about the work of the RIEP in their area. In addition to this 79% of respondents stated that they were either very well or fairly well engaged with the work of the RIEP in their area. Your RIEP director holds more detailed results by region.

**Progress updates:** The following provides a quick summary of some key areas of progress at national and regional levels in the last month:

**Economic downturn:** The RIEPs are working hard to ensure they are responsive to local authorities' needs during the economic downturn. A sample of highlights include the South West's peer support programme which includes peer reviews, building skills capacity and grant funding for sub-regional projects; the West Midlands integration of an increased focus on worklessness and the economy into their LAA programme supported by additional funding from their Regional Development Agency; the North West commissioning research to establish effective practice in reducing worklessness and Capital Ambition's programme to address workforce aspirations and support apprenticeships.

The Programme Office recently co-ordinated a RIEP submission to the National Economic Council summarising each region's offer around economic development and their response to the downturn, and this has been very well received by Ministers.

**Procurement:** The RIEP directors were invited by CLG to contribute to the draft report of the recent Review of Procurement Efficiency, which was led by Bill Roots, former CEX of Westminster Council. A number of sector representatives, including Joyce, were involved on the steering group for the review. In general, directors were supportive of the review which includes recommendations for a procurement champion and places considerable onus on the RIEPs to drive forward this agenda. Directors emphasised the need to 'sell' collaborative procurement to local

authorities, to engage members and to reach a wide audience including demonstrating how procurement can drive other topical agendas. The LG Improvement Board is also taking a strong interest in procurement and has referred this as an item to the next RIEP Member Forum.

**Health and wellbeing fund:** DH/CLG has asked for an update on progress in implementing the £4m health and wellbeing fund which was devolved to RIEPs and JIPs over the summer. The NW JIP is taking a lead in co-ordinating a national joint response from Joyce and Cllr Parsons on behalf of the RIEPs and JIPs.

**Funding to support neighbourhood management initiatives:** CLG, has recently written to all RIEP directors to outline plans for the devolution of up to £4.1m funding over two years (2009-11) to build the capacity of communities and partnerships in deprived neighbourhoods and support relevant LAA targets including resident satisfaction and community cohesion. This is funding which has previously been available to Neighbourhood Training and Resource Centres, a facility for training wardens and undertaking other support activity at neighbourhood level. While the LGA and the RIEP Programme Office have had some reservations about whether the RIEPs were best placed to pick up these responsibilities, we are pleased that CLG will work with directors to develop an approach which is appropriate for each region and have broadened the focus of the work to integrate neighbourhood management into the wider objectives of each RIEP.

**RIEP Member Forum:** Cllr David Parsons, Chairman of the LGA improvement board has invited the nine lead RIEP members and lead members from the LGA Improvement Board to attend the next meeting of the RIEP Member Forum on 6<sup>th</sup> January 2009. John Healey MP will attend for part of the meeting and Joyce will also attend in her capacity as Chair of CEXTG. The meeting will include a focus on the economic downturn, including how members can best champion the help their RIEP can offer to support local authorities in challenging times.

**Communications:** Samantha Castelow has been busy working to raise the national profile of the RIEPs since joining the RIEP Programme Office as Communications Executive a few weeks ago. Starting in January 2009, please look out for a nine week series of articles in MJ magazine, featuring a different region each week. On 12<sup>th</sup> March, the RIEP programme is supporting the LGC Improvement and Efficiency conference which is being chaired by Cllr David Parsons, Chair of the LGA Improvement Board. The flier is attached for your information should you wish to attend. Samantha has arranged visits with all of the RIEPs to ensure national communications complement and support regional activity and to ensure we offer a supportive service to the RIEPs. She is also meeting with LGC and other influential publications.

As requested by the Member Forum, we are also working on the national RIEP brochure. This will be distributed in early January and will feature a paragraph on each RIEP. The purpose of the newsletter is to tell the positive story of delivery in the regions to a wide range of stakeholders including members and government, and to showcase and share good practice across the regions. We will circulate copies to you all when it is completed.

**Key events and dates for your diaries:**

- Member Forum, 6<sup>th</sup> January 2009, London (for information only)
- Joint meeting of CEXTG and IEAN, 11<sup>th</sup> February 2009, London
- LGC Conference (supported by the RIEP programme): Efficiency & Improvement 2009: Delivering Cashable savings and value for money while continuing service improvement, Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> March 2009, Inmarsat, London EC1

Finally, the RIEP Programme Office would like to offer you best wishes for the Christmas break and the new year!