

Agenda item No: 7

EAST MIDLANDS IMPROVEMENT AND EFFICIENCY PARTNERSHIP BOARD MEETING: 12th SEPTEMBER 2008

Report of the Director

Support for Local Authorities in Difficulty

1. Purpose of the report

- 1.1 The EM IEP Officer Steering Group on the 10th July 2008 considered the **attached** report. The purpose of the report was:
- To summarise the basis of the allocation of £270k capacity building resources, approved within the business delivery plan, for developing packages of support for local authorities in difficulty.

2. Background

2.1 The EM IEP Officer Steering Group:

- a) Considered and recommended approval of £270k and a further £79k of residual EMIP capacity building resources, for local authorities and/or services in difficulty.
- b) Agreed that in certain instances it would be necessary to provide an early indication to local authorities that support from the EM IEP Capacity Building funds could be available to support improvement plans.
- c) In these instances where speed of decision making was important to help local authorities' planning, then a scheme of delegation needed to be agreed.

- 2.2 In respect of (c) above it was considered appropriate that the Chair of the EM IEP Board and Chair of the Officer Steering Group are delegated the power to act in cases where urgent support is required. Actions would be reported to the Board at an appropriate meeting.

3. Recommendations

3.1 The EM IEP Board is recommended to agree:

- a) The Capacity Building fund established to support local authorities/ services in difficulty of £349k in 2008/09
- b) The process of decision making and delegation for urgent requests of EM IEP support, as set out in the report attached
- c) To review the use of the capacity funds by the end of the year

Chris Allison
Director EM IEP

**Agenda item No: 6
EAST MIDLANDS REGIONAL IMPROVEMENT AND EFFICIENCY
PARTNERSHIP OFFICER BOARD MEETING: 10 JULY 2008**

Report of the Director

Support for Councils in Difficulty

1. Purpose of the report

1.1 To summarise the basis of the allocation of £270k for developing packages of support for councils in difficulty.

2. Background

2.1 At the 16th June Officer Board meeting two specific allocations for projects 955 and 956 were summarised in the report on the proposed regional work programme. These were not discussed as outline business cases had not been included in the agenda papers.

2.2 Essentially the Business Delivery Plan approved by the Officer and Members Boards, subject to outline business case examination, set out the following resource allocations:

- Self Improvement – support for prevention/intervention packages for councils in difficulty (£180k)
- Capacity building – support provided by one local authority to another (90k)

In addition there currently exists a surplus on the EMIP legacy programme of £79k, also earmarked for supporting local authorities in difficulty. This was set aside originally (£200k) for Northampton Borough Council. A total of £349k is therefore available for such support in 2008/09.

3. Programme of support

3.1 In essence the above sums have been set aside to respond or to intervene where there is a danger that a local authority is heading for a difficult period, as evidenced by the CAA or other published performance data.

3.2 The Regional Improvement and Efficiency Strategy outlines this support programme to cover the following:

- Intelligence gathering from a number of national and regional sources together with information shared between the key

agencies operating under the governance and support arrangements of the EM IEP.

- Identification of where support is necessary and the framing of packages of support from the relevant agencies.
- Development of a plan of action
- Delivery of the plan and continued support and monitoring

Annex 1 of the RIES sets out the protocol and approach to be followed where a local authority is struggling. The principal lead agencies being the Government Office and the IDeA with support from the EM IEP. Given the length of the protocol (5 pages) it has not been replicated in this report.

3.3 The current benchmarking exercise will also show where there might be a requirement for early intervention / support and the resources summarised in 2.2 above, could be used for this purpose.

3.4 It is envisaged that where urgent action is deemed necessary and hence early access to EM IEP funding, that agreement is obtained from the Chairs of the Officer and Member Boards with actions reported to subsequent meetings of the Officer and Member Boards.

4. Recommendations

4.1 The 2008/09 allocation of EM IEP resources of £270k and the residue of EMIP resources of £79k be agreed for supporting councils in difficulty.

4.2 The resource allocation for local authorities in difficulty be reviewed in the light of any actions taken in 2008/09.

Chris Allison
Director
East Midlands Regional Improvement & Efficiency Partnership