

Agenda item No: 6

EAST MIDLANDS IMPROVEMENT AND EFFICIENCY PARTNERSHIP BOARD MEETING: 16th June 2009

Report of the Director

Proposal to Provide Support for the Borough Council of Wellingborough

1. Purpose of the report

- 1.1 To present a bid for resources from the "Support for Councils in difficulty budget" to enable further improvement measures to be undertaken at the Borough Council of Wellingborough.

2. Background

- 2.1 In February 2009, the Borough Council of Wellingborough was reassessed by the Audit Commission in a CPA review as "weak" having previously been "excellent". Wellingborough was the only district council to have its CPA rating downgraded.

- 2.2 Weaknesses identified by the Audit Commission included:

- The Council was not managing performance well.
- The pace of change was been slow, with few noticeable achievements
- The Council has not provided clear leadership on the key challenges facing the area.
- There had been little involvement with other agencies and community groups in setting objectives for the borough

- 2.2 The IDeA regional associate and colleagues from the wider IDeA organisation have subsequently been providing support to the Borough Council of Wellingborough.

- 2.3 There are 4 elements to the bid which are appended to this report.

1	Improved Joint Leadership	£11,600
2	Member support for scrutiny function	£ 2,300
3	Implementation of a Performance Management System	£24,000
4	Support for updating the State if the Borough report	£10,000
Total		£47,900

- 2.4 If approved this would become a charge against the £349k budget (£289k uncommitted) agreed by the EM IEP Board at the September 2008 meeting.

3. Recommendation

- 3.1 That the Board discuss and consider the attached proposal for support for the Borough Council of Wellingborough.

Chris Allison
Director EM IEP

Borough Council of Wellingborough

RIEP funding application

Improved Joint Leadership

£11,600

The leading members of council and the management team have identified the need for improved officer awareness of members concerns and the requirement for better support to their developing community leadership role. Members recognise the need for personal development too, with a better understanding of the professional standards governing the work of officers. The key to improved leadership within the council is to focus on the development of the joint leadership function, as identified in the early work with IDeA.

IDeA have proposed a programme of development with officers and with members in order to achieve this aim. Further details are attached.

It is proposed that the full programme is implemented, acknowledging the further costs and expenses proposed.

Borough Council of Wellingborough

RIEP funding application

Member support for scrutiny function £2,300

As part of the support being provided by the IDeA for the Council's improvement of its performance management framework a Member Peer role has been identified to provide support specifically for the elected members sitting on the Council's Audit & Performance Committee. The level of support required is scheduled to cover five days at a predicted cost of £2,300.

Given that the Audit & Performance Committee will double in size from six to twelve members (subject to member approval in May) there will be an influx of inexperienced scrutineers to the committee. The member peer has been scheduled to assist with the following activities:

- To meet with Audit & Performance Chair and leadership team as soon after Annual Council as possible and before 30th June (date of first A & P committee meeting after annual council).
- To meet with all Committee Chairs plus A & P lead members if possible before 30th June.
- On 30th June meet with all members of the A & P Committee to:
 - discuss their scrutiny role plus any training needs
 - level of one to one support available
- Observe one or more A & P committee meetings and report back observations

Borough Council of Wellingborough

RIEP funding application

Implementation of a Performance Management System £24,000

The council does not currently have a Performance Management System although the purchase of such a system has been approved as part of the Council's Capital Programme. Although operating such a system would undoubtedly streamline the collection, analysis and distribution of performance information throughout the Council and with its partners it is felt that there are not enough resources available to the Performance Team to complete its current programme of work and project manage the implementation of a Performance Management System as well.

To overcome this barrier to progress a temporary project leader is required to:

1. Help establish and embed the basics of the performance management framework across the Council as part of our **Performance Matters** campaign.
2. To project lead on the initial Performance Plus pilot. Assuming this is successful then to lead the roll-out across the rest of the council. (The roll out of the Performance Plus software is seen as the second phase of the Performance Matters campaign.)

To do this would require project support for up to nine months at a cost of £24,000 for a fixed term position for a project leader.

This post would work as part of a team of three consisting of:

- The project leader
- Performance Analyst – (new post currently being advertised)
- Performance Officer – existing post.

Borough Council of Wellingborough

RIEP finding application

Specialist support for updating and improving the State of the Borough Report £10,000

The report is a key tool for both community and partner engagement and policy development.

The support would be used to:

- improve the collection and analysis of data and information; particularly that relating to vulnerable people.
- improve the way the report is presented to different users so as to make it more accessible and relevant to them
- put in place a process for simplifying the process of updating the report

Additional information

The State of the Borough Report is the key document used by the Council to manage the knowledge it has about the Borough. It is the means by which the Council collects together the myriad of different information that exists about Wellingborough. Inferences are made from this information to inform service planning and commissioning.

It is therefore necessary that the Report is updated regularly to ensure that new or changed information is captured and made available for use by service planners and commissioners.

What the Council wants to do is engage specialist support to help it increase the value added by the Report. Desired outcomes are as follows:

- An enhanced ability to discern better the relationships and patterns that lie within the information contained in the Report. This will be achieved through the specialist redesigning the layout of the Report, providing tools to assist in data and information analysis and knowledge transfer to staff to ensure sustainability.
- Improved communication with partners and the community. This will be achieved through the specialist redesigning the layout of the Report to make it more user-friendly and relevant to particular groups e.g by use of themes so that particular parts can be easily removed and targeted at particular audiences.
- Improved engagement with partners and the community. This will be achieved through the specialist providing advice and support in engaging with hard to reach groups to obtain data and information not currently collected. Toolkits and knowledge transfer will again be a feature of this work.
- A mechanism to make the Report updating process more efficient and effective. This will be achieved through the specialist re-engineering the process so that when source data changes the Report database, and ideally the relevant parts of the Report, change at the same time.