

LOCAL GOVERNMENT EAST MIDLANDS
EAST MIDLANDS IMPROVEMENT PARTNERSHIP JOINT
MEMBER/OFFICER BOARD

28 JANUARY 2008

LGEM OFFICES, MELTON MOWBRAY

MINUTES

1. Attendees/Apologies

Attendees:

Name	Authority/Organisation
Cllr Dave Wilcox	Derbyshire CC
Cllr Fiona Martin	East Lindsey DC
Cllr Jeremy Webb	East Lindsey DC
Cllr Mary Malin	Kettering BC
Cllr David Parsons	Leicestershire CC
Cllr Ken Savidge	North East Derbyshire DC
Cllr Marion Brighton OBE	North Kesteven DC
Cllr John Stocks	Nottinghamshire CC
Cllr Neil Clarke	Rushcliffe BC
Graham Bennett	External Adviser (Catch the Vision)
Alan Mellor	Ashfield DC
Wes Lumley	Bolsover DC
Ray Cowlshaw	Derby City C
Nick Hodgson	Derbyshire CC
Nigel Howells	East Lindsey DC
Chris Allison	EMCE
Andrew Foster	EMCE
Peter Murphy	GOEM/CLG
Mark Edgell	IDeA
John Sinnott	Leicestershire CC
Janet Beaumont	LGEM
Sam Maher	LGEM
Julie Rankin	Nottingham City C
Roger Latham	Nottinghamshire CC
Frank Swann	Nottinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service

Apologies:

Name	Authority/Organisation
Alison Rigg	Audit Commission
Heather Parker	EMCE

Helen Richmond	EMCE
Steve Atkinson	Hinckley & Bosworth BC
Rodney Green	Leicester City C
Melanie Rowe	LGEM
Tony McArdle	Lincolnshire CC
Katherine Kerswell	Northamptonshire CC
Michael Frater	Nottingham City C
Helen Briggs	Rutland CC
Terry Huggins	South Holland DC
Jean Morgan	South Northamptonshire C

2. Minutes of the last EMIP Officer Board Meeting held on 9th January 2008 and Minutes of the last EMIP Member Board Meeting held on 29th October 2007

The notes of the last meetings were approved and **agreed** as a true record.

2.1 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

3. EMCE Case Studies Book – Volume 2

This was noted for information.

4. Improvement Essay – Getting Better All the Time? An independent Assessment of Local Government Improvement and its Future Prospects

This was noted for information.

5. Progress of the East Midlands Centre of Excellence and East Midlands Improvement Partnership Work Programmes

Clarification was sought on the protocol for the Member Board in relation to decisions made by the Officer Board. It was agreed that there should be a written constitution clarifying respective roles, which would be discussed at Item 12.

The Board noted and endorsed the report.

6. Consultation on Centre of Excellence for the Fire and Rescue Service in England – East Midlands response.

The Board noted and endorsed the report.

7. Modern Councillor Toolkit – Learning Pool

It was agreed that the toolkit should be widely promoted across the region and that a mechanism be put in place to monitor usage. The report was noted and endorsed on this basis.

8. EMIP Business Process Improvement Workstream

The report was noted and endorsed.

9. Progress Report on East Midlands Authorities in Engagement – Northampton BC and Erewash BC

Pete Murphy updated the Board on progress to supplement the report which had been presented to the Officer Board meeting. Advice to Ministers had been sent on Friday which anticipates reasonable progress at Erewash BC and good progress at Northampton BC. Formal intervention is being withdrawn from Northampton's benefits service.

The report was noted.

10. Improvement & Efficiency Strategy

Discussion took place on the latest draft regional improvement strategy which had been drawn up following a series of workshops across the region. Chris Allison assured Cllr Clarke that the new version had taken into account the comments previously made by Members.

Mark Edgell felt that the structure of the report was clearer, but concerns remained over its coherence and content, with a greater emphasis on efficiency than improvement and a need for intermediate progress measures. He felt the strategy as currently drafted did not reflect the focus required by CLG and LGA on LAA, CAA, leadership and community engagement. He also felt that it needed to show how lower performing authorities would be supported and how best use would be made of existing opportunities and projects. Clarity was also needed on the relationship between the regional and sub-regional improvement partnerships.

Roger Latham agreed that the draft would need further amendment before it is submitted, and was looking for an in principle agreement from Members on how they wished to input to the final version.

Cllr Brighton felt the vision needed to be more dynamic and agreed that the strategy was still weak in relation to community engagement, for example there was no reference to parish councils and local communities.

Cllr Webb expressed concern about the apparent lack of an obvious link between the regional strategy and the national strategy - the key themes of the national strategy and innovation are missing. He wanted

the strategy to provide steer and control for sub-regions and suggested the strategy could identify how funding would be allocated. He wanted the document to reflect the desire of the region to innovate, raise the bar and be open to external challenge.

Cllr Martin was concerned about the short timescale available to re-write the document and get buy-in.

Cllr Parsons asked that the revised version be shorter and asked for clarification on the regional improvement governance arrangements diagram which showed different boxes for LGEM and the Regional Local Government Forum. Nick Hodgson said that the Regional Local Government Forum box reflected the role of the LGA and the LGEM/IDEA box represents the advisory role. In response to a question from John Sinnott, it was clarified that LGEM and IDEA would not be commissioning.

Nigel Howells raised concern that the workshops were focussed on sub-regional needs without a focus on the context of national strategy.

Nick Hodgson commented that different audiences would be looking for different things from the document and the strategy needed to be better balanced in terms of being informed by a top-down and bottom-up approach. He added that buy-in was critical to ensure the strategy is implemented.

It was agreed that Ray Cowlshaw, Mark Edgell, Neil Clarke, Fiona Martin, Jeremy Webb and Chris Allison would form a sub-group to work on the document in advance of the meeting on 19th February. The revised document would clearly show tracked changes and the version level.

It was agreed that Cllr Malin would also attend the meeting with CLG on 19th February.

11. Bid against the £11m Underspending Pot held by CLG

Chris Allison presented the submission made on 25th January on behalf of the region for CLG funding. Concern was raised by Cllr Parsons on an integrated waste project which appeared to show the involvement of Leicestershire County Council. It was agreed that Chris Allison will meet with the County Council and the four district authorities to determine if an agreement on the way forward can be reached. If this cannot be achieved to Leicestershire County Council's satisfaction, then an amendment to the funding request will be sent to CLG.

Cllr Webb asked for clarity on the element of the bid relating to councillor development. Mark Edgell explained this would be to support councillors to further build knowledge and skills in relation to LAAs. Cllr Brighton and Cllr Malin expressed concern that there would

be no conflict between this proposal and the Councillor Development Charter. The support envisaged as part of this funding proposal relates to programmes of development and would not conflict with the Councillor Development Charter which provides a framework for best practice in councillor development.

It was **agreed** that subject to the above, Members endorsed the action of the Chair in submitting the £11m bid in the timescales available.

12. Staffing and Governance Arrangements for RIEP

EMCE and LGEM employees left the meeting.

Discussion on the structure was postponed until 6 February 2008 pending clarification of the following points:-

1. Item 4 and 5 on the Job Description for the Director to reflect Members concerns regarding community engagement and the future operational structure.
2. Independent legal advice be sought in relation to the employment contracts and TUPE issues relating to the EMCE current staff base. Leicestershire County Council's offer was accepted.
3. A breakdown be provided on current and future costs in relation to:-
 - i) operations
 - ii) successor bodies
 - iii) liabilities
4. Reporting lines are clarified.
5. Members receive up-to-date information on direction of travel from CLG for 29 January in London.
6. Information is provided on comparative structures.

13. Any Other Business