**Improvement East**

**Minutes of the Executive Advisory Group Meeting**
**Held on 4 June 2008 at the Trinity Centre, Cambridge**

**Present:**

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| Andrea Hill (Chair) | Chief Executive Suffolk County Council |
| John Campbell (V. Chair) | Chief Executive North Herts District Council |
| Cllr Richard Stay | Chairman Regional Improvement and Efficiency Panel |
| Gillian Beasley | Chief Executive Peterborough City Council |
| Deborah Cadman | Chief Executive St Edmundsbury Borough Council |
| Kevin Crompton | Chief Executive Luton Borough Council |
| Richard Elliott | Chief Fire Officer, Norfolk Fire & Rescue Service |
| Rob Hammond | Chief Executive, Cambridge City Council |
| Mark Lloyd | Chief Executive, Cambridgeshire County Council |
| Malcolm Morley | Chief Executive, Harlow Council |
| Martin Reeves | Chief Executive, Bedfordshire County Council |
| Angie Ridgwell | Chief Executive, Thurrock Borough Council |
| Geoff Rivers | Chief Executive, South Norfolk District Council |
| David White | Chief Executive, Norfolk County Council |
| Anne Gibson | PPMA |
| Mark Harrison* | IDeA |
| Andrew Limb | GO-East |
| David Marlow | EEDA |
| Mike Mosley | EERA |
| Andy Perrin* | Audit Commission |
| Cecilia Tredget | Director, Improvement East |
| Jane Sullivan | Improvement East |
| Cindy Burgess | Improvement East |

***** Substitute

**In Attendance:**

For Item 4 - 4. Waveney DC

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| Stephen Baker | Chief Executive Waveney District Council |

## 1. Introductions and Apologies

Introductions were made.

Apologies were received from:
Joanna Killian, Essex County Council,
Rob Tinlin, Southend Borough Council,
Caroline Tapster, Hertfordshire County Council,
Dennis Skinner, IDeA (Mark Harrison substituting)
Susan Fenwick, Audit Commission (Andy Perrin substituting).

The Chair initiated a discussion on conflicts of interest relating to:

(i) Members of the Group
(ii) Those who were not members of the Group but attending in support of a bid.

**It was agreed that**

**(i) Members of the Group need to declare an interest if their authority will benefit from a bid being discussed**
**(ii) Members of the Group with a declared interest in an item should be allowed to remain during any discussion but should leave the room if a vote was taken.**
**(iii) Non-members of the Group attending in support of bids should be present at discussions and should be allowed to answer questions.**
**(iv) All submitting authorities should be invited to attend in support of their bids**

## 2. Delivery Plan

Cecilia Tredget presented a report on the Delivery Plan.

A number of points were raised during the discussion:

It was felt that the delivery plan would benefit from further analysis and scoping work. However, in order to secure funding for years 2 and 3 it was essential that Improvement East should demonstrate the ability to deliver in year 1.

A capacity issue with the secretariat of Improvement East was recognised. Group members were asked to consider offering the help of staff on a secondment basis. It was noted that there is a particular lack of expertise in efficiency.

It was questioned whether the indicative budget reflected the priorities for the East of England. Concern was raised that the number of work streams should be reduced. However, the Group wished to ensure that Climate Change/Environment, Customer Services and Local Government Reputation were given due weight.

**It was agreed that:**

**(i) The Group would support the nomination of Chief Executive leads for the workstreams.**
**(ii) Priority areas for delivery in year 1 should be redefined and an updated Delivery Plan be brought back for discussion at the joint meeting on 26th June with Members.**

**(iii) New delivery plan documents for years 2 and 3 would be required to be developed at a later date.**
**(iv) Group members should consider offering personnel on a secondment basis to Improvement East to alleviate the capacity problem.**

Gillian Beasley and David White both offered assistance with the efficiency capacity issue.

**3. Bids to Improvement East**

Four bids for funding were considered.

**Waveney DC** :

*Mark Harrison, IDeA declared an interest in this item.*

During the discussion a number of points were noted as follows:

Deborah Cadman believed that Waveney could become a failing council if this bid was not supported and that as a minimum, the following should be agreed:

- Support to Finance : £440,448
- HR Consultancy: £44,550
- Interim Director of Change Management: £96,000

An Improvement Board had been set up and a Chief Executive representative from this Group was invited to sit on the board.

It was felt that the bid was over ambitious in particular with regard to timescales.

The Group considered that thought should be given to how the learning could be embedded into the council, as the danger with engaging consultants was when they left the knowledge left with them.

It would have been helpful to know what impact previous funding had made.

**It was agreed that:**

**(i) The bid should be supported in principle and to the value of £580,998 for the items listed above**
**(ii) Gillian Beasley would act as Chief Executive lead and work with Stephen Baker (Waveney CEX) in developing a more realistic and achievable support package and that she should have a seat on the Improvement Board.**
**(iii) The Group would receive a report on progress in October.**
**(iv) When presenting bids to the Group in the future, details of the impact of past support should be included in the papers**

**Bedfordshire and Luton FRS**

*Kevin Crompton, Cllr Richard Stay and Martin Reeves declared an interest in this bid.*

The bid from Bedfordshire and Luton FRS was considered. Concern was raised that the support requested was not in line with the improvement needs of the authority at this time.

**The Group agreed not to support this bid.**

**Bedfordshire Local Government Re-organisation**

*Kevin Crompton, Cllr Richard Stay and Martin Reeves declared an interest in these bids (2).*

The Group felt that a commissioning approach to issues arising from LGR would be a better approach than funding individual bids. It was questioned whether the need and cost of such support should have been covered in the original LGR proposals. Concern was expressed about the level of external support requested which should, in the first instance, be sourced from within the sector.

**It was agreed that:**

**(i) These particular proposals should not be supported.**
**(ii) Mark Lloyd should act as Chief Executive mentor during the unitary process with Ann Gibson assisting.**
**(iii) Mark and Anne should work with the Bedfordshire authorities in order to define ideas on what could be commissioned in order to enable continuity of good performance.**

**4. Minutes of the EAG Meeting of 21 April 2008**

**The Minutes of the EAG Meeting of 21 April 2008 were approved as a correct record.**

There were no matters arising from the Minutes.

**5. Joint Meeting with Member Panel 26th June**

Cecilia presented a report setting out the format for the joint meeting on 26th June. In addition, she reported that Elizabeth Forbes had been appointed to facilitate that meeting.

**6. Update from Partner Agencies**

**IDeA:** Mark Harrison reported that:

- The IDeA are carrying out an analysis of all 9 regional strategies and delivery plans and they will share the findings when complete.
- A RIEP national programme office had been set up - further details of this work to be circulated with the Minutes.

**GO-East**: Andrew Limb reported that a new regional Director will be appointed within the next couple of months.

**Audit Commission:** Any Perrin reported that CAA preparations are in hand for addressing the national consultation on the detailed framework. They are now looking to pull the 4 strands together to form just 2.

**EERA**: Mike Mosley reported that EERA were working on SNR and need to use changes at regional level to build good relationships with EEDA, GO-East etc.

**Dates and times of future meetings**:

26 June 2008 - Joint Member Panel EAG meeting - Trinity Centre, Cambridge 8.30 am.
3 September 2008 - EAG Meeting - Trinity Centre, Cambridge 2.30 pm
12 November 2008 - EAG meeting - Holiday Inn, Bridge Road, Impington 2.30 pm