**Item 6**

**Report to Executive Advisory Group**

**Improvement East** **21st January 2009**

**Subject: Feedback from relevant meetings**
**Report by: Secretariat**

**Purpose**

**To update the Executive Advisory Group in respect of several Improvement East meetings held since the last EAG.**

**Recommendations**

**It is recommended that the Group note the progress made by the relevant groupings.**

## 1. Introduction

1.1 Meetings have been held since the last EAG meeting, the outcomes of which need to be noted by the EAG. These are:

- Efficiency Cluster – 10th December. See Annex 1.
- LAA/LSP Strategic Group – 12th December. See Annex 2.
- Performance Cluster – 8th January. See Annex 3.
- Chief Executive Leads Mentoring Group – 9th January. This group has been established essentially as an internal support group to those Chief Executives who are supporting our Individual Authorities.
- Chief Fire Officers meeting – 9th January. The background to this meeting was, in part, an Audit Commission report entitled "Rising to the Challenge" which was published in December 2008 and a letter from the CFO Association encouraging the increase in peer review capacity.

## 2. Key Issues Arising

2.1 All three themes have progressed decisions on and delivery of projects. They are all working on the development of a Year 2 work programme. Progress has been made in defining the Success Measures that the Partnership is working towards. The first round of reporting against the new performance management framework has been undertaken.

2.2 A number of key decisions have been made as follows:

2.2.1 Efficiency:

- PWC to develop project initiation documents and timetables for the elements of the programme as prioritised by the cluster.

- Agreed that the procurement element would be the top priority and that a project team should be set up to develop a Project Initiation Document
- Agreed to fund Mietool training in the sum of £10,000 for this year with a view to building training for next year into the Year 2 Delivery Plan.

2.2.2 LAA/LSP:

- Agreed the terms of reference and membership of the Strategic Group and the Practitioner Group
- The three top priorities for immediate action were agreed as Climate Change, Skills and Worklessness, Community Empowerment, Engagement and Cohesion.

2.2.3 Performance:

A number of submissions were considered and recommendations for approval were made. It was agreed that these should be dealt with via the expeditious delegated procedure due to the need for the authorities to be able to address these performance issues quickly and that we would not be able to formally determine them at a Member Panel until at least the 4th March. At the time of writing this report this process is being ongoing and an update can be given at the meeting. The recommendations were as follows:

- Great Yarmouth DC – Use of Resources submission was recommended to be approved to the value of £95,000 subject to the allocation of a Improvement East Chief Executive lead and the establishment of a Joint Agency Group
- Norwich City Council – Housing. The Cluster recommended that this be approved to the full value of £20,000
- Norwich City Council – Use of Resources submission be approved to the value of £62,000 subject to the allocation of a Improvement East Chief Executive and that the existing Performance Management Improvement Board is expanded to allow for appropriate Improvement East and agency reps to attend.
- Uttlesford DC – Use of Resources submission recommended approval to the full amount of £100,000.

The Cluster also noted that the Winter Menu of Support has been taken up by 34 authorities.

2.2.4 Lead Chief Executives Mentoring Group:

- Agreed guidelines for the role of Lead Chief Executives. See Annex 4
- Agreed guidelines for the role of a Joint Agency/Improvement Board. See Annex 5
- Agreed the criteria for the £20,000 of funding delegated to the lead Chief Executives for Individual authorities. See Annex 6
- Agreed the criteria and Submission form for Individual authorities

2.2.5 Chief Fire Officers Meeting:

- The CFO's are keen to assess their priorities and devise a programme of support that, by working together, would add value. This could address the concerns raised by the Audit Commission report and the efficiency agenda.
- The CFO's were keen to increase their peer review capacity

## 3. Recommendations

**It is recommended that the Group note the progress made by the relevant groupings.**

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**Contact:** Cecilia Tredget/Jane Sullivan 01284 729464/729462 Cecilia.tredget@eera.gov.uk Jane.sullivan@eera.gov.uk

**Notes of the Efficiency Cluster Meeting**
**Held on 10 December 2008, 9.00 am**
**at the Bedford Lodge Hotel, Newmarket**

**Present:**

| | | |
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| Cllr Tony Williams | Norfolk County Council | Chairman, Member Champion |
| Cllr Terry Hone | North Hertfordshire DC | |
| Malcolm Morley | Harlow DC | CEX Champion |
| Cecilia Tredget | Improvement East | |
| David Ellis | Improvement East | |
| Cheryl Lowe* | GO-East | |
| Michael Kitts | PWC | |

***** Substitute

**Apologies**

Cllr Michael Lager
Dennis Skinner
Andrew Limb GO-East – Cheryl Lowe Substituting
Kevin Crompton – Luton Borough Council

**Actions**

**1. Welcome and Introductions**

Cllr Williams welcomed attendees to the meeting and introductions were made.

**2. Notes of the Efficiency Cluster Meeting of 8 October 2008**

The notes were agreed as an accurate record.

**Matters Arising not covered in the agenda were:**

- 2. Fuel Procurement project.

  Cecilia gave a verbal update on the work being carried out nationally around fuel procurement. Contact had been made with Kevin Harlock from Kent County Council who was leading on the project and, following a request from him, all authorities in the region had been contacted to ascertain interest. Five councils had responded: Huntingdonshire, Dacorum and West Suffolk, District Councils, Norfolk County Council and Thurrock Unitary and responses passed to Kevin and we were now waiting for further news from him.

  A national conference on fuel procurement had been held, to

which Richard Stay was invited, although unfortunately unable to attend.

- 4. Corporate and Transactional Services

  Malcolm reported that sign up from other RIEPs was required for this project to go forward and that 4Ps would be attending a meeting of RIEP Directors taking place on 11 December in order to encourage participation. Malcolm also reported that the evaluation criteria for the project would be finalised week commencing 15 December and that volunteers for the project would be requested in the New Year.

- Cecilia reported that the Member Panel, at its meeting on 27 November, had agreed that urgent decisions could be taken by Clusters between Panel meetings where urgency was an issue.

**3. Implementing the Programme for Efficiency**

*Cllr Tony Williams declared an interest in Adult Social Care.*

Michael Kitts from PWC gave a presentation on the conclusions from work carried out so far which complemented the paper "Improvement East – taking forward the 6 targeted efficiency areas".

Key messages were:

- Need to prioritise on up to 3 projects.
- A clear understanding of what the benefits are and how they are measured was required.
- The current economic downturn placed a greater emphasis on efficiency.
- Spreading best practice should be a priority and setting up a "knowledge portal" might be worthwhile considering in this regard.

Cecilia informed the meeting that Mietool, a tool developed for measuring improvement and efficiency in projects would be used to track qualitative and quantitative benefits.

A discussion on priorities followed and the following points arose:

- Any work on the Revenues and Benefits theme should concentrate on Revenues. The first stage to encourage the use of best practice and develop common ways of working, second stage to consider shared services.

- The CLG have commissioned a review of procurement, it is likely that RIEPs will be encouraged to do more in this area.

- Project teams to be formulated as quickly as possible.

**It was agreed that Procurement would be the top priority and that a project team should be set up to develop a PID.**

Once the Procurement group had been established steering groups for Joint Commissioning, Resource Mapping and Revenues and Benefits would follow.

**It was agreed that PWC should draw up a timetable.**

## 4. Business Process Improvement Survey

David Ellis presented the report. The key messages were:

- A lot of authorities are working on BPI
- Most want financial benefits within the current CSR period
- Back office is the principal area for concentration on BPI although that could usefully be extended to front office.
- Most authorities do not have sufficient capacity to carry out more than short term work and generally employ consultants.
- There is a large demand for training and networking support.
- The BPI network would be a sub-group of the EERA Performance Management Network.
- A coherent strategy needs to be developed which ensures failing authorities are helped while, at the same time, being careful not to disengage those authorities making the most progress.

**It was agreed that the survey findings would influence the Year 2 Delivery Plan through the transformational work with the 4Ps.**

**The Cluster group approved the publication of the report to Improvement East stakeholders.**

A draft of the Year 2 Delivery Plan would be brought to the next Efficiency Cluster meeting. CMT/DE

## 5. Mietool : Future Funding

Cecilia explained that Mietool was a toolkit for measuring benefits and efficiency savings from projects. Developed by the old RCEs, RIEPs are encouraging authorities to use this tool and Improvement East are considering making it a requirement for

authorities seeking funding in the future.

A small amount of funding was needed to run future Mietool training and training for other tools such as Proclass. The Mietool training cost around £4,500 to £5,000 for 15 people.

The group requested further information on Mietool and a note of the number of authorities who have received training in the region to date. CB

**The group agreed to fund Mietool training in the sum of £10,000 for this year with a view to building training for next year into the Year 2 Delivery Plan.**

**6. Future Meetings**

It was decided that the Cluster should meet quarterly. Next meeting would take place in Newmarket on 4 February starting at 9.00.

Dates for the whole of next year to be arranged. CB

**7. Any Other Business**

Cecilia and David to draft a response to the email from Michael Lager.

**Notes of the LAA/LSP Strategic Group meeting**
**on 12 December 2008 at 2.00 pm**
**Held at the Trinity Centre, Cambridge**

**Attendees:**
Gillian Beasley
Christina Wells (substituting for Gordon Johnston)
Jane Sullivan
Andrew Limb

**Apologies:**
Gordon Johnston
Cllr Jane Storey
Andy Perrin, Audit Commission

| | | Action |
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| **1.** | **Welcome and Introductions**<br><br>Introductions were made and apologies noted. | |
| **2.** | **Terms of Reference and Governance Issues**<br><br>The terms of reference and governance issues were discussed.<br><br>**The terms of reference for each group were endorsed with the proviso that a representative of the Government Office should be added to the membership of the Practitioners Group.**<br><br>**The Group supported the view that they should review the effectiveness of membership arrangements in six months time.**<br><br>**The Group confirmed that the A2P project should be amalgamated into the wider programme and that the Practitioner Group should be asked to resolve the details as soon as possible.** | |
| **3.** | **Feedback from the Practitioners Group Meeting of 1 December**<br><br>Christina reported on outcomes from the Practitioners Group Meeting. The main focus of discussion had been around priorities and how to take these forward. It had been concluded that the top priorities were Climate Change, Engagement Empowerment and Cohesion and Skills and Worklessness.<br><br>The following points arose from the ensuing discussion:<br><br>• Although the top 3 priorities had been identified, the group should not lose sight of other areas where IE support could be valuable. | |

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| | • The Group thought it important to carry out research in order to find the gaps in support and avoid duplication. It was important to understand what IE could do which would actually make a difference.<br><br>• There was now a degree of urgency in the timetable and IE needed positive ideas for projects that they could commission to come from the Practitioners Group meeting in January.<br><br>• The link between the two groups would come via Gordon Johnston/Christina Wells who had been voted Chair and Vice Chair of the Practitioner Group.<br><br>**It was agreed that Gillian, Christina and Gordon should meet separately to discuss what should be the aims and outcomes from Practitioner Group meetings.** | GB/CW |
| **4.** | **Developing Success Measures**<br><br>Jane presented the report to the Group and the targets and measures were discussed. The main points arising were:<br><br>• The target of 100% of LSPs having undertaken A2P by 2010 was unlikely to be achieved.<br>• Need to note there are a number of NIs that have come up as priorities across the region but do not feature under any cluster. (Highlighted in the report). IE needs to be aware of this and not lose sight of them.<br>• The Group thought that Local Improvement Advisers could be used use to carry out an analysis of where strengths and weaknesses are in an LSP. They could be used to assist partnerships in self assessment.<br><br>**The Group noted the success measures and recommended that:**<br><br>• **L1 should be refined or removed altogther**<br>• **L2 should be changed to a CAA outcome but the positive organisational assessmentelement under L3 should be moved to the performance cluster.** | JS |
| **5.** | **Update on the Support Programme**<br><br>The progress to date of the work with the A2P toolkit and the wider programme was noted.<br><br>The group felt that in order to engage authorities, a Menu of Support should be set up which would state what support was available and a clear indication of the likely benefits/outcomes from | |

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| | such support. It should include support that is not or does not need to be funded by Improvement East. This could then assist in the development of a fund programme by Improvement East where necessary and appropriate.<br><br>**It was agreed that Jane should look into this.**<br><br>In order to promote the programme to Local Authorities who needed more support, a method of establishing who these authorities were was required. **It was agreed that Gillian would set up a meeting with the Audit Commission and GO-East to discuss establishing a mechanism for achieving this.**<br><br>The Group felt that more detailed information on outcomes rater than progress was required in the Quarterly Report shown at Annex 1.<br><br>It was agreed that Local Improvement Advisers could be used to work with LSPs to help identify their support needs – this help could be part of the Menu of Support. **Jane to look into the process of acquiring help from Local Improvement Advisers in order to get in an early bid for support.** | JS<br><br><br><br>GB<br><br><br><br>JS<br><br><br><br>JS |
| **6.** | **Supporting LAA Priorities**<br><br>**The top three priorities were confirmed and the Group agreed that the Practitioner Group be requested to develop a programme of support around those priorities.**<br><br>It was reported that champions had been identified for the three priority areas.<br><br>Concerns were expressed that an agency representative appeared to be championing one of the areas. **It was agreed that this concern should be channelled back to the Practitioner Group and a local authority representative should undertake this role.** | |
| **7.** | **Any Other Business**<br><br>• Gillian to contact Cllr Jane Storey to keep her updated on what was happening in this Group.<br>The method of reporting back to EAG would be through the Quarterly Report and the Minutes of the Group meetings and Gillian, as Chief Executive Champion, would talk to the Minutes.<br><br>The Group decided that it would be necessary to hold the next meeting in January following the Practitioners meeting on 19th. | <br>GB<br><br><br><br><br>CB/JS |

# PERFORMANCE CLUSTER

## Notes of Cluster Meeting
## 08 January 2009 9:30am Trinity Centre

**Present:**
Caroline Tapster, Chief Executive, Hertfordshire CC - Chair
Rob Hammond, Cambridge City Council
Andrew Limb, GO East
Mark Harrison, IDeA,
Jane Sullivan, Improvement East

**Apologies:**
Cllr Mac McQuire, Cambridgeshire County Council
Cllr Chris Millington, Harlow Council
Gillian Beasley, Peterborough City Council
Rob Tinlin, Southend on Sea Borough Council
David White, Norfolk CC
Andy Perrin, Audit Commission
Cllr Lynne Faulkner, Bedfordshire CC and Bedford BC
Cllr Penny Otton, Mid-Suffolk District Council
Kevin Crompton, Luton Borough Council

| Item | | Action |
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| **1.** | **Welcome**<br><br>Those present were welcomed to the meeting. | |
| **2.** | **Notes of the Performance Cluster Meeting of 22 October 2008**<br><br>The Minutes of 22 October 2008 were agreed. All actions had been undertaken or form part of items on this agenda. The recommendations made by the Cluster had been taken through the EAG and Member Panel and had been approved. | |
| **3.** | **Developing Success Measures**<br><br>The Cluster went through each of the Success Measures for the Performance Theme and agreed the following:<br>• No authorities in difficulty – as drafted<br>• All authorities to have a positive direction of travel statement – the target should be 100% of authorities should be performing adequately (score 2 or above)<br>• Improve overall satisfaction – the target should be on a comparative basis with other regions<br>• Improvement to NI set – the target needs to enable | |

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| | Improvement East to demonstrate net improvement across the region<br>• Positive CAA Organisational Assessment – the Cluster needs to look at this Measure once the CAA framework has been published<br>• No Priority in Adult Social care – this needs to be rephrased to No authority in Priority Need in adult social care. There were queries over the accuracy of the March baseline figures given.<br>• Children's Measures – the first should be split out to two main baselines to:<br>  • No authority in the bottom category<br>  • No authority to have a score of less than 2 in any individual theme<br>• The Children's Programme Board should be made aware of the NI measures<br>• Use of Resources – as drafted<br>• Equalities:<br>  • No authorities on Level 1 or 2 – the target should be amended to 2010/11 – 100% of authorities to score level 2 with X% scoring three or above<br>  • LAA priorities – there was uncertainty as to whether the NI quoted was correct in that it should preferably be in respect of people getting on with each other (NI4?).<br><br>**Action:**<br><br>Work with Andy Perrin to devise a target for the Improvement to NI Set Measure.<br><br>Check the Adult Social Care March 2008 baseline figures.<br><br>Devise a percentage figure in respect of Equalities<br><br>Clarify the Equalities NI<br><br>Amend the Success Measures in accordance with the above and report back to the Cluster when appropriate for further consideration.<br><br>**The Cluster agreed the reporting arrangements of the Success Measures through the EAG and Member Panel.**<br><br>**Year 2 Work Plan**<br><br>The Cluster discussed ideas for the Year 2 work plan. It was agreed that the work plan should address any areas of the Success Measures where these are at risk of not being met. It was recognised that there are gaps in the evidence base to do this at the current time and that this will be an evolving picture over time. As initial ideas, the following were agreed as areas to support in Year 2: | JS/AP<br><br>JS<br><br>JS<br><br>AL<br><br>JS |

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| | • Individual authorities which may include new authorities<br>• Adults<br>• Children's<br>• Use of Resources<br>• Reputational Management<br>• Targeting peer/mentor support for new Chief Executives<br>• Fire Service Peer Support<br>• Running two Menu's – areas to target are Member Development (particularly in respect of elections in 2009); financial skills; training and support to new roles such as the Chairs of Children's Safeguarding Boards and Serious Case Reviews.<br><br>Specific support to Fire Services was discussed in relation to the recent Audit Commission report. It was agreed that specific support may be required albeit that this may fall under the Efficiency Cluster remit.<br><br>**Action:**<br><br>Report to the next Cluster Meeting with details of accredited peers and new Chief Executives within the region in order to start devising a support package for new Chief Executives.<br><br>Update the relevant scores for this Cluster and report to the next meeting (Use of Resources, APA etc). | MH<br><br>JS |
| **4.** | **Performance Management Report**<br><br>The Cluster considered the progress of the projects and proposed no changes to the actions detailed. No recommendations were made to amend the resource allocations shown.<br><br>The Cluster found the format useful subject to one change to the column entitled "Progress on Outcomes/milestones to date" which is more a record of progress on the project which should then deliver the outcomes originally approved. The heading of this column should therefore be amended to "Progress of the Project".<br><br>The Cluster agreed that the ultimate aim should be that others should follow the JIP lead in pooling resources.<br><br>**Action:**<br><br>Caroline Tapster agreed to liaise with the Regional Health representative to progress this.<br><br>The Cluster agreed that they should review the Use of Resources | JS<br><br>CT |

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| | scores at the next meeting. They noted the request from an authority which is currently scoring 2 but considered that this should be considered alongside the wider regional picture in order to formulate an appropriate support package.<br><br>**Action:**<br><br>Mark Harrison agreed to check the Use of Resources KLOE in respect of any differences between types of authority.<br><br>The Cluster noted that the first meeting of the Lead Chief Executive Mentoring Group is to be held on 9th January and agreed that they have authorisation to agree the:<br>• Chief Executive Lead Role description<br>• Criteria for utilising the £20,000 delegated powers<br>• Joint Agency Group Terms of Reference<br>• Submission Form and criteria | MH |
| **5.** | **Individual Authorities**<br><br>Jane presented the report. Points arising from the following discussion were as follows:<br><br>• Agreed that we have made a commitment to the principle of continuing support to those authorities with a score of 1 as at October but are now moving up.<br><br>• A general principle for any funding should be that any learning from a project should be shared across the region.<br><br><u>Great Yarmouth.</u><br><br>Caroline Tapster passed on concerns which had been expressed to her from David White around the large sum of money being requested (£271,000) and the forthcoming Boundary Commission decision for Norfolk.<br><br>The Cluster generally concurred with these concerns but felt that there were issues which did need immediate attention.<br><br>**The Cluster agreed funding for the following items under paragraph 2.2.3 of the report:**<br><br>**b) Training and Development - £35,000**<br>**c) Staff survey - £10,000**<br>**d) VFM - £50,000**<br><br>**The Cluster recommended funding totalling £95,000 subject to the allocation of a Chief Executive lead and the establishment of a Joint Agency Group**.<br>**Action:** | |

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| | Jane and Mark to work together on finding a Chief Executive Lead and progressing the JAG. | JS/MH |
| | <u>Norwich City - Housing</u><br><br>Norwich City was requesting funding support for the Housing service in the authority. Support is currently being provided by Cambridge City Council. It was possible that further support could be needed following preparation of an Improvement Plan.<br><br>**The Cluster recommended that this be approved to the full value of £20,000** | |
| | <u>Norwich City Council – Use of Resources</u><br><br>The Cluster did not consider that the City Hall options development should be funded at this time given the LGR situation.<br><br>**The Cluster Group recommended funding of £62,000 for the following from the proposal:**<br><br>**1. Skills for Managers - £30,000**<br>**2. Technical skills for the Financial Services Team – £25,000**<br>**3. Risk Management Workshop - £7,000**<br><br>**subject to the allocation of an Improvement East Chief Executive and that the existing Performance Management Improvement Board is expanded to allow for appropriate Improvement East and agency reps to attend.** | |
| | **Action:** | |
| | Jane and Mark to work together on finding a Chief Executive Lead and progressing the JAG | JS/MH |
| | <u>Uttlesford</u> | |
| | **The Uttlesford Use of Resources submission was recommended for approval to the value of £100,000.** | JS |
| | <u>Expeditious Process</u><br>**The Cluster agreed to use the expeditious process to determine these submissions.** | JS |
| | <u>Feedback on the Submission Form</u><br>The Cluster made some comments on the submission form as follows for these comments to be taken to the Lead Chief Execs meeting on 9th January:<br>• Ensure the guidance on the submission forms clearly states the | JS |

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| | need for authorities to contribute to the resources for a project<br>• Amend the submission form so there is a space for outcomes to be listed on the front page.<br><br><u>Thurrock Situation</u><br><br>The current situation at Thurrock was noted. Andrea Hill was acting as the Chief Executive representative on the Improvement Board for the time being.<br><br>A general discussion on how Chief Executives should support each other followed and how to encourage Chief Executives to become Peer Accredited. It was agreed to add this to the agenda for the next meeting as an item for discussion as above. | |
| **6.** | **Any Other Business**<br><br><u>Menu Results</u><br><br>Jane provided the results of the take up from the Winter Menu of Support. 34 authorities had sent submissions for the offer. The only item which had no take up was for the National Graduate Programme.<br><br>The winter menu was now closed with a committed spend of £227,375 out of a budgeted £420,000. The residual amount to be put back into the Performance budget. NB Since the meeting one further authority has made a late submission.<br><br>The Menu results to be reported to EAG on 21st January.<br><br>A discussion should be held at a future Performance Cluster around what to include in the next Menu.<br><br>Write to the Chief Executives/CFOs who did not take up the Winter 2008 Menu of Support to assess why this is the case and to learn any lessons for the next Menu. | JS<br><br>JS |
| **7.** | **Date and Time of Next Meeting**<br><br>18th March 2009 at the Trinity Centre, Cambridge, starting at 9.30 am. | |

**Support for individual authorities**

Improvement East supports authorities who have been assessed as poor, weak, 0* or 1* under CPA and those authorities with particular performance issues. These authorities are referred to as 'individual authorities'. Funding for individual authorities is subject to the authority agreeing that it will (i) receive the support from a lead Chief Executive from another authority; and (ii) establish a Joint Agency Group/Improvement Board.

**Role of the lead Chief Executive**

All individual authorities in receipt of Improvement East funding will be assigned a lead Chief Executive from another authority in the region. It is not expected that this role will exceed the equivalent of one day per month. The lead Chief Executive should agree the time commitment with their own authority and that of the authority receiving this support. The role of the lead Chief Executive assigned to the authority is to:

1. support the authority to devise and implement its Improvement Plan;
2. act as a critical friend and challenge the pace and extent of improvement;
3. liaise with regional and national bodies on the authority's progress, including regular reports to Improvement East;
4. assess and monitor that the authority is achieving optimum value for money from the funding allocated;
5. if necessary, agree additional funding support of up to £20,000 subject to certain criteria (see below) and availability;
6. attend the authority's Joint Agency Group/Improvement Board when appropriate, an Improvement East secretariat to deputise when necessary;
7. promote opportunities to share best practice and learning from the authority;
8. critique any future submissions for support from the authority; and
9. seek and promote good practice and opportunities to the authority
10. give support, including mentoring, to the authority's Chief Executive

**Criteria for additional funding of individual authorities**

Improvement East has a decision-making structure which ensures that funding approaches are equitability considered. Funding decisions are generally considered firstly by the Performance Cluster, followed by the Executive Advisory Group and finally by the Member Panel.

However, Improvement East recognises that in *exceptional* circumstances, funding may be required more quickly that the decision-making structure allows. Consequently, lead Chief Executives supporting individual authorities have delegated responsibility to approve additional funding support up to the value of £20,000. Approval of this funding is subject to the following criteria:

1. sufficient funds must be available in the Improvement East budget allocated to support individual authorities;
2. the usual Improvement East approval process would not allow a funding decision to be made within the necessary timescales;
3. any delay in funding approval would be detrimental to the authority's improvement;
4. the funding must clearly support the delivery of the authority's improvement plan;
5. there is a maximum of £20,000 of such delegated funding per authority per financial year;
6. delegated funding will be subject to the same performance monitoring requirements as any other Improvement East funding;

**Role of the Joint Agency Group/Improvement Board**

There is an expectation that each individual authority will establish a Joint Agency Group/Improvement Board.

The **purpose** is to bring together the key authority members and officers with the support agencies to:

1. oversee the authority's progress and assist it to improve;
2. challenge the pace and extent of improvement made; and
3. provide support thorough advice, experience and possible access to funding and other support to assist the authority to improve;

Improvement Boards are *advisory* only; they do not replace the formal decision-making process of the authority.

**Membership**

Membership of the Group/Board is not prescribed and will be dependant on the specific circumstances of the authority. However, good practice suggests that the following should be members of the Board:

1. Leader and other appropriate Members from the leading group;
2. Appropriate Members from opposition groups
3. Chief Executive of the authority;
4. Officers from the authority's senior management team (dependent on agenda items);
5. Improvement East lead Chief Executive and/or Improvement East representative ;
6. Audit Commission representative;
7. IDeA Associate;
8. Government Office representative
9. District Auditor.

The Group/ Board will be Chaired by a member of the board chosen by the authority.

**Reporting**

The Group/Board is not required to report to the Government. Notes of meetings should be taken for the benefit of Group/Board members. In addition, it is seen as good practice to produce key messages following each meeting as a means of informing staff and members of the work of the Group/Board and its views on the authority's progress. Improvement East will require quarterly progress reports as part of its performance management framework.

The frequency of meetings of the Group/Board is not prescribed and will be dependant on the specific circumstances of the authority. However, good practice suggests that, at least initially, the Group/Board should meet every 6 weeks.