

HAMPSHIRE AND ISLE OF WIGHT LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION

2 June 2006

A REGIONAL IMPROVEMENT STRATEGY FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN THE SOUTH EAST 2006/2009

Report by the Chief Executive of East Hampshire District Council and Lead on Capacity Building

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Association is recommended to agree the following:

- (1) Support the principle of submitting a bid from the capacity fund
 - (2) Agree the 4 strands of the bid as outlined in paragraph 6
 - (3) Agree the governance arrangements outlined in paragraphs 7 – 11
 - (4) Support the outline bid outlined in paragraphs 12 - 14
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INTRODUCTION

1. The purpose of this report is to update members on the improvement strategy for local government in the South East and seek endorsement for the proposed actions within the Hampshire and Isle of Wight area.

BACKGROUND

2. To support the local government improvement agenda, the spending review 2004 included £150m over three years from central government for local authorities in England.
3. The Local Government Association has been negotiating on behalf of local authorities the best way to use this money to support improvement initiatives across the country. It is therefore appropriate that the area local government body oversees arrangements in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight.
4. The capacity building fund is being made available to sub regional partnerships within the south east as the main source of financial support to drive improvement. Members agreed at the last meeting that HIOW should be one such partnership. At the same meeting it was reported that Hampshire County Council had offered to act as "banker" for the Consortium. We are optimistic that funding of around £1.3m could be made available over the current and next financial years. The Government Office of the South East (GOSE) who are handling the process locally have encouraged partnerships to develop proposals based on local priorities.
5. As a local partnership we are encouraged to consider linking our bid to some of the key challenges which have been identified for the south east, such as:

- performance management
- customer satisfaction, community engagement, consultation etc.
- political/senior executive leadership/strategic planning and visioning (inc. training and development)
- service issues around speed of planning applications, council tax collection
- issues that need a more strategic and collaborative approach such as waste management, affordable housing, transport
- leading communities and proper engagement with partners
- Organisational development, linked to the national workforce strategy.

THE PROPOSED HIOW SUBMISSION

- 6: The Chief Executives meeting on 12 May considered and agreed a paper which provided an outline for a detailed submission. There were four elements to this paper which I would now like to explain in more detail:

Organisational Development

A number of organisation wide projects have been identified which are key to delivering tangible improvements to all member organisations of HIOW:

- (i) The development of a project to enhance the wellbeing of both individuals and organisations in HIOW. The principle is that well people + well managed = well organisations. As well as promoting Hampshire authorities as employers of choice, this project will help meet the government's community wellbeing initiative.
- (ii) The building of leadership and management capacity for senior officers and Members, this will include succession planning initiatives, coaching, secondments and action learning sets.
- (iii) The development of a consistent methodology for managing projects, together with training, mentoring and a mechanism for sharing resource.
- (iv) The development of a recruitment web portal for advertising and promoting job opportunities throughout the Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, to enhance the employment brand for authorities at the same time driving down costs.
- (v) The development of a learning and development portal to enable the sharing of learning activities for both officers and Members.

Collaborative Service Delivery

This is a critical part of the ongoing improvement and efficiency agenda. Workshops were held last autumn which identified a number of priorities for collaborative working. As such it is anticipated that a significant element of the capacity fund money would be made available to support the following projects:

- Investigate further opportunities on joint working on council tax collection. Significant progress has already been made on this project but resources are required to develop a clear business case for potential future administrative arrangements.
- Collaborative working in planning. An initial workshop has already been held to consider possible models for shared services, with a further event being planned during this month. Funding of £50K has been obtained from the Planning Advisory Service to assist this exercise but it is clear that substantial more funds will be required to develop the issue further.
- Test Valley Borough Council and New Forest District Council have been working together since 2002 to develop a partnership model for the joint management and delivery of a wide number of front line services. This is seen as a model which could be transferable across the Hampshire and Isle of Wight area.

Further work needs to be done to develop this model and the anticipated cost of this work is £30,000 over the next two years.

- Work has already taken place to consider the opportunities for a shared service model for waste collection. Some resources are needed to ensure this work is progressed to its conclusion.

Member Development and Community Engagement

One of the key issues to come from the autumn workshops was the need to invest significant money in member training. This is an area where there are many opportunities for joint training – e.g planning, scrutiny, licensing. Developing a consistent training base for members in the Hampshire and Isle of Wight area would help develop a more consistent experience for users of local government services.

There are also a number of issues relating to community engagement which need to be explored for which some financial support will be required.

Dedicated Improvement/Efficiency Support

The overall improvement and efficiency agenda is one of the most important issues currently facing local government.

It is clear from the work we have done so far that there is a very strong case for creating extra capacity to enable the Association to make substantial progress in the next two years. At present, what progress has been made has been due to the enthusiasm of key colleagues but if we are serious about change, then this is the opportunity to drive the changes that we all feel are there to be realised. Accordingly, it is proposed that the bid will include provision for a dedicated post to enable a clear and focussed approach to be made to the efficiency agenda within the Association.

GOVERNANCE

7. The bid guidance is clear that strong member and officer governance is required if any bid is to be successful. Whilst the association meetings are a good forum for updating members it is not thought appropriate for the task of overseeing progress on the individual projects over the next two years. To do this we really need a focussed member group to guide the improvement and.
8. The proposal is therefore to create a Hampshire and Isle of Wight Improvement Board. Each member authority of the association would be asked to nominate one member to serve on the board, which will have the following terms of reference:
 - To oversee the implementation of the Capacity Building Programme and to report annually to the full meeting of the Association
 - To champion the efficiency agenda throughout Hampshire and the Isle of Wight
 - To proactively support any authority where overall performance and improvement is felt to require assistance
 - To ensure that best practice approaches to efficiency throughout the area are shared and implemented elsewhere wherever possible
 - To elect a champion to attend the Regional Improvement Meetings
9. Primary officer support would be provided by Will Godfrey, Chief Executive of East Hampshire District Council in his role as lead Chief Executive for this area of work. The other officer support would be provided by the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Improvement Officer when appointed.
10. At this time it is proposed that the Chief Executive's group provide the overarching governance at officer level. However, because it is acknowledged that there is currently some confusion about the role of various officer groups a review has been commissioned to consider the most appropriate future arrangements.
11. If this review proposes a different officer governance structure a further report will be presented to the Association.

OUTLINE BID PROPOSAL

12. As indicated above, there is the potential for significant resources being made available through this fund. At this stage, we are still examining the construction of the bid and the funds to be provisionally allocated to each part of the overall programme. This will clearly need to be settled by the Local Improvement Board once the bid has been approved. It is not envisaged that any additional resources will be expected from individual authorities but there is an expectation from GOSE that efficiency gains realised will release further resources to allow the partnerships to become self-sustaining. This will be a key issue to be addressed through the Local Improvement Board as this project gets underway.

13. At this stage the outline bid is as follows:

Organisational Development	£000
<i>Building Leadership and capacity</i>	150
<i>Regional Learning & Devlp portal</i>	35
<i>Regional Recruitment Portal</i>	100
<i>Wellbeing</i>	250
<i>Project Management</i>	145
Collaborative Service Delivery	
<i>Council Tax collection</i>	150
<i>Planning</i>	100
<i>Test Valley & New Forest partnership</i>	30
<i>Waste Collection</i>	50
Member Development & Community Engagement	150
Improvement/Efficiency post	150
TOTAL BID	1,310

14. The bid needs to be submitted to GOSE by the end of June. Inevitably progress on each of the projects is varied and the values attached to each project are initial estimates which are subject to change as work progresses. However if members indicate support for this package then more detailed work will be done on all project proposals.

WILL GODFREY
Chief Executive of East Hampshire District Council and
Lead on Capacity Building

Date: 22 May 2006
Annex: 0
Contact: Will Godfrey - Tel: 01730 234002; email will_godfrey@easthants.gov.uk