

## **National Improvement and Efficiency Strategy (NIES) - Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnerships (RIEPs)**

### **Purpose**

*This paper outlines proposals for performance monitoring of and engagement with RIEPs to support board objective 2 - to design and embed an effective, sector-led and streamlined improvement and innovation support architecture and programme;*

### **Decisions**

- *Agree proposals for reporting arrangements from RIEPs (see paragraph 6);*
- *Agree proposals to strengthen links between the Improvement Board and RIEPs (see paragraph 8).*

*Contact Officer: Clarissa Corbiserio tel: 0207 664 3060; email: clarissa.corbiserio@ga.gov.uk*

## **Performance monitoring arrangements for RIEPS**

1. *The National Improvement and Efficiency Strategy established the principles of sector led improvement, devolution, rationalisation and simplification. The strategy represents an acknowledgement of the outstanding performance of local government and is an opportunity for the sector to secure and further the case for devolution and greater local decision making.*
2. *Establishing a robust and credible evidence base demonstrating the success of sector led improvement support over central intervention and control will be crucial over the coming months and years; both to ensure implementation of the principles of NIES across government and supporting the preparation of a strong submission for the next spending review.*
3. *Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnerships will be an important tool in supporting councils to accelerate the drive for improvement and efficiency. Demonstrating the impact of the partnerships is important for RIEPs to ensure accountability and transparency to the councils in their region and, within the context of a spending review in 2009, to making the case to government for continued funding.*
4. *In the NIES, RIEPs committed to a set of minimum standards and to report annually, accounting for the distribution and use of funding and progress against priorities and providing reassurance that these minimum standards are being met.*
5. *The minimum standards include:*
  - *focus resources on supporting innovation and efficiency as a means of delivering excellent LAAs;*
  - *establish strong governance arrangements that ensure strong member leadership of and engagement in the RIEP and ownership of the strategy by all members in the region;*
  - *base their regional improvement and efficiency strategy (RIES) on a robust analysis of need across the region, using both data and consultation to develop the strategy.*
6. *On this basis, members are asked to agree the following proposals for RIEP performance monitoring:*
  - *RIEPs should focus primarily on reporting to councils, and more frequently than annually (which they are all doing), although this is not prescribed;*
    - *Given the political commitment the LGA made in supporting RIEPs, we will use this information to give Improvement Board members regular updates on progress, along with other means (outlined below).*
  - *Annual reporting to the LGA and Government should be based on the minimum standards and the commitments made in the RIES i.e. reporting on the standards/priorities/targets already agreed. These should be submitted in Mar/Apr 09.*
  - *As the NIES recognises, "Accountability should not equal prescription or standardisation", therefore we should not impose a standard approach to reporting, but rather set high level expectations against which RIEPs can report.*
  - *Reporting to LGA/CLG should impose minimum burden on RIEPs, therefore we will draw on the reports RIEPs produce for councils in their region.*
    - *We will however draw this together into a single report/presentation outlining the achievements of the sector's improvement architecture (i.e. RIEPs and the LGA group) in implementing the national improvement and efficiency strategy.*

## **Strengthening links between the Improvement Board and RIEPs**

7. *At the last board meeting members endorsed the decision taken at the RIEP and LGA lead member meeting to establish formally a RIEP member forum. RIEP member chairs will meet with*

lead Improvement Board members on 15<sup>th</sup> October 08 (and twice yearly thereafter) to review RIEP progress and provide RIEPs an opportunity to shape the national agenda.

8. At this meeting we will seek agreement with RIEP members on a proposal for wider engagement with Improvement Board members. **Members are asked to agree this proposal in advance of them being put to RIEP members:**

- Annual meeting of Improvement Board and RIEP chairs - this meeting, proposed for April 2009, will bring together the Improvement Board with RIEP chairs to discuss and review progress of the implementation of the NIES over its first year. This meeting will seek to identify remaining barriers to a sector led approach to improvement across government and the inspectorates, particularly to support LGA lobbying in SR09 and help shape the board's agenda for the following year.

9. In addition to this, RIEPs have been provided with a list of Improvement Board members, so they can strengthen links at the local level, where they feel this is appropriate. The LGA and Programme Office are compiling information packs which are available for members who wish to engage on an individual basis with one or more regions. LGA officers will also be available to support members in this.

10. Finally the RIEP programme office has published the first of a series of quarterly member newsletters to all RIEP and Improvement Board members, these will be important in keeping members informed of developments on the agenda at both regional and national level.

Contact Officer: Clarissa Corbiserio tel: 0207 664 3060; email: [clarissa.corbiserio@ga.gov.uk](mailto:clarissa.corbiserio@ga.gov.uk)