

Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnerships (RIEPs): One year on

A summary of key achievements
from the RIEP Programme in 2008-9



Regional Improvement and
Efficiency Partnerships

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Foreword

It is now one year since the nine Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnerships (RIEPs) were established under the National Improvement and Efficiency Strategy (NIES) and we are delighted to introduce our first report on the RIEPs collective achievements to date. We hope you will find in this report, strong evidence of the depth and variety of their work with authorities to accelerate efficiency gains and support improvement.

The RIEPs are an important element of sector led improvement support and we are pleased that all RIEPs have established local leadership and ownership of this agenda in their first year. It is particularly encouraging that the RIEPs have already repaid the initial investment made into the RIEP programme in year one, reporting gains of over £100m for 2008/9 with further ambitious efficiencies projected over the coming years. RIEPs have proven they can be agile and flexible by assisting the sector to respond effectively to the economic downturn and we have also made strides in supporting local authorities to deliver ambitious

Local Area Agreements (LAAs), to collaborate on a wide range of innovative projects and on specific themed activity such as community empowerment.

However we are not complacent and we look forward to building on these successes in future years. Local authorities face challenges ahead with demand rising for key services and the continuous pressure to make efficiencies. We recognise the need to sustain improvement in key services and to meet the new set of challenges introduced by Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA). In this environment, the RIEPs will have a fundamental role in enabling local authorities to maximise their efficiency savings, facilitating collaboration, fostering innovation and sharing good practice across the sector.

We could not hope to detail in one document the variety of improvement and efficiency projects which local authorities are working through their RIEPs to deliver on a daily basis, however we hope you will find in this report, a clear summary of the RIEPs' key achievements in their first year of delivery.



Cllr David Parsons CBE
*Chair of the Local Government
Association (LGA) Improvement
Board and Leader of
Leicestershire County Council*



Joyce Redfearn
*Chair of the Chief Executives'
Task Group (CEXTG) and Chief
Executive, Wigan Council*

Executive summary

This report reflects the key achievements of the nine Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnerships (RIEPs) over their first year of delivery. It includes a number of case studies to illustrate individual RIEP's work at regional levels and their collective achievements as a programme. It also describes the challenges the RIEPs will be tackling in years two and three and what they plan to achieve.

As such, this report celebrates both the variety of programmes which the RIEPs have developed with their local authorities at a regional level, and their collective achievements which include considerable combined efficiency savings, collaboration between regions and with national sector led bodies and the development of robust improvement support for authorities and partnerships within a challenging economic context.

Key messages arising from the 9 annual reports:

- RIEPs are led and owned by Councillors and local authorities
- RIEPs reported over £100m efficiency gains in their first year on an initial funding investment of just under £50m
- RIEPs communicate with all English local authorities and have engaged with over 95% of local authorities in their first year¹
- RIEPs are supporting authorities to respond to the economic downturn and deliver savings to operate within the next financial settlement
- RIEPs have supported 36 authorities facing difficulties over the past year²
- RIEPs have facilitated innovative approaches so that authorities can take forward collaborative projects they may not otherwise have done

Policy background: what are the RIEPs?

The joint Communities and Local Government (CLG) and Local Government Association (LGA) National Improvement and Efficiency Strategy (NIES) published in December 2007 announced the establishment of the RIEPs with a devolved funding package of up to £185m over the three year period, 2008-11. This funding is part of a total £380m devolved to the sector for improvement.

RIEPs are partnerships of local authorities including fire and rescue authorities which work together at regional and sub-regional levels to support improved efficiencies, performance improvement and more innovative approaches to service delivery.

The NIES required the RIEPs to report back to government and local government on their progress through annual reports. The annual reports provide an opportunity for each RIEP to report back to local authorities in their regions, lead LGA members and CLG on the progress they have made in meeting the objectives set within their Regional Improvement and Efficiency Strategies (RIES), on the programmes and outcomes they have delivered to date, and on their focus for the year ahead.

RIEPs meet regularly with colleagues from the LGA and IDeA around a number of thematic topics such as empowerment and children's services. An appendix detailing the name of each RIEP and governance for the RIEP programme is available on p.33.

Key progress and achievements in 2008-9

The following provides an overview of the RIEPs' key achievements to date. Considerably more detail about individual programmes and projects at regional level is available within each of the RIEP's annual reports. Links to all the reports are available at www.idea.gov.uk/rieps

1. Establishing Councillor leadership and ownership by the local government sector

A key focus for all RIEPs in their first year of delivery has been to establish Councillor led governance at a regional level and to ensure 'buy in' and ownership from local authorities.

Highlights:

- Robust Councillor and officer governance in place in all RIEPs
- Sub-regional structures established in the North West, East Midlands, South East and developing in Yorkshire and Humber
- Councillor and officer champions identified to lead particular workstreams within all RIEPs
- Development of integrated, sector led partnerships to deliver improvement support in key service areas. Examples include partnerships of fire authorities in the South East and the North West, the Regional Children's Forum in the West Midlands and integrated working with Joint Improvement Partnerships in adult social care in most regions including the South West, the East of England and the East Midlands

A number of RIEPs have established Councillor and officer champions for their support programmes to promote the support they provide and ensure it remains responsive to local authorities' changing needs. This includes Chief Executive oversight of improvement packages in Improvement East, Capital Ambition's engagement model and thematic leads and sponsors for different programmes of activity within the other RIEPs.

John Healey MP has been clear that demonstrating sector ownership of the RIEP programme is a key success criterion. All of the RIEPs are running communications programmes to keep authorities in the region informed of their work including regular newsletters, websites and annual conferences. This is complemented by national support for media and communications from the RIEP Programme Office.

A number of RIEPs have conducted their own perception surveys of stakeholders at regional level which are reported within their annual reports and will be monitored over the next two years.

Spotlight on Capital Ambition's engagement model:

Capital Ambition, the RIEP for London, is delivering a rolling programme of engagement meetings with all London authorities within its performance programme, 'Raising the Bar'. Led by Capital Ambition Programme Board members, the meetings offer peer to peer challenge and support to each London Chief Executive. The meetings provide an opportunity to enhance relationships with key stakeholders, gather soft intelligence, compare and discuss local area performance and needs-based future challenges and identify and share good practice across the capital's authorities.

Regular engagement meetings help reveal where authorities face common obstacles and where they can share key strengths, as well as identifying pan-London programmes and shared solutions which Capital Ambition can support. Bespoke support packages for individual boroughs are negotiated through this process. The success of this programme is demonstrated by the improvement amongst the nine authorities that have benefited from Capital Ambition improvement packages developed to address specific performance issues impacting on their ratings. One of these has risen from zero to four stars since CPA began, whilst two others have gone from zero to three stars. A further authority moved from one to four stars, another from one to three stars, another from two to four stars. Importantly the ethos of the programme supports a 'mutuality statement', signed by local authority leaders, ensures close connection of Capital Ambition to the needs of key stakeholders and has helped London become the best performing region in England. Capital Ambition is now building on this success and supporting authorities in their preparations for Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA).

“Waltham Forest has improved dramatically, rising from just one, to four stars since the inception of Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA). Our work with Capital Ambition has been a key part of this success. Engagement meetings with Capital Ambition board members have helped to reveal where we face challenges, and where other boroughs can offer solutions to these. This collaborative approach has also enabled us to share our best practice with other boroughs, as well as identify London-wide programmes and shared solutions that Capital Ambition can support”

*Cllr Clyde Loakes
(Leader of the London Borough of Waltham Forest)*

Spotlight on the East Midlands Improvement and Efficiency Partnership's (EM IEP) sub-regional structures and engagement model:

The EM IEP has taken the decision to devolve 70% of its total funding to five sub-regional partnerships; Derbyshire, Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire, Nottinghamshire and Leicestershire and Rutland as a means to ensure engagement, local ownership and responsiveness to locally determined improvement needs. Each sub-regional partnership is Councillor led and has clear governance arrangements and formal programme management in place. The sub-regions are developing their programmes of activity (across 58 projects as at March 09) in line with the EM IEP's priorities and targets within the RIES.

The EM IEP works closely with the sub regional partnerships' programme managers to support and monitor progress and the payment of devolved funding is made against the delivery of the agreed project outcome milestones for all sub regional projects. The EM IEP commissions regional programmes with the remaining 30% of its funding and plays a key role in sharing the outcomes and benefits of regional and sub-regional activity across the region.

This approach is ensuring local ownership by the local government sector of improvement and efficiency support, and a real responsiveness to local authorities' improvement needs. To date, the EM IEP has successfully engaged with all of the local authorities and fire and rescue authorities within the region through a variety of means including workshops, events and regular communications including monthly news bulletins and a bi-monthly newsletter for Councillors.

The North West Improvement and Efficiency Partnership (NW IEP) adopts a similar approach to the EM IEP with a 60:40 split between its sub-regional and regional funding. Sub-regions in the South East establish their own programmes and contribute to regional level support and Your Space (YoHr Space), the RIEP in Yorkshire and Humber is also developing its sub-regional infrastructure.

Spotlight on integrated working with health and adult social care in Improvement East:

When CLG and the Department of Health (DH) devolved the £4m health and wellbeing fund jointly to the RIEPs and Joint Improvement Partnerships³ (JIPs), the RIEPs responded positively and have developed integrated support programmes for adult social care in partnership with their JIPs, including pooling their resources to ensure best use of resources.

One such example is the partnership between the JIP and the RIEP in the East of England. Improvement East encourages existing sector groups to take a lead in delivering improvement and efficiency to ensure sector 'ownership' and sustainability of the changes it is facilitating. Improvement East has worked closely with sector experts within the JIP to jointly plan fund its improvement programme for adult social care.

This has led to a more holistic approach to social care improvement with a willingness to share and link budgets across work streams where this is the most effective way of getting results. It has provided an opportunity to identify priorities in a more strategic and coherent way across the region and to target resources accordingly. The role of the JIP in relation to the Improvement East is to:

- Co-ordinate, challenge, support and accelerate the drive for transformation of adult social care
- Work in ways which deliver personalised support that is excellent value for money, of the best quality and more efficiently delivered
- Provide support in partnership with wider local government, health services and people who use services and their carers

Nine work streams to improve adult social care have been identified to improve adult social care including support for dementia, personalisation, efficiency and safeguarding. Each stream is led by a Director of Adult Social Services ensuring the process is fully embedded in the sector and owned by senior level specialists who know best how the funding should be channelled.

As the process develops into its second year, there are clear signs of further developments in joint working with positive links being made between the broader improvement agenda and key service areas.

2. Supporting local authorities to accelerate efficiency gains

RIEPs have collectively reported efficiency savings of over £100m in their first year of delivery, providing a strong return on the £50m investment CLG made in the RIEP programme in year one.

RIEPs are building on this strong foundation with ambitious savings projected over the next few years. On this basis the RIEP programme is currently projecting a saving of at least £2 for every £1 of the total £185m which will be invested over three to five years. Projected savings will evolve as programmes are delivered.

Highlights:

- North West forecasts a total £68m savings in 08/09 from collaborative procurement activity across local authorities in the region
- South East has projects generating £20m savings this year
- West Midlands will release almost £7m this year from its procurement programme
- South West has achieved £3m savings since Sept 08 through its procurement workstream
- Capital Ambition will release £6m on an out of hours call centre framework contract and £2.3m on postal service costs plus significant returns on previous procurement activity
- Supplier and contract management system in Yorkshire and Humber is saving the region £321k p.a
- In the East Midlands support for highways construction has delivered £1.5m savings in 2008/09 as well as reductions of £137k in the cost of high cost placements for the local authority leading the project and further savings of at least £100k p.a. anticipated

Highlights:

- Total of £160m identified by the South East to be achieved by 2011
- £70m through collaborative procurement in Yorkshire and Humber by 2011 with a further £40m identified through its construction framework Yorbuild
- In the North East, £100m savings are projected through collaborative procurement £0.5-2.5m projected for reductions in costly children's placements
- £20m - £30m further savings identified through procurement efficiencies over the next 3 years in the South West
- In the East Midlands, there are savings of £17m identified by 2011 on highways and property framework contracts, savings of £1m per annum anticipated from use of the Care Funding Calculator and a project on shaping the market for looked after children anticipates achieving £10m savings over 5 years
- £4m projected through use of consultancy procurement toolkit in London plus savings anticipated through collaboration over contracts with a value of £43m (ICT e-auction) and £350m on supplier contracts
- The West Midlands is projecting total savings of £30m from corporate procurement; £60m from waste, highways, construction and asset management and £35m through process improvement and shared services over the next five years

Spotlight on Improvement and Efficiency West Midland's (IEWM) procurement programme:

The IEWM procurement programme has been built on a strong legacy established in SR04. In corporate procurement over £17m savings have been delivered to date with almost £7m of this achieved in 2008/9 through encouraging collaboration which levers economies of scale and reducing duplication. Of the £7m delivered in this year alone, £4m is from various commodity savings (home to school transport, insurances, banking services, salt etc.) and £2.7m savings from the West Midland's procurement hub and associated framework contracts.

The Regional Procurement Hub run by IEWM acts as a "one stop shop" with ready access to over 270 "best deals" (contracts and frameworks) which are growing monthly. On the procurement hub, local authority employees can find LIVE contracts, procurement Information, standard procurement documents and information about the events and training which the IEWM runs to build skills in this area.

"Creating a collaborative procurement approach has already delivered cashable savings with significantly more opportunities in the pipeline, IEWM provides an ideal forum for this to thrive and grow in a positive and partnership environment."

Paul Galland, Strategic Director for Environment and Economy, Warwickshire County Council

Spotlight on EM IEP's Business Transformation Programme:

Every authority in the East Midlands is running a 'business transformation' project in some form. These projects range from small, local initiatives to major shared services programmes. The EM IEP has a specific regional programme

to support business transformation. The primary aim of this programme is to build the region's capacity to undertake business transformation projects, in turn helping authorities to improve services for customers and realise cashable efficiency savings.

Programme impacts include:

- Over 230 officers from 14 local authorities have completed training in Business Improvement Techniques (BIT), obtaining an NVQ level two and identifying £800k of savings
- Match funding has been provided for a range of training courses including project management and 'Sprint' training, enabling authorities to build internal business transformation capability
- A series of events have helped to share lessons from successful projects and introduce leading techniques
- Provision of advisory support for authorities undertaking business transformation projects

Spotlight on Improvement and Efficiency South East (IESE)'s construction framework:

This framework is being jointly developed by IESE and Office of Government Commerce (OGC) buying solutions to serve all public authority construction projects in the South East and demonstrates the benefits of public sector organisations working in partnership. The new framework is expected to benefit public authorities significantly by reducing consultancy procurement time and cost as well as improving project delivery and value.

A view from a client

Surrey County Council hopes to take advantage of the new contract at the earliest opportunity. Surrey's Professional Services Consultant Nick Layton says:

"Surrey County Council has for many years used external consultants to deliver its major capital works building projects using bespoke conditions of contract. Procuring such contracts is time consuming and expensive. "It makes sense to use a framework of consultants, using industry standard terms of engagement. It precludes the council having its own bespoke arrangements, means consultants do not need to undertake multiple costly tender exercises for similar clients, and should dovetail nicely into the IESE contractor framework arrangements."

The new framework for consultancy complements the existing IESE construction framework, which helps clients procure building work. The development of the consultancy framework means the whole project team can adopt a collaborative procurement approach.

The framework will provide lower cost and faster access to providers of construction consultancy services with increased opportunities for collaboration, market leverage and capacity building. In addition IESE will be ensuring that lessons and learning is shared across local government resulting in increased adoption of best practice public sector construction procurement within the south east and nationally.

The joint framework represents an estimated fee value of £750million over the four year framework life. IESE, the primary stakeholder, represents approximately a third of this potential value. The IESE route is open to the whole of the south east, although other regions can adopt the IESE principles if desired and a number of other RIEPs are considering this. The framework is expected to launch in June 2009.

Spotlight on the South West RIEP's (SW RIEP) Outcome-Based Placements in the Peninsula:

Developed by five peninsular authorities, this project aims to entrench a new method of procurement whereby the needs of children and young people are more accurately and appropriately matched to independent sector placements.

The process consists of establishing a pre-qualified list of good quality providers and then matching each individual placement against what support-based outcomes the provider states they can provide for the child. The pre-qualified list is held by Devon County Council but individual authorities tender the placements. The SW RIEP has provided key funding and support for the project which has achieved the following key benefits:

- savings for authorities in the sub-region of £1.6 million since 2007
- more appropriate placements that lead to improved placement stability for children in care. Prior to the collective adoption of the system (in 2006/7), the average percentage of children with three or more placements during the year in the sub-region was 17%. It is now 10% (2% lower than the England average)
- greater engagement with providers which helps plan future commissioning of services and reshapes the market to better meet children's needs

“The SW RIEP has enabled us to make an exponential leap forward in our commissioning practice in particular in demonstrating links between choice and outcomes. With RIEP facilitation we have been able to design services and systems which have improved outcomes for children whilst achieving savings and their assistance and support is greatly welcomed.”

Brain Grady, Head of Commissioning and Procurement, Children and Young People's Services, Devon County Council

Spotlight on the Midlands Highways Alliance:

The Midlands Highway Alliance (MHA) is a partnership of ten highway authorities and the Highways Agency. This project, funded and supported by the EM IEP, is estimated to achieve efficiencies of around £11m by 2011 as well as benefiting local communities by driving the improved design and delivery of large scale highways projects.

Four highways contractors are signed up to the medium sized schemes works framework and 27 schemes have been earmarked. It is anticipated circa £100k per scheme will be saved on procurement costs alone with £300k delivered in 2008/09. Other efficiency savings of circa £5,724k have been identified with £253k delivered in 2008/09. A number of procurement initiatives operated through the MHA have delivered commodity savings, for example a saving of £700k, over three years on rock salt. A professional services partnership (with Scott Wilson and partners) which forms part of the approach, has delivered £738k savings in 2008/09.

Spotlight on the Care Funding Calculator (CFC) developed by IESE:

The CFC is widely used by local authorities and primary care trusts to manage the costs of residential care and supported living for adults with learning disabilities, and to tailor care packages more closely to individual needs. The tool builds upon successful models developed in the South East and South West. Though initially developed specifically for learning disabilities, it is now being used successfully in other adult care services such as mental health, physical disabilities and sensory impairment.

IESE is co-ordinating the roll out of the tool to interested RIEPs with strong support from the East Midland and West Midlands. The CFC is available online and can be used by commissioners and providers. Led by IESE, the South East region alone has saved over £3.6m from the CFC in 08/09.

In addition to significant efficiency savings, the CFC supports local authorities to implement the 'personalisation' agenda as it tailors packages to individual needs by breaking down the needs of an individual in detail and using benchmarked guide prices to calculate how much it costs to meet those needs. In fact the tool is also helping to improve relationships with providers. Many providers see the CFC providing a fair and transparent basis for negotiation as well as allowing them to provide costings for their services once rather than for each placement.

The South East has also seen a significant culture change in many social services departments with services within an authority and different authorities working together better to avoid duplication. In Berkshire, for example, a formal structure has been set up between authorities to identify key providers, the level of provision they each offer and then to use the CFC to negotiate on costs for the county. Crucially, the CFC is encouraging a culture of value for money with officers prepared to look closely at costs, challenge them and negotiate if appropriate.

3. Supporting local authorities in the economic downturn

RIEPs have proven that they are flexible partnerships, able to react to the changing demands placed on local authorities. In addition to the opportunities for accelerating efficiencies which the RIEPs offer local authorities, a number of regions have developed comprehensive support for local authorities in the economic downturn. This will inevitably be a strong focus for the RIEPs in the next two years and is a key message arising from their annual reports.

Highlights:

- The SW RIEP has refocused its priorities and revised its programme for year two in response to feedback at a 'grey sky' thinking day with key stakeholders and has an 'Economic Recovery Fund' which will promote innovative approaches to reducing pressure on services for vulnerable groups affected by the recession
- The South East business portal, a web based tool which allows local authorities to upload their current contracts and business opportunities, allows authorities to collaborate and share documentation and ensures tender opportunities are widely available. To date the portal holds over 2000 contracts with over 60 tenders a day. Over 7000 businesses are registered with an average 150 registrations a week. IESE has run two rounds of regional seminars with Business Link throughout the region to support the process
- YoHr Space's economic development programme which has included commissioning research on the impact of the downturn and on LAA indicators, regional events and the launch of an action pledge which authorities are being encouraged to sign
- Publication of the North West Improvement and Efficiency Partnership (NW IEP)'s briefing on action in the downturn and the launch of a regional workforce gateway which will help tackle worklessness among other things
- IEWM is supporting authorities through its LAA and partnerships programme and leading on behalf of the RIEPs the developing approach to regional worklessness networks with funding from the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP)
- Capital Ambition is supporting improvements in handling apprenticeships offering joint commissioning to fast track support for worklessness; the London Efficiency Challenge for all London's authorities to operate within greatly reduced resources and a Supplier Relationship Pilot to generate greater savings from multi-authority suppliers
- EM IEP has commissioned a Local Improvement Adviser to identify the scope for pan-regional collaboration on research, intelligence and analytical capacity

Spotlight on YoHr Space's pledge for action:

YoHr Space (the RIEP for Yorkshire and Humber) worked with Local Government Yorkshire and Humber to run an event to create a co-ordinated response across the authorities and partnerships in region to offering support in the economic downturn. Over 90 local authority Leaders, Chief Executives and Corporate Directors attended the event as well as the Regional Minister Rosie Winterton and the Minister for Local Government, John Healey. A key outcome of the day was a Regional Economic Pledge which the region's local authorities, fire and rescue and police authorities have signed, committing them to a series of promises on how they can help prepare the region for the economic downturn. The pledge focuses on supporting businesses, providing affordable housing, building up skills and protecting citizens.

In order to assess the potential impacts and policy implications of the economic downturn on the major cities in the Region, YoHr Space has funded a research project commissioned by Yorkshire Cities. This study will develop an Index of Economic Resilience to provide an indication of the robustness of local economies to withstand an economic downturn. This will complement a RIEP commissioned study to examine the potential impacts of the downturn on LAA targets and local priorities in the region.

Spotlight on Capital Ambition's support for workforce and apprenticeships:

Capital Ambition and London Councils are working closely with authorities to develop a London-wide aspiration for 2000 new apprenticeship start-ups to 2012 in direct employment in public services, which includes the boroughs themselves and potentially suppliers of outsourced services. This will contribute to targets set by the London Apprenticeships Taskforce and the London Skills and Employment Board, which will also be adopted into the Workforce Strategy for London agreed in July 2008.

The RIEP has met with the Association of London Work-Based Learning Providers to identify how risk can be shared between employers and providers in times of economic uncertainty, and to access support available via the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) for boroughs to develop sustainable and effective schemes. It will also be examining the scope for effective commissioning of appropriate programmes to ensure an efficient use of resources across London in this area.

The majority of London boroughs have selected LAA indicators on worklessness and people not in education or employment (NEETs) and the apprenticeships will form an important plank in delivering these targets. Capital Ambition will be monitoring progress via its performance office and networks.

A further strand of the workforce strategy is to explore how local authorities' recruitment practices can open up opportunities for the hardest to reach in the labour market: The London Borough of Havering is leading on this project as a pilot, and Capital Ambition will share their learning and associated tools with the rest of London as the results emerge.

Spotlight on the development of support to tackle worklessness across the regions:

Led by IEWM, the nine RIEPs are collectively working with the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) to develop a range of support and network opportunities for practitioners tackling worklessness. This includes existing regional support programmes and a range of activities supported with £1.2m funding from DWP.

RIEP support for worklessness includes the establishment of regional networks for practitioners to share good practice, mapping existing activity in the region so as to better signpost authorities to the right support, support programmes for scrutiny, partnerships with Regional Development Agencies and other bodies and integration with LAA support programmes.

4. Supporting performance improvement

In 2008-9, the RIEPs have worked with IDeA and other partners to support 36 local authorities with particular performance issues over the last year. The RIEPs recognise the need to support councils in safeguarding children. Other areas of performance identified include adult social care, equalities, use of resources and supporting councils' preparation for CAA and local government reorganisation (featured within this report with strong examples of support by Improvement East and the North East Improvement and Efficiency Partnership).

Using this experience the RIEPs are currently working in partnership with councils and the IDeA and LGA to develop a new framework for providing local government led help for local authorities facing particular difficulties. The RIEPs will be consulting their Councillor and officer boards about these proposals over the coming year to strengthen local government's collective ability to offer timely and appropriate support to local authorities when they need it.

Highlights:

Successful, tailored support delivered to a number of authorities on a variety of issues:

- Fylde, Liverpool and Oldham in the North West
- Support for local government reorganisation provided in East and North East in particular
- Tailored support packages delivered in Herefordshire, Shropshire, Bromsgrove Stoke by IEWM
- Development of pilot Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) self evaluation activity in partnership with IDeA
- Confidential network developed in the East Midlands which has enabled the RIEP to build up a picture of needs, exchange performance information with key partners and offer timely support to authorities

A strong and developing focus on safeguarding as an emergent improvement need:

- Improvement East's Children's programme board and transitions programme
- West Midland's Regional Children's Forum and support programme
- Capital Ambition's strong support to Haringey following the Baby P case and its major programme to improve the resilience of children's safeguarding across London
- Comprehensive programmes scoped in South East and North East
- South West examples of delivery in reducing social care placement costs, tackling childhood obesity and teenage pregnancy
- North West support for practitioners development in children's services

Spotlight on NW IEP's rapid response fund:

One of the aims of the NW IEP is to assist councils in difficulty and tackle poor performance through tailored, co-ordinated support. The RIEP has established a regional panel with representatives from local government, the Audit Commission, the Government Office and the IDeA to identify general areas for improvement in performance as well 'at risk' authorities and service areas which would benefit from specific support. The chairs of the two main RIEP boards have delegated authority over a £200,000 'rapid response' fund to ensure the swift delivery of improvement packages to authorities when early intelligence and/or an urgent improvement need is identified.

As a whole, the North West region performs strongly with 86% of the 22 authorities achieving a three or four star rating and all but two authorities judged to be 'improving well' or 'improving strongly'. To sustain this strong record, NW IEP has undertaken two programmes of direct support in its first year - for Liverpool City Council and Fylde Borough Council. A further programme has been commissioned following the recent identification of a number of critical support issues in Oldham Council. The following provides a summary of the type of support the RIEP is successfully providing:

Liverpool

- Corporate Improvement and Value for Money (VfM) toolkits developed which form the basis of the VfM service reviews to be undertaken across Liverpool City Council
- Best practice has been identified in relation to the provision of effective and efficient services in Children's Services, Adults Services and Revenues and Benefits Service. Learning from this will be available via an 'Innovation Bank' and the council has deposited 50 days of support to be accessed by other local authorities, other regional and sub regional providers

Fylde

- A number of events and processes have strengthened the council, including a peer review and an event targeted at middle managers designed to raise awareness about inspections.
- A number of specific actions were taken to address areas identified for further improvement, including an exercise on sharpening how the council prioritises its resources

Spotlight on Improvement East's sector ownership of the improvement agenda:

In the East of England, Chief Executives were invited to support councils in the region with help and advice. Where Improvement East is providing targeted support to an authority in difficulties, a lead Chief Executive from another council is allocated to provide senior management advice and to keep Improvement East updated on progress in implementing an agreed package of support.

Rob Hammond, Chief Executive at Cambridge City Council, has been working with South Cambridgeshire District Council over the past two years. He says that as a fellow Chief Executive he brings a different perspective to the work which can benefit members, the authority's officer management team and its partner organisations. A key focus is on getting to grips with issues, whether these are about strategy, resource planning or member and staff development. The Chief Executive advisor is there to do just that: be a critical friend and advisor, not to do the work. So a crucial element is helping to build capacity so that sustained improvement can take place.

All the Chief Executives who are doing this work, helping other councils, will say that they learn from it. Analysing problems and finding solutions for other councils brings fresh insights which you can carry back to your own local authority.

Recently, a group has been set up for Chief Executives carrying out this support role. This is an opportunity to provide mutual support and develop some frameworks for approaching the task.

Spotlight on support for local government reorganisation in the North East:

One of the North East Improvement and Efficiency Partnership's (NE IEP) first activities was to support the two areas of Durham and Northumberland in their transition from two-tier to unitary status. The RIEP helped the authorities through the transition by giving advice on structure and change management, as well as £200,000 in funding for each body (£175K for change management plus £25K for leadership development for newly-elected Councillors). The partnership also facilitated the sharing of experience and solutions, and continues to offer this facilitated support as the two authorities each embed the changes they have made.

Each authority set up a Joint Implementation Team which identified the essential activity required to achieve unitary status. Both authorities were given RIEP help with their work on:

- Proposals to develop the Councillor/officer top team
- Support for officers on strategic and operational change management to help them manage the transition to the new authority
- Career transition help to support people facing changes in their role, or competition for posts
- Induction and skills auditing for elected Councillors
- Devising and communicating new vision and values

An independent consultancy reviewed RIEP support for both authorities which was particularly valued:

“The Joint Implementation Team for local government reorganisation in Northumberland has used the RIEP funding to add value to our in-house effort to create and embed the new vision and values of the Unitary Council. By bringing in external advisors to work along side our Culture & Change Team we have constructively challenged existing practices in the county and are embedding the new direction with all staff and members.”

John Litherland, LGR Programme Manager, Joint Implementation Team, Northumberland County Council

A regular roundtable meeting has now been established, attended by the RIEP, Northumberland and Durham councils, Government Office North East and IDeA. The purpose of the meeting is to identify support needs and align resources for the new councils’ improvement and transformation programmes.

Spotlight on YoHr Space support for Climate Change:

All RIEPs have, with IDeA, been developing support for authorities to tackle climate change supplementing existing regional activity with a £4m devolved funding package from CLG and Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC).

The YoHr Space vision for climate change is to meet the needs of local areas in supporting their delivery programmes to address climate change and prepare for its impacts, including for example the risks from flooding. The key areas of collaborative activity identified in the region are: Local leadership, taking forward and understanding climate change in schools and engaging citizens on combating climate change. Achievements in 2008/9 include:

- development of support proposals at sub-regional level in South Yorkshire and the Humber
- joint working between YoHr Space and the West Yorkshire Leadership Academy on Climate Change to provide development support for officers and members
- jointly hosting workshops with the government office and Local Government Yorkshire and Humber on ‘mitigation and adaption’ and on flooding, development of flood risk partnerships and development of practical toolkits authorities can use to support them in this key risk area,
- RIEP funding supporting Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council’s largest regeneration project which is dependent on increased rail capacity for sustainability and climate change mitigation

- The RIEP's construction framework (YORbuild) providing a vehicle to explore sustainable methods of construction contributing positively to the region's climate change agenda
- Ongoing analysis of LAA priorities and available intelligence in partnership with Yorkshire Futures is ensuring robust and critical analysis is underway to build on this emerging picture and ensure the region understands what and where the focus of our attention should be

The region is ambitious about creating a legacy of joint working on climate change to develop actions on long term issues with targets already in place to 2050 and the YoHr Space sees its role as enabling local authorities to lead the region's response. Resources have now been combined to recruit a Regional Climate Change Co-ordinator to support integrated delivery of the Yorkshire and Humber Climate Change Plan and the YoHr Space Climate Change Programme and help facilitate partnership working across a broad range of bodies and authorities.

5. Supporting the delivery of ambitious Local Area Agreements (LAAs)

All RIEPs are investing in support for LAAs, Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) including ensuring authorities are confident and prepared to deliver against Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA). Where relevant, a number of RIEPs are supporting ambitious Multi Area Agreements (MAAs) in their regions.

At a national level, IEWM has been leading the recruitment of a network of Local Improvement Advisers on behalf and with the support of CLG and the other RIEPs. A network of over 100 advisers is now in place, facilitated by IEWM and accessed by all RIEPs.

- Regional events and sub-regional support for 'hard to crack' indicators in East Midlands based on consultation with LAA Co-ordinators in the region
- Projects to tackle indicators of particular regional relevance such as health inequalities and cohesion, in Y&H
- LSP Performance Improvement Development Programme in the North West
- LAA networks and/or champions established in the South East, North East and Yorkshire and Humber, among others

Highlights:

- West Midland's 'learning to deliver' programme and subsidy for each LSP
- 'Progress through Partnership,' a sub partnership of IESE, offering funding, events and resources to every LSP in the region and delivering £1m support for LSP's including resources to target those most in need
- The 'aspire to perform' diagnostic tool offered by Improvement East
- Beneficial self assessment and behavioural change programmes for LSPs run by the NE IEP and the SW RIEP
- Support for two MAAs in the North East and three MAA areas in Yorkshire and Humber
- Capital Ambition's performance office, engagement meetings and identification of LAA targets 'at risk'

Spotlight on IEWM's 'learning to deliver' programme:

The 'Learning to Deliver' programme supports authorities and partnerships with the delivery of their LAAs. The programme is providing a range of support products and is designed to tackle specific indicators within the region's LAAs including advice and development support from a nominated RIEP adviser, grants to support delivery plans of £50k to each core LAA area and an additional grant of £7k to each district, practice exchange in a range of media and themed projects involving clusters of practitioners focusing upon delivery issues arising from their Improvement Support Plans through workshops, peer assist activities or web-based seminars.

The 'Learning to deliver' programme also includes focussed activity on empowerment, climate change and economic development.

82% of respondents to a recent survey of the short-term impact of the programme upon organisations or partnerships stated it has been 'positive or very positive. Some of the key outputs from the programme to date include:

- 15 Improvement Support Projects specifically targeted at LAA targets underway
- An extensive programme of shared learning; 400 people have attended 14 regional events with a 96% satisfaction rate
- Produced 25 knowledge based products (briefings, "how to" guides, DVDs etc)
- Improvement grants have been taken up by all of the 14 LAAs in the region and are being used to undertake a range of activities (examples include developing plans to address antisocial behaviour, alcohol and drug abuse in Stoke, piloting 'Results Based Accountability Training' in Sandwell, development of a performance management framework that will support the increase of adults taking up sport and leisure activities in Birmingham; improving multi-agency commissioning and integrated service delivery in Solihull)
- There has been a strong focus on bringing all the key agencies together including the Government Office, Audit Commission, the Regional Development Agency (RDA) and IEWM to ensure a shared understanding of issues, improvement needs and support

Spotlight on facilitating LSP self assessments in the Southwest:

The 16 lead LSPs in the South West now have a much clearer understanding of their relative strengths and areas for development after a series of self assessments were carried out, facilitated by the RIEP. This process has also helped ensure that RIEP funding is focussed on areas of need. For example, the assessment has stimulated the North Somerset Partnership to review its governance structures resulting in a new executive and a board which is outcome-focused. Another LSP in Dorset now better understands how to embed equality and diversity across the partnership. The self-assessment exercise is an ongoing process and will be refreshed in the autumn, 2009. The South West has also launched an LAA co-ordinators network and facilitates events to share good practice. One example is Bath and North East Somerset, which is now working with Swindon LSP to improve engagement with the business community.

"I have found the network meetings to be useful, informative and they kept me fully up to date with current thinking which has assisted me in working effectively in Somerset's LAA"

*Sam Crabb, Portfolio Holder,
Somerset County Council*

Spotlight on support for cultural change and ambitious MAAs in the NE:

The NE IEP's Partnership Programme is designed to help deliver the RIEP's commitment for the public sector and its partners to take joint responsibility for performance improvement and efficiency. The programme will invest £1.25m in six regional projects over the next two to three years and is identifying regional "champions" to promote partnering; maximise use of Local Improvement Advisors, develop partnership capacity and culture, identify effective partnership behaviour and deliver Local and Multi Area Agreements and crime and disorder reduction.

"Innovative and effective partnerships are more important than ever before. We have an exciting programme to shortcut learning about partnership dynamics and to share that learning across our region."

Irene Lucas, Programme Sponsor and Chief Executive of South Tyneside Council

The NE IEP recognises the importance of the two MAAs in the region: the Tees Valley and Tyne and Wear. RIEP funding is supporting shared strategic objectives around economic development, transport, housing and regeneration. In addition, NE IEP helps raise awareness of the MAAs amongst public, private and third sectors partners.

In Tees Valley the focus of RIEP support has been on ensuring officers have the skills to deliver large scale regeneration projects and are confident to act as 'intelligent clients' in working with the private sector. Other areas of training for key staff and Councillors have included project management, scrutiny, partnership working and maximising private sector investment.

In Tyne and Wear, NE IEP has secured additional capacity for detailed policy analysis and supported the development of a co-ordinated monitoring and evaluation framework through which the MAA could come under scrutiny by local city region partners. The City Region will now work with Councillors to better understand how action at the city region spatial level can impact on employment, skills and transport and add value to the delivery of local economic priorities.

Spotlight on Improvement East's diagnostic support for LSPs:

The East of England's 'Aspire 2 Perform' Diagnostic Toolkit has been developed to provide LSPs in the region with an opportunity to assess their capacity to deliver. It was designed to be sensitive to the needs of this region with elements that relate to two-tier working in particular. For those who have used it, it can provide a regional 'benchmark' for LSP arrangements and early analysis has helped to inform LSP capacity-building support in the East of England.

The diagnostic toolkit is being complemented by training on areas of interest, such as CAA and programmes are being offered by the RIEP to support popular and challenging LAA targets, such as the ones around climate change and community engagement.

Improvement East has also offered tailored support to a number of LSP's in the region including Peterborough Partnership where RIEP funding is supporting an innovative 'solutions centre.' The centre brings together members of the organisations on the LSP to tackle key LAA targets. The centre is currently looking at teenage pregnancy, vehicle crime and childhood obesity.

Peterborough needs to reduce its rate of teenage conceptions by 55% and the centre drew together council, Primary Care Trust and voluntary sector colleagues to profile and identify young people at risk and pilot a new school and community service.

Early feedback from this work is positive –there has been a fourfold increase in the numbers of young people attending advice clinics and young people have demonstrated increased knowledge of sexual health and changed their behaviour.

6. Empowerment

Empowerment is a policy area which has gathered increasing momentum over the last year with the introduction of the white paper 'Communities in Control' (July 2008) and the establishment of Regional Empowerment Partnerships (REPs). Empowerment is also a theme within the NIES and all RIEPs are supporting local authorities in their work to engage and empower communities.

Highlights:

- Research commissioned about use of community empowerment indicators in the North West, along with the launch of an excellence model for neighbourhood working
- North West and East Midlands progressing a number of empowerment and cohesion projects at sub-regional level
- Joint action plan with REP and delivery of member development modules on empowerment in East
- Programme of activity underway with the REP and the NE IEP
- The East Midlands has developed a website which includes a directory of empowerment projects by interest area or local authority

Spotlight on NE IEP's integrated programme of support with their REP:

The NE IEP's 'Community Engagement and Empowerment Programme' is a thorough programme which aims to give communities a stronger voice and more involvement in the delivery of public services in the Northeast. Working closely with the North East Empowerment Partnership (NEEP, the regional consortium of the National Empowerment Partnership (NEP), the programme supports local authorities in empowering their communities and fulfilling their duty to involve young people, older people, the third sector and citizens in general. The programme primarily focuses delivering improvements against National Indicator 4, (the percentage of people who feel they can influence decisions in their locality).

In its first year the RIEP has largely concentrated on forming key relationships with a wide range of stakeholder and gathering the intelligence to inform delivery in years two and three.

Key achievements this year include:

- intelligence on regional needs gained through a range of engagement including six themed events involving 150 people, most of whom were citizens, or community groups and two further forums for local people
- agreement of joint workplan with the REP supporting local authorities on National Indicator 4

- ‘Take the Lead’ courses delivered in each sub-region
- four pieces of research commissioned including research into the levels of integration of neighbourhood management and policing
- community safety problem solving training delivered for eight crime and reduction partnerships
- training and development provided to support the transition from five warden schemes to one as part of the move to unitary status in County Durham

Two councils, Blackpool Borough Council and Preston City Council, have piloted the framework and have earned the Management Excellence Award so far. Benefits have included motivating partners to co-ordinate activity and deliver efficient services in response to local needs, and boosting morale of staff and residents alike. The award scheme has now been launched for roll out across the region.

Spotlight on the NW IEP’s support programme for empowerment:

Empowerment is a key theme for the North West and complements its sub-regional structure whereby 60% funding is devolved to five sub-regions to ensure delivery supports local improvement needs. The North West runs a wide ranging support programme for empowerment and engagement at regional and sub-regional levels.

One key achievement this year has been the development and roll out of the North West Neighbourhoods Excellence Award, a new award scheme which has been developed by Neighbourhoods North West with the support of the NW IEP to inspire neighbourhood management organisations to achieve the national standard of Investors in Excellence. The scheme provides a bespoke framework for neighbourhood management organisations which drives improvement activities and recognises their achievements to date. The assessment process enables partners to review and evaluate partnerships and community involvement and to identify areas of strengths and improvement.

7. Innovation

RIEPs are all about enabling local authorities to work together in creative ways which they would not have been able to do without support, funding and facilitation. The following examples demonstrate core RIEP activity which is new and enables local authorities to work together on projects they may not otherwise have taken forward. Many of the RIEPs include innovation funds for authorities within their work programmes but innovation is a fundamental theme running through all their activity.

Highlights:

- Introduction of 'improvement and efficiency masterclasses in Yorkshire and Humber to support Chief Executives, Leaders and Communications Directors in managing local government reputation
- Work with the Institute of Local Governance in NE to form a novel strategic partnership between public services and universities
- Innovation Fund in the South West to support small-scale, innovative and collaborative improvement projects and annual innovations day run in the East of England
- Capital Ambition leads the innovative London Collaborative bringing London's leaders together to develop pioneering yet practical solutions to the major challenges facing London

Spotlight on the London Efficiency Challenge:

The London Efficiency Challenge will enable authorities across London to identify and deliver further savings, share best practice from around the capital, streamline services to residents, bolster an area where London authorities are already leading the way and provide better value for money. The approach is currently being piloted in the London Boroughs of Camden, Richmond, Havering and Barking and Dagenham.

A team of peers from London authorities is central to the process. Each team is led by a Senior London Treasurer with two other senior authority colleagues. In the pilots the team are accredited IDeA peer reviewers. From April onward teams will go through a training programme specific to Capital Ambition.

The challenge begins with the authority completing a self-assessment on performance in 25 key areas of spend including providing information about where savings have previously been achieved. The team will review the self-assessment information before the Challenge starts and from this will set target areas for investigation over the three days of the Challenge. The final day of this valuable process will highlight where the authority could find quick wins, as well as recording notable areas of practice and signposting the authority to good work taking place elsewhere they could learn from.

The London Efficiency Challenge focuses on practical gains rather than governance and strategy (where other peer reviews tend to focus). It is based on Capital Ambition's core values of self-awareness, mutuality and improvement and supports a number of goals, including:

- Creating political choice, by freeing resources for other priorities
- Providing a perspective on efficiency, to form the basis for improvement plans
- Enabling councils to learn from each other and apply best practice
- Helping London authorities and their partners re-model and improve services
- Providing better value for money
- Paving the way for a new balance in the relationship between regulators, funders and local government

Four opportunities for development are triggered by each Challenge:

- At the end of each Challenge, the team will report back to the authority with suggestions for areas where improvements can be made.
- Identified areas of notable practice will be researched, written-up and made available through the Capital Ambition web-site and events as appropriate
- Efficiency gaining data will be captured by Capital Ambition. This will provide vital intelligence for shaping future support packages and feed into an appraisal of the success of the scheme
- The Challenge will also highlight areas where London-wide groups or sub-regional/cluster groups could examine solutions

Once the pilot phase is complete and lessons learned, the full LEC programme will begin, extending across all London authorities including the Greater London Authority and London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority. All Challenges are expected to be complete by March 2010.

Spotlight on the Waste Improvement Network, led by IESE:

The Waste Information Network (WIN) is a national free portal for the local government waste and environment sector which aims to deliver sector-led support. It was established in 2007 by IESE to realise efficiencies by sharing common information about contracts, joint working and good practice reducing the need for councils to engage with costly consultants or spend time searching for information. WIN receives a combination of funding from IESE and the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) to offer a national infrastructure for use by all waste authorities.

WIN has grown consistently attracting new users and interest from many areas. WIN has 1,222 registered users with growth averaging 9 per cent each month and 71 per cent of local authorities had at least one user registered to WIN. The idea was originally conceived as a place where local authorities could easily obtain information, guidance and advice about the waste sector. WIN has now expanded and is leading the way for sector-led support for local government in the waste and environmental sector by providing the resources to enable benchmarking by councils, improvement to their services, councillor development, networking and representation of local authorities.

One significant impact since the launch of WIN has seen the transfer of large amounts of data from DEFRA's local authority support website onto WIN in August 2007, increasing its credibility as a one-stop-shop for local authorities and their employees to access information. One example of how WIN has been used to share good practice was an innovation in Southampton driver training, which saved the council £46,000 a year by reducing accidents and fuel usage. WIN's online case studies and online seminars have helped all councils in England to benefit from Southampton's experience.

Spotlight on YoHr Space projects:

YoHr space has an innovation fund to stimulate a number of small scale practitioner led initiatives which could lead to a step change in outcomes.

Examples include support to improve council communications which is closely lined to measures of resident satisfaction and is an area where the region is seen to sell itself short. Chief Executives agreed to a number of actions to improve communications and the RIEP is supporting the development and delivery of a series of events for partners across Yorkshire and Humber such as masterclasses to build visionary, ambitious, political and managerial communications leadership for Chief Executives, Leaders, Directors and Heads of Communications. Workshops for communication professionals and trainees will focus on developing skills and knowledge.

Another example is a commitment to addressing health inequalities, another key priority in the region, with RIEP support and funding facilitating the roll out of support for healthy eating in cities across the region starting in Hull and West Yorkshire (building on the Jamie Oliver 'Ministry of Food' project in Rotherham which has become well known branding across the region).

Looking forwards

Through the NIES, both CLG and the LGA acknowledge sector led support as a fundamental element in securing sustainable improvement. The devolution of funding to the nine RIEPs forms one key element of this approach and the local government family is keen to see sector led improvement strengthened further in the future.

The RIEPs annual reports for 2008/9 reveal a focus on the following areas for years two and three:

Accelerating efficiency gains: Building on a strong start in year one, the RIEPs will be developing their prominent role in implementing the recommendations of the Roots Review of Local Government Procurement Efficiency particularly in supporting collaboration between authorities.

Support for local authorities in the downturn: In addition to supporting local authorities to run efficiently, RIEPs will be building on their existing regional projects and considering how best to work together on this central agenda.

Supporting safeguarding: and other areas of performance improvement have been identified by RIEPs as a key area of focus.

Responding positively to the new challenges of CAA: RIEPs are committed to helping local authorities to embed CAA including offering support for partnerships, collaborative working, LAAs and LSPs.

Ensuring sector ownership of the improvement agenda: Building on a strong start, RIEPs will continue to work with the wider national sector led architecture (LGA, IDeA, LGE, 4Ps, LACORs, Leadership Centre for Local Government) to ensure continued sector ownership of local government improvement by Councillors and local authorities themselves.

Delivering regional improvement priorities: RIEPs will continue to focus on delivering regional objectives as agreed within their RIES.

Appendix 1:

The nine RIEPs are:

Improvement and Efficiency South East (IESE)



South West Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership (SW RIEP)



Capital Ambition, the RIEP for London



North West Improvement and Efficiency Partnership (NW IEP)



East Midlands Improvement and Efficiency Partnership (EM IEP)



Improvement and Efficiency West Midlands (IEWM)



Improvement East, the RIEP for the East of England



YoHr Space, the RIEP for Yorkshire and the Humber (YoHr Space)



North East Improvement and Efficiency Partnership (NE IEP)



For further information and access to all nine websites, please see:

www.idea.gov.uk/rieips

Appendix 2:

National and Regional Governance for the RIEP Programme

At a national level, there is a sector owned governance structure for the RIEP programme as a whole which is outlined below. This is complemented at regional level by member and officer boards which allocate RIEP resources and agree the strategic direction of each RIEP. Details of regional and national governance structures can be found at:

www.idea.gov.uk/rieps

LGA Improvement Board, this cross party member grouping takes a lead for the LGA on the improvement and efficiency agenda, liaises with government on the agenda and receives regular updates on the delivery of the NIES. The Chair of the LGA Improvement Board chairs the RIEP Member Forum and a number of Improvement Board members are heavily involved with the RIEP in their region (including two RIEP chairs).

RIEP Member Forum, comprising of the member chair of each RIEP and LGA Improvement Board lead members, this group is a forum for sharing of common issues and challenges. The Chair of the LGA Improvement Board and lead members from the Improvement Board sit on this group to ensure clear links between the two groups. This provides a forum for engagement with the Minister for Local Government who has attended in the past and is regularly invited.

Chief Executives Task Group (CEXTG), comprising the lead Chief Executive from each region. The group provides advice to the LGA improvement board on issues relating to the improvement and efficiency agenda. The group also plays a key role engaging with government departments at a senior officer level and is important in advising LGA and central bodies (in particular in providing advice to the LGA Improvement Board) to ensure national support is responsive, commissioning national programmes where appropriate.

Improvement and Efficiency Advisory Network (IEAN), comprising the director of each RIEP, LGA, IDeA and CLG. This group meets monthly to share good practice and discuss areas of common concern. This group plays a key role advising the CEXTG on strategic allocation of resources and liaise with government departments at an officer level to promote the devolution of funding to the front line.

These groups will work together to provide a forum for discussion and challenge of the implementation of the NIES. They also liaise with a number of government groups.

The RIEP Programme Office

The RIEP Programme Office exists to support the RIEPs in their delivery, to support national governance infrastructure for the RIEP programme at a national level and to facilitate the sharing of good practice across the sector.

Endnotes

¹ Source: Individual RIEP information.
Includes authorities identified prior to 08/09 and those receiving support to prevent serious performance difficulties

² Source: Individual RIEP information.
Includes Fire and Rescue Authorities.

³ Joint Improvement Partnerships (JIPs) are made up of social care partners in the regions and focus on improvement and efficiency in social care specifically. The JIPs are not statutory bodies and sit under the auspices of the Association of Directors of Social Services (ADASS).



Regional Improvement and
Efficiency Partnerships

