

Leicestershire & Rutland Improvement Partnership



January 2007

Issue 3

Performance Management — What Have We Been Up To



Performance Management – what’s that all about? We are here to do something for someone and managing that relationship is the essence of managing ‘performance’. Performance is something that sits at the heart of what we do in local government. Success hinges on how well we manage our performance in delivering improvements by taking the right action and measuring whether we have achieved the desired result. Strong performance management demonstrates to our communities, our members and indeed the Government that we are achieving the things we set out to achieve in an efficient and effective way.

The Performance Strand has been busy all year putting in place a host of tools and knowledge so that everyone in the Partnership can learn from best practice and have available the tools to manage performance on their desktop.

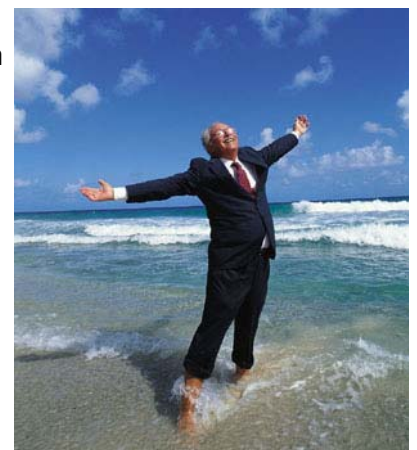
Three major pieces of work from the group have already had a significant impact in helping councils throughout Leicestershire and Rutland to improve their performance management.

The LRIP Continuous Improvement Toolkit is a Compact Disc freely available to all authorities which contains a host of tools, advice and techniques on a whole range of performance matters. Covering target setting, risk management, project management and customer focus to name but a

few, the Toolkit is an invaluable aid to anyone involved in management. The Toolkit has been written in plain language and offers a step-by-step guide which leads people through the process of developing plans and strategies which can help improve performance. It is, though, much more than a toolkit for planning. It is crammed full of advice and information which builds upon the vast experience of people working in Leicestershire and Rutland. It serves as an excellent training and learning aid for new managers or staff undertaking management development and can provide the foundation for corporate and service planning.

The second major initiative has been the provision of Project Management training, based on PRINCE II principles, to every Council in the area.

Socially we manage ‘projects’ all the time, whether its arranging holidays, weddings or just about every other event you can think of. The techniques learnt can conveniently be used at work as well. Seriously these project principles will be used across a range of work topics other than designated ‘projects’.



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As with so much of performance management, it is important to know what a project is seeking to achieve, how much it is costing, how long it is taking and whether it has achieved what it set out to do. Project management is an essential way of achieving this. Working with the company 'Aim for Excellence' the Group provided two types of training within local councils. The first one day course provided a high level insight for Councillors and senior managers to enable them to oversee projects and ensure they could see projects are well managed. The second two-day course took practitioners through the requirements of project management. Feedback from across the area has been excellent and should help to make Leicestershire and Rutland a beacon of excellence in our project work.

The introduction of a computerised system across all District Councils and Rutland (except Blaby

who were already ahead with their own system) has given us a well-structured and efficient way of managing performance information. Using the TEN system will make the focus on challenging and discussing performance easier and take away the need to expend our energies on producing reports!

The Performance Group has managed, by working together and leading by example, to put in place some really practical ways of improving performance regardless of the area of work. We will continue to work together as a group, sharing ideas and best practice and developing other ways of making our working lives just a little bit easier and more effective.

Thank you to the Group for their commitment and 'sense of humour' through the past months.

Slicing up the money

In May 2006, the Partnership was notified that an additional £505,000 would be allocated by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) for sustaining and delivering the work identified in the bid submitted in December 2005. The first £150,000 had been deployed largely to identify the products required to address the needs of Management and Member Development and Performance Management as appropriate to Leicestershire and Rutland. The additional £505,000 was to deliver the products.

The Phase two bid of £770,000 meant there was a good deal of discussion at both Strand and Board level as to how to meet identified requirements within a much reduced resource. Thanks to the efforts, commitment and no little ingenuity on the part of all concerned, we achieved an agreed programme. This alone is evidence of the commitment amongst us all to the success of our Partnership.

The funding has been split as follows:

- Communications - £60,000 for internal and external publication of Partnership achievements.
- Performance Management - £108,000 to embed the process and culture of performance as well as conduct research and act as the user group.
- Middle Management Development - £140,000 to continue the agreed programme for 80 Managers
- Member Development - £125,000 to complete the development programme, including prospective and new Members
- Learning for the future - £22,000 to evaluate the projects and ensure that we learn and improve further.
- Contingency (10%) - £50,000 just in case!

The Strand Leaders have developed delivery routes for this work with their colleagues and a timetable, initially up to March 2008, has been agreed with DCLG. The next step will be to plan for the period beyond 2008 to ensure that the projects can be sustained by joint funding from the partners.



Member Development Strand

The Member Development Strand of the Leicestershire and Rutland Improvement Partnership has continued to move forward at some pace. The information below provides a brief update on the progress so far.

The Partnership-wide Member Reference group has met every two months for this year and continues to have member representation from all the Local Authorities involved in the partnership. Leicester City Council has started to work with the partnership and elected members from this authority are also now actively involved in these meetings.

A number of members from each authority have attended training on different subjects, provided by LG-EM on behalf of the Partnership. The training is in line with the development needs analysis undertaken of all LRIP authorities in 2006. The accreditation partner, London Southbank University, have been involved in evaluating these courses.

The standard for the Induction programme has been established and adopted by the LRIP Member Champion Group. Officers are now working to establish the detailed content to this programme. This will ensure that all newly elected members to any authority will receive the same standard/level of induction.

The procurement process for delivering the training programme has taken place and the results will be published in the next edition of the Newsletter.

The draft Member Development Strategy and Member Handbook are now with the partner authorities for member consideration and it is anticipated that these will be adopted by the end of January 2007.

All partners have agreed to sign up to the LG-EM Member Development Charter and a PR launch took place in November 2006.

Discussions have taken place with the 'Staffordshire Plus' Improvement Partnership to examine opportunities for joint working and learning opportunities.

Councillor Jeffrey Kaufman of Oadby & Wigston Borough Council said:

"Working together in partnership with other elected Members and Councils for the benefit of future Councillors has been a very stimulating and fulfilling experience. I hope that future elected Members will benefit from the new Member Development Strategy and the wealth of training and development opportunities that are being provided through the LRIP and supported by the London South Bank University".

The LRIP

Authorities:

Blaby District Council

Charnwood Borough Council

Harborough District Council

Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council

Leicester City Council

Melton Borough Council

North West Leicestershire District Council

Oadby and Wigston Borough Council

Rutland County Council

Leicestershire County Council (as a supporter)



Communications Strand



Communication is a vital tool in Partnership working and our aim is to inform all partners and employees of the Councils are kept up to date with what the LRIP is doing.

The LRIP newsletter was created in 2006 and you should have received 2 editions previous to this one.

We have created a Communications Strategy to ensure good communication and a co-ordinated approach to managing the media are in place. In creating this document we are able to give the Partnership guidelines in our agreed approach to both internal and external communications to provide this activity in a professional and consistent manner. The Communications Strategy will underpin successful communication and drive forward the need to standardise communications and promote a single voice for the LRIP.

In order for this to work we ask for staff to cooperate in providing information when requested by the Communications Strand.

The members of the strand are:

Lynn Aisbett: Chief Executive
Melton Borough Council

Bryony Crouch: Communications Officer
Melton Borough Council

Gurpreet Santini: Public Relations Officer
Oadby & Wigston Borough Council

Jacqueline Puffett: Communications & Promotions Officer
Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council

Jane Strachan: Communications Officer
Harborough District Council

Karlie Thompson: Head of Consultation,
Communications and Partnerships,
Charnwood Borough Council

Julie Hutchinson: Communications Manager
Blaby District Council

Ian Hill: Head of Communications
North West Leicestershire Borough Council

Chris Jones: Communications Officer
Rutland County Council

Watch this space for the LRIP web page....



**IMPROVING
LEICESTERSHIRE AND
RUTLAND**

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**If you would like to see
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featured in the next
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