

Building Capacity East

What it means for you and your authority in 2006/07

What is Building Capacity East?

Following a series of consultations with the 60 authorities in the region the Building Capacity East (BCE) Partnership was established in 2005. The Partnership is under the auspices of the East of England Regional Assembly (EERA) and comprises a Member Panel of elected local authority members and an Executive Group of Local Authority Chief Executives, Chief Fire Officer and representatives of partner agencies such as the Government Office for the East of England (GO-East), EERA, Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA), the Audit Commission and the Regional Centre of Excellence (RCE).

How is BCE funded?

In March 2006, the Department of Communities and Local Government (formerly the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister) and the Local Government Association (LGA) devolved £6.2m of national funding to the Partnership. This funding lasts until March 2008.

What are the Strategy, Ambition, Aims and Priorities of BCE?

We have produced a Strategy entitled "Building Capacity East Improvement Strategy 2005- 2008" which states that our ambition is:

"To promote measurable and sustained improvement in performance across all 54 Local Authorities and 6 Fire and Rescue Authorities across the region"

Underlying this are three key aims:

1. Supporting the LGA's commitment that no Authority in the region to be classified as 'poor' or 'weak' by 2008.
2. Evidence of positive improvement in corporate Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) judgements across Authorities as measured by:
 - a) No fewer than 80% of Authorities annually reporting positive 'direction of travel' statements over the full CPA review cycle
 - b) Evidence of improvement in key service areas reflecting both local and national priorities.
3. Supporting and assisting innovative exemplars to disseminate best practice; improved partnership working and increased shared services across authorities in the region.

A number of priority themes have been identified which (in no priority order) are:

- Community, Diversity and Customer focus
- Elected Member Development
- Management Development
- Partnership Development
- Performance Management
- Project and Risk Management
- Workforce Planning

What work is proposed in 2006/07?

It is proposed to utilise the funding in three strands:

- a) Commissioned work
- b) Supporting those authorities categorised as Poor/Weak/0*/1* under CPA and those authorities considered to be at risk of not having a positive direction of travel
- c) Local Projects – bids submitted by groups of authorities

What is Commissioned work?

We will commission work to be undertaken by and on behalf of authorities that they can opt into when it suits them. All authorities are eligible to access the benefits of this work, whatever your CPA status.

Performance Management

We have chosen Performance Management as the first priority theme to commission work on and we are currently scoping a project to be delivered later this year. Further details will be circulated when available.

Subsidised Peer Review

We recognise that one key way that authorities improve is through a level of self-awareness and being open to external challenge. We will, therefore, introduce a regional framework for mutual support which makes use of peer review and peer support as a central theme.

We will offer all authorities the opportunity of a free peer review or challenge between now and March 2008 and the Partnership will shortly be in contact in respect of your peer review timetable and details of how to access this opportunity.

We will also encourage more members and staff to put themselves forward for peer accreditation and aim to increase the local pool of both members and officers.

Leadership Development

We will support the development of political leadership across the region by, for example:

- Making effective use of the National Councillor Mentoring Programme with up to 6 authorities in the region being involved in the programme each year
- Seeking to increase by 50% the number of councillors who have attended the Leadership Academy by 2008

We will be in contact with all Leaders, Chief Executives and Chief Fire Officers in respect of how to get involved and the subsidies available.

Corporate and Roving Capacity

We want to build and improve capacity to implement positive change. We will achieve this by a variety of means and we are currently examining the potential for:

- Encouraging authorities to subscribe to a 'talent-bank' to enable staff to move between authorities on a planned secondment basis building on the EERA Interchange initiative
- Each authority in the region identifying at least one senior officer who has expertise in a particular area and would act as an informal source of advice to others in the region
- Recruiting supernumerary staff to act as additional capacity for authorities who have critical change programmes in place

Supporting Regional Networks

We wish to support and develop regional and sub-regional networks that drive forward improvement including regional communication networks.

We would welcome any ideas or suggestions in respect of the initiatives of corporate and roving support and support of the networks.

How are Poor/Weak/0*/1* authorities and those "at risk" being supported?

These authorities are eligible to access any part of the BCE programme. However, they are also eligible for individual funding subject to certain criteria and bidding

processes. See Annexes 1 and 3 for Bid Criteria, processes and timetabling and go to www.eera.gov.uk for an application form and assessment criteria.

We are currently undertaking meetings with those authorities who are categorised as Poor/Weak/0*/1* in order:

- To outline details of the Partnership
- To discuss with each authority what their needs are
- To discuss how the Partnership could meet those needs

Authorities that consider themselves "at risk" of not having a positive direction of travel are encouraged to contact the Programme Manager as soon as possible to discuss support needs and eligibility for individual funding support.

What are Local Projects and how do authorities access funding?

Local projects are those initiatives that groups of authorities have devised and wish to implement themselves. The basic premise for funding these projects is that they should build capacity, not fund day-to-day operational functions. There is no prescribed grouping of authorities for these projects.

See Annex 2 for Bid Criteria and Annex 3 in respect of process and timetabling and go to www.eera.gov.uk for an application form and assessment criteria.

What funding is available for these areas of work in 2006/07?

Commissioned Work:	
Performance Management	£250,000
Subsidised Peer review	£250,000
Leadership development	£150,000
Corporate and Roving capacity	£500,000
Supporting Regional Networks	£100,000
Supporting Poor/Weak/0*/1* and those at risk	£750,000
Local Projects – bids	£900,000

What is next?

Further details on all the categories of work to be commissioned and how you can access it will be issued to all authorities shortly and will also be published on our website.

All the work of the BCE partnership and the funding allocations for 2007 onwards will be reviewed toward the end of 2006.

Where can you find further information?

Jane Sullivan, Building Capacity East Programme Manager, East of England Regional Assembly, Flempton House, Flempton, Bury St Edmunds, IP28 6EG
Mobile: 07920 257968 Tel: 01284 729424 Email: jane.sullivan@eera.gov.uk

www.eera.gov.uk Follow: Our work – Building Capacity East
Amongst other information, the following is available on the site:

- BCE Improvement Strategy 2005-08
- Partnership membership
- Governance Arrangements
- Terms of Reference
- Minutes of meetings
- Details of the Projects that were funded in the East of England 2003-2005
- Details of the National Capacity Building Programmes
- Application forms for bids

If you have any comments, suggestions or queries please contact the BCE Programme Manager or any member of the Partnership.

Bidding Criteria for Poor/Weak/0/1* Authorities and those “at risk”

Poor/Weak/0/1* authorities and those who consider themselves to be “at risk” of not having a positive direction of travel can apply for funding individually.

The basic premise for funding these projects is that they should build capacity, not fund day-to-day operational functions and that they meet the following criteria:

- Any bid should address the needs identified in your Improvement Plan
- Funding can be given for individual post-holders where there is a clear and explicit relationship to the authority’s improvement agenda and the post will build capacity within the authority
- Be authority led
- Be self-sustaining beyond the life of the funding
- Demonstrate a commitment through officer/member time, resources and Chief Officer support
- Not duplicate existing projects/initiatives that are funded by the DCLG/LGA/RCE
- Utilise existing material/practice where possible
- Be completed by March 31st 2008

The DCLG Regional Director of Local Government Practice retains the formal duty of engaging with Poor/0* authorities and that of informal engagement with Weaks/1*. All proposals for individual funding by these authorities should be discussed in detail with the Regional Director to ensure that they are addressing the areas for improvement identified through the CPA process.

Those authorities who consider themselves to be “at risk” of not having a positive direction of travel should contact the Programme Manager as soon as possible to discuss their support needs and any potential bid.

Bidding Criteria for Projects by Partnerships of Authorities

The basic premise for funding these projects is that they should build capacity, not fund day-to-day operational functions and that they meet the following criteria:

- Address a key area and/or priority theme(s) as identified within the Building Capacity East Strategy and be in accordance with that Strategy
- Be a partnership of 2 or more authorities
- Be authority led
- Be self-sustaining beyond the life of the funding
- Be transferable to and/or capture the learning for other authorities within the region
- Not duplicate existing projects/initiatives that are funded by the DCLG/LGA/RCE
- Demonstrate a commitment of each authority involved in the project through officer/member time, resources and Chief Officer support
- Utilise existing material/practice where possible
- Target hard-to-reach groups where appropriate
- A project may involve non-authority partners such as the police and private companies and the primary focus must be on local authority improvement
- If a bid is for more than £150,000, a large number of authorities need to be involved and/or the project covers more than one financial year
- Be completed by March 31st 2008
- On completion of each project, dissemination of learning and feedback on the outcomes will be required to the BCE partnership and to authorities across the region

Bidding Process, Timetable and Requirements

Application forms are available at www.eera.gov.uk

All bids must be submitted on the correct and fully completed application form.

The application form and any supporting information must be submitted electronically to jane.sullivan@eera.gov.uk on/by the closing date detailed below.

Timetable

All bids must be submitted by 4:30pm on Monday 31st July 2006.

All bids will be considered by the Executive Group on 14th September 2006.

All lead officers will be notified of the outcome of their bid by 22nd September 2006.

Payment for successful bids will usually be paid on approval of the bid but exact timing will be agreed between the lead officer and the BCE Programme Manager.

There is no right of appeal against the decision of the Executive Group.