

# Regional Programme Proposal

## Name of Programme

SUPPORT FOR IMPROVED PERFORMANCE

FYLDE BOROUGH COUNCIL – IMPROVEMENT SUPPORT

## **Programme Overview**

What is the programme? Describe what the programme is and how it will be delivered.

Fylde BC is the last “weak” council in Lancashire and is aiming to undergo a corporate re-assessment this autumn in the last round of district CPA’s re-categorisations prior to the introduction of the new comprehensive area assessment.

Since the original CPA inspection of Fylde in 2003/04 the council has, until recently, been able to tap into funding support via the IDeA to help with its improvement ambitions. This external support has been of great value to the council, which is one of the smaller districts in Lancashire and has always struggled to identify the resources necessary to advance its corporate and organisational development capacity.

In the last two years the council has received encouraging annual audit and inspection letters about the direction of travel and performed well on a broad-based, cross-cutting service inspection on environmental sustainability, which was assessed as good with promising prospects for improvement. However, the “weak” CPA label remains.

Fylde BC has recently been negotiating with the IDeA a support proposal to take the council through a CPA re-categorisation during 2008. This will involve a number of elements of support which will cut across management team and middle manager capacity development and elected member development.

The aim of the programme is to provide funding towards specific support through the IDeA for Fylde BC to ensure that the council has the best possible opportunity to demonstrate, through the re-assessment process, the improvements it has made.

The programme will cover key areas of member and management development. In particular :

- peer support and mentoring for elected members and member development,
- specific work with middle managers,
- support in increasing organisational capacity during the preparation for corporate re-assessment, and
- peer review.

As a small district council with an annual revenue budget of around £11m Fylde finds it difficult to resource major change programmes and in particular to provide the support for the softer elements of culture change which are necessary for such programmes to succeed. This bid aims to provide this support in a cost effective way by bolting further work on to the support which Fylde receives from the IDEA due to its current CPA category.

In addition this work will complement other funding being provided through sub-regional resources to support and assist Fylde in delivering both its ambitious change and capacity building programme, including the development of a wide range of shared services initiatives and collaboration on the MAA with its Fylde coast neighbours.

<b>Intended Outcomes</b> – what benefit will this project bring to local government and its partners?	
<p>The intended outcome of this project would be for Fylde BC to achieve a minimum CPA category of “fair”, meaning that there are no remaining “poor” or “weak” councils in Lancashire.</p> <p>Member Development is a key component of the programme and activity will facilitate further achievement and recognition through the North West Charter for Member Development.</p>	
<b>How does the programme link with the Regional Improvement and Efficiency Strategy?</b>	
<p>Through supporting one of the “enablers” of improvement this outcome will help to secure the ambition communicated in the performance management framework of the regional improvement and efficiency strategy.</p> <p>The programme of activity will support Fylde in the final stages of its move out of the “weak” category. In doing so it will contribute to the objectives set out in the regional strategy of eliminating pockets of underperformance and not having any “poor” or “weak” councils in the north west.</p> <p>Similarly this programme will benefit the delivery of regional outcome targets related to Member Development.</p>	
<b>How does the programme help achieve the sub regional improvement and efficiency strategies?</b>	
<p>There is an outcome target within the sub-regional improvement and efficiency strategy which also focuses on performance improvement and not having any “poor” or “weak” councils.</p> <p>In addition this work will complement other funding being provided through sub regional resources to support and assist Fylde in delivering both its ambitious change and capacity building programme, including the development of a wide range of shared services initiatives and collaboration on the MAA with its Fylde coast neighbours.</p> <p>There is a specific outcome target in the Sub Regional Strategy related to member development and this investment will assist in achievement of this outcome</p>	
<b>Intended Outputs</b> – what will be produced or delivered? – eg: a research report, a conference or a learning programme. Specify details to the extent that they are known.	<b>Date of Delivery</b> – when will the outputs be delivered?

<p>The total programme, of which this funding is part, is intended to deliver:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mentoring support for the two largest political groups.*</li> <li>• Mentoring support for the overview and scrutiny function.*</li> <li>• A peer review*</li> <li>• Pre inspection support including review of the self assessment in the light of the peer review*</li> <li>• Work with middle managers leading up to the inspection and the introduction of a new management structure.</li> </ul> <p>The items marked * are those for which funding is sought from the NWIEP either in whole or part.</p>	<p>The programme is intended to be completed prior to the CPA re-assessment before December 2008</p>
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<p><b>Key Milestones</b> – what are the key milestones in delivering the project with dates?</p>
<p>The key milestones will be set working backwards from the agreed on site inspection date once set by the Audit Commission.</p>

<p><b>Programme Plan</b> – is there a project plan that is appropriate to the size and complexity of the project?</p>
<p>The programme is to be commissioned through the IDeA and their project management methodology will be used.</p>

<p><b>Cost of Programme</b> – specify clearly how much the project will cost and sources of funding. If funded from within the NWIN allocation to University specify which category. Is all the funding secure?</p>
<p>The funding requested is £15,600, in addition to the allocation of resources through the IDeA's revenue support funding for "poor" and "weak" councils of £18,700. Fylde BC will meet expenses and any irrecoverable VAT in addition to these costs.</p> <p>Additionally, £11k has been allocated through existing sub-regional resources, prior to the approval of the sub regional strategy by NWIEP. This will be used to build capacity for the development of business cases for the extension of shared service activity and MAA development with the council's Fylde coast neighbours.</p> <p>As well as allowing this work, which is important to the sub region's efficiency programme, to be completed more quickly, it will also free capacity within the council to ensure the re-inspection process is adequately resourced.</p>

**Programme Staffing** – Who is responsible for delivering the outputs? Who else will work on the project, what are their roles?

Work would be commissioned from the IDEA using their directly employed staff and consultants / peer members commissioned by them. However, ultimately Phil Woodward, Chief Executive of Fylde BC will be responsible for delivering the target outcomes.

**Programme Budget** – what will the money be spent on? How certain are the costs?

The costs quoted are set out in an IDeA proposal dated 8<sup>th</sup> April 2008 and are certain. The resources will be spent on the activities outlined in the intended outcomes above on page 4.

**Local Government engagement** – how have local government representatives been involved in setting up this project? How will they be involved in monitoring or steering the project as it takes place? (for example is there an advisory group or working group? Are local government secondees involved as staff on the project?)

The project proposal has been structured as a consequence of discussions between the Chief Executive of Fylde BC, the IDeA, the *Team Lancashire* programme director and the Chief Executive of South Ribble BC as one of the sub region's representatives on the RIEP board, together with Government Office officials and the Audit Commission.

At present the sub-region has allocated all the available free resources at its disposal to support Fylde (this is prior to approval of the sub regional strategy) and, in addition, support in kind has been offered from within Lancashire to support Fylde in this process.

**Links with other improvement initiatives** – how does this programme link to other improvement initiatives in the region or nationally?

If the Sub Regional Strategy is approved several elements of it will have a complimentary impact to this work for Fylde, e.g. work to address performance against the equality standard, the Members as Community Champions programme together with the resource to support the development of targeted activity and collaboration within the various clusters.

**Communications** – how will information about this project be communicated before it takes place? (to advertise it), while it is going on? and once it has concluded? (to share the lessons)

Wide dissemination of learning is not usual from the processes for which these resources are sought. However, *Team Lancashire* intends to publish a series of good practice case studies and the peer review process will be used to identify such studies.

**Performance Criteria** – How will you know that the project has been successful?

- Achieving milestones
- Attendance numbers at conference or enrolments on learning programmes
- Customer / participant feedback – how will this be obtained?
- Participant achievement – did they complete learning programme?

The key performance measure for this project is the achievement of the minimum target of a CPA re-assessment of “fair” for Fylde BC.

**Impact assessment** – how will the impact of this project on the improvement of public services be assessed and evaluated? How will it link with the overall evaluation of the North West Improvement and Efficiency Partnership?

The impact of there being no “poor” or “weak” councils in the Lancashire sub region represents the achievement of a significant target within the regional strategy and represents a significant early win for the NWIEP.

**Risk assessment** – requests for investment will need to provide evidence of risk and proposed mitigation action

Risk	Probability (H/M/L)	Impact (H/M/L)	Mitigating actions
Ability to secure none or only a proportion of the requested resources	M	H	Scaling back of proposed activity (although this would leave an increased risk of failing to achieve the ultimate goal and compromise the delivery plan of the NWIES)
Inability to deliver the programme to the required timescale	M	H	Effective project management in partnership with the IDeA and the fact that those elements of the programme funded through other sources have already commenced.
Inability to secure resources will reduce organisational capacity to fully engage with other elements of the RIEP e.g. development of the Fylde coast MAA.	M	H	Internal management restructure may free up alternative capacity.

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Please attach any programme plans or further details.