



Draft EMC Business Plan 2015/16

Summary

The following report invites Members to inform the development of the EMC Business Plan.

Recommendations

Members of the Executive Board are invited to:

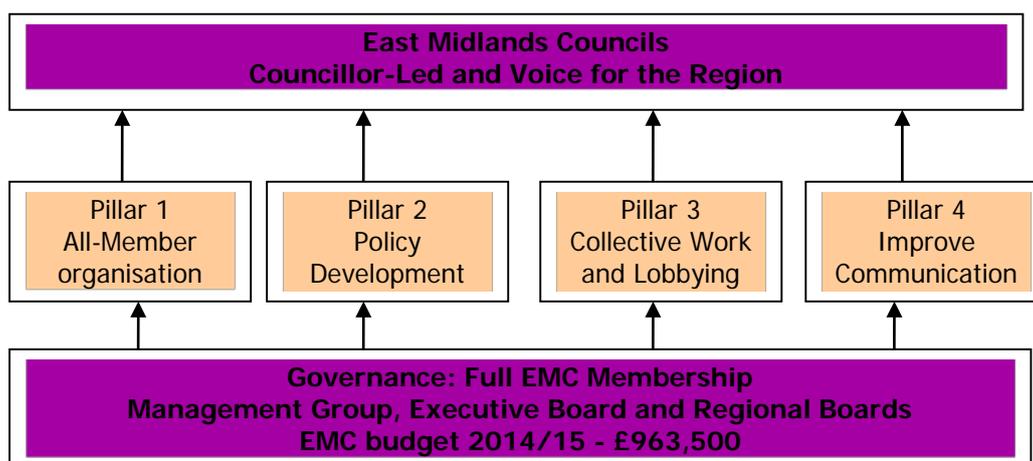
- Consider and approve the draft Business Plan 2014-15
- Approve proposals that the final draft of the Business Plan is further consulted upon with councillors across the East Midlands.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 A draft Business Plan is presented to Members of the Executive Board for comment and agreement. As a membership body, the priorities of EMC should be developed and agreed by member councils and clearly presented for review, not just in order to promote an understanding of the roles and responsibilities of EMC, but also as a measure against which our performance and value as an organisation should be judged.
- 1.2 Against this business plan, EMC must be flexible and respond to the changing priorities and challenges faced by the sector. Therefore, the activities within it may change if Members require it to. However, within this context, the business plan should reflect both the resource base and should be considered alongside the proposed budget for 2015/16 that will require EMC to adjust its offer through a refocus on those issues of greatest strategic importance and relevance to members, while ceasing activities elsewhere.

2. Focus of Business Plan

- 2.1 The focus for the Business Plan is provided by the new '4 pillar' approach unanimously agreed by Members, as shown by diagram below and summary attached as Appendix (a):
- All-Member Organisation.
 - Policy Development.
 - Collective Work and Lobbying.
 - Improve Communication.



- 2.2 The 4 pillar approach will continue to provide the framework for the proposed programme of work. While some issues inevitably relate to more than one pillar of

work, this approach does provide clarity on the focus of organisational activity against the priorities identified by the independent review and unanimously agreed by Members.

- 2.3 The Business Plan 2015-16 summary against the 4 pillar approach is attached as Appendix (a). Progress against the 4 pillar Business Plan will be reported on a quarterly basis to Management Group and Executive Board.

3. All-Member Organisation: Pillar One

- 3.1 EMC has adopted an 'all-member' approach and secured greater member involvement – however, there is some way to go before a significant number of the 2000 councillors in this region regularly engage. A fundamental change is that instead of an organisation that focuses on the limited number of councillors who comprise the actual membership of East Midlands Councils, EMC has become more of an 'all member' organisation through offering opportunities for all councillors in the region to be actively involved in some way in the work of EMC.

- 3.2 For 2015/16, EMC will offer further opportunities for councillors to engage and influence the work of EMC, including policy development, attendance at Parliamentary events and all-member meetings that include, for example, full EMC meetings and policy development/lobbying events.

- 3.3 Adapting to the changing environment. The general and local elections offer an opportunity for EMC not solely limited to member development but also how we respond to a new government and its policies. Member councils may have new leaders in place, and in the very least, there will be a new cohort of backbenchers and portfolio holders. An early all-member event to follow soon after the elections is an important opportunity to engage.

- 3.4 Importantly, the devolution and combined authority agenda is one that EMC must respond and remain relevant to.

a) Member Development

- 3.5 Member support is a key offer of East Midlands Councils that will focus on providing timely and relevant support for councillors in providing leadership on matters important to their council and communities.

- 3.6 East Midlands Councils commits to delivering an expanded Member Development Programme for 2015/16 so that every month there is at least one all-member event or member development opportunity. This will include the following:

- Support, briefings and advice.

- Councillor development charter – providing bespoke support to councils in gaining the nationally recognised award for councillor development.
- Facilitating personal development plans for councillors.
- Councillor skills portal – providing support to councils using an on-line portal for councillor development.
- Programme of knowledge briefing events for councillors.
- Provision of community leadership development leading to formal accreditation for councillors.
- Locally-based councillor development programmes (within county-based areas).

3.7 This will also include a cycle of all-member events (at least one per quarter) on issues of significant importance to councils, including:

- What does the outcome of the General Election mean for Local Government and Public Services – providing an early opportunity to engage with Ministers, council leaders and newly elected councillors.
- Local Government finance and funding; including income generation opportunities and new ways of working ('how to stop your council going bust').
- HS2 conference [October 2015].
- Infrastructure conference [on the 5 regional priorities].

b) Member Networks

3.8 A core role for EMC is to provide a platform for councillors' leadership to address the key challenges facing the sector. In addition to the priorities identified elsewhere in this business plan, the membership has highlighted the following issues for EMC to focus upon:

- Children's, Adults and Health and Wellbeing. EMC and the LGA will continue to jointly support member networks for Chairs and Portfolio Holders in Children Services, Adult Social Care and Health and Wellbeing Boards. These will support members to work collectively on joint priorities and to lead on self-improvement and capacity development.
- Scrutiny – The network seeks to provide support to local authorities in the development and dissemination of good practice, through close working with local councils, regional partners and national organisations, (including the Centre for Public Scrutiny and the LGA).

c) Delivering Value-Added and Benefits of Membership

3.9 A number of services are provided to member councils at low-cost and an important part of the wider value-added of membership, including:

- Facilitating appraisals for chief executives

- The provision of discounted services, e.g. e-pay Check (the on-line pay benchmarking database); WARP network (IT security early warning system) and East Midlands Jobs (online recruitment portal).
- Access to discounted consultancy services and capacity support.
- Discounted officer development programmes, e.g. CPD programme for Environment Health Officers, CPD programme for Planners, Delivery of Planning & Housing Master classes
- Research and information service.
- Collating and circulating information on HR policies and practice amongst local authorities.
- Providing an advice service to local authorities on terms and conditions and employment law.
- Salary surveys and salary benchmarking.
- Economic, housing and investment trend data and information.

4. Pillars Two and Three

3.10 More effective collective work and lobbying. The identification of practical solutions and policy responses should link campaigning to the collective work of member councils, specifically in conjunction with the work of the All-Party Parliamentary Group of MPs (East Midlands) and LEPs.

a) Working with MPs

3.11 EMC should continue to work with MPs, MEPs and other partners on the priorities for this region, enhance its profile and establish a more effective collective approach in the East Midlands. There is an opportunity to work with the new cohort of MPs post-General Election highlighting the priorities of the region and the challenges faced by their local councils.

3.12 There is little relationship between EMC and MEPs. On issues that relate to the EU, that include funding, directives and legislation – there are likely to be lost opportunities that should be addressed.

b) A Focus on Growth and Infrastructure

3.13 Securing a greater share of national infrastructure spend through delivery of five agreed infrastructure priorities:

- Midlands Mainline Market Harborough Enhancement.
- A5 (M42-M69) Strategic Enhancement.
- Newark Strategic Road and Rail Enhancement.
- North Leicestershire Strategic Rail Enhancement (National Forest Line & Mountsorrel Quarry).

- A14 Enhancement.

c) HS2

- 3.14 Ensuring that HS2 is implemented in the East Midlands in a way that meets the needs and aspirations of local partners including:
- Developing the proposition for Toton through the development of an 'Initial Connectivity Plan' by July 2015.
 - Playing a leading role in the Eastern Network Partnership to build the political case for the Eastern leg of HS2 with the new Government.

d) Midlands Connect

- 3.15 Developing a robust strategic economic case that will secure a greater share of strategic transport investment for the East Midlands and the Midlands as whole, including:
- Holding a joint event with Government in autumn 2015;
 - Developing a long term joint investment package for the Midlands by December 2015.

d) Completion of 'Future EU Structural Funds Review'

- 3.16 EMC will complete work (June 2015, subject to approval of the current project extension) that will support partners to maximise the opportunities of approximately €700m of future EU funding to the region. The region needs effective local delivery of projects with sufficient strategic scale and impact. The delivery of the PA3 TA Project by the end of June 2015 will focus on, and support, the development of public/private partnerships, and in particular promote the development of collaborative projects that span more than one LEP area.

e) Statutory Regional Employers' Role - Employment and Pay

- 3.17 All regions have a statutory Employers' Organisation, and this is one of the functions within EMC. Its primary focus will be to represent the interests of local authorities on employment issues as they develop at European, national and local level, as indicated below:
- Representing the region's councils at national meetings.
 - Host regional pay consultation meetings.
 - Dispute resolution (both formal and informal).
 - Liaise and communicating with councils on pay negotiation developments.
 - Represent the interests of local councils in the region at European level on Directives being developed/reviewed e.g. Working Time, Agency Workers, Equality and equal pay.

f) Externally Funded Programmes

- 4.21 Where they meet with organisational objectives, East Midlands Councils is responsible for the delivery of externally funded programmes on behalf of the region:
- a) Climate change mitigation and adaptation with a focus on councils and businesses, delivered through Climate East Midlands (funded by DEFRA).
 - b) Informing the delivery of European structural funds 2014-2020 (EU Funded) – in particular through ERDF Technical Assistance.
 - c) Regional Migration Partnership (funded by Home Office).
 - d) Secretariat support for Rural Network East Midlands.
- 2.6 A focus on policy development, with the membership providing the mandate for action (based upon an annual work programme). In discussions with Members, 2 issues have been highlighted:
- Local Government Funding Settlement.
 - Affordable housing in the East Midlands.

5. Better Communication - Pillar 4

- 5.1 The objective remains to improve communication with the membership and outside partners to better promote the identity and profile of the region alongside the value of the organisation. In particular, the work will focus on:
- Further support the platform for councillors' leadership, the promotion of good practice and encouraging the better use of online forum, social media and the wider use of EMC website. Further develop links with locally based Government Departments and partner organisations, e.g. BIS, DCLG, PHE, LEAs.
 - Establish a more effective working relationship with MPs and MEPs.
 - Regular updates on the progress of work and opportunities for members to inform its development.
 - Better use of EMC website including a discussion facility and member-led special interest groups, e.g. new councillors.
 - Targeted promotion of specific regional/sub-regional issues.

6. Recommendations

Members of the Executive Board are invited to:

- 6.1 Consider and approve the draft Business Plan 2014-15.
- 6.2 Approve proposals that the final draft of the Business Plan is further consulted upon with councillors across the East Midlands.

Stuart Young
Executive Director

