

**STRATEGIC SENIOR OFFICERS' GROUP**

**10 MARCH 2009**

**PROJECT UPDATE**

**REPORT OF LEICESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

Purpose of Report

1. To update the Group on progress with various projects.

Report

(a) Commissioning

2. This project is developing a consistent commissioning framework across the partnership including the sub regional economic development structure. It follows approval by SSOG in February 2009 of the stage [that identified gaps in current arrangements](#). A manual is being developed in consultation with partner agencies and theme partnerships that will clarify responsibilities and processes. The project is due to be completed by early July. A project progress report is attached as Appendix 1.
3. SSOG in February 2009 agreed to [a programme of work to improve consultation engagement](#), information and communication to better inform citizens and influence customer satisfaction. A senior policy officer group has been established to oversee this programme of work and progress is as follows:

(b) Research and Intelligence Project

4. Caroline Boucher a local consultant who is already heavily involved in the partnership research and information work has been engaged to lead a project which:
  - (i) develops operational improvements to the functioning of SARCOG;
  - (ii) identifies measures to develop a shared approach to customer insight across the partnership;
  - (iii) examines the benefits of the development of a research and intelligence shared service.
5. The project brief with timelines for each part is attached as Appendix 2

(c) Consultation & Engagement

6. This area of work is being covered in a number of ways:

- (a) the better joining up of formal questionnaire based consultation will be addressed by part (i) of the research & intelligence project.
- (b) how intelligence from a range of sources including formal questionnaire consultation, formal forms of engagement (e.g. Community Forums), informal forms of engagement (e.g. neighbourhood police knowledge, elected member knowledge) and service transaction information (e.g. CRM systems) can be collected and analysed to provide a better collective understanding of customer and citizen views and needs will be addressed through part (ii) of the research and intelligence project.
- (c) the Consultation & Engagement Task Group is preparing a Leicestershire Together Consultation and Engagement Strategy that will set out the different methods and approaches available to partner agencies and theme partnerships.

(d) Communication & Satisfaction

7. Opinion based satisfaction measures are now playing a significant role in key performance indicators for individual partners, theme partnerships and Leicestershire Together as a whole. Opinion is as much if not more influenced by people's perception as by hard facts about the performance of service delivery agencies.

8. This perception is influenced by the media and direct communication by agencies. Work has already begun to look at how perception can be influenced in the safer communities field. Work will also be undertaken on the results of the Place Survey once it is finalised and on the opinion survey being carried out by LCC and NHS LCR in the summer. A report on the emerging conclusions will be brought to the next meeting of the group.

(e) Employment and Skills

9. There are a range of groups and activities in this area including a Strategy and Performance Group under the Sub Regional economic development arrangements. Support is provided by the Learning and Skills Council which is winding down leading to the April 2010 changes and the Local Learning Partnership which has been mainly funded by the LSC and whose future is therefore also uncertain. The project is seeking to rationalise the various groups into a more efficient and effective structure and identify new cost effective arrangements to support it.

### Other Projects

10. A wide range of other improvement projects are being undertaken in the County or sub region and keeping track of these can be difficult. Information is currently being collated to be made available via the Leicestershire Together website and 'work in progress' will be available at the meeting.

### Recommendation

11. That the Group note progress with the programme of projects outlined above.

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## Appendix 1 Leicestershire Together Strategic Commissioning Support

Flash Report no.: 6

Period covered: 1<sup>st</sup> June 09 – 12<sup>th</sup> June 09

Date of report: 5<sup>th</sup> June 09

### Overview

Tribal has been commissioned to develop a 'manual' outlining what strategic commissioning means for Leicestershire Together, why it is important, and how theme boards and organisations can deliver it successfully. This will be developed through input from stakeholders across the partnership, based on an extensive consultation exercise. A third strand of the work will provide support to the partnership's Economic Development Group, to ensure a robust commissioning and governance approach is in place to enable the group to make the best use of resources and deliver its outcomes.

To date an initial draft of the manual has been completed, which has been circulated for validation and detailed feedback amongst a small group of stakeholders. A series of workshops, beginning with the Leicestershire LAA2 Challenge Group on the 17<sup>th</sup> June will provide additional validation, practical examples and wider 'education' around the manual and Leicestershire Together's approach to strategic commissioning. This will be worked into a finalised version accompanied by case studies and references to examples of good commissioning from across the partnership, gathered from the workshops and through additional interviews. The key areas to emerge from this that are most important for the manual to focus on and highlight are:

- The need to set clear expectations for the roles and responsibilities of individual groups.
- That the manual should help to achieve a balanced commissioning approach and portfolio of projects both across the seven themes of the Sustainable Community Strategy as well as across its 18 chapters.
- That the partnership, and its Executive, will need make difficult decisions in the future, for example around decommissioning activities that are seen not to meet strategic outcomes, ensuring mainstream budgets of organisation are aligned to key strategic outcomes (and not just funding pots), and prioritising particular initiatives over others.

As part of its review of the Economic Development partnership (led by the LeicesterShire Leadership Board, Co-ordination Group), Tribal has conducted an initial set of interviews with Co-ordination Group leads, and presented a set of emerging findings about the partnership's strength and areas of improvement from a commissioning perspective. These will be validated more widely at a workshop with stakeholders from across the partnership, and presented with recommendations in a final report to the Co-ordination Group.

**Overall assessment of progress<sup>1</sup>: Green**

Tribal Activity	Completed this period 1 <sup>st</sup> June 09 – 5 <sup>th</sup> June 09	Planned for next period 8 <sup>th</sup> June 09 – 12 <sup>th</sup> June 09
Project management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Ongoing project management</li> <li>■ Submitted flash report</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Ongoing project management</li> </ul>
Case studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Continued to conduct interview with representatives for case studies on integrated youth services, Melton re-offending pilot, and the work of the Leicestershire DAAT.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Continue to arrange and conduct case study interviews</li> </ul>
Support to develop and embed manual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Produced initial draft of Do section and Activities Timeline for manual</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Finalise draft of Do section and Activities Timeline for manual</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> **Green:** project expected to deliver in line with project plan; **Amber:** issues affecting project which would affect delivery but issues can be resolved within the next period; **Red:** issues affecting project which will affect delivery and cannot be resolved within the next period

Tribal Activity	Completed this period 1 <sup>st</sup> June 09 – 5 <sup>th</sup> June 09	Planned for next period 8 <sup>th</sup> June 09 – 12 <sup>th</sup> June 09
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Compiled feedback record to log points raised by stakeholders</li> <li>■ Begun amending manual in light of Project Board feedback to test with wider stakeholders</li> <li>■ Begun developing workshop materials to test and validate manual more widely, as well as introduce stakeholders to the commissioning process</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Continue to amend manual as necessary in light of detailed Project Board feedback</li> <li>■ Refine workshop materials</li> </ul>
Economic development support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Discussed emerging hypotheses and issues with Andy Robinson</li> <li>■ Arranged workshop with stakeholders to validate findings and identify recommendations</li> <li>■ Amended initial findings based on discussion at meeting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Design materials for wider stakeholder workshop</li> </ul>

Client Activity	Completed this period 1 <sup>st</sup> June 09 – 5 <sup>th</sup> June 09	Planned for next period 8 <sup>th</sup> June 09 – 12 <sup>th</sup> June 09
Project management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ n/a</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Andy Robinson to feed back progress to Executive (SSOG)</li> </ul>
Case studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ n/a</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Representatives to undertake interviews</li> </ul>
Develop manual and case studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Provided detailed feedback on manual</li> <li>■ Submitted additional background documents for incorporation into the manual</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Continue to provide detailed feedback on manual where required</li> </ul>
Support to develop and embed manual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ n/a</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Submit attendee list for workshops</li> <li>■ Arrange dates for workshops</li> </ul>
Economic development support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Discussed emerging hypotheses and issues with Tribal</li> <li>■ Identified attendees for workshop</li> <li>■ Arranged workshop with wider stakeholders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Discuss workshop structure with Tribal and provide comments.</li> </ul>

### Risks/issues<sup>2</sup>

- *There are currently no major risks or issues for the work*

<sup>2</sup> A risk is something that **may** affect the project, an issue is **already** affecting the project

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- *However, we are currently having difficulties to get hold of interviewees to discuss case studies in more detail. We will continue to follow up with representatives, and will also use the workshops to gather examples of where people have undertaken activities within the commissioning cycle that can be used and showcased in the manual. Should we continue to struggle with speaking to representatives we will escalate this to the Project Board.*

## Research and Intelligence Review

### 1. Project Understanding

- 1.1 Caroline Boucher in partnership with Susan Lanz of Valued Research is pleased to provide a proposal in response to the project mandate issued by Andy Robinson, Assistant Chief Executive at Leicestershire County Council.
- 1.2 The Leicestershire Together Executive via the Senior Policy Officer Group would like to commission a review of sub-regional research and intelligence arrangements. This is in recognition of the following:
- The need for evidence based decision making is increasing.
  - Evidence needs to consider future scenarios in addition to providing a robust understanding of what has happened in the past.
  - It is also critically important to take greater account of customer and citizen views in compiling an evidence base.
  - Effective arrangements must be partnership based in line with the joining up of strategic planning, policy making, service design and service delivery.

### 2. Project Objectives

- 2.1 The primary objective of the research and intelligence review is:
- To examine the changes required to provide effective research and intelligence support to public agencies working in Leicestershire in a cost efficient form.
- 2.2 The project will be commissioned and delivered in three stages:

Stage	Objective
One	To examine and make recommendations about the improvements needed to increase the effectiveness of the Statistical Analysis Research Consultation Group (SARCOG)
Two	To explore and make recommendations about the changes required to develop a more systematic approach to customer insight.
Three	To consider the best arrangements to resource and deploy Research & Information (R&I) staff to deliver an effective and co-ordinated research and information programme. This stage will also address efficiency savings.

- 2.3 The research will build on work that has already been conducted, including the papers on the Statistical Analysis Research Consultation Group (SARCOG) and customer insight submitted to the Leicestershire Strategic

Senior Officer Group in February 2009. Leicestershire has shown strong commitment to partnership research arrangements and this review will recognise the good practice that already exists and how best to implement further improvements. It will be critically important to consult with key partners at a senior level and also engage the R&I specialists within the key local agencies as part of this project. This will help to secure buy-in to the project and its outcomes from the outset.

2.4 The review will consider the research and intelligence arrangements across:

- Leicestershire County Council
- Leicestershire Constabulary
- NHS – LCR
- Other partners as agreed at the inception meeting

We would also recommend that Leicester City Council be included in the review of research and intelligence.

2.5 Whilst the potential for inter-agency working is the focus of this review, we will also assess whether the different departments within large organisations such as Leicestershire County Council are working effectively together on sharing research, intelligence and customer feedback.

### **3. Expertise and Team Summary**

3.1 Caroline Boucher has worked in a research capacity in Leicestershire since 1994, working firstly for the Training and Enterprise Council, followed by the Learning and Skills Council and more recently as an independent research consultant. Caroline has proactively developed local research partnership arrangements primarily around economic and labour market analysis; managing the production of partnership economic baseline studies and business surveys. She managed the Leicester Shire Intelligence programme through the Leicester Shire Economic Partnership from 2003 to 2008 and currently chairs the Economic Research Sub Group to SARCOG. Caroline is a member of SARCOG and the LSR Online Management Group. Caroline is uniquely placed to conduct this review in that she has an in-depth understanding of local research partnership arrangements, a proven track record in delivering successful partnership research projects and has established good relationships with research professionals in Leicester and Leicestershire. She is also independent from any of the key agencies that need to be consulted as part of this review and will bring an objective and impartial approach to the project.

3.2 Caroline will be supported by Susan Lanz of Valued Research who has fifteen years experience in market research and detailed knowledge of partnership working at local, regional and national levels. Susan has successfully delivered partnership projects in Leicestershire in the past as an employee of Leicestershire County Council. More recently Susan has been involved in work for the Leicester and Leicestershire Employment Skills Board producing a strategic plan and examining the effectiveness of the working arrangements supporting the Board's activity. Susan's involvement will further ensure an independent, objective and robust approach to the project.

- 3.3 More detailed CVs for Caroline and Susan are shown in appendix one. References can be provided on request.

#### 4. Methodology Stage One Operation of Statistical Analysis Research Consultation Group (SARCOG)

4.1 Given the research requirements in the project mandate, we propose the following activities to meet your needs. We offer a flexible approach to project delivery, so we would be very willing to revisit the methodology if this does not fully meet your requirements.

Project Phase	Activity	Purpose
Inception	Inception Meeting	<p>Confirm the approach to be taken to meet the project objectives</p> <p>Agree detailed stage one project work plan</p> <p>Agree the documents to be reviewed &amp; list of individuals to be interviewed (contact details)</p> <p>Confirm audience and report style</p> <p>Agree project management arrangements</p>
Document review	<p>Review SARCOG documentation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- minutes, agendas, papers etc.</li> <li>- current programme of work for SARCOG</li> <li>- reports to SSOG</li> </ul>	<p>Produce an objective evaluation of SARCOG's performance to date based on paper evidence. This will include an overview of some of the key work areas overseen by SARCOG, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- LSR Online</li> <li>- Integration of statutory assessments, JSNA, Economic, Community Safety</li> <li>- Performance of sub groups - Economic, Strategic Assessment, Consultation and Customer Insight</li> </ul>
Communication	Attendance at May & June SARCOG meetings	<p>Explain objectives of the review and facilitate general discussion.</p> <p>Obtain buy in to the project (all 3 stages).</p>
Consultation	<p>Focus groups with police, health, County, City and District staff (6 groups)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Senior officers in agencies (6 interviews)</li> <li>- SARCOG sub group chairs (4 interviews)</li> </ul>	<p>Seek views on effectiveness of SARCOG, its sub groups and ideas for improvement to operation of SARCOG.</p> <p>Seek views on paper produced for SSOG, February 2009 especially around</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• membership of SARCOG</li> <li>• terms of reference</li> <li>• priority workstreams</li> <li>• scope SARCOG covers (e.g. should it extend to housing, environment, transport...)</li> <li>• branding of SARCOG work</li> </ul>

Project Phase	Activity	Purpose
Consultation (continued)		Seek views on how best to resource SARCOG, its sub groups and the work programme, including opinions about a dedicated support unit.
Reporting	Preparation of final report	Produce succinct final report which sets out clear recommendations for the future operation of SARCOG – including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Membership</li> <li>• Terms of reference</li> <li>• Sub Group – composition and accountability</li> <li>• Resource arrangements (people and money)</li> <li>• Priority workstreams</li> <li>• Year one programme of work</li> <li>• Evaluation arrangements</li> </ul>
Presentation (optional)	Presentation of key findings	Present key findings and recommendations to agreed audience.

## 5. Timetable Stage One

Task	w/c 25 May	w/c 1 Jun	w/c 8 Jun	w/c 15 Jun	w/c 22 Jun	w/c 29 Jun	w/c 6 Jul	w/c 13 Jul
Inception Meeting								
Document Review								
SARCOG Meeting	14/5				24/6			
Focus Groups & Interviews								
Reporting								
Presentation (optional)								

## 6. Methodology Stage Two Customer Insight

6.1 Customer insight can be defined as:

“Understanding what really matters to the people we serve.” or  
“Having a deep, embedded knowledge of the customers and the markets around us that helps structure thinking and sound decision making.”

6.2 Many local agencies are investing in consultation and customer research often through primary research which is very expensive. Stage Two of the research and intelligence review will identify opportunities for joint working and the potential to develop a more systematic approach to customer insight across the sub-region.

6.3 Stage two will build on stage one but is likely to involve consultation with different individuals.

Project Phase	Activity	Purpose
Inception	Inception Meeting	<p>Confirm the approach to be taken to meet the stage two project objectives</p> <p>Agree a detailed project work plan</p> <p>Agree the documents to be reviewed &amp; list of individuals to be interviewed</p> <p>Confirm audience and report style</p> <p>Agree project management arrangements</p>
Document review	<p>Review current policy documents.</p> <p>Review local documentation including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Audit of Consultation, Engagement and Information Provision by LAs.</li> <li>- Questionnaires</li> <li>- Documents associated with Consultation &amp; Customer Insight Sub Groups to SARCOG</li> </ul>	<p>Briefly summarise policy context.</p> <p>Summarise what is currently happening in terms of developing customer insight to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• questionnaires</li> <li>• complaints and compliments</li> <li>• citizen panels</li> <li>• data from customer relationship management systems</li> <li>• soft information from community forums etc.</li> <li>• feedback to websites</li> <li>• soft information hub</li> </ul> <p>Examine opportunities to join up activity, including maximising use of Place Survey, annual public satisfaction surveys, citizen's panels etc.</p>
Consultation	<p>Group discussions with:</p> <p>SARCOG Consultation Sub Group &amp; Customer Insight Sub Group</p> <p>Face to face &amp; phone interviews with Key partners and stakeholders, R&amp;I practitioners, plus Focus or customer representative groups (15-20 interviews)</p>	<p>Seek opinions about effectiveness of current activity in terms of understanding customer needs and how this information is being used to influence policy, service development and service delivery.</p> <p>Identify opportunities for joint working and better integration of questionnaires, CRM systems, citizen panels etc.</p> <p>Seek views on how best to co-ordinate and resource customer insight work across the sub-region. This will include opinions about a dedicated support unit and the relationship of this work to SARCOG.</p>

Project Phase	Activity	Purpose
Reporting	Preparation of final report	Produce succinct final report which sets out clear recommendations for developing a systematic approach to using customer insight as a tool for service improvement and priority setting. To include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overview of current situation</li> <li>• Identification of opportunities</li> <li>• Short term priorities</li> <li>• Longer term priorities</li> <li>• Management/co-ordination arrangements</li> <li>• Resource implications</li> </ul>
Presentation (optional)	Presentation of key findings	Present key findings and recommendations to agreed audience.

## 7. Timetable Stage Two

Task	w/c 13 Jul	w/c 20 & 27 Jul	August	w/c 7 & 14 Sep	w/c 21 & 28 Sep	w/c 5 Oct	w/c 12 Oct
Inception Meeting							
Document Review							
Focus Groups & Interviews (2 groups and 15-20 interviews)							
Reporting							
Presentation (optional)							

## 8. Methodology Stage Three Staff Deployment

8.1 The final stage of the project will consider the resource implications and management arrangements in more detail. We will have gathered some initial views on this in stages one and two. The purpose of this stage will be to consider the best arrangements to resource and deploy R&I staff to deliver an effective, cost efficient and well co-ordinated research and information programme. A more detailed approach to this stage will be agreed at the inception meeting for this stage

8.2 Our suggested approach to stage three will be to produce an options paper for consultation, based on the evidence gathered in earlier phases. The options paper will be agreed with the commissioning team but is likely to include topics such as:

- Leadership and strategic direction
- Research programme management
- Arrangements for better information sharing

- Resource allocation to analysis, presentation and dissemination on information
- Making more effective use of existing information, such as strategic assessments, questionnaires, citizen panels.
- New organisational arrangements
- Feasibility of partnership research support unit
- Branding of partnership research activity
- Resource implications
- Efficiency savings

8.3 We will then use the options paper to facilitate discussions at the following groups:

- County R&I team
- City R&I individuals
- Health R&I team(s)
- Police R&I team

Where R&I staff are deployed in other departments (e.g. education) it will be important to ensure that they are included in discussion groups. The potential for internal “joining up” of activity could be significant.

8.4 The options paper will also be used as a discussion guide in face to face interviews with senior policy officers (to be agreed with the commissioning team).

8.5 A final report will be produced with clear recommendations for the way forward. This will be in the form of an outline business case for the new arrangements, identifying proposed structures, timescales for implementation, resource implications and efficiency savings. The key recommendations can also be incorporated into a presentation.

## 9. Timetable Stage Three

Task	w/c 26 Oct	w/c 2 Nov	w/c 9 Nov	w/c 16 Nov	w/c 23 Nov	w/c 30 Nov
Inception Meeting						
Preparation of options paper						
Focus Groups with R&I teams (4)						
Face to face interviews with senior policy officers (up to 8)						
Report						
Presentation (optional)						

## 10. Project Management Arrangements

10.1 Caroline Boucher will be the key point of contact on the project. She will maintain appropriate contact with the Senior Policy Officer Executive Steering Group throughout all project stages. Caroline will attend meetings as required to keep the group informed of progress. It would be

helpful to have a named individual point of contact on the commissioning team for more detailed day to day queries on the project.

## **11. Quality Standards**

- 11.1 Research is conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Market Research Society Code of Conduct. This ensures that all data is kept secure, is accurate, is lawfully and fairly processed, and that respondents' views and opinions are treated in the strictest of confidence and remain anonymous unless express permission has been given. It also ensures that the right of refusal to participate in a study is readily accepted.