



Office of the
Deputy Prime Minister
Creating sustainable communities



Local Government Association



the capacity building programme – the facts

a guide to the capacity building programme



the capacity building programme: the facts


the capacity building programme is part of local government's ambitious improvement agenda

This leaflet provides an introduction to the capacity building programme, explaining how it works, who can access the programme and how. It also looks at what the programme has already achieved with a series of real examples, as well as explaining how the programme will be evaluated, how it 'fits' with other initiatives and how individual councils can influence the programme's development.

what is the capacity building programme?

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) and the Local Government Association (LGA) established the capacity building programme in April 2003, as part of a three year initiative to support improvement in local government. The programme aims to enhance and develop councils' confidence, leadership, and skills to drive forward improvement as well as developing their capacity to learn, innovate and share knowledge and expertise about what works and how.

The funding for the programme is significant. In its first year alone £33.7 million was allocated – made up of £25 million from central government and £9 million from the local government revenue support grant 'top slice'. Although £17 million has already been committed by the end of the first year, the need to get the architecture right to deliver a programme of this scale, means that not all available funds for the first year have been allocated. It is a three year programme and, subject to parliamentary approval,



uncommitted funds will be carried forward and added to resources for the second year. It is envisaged that the remaining years of the project will receive similar levels of funding.

The LGA (on behalf of local government) and ODPM jointly manage the funds – with management arrangements at ministerial, elected member and officer levels – reflecting the ODPM's commitment to work with councils on this agenda and to ensuring councils have the right support to deliver long-term benefits for their communities.

how does the programme work?

The programme aims to encourage 'whole council' approaches to driving improvement focusing on developing councils' corporate capacity, for example around leadership, people management, performance management and support for generic skills such as procurement. This complements the host of other initiatives run centrally and locally in specific service areas.

This does not mean a 'one size fits all' approach. The need for councils to drive and source their own improvement to address often diverse individual needs and priorities is central to the programme's success. Instead the programme provides a wide range of affordable and accessible national projects from which councils can pick and choose as well as providing opportunities to access specific individually tailored and regionally tailored support (see exhibit overleaf).

affordable and accessible support

national programmes

Primary purpose: to develop affordable programmes that address councils' shared capacity building needs

description:

Two key streams:

- **delivery of new initiatives** for example
 - a programme for middle managers
 - an induction programme for new councillors
- **expansion and development of existing initiatives** for example
 - Peer Clearing House hosted by the IDeA
 - National Graduate Development Programme managed by the Employers' Organisation
 - Top Team development provided by the IDeA
 - Centre for Public Scrutiny, and
 - Gateway reviews

capacity
building
programme

regional projects

Primary purpose: to provide a regional context to the national projects, promote joint working on common problems, capture and share good practice.

description:

As at May 2004 there are seven regional or sub regional projects underway focusing on developing improvement networks and regional partnerships, member development and training, and performance management. The programme would like to support at least one regional or sub regional project in each region.

pilots

Primary purpose: to test innovative and transferable approaches to driving forward improvement and to inform the development of national projects

description:

As at May 2004 there are 18 pilot projects covering a range of themes including, pooling resources and integrating services, developing leadership skills, middle management development, developing performance and change management systems, and supporting two tier working.

In addition the programme is supporting a number of initiatives involving 'excellent' councils working with others and projects being undertaken by the Innovation Forum. An LGA and IDeA publication titled 'Excellence in Focus – a guide to the Innovation Forum' provides further information on this.

It is anticipated that there will be less of a focus on individual pilots in years 2 and 3 of the programme and more of a focus on the roll out of the new national projects.

tailored individual support

Primary purpose: to support improvement planning in councils classified as 'poor' and 'weak' under Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) and to encourage the sharing of learning for the benefit of others

description:

As at May 2004, 24 local authorities are receiving support for local projects covering leadership, middle management development, performance and project management, partnership working and customer focus.

who can access the programme and how?

Support from the programme is available to all councils and not just those classified as 'poor' and 'weak' under comprehensive performance assessment. However there needs to be flexibility within the programme to ensure it appropriately reflects need and capacity and in the first year this meant efforts were targeted at those councils in greatest need, such as those categorised as 'poor' and 'weak'.

New national programmes

Who can access?


All councils

How much will it cost?

The initial development of these programmes will be funded by the capacity building monies. Further subsidy may then be provided for those councils in greatest need and with less capacity to enable them to access the programmes. All programmes should be affordable to all councils.

How?

A range of projects are being developed to be rolled out from summer 2004. These include middle management development (*see below*), mentoring for newly elected members, improving overview and scrutiny, project and programme management and performance management and improvement. ODPM is setting up a facility on its website allowing local authorities to register for programme updates. Watch the ODPM website <http://www.odpm.gov.uk/capacitybuilding> for details.



The first new national programme will be the **National Middle Manager Development Programme** with three key aims:

- to develop existing middle managers;
- to identify and prepare potential future senior managers;
- to contribute to making local government a desirable career choice and so attract new talent into the sector.

The first 'intake' of middle managers will be in autumn 2004. Candidates for the programme will be selected by their local authorities. It is anticipated that the 'training period' for participants will be around six months and likely activities will include residential workshops, distance/remote learning, and workplace-based project work. At least 400-600 participants are expected in the first two to three years.


Existing national projects

Who can access?

All councils

How?

There are different routes for the different programmes. These are listed overleaf. Programmes are subsidised for those authorities categorised as 'poor' or 'weak' as appropriate.



The Employers' Organisation (EO) has appointed a **Regional Skills and Capacity Advisor (RSCA)** in each region to help councils assess and address their individual and regional skills needs. For further information, please contact Jonathan Trubshaw on 020 7296 6502.

www.lg-employers.gov.uk/skills

The **peer clearing house** for local government has been set up to recruit, accredit and place peers. It is hosted by the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) and facilitates the brokerage of peers for improvement work and support in the local government sector. The incentive payments for councils releasing officers to support 'poor' and 'weak' authorities have been increased to cover 75 per cent of the salary costs for each officer being released which will be paid to the releasing authority. An incentive of 20 per cent of the salary costs will also be paid to each individual peer.

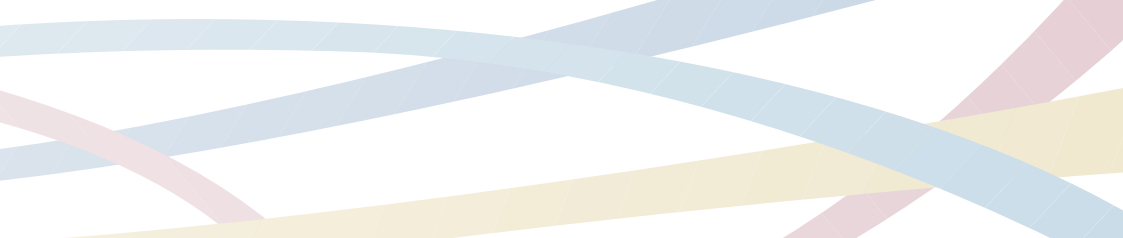
www.idea.gov.uk/peer/

IDeA's **Performance Support** mobilises the efforts of the whole local government community to raise standards of performance across the board by providing direct and in-depth support where it is most needed.

www.idea.gov.uk/performance

The IDeA's Local Government Improvement Programme provides **Peer Reviews** for local authorities particularly those facing comprehensive performance assessment. www.idea.gov.uk/lgip

The IDeA's **Advanced Leadership Programme** is designed to equip senior



managers with insight and the skills they need to manage change and deliver quality services. www.idea.gov.uk/manager/alp

The [National Graduate Development Programme](#) was introduced by the EO to develop a new generation of highly skilled and effective managers who will have a significant influence in local authorities and in every community in which they operate. www.lg-employers.gov.uk/leadership/ngdp

The IDeA, 4ps and EO are working together to provide a range of services linked to the [National Procurement Strategy](#). For more information on [the Procurement Centres of Excellence, Gateway Reviews, and Procurement Skills Training](#). www.4ps.gov.uk , www.idea.gov.uk/procurement or www.lg-employers.gov.uk/skills/procurement

Pilots, Tailored regional support, Tailored individual support

Who can access?

All councils (pilots), groups of councils working in partnership (tailored regional support), those classified as 'poor' and 'weak' (tailored individual support)

How?

The first point of contact is your ODPM Regional Director for Local Government Practice who will provide advice on putting together proposals and on accessing the funds (for contact details refer to p22). It is important that councils engage regional directors at an early stage in their project proposals. The LGA/ODPM joint management group, informed by the Regional Director's recommendations, approves the bids to ensure consistency and fairness across the board.

who will deliver the programme?

capacity building framework contract

Fifty-one suppliers are providing the programme's activities and through the ODPM's 'framework contract'. These suppliers include larger consultancy firms, academic institutions and smaller 'niche' providers from the private and public sectors. They will work in partnership with the ODPM, LGA and councils to develop and deliver projects and support. In all cases selected suppliers will need to tender for specific projects as ideas emerge.

Further details of suppliers in the 'framework contract' can be found on the ODPM website at www.odpm.gov.uk/capacitybuilding

what are the links between the capacity building programme and the Performance Partnership?

The Performance Partnership is the umbrella term for the four organisations – the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA), LACORs, the 4ps and the Employers' Organisation – which are funded primarily through the RSG 'top slice' monies to broker and provide significant capacity building support to local government. The Performance Partnership bodies will continue to broker and provide support to councils as part of their ongoing activities, some of which have been boosted by funds from the capacity building programme – for example the national graduate development programme. In addition the Performance Partnership is also one of the 'framework contract' suppliers and will be able to tender for programme work on the same basis as other selected suppliers. New capacity building activities will clearly need to complement existing activities of the Performance Partnership.



what has been achieved so far?

Although it will take time for many of the programme's outcomes to be achieved, we believe that it is already starting to have an impact. At the time of going to press (May 2004) seven regional and 18 pilot projects have been supported and 24 tailored packages of support for those councils classified as 'poor' and 'weak' under CPA have been developed. The programme has also boosted several existing national projects including:

- IDEA's 36 performance support projects, including support being provided to 12 single or upper tier authorities classified as 'poor' under CPA, 11 single or upper tier authorities classified as 'weak', and eight districts;
- IDEA's Leadership Academy and Advanced Leadership programme. A third of local authorities have participated and over 300 elected members from all political parties have participated in the Leadership Academy and Advanced Leadership programme and events;
- procurement centres of excellence have been piloted in the East, North East and Yorkshire;
- setting up and rolling out the Peer Clearing House; and
- EO's national graduate development programme.


what does this look like on the ground?

case study 1 – Portsmouth city council – pilot

Portsmouth city council is rolling out its 'transformational leadership' programme across a number of neighbouring authorities supported by funds from the capacity building programme. The council is running three cross-sector leadership development programmes aimed at solving the leadership issues at all levels of local authority service delivery and within local health authorities. Its leadership programme has attracted support from Havant borough council, West Sussex county council, The Isle of Wight county council, the Isle of Wight National Health Service Trust, and the Portsmouth National Health Service Trust.

'The capacity building fund is helping us provide the architecture for building leadership capacity through enabling a cross-sector, multi-organisational programme of leadership development.' Cliff Allen, Head of corporate development and learning, Portsmouth city council


'The key aim of the programme is to provide what matters to those with potential. This includes an engaging vision of the future, a sense of direction, a chance to make a difference, a challenge to current capabilities, validation, recognition and appreciation of potential ability, and the opportunity to acquire and use developed leadership skills when offering services to the community.' Cliff Allen, Head of corporate development and learning, Portsmouth city council



case study 2 – Association of Greater Manchester Authorities – sub regional project

The Association of Greater Manchester Authorities (AGMA) has launched its own AGMA capacity building programme, developed in partnership with ODPM, LGA, IDeA, Manchester Business School and Office of Public Management. The AGMA programme aims to provide both elected members and managers with the leadership skills needed to help their authorities improve. For elected members, the programme will focus on personal leadership styles, leadership in local government, political skills, political leadership at regional level and partnership working. For managers, it will concentrate on improving performance, delivering improvement, corporate governance and partnership working. There will also be a number of joint member/ manager and large scale learning events throughout the year, where some of the best from AGMA authorities and across the country will share experiences and best practice. The AGMA programme will also look at some of the government's key initiatives to modernise and improve performance such as strategic partnering and procurement.

'The success of the (AGMA) programme will be judged on the skills developed by people taking part and how their personal effectiveness increases. In turn we hope those taking part will return to their own organisations and put their new-found skills to use to secure improved performance.' Steve Jones AGMA Secretary and Chief Executive, Wigan council



'This is an exciting initiative which we hope will shape the future of public service delivery in our region and maybe beyond. It aims to capitalise on our greatest asset namely people and utilise their skills and examples of excellence as a learning model. Every local authority has real strengths, which the programme wishes to share. We also know it will help to forge stronger networks among all those organisations taking part. Eventually we would like to see this programme grow into a valuable regional resource for public sector leadership development.' Lord Peter Smith, AGMA Chairman and Leader, Wigan council

case study 3 – Wakefield – tailored support

City of Wakefield MDC are receiving a package of tailored support, aimed at providing a focussed response to its areas for improvement. This includes re-energising and upgrading the skills of a large number of middle managers working in all service areas. This tailored support has contributed to the council's reassessment as 'fair' in December 2003.


'The ability to access resources from the ODPM capacity building fund has been an important contribution to Wakefield's spectacular improvement. Our recent CPA reassessment recognises the transformational change. The experience and learning we have gained is now being shared with other councils, adding even greater value to the investment.' John Foster, Chief Executive, City of Wakefield MDC

Case study 4 – peer support – national project

The IDeA hosts the Peer Clearing House (established as part of the capacity building programme) brokering peer support which has become a key component of change. There is no one better to help local government than the people who work in it and share its values. The Peer Clearing House gives local authorities access to current best practice in local government, from people already working in the field. Around 200 local authorities have benefited from peer support from more than 200 accredited member and officer peers. Around 40 per cent of local authorities currently provide peers.

‘Anyone who takes on the role of peer support comes to recognise what a privilege it is. Sometimes people talk as if this role is performed by the expert, who benevolently shares wisdom with lesser mortals. That is a very foolish view. No matter what difficulties a council is facing, there will be areas where they are excellent and you can borrow new ideas. The difficulties they face are often challenging, and you can think through how you would approach similar problems if you are ever unfortunate enough to experience them. Peer support makes you take time out to reflect on things you often do by habit or custom in your own authority.

‘So the conclusion I have reached is that peer support is one of the most cost effective opportunities for personal development I have had the good fortune to enjoy. Of course you do give as well, as a sounding board, as an objective observer of events and as an experienced colleague who can offer support from a position of strength if outside experts demand an unrealistic work programme’ Tony Elson, Chief Executive, Kirklees MBC



'There is a bright future for local government based on the simple premise of councils helping each other. This can really move mountains. People are warming to the idea and the Peer Clearing House is the catalyst for making things happen.' Kevin Wilson, lead Labour member of the Peer Clearing House

'The peer review of Kent county council was a turning point for us; both members and officers found the peer review, with its critical but constructive analysis, highly beneficial in bringing a step change in our desire for self improvement.' Sandy Bruce-Lockhart, Leader, Kent county council

case study 5 – National Graduate Development Programme (NGDP) – national project

This highly successful programme is intended to promote careers in local government by equipping graduates with the skills to become the managers of the future. It sits alongside the existing civil service and NHS programmes to complete the family of public sector programmes. Currently there are 128 graduates on the programme with the first cohort of 44 graduating in September 2004. The programme is being boosted by the capacity building programme with the aim of providing places for 150 graduates in any one year. By March 2005 it is anticipated that there will be 220 graduates on the programme.

'The NGDP is now an essential part of Lewisham's resourcing strategy. The programme is unique in providing us with a highly flexible resource – our national management trainees can deliver projects excellently at short notice. They're motivated, energetic and enthusiastic, with the analytical



skills Lewisham needs to provide innovative solutions for many of the problems we face' Rob Whiteman – Deputy Chief Executive, LB Lewisham

'Through the NGDP I have gained an exceptional understanding of Barnsley's role in the community and it's been a thoroughly worthwhile experience. I am confident that the skills and experience I have gained through the programme will be invaluable in my future career in local government'
Emma Cotter, National Management Trainee, Barnsley council

how will the longer term success of the programme be evaluated?

It is important that the longer term successes and impact of the programme's activities are evaluated and understood. An evaluation project, covering the three years of the programme, will be led by the ODPM. This will focus on the national projects and activities but will start by gathering lessons from the regional projects, local pilots and the tailored support for authorities classified as 'poor' and 'weak'.

The evaluation will look at how the national projects are being implemented, the extent to which they meet their objectives, their cost effectiveness and the added value they provide. The evaluation will consider not just how the various national projects work in isolation but also taken together and in the context of the local and regional work already commissioned. In addition, the evaluation will consider the impact of activities in building capacity for the local government sector as a whole (particularly in encouraging and strengthening partnership working), for individual authorities and for individuals.

where does the local government leadership centre fit it?

One of the key themes of the programme is to improve leadership skills and capacity. This lies at the heart of the proposals for a new Local Government Leadership Centre (LGLC) which will offer a 'syllabus' of activity for elected members, senior officers and middle managers. The capacity building programme will provide funding for the initial costs of the centre which will consist of a small core team working to a governing body. The LGLC will be a 'virtual' centre, not tied to infrastructure and most importantly will be driven



by local government. Successful projects such as the IDeA Leadership Academy will continue to run as part of this offering.

how does the programme fit with other government initiatives?

Local government's improvement agenda is influenced by a range of 'external' drivers and other national initiatives, including the government's Efficiency Review, ODPM's 10 year local government strategy, Pay and Workforce Strategy, the National Procurement Strategy and children's services workforce developments. The programme is also closely linked to work being led elsewhere in central government, for example the Home Office's work on strengthening councils' approaches to partnership working with the voluntary and community sectors, ODPM's Neighbourhood Renewal Process (NRU's), Local Strategic Partnerships and the ODPM's Beacon Council Scheme.

The programme will be important in helping councils implement key recommendations arising from these initiatives. This means that programme activity needs to be complementary and supportive, avoiding duplication of effort and resources in their implementation. Steps have already been taken to ensure this happens at a practical level. The joint ODPM/LGA steering group will also ensure that the overarching framework for the programme remains relevant within this context.


how can I influence, feedback and comment on the development of the programme?

The programme's success depends upon activities to secure sustainable improvement being relevant to councils' needs. Strong partnership working with councils lies at the heart of achieving this.

The LGA's role is critical – as the national voice of local government and joint managers of this major programme. The LGA engages with councils directly on all aspects of its work and uses this engagement, particularly around the improvement agenda, to inform and influence the direction of the programme.

In addition there are a number of direct communication routes available to local authorities and stakeholders including:

- a series of capacity building seminars hosted by the ODPM and LGA in each of the regions earlier this year. We shall seek further opportunities to repeat these at appropriate milestones in the programme's delivery;
- written communications including the original capacity building prospectus and this publication; and
- direct engagement with ODPM regional directors for regional and pilot projects and tailored support for 'poor' and 'weak'.



The LGA is also looking to involve local authorities in shaping the programmes by establishing an 'advisory network' of local government colleagues from a diverse range of councils. Your authority would receive a small financial contribution to recognise the time commitment required. If you are interested in joining this 'advisory network' please get in touch with Lyndsey Swift.

The LGA and ODPM would welcome your comments and feedback on the overall programme and this publication. In the first instance please contact Lyndsey Swift on 020 7664 3041 or lyndsey.swift@lga.gov.uk

contacts

Yorkshire & Humber

Mike Reardon, 020 7944 3343, mike.reardon@odpm.gsi.gov.uk

North East

Julia Veall, 0191 202 2251, julia.veall@odpm.gsi.gov.uk

North West

Michael Greenwood, 0161 952 4206,
michael.greenwood@odpm.gsi.gov.uk

West Midlands

Adrienne Roberts, 0121 212 5245, adrienne.roberts@odpm.gsi.gov.uk

East Midlands

Peter Murphy, 020 7944 8112, peter.murphy@odpm.gsi.gov.uk

Eastern Region

Elizabeth Forbes, 07881 802 976, elizabeth.forbes@odpm.gsi.gov.uk

London

Guy Ware, 020 7217 3210, guy.ware@odpm.gsi.gov.uk

South West

Sohail Faruqi, 01752 635 063, sohail.faruqi@odpm.gsi.gov.uk

South East

John Haward, 020 7944 3479, john.haward@odpm.gsi.gov.uk





Local Government Association



For further information please contact
the Local Government Association at:
Local Government House
Smith Square,
London SW1P 3HZ

or telephone LGconnect, for all your LGA
queries on 020 7664 3131
Fax: 020 7664 3030
E mail: info@lga.gov.uk

June 2004
F/241 ISBN 1 84049 411 5

promoting better local government