

Current Regional Structures and Arrangements in the East Midlands

Regional Institutions, Agencies and Working Arrangements

1. The following sections summarise the key components of the current regional institutional structure and indicates Member involvement in the various regional organisations. Appendix C provides a list of both Member and officer involvement. The attached Diagram 1 sets out the relationships between the organisations in the region. There are numerous other regional initiatives and networks. Further details of involvement in these can be provided if required.

East Midlands Regional Assembly

2. The East Midlands Regional Assembly (EMRA) was established in December 1998 and was subsequently designated as a voluntary regional chamber by the Secretary of State under the Regional Development Act 1998. This recognition in law gives greater legitimacy to the Assembly and adds the Government's stamp of approval to its work.
3. The Assembly states its main purposes as:
 - being a voice for the East Midlands region, providing an opportunity for regional stakeholders to develop a clear vision for the future of the East Midlands;
 - working closely with East Midlands Development Agency and other regional partners to promote the delivery of the region's agreed vision;
 - developing an Integrated Regional Strategy to boost the social, economic and environmental quality of life for all the people of the East Midlands;
4. Full meetings of the East Midlands Assembly are held three times a year and the Annual General Meeting takes place in December. Cllr Mick Young, leader of Northamptonshire County Council, is the new chair of the East Midlands Regional Assembly.
5. Assembly sub-groups include a Steering Group made up of 14 Assembly members and chaired by the Chair of the Assembly. It meets bi-monthly to manage the business of the Assembly, and makes decisions as delegated and authorised by the Assembly.
6. The Integrated Regional Strategy Policy Forum co-ordinates the development of the region's Integrated Regional Strategy (IRS) and includes membership from local government, the voluntary sector, trade unions, health, education, the environmental and business sectors.
7. In December 2000, the Regional Assembly approved the Integrated Regional Strategy 'Our Sustainable Framework' (IRS) based on the four themes of economic, social, environmental and spatial issues. The IRS is intended to be

the guiding framework for achieving a more sustainable region and for achieving integration in policy making. For example, a high degree of compatibility has been secured between the regions' economic strategy prepared by emda and the spatial strategy -Regional Planning Guidance - prepared by EMRLGA. The social and environment themes of the IRS have been developed by the Environment and Social Inclusion Task Groups.

8. The Economic Review Group has recently been established to enable the Assembly to carry out its scrutiny role in relation to the activities of emda and provides the Assembly's primary means of examining regional economic progress in more detail.
9. The European Strategy Forum's role is to develop a clear European dimension to the region's IRS and to co-ordinate a shared East Midlands response to key European policy initiatives. It is considering a number of priorities for the region in its engagement with Europe and developing relationships with key individuals within the EU institutions and committees.
10. Various Task Groups, bringing together representatives from a range of regional partners, have been established to drive forward the various elements of the IRS including:
 - The Community Safety Task Group has recently been set up to take forward development of a regional Crime and Community Safety Strategy
 - The Energy Task Group is developing a strategy for the region in consultation with local government, business, social partners and environmental groups.
 - The Environment Task Group with the key task of overseeing the development of the Regional Environment Strategy which has been developed by a small team of advisers.
 - The Housing Task Group includes representatives from the public and private sector, including Government Office, Housing Corporation, registered social landlords, private developers and local authority representatives. A draft Regional Housing Statement, dealing with all housing issues has been prepared, supported by other regional agencies and partners.
 - The Life Long Learning Task Group is consulting with a range of organisations across the region to encourage access to learning for all citizens.
 - The Public Health Task Group is currently developing a regional strategy. Consultation events are being held across the region. Membership of the group is drawn from local government, the business and voluntary sector, health and environment sectors.
 - The Social Inclusion Task Group includes representatives from emda, the voluntary sector, and ethnic minority groups and police authorities. It was formed to carry forward the social theme of the IRS and to oversee the Social Audit of the region which is to be jointly produced by the Assembly, GOEM, emda and EMRLGA.

- The Transport Task Group was set up to develop a Regional Transport Strategy, which forms a chapter in the Regional Planning Guidance. The task group has published examples of good practice in the region.
11. There is County Council member representation on only one of the eight task groups.
 12. A staffing restructuring has recently taken place separating EMRA and EMRLGA staff functions. Central Government has made funds available to Regional Assemblies to assist them in their economic scrutiny role and associated activities. With these funds EMRA has put in place a team of regional policy advisers.

East Midlands Regional Local Government Association

13. The East Midlands Regional Local Government Association (EMRLGA) represents local authorities in the Region and acts as the secretariat to the Regional Assembly. It has overall responsibility for the development of Regional Planning Guidance (RPG). The EMRLGA committee which oversees this work is the Planning Forum, which itself has a Steering Group and an Environment Committee.
14. RPG for the East Midlands was published in January 2002. A review of RPG is now underway following a Government imposed timetable to inform the next round of Local Transport Plans in 2004/2005. To meet this timetable EMRLGA will publish a draft RPG for the East Midlands in April 2003. This will be debated at a Public Examination in Autumn 2003, with final RPG issued by the Secretary of State in mid 2004.
15. A number of officer groups service these arrangements, including an overarching Planning Forum Officer Group and sub-groups dealing with RPG Strategy, Sustainable Development, Environment, Housing, Economy, Transport, Minerals & Waste and Monitoring.

East Midlands Development Agency

16. East Midlands Development Agency (emda) is a government sponsored public body. It is one of nine English Regional Development Agencies set up by Government in April 1999 to develop the regions. Its business-led Board works as a team for the benefit of the region as a whole. Emda's main focus is to work with a range of partner organisations to agree and implement a strategy for the region. The Economic Development Strategy for the East Midlands 'Prosperity through People' is the route-map for the region's economic development to 2010. The Regional Economic Strategy will be reviewed by October 2002.
17. Emda has recently reorganised to meet the challenges set out in its new Business Plan and to strengthen its arrangements for working with the Sub-Regional Strategic Partnerships (SSPs).
18. SSPs, including the Leicester Shire Economic Partnership (LSEP) and the Welland Partnership, are being established to encourage the development of localised business-led economic partnerships to help support and deliver emda's economic agenda for the region. Emda sees the SSPs as the key

delivery agencies for economic development at the local level to support and shape the East Midlands strategy in future years and encourage partners to work for change on the ground. In particular they hold the key to translating the Region's Economic Strategy into sub-regional action that makes sense for local areas.

Government Office for the East Midlands

19. The Government Office for the East Midlands (GOEM) brings together the regional activities of Government Departments including the Department for Education and Skills (DfES), the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) and the Department for Local Government, Transport and the Regions (DTLR). In response to a Performance and Innovation Unit report 'Reaching Out: the role of central government at the regional and local level' the role of the Government Offices were strengthened to give responsibility for: the work of the former MAFF (now DEFRA), new work on local strategic partnerships and local government, the Connexions Service and advisors on school standards and adult skills, expanded support for Sure Start and the Childrens Fund, and support for the local Learning and Skills Council.

Other Regional Organisations and Forums

20. The East Midlands Observatory is a network of organisations within the East Midlands which was established in April 1999 to develop a common understanding of the regional economy and of social and environmental issues. The aim of the Observatory is to make available information and research on the East Midlands to underpin the delivery of the Integrated Regional Strategy.
21. The East Midlands Cultural Consortium (EMCC) is the voice for culture in the region. The EMCC includes representatives from local authorities, emda and the regional cultural sectors such as Sport England, BBC, Heart of England Tourist Board and English Heritage. It developed the regional cultural strategy, 'Time for Change', launched in September 2001. This strategy offers a perspective on the cultural development of the East Midlands and contributes to the IRS and Regional Economic Strategy.
22. The East Midlands Sustainable Development Round Table (EMSDOT) is an independent body providing a forum for examining and advising on key issues relating to sustainable development in the Region. The Round Table includes representatives from bodies with formal responsibilities in sustainable development as well as representatives from industry, voluntary groups and universities. 'The Potential Impacts of Climate Change in the East Midlands' study was commissioned by EMSDOT and published in July 2000. The study identified some potential opportunities for responding to climate change. EMSDOT are currently considering how best to take forward the findings of the study.
23. An East Midlands Rural Affairs Forum was established in January 2002. The Rural White Paper, published in November 2000, recommended the establishment of national and regional rural sounding boards, to "rural proof" and co-ordinate the activities of government organisations and other partners

working for the benefit of rural areas. The East Midlands Rural Affairs Forum (EMRAF) evolved from the East Midlands Rural Action Group and met for the first time in January 2002. Its membership comprises representatives of 47 organisations and will be chaired by Sir Martin Doughty for at least its first year. He will represent EMRAF on the England Rural Affairs Forum.

Resources for Regional Work

24. Many regional activities and strategies directly influence the work of the County Council. Regional Planning Guidance, for example, sets the policy framework within which the Structure Plan is prepared, and as a result has a major influence on housing provision levels within Leicestershire. Similarly the Regional Transport Strategy sets a strategic context for the Local Transport Plan. The distribution within the East Midlands of resources relating to economic development and regeneration is shaped by emda's regional economic strategy led by the strategies and activities of the Strategic Sub-regional Partnerships (including the LSEP), and over time it is likely that the Regional Assembly will have an increasing influence over the allocation of European and national resources. In this context, and in order to protect its own interests, the County Council needs to engage with those developing regional strategies, policies and action plans.
25. The County Council's contribution to work at the regional level takes a number of forms, the most significant being staff inputs to regional work. In addition the County Council puts in the annual subscription fee to the EMRLGA which in 2001/2 was £22,664 and has contributed £10,000 per year to EMRLGA to support RPG related studies (eg. Quality of Employment Land Sites study and State of Freight study).
26. In 2002/3 the Department of Transport, Local Government and the Regions has allocated £6m to upper tier local authorities in England on an unhypothecated basis for regional planning. This is for the additional costs associated with the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing regional planning.
27. The East Midlands' share of this sum is £440,000. The funding is being allocated to local authorities using the County Services Environmental, Protective and Cultural Services sub block of the standard spending assessment distribution formula. On this basis, the County Council will receive £54,688 for 2002/03. However, proposals in the White Paper indicate that in future this funding will go directly to EMRA.