

# THE LINCOLNSHIRE RESEARCH OBSERVATORY

## Steering Group

Minutes from meeting held on Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> February 2005

### Attendees

MB Director of Public Health, East Lincolnshire PCT (Chair)  
KT Principle research officer, Lincolnshire Development  
NC Information and liaison officer, Lincolnshire Research Observatory  
AS Chief executive, Lincolnshire Enterprise  
VG Senior information officer, Lincolnshire Police  
DC Research Officer, North Kesteven District Council  
RT Knowledge director, Connexions  
PQ Head of regional and research offices, University of Lincoln  
ZMB Research assistant (corporate strategy), University of Lincoln  
DU Information officer, LCC Education (IPMD)  
SS Research officer, Children's Links  
MB Childcare partnership manager, Job Centre Plus  
MC Research and project officer, Learning and Skills Council

### 1. Apologies

Apologies were received from:

SO Corporate research officer, LCC Policy and Performance  
BC Research officer, West Lindsey District Council  
RW Principle information officer, LCC Education (IPMD)  
RH Director of the community operational research unit, University of Lincoln

### 2. Minutes from the last meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> August 2004

These were accepted as a true and accurate record

### 3. Matters Arising

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*IMD Interactive Toolkit:* NC advised members that this toolkit was now scheduled for release before the end of the month but that a more basic toolkit had been available since November to support use of the 2004 IMD in the meantime.

*Potential Developments:* A number of additional toolkits including a guide to understanding geographies, and preparing a bid for funding are also now available on the LRO.

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*Research and Consultation Calendar:* NC informed group about promotional activities planned between May and June to raise awareness of the RAC calendar and to encourage population.

*BMG Toolkit:* This toolkit now titled Forecasting and Benchmarking Assistant Went live in October 2004 and currently houses headline results from the 2003 Employer survey and 2004 Skills Forecasting Model. Work is currently in progress to promote further use of this tool and to incorporate additional datasets.

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*LRO Management Information:* software has recently been purchased to enable analysis of MI such as visitors, hits, average visit length etc. This information will be monitored at regular intervals and will be used to support the evaluation of site performance and content development.

#### **4. The 2004 Annual Conference**

Around 40 organisations both local and regional were represented at this event, which provided a platform for the discussion of obstacles to creating intelligence from data and information, and also the demonstration of a number of capacity building tools already in development.

NC informed the group that a number of organisations had contacted the LRO following the conference to discuss opportunities for engaging more with the partnership, and gaining value from tools available on the website. We had since presented at a national conference for local observatories on the subject of setting up and maintaining successful sharing partnerships. Following this the Association of Regional Observatories are considering using the LRO site as a base for information on best practice in setting up local observatories.

Feedback from the event including copies of presentation slides and summaries of discussion groups are available on the LRO via a link from the homepage.

#### **5. Potential Research Projects (moved from item 6 on the agenda)**

KT outlined a number of research activities, shaped during previous consultation with the LRO steering group, being offered under Objective 3 ESF funding. An expression of interest document will be sent out next week and consultations will take place for each individual item as the project brief is prepared and the activity gets under way.

Details of each project including invitations to express interest will be on the LRO website next week and partners are encouraged to provide further suggestions of sites for the notice to be placed.

Action: Members to provide KT with details of anywhere details of these projects should be made available to raise awareness

## **6. Section 106 and Lincoln IMP Tools** (moved from item 5 on the agenda)

KT summarised the S106 and IMP tools that had been developed to lead into discussions around potential future developments.

## **7. The Future of the LRO**

### *Potential site development*

KT provided information on potential future developments around the S106 and IMP tools in terms of widening them to include further issues and to be county wide. She described how these and the further development of the database and mapping systems on the LRO site might link in with the corporate GIS developments that are currently being proposed within LCC

In response to issues raised by AS, KT informed the group that potential developments to S106 in the future might include not only development of specific models for services but ultimately consultation between service providers and district councils to agree section106 contribution formulas that incorporate a wider range of services. If this were to happen we may be involved in developing tools to run this or in incorporating such tools into the LRO.

It was agreed that to develop the LRO in this way linked to the corporate LCC GIS development would provide valuable tools for the partnership that may otherwise be inaccessible to access due to financial and resource constraints, and that links to one database system may greatly increase the amount of information made available.

In response to concerns regarding sensitivity, KT informed the group that developments to the system would internally incorporate development of transfer methods to ensure that sensitive data is never shared where inappropriate and that it could be possible to use similar methods in other organisation's systems to reorganise their own data into a format which is capable of being shared and easily added to the system.

MB emphasised the importance of driving forward intelligence and capacity building activities alongside technical advances in data storage and retrieval.

PQ suggested that advances in technology can often engage audiences and be used to encourage further commitment to research and data sharing activities.

It was agreed that should the LCC GIS developments continue in the described manner, that the LRO should develop along side them wherever possible.

### *Management Structure of LRO partnership*

MB proposed that the most effective way to manage proposed developments would be to re-structure the current steering group (please see appendix 1.) to provide maximum support to management of both strategy and activities.

It is hoped that the current steering group will identify a level of the management structure to which they would be able to provide most support.

AS highlighted the importance of looking to Emda's regional strategy for steering on future priorities and activities, although this is still in the process of being finalised. It was suggested that EMDA are invited to a future meeting to inform the partnership about the strategy.

It was also suggested that the LRO remain informed about additional regional activities and that an event is organised to bring a wider audience together to engage in this.

**Action:** NC/KT to liaise with MB regarding possible event

It was agreed that restructuring of the group in the proposed manner would be beneficial to the operation of the LRO partnership and so details of the proposed structure and the process in which it would operate are attached as Appendix 1.

**Action:** Members to look at proposed structure (Appendix 1) and contact NC with suggestions on membership for the LRO network and the Executive Steering Group.

*Nb. Members who were not present at this meeting or who require further advice on the structure outlined in appendix 1. can contact NC for further info.*

## **8. Any Other Business**

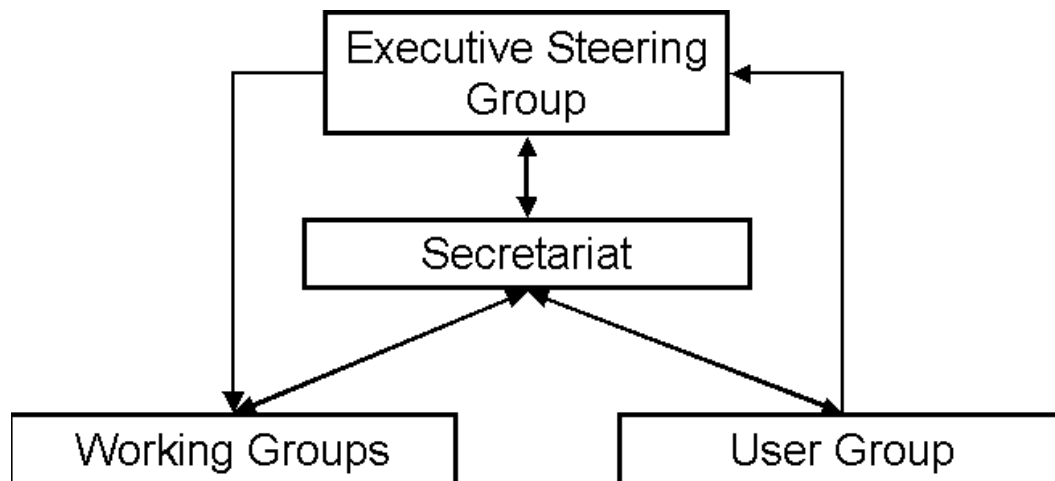
NC – LRO user survey will be circulated to site users within the next fortnight, which will provide information on users and usage to support further development as well as some information on the importance of the LRO website in supporting activities and the impact that it has had in securing funding for the county.

KT – JC (LCC Policy and Performance) has expressed an interest in contacting partner organisations to learn more about consultation methods and activities. It was suggested that JC includes LRO partners via steering group members who would pass details onto to the most appropriate person and that NC attends any meeting to demonstrate the RAC calendar on the site as a tool for sharing and coordinating research activities in the county.

MB – Discussions are currently taking place between the Public Health network and University of Lincoln regarding a resource hub to support local research activities

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## Appendix 1 - Proposed Management Structure Presented to Steering Group



### **Executive Steering Group**

**Role** - To identify priorities of partnership and steer major decisions on activities, developments and required outputs.

**Membership** - Senior representatives of partner organisations

**Frequency** – Bi-annually

**Process** - Meetings scheduled in advance and agenda circulated a short while before each meeting. In very occasional circumstances an extraordinary meeting could be called if strategy decisions were absolutely necessary before the next scheduled meeting and discussion/agreement would not be possible via other methods (eg e-mail).

### **Secretariat**

#### **Role**

To coordinate and support the running of the LRO partnership and website.

#### **Membership**

Lincolnshire Development and the Lincolnshire Public Health Network will continue to provide resources to undertake this role.

#### **Responsibilities**

Day to day administration of the LRO website;

Liaison with agencies across Lincolnshire to promote the value of the LRO and to engage partners;

Provision of user and input training to partner organisations;

Coordination of consultation activities to inform future developments;

The secretariat will also coordinate the administration of meetings at every level from executive steering group to individual working groups, including the production and circulation of agendas minutes and terms of reference where appropriate.

## **Working Groups**

### ***Role***

To undertake those activities identified by the executive, including specific research, consultation and development activities.

### ***Membership***

Membership of these groups will change according to the intended focus of the working group but will include individuals suggested by both the executive and user groups.

### ***Frequency***

To be set according to requirements of individual activities, but with a specific start and end date

### ***Process***

Working groups will define their terms of reference and agree, under guidance from the executive group, any timescales and outputs required to complete individual activities. Groups will meet at appropriate intervals throughout the life of the activity including presentation/evaluation sessions following completion.

## **User Group**

### ***Role***

To provide regular feedback to LRO partnership on content, presentation and benefits of the LRO website, which will be fed back to the executive steering group to inform future priorities and activities.

### ***Membership***

Representatives from partner organisations who are regular users of the LRO website.

### ***Frequency***

Bi-annually (where appropriate this group may be requested to provide feedback at more regular intervals or prior to/following major projects)

### ***Process***

This group will run in addition to any individual working group set up for specific activities and projects. In some cases members of the user group may also choose to sit on a working group to support an individual project or activity.