

# **Executive Summary of GO-East Peer Review Report**

## **1. Opportunities**

Partners want GO-East to play a stronger role in the region by assuming leadership on vital issues and being more pro-active in setting regional policies in a national context. Whitehall Departments want to see the GO integrating Departmental policies, implementing national policies effectively in a regional context rather than presenting the difficulties and barriers.

## **2. Leadership**

There are specific areas where the GO *has* been able to take an effective lead, e.g. on Planning and Transport issues. Its ability to build consensus between partners/authorities is seen as valuable. Its operational staff are widely praised but there remains greater scope for taking the lead in setting regional/sub-regional agendas.

## **3. Planning and Performance**

As GO-East's profile has risen, so awareness of its performance in the region has risen also. However as the GO agenda expands to include Local Area Agreements (LAAs) and more devolved decision making, the GO needs to keep engaging ever more closely with key regional stakeholders.

## **4. People**

Internally GO-East is well thought-of in its work towards continuous improvement. Externally the GO's professional skills are considered particularly valuable, as is the contribution of junior staff. Conversely, there remains a perception that the GO needs a greater knowledge of issues right across the range of Departments and that in some areas there is a lack of sufficient experience, knowledge and expertise to engage in an influential way.

## **5. Communication and Reputation**

Good on softer skills i.e. approachable, helpful, accessible, but knowledge and experience of the region not always recognised and used to best effect. Rather than adding to complexity, needs to be offering solutions. Reputation lies very much in the hands of senior staff who are most often seen by regional partners. Improved Senior Management structure and structured Leadership development programme needed for this to improve.

## **6. Partnership**

Comfortable relationships built and maintained with partners; concerns remain that there is a need to be more challenging and less 'passive' in order for the GO and partners to move the agenda forward more quickly and effectively. Also, continuing worries over our relationships with EEDA and EERA – these must be closer (especially at senior level) and more productive in order for the regional picture to become clearer, though the GO-East input to regional strategies was recognised.

## **7. Growth and Regeneration**

Despite our good work on Growth Areas, it was felt that the priority of linking growth and regeneration was not widely understood either in the office *or* in the region. Little understanding amongst regional partners of how the “priority places” have been identified or how they will be taken forward.

## **8. Conclusion**

An acknowledgement that there are conflicting drivers for the GO, especially between the region and Whitehall. Also, conflicting and varied feedback from regional partners, partly dependent on the different amount and nature of engagement that the GO has. GO-East's inability (resource driven) to cover the whole region with the same degree of priority means that some places receive regular interaction and others much less. The GO's approach to this remains the subject of some misunderstanding. Though the GO's approach to tackling change is praised, the speed with which the work translates into action is less clear.