

SUPPORT FOR PLACES

PRESS RELEASE

New support service for Local Economic Assessments

21st September 2009

Support for Places is a new service established by the consultancy teams that developed the sector-led guidance for the Local Economic Assessment (LEA) on behalf of the Improvement and Development Agency.

Rocket Science UK Ltd and Globe Regeneration Ltd have formalised their working relationship through **Support for Places**, bringing together their collective skills and experience across urban and rural local economic development. The organisations have worked together closely over the past twelve months working on the IDeA project, as well as for Government offices, regional agencies and local authorities in evaluating and providing capacity building and support around economies.

Commenting on the partnership, Caroline Masundire Associate Director of Rocket Science who has led development said "Our founding principle around **Support for Places** is to help authorities and their partners build their **internal** capacity to deliver LEAs. Working so closely on the guidance has really highlighted that the LEA must not be seen as a traditional data and analysis exercise. The importance of the LEA in informing the Sustainable Community Strategy and the Local Area Agreement and being the conduit between Local Development Frameworks, requires a high degree of cross departmental and authority

working. We see the LEA as an enabling tool to support the improvement and efficiency agenda internally as well as help bring coherence to strategy and targeted services as part of a single evidence base.”

Both the sector-led guidance and pre-consultation draft statutory guidance published by Communities and Local Government are currently out for consultation with the duty to produce the LEA falling to top-tier authorities from April 2010.

Ivan Annibal Managing Director of Globe and Chair of the IED Educational Trust said “This is the first time that economic development has been given a statutory footing - And a great opportunity to cement councils’ roles in Place Making, more importantly to bring strategy and services together to improve the economic wellbeing of our communities.”

“**Support for Places** offers traditional consultancy services as well as interim management, capacity building and training activity to help authorities respond and develop their capability and skills. With requirements for an annual refresh and full update every three years, it is in authorities’ interests to invest in their people, systems and structures now to integrate new ways of working, it offers far better value for money longer term. In an increasingly tight fiscal environment councils need to drive efficiency and value for money.”

Of particular interest to authorities that have limited capacity at present, **Support for Places** offers specialists to be housed within the authority on an interim basis to help build their internal capacity and expertise. This is backed up by a larger consultancy team if required and uniquely different than traditional research and consultancy offers.

Masundire explains, “The danger with the LEA is that the focus will be purely about data collection and analysis and production of a report. The assessment is an iterative process, requiring high level support and engagement backed up with ‘real’ evidence and practical application.

Support for Places brings together both practitioner and consultancy expertise to help authorities use this as part of broader transformational

change to articulate needs and join up services that result in real economic benefits to business, individuals and communities.”

Ends

Contact

Caroline Masundire
Rocket Science UK Ltd
70 Cowcross Street
London
EC1M 6EJ

Tel: 020 7253 6289

Email: caroline.masundire@rocketsciencelab.co.uk

www.rocketsciencelab.co.uk

www.supportforplaces.com

Further information

Rocket Science UK Ltd is a public policy consultancy based in London, Newcastle and Edinburgh. www.rocketsciencelab.co.uk

Globe Regeneration Ltd is an economic regeneration consultancy based in Lincoln. www.globelimited.co.uk

Support for Places has a website at www.supportforplaces.com where more information on the team and expertise can be found.

The Local Economic Guidance, toolkits and resources can be found at www.communities.idea.gov.uk within Local Economic Assessment community.