

Agenda Item No. 20

WEST MIDLANDS REGIONAL ASSEMBLY

Board of Directors - Friday 16th September 2005

Company Secretary's Report

1. Purpose of the Report

1.1 To consider:

- Regional Assembly Membership – update
- Appointments to Outside Bodies
- Composition of Audit Committee
- Feedback from Annual General Meeting and Partnership Event

2. Regional Assembly Membership – update

Background

2.1 Following the Annual General Meeting, all members have been sent a series of documents for completion and return. These included an Assembly membership form (for full members only), a 'Declarations of interests' entry and a preferred contact details pro-forma. Members will be advised of the latest position at the meeting.

Recommendation

2.2 The Board is asked to approve the Assembly membership as set out at the meeting.

3. Appointments to Outside Bodies

Purpose

3.1 The Board is asked to consider various appointments to outside bodies.

3.2 Recommendations

- (i) The Board is asked to determine the appointments to the West Midlands Regional Observatory and MLA – West Midlands: The Regional Council for Museums Libraries and Archives based on the expressions of interests received.
- (ii) That the position regarding the Sustainability West Midlands appointment be noted.
- (iii) The Board is asked to consider the appointments of an Alternate Member for the West Midlands Rural Affairs Forum and a Full Member to the Shropshire Partnership - Sustainable Communities Steering Group
- (iv) To receive an update on the Committee of the Regions Nominations process for 2006 – 2010

Background

3.3 Nominations had been sought for the following two appointments to external bodies. The closing date for expressions of interest was Wednesday 14 September 2005:

(a) **West Midlands Regional Observatory (WMRO) Board position**

It had been previously agreed that the Assembly should be represented by a Director or an Assembly member. To date, an expression of interest had been received from Roger MacKenzie (Other Stakeholders Group).

(b) **MLA – West Midlands: The Regional Council for Museums Libraries and Archives**

The Assembly had previously been invited to take a seat on the board previously held by Advantage West Midlands. An elected member or senior strategic officer who welcomes and understands the contribution that museums, libraries and archives can make to the regional economy was sought. To date, an expression of interest had been received from Elizabeth Newman (Other Stakeholders Group).

Sustainability West Midlands

3.4 It had been previously agreed that the Assembly should be represented on the SWM Board by a full member of the Regional Planning Partnership. Nominations had been sought and the matter would be formally determined by the Partnership at their meeting on 23 September 2005.

Alternate Member of the West Midlands Rural Affairs Forum

3.5 The Rural Affairs Forum acts as a sounding board for rural practitioners and delivery agencies; reflects the needs and aspirations of rural people; provides direction, leadership and co-ordination in respect of the rural agenda; is a conduit for rural views and presents the West Midlands perspective on the national, regional and sub-regional rural agenda.

The Assembly is currently represented by David Littlemore and the Assembly has been asked to secure an alternate member.

Shropshire Partnership - Sustainable Communities Steering Group

Correspondence has been received seeking Assembly representation on the above group. A copy of the terms of reference is appended to the report.

Committee of the Regions Nominations for 2006 – 2010

- 3.6 The ODPM has responsibility for the process of nominating UK delegates to the Committee of the Regions, with the National LGA acting in an agency role. Regional Assemblies are identified as the regional nominating bodies. WMRA has been asked to nominate one Full CoR Member and one Alternate, and candidates for the national 'top up' pool. CoR Members must be elected members. The Chairman and Vice-Chairs' of the Assembly approved the following nominees, after consultation with the regional political groups:

Full Member

Cllr Martin Heatley, Conservative, Warwickshire

Alternate Member

Cllr Syeda Khatun, Labour, Sandwell

National Pool for Balancing Places (in Alphabetic Order - Not Ranked)

Cllr Sir Albert Bore, Labour, Birmingham
Cllr Pauline Dee, Independent, North Shropshire
Cllr Christina Jebb, Liberal Democrat, Staffordshire
Cllr Tony O'Neill, Conservative, Coventry (completed form awaited)
Cllr Judith Pearce, Conservative, Wychavon
Cllr David S Smith, Conservative, Lichfield
Cllr Sadie Smith, Liberal Democrat, Sandwell
Cllr Milner Whiteman, Independent, Bridgnorth

A update on this process will be provided at the meeting.

4. Composition of Audit Committee

Purpose

- 4.1 To set out a proposed amendment to the composition of the Audit Committee following the increase in board size agreed at the Annual General Meeting.

Recommendation

- 4.2 That the existing terms of reference be amended to increase the composition of the Audit Committee from four to eight members, to comprise two members from each sector of Assembly membership, all drawn from the Board of Directors.
- 4.3 That the remaining terms of reference be unchanged.

Background

- 4.4 On 23 January 2004, the Board agreed to establish an Audit Committee. The first meeting was held on 2 July 2004 where the terms of reference were agreed (Appendix 2).

4.5 Following the increase in the number of Directors, as agreed at the Annual General Meeting, it was considered appropriate to increase the size of the Audit Committee.

5. **Feedback from Annual General Meeting and Partnership Event – July 2005**

Purpose

5.1 To provide the Board with feedback from the Annual General Meeting and Partnership event.

Recommendations

5.2 That the Board consider the proposal for the 2006 event.

Background

5.3 **Event Costs:**

For comparison, the cost of the 2004 and 2005 event are set out below:

2004 AGM and Annual Conference:	£17.5k
2005 AGM and Partnership Event:	£5.8K (including banners)

5.4 **2005 Event:**

Observations from the 2005 Event are set out below:

Venue: Very positive comments about the venue, location, signage, catering and helpfulness of staff (also very cost effective).

Timing: The marketplace and workshops were affected by the AGM overrunning, which resulted in cancelled workshops and fewer people visiting the different partnership stands.

Marketplace: Positive feedback from participants regarding opportunities to meet and talk to other organisations/groups. Also requests from several organisations who didn't have stalls to be included in any future events of this type

Workshop sessions: Despite low numbers and cancelled sessions the quality of debate during the sessions was excellent and very insightful.

5.5 **Proposals for 2006 event:**

Both the 2004 and 2005 events were affected by the AGM over running.

Whilst holding the two events on one day does bring cost savings, this is outweighed by the negative impact on the events which followed the AGM. Therefore we would not

recommend combining the AGM with any other event in the future.

However we would recommend holding a Partnership Event again as the feedback has been positive. Given the levels of interest from partner organisations it would also be worth considering extending the invitation to participate and attend to a much larger group and increasing the number of workshop sessions.

Trudi Elliott
Chief Executive
Tel: 0121 678 1031
Email: t.elliott@wmra.gov.uk

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Appendix 1

Sustainable Communities Steering Group - Terms of Reference

1. The Steering Group will comprise representatives of supporting delivery groups such as the Economic Development Forum (Shropshire Futures), the Housing Advisory Group, the Shropshire Transport Forum and the Environment Forum, as well as representatives of key partner organisations such as Shropshire County Council, AWM, and the West Midlands Regional Assembly.
2. The Steering Group will be chaired by Penny Spencer, Corporate Director Economy and Environment, Shropshire County Council.
3. The Steering Group will focus on the shared priority between central and local government in relation to the Environment, Economy, Transport and Housing. The shared priority aims to create prosperous, inclusive and sustainable communities for the 21st century, places where people want to live, that promote opportunity and a better quality of life for all.
4. The Steering Group will focus on the development and delivery of the Sustainable Communities block of the Local Area Agreement (LAA).
5. The Steering Group will focus on a range of performance indicators that are agreed and developed in line with the LAA.
6. The Steering Group will be responsible for the monitoring and delivery of LAA reward grants.
7. The Steering Group will work to ensure the Sustainable Communities sections of the Shropshire Partnership Community Strategy are appropriately driven forward and delivered. The Group will drive the performance and monitor progress (through 'traffic light' systems).
8. The Steering Group will co-ordinate activity undertaken by a range of working groups and initiatives, to ensure that this delivery mechanism is co-ordinated and reports into the Public Service Board and Management Group of the Shropshire Partnership, as appropriate. Additionally, the Group will have work to undertake that has been sponsored by the Partnership.
9. The Steering Group will ensure appropriate linkages are established and maintained with the three other shared priority groups – Children's Trust, Older People and Healthier Communities Board, and the Safer Shropshire Group.
10. The Steering Group will ensure that national policy initiatives, for example improving rural service delivery through the Defra Rural

Pathfinder are integrated into the work of the Public Service Board and the Shropshire Partnership.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

West Midlands Regional Assembly Audit Committee

Purpose and Remit

- To consider and recommend the Annual Report and Accounts to the Board of Directors.
- To consider and make recommendations to the Board of Directors on any issues emerging from the annual audit
- To initiate reviews of effectiveness, efficiency, risk or propriety on any area of financial, governance or operational concern.
- To consider and make recommendations on any reports from external government auditors.
- To recommend the appointment of auditors
- To serve as Remuneration Panel if required by the Board of Directors.

Membership

- There are to be four members of the Audit Committee with at least one from each sector of the Assembly membership, all drawn from the Board of Directors.
- One member of the Audit Committee to be appointed Chair.
- The Chair of the Assembly and the Vice Chair of the Assembly from the Local Government Sector are not eligible for appointment to the Audit Committee.
- The Committee may recommend to the Board the appointment of an external non-voting member(s) if additional expertise is required.
- All appointments including the appointment of Chair are to be made annually.
- Subject to annual re-appointment, all members may serve for an indefinite number of years.
- Secretary to the Assembly and the Chief Executive or their nominee to attend in ex officio capacity.

Meetings

- There to be at least three formal meetings of the Audit Committee each year.
- Normally these meetings would run on the same day as the Board of Directors meetings.

Resources

- Resources for any exceptional work to be commissioned will be agreed with the Chief Executive or the Board if above agreed delegations.