

Agenda Item No. 10

WEST MIDLANDS REGIONAL ASSEMBLY Board of Directors - Friday 2nd June 2006

Scrutiny Review – Regeneration Zones Revisited: Key Issues

Report of the Review Panel

1. **Purpose**

To provide Board Members with an outline of the key issues identified by the assessment of the implementation of the recommendations made in the Regeneration Zones Review that took place during 2004 and possible areas for further action.

2. **Recommendation**

That Board Members note the issues and possible recommendations.

3. **Background**

3.1 In 2004, the Regional Assembly carried out a scrutiny review of Regeneration Zones which explored the progress made by Advantage West Midlands (AWM) in developing the regeneration zone concept and the issues faced by those involved in them. The review panel made 17 recommendations around vision, communications, structural issues, integration with other initiatives, partnership working and process issues. The full report and AWM's response can be accessed on www.wmra.gov.uk/page.asp?id=87.

3.2 The Assembly endorsed the report in October 2004 and in addition requested that a further review take place to identify the progress made in implementing the Panel's recommendations, taking account of completed and planned activities and any external influencing factors. The key issues addressed by these recommendations are:

- The breadth of the Regeneration Zone approach to regeneration
- Partnership Working
- Communication
- Future development of Regeneration Zones
- Evaluation of impact
- Scrutiny process

3.3 The current revision of the Regional Economic Strategy includes detailed assessments of all delivery mechanisms, including Regeneration Zones and it is expected that the Panel's report will inform the development of the evidence base.

3.4 The current Review Panel consists of:
Sarinder Singh Sahota Assembly Vice-Chair - Business Sector

Yann Lovelock
Richard Bubb

Cllr Mrs Jo Jones
Kevin Farrell

Other Stakeholders Group – Faith
Other Stakeholders Group – Voluntary and
Community Sector (Urban)
Shrewsbury and Atcham Borough Council
British Ceramic Confederation (co-opted
member)

- 3.3 Two of the Panel Members, Sarinder Singh Sahota and Cllr Mrs Jo Jones also served on the original scrutiny review panel. This has allowed continuity between the two reviews.
- 3.4 Evidence has been submitted to the review from each of the Regeneration Zones either in writing or at discussion sessions. In addition, a joint meeting of the Regional Economic Development Officers Group and the Rural Renaissance Working Group took place that informed the review.
- 3.5 The Panel hearings have now concluded and the consultation draft report will be available during week commencing 31 May 2006. The period of consultation will conclude on 16 June. The final report is made on behalf of the Assembly and will not require further approval but will be reported to the full Assembly at their Annual General Meeting on 12 July 2006.

4. **Progress on Recommendations**

- 4.1 The original review was challenging for the Panel, partners and Advantage West Midlands both in terms of the outcomes and the process itself. It appears that Advantage West Midlands has made significant progress in implementing the recommendations from the original report although there is a need for further activity in some areas.
- 4.2 Advantage West Midlands have shown an open and helpful attitude throughout the assessment. This is in contrast to the experiences of the original review Panel and clearly demonstrates the maturing scrutiny relationship between Advantage West Midlands and the Assembly.
- 4.3 Demonstrable progress has been made in respect of communications, partnership working, implementation issues and delegation. The recommendations in respect of the breadth of the Regeneration Zone approach and principals behind them are being explored by the revision of the Regional Economic Strategy.

5. **Possible Areas for Further Action**

- 5.1 It is not intended that the final report will make recommendations but identify areas for future activity within the context of the current regional Economic Strategy. It is anticipated that these areas will include the following

- 5.2 Clarity of Advantage West Midlands' role and how this contributes to holistic regeneration.
- 5.3 Ensuring Advantage West Midlands staff have an understanding of the differing strategies and priorities of the Zones and the implication of these for their activities.
- 5.4 Need to re-examine current delegation levels in light of changing project sizes
- 5.5 Need to share real time spend and output data with Regeneration Zones
- 5.6 The Review Panel meet to consider a draft report on 25 May at which these issues and others will be discussed. Board Members should be aware that further areas for future activity may be identified at this meeting.

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