

Agenda Item No. 7

West Midlands Local Government Association – 18 January 2006

West Midlands Regional Assembly – 18 January 2006

Draft Statement – West Midlands Region – Incorporating A City Region and Sub-Regional Approach

Report of the Director of Policy

1. Purpose of the report

The Assembly is asked to consider the attached draft statement.

2. Recommendation

That the Assembly offer views on the attached statement and request the Chairman and Vice-Chair's of the Assembly to sign-off the final version of the statement.

3. Background

- 3.1 Recently we have seen an intensification of the debate about the nature and role of City Regions. This paper is intended to set that debate in the context of the Assembly's core activities namely its roles as Regional Planning Body, scrutineer of the Regional Development Agency and as facilitator of regional strategic partnership work.
- 3.2 In the West Midlands the seven Metropolitan Authorities with encouragement from ODPM, are actively pursuing a City Region approach. Stoke-on-Trent is also exploring a case for a City Region with support from ODPM.
- 3.3 There has been much conjecture about how the City Region approach will play into and support existing regional and sub-regional arrangements. Recent meetings of the Planning Partnership and Assembly Board have discussed the City Region approach. West Midlands Local Government Association also hosted an event for Leaders and Chief Executives from all 38 local authorities to discuss and understand the relationship between the West Midlands Region and the City Region approach.
- 3.4 An outcome of those discussions is the attached draft statement for consideration by the Assembly on 'West Midlands Region – Incorporating A City Region and Sub-Regional Approach'; the purpose of which is to:-
 - Clarify the expectations that the Assembly has of the City Region approach.
 - Agree in outline the nature of the relationship between the Assembly and the City Region approach.
 - Confirm to ODPM that the Assembly is supportive of the City Region approach as set out in the statement overleaf.
 - Set the above in the context of the Region as a whole with all its sub-regions.

3.5 This is a statement made in January 2006. The regional and City Region agenda is an evolving one both regionally and nationally, therefore the Assembly may wish to review this position at appropriate points in time.

Rose Poulter

Director of Policy

MISSION STATEMENT

West Midlands Region – Incorporating A City Region and Sub-Regional Approach

The overriding objective of West Midlands Regional Assembly is to achieve the long term sustainable regeneration of the region. We are committed to working together and in partnership with national Government and other partners to achieve our purpose. Our response to the Government's challenge to consider the City Region approach is positive and proactive.

One

A key role of the Assembly is to facilitate regional strategic partnership work. This Mission Statement - "West Midlands Region – Incorporating A City Region and Sub-Regional Approach" has been developed in that spirit of partnership.

The West Midlands Regional Assembly supports sub-regional partnership working and the move taken by the seven metropolitan authorities to develop a City Region approach at the heart of the West Midlands Region. The West Midlands Regional Assembly welcomes the steps taken by Stoke-on-Trent to explore such an approach.

Two

The Assembly recognises that the City Region approach is:-

- A challenge from ODPM to which the Region, its sub-regions and partners is responding positively.
- A key delivery vehicle for the Regional Spatial Strategy, Regional Housing Strategy especially the Urban Renaissance element and Regional Economic Strategy.
- Capable of balancing demands and needs of other settlements and centres as part of a polycentric West Midlands Region.

Three

The Assembly will work with City Region to ensure it:-

- Develops within the framework set by the Regional Spatial Strategy.
- Recognises the realities of economic, travel and housing patterns but acknowledge administrative boundaries.
- Strengthens the Region's profile in the UK, Europe and globally.
- Recognises and support the role of and linkages to other cities, towns and settlements in the West Midlands Region.

- Recognises and enhance the interdependence between urban and rural areas and economies to ensure a successful City Region approach.
- Is able to demonstrate/evidence how the City Region approach will contribute to the Region's competitiveness.
- Is able to add value to the social, economic and environmental well-being of the West Midlands Region.
- Help to achieve sustainable communities.
- Integral to and accountable to the whole West Midlands Region through appropriate governance arrangements.

Four

The Assembly makes the following commitments:-

The Assembly is committed to working with the seven Metropolitan authorities, Stoke-on-Trent and all other local authorities to secure robust and transparent governance arrangements and working links with partners from national Government, local government, the private, public and voluntary sectors. Our objective is to ensure that the City Region approach is compatible and accountable to the region in which it is based and to West Midlands Regional Assembly.

Our commitment to regional working and the City Region approach is to continue to facilitate discussion leading to coherent and integrated regional policy which is deliverable and developed with, and owned by sub-regional partnerships and local authorities and agencies.