

Agenda Item 10

WEST MIDLANDS REGIONAL ASSEMBLY Board of Directors - 9 March 1007

Climate Change – Next Steps

Report of the Chief Executive and Director of Policy

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To inform the Board of Directors of steps being taken by the Regional Assembly in response to the climate change challenge following its Annual Conference and the last Assembly meeting in October 2006.
- 1.2 To advise Members of the Supplement to Planning Policy Statement 1 (PPS1): Planning and Climate Change for the Regional Spatial Strategy which was issued for consultation in December 2006.

2. Recommendations

2.1 That the Board:

- (a) Note the steps being taken by the Regional Assembly following the Annual Conference on Climate Change, and
- (b) Note the contents and issues raised in the Draft PPS1 for the revision of the Regional Spatial Strategy.

3. Regional Assembly Response To The Climate Change Challenge

- 3.1 The Regional Assembly in October received a report on the outcomes of the Annual Conference. This paper aims to provide an update on the next steps following the Assembly's commitment to address climate change and the establishment of the Regional Climate Change Task Group
- 3.2 Following approval by the Regional Assembly on 25th October, the Regional Assembly formally signed the **West Midlands Declaration on Climate Change** ("Nottingham Declaration") at the Sustainable Development Business Summit held at the NEC on 30th November. By signing the Declaration the Regional Assembly has committed to:
 - Working to deliver the UK Climate Change programme and the Kyoto Protocol;
 - Reducing Co2 emissions from within its own operations, including a internal audit of energy use and promoting energy reduction;
 - Developing an Climate Change Action Plan to progressively address the causes and the impacts of climate change within the West Midlands, and

- Encouraging all regional Concordat partners to take the opportunity to adapt to the impacts of climate change, to reduce their own greenhouse gas emissions and to make public their commitment to action.

3.3 A **Regional Climate Change Task Group** has been established to develop the Regional Climate Change Action Plan. The Task Group has met three times and work is in progress to produce a draft Action Plan for consideration at the meeting of the full Regional Assembly on 25th April. The Task Group is led by a high level Chief Executive grouping involving the Assembly, AWM and GOWM. This provides the necessary level of leadership, and accountability ensuring that climate change acts as a fundamental driver in all regional decision making .

3.4 Since the Conference the Regional Assembly has also begun the process of:

- Integrating climate change policy development into the Assembly Business Plan for 2007/08 ,
- Encouraging all local authorities in the region to sign up to the Nottingham Declaration through support for “Adapting to Climate Change Workshops”, and is
- Working with AWM to publish a regional Sustainability Checklist to inform planners and assist developers in drawing up planning applications .

3.5 The Regional Rural Affairs Forum also convened a ‘Rural Response to Climate Change’ Conference in Telford on the 17th November. The Conference was attended by 140 people, positioned to follow on from the Assembly’s conference and identified the key issues and opportunities for rural areas of the region arising from the climate change challenge.

3.6 Work is also underway on evaluating the contribution that all Assembly-led Partnerships either are, or could be, making to addressing the climate change challenge .

4. **Draft Supplement to PPS1: Planning and Climate Change**

4.1 Planning Policy Statement 1 (PPS1): Delivering Sustainable Development sets out the Government’s overarching planning policies on the delivery of sustainable development through the planning system.

4.2 In December 2006, the Government issued for consultation, a draft Supplement to PPS1 specifically relating to *Planning and Climate Change*. This sets out how spatial planning should contribute to reducing emissions and stabilising climate change (mitigation) and take into account the unavoidable consequences (adaptation).

4.3 *Planning and Climate Change* recognises that regional spatial planning has a major and positive contribution to make in meeting the climate change challenge by promoting policies which reduce the threat of climate change by:

- Helping to secure enduring progress against the UK's emissions targets, by direct influence on energy use and emissions, and in bringing together and encouraging action by others;
- Requiring land-use patterns that reduce the need and the propensity to travel by car;
- Restricting development which has a major negative impact on CO2 emissions;
- Promoting the highest standards of resource and energy efficiency in new development so as to reduce carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions arising from construction and use; and
- Promoting small and large scale renewable energy projects.
- Adapting to the harmful impacts of climate change.
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- Promoting small and large scale renewable energy projects.
- Adapting to the harmful impacts of climate change.

4.4 The Draft PPS1 states that Regional Planning Bodies should not bring forward policy on climate change in isolation from other regional considerations. It does, however, clearly outline key issues and components that Regional Planning Bodies do need to integrate into their Regional Spatial Strategies and these are summarised below:

- (i) Pay particular attention to the location of major generators of travel and the potential to build into new and existing development more efficient means of energy supply and increasing contributions from renewable and low-carbon energy sources.
- (ii) Substantial new development should be focused on locations with good accessibility by means other than the private car.
- (iii) Ensure opportunities for renewable and low-carbon sources of energy supply and supporting infrastructure are maximised.
- (iv) Set regional targets for renewable energy in line with PPS22.
- (v) Recognise the potential of, and encourage, those land uses and land management practices that help secure carbon sinks.

- (vi) Consider the potential for carbon capture and storage, and the need for supporting infrastructure, and help realise this potential.
- (vii) Consider the desirability of avoiding new development in those areas with likely increased vulnerability to climate change.
- (viii) Bring forward adaptation options for existing development in likely vulnerable areas.
- (ix) The likely performance of the RSS on mitigating climate change should be part of the Sustainability Appraisal (SA). The SA should also be used to identify and evaluate possible tensions or inconsistencies between current or likely future, baseline conditions.
- (x) Provision of clear yardsticks for identifying trends in carbon emissions should be considered. Trajectories for the expected carbon performance of new residential and commercial development are therefore encouraged.
- (xi) Convening of a broadly-based advisory body on climate change should be considered.
- (xii) Adequate mechanisms to assemble data and information on climate change within the region to inform the preparation of the spatial strategy and, co-ordinate a programme of data collection and monitoring required to keep the spatial strategy under review.

4.5 Following the RSS Phase1 Black Country Examination in Public it is now the intention to integrate climate change as part of the development of the Phase 2 Preferred Option.

4.6 The RSS Task Group are looking to integrate climate change considerations in to Phases 2 and 3 of the RSS Review through the Sustainability Appraisal process

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