

WEST MIDLANDS REGIONAL ASSEMBLY

Wednesday, 18 July 2007

Climate Change Action: Proposals

Report of the Chief Executive

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek the endorsement of the Regional Assembly to the consultation draft Climate Change Action Plan for the Region, and the arrangements for the consultation and finalisation of the Climate Change Action Plan.

2. Recommendations

That the Regional Assembly:

2.1 Endorses the consultation draft of the Climate Change Action Plan;

2.2 Notes and endorses further development regarding proposed arrangements for governance and accountability for Regional Climate Change working;

2.3 Supports the proposed arrangements for consultation and finalisation of the plan

2.4 Requests its own member organisations to contribute to the development and delivery of the action plan.

3. Background

3.1 At the Regional Assembly meeting in April 2007, the Assembly endorsed a Climate Change Vision for the Region; supported a proposal for governance and accountability arrangements for Regional Climate Change working; and endorsed a process for preparation and consultation on a draft Regional Climate Change Action Plan.

3.2 Progress on developing the Action Plan is reported below.

4. Leadership and Accountability

4.1 At the April meeting of the Regional Assembly, members supported a proposal for arrangements for governance and accountability for regional climate change working. This proposed the establishment of an Executive Group and that the group's role should be overseen on

behalf of the Assembly by the Regional Environment Partnership, with the portfolio holder for the Environment assisted by the Chief Executive and other officers in taking responsibility for climate change and related actions within the Assembly.

- 4.2 The Climate Change Executive Group, consisting of the Chief Executives of the Assembly, Advantage West Midlands, and Government Office for the West Midlands, and also including representatives of the Local Government sector, the Environment Agency and Natural England, met in June to consider proposed actions for inclusion in the Action Plan.
- 4.3 At their meeting in June, the Executive Group discussed arrangements for accountability for the delivery and monitoring of the Climate Change Action Plan. The Executive Group agreed that it would be appropriate for the consultation on the draft Climate Change Action Plan to seek views on the most appropriate support, monitoring and accountability arrangements for regional climate change working, in order to ensure regional buy-in, rather than defining an outcome prior to consultation.

5. Action Plan Proposals

- 5.1 Subsequent to that meeting, a Climate Change working group consisting of representatives of the above organisations has met to further develop the Action Plan and has produced the attached draft Climate Change Action Plan for wider consultation.
- 5.2 The consultation on the draft Action Plan therefore poses an open question regarding the most appropriate regional arrangements to support and monitor delivery of the Action Plan. The consultation presents the establishment of a Climate Change partnership as one possible outcome but does not present a preferred position. This is in line with partners thinking as expressed at the Climate Change Executive Group and has been presented to and supported by the Regional Environment Partnership. Members are asked to note and endorse this approach.
- 5.3 The draft Action Plan identifies the Assembly as the lead organisation for regional climate change working, with responsibility and accountability for tackling the challenge of climate change at regional level on behalf of the West Midlands. The political lead on regional climate change working will continue to be provided by Cllr Keith Austin. This will be in his capacity as Environment portfolio holder pending the establishment of arrangements for regional climate change working following consultation on the draft Climate Change Action Plan.

- 5.4 The draft Climate Change Action Plan circulated with this report is intended to be broadly based and achievable within the sphere of influence of regional partners. The purpose of the Action Plan is to focus regional capacity to realise the Climate Change Vision for the region.
- 5.5 The Action Plan includes milestones for the achievement of key elements required to tackle climate change, including the development of robust mechanisms for benchmarking, monitoring and review. Each of the actions is assigned a lead partner organisation. However, delivery will require the input and commitment of a range of regional and local partners. It is therefore recommended that the Assembly should Request its own member organisations to contribute to the development and delivery of the action plan.

6. Consultation

- 6.1 Following endorsement of the draft Climate Change Action Plan by the Regional Assembly, the Action Plan will be made available for consultation responses. The consultation period will run from the end of July until 14th September 2007.
- 6.2 Following the close of the consultation period, the Climate Change Executive Group will meet to consider the responses received. The Climate Change Action Plan will be further developed with consideration to the consultation responses received and the final version of the Action Plan will be submitted to the Regional Assembly's October meeting for endorsement.
- 6.3 It is intended that that the Action Plan should be a dynamic resource rather than remain a static document. The Action Plan will be regularly reviewed, with the outputs of early actions and the periodic review of progress against targets informing the development of an ongoing programme of further actions. Future iterations of the Action Plan will be reported to the Regional Assembly for information and made publicly available via the Assembly's website.

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