

WEST MIDLANDS REGIONAL ASSEMBLY

Wednesday, 18th July 2007

The West Midlands Economic Strategy (WMES) and Action Plan 2004 – 2010: Progress Report 2006 - 2007.

Report of the Chief Executive of Advantage West Midlands

1. Purpose of the Report

1.1 To provide an update on progress in delivering the Actions set out in the WMES Action Plan 2004 – 2010.

2. Recommendation

2.1 That the report be endorsed by the Assembly (please note that this report has yet to be endorsed by the Advantage West Midlands Board – it will be put to the Board at their meeting on 31st July).

3. Background

3.1 The WMES Action Plan Progress Report is jointly signed off by Advantage West Midlands and the West Midlands Regional Assembly on an annual basis. Two progress reports have been produced and agreed to date, covering the periods 1st July 2004 – 30th June 2005 and 1st July 2005 – 30th June 2006, respectively. The current report covers the period 1st July 2006 – 30th June 2007.

3.2 As was the case in the previous two reports, good progress continues to be made against the majority of the actions. Action 41 is highlighted this year as the only action experiencing difficulties. This action relates to engagement with the voluntary and community sector. The measure of progress given to this action is a reflection of the structural changes and challenges being encountered within some of the organisations involved in delivery. This year a new category has also been introduced, for actions that have been completed or which are being subject to significant modification going forward.

4. Next steps

4.1 This report must be considered in the context of the review of the WMES that is now in progress. A revised version of the full draft strategy is currently being consulted upon, with a closing date for responses of 31st July 2007. Work on the development of the associated revised Action Plan is also underway. Relevant actions from the existing action plan

(the subject of this progress report) will be carried forward into the revised Action Plan, which is expected to be launched in November 2007.

- 4.2 Next year, we plan to produce the fourth and final progress report for '*Delivering Advantage*' covering the period 1st July 2007 – 30th June 2008. In producing that report, we will be seeking third party verification of the progress that has been made and ensuring that the necessary continuity has been achieved between the existing and newly revised Action Plan.

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