

## **WEST MIDLANDS REGIONAL FUNDING ADVICE – ROUND 2**

### **Briefing Note Two**

**November 2008**

This is the second in a series of Briefing Notes on Regional Funding Advice. Government has asked all regions to submit 'Regional Funding Advice' against indicative budgets for economic development, transport and housing and regeneration for the period up to 2018-19. Regional Funding Advice (RFA) will cover public investment in the region of £1bn per year and must be submitted by the end of February 2009 and be no longer than 35 pages.

The partners leading the development of the RFA submission - AWM, Local Government, West Midlands Regional Assembly, Highways Agency and the Homes & Communities Agency – have arranged a regional briefing on 19 January 2009, 10.00 – 12.00 at the Lakeside Conference Suite to update partners on how the RFA is shaping up.

If you would like to attend the RFA Briefing on 19 January 2009 please complete the attached form and return it to Ali John at [alisonjohn@advantagewm.co.uk](mailto:alisonjohn@advantagewm.co.uk)

The 'shadow' Joint Strategy and Investment Board (JS&IB) met for the first time on 13 November to consider how best to develop the RFA. They have asked officers to prepare the advice within the following parameters:-

- The RFA must build on the priorities set out in the RES and RSS but not repeat the extensive consultation recently undertaken to develop both strategies. We also need to factor in the Regional Transport Priorities. RFA must not jeopardise or undermine our collective efforts to support the agreed RSS position into the Examination in Public of the RSS in April.
- Early discussions have identified that the following headline will provide the strategic framework for the advice:- Closing the £10bn Output Gap by -
  - Sustaining and strengthening the West Midlands' economy
  - Delivering urban and rural renaissance – including housing growth and provision of affordable homes
  - Expanding skills and employment
- RFA will need to set out short term interventions which address the current economic downturn but these must adhere to/support the above agreed long term objectives. Advice will need to be realistic, well argued and alive to the challenges of the current economic climate.
- Deliverability is key, there must be clarity about timescales, funding packages and key milestones.
- All programmes, projects and schemes included in RFA will need to demonstrate how they benefit the economy.
- RFA will need to identify very clear priorities for public spending to secure the greatest multiplier effect, reduce risk for private sector investment and, in current circumstances, act as a catalyst for a more buoyant economy in the future.

- Regional partners must address the issues that have prevented the region from spending its transport allocation in particular.
- RFA will seek freedoms and flexibilities from Government to secure a more integrated approach to sustainable economic growth and regeneration in the West Midlands – to break down the constraints to integration currently presented by individual Departmental funding regimes. It is recognised that there will be some ‘quick fixes’ and some that might take longer to negotiate. In addition, regional partners must examine existing custom and practices to ensure there are no built-in inhibitors to progress.
- The opportunity to explore innovative funding arrangements will be taken eg ADZs as will the use of local authority powers and flexibilities previously given by Government to support the MG Rover Task Force.