

WEST MIDLANDS REGIONAL FUNDING ADVICE – ROUND 2

Briefing Note Five

February 2009

This is the fifth 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.

'Regular readers' of these Briefing Notes will recall that the process of developing the RFA has been to take the lead from the 'shadow' Joint Strategy and Investment Board which has set out the parameters and the strategic priorities for the RFA (contained in Briefing Note Two); the emerging approach to the document (contained in Briefing Note Three); and the examination of key projects in the region at Impact Investment Locations (Briefing Note Four). Throughout the process the JS&IB has been advised by the RFA Advisory Group [Chief Executives/senior staff of LA's and regional bodies], while before Christmas the RFA process was 'kick-started' by the work of an RFA Working Group, and with very helpful input from staff in a number of local authorities.

In recent weeks, there has been a focus on ensuring the 'deliverability' of key projects in the Impact Investment Locations, initially through a 'scrutiny' event with regional partners from some of the Locations (9 January), and since then via discussions between all the project proposers and project management consultants Davis Langdon. This work has been undertaken to test and accelerate the delivery of key projects seen as those which support our collective strategic objectives. It is therefore not a bidding process or one which entails revisiting the priority of schemes.

While the RFA document will reference the Impact Investment Locations, the real worth of the exercise now begun is that it will improve the delivery of major projects throughout the West Midlands and form the basis of a continuing regional strategic performance management process. By this means, public resources will be used to best effect, and the optimum conditions for private investment will be secured, particularly looking to the economic upturn.

The process of drafting the RFA document has been underway for the past few weeks. Significant high level budget and programme information has been obtained from AWM, Local Government, WMRA Secretariat [Housing team], Homes and Community Agency, Regional Skills Partnership and Regional Transport Partnership. Comments on the draft document were made by the RFA Advisory Group on Tuesday 10th February. The JS&IB will discuss the draft in coming weeks before its submission on 27 February.

From Monday 16 February lunchtime the draft RFA document [and associated maps and a transport table] will be available on the AWM, WMLGA or WMRA websites www.advantagewm.co.uk; www.wmlga.gov.uk; www.wmra.gov.uk

Comments should be sent to snrtransition@advantagewm.co.uk by 24 February 2009.

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