

LETTER FROM SHADOW JOINT STRATEGY AND INVESTMENT BOARD (JS&IB)

02 March 2009

NP/tc/fo/1031

Ian Austin MP
Regional Minister for the West Midlands
C/o Government Office West Midlands
5 St Philips Place
Colmore Row
Birmingham
B3 2PW

Dear Minister

WEST MIDLANDS – REGIONAL FUNDING ADVICE

We are pleased to submit our Regional Funding Advice to you. It has been prepared by the shadow Joint Strategy & Investment Board with input from Advantage West Midlands, Local Government, West Midlands Regional Assembly, Homes and Communities Agency, Highways Agency and the Learning and Skills Council. The opportunity to meet with you part way through the process to discuss our initial thoughts and receive your views was much appreciated; and as you will see we have incorporated a number of the points we discussed into the submission document.

Our submission has been developed against the backdrop of the Regional Economic, Spatial and Housing Strategies and the Transport Action Plan; but with a very clear focus on how we can use public funding to stimulate private sector investors in the context of the economic recession, and lay the groundwork for a more buoyant economy.

We would like to draw your attention to two aspects of the submission – firstly, the emphasis we have placed on testing the deliverability of projects and secondly a request to Government for flexibility to help us accelerate the implementation of critical projects.

In respect to the former, projects have been independently examined by project management consultants in discussion with project proposers to ensure clarity over the timescales for project delivery and confidence over the delivery of projects in a 3-4 year timescale. This process has laid the ground for establishing regional co-ordination mechanisms to ensure full spend is achieved, including provision of

resources to support the detailed development of critical transport schemes. It will deliver, urgently, investment, jobs and homes to raise regional output.

In respect to the latter our submission includes propositions to create a Regional Infrastructure Fund (initially using ring fenced RFA transport and economic development resources), a range of flexibilities in delivering transport investments, a City-Region Accelerated Development Zone and how Government's and other agencies investment programmes can be better aligned to the region's strategic priorities.

Your offer to host a meeting with senior civil servants to discuss our submission in more detail is very helpful, and we look forward to a positive dialogue. Ahead of our meeting we expect to make progress on a number of the above issues and will share these with you when we meet.

Regards



Roger Phillips
Co-Chair
Shadow Joint Strategy & Investment Board
Chair, Local Authority Leaders Board



Nick Paul CBE
Co-Chair
Shadow Joint Strategy & Investment Board
Chair, Advantage West Midlands