

NEWS RELEASE



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“IT’S ONLY BRUSSELS?” REPORT ENDORSED

‘A lack of strategic direction, confused governance arrangements, imbalance in the distribution of resources and an excess of information over intelligence’. These are amongst the findings of a new report examining how the West Midlands relates to and engages with Europe.

The Report, which is called ‘It’s Only Brussels? - The West Midlands’ Relationship with Europe’, was produced by the West Midlands Regional Assembly as part of its Scrutiny role. It followed a six month period of evidence gathering from a wide range of regional, national and European organisations as well as MEPs and individuals working in the field.

Endorsed by the members of West Midlands Regional Assembly at its meeting on 25th April, the Report makes a total of 11 recommendations for improving the way the West Midlands engages with and benefits from Europe.

Assembly Member, Roger McKenzie, who chaired the Review Panel commented: “I am really pleased that the Assembly has endorsed our report, but this is only the beginning of the improvement process. Partners, from all sectors, need to work together to implement the recommendations and to ensure that the Region takes full advantage of the opportunities offered by Europe.”

The final report is available on the Assembly website at:

<http://www.wmra.gov.uk/page.asp?id=92>

The Assembly's scrutiny work not only includes its statutory responsibility for scrutinising the work of the Regional Development Agency, Advantage West Midlands, but also investigations/ assessments into wider issues which have an impact across the entire Region.

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Notes to editors:

1. The West Midlands Regional Assembly ('the Assembly') represents a wide range of democratic, social and economic interests throughout the West Midlands region (comprising the historic counties of Herefordshire, Shropshire, Staffordshire, Warwickshire and Worcestershire, and including the metropolitan area centred on Birmingham).
2. The Assembly's membership consists of 100 nominated representatives, with 68 members representing the local authority, 16 representing the business sector and 16 representing other economic and social partners (trades unions, health, FE, HE, culture, housing associations, environment, parish councils, voluntary and community sector, black and minority ethnic community, disability, gender and faith communities)
3. The Assembly provides a platform for organisations to consider matters of common concern including: regional planning, transport, economic prosperity, sustainability, culture and Europe. It also supports regional policy forums and task groups on social inclusion, faith, housing, life long learning/skills, health, rural and community safety/crime reduction.
4. The Assembly works in partnership with Advantage West Midlands (AWM) the regional development agency (RDA), the Government Office West Midlands (GOWM), Regional Action West Midlands (RAWM) the West Midlands Local Government Association (WMLGA) and other regional and local organisations from across the West Midlands region.
5. The Assembly is the Regional Planning Body, and is also responsible for scrutinising the operation of the region's RDA, Advantage West Midlands.
6. For further information, visit our website www.wmra.gov.uk