

NEWS RELEASE



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ASSEMBLY REMAINS DETERMINED TO WORK HARD

The Government published the outcomes of its Sub National Review of Economic Development and Regeneration yesterday which is set to give greater powers to local councils.

But despite the changes, the West Midlands Regional Assembly remains determined to continue the hard work in promoting transport, housing and planning in the Region until the shift of power takes place.

The review will see key changes taking place with a proposed duty for councils to analyse the economic circumstances and challenges of their economy, sharpening the role of Regional Development Agencies with a focus on increasing economic growth, with increased scrutiny by councils and simplified and strengthened performance management by central government.

Regional Development Agencies will also be required to delegate funding to local authorities where possible.

Assembly Members expressed at this Wednesday's annual general meeting the desire to make the Regional Forum of Leaders a body that encompasses the existing strong partnership structure which is already in place within the West Midlands across business, local government and stakeholders.

Olwen Dutton, Chief Executive of the West Midlands Regional Assembly said: “This review will take some time to digest, to understand and to consider the best way in which way we can continue with the work we need to carry on here and look after the best interests of those in the Region.”

Chairman of the West Midlands Regional Assembly, Cllr David S Smith said: “The appointment of a Regional Minister is very good for the West Midlands, the opportunity for a West Midlands question time and select committees will raise the focus on the Region.

“That is very much to be welcomed but not if it is taking power away from the local government.”

- ENDS -

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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.
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.
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
7. The Independent Performance Assessment was undertaken by the National Audit Office as part of an examination of all 8 English Regional Development Agencies at the request of the Department of Trade and Industry.

8. The final report can be downloaded from Advantage West Midlands' website www.advantagem.co.uk