

NEWS RELEASE



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SCRUNTINY REPORT FINDS LACK OF ACCESS TO FINANCE

THE West Midlands Regional Assembly has completed a review which examined Advantage West Midlands' approach to financial support for businesses and found a lack of awareness of the funds available in the Region.

The report was undertaken as part of the Assembly's statutory responsibility for scrutinising the work of Advantage West Midlands, the Regional Development Agency. It followed a focused period of evidence gathering from a range of regional players and individuals working in the area.

The report, supported by the West Midlands Regional Assembly at a meeting last Wednesday, made nine recommendations which aims to assist and enhance the future development of Access to Finance activity in the Region.

Assembly Member, Roger Trotman, who chaired the Review Panel said: "We, as a Panel, recognise the much positive work that has been carried out by Advantage West Midlands and would encourage them to continue. However it is clear that the perception of stakeholders is, in some ways more important than the reality of Advantage West Midlands' interventions."

The final report is available on the Assembly website at:

<http://www.wmra.gov.uk/page.asp?id=337>.

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For further information contact:

Jay Rana, Press Officer, West Midlands Regional Assembly

Telephone: 0121 678 1044

E-mail: j.rana@wmra.gov.uk

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