

## West Midlands Regional Assembly

### Regional Transport Partnership

6<sup>th</sup> July 2009

### Regional Partnership Centre

#### Present:

#### Members:

Cllr Roger Phillips	Chair – Herefordshire
Gerald Kells	Vice Chair – Other Stakeholders
Brian Summers	Vice Chair – West Midlands Business Council
Cllr Angus Adams	West Midlands Planning and Transport - Dudley MBC
Cllr Bob Badham	Regional Planning - Sandwell MBC
Phil Bateman	Confederation for Passenger Transport
David Golding	Network Rail
Mike Haigh	London Midland
Chris Haynes	Regional Rail Forum
Stephen Hill	Birmingham International Airport
Anne Jones	Highways Agency
John Sidebotham	Centro

#### Officers:

Heather Crocker	Advantage West Midlands
Peter Davenport	Regional Planning (Transport)/Shire Authorities
Trevor Errington	Regional Transport Officers Group - Coventry CC
Danny Lamb	West Midlands Regional Assembly
Simon Rowberry	Chief Engineers and Planning Officers Group – Metropolitan Authorities

#### In attendance:

Sharon Britton	West Midlands Regional Assembly
Bridget Rafferty	West Midlands Regional Assembly

#### Apologies:

Cllr Gary Clarke	WMPTA
Phil Davis	Passenger Focus
Geoff Inskip	Centro

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## 1. Introduction

The Chair welcomed everyone and outlined the regional change process that is underway. He highlighted the need for a more streamlined, focussed system and the need to 'tighten our belts'. The Chair introduced the subject matter for future arrangements in Item 5 and explained that while this meeting would discuss the issues and gain members' views to feed into the process – this is the last time Regional Transport Partnership (RTP) will meet in this form.

## 2. Declaration of Interests

None were declared.

### **3. Draft Notes of 14<sup>th</sup> January and 6<sup>th</sup> April 2009 Meetings**

The notes were agreed.

### **4. Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising.

### **5. Regional Transport Governance - Future Arrangements**

Members received a report that set out the proposed future arrangements for transport governance in the region. These proposals are in the context of how we move forward in the light of the Local Democracy Bill. Members were informed that the report sets out current work in progress and the practicalities still need to be agreed.

The Chair suggested that the report recommendation should be changed, so that members should “note” rather than “agree” the changes. This suggestion was agreed.

Following a description of the proposed changes, members were invited to make comments that can be reported to the shadow Joint Strategy and Investment Board (JSIB).

#### **Members' comments:**

- The new Transport Panel should add to the debate and inform policy thinking;
- There is an opportunity to engage academics and or independent experts to contribute;
- Stakeholders should be considered for inclusion on Transport Advisory Group;
- RTP/Regional Rail Forum have brought Network Rail into the regional processes and this should not be lost;
- Need to clarify the future roles for rail, aviation, road and operator partners;
- Need for a recognised regional champion and Transport Panel engagement with the Department for Transport (DfT);
- Government direction means local government dominates the future governance;
- There should not be too many layers in the decision making process;
- Sub-regional dimension needs to be highlighted e.g. West Midlands Planning and Transport members and officer support;
- Regional Transport Officer Group has provided a valuable service providing partners with access to expertise across the piece;
- How do we compare to other regions;
- We need to retain a flexible approach, rather than prescription from Government.

## **Recommendations**

In addition to RTP agreeing that the report's recommendation should be changed from "agree the changes" to "note the changes", another set of recommendations were agreed:

- a) There is a need to clarify where the RTP members are involved under the new constitution;
- b) There is a need to clarify the Regional Transport Panel's relationship with the DfT; and
- c) There is a need to clarify the levels of decision making for the Regional Transport Panel, Regional Advisory Group and Transport Advisory Group.

## **6. Regional Spatial Strategy – Phase2 Revision**

This report updated members on the issues that emerged during the Examination in Public (EiP) and drew their attention to the Phase 3 options consultation.

### **Members' comments:**

- RTP congratulated and thanked the officers for presenting a professional case;
- Transport was a major issue in the sub-regional sessions at the EiP;
- Future transport needs should not be determined only by new housing figures, but linked back to the RFA broader picture;
- RSS Phase 3 includes tourism – this has an important relationship with transport, including the role of aviation bringing tourists into the region.

## **Recommendations**

RTP noted the report and encouraged members to respond to the Phase 3 consultation.

## **7. Regional Funding Advice**

Members were updated on the Regional Funding Advice (RFA) transport programme and the progress in discussions with the DfT, including the expected response to RFA2 later in July 2009.

### **Members' comments:**

- The DfT is working through the details to approve the Regional Infrastructure Fund for Wolverhampton Interchange;
- Birmingham Gateway promoters are still awaiting the compulsory purchase order approval. This will have an impact on the level of RFA required and when;
- The funding programme for Birmingham Gateway is agreed directly by DfT with the other funding partners including Network Rail, and Advantage West Midlands Birmingham. It has been pointed out to DfT that this has consequential effects on the management of the programme and that this should not result in any loss of funding to the region;

- This may also affect other RFA transport schemes if the region loses funds it cannot spend – we need schemes ready to take up the underspend;
- West Midlands still has a reputation issue – we are not spending;
- DfT still has a capacity issue in progressing decisions;
- Lower land values may also reduce the amount of RFA expected to be spent;
- Managing the RFA process is critical to our success and maximising investment;
- Indications are that schemes that are well progressed will go ahead, but others could be jeopardised as public expenditure is cut;
- Development costs, already expended for schemes in the pipeline, will be lost if schemes are not progressed;
- We need commitment to the RFA transport programme at the highest level.

## **Recommendations**

RTP supported the:

- a) approach to implementing improved ways of working;
- b) potential rail schemes set out in 5.3 and 5.4 form the basis of an initial phase of the rail match funding programme for consideration by the JSIB;
- c) revised funding profile for Birmingham New Street (Scenario 1);
- d) proposed programming amendments set out in section 7 and these should be advised to JSIB.

In addition RTP agreed that the Chair should take up the issue of high level commitment and DfT capacity at JSIB for discussion with the Regional Minister.

## **8. Delivering a Sustainable Transport Strategy**

Members were updated on the progress of the region's response to Stage 1 of the DfT's 'Delivering a Sustainable Transport System' process.

### **Members' comments:**

- Concerned about RTP's direct input to this process;
- Supportive of the response, but this puts us in 'study mode' again – we are good at study but not so at delivery;
- Stakeholders need a greater level of engagement;
- If a 'reducing travel' study takes place it should be regional, not national;
- Choice of travel opportunity is important;

- Not clear what is meant for the M6 Toll – it does not appear credible to suggest we can change the current operation;
- The importance of Birmingham International Airport is not obvious in the response.

### **Recommendation**

Members agreed to note this report.

## **9. Regional Rail Issues**

Members were informed of recent publications and consultations that have been considered by the Regional Rail Forum.

### **Members' comments:**

- The High Speed 2 report to JSIB will be an update on the process not specific issues;
- The Greengauge 21 scenarios are considering a network of high speed lines;
- A High Speed 2 service should be operational between London and Birmingham before anywhere further north.

### **Recommendations**

RTP agreed to note the report and the basis for a response as set out in Section 3.2.2.

## **10. Regional Freight Update**

Members received an update on progress of the Regional Freight Strategy Action Plan and were asked to consider the future of Regional Freight Advisory Group.

### **Members' comments:**

- Freight needs to be encompassed in the ongoing considerations for governance;
- The group should also consider freight problems as well as opportunities.

### **Recommendations**

RTP agreed to note the progress to date on the Action Plan and required the future arrangements for Regional Freight Advisory Group be considered in the review.

## **11. Draft Integrated Public Transport Prospectus**

Members were given an outline of the core principles of the prospectus and encouraged to respond to the consultation.

### **Members' comments:**

- This needs to be viewed in the wider angle of future public spending as all our organisations will need to deliver more with fewer resources.

## Recommendations

RTP members agreed to provide any further comments (by email to Centro at [prospectus@centro.org.uk](mailto:prospectus@centro.org.uk)) by 28<sup>th</sup> August 2009.

### 12. AOB

The Chair thanked the RTP members for their efforts over the last six years. He said that the members had made sure that RTP raised the region's profile and demonstrated a high level of capability and commitment. This was particularly the case with two RFA responses. Cllr. Phillips paid particular thanks to the Vice Chairmen, Brian Summers and Gerald Kells, and the officers.

He stated that the transport issues we have dealt with will not go away, but we need to face them with tighter financial control, and that with the inevitable decline of the Assembly over the next few months it is important that partners maintain our linkages.

Brian Summers acknowledged Cllr. Phillips' role as Chair and thanked him for his commitment and substantial work effort.

Chairman



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Date: 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2009