

West Midlands Regional Assembly

Agenda Item 4

Draft Notes of the Regional Assembly Board of Directors Meeting Held on 3 December 2008

Chairman: Cllr David S Smith

Present:

John Lines (Birmingham), Jo Jones (Shrewsbury & Atcham), Elizabeth Newman (OSG), Roger Phillips (Herefordshire), Chris Saint (Stratford-on-Avon), Rex Roberts (Staffordshire), Roger Evans (OSG), Sarindar Sahota (WMBC), Ken Taylor (Chairman- WMLGA, Coventry), Roger Stone (WMBC), Beris Williams (Herefordshire), Paul Tilsley (Birmingham), Frances Beatty (WMBC), Steve Eling (Sandwell), and Bob Badham (Sandwell)

In attendance:

Olwen Dutton (WMLGA/WMRA), Sharon Doak (WMLGA/WMRA), Rose Poulter (SNR), Philip Atkins (Staffordshire), Kenneth Turner (Dudley), Sharon Phillips (WMLGA), Mark Middleton (WMRA), Jenni Venn (Coventry) and Nina Dawes (Lichfield).

1. Apologies

The following apologies were **noted**:

Rvd John Hall (OSG), Roger McKenzie (OSG), Keith Austin (Telford & Wrekin) and Barrie Williams (WMBC)

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest stated.

3. Chairman and Vice-Chairs' Reports

The Chairman opened the meeting by announcing that the Government response to the SNR had been received and was as predicted. There were potential pitfalls but it was important for Partners to stay involved until the end of the Assembly existence as there was still work to be done. Thanked all Partners for their past and support.

The Vice Chair (WMBC) agreed that full involvement should continue and welcomed the support structures that would be put forward later on the agenda.

The Business Council would continue to lobby Government and others.

There were now 24 representatives on the Business Council with 3 new Members: The Housing Federation, Stratford Town Management Partnership and West Midlands Developers Alliance. The WMBC hope to continue to play a full part in Partnership working.

Vice Chair (OSG – Elizabeth Newman for Roger McKenzie) stated that the OSG would wish to continue to be consulted and raised concern that the OSG and WMBC are not going to be fully engaged as other regions are and would like to see this addressed.

4. Draft Decision Notes of the Assembly Board of Directors Meeting held on 24 September 2008 and Matters Arising

The Board **NOTED** the decision notes. There were no matters arising.

5. Draft Decision Notes of the Full Assembly Annual Meeting held on 29 October 2008

The Board **NOTED** the decision notes and agreed the following amendment:

Word change on Page 1, last paragraph – change the word Business to Business Premises not Business

6. WMRA Operational Review

The Board were advised on the outcomes from the Joint Executive and the Shadow Strategy Advisory Panel meetings held on 18 November.

It was recommended and **AGREED** that the changes outlined in the report, and proposals that were put to the Assembly on 29 October 2008, were adopted with immediate effect.

7. West Midlands Regional Strategy: Phase 2 Revision Assembly Response for 08 December 2008

The Board were provided with the context for them to consider and approve the Assembly's response to the Independent Panel which would be considering the Assembly's West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy: Phase 2 Revision (RSS2) at an Examination in Public in Spring 2009.

A full technical response would be submitted by the 08 December 2008 to the Panel Secretary. In addition, Members of the Joint Executive had felt that it was appropriate for the Chairman to write to the Minister, The Rt Hon Mrs Beckett giving the Assembly's views regarding the process that was being approved and the strong support for the RSS Phase 2 Revision.

The report recommended and the Board **AGREED**:-

- a) The Assembly's 08 December 2008 technical submission to the Panel for the Examination in Public, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report.
- b) That they delegated powers to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Chairman of the Assembly and the Chairman of the Planning, Environment **and Housing** Executive, to agree any necessary minor refinements or adjustments to either the technical submission or the letter to the Minister.
- c) That they delegated powers to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Chairman of the Assembly and the Chairman of Planning, Environment and **Housing** Executive, to enable the Assembly to be able to respond promptly to any requests from the independent Panel which would be convening the Examination in Public.
- d) Considers and approves the letter from the Chairman of the Assembly to the Government minister, the Rt Hon Mrs Margaret Beckett.

8. Report of the Chief Executive and Company Secretary

The Board were provided with an update on general issues:-

- 2008-09 Q2 Progress Report
- 2009-10 Draft Business Plan & Budget
- Members Declarations of Interest
- Planning Appeal decisions in South Staffordshire
- Parliamentary Regional Accountability

The report recommended and it was **AGREED** that the Board:-

- **NOTED** the 2008-09 Q2 Progress Report (Para 3)
- **APPROVED** the 2009-10 Draft Business Plan & Budget (Para 4)
- **NOTED** the current position with regards to outstanding Declaration of Interest forms and action where necessary (Para 5).
- **NOTED** the Planning Appeal decision and **AGREED** that a full report be made to the Assembly meeting on 14 January 2009 (Para 6)
- **NOTED** the report on the Parliamentary Regional Accountability

(Para 7) and **AGREED** that a full report be made to the Assembly meeting on 14 January 2009.

9. Regional Funding Advice Round 2

The Board were advised of the arrangements that were being made to respond to the Government's request for advice on how the funding coming into the region for transport, housing and economic development should be spent.

It was recommended and the Board **AGREED** to note the arrangements being made to respond to the Government's request for Regional Funding Advice for the period to 2018-2019.

10. Government Response to SNR Consultation

The Board were advised that on 25th November 2008 the government had published its response to the many submissions that it had received to its consultation following the publication of the Sub National Review. The response had reaffirmed that Regional Assemblies would not continue to be the Regional Planning Body and that their funding would be discontinued at the end of March 2010. Arrangements would need to be put in place to ensure an effective transition.

The report advised that, as well as the general and far reaching implications of the response, indications from government were that the necessary legislation would be introduced into parliament at an early date and there were specific implications' for the Assembly and its workload, which would be subsumed at some stage into a single strategy.

Members were further advised that officers were already working with the RDA and local authority leaders to discuss transitional arrangements and this work would need continue at an increased pace and officers had been advised that the government would require regions to have draft plans in place by March 09. Change management arrangements would be required to be put into the business plans which needed to be submitted to CLG in January.

It was highlighted that the Board was not due to meet until 25 March 2009 which is very late in the day to consider these matters. It was therefore recommended, and **AGREED** that a Special Board meeting be arranged for the New Year to discuss these matters. In the meantime, members would be kept informed of progress and, in particular, of change management and transition plans.

11. Draft Agenda for the Full Assembly Meeting – 14 January 2009

Members received and **NOTED** the draft agenda for the next full assembly meeting. Additional Items were added as: -

- Economic Issues
- Debate on the Impact of SNR on Regional Assemblies
- Parliamentary Accountability Issues
- Select Committees

FOR RATIFICATION:

12. Notes of the last RPE meeting held on 17 October

13. Notes of the last RPP meeting held on 28 October

Due to inaccuracy at the above meetings, the Board were requested and **AGREED** to ratify the decisions made.

The following items were for information only and were NOTED by the Board.

14. Notes of the Finance and Audit Committee Meetings held on:-

- a) 13 February 2008
- b) 04 June 2008

15. Regional Policy Partnerships Activity

The Board received an update on key issues undertaken by the Secretariat on behalf of the Board and Assembly Partnerships over the last quarter.

16. Minutes of the City Region Shadow Executive

- a) AGM 4 June 2008
- b) 10 September 2008

17. Advantage West Midlands – Notes from Board Meeting

10 September 2008

18. Dates of future Board Meetings 2008/09

Special Meeting to be arranged early 2009 – Members TBA

25 March 2009

10 June 2009

19. Any Other Business

There was no other business stated.