

West Midlands Regional Assembly

Agenda Item 3

WEST MIDLANDS REGIONAL ASSEMBLY Regional Planning and Environment Executive

Notes of a Meeting held on 14 October 2009 Held at the Regional Partnership Centre

Present:

Cllr Rex Roberts, OBE – Chairman (Staffordshire)

Cllrs:

Keith Austin – Vice Chair (Telford & Wrekin) Bob Stevens (Warwickshire)
Peter Douglas Osborn (Birmingham) Neil Roberts (Lichfield)

Business Voice WM:

Roger Stone – Vice Chair Julian Dolman

OSG:

No attendance **(The meeting was therefore inquorate)**

Officers:

Ian Smith (GOWM) John Pattinson (WMRA),
Sarah James (CEPOG), Sharon Britton (WMLB/WMRA)
Stefan Preuss (WMRA)

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from:

Local Authority Members: Cllrs John Everall (Shropshire) and Tim Wright (Dudley).

Business Voice West Midlands: Sarah Faulkner

Other Stakeholder Group: Roger Evans (Vice Chair), Mike Kinghan and Gerald Kells.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest stated.

3. Notes of last meeting held on 22 September 2009

The notes of the last meeting were **AGREED** as a true record.

4. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

5. PLANNING

5a. RSS Phase Two - Examination in Public Panel Report

Members received a report and were advised on the publication of the Panel Report for the RSS Phase Two Revision and key issues and actions arising from the Report.

The Chairman took Members through the report page by page and the following comments were made:-

Housing

Lichfield expressed their disappointment about the rise in their housing figures and about the high level of detail in relation to broad locations. Cannock and Tamworth – the Inspector had not provided any evidence for housing in either of these areas.

Concerns were raised regarding the Panel report being very location specific in certain parts of the region. Members were advised that, in the light of recent issues relating to sustainability appraisals in other regions, the proposed changes may not be as locationally specific.

Members requested some clarity on the targets mentioned in 4.14 of the report and were advised that the Panel had stated that minima and maxima were no longer to be used and that the housing figures in the RSS should be treated as targets. The Panel felt that with minima and maxima there would not be a simple figure to work with whereas having target figures makes sustainability appraisals easier.

Employment Land

Members felt there was some conflict between housing land and employment land due to the increased housing and employment land figures – pressure would be put on Planning Authorities to come up with a balance.

Centres/Retail and Waste

Members enquired about the implications of the proposed reduction in the number of tiers of strategic centres. They were advised that this change would not have strategic implications but was mainly for simplification.

Transport

Concern was raised that the report was not specific enough on linkages between transport and housing.

Monitoring and Implementation

Members made no comment.

Members **NOTED** the report.

5b. RSS Phase Three Progression of WMRSS Phase Three Workstreams – Development of Policy Statements & Recommendations

Members were advised that the RSS Phase Three Options consultation which ran from 29th June to 14th August 2009 had attracted 442 responses. A final report analyzing the consultation responses was expected on 16th October 2009 and would be made available to Members on request. Key messages arising from an initial analysis of the responses were reported orally:

Members made the following comments regarding Minerals:-

Residents in Staffordshire are not in favour of the level of mineral extraction indicated for the County. Members felt that the apportionment in Staffordshire is unreasonably high.

Concern was raised that clays and cement in Warwickshire were not included in the policy. Members were advised that wider minerals issues would be considered in the subsequent report on Policy Recommendations relating to safeguarding and brick clay provision.

BVWM questioned whether there had been any progression on Coal Reserve Protection and were advised that the National Mineral Guidance did not give guidance on coal as a regional policy but it was recognised that the importance of this issue was increasing.

The report recommended and the RPEE:

- (a) **NOTED** the key messages emerging from the Options consultation,
- (b) **NOTED** the outcome of recent discussions relating to the progression of RSS Phase Three workstreams, and
- (c) **ENDORSED** the proposed approach towards developing Policy Statements and Policy Recommendations (including suggested nature of Policy recommendations) and forward this for approval by the Regional Assembly on 23rd October 2009.

5c. Consultation on Regional Strategy Guidance

Members were advised on the Government consultation on the guidance for the preparation of Regional Strategies and the proposed regional response guidance for arrangements, including the latest draft of a technical officer response attached at Appendix 1 to the report.

Members **NOTED** this report.

6. Any Other Business

There was no other business stated.

7. Date of Next Meeting:

~~17 November 2009~~ **Cancelled**
15 December 2009