

West Midlands Regional Assembly

Agenda Item 10 - Addendum

WEST MIDLANDS REGIONAL ASSEMBLY BOARD 3 December 2008

Business and Enterprise Select Committee – Oral Evidence Session: Implications of the Sub National Review on Regional Development Agencies

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 To allow members to discuss the call for additional evidence by the Business and Enterprise Select Committee as part of the wider debate of the Government response to the SNR consultation.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 That the Chief Executive responds reflecting Members views as expressed during the wider discussion of the Government response to the SNR consultation.

3. Background

The Assembly responded to the original call for written evidence to inform the Business and Enterprise Committee inquiry into the future role and responsibilities of Regional Development Agencies. The Committee took oral evidence from representatives of local authorities, business organisations and RDAs in October 2008.

The Assembly received notification on 28 November that the Committee will take evidence on 15 December from Pat McFadden MP, Minister for Employment Relations and Postal Affairs, on the Government's revised sub-national review proposals. Stakeholders have been requested to provide brief additional comments to inform this evidence by Friday 5 December 2008. In particular the Committee would welcome information on:

- 3.3 Sub-regional collaboration
- views on the creation of Economic Investment Boards (EIBs), especially how they will interact with other public sector bodies, the flexibility to propose their own functions and lack of a specific performance framework.

- 3.4 Regional strategy and reformed regional governance structures:
- sharing of spatial planning responsibilities between RDAs and the Local Authority Leaders' Board, including the staff and financial resources to support the agreement of the regional strategy and whether this allays local authorities' concerns regarding the original proposal;
 - whether business and other stakeholders remained concerned that RDAs' focus on business and economic development might be diluted by their widened remit;
 - The implications of the increased role for local authorities in terms of the economic planning aspect of the regional strategy;
 - The flexibility given to Local Authority Leaders' Boards regarding their membership;
 - Whether the proposals allow for sufficient accountability and consultation.
- 3.5 Delegation of decision-making by RDAs
- Whether the proposals enable RDAs to take the more strategic programme management role expected.
- 3.6 Any other comments stakeholders feel are relevant.

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