

WEST MIDLANDS REGIONAL ASSEMBLY

08 July 2009

SNR Change Management Plan Update

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 To update Members on SNR Change Management Plan.

2. Recommendation

2.1 That the Assembly discuss and note the report.

3. Background

3.1 The Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Bill has now reached the House of Commons. It has been through the Committee Stage with any significant amendments and so does not need to return to the House of Lords. However, no date has yet been set for the report stage and third reading so it is not yet clear if the Bill will receive Royal Assent this side of the Parliamentary summer recess. The government is confident that the Bill will move to Royal Assent and is still hoping to gain this before Parliament goes into recess on 22nd July. If the Bill does not receive Assent before the Autumn the intention is still to implement in early 2010.

3.2 It is intended that there will be four separate sets of Regulations issued around the time of Royal Assent, and all will be subject to consultation. If Royal Assent is delayed to the Autumn then CLG may still issue the draft regulations prior to the summer recess. It is understood that the four Regulations will cover:

- ◆ Statutory consultees
- ◆ Timetable for Annual Monitoring Reviews, using existing RSS conventions
- ◆ Project plans – minimal requirements but covering detailed milestones such as options, SRS submission etc
- ◆ Access to Information for Leaders Boards - utilising the Access to legislation protocols which exist for local authority

- 3.3 As far as the commencement of the provisions of the Bill the first commencement orders will be around the setting up of Leaders Boards structures as a priority but irrespective of what new arrangements have been introduced in each region there will be a requirement for regions to consult on a Leaders Board scheme for the approval of the Secretary of State.
- 3.4 The intention still remains to allow regions considerable freedom in setting up arrangements which suit their individual circumstances within a broad framework. The timing of the publication of the guidance depends upon the progress of the Bill.
- 3.5 The guidance on Regional strategies will be published in draft first for consultation and will contain the process for carrying out the review of the RES and RSS and for drawing up the new single strategy. The intention is to ensure that none of the current work which is being carried out by Assemblies is wasted - such as the work that has been carried out in this region regarding Phase Three of the RSS. There will be a requirement at some point for a project plan or for the production of the strategy to be agreed by the responsible regional authorities - i.e. the RDA and the Leaders Board, with their government office. Key issues for the regional strategy are expected to be economic growth, climate change, transport and housing.
- 3.6 CLG has already held one workshop with officers from Assemblies and RDA's about the development of the single strategy. They felt this to be very useful and are intending to hold another event within the next couple of months both regionally and in London.
- 3.7 The government intends to be more explicit about stakeholder engagement than has been the case to date. Again though, this guidance will be high level and not prescriptive upon regions as to a particular method, with the detail being for each region to decide upon. The guidance is likely to encourage stakeholders to consider where their influence upon the development of the strategy can be most effective, at the early stages, for example and in more local forums than necessarily at a regional level. The use of existing mechanisms for involvement, such as LSP's will be encouraged.
- 3.8 The Government also intends to produce a guidance note dealing with the composition of leaders' boards and what it will be looking for in the scheme which sets these up in each region. This will be non prescriptive and sticking to the broad criteria previously published. There will be broad scope for regions to develop options which suit their individual circumstances.
- 3.9 In addition, a letter is expected shortly from CLG about Regional Housing Boards setting out more details about how the housing

responsibilities currently dealt with by the Assembly through the Housing Executive will work in the future, with the involvement and responsibilities of the Homes and Communities Agency.

- 3.10 In other regions, work is progressing to set up the new arrangements, and each regions plans are slightly different. All regions other than the East Midlands, West Midlands and East of England have abolished their Assembly and moved to new arrangements.
- 3.11 In the West Midlands the Shadow Joint Strategy and Investment Board has met several times by now and is considering the arrangements that will be needed to support it effectively. This is still in the process of discussion but is likely to involve groupings which bring together partners around the key areas of planning, housing and transport in order that the JSIB can be advised effectively and provide a mechanism into which views can be fed.

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