

ADVANTAGE WEST MIDLANDS

Minutes of the 118th Board meeting held on 24th November 2009

Present:

Sir Roy McNulty Chairman
Dr David Brown
Brendan Connor
Gerard Coyne
Cllr Roger Lawrence
Angela Maxwell
Michael Oakes
Sue Prince
Cllr Diane Rayner
Prof Michael Sterling
Cllr Ken Taylor
Cllr Mike Whitby

Executive:

Michael Lavery Chief Executive
Dr Richard Hutchins Deputy Chief Executive
John Doherty Corporate Director, Resources
Tim Gebbels Corporate Director, Strategy & Skills
Mark Pearce Corporate Director, Economic Regeneration
Karen Yeomans Corporate Director, Partnerships & Communications

Apologies:

Jas Bains
John Crabtree
David Smith

In attendance:

Trudi Elliott Government Office West Midlands
Lorraine Holmes Chief Executive, Business Link (items 12 and 13)
Sue Marwa Board Support Executive
Dylan Murphy Head of Board Support

ITEM	DETAILS	ACTION
1.	Confidential Item	
	The Board approved the minutes of the meeting on 27 October 2009 and the chairman signed a copy.	

2.	Matters arising	
2.1	There were no matters arising that were not otherwise covered on the agenda.	
3.	Confidential Item	
4.	Declarations of Interest	
4.1	There were no declarations of interest.	
5.	Declarations of items of any other business	
5.1	The Board agreed to receive a verbal update on the Birmingham International Airport Runway Extension.	
6.	Chairman's Report	
6.1	The Chairman presented his report which the Board noted.	
7.	Chief Executive's Report	
7.1	The Chief Executive presented his report and the Board noted the following in particular:	
7.2	<u>Clusters Update</u> The four regional task and finish groups announced by the Regional Minister were consistent with existing Cluster activity and the Agency was still working towards designation as the Low Carbon Economic Area for Automotive Engineering (it was noted that there was no funding attached to such a designation but it would be important to achieve recognition of the region's specialism in this area).	
7.3	The Clusters Newsletter was available to view electronically (as well as at the meeting).	
7.4	<u>Manufacturing Technology Centre (MTC)</u> All required approvals had now been granted and work was to commence in January 2010. This was very good news for the Ansty site. The Chief Executive would represent the two RDAs on the Board of the MTC.	

7.5	<p><u>Ericsson</u> The withdrawal of Ericsson from the Ansty site was extremely disappointing and a taskforce had been established under the auspices of the Coventry, Solihull and Warwickshire Partnership. The first class site remained an attractive proposition and there had already been expressions of interest from potential tenants. The site would be marketed internationally and the Agency would work with partners to bring the site back into use as soon as possible.</p>	
7.6	<p><u>Independent Supplementary Review (ISR)</u> The preparation of the ISR submission had been a very time consuming, resource intensive exercise. It was important for the Agency to perform well however.</p>	
7.7	<p><u>Skills</u> The National Skills Strategy and associated Investment Strategy had now been published. The Skills Strategy contained a welcome shift towards a stronger focus on economic need, with business need shaping the demand for skills.</p>	
7.8	<p>A regional Skills and Education for Employment Panel was to be established to ensure the Skills Strategy achieved sufficient traction.</p>	
7.9	<p>It was anticipated that six Learning and Skills Council (LSC) staff would be transferred to the Agency on secondment to develop the Skills Strategy (which would, in future, become an integral element of the Single Integrated Regional Strategy).</p>	
7.10	<p>The new skills responsibilities and structures presented an opportunity to effectively target resources to address economic need. It was agreed that the Board would consider a Skills Update in January 2010.</p>	<p>Tim Gebbels / Board Support</p>
7.11	<p><u>Budget</u> The 2011-12 budget position was unlikely to be clear before the General Election. There had been no announcement on the possible 2010-11 budget raid since the October meeting. A cut was still anticipated though it may be smaller than originally anticipated. The position should be clearer by December.</p>	
7.12	<p><u>Annual Conference</u> Ken Taylor and David Brown were thanked for their contribution during the question and answer session and Angela Maxwell was thanked for the excellent job she had done as compere.</p>	
7.13	<p>A formal review of the Conference would be submitted to the January 2010 Board meeting. This review should consider attendees the Agency would have liked to have attracted (but had not).</p>	<p>Karen Yeomans / Board Support</p>

7.14	<p><u>Projects for Endorsement</u> No projects between £5m and £10m had been endorsed at outline by IDG since the October Board meeting.</p>	
7.15	<p><u>Spotlight Award</u> October's Individual Spotlight Award had been presented to Rosie Day, Research Analyst at WMRO. She was nominated for this award because of her work on the Regional Perceptions Indicator. This was not a project with which that she had previously been involved but she undertook the work quickly and accurately. Following the analysis, Rosie produced an excellent draft of the final report making good use of visual presentation and demonstrating sound understanding of the sometimes complex issues involved. This work was undertaken on top of her core responsibilities, which did not suffer, and she clearly demonstrated the Agency's value of Aiming for Excellence.</p>	
8.	Confidential Item	
9.	WMES Delivery Framework – Non-Confidential	
9.1	The Board considered the submitted report and noted that:	Tim Gebbels / Board Support
9.2	The annual review (undertaken in the Summer of 2009) had been a robust, externally verified exercise. The presented update was based on a lighter-touch, internal review of progress at the mid-year point.	
9.3	There had been progress since the annual review and the headline findings were that 71.6 per cent of actions were rated green (up from 67.8 per cent).	
9.4	A number of actions were no longer applicable and replacement measures were to be identified.	
9.5	The associated risk register was presented to the Audit Committee in full (and had been considered at the October meeting).	
9.6	An update on the headline indicators would be presented to the February 2010 Board meeting.	
10.	Confidential Item	

11.	Regional Infrastructure Fund – Non-Confidential	
11.1	The Board considered the submitted report and noted that:	
11.2	DfT was supportive of the Regional Infrastructure Fund (RIF) proposal and regional governance arrangements were now required to oversee its implementation. The proposal was that governance would be delivered via a Panel chaired by a local authority Leader from the Joint Strategy & Investment Board (JS&IB) supported by a business representative nominated by the JS&IB and representatives from AWM, the Highways Agency, Homes and Communities Agency and Government Office West Midlands.	
11.3	The RIF arrangements represented an important step in coordinating activity and achieving DfT spend in the region. One important element of this was providing a single point of contact to represent the region in discussions with the Department.	
11.4	The Board agreed that the criteria for the inclusion of projects would be considered and approved by the JS&IB.	Mark Pearce
11.5	The Fund was to be used to unlock sites for development by providing critical infrastructure. Monies committed were then to be recovered and recycled for further investment.	
11.6	The Board approved the governance arrangements for overseeing the implementation of the DfT commitment to the RIF as outlined in the submitted report.	
12.	Confidential Item	
13.	Confidential Item	

14.	Confidential Item	
15.	Confidential Item	
16.	Confidential Item	
17.	Other Business	
17.1	<p><u>Birmingham International Airport Runway Extension</u> There had been significant media interest in the progress of the runway extension project in recent weeks. The AWM position had not changed since the discussion at the October Board meeting. If the known issues could be resolved and if the economic impact assessment justified AWM investment, the £25m earmarked in the Agency Corporate Plan would be deployed as appropriate. AWM was continuing to work with Birmingham City Council to find a state aid solution and a meeting was expected to take place with senior representatives of the airport on 14 December.</p>	
17.2	<p><u>Thanks to Departing Board Members</u> The Chairman thanks Cllr Roger Lawrence, Michael Oakes, Michael Sterling and David Smith (in his absence) for their service on the Board over the last six years. An announcement on the 2009 appointees was expected the following week.</p>	