

ADVANTAGE WEST MIDLANDS

NON-CONFIDENTIAL

Minutes of the 105th Board meeting held on 30th September 2008

Present:

Nick Paul Chairman
Cllr Richard Hyde
Brendan Connor
Gerard Coyne
John Crabtree
Cllr Roger Lawrence
Angela Maxwell
Michael Oakes
Sue Prince
Cllr Diane Rayner
Prof Michael Sterling
Cllr Ken Taylor

Executive:

Michael Laverty Chief Executive
Michael Crich Corporate Director, Resources
Tim Gebbels Corporate Director, Strategy and Communications
Richard Hutchins Corporate Director, Economic Development
Mark Pearce Corporate Director, Economic Regeneration
Karen Yeomans Corporate Director, Operations

Apologies:

Jas Bains
Dr David Brown
David Smith

In attendance:

Trudi Elliott Regional Director, Government Office West Midlands
Sue Marwa Board Support Executive
Dylan Murphy Head of Board Support

ITEM	DETAILS	ACTION
1	Minutes of the last meeting	
1.1	The Board approved the minutes of the meeting held on 29 th July 2008	
2	Matters arising	
2.1	<u>RDA Chairs' Meetings</u> Martin Temple, Executive Chairman EEF, had been invited to visit the Agency to discuss the Business Support Simplification Programme though a date had not yet been set.	

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	Sue Prince requested an item on the Business and the Environment linked through Small Scale Tourism (BESST) report <i>Special Places, Special People</i> .	
5.2	The Chairman drew members' attention to Sue Prince's appearance on the Radio 4 Food Programme.	
6	Chairman's Report	
6.1	The Chairman welcomed Michael Crich, Corporate Director for Resources, to his first Board meeting.	
6.2	The Chairman reported that the Chair position had been re-advertised. The appointment process would be undertaken as quickly as possible and the Chairman had agreed to stay on until the new appointee took up their position.	
6.3	The Chairman proposed that David Brown be appointed Deputy-Chair, following Richard Hyde's retirement, and that John Crabtree be appointed President of the Ambassadors. The Board endorsed these proposals.	
6.4	The Chairman presented his Report and drew particular attention to the following items:	
6.5	<u>AWM Board Interviews</u> There had been a very positive response to the local government Board position vacancy. Two strong candidates had now gone forward to the next stage of the recruitment process.	
6.6	<u>Discussions with Elisabeth Buggins</u> A joint Regional Development Agency (RDA)/Strategic Health Authorities' statement on "Health and Economy" would be discussed at the joint RDA Chairs' meeting.	
6.7	<u>Launch of the Cultural Olympiad</u> The Agency was taking a leading role in developing a regional programme of events.	

6.8	<u>Amey Roundtable Dinner</u> This Dinner did not take place on 29 September.	
6.9	<u>AWM / CBI Quarterly Meeting</u> The business community had some serious concerns about the economy. It would be important to ensure that the Agency acknowledged these concerns at the annual conference and reviewed its Corporate Plan in light of any necessary action.	
6.10	The impact of the credit crunch on the economy could be wide-ranging and would differ across sectors. This impact may be better understood if informed by real-time data from Job Centre Plus. An assessment was required to identify how the Agency could best assist businesses (whether through, for example, the provision of gap funding, practical advice/assistance or developing longer-term strategies to tackle energy costs).	
6.11	There was also a potential role for the Agency in arranging talks between representatives of local businesses and financial institutions to influence banks' policies towards businesses. The Regional Finance Forum was an existing channel of communication between these groups and it was agreed that the Chief Executive would discuss this with the Chair of the Regional Finance Forum.	Chief Executive
7	Chief Executive's Report	
7.1	The Chief Executive presented his Report and drew particular attention to the following items:	
7.2	<u>Cabinet Meeting and Economic Outlook Event</u> The Cabinet meeting had been a success and had generated a very positive response within Whitehall (and had generated increased interest in regional activities). Those involved in the arrangements were thanked for their hard work and Richard Hyde congratulated the executive team on doing an excellent job producing the report and organising the event.	
7.3	An Agency/Treasury/BERR joint publication had been launched at the event entitled <i>A joint response to changing economic circumstances</i> . This document outlined a number of activities already underway which enabled the Agency to provide support to businesses facing challenging economic conditions. It was noted that there was a balance to be struck in achieving the longer-term objectives of the Regional Economic Strategy (RES) and providing support in the shorter term.	
7.4	The Agency was now required to produce a monthly report to BERR/Treasury providing business feedback on their experiences and views on the economic climate. Any intelligence members received from local businesses which could inform this report would be welcomed.	

	also ensure that Zone Chairs were informed of developments.	
7.17	<u>Birmingham Gateway New Street Station</u> The concept design contract had been awarded and had been launched with partners. A concept design film was available from Board Support if members wished to view it.	
7.18	<u>Stakeholder Survey</u> The headline results were very positive. Analysis was being undertaken to better understand the results and a full presentation would be delivered to the Board in October.	Tim Gebbels / Board Support
7.19	<u>NAO Visit</u> The visit to the Agency would inform a national report. Karen Yeomans and her team were thanked for their work in supporting the visit.	
7.20	<u>Regional Marketing Board</u> Professor Michael Clarke had been appointed Chair of the Regional Marketing Board. The Board was working to develop messages which would be delivered through existing partners.	
7.21	<u>Spotlight Awards</u> The Agency's employee recognition scheme, Spotlight Award, for July was presented to Frances O'Connor for the Individual Award and Naina Patel, Darryl Poulton, Joanne Townsend and Monica Lunn for the Team Award.	
7.22	The Team Award for August was presented to Stephen Copley and Sharon Machin and Individual Awards were presented to Stuart Buckley and Dhiren Thakker.	
8	Confidential item	
9	Confidential item	
10	Annual Conference 2008 – "Meeting the Challenge" – Non Confidential	
10.1	The Board noted that the breakout session case studies had been nominated by the relevant policy leads as strong examples of projects where Agency involvement had added value. In response to members' concerns about wasted time travelling between exhibits/breakout sessions, delegates would attend one breakout session each but be able to view all presentations in the exhibition area over lunch.	
10.2	Consideration was being given to broadening the MPs' breakfast reception to include representatives of key regional businesses. It was noted that the breakfast presented a good opportunity to showcase regional produce.	Tim Gebbels
10.3	Trudi Elliot would be consulted on the economic inclusion	Tim Gebbels

	aspects of the event and efforts should be made to co-ordinate messages within the Agency and Regional Minister's speeches as far as possible.	
10.4	The Board noted the progress on preparations for the annual conference.	
11	Final Progress Report against <i>Delivering Advantage</i> – Non Confidential	
11.1	The lessons learned during the self-assessment and validation exercises would inform the process of monitoring delivery of the new Strategy.	

11.2	The validation exercise had produced some very positive messages which should be shared. It would be helpful if the key messages were articulated in an easily digestible form which clearly demonstrated improvement over time.	
11.3	The Board noted the 2007/08 progress report against <i>Delivering Advantage</i> and associated verification report as attached to the submitted report.	
12	Leading the Delivery of the new West Midlands Economic Strategy, <i>Connecting to Success</i> – Non Confidential	
12.1	The Board noted that the Agency had been the first to track its progress against its Regional Economic Strategy (RES). It was now developing this approach further to track progress and opportunities or need for intervention.	
12.2	It was agreed that the presentation of the risk register be amended to allow easier cross-referencing with the West Midlands Economic Strategy (WMES).	Tim Gebbels
12.3	It was agreed that the annual audit of partners' plans should review whether the WMES was referenced directly.	Tim Gebbels
12.4	It was noted that the balanced scorecard and risk register would enable the Board to assess performance against both the Agency's Corporate Plan and the WMES far more easily than had previously been the case.	
12.5	The Board considered the submitted report and:	
12.6	i) Agreed that monitoring of the new WMES risk framework should be taken forward by the Audit Committee.	
12.7	ii) Noted progress to date in leading the delivery of the new WMES.	
12.8	iii) Agreed that the monitoring and updating processes for the Delivery Framework be brought together into a single process, with the first annual update of the Framework produced in June 2009.	
13	Confidential item	
13.2	Timing was critical in assessing genuine value added. Certain types of activity produced benefits over a longer time period and in some cases there would be a lag between capital expenditure and the realisation of benefits. The Agency had made robust, conservative assumptions during the evaluation and was working with Price Waterhouse Coopers to ensure	

	longer-term benefits were captured.	
13.3	It should be made clear that the figures presented in paragraphs 2.2 and 2.3 of the submitted report were per annum .	
13.4	The results of the evaluation were subject to an embargo until BERR released all RDAs' figures.	
13.5	The evaluation had produced a very positive outcome, particularly when the vale added was considered in the context of the region's output gap.	
13.6	The Board considered the submitted report and:	
13.7	i) Noted the progress made in delivering the current impact evaluation programme.	
13.8	ii) Noted the initial findings of the analysis of the Agency's economic impact.	
13.9	iii) Congratulated David Blake on his work in undertaking the evaluation.	
14	DCLG Consultation: Regeneration Framework – <i>Transforming Places; Changing Lives</i> – Non Confidential	
14.1	The Board noted the Government's intention to launch a national regeneration framework and the Agency's input into the process to date.	
14.2	The Agency welcomed the development of a framework and members noted that One North East would be co-ordinating a collective RDA response.	
14.3	The Board also noted that the Agency was assisting the Rural Affairs Forum to contribute to the regional debate.	
14.4	Sue Prince reported that the Commission for Rural Communities' <i>State of the Countryside 2008</i> Report by Dr Stuart Burgess had found that businesses in rural areas were underperforming due to three main factors – planning and development; business support and infrastructure.	
14.5	It was agreed that Mark Pearce would review the Burgess Report and discuss the findings with Sue Prince and the Commission for Rural Communities.	Mark Pearce

15	West Midlands Regional Observatory Annual Report 2007/08 – Non Confidential	
15.1	The Board noted the submitted Report including the results of the external evaluation, key achievements in 2007/08 and key challenges for the future.	
15.2	The Observatory Chair, Councillor Richard Hyde, commented that the Observatory had been a well-managed organisation and drew members' attention to its annual conference in Coventry on 13 October.	
16	Confidential item	
17	Any other business	
17.1	<p><u>Business and the Environment linked through Small Scale Tourism report, <i>Special Places, Special People</i>.</u></p> <p>Sue Prince presented a copy of the Business and the Environment linked through Small Scale Tourism report, <i>Special Places, Special People</i> to the Chairman. It was noted that the report had been very well received in Europe. It was agreed that a letter of thanks be sent to Jim Dixon, Chief Executive of the Peak District National Park Authority thanking him for the report.</p>	Board Support