

**WEST MIDLANDS REGIONAL ASSEMBLY
ANNUAL MEETING**

**Notes of the Meeting held on 8 July 2009
At Solihull MBC**

Chairman: Cllr David S Smith (Lichfield DC)

1. Apologies

Apologies and attendances are attached in the Appendix.

2. Members Declarations of Interests

There were no Declarations of Interest stated.

3. Membership of the West Midland Regional Assembly 2009-2010

Members were advised on the approach being taken to membership issues for the year 2009 – 2010.

The Assembly: -

ENDORSED the Assembly membership for 2009 -2010

ENDORSED the Strategy Advisory Panel membership for 2009 - 2010.

AGREED the roll forward of membership of the Assembly Board, the Strategy Advisory Panel, the Regional Planning and Environment Executive and the Regional Housing Executive.

4. Chairman and Vice Chairs reports

The Chairman:

Congratulated the following on receiving the following Queen's Birthday Honours:

Mr R McKenzie **OBE**;

Ms J Slowey **CBE**.

Cllr J H Smith **OBE**;

Cllr A Haque **MBE**;

Cllr J Dalgarno **MBE**;

Advised of the following changes to the representations from Councils:

Cllr Rex Roberts, Chairman at Staffordshire (replaces Terry Dix)
Cllr Phil Atkins, Leader at Staffordshire (replaces John Taylor)
Cllr Keith Barrow at Shropshire (replaces Malcolm Pate)
Cllr Mike Bird at Walsall (replaces John O'hare)
Cllr Bruce Boughton at Tamworth (replaces Jeremy Oates)
Cllr Mike Heenan at Stafford BC (replaces Judith Dalgarno)
Cllr Ross Irving at Stoke-on-Trent (replaces Mark Meredith)
Cllr Philip Grove at Malvern Hills (replaces Ralph Madden)
Cllr Ann Millward at Dudley (replaces David Caunt)
Cllr Richard Grosvenor at East Staffordshire (replaces Alex Fox)

The Vice-Chair – OSG Sector: Roger McKenzie:

Advised that Equality and Diversity work continued and OSG were currently reflecting on 'where we've been and where we're going'.

Need to ensure partnership work continues and is taken forward under new arrangements.

Vice Chair - Business Sector: Mr Sarindar Sahota

On behalf of the Business Council congratulated Roger on his OBE.

Reminded Members that the West Midlands had been the hardest hit by the recession and reinforced the value and strength of partnership working – this was not to be lost sight of.

Shared his disappointment that the short time working scheme/subsidy had not been established in the current economic climate.

The Construction Action Plan had been valuable in helping the manufacturing industry and imperative that discussions were continued at the Assembly.

The Chairman:

Thanked the Vice Chairs and advised that Cllr David Sparks (Dudley) had been nominated by his political group to serve on the Assembly as the new Vice Chair for local government.

Cllr Ken Taylor (Chairman of WMLGA), nominated Cllr David Smith to continue his Chairmanship of the Assembly. This was seconded by Cllr Chris Saint.

5. Draft Decision Notes of the Assembly Meeting held on 22 April 2009 and Matters Arising

The Decision Notes were **AGREED** subject to the following amendments:

Item 3

The Vice Chairman for the Business Council requested that the report should read (amendments in ***bold italics***):

*“Informed Members that Kevin Farrell had recently passed away. **As well as an Assembly and WMBC Member, Kevin had** also been the Chief Executive of the British Ceramics Federation and would be sadly missed by the Assembly and all those who knew him.*

Item 6

Members had requested if Observers could attend JSIB meetings and were advised that, whilst the JS&IB is informally convened and in shadow form, the meetings will not be open to attendance by observers.

Matters Arising

There were no Matters Arising that were not already on the Agenda.

6. Report of the Chief Executive and Company Secretary

The Assembly was provided with an update on general corporate and financial issues:

2008-09 Financial Statements

Preparation for Winding Up the Assembly

The report advised that, at its meeting on 10th June 2009, the Board agreed to approve the Draft 2008-09 Financial Statements presented by Clement Keys upon a recommendation from the Finance & Audit Committee, who met on 30th June.

Members were advised that the the final accounts, as approved by the Audit Committee, would be placed on the Assembly website and filed with the Department for Communities and Local Government

The Assembly:

Endorsed the Board's approval of the 2008-09 Financial Statements of the West Midlands Regional Assembly and appointment of Clement Keys as auditors for 2009-10

Noted the proposed approach for Winding Up the Assembly

7. Regional Spatial Strategy Phase Two - Examination in Public

The Chairman commenced the item by thanking Mark Middleton, John Pattinson, the Assembly Planning Team and all Local Authorities for the tremendous contributions they had made to the Examination in Public to the RSS Phase 2.

Mark Middleton took Members through the report as follows:

Paragraph 5 - Sustainability and Habitat Protection

5.3 Judicial Review challenge to the East of England Regional Spatial Strategy:

Advised that a letter was put forward to the Panel drawing their attention to this case.

Paragraph 6 - Level and Distribution of Housing

The key word coming from the EiP was deliverability, particularly in the current economic circumstances.

Paragraph 7 - Employment Land & Commercial Development

It was highlighted that the discussion on the policies in the Phase Two Revision in these areas were limited which was disappointing given the need to develop the regional economy.

Paragraph 8 - Sub Regional Sessions

Mark gave thanks to local authority colleagues who took the lead on these sessions not only for themselves but for the Assembly as well.

Paragraph 9 - Middle Quinton Ecotown

This proposal on the south Warwickshire/south Worcestershire boundary was not part of the Phase 2 Revision strategy. It was however accorded a full session in its own right in light of the Government's interest in promoting ecotowns across England. There was little support for the proposal outside the promoters of the scheme themselves.

Paragraph 10 - Implementation

Mark advised that much time had been spent during the EiP in debating the impact of the current global recession on the deliverability of the Phase 2 Revision.

The final monitoring and implementation session pulled all these debates together and looked at the Assembly's recently-submitted Implementation Plan Supplement.

The Assembly **NOTED** the issues that arose during the EiP and gave their support and gratitude to the region's local authorities for their active support.

8. Regional Spatial Strategy Phase Three – Options Document

The Assembly were updated on the consultation arrangements related to the RSS Phase Three Revision Options consultation document and the proposed process for completing the RSS Phase Three Revision.

The following comments were made:

- Requested to be mindful of Parish Councils and the tight deadlines for consultation.
- Tourism is increasing at the moment as people could not afford to holiday abroad in the current economic situation. If managed properly, this could be sustained up to and including the 2012 Olympics.
- Gypsy and traveller communities were very varied and their unmet accommodation needs had to be planned for carefully both at the regional and local level.
- Concern was raised regarding the future of the Phase 3 and the tremendous amount of work that had been done - if Phase 3 goes to SIRS it may be delayed or disappear altogether.
- Tourism wasn't getting enough recognition, there needed to be development of existing and new levels of tourism.
- Members were reminded that the 2012 Olympics was also the Paralympics.
- Some planning authorities had concerns regarding Gypsy and Traveller sites – the surveys on which the numbers were based represented actual need. The options addressed aspirations, though some felt this influenced the surveys.
- Tourism was also about the environment not just revenue from expensive venues. There was a need to remember and promote walks/countryside and healthy living.
- Broadband in rural areas and how businesses are linked to the rural communities - when laying cables can the cable companies and public services work together. Could this perhaps be a policy to be included in Phase 3?

The Assembly **NOTED**:

- (a) the consultation arrangements for the RSS Phase Three Revision Options and
- (b) arrangements for the Assembly and GOWM to review the process for taking forward the Phase Three work through either a revised RSS or single Regional Strategy following the Phase Three Options consultation.

9. **WMES Delivery Framework Monitoring and Update**

Members received a report from Philip Amison and Mark Pearce from AWM and were requested to consider the outputs from the first annual monitoring and update of the West Midlands Economic Strategy (WMES) Delivery Framework.

The following comments were made: -

- This was another great example of partnership working.
- There are still challenges to be met in skills

- Need to be mindful that the next wave of the recession will hit the public sector so there is a need for the document to be flexible to encompass change.
- Too little attention given to deep rural areas – internet and broadband are needed for promotion of rural areas/services. Government funding is needed.
- There is a need to persuade Government that wage subsidy is needed.
- Members queried the wording in paragraph 2.7.1 stating that there was plenty of existing evidence to demonstrate that activity of this sort does yield economic benefit. It was requested that the wording be amended from: -

'activity to safeguard natural and agricultural assets has traditionally failed to demonstrate economic benefit.'

to:

'slower than expected progress in demonstrating economic benefit.'

The Assembly **NOTED** the first annual Monitoring Report against the WMES Delivery Framework and **ENDORSED** the updated WMES Delivery Framework.

AGREED that the wording be changed to paragraph 2.7.1 as outlined above.

10. SNR Change Management Update – Outlining Partnerships and Committees -

Members were updated on the SNR Change Management Plan.

The Assembly **NOTED** the report.

11. Delivering a Sustainable Transport System (DaSTS)

The Assembly were advised of the region's response to Department for Transport's (DfT) 'Delivering a Sustainable Transport System' (DaSTS) process.

Members requested that a copy of Stage 1 be circulated to them.

The Assembly **NOTED** the details of the process.

ACTION to circulate Stage 1 to Members.

12. Parliamentary Regional Accountability – West Midlands Select Committee

The Assembly were provided with an update on the current and future activity of the West Midlands Select Committee.

Recommendation

The Assembly **NOTED** the report.

FOR INFORMATION: The following reports were **NOTED**.

- 13. Draft Decision Notes of the Board Meeting held on 10 June 2009 – For Noting**
- 14. Policy Report of the Chief Executive – Headline Issues for West Midlands Regional Assembly**
- 15. Suggested Dates of future Full Assembly Meetings 2009/10
23 October 2009 – Venue TBC**
- 16. AWM Non Confidential Board Notes**
- 17. Any Other Business**
There was no other business stated.

Appendix

✓ = Attended **A** = Apologies * = Substitute

Authority	Full Member	ATT	Alternate Member	ATT
Birmingham City Council (21)	Cllr Mike Whitby (C) (9)	A	Cllr Len Gregory	✓
	Cllr Sir Albert Bore (L) (6)	✓	Cllr Ian Ward	
	Cllr Paul Tilsley (LD) (6)	✓	Cllr Ray Hassall	
Coventry City Council (7)	Cllr Ken Taylor (C) (4)	✓	Cllr Kevin Foster	
	Cllr John Mutton (L) (3)	✓	Cllr George Duggins	
Dudley MBC (7)	Cllr Les Jones (C) (4)	✓	Cllr Adams	
	Cllr David Sparkes (L) (3)	✓	Cllr S Ali	
Solihull MBC (5)	Cllr K Meeson (C) (3)	✓		
	Cllr Robert Sleigh (L) (1)	✓	Cllr Hill	
	Cllr I Hedley (LD) (1)	✓	Cllr T Hodgson	
Sandwell MBC (7)	Cllr S Eling (L) (5)	A	Cllr W Thomas	
	Cllr A Ward (C) (1)	A	Cllr M Middleton	✓
	Cllr S Smith (LD) (1)	✓	Cllr J Underhill	
Walsall MBC (7)	Cllr Mike Bird (C) (4)	✓	Cllr Andrew	
	Cllr Keith Chambers (L) (2)	✓	Cllr Oliver	
	Cllr D Shires (LD) (1)		Cllr I Shires	
Wolverhampton City Council (6)	Cllr Neville Patten (C) (4)	A	Cllr B Findlay	✓
	Cllr Bilson (L) (2)	✓	Cllr T Singh	
Herefordshire Council (4)	Cllr Roger Phillips (C) (2)		Cllr H Bramer	
	Cllr Terry James (LD) (1)	✓	TBA	
	Cllr J Beris Williams (I) (1)	✓	TBA	
Stoke-on-Trent City Council (5)	Cllr Joy Garner (L) (1)		Cllr Mark Davis	
	Cllr James (City Indep.) (1)		Cllr Brian Ward	
	Cllr Ibbs (C and I A) (1)		Cllr Lee Wanger	
	Cllr Jean Bowers (LD)		Cllr Paul	

	(1)		Billington	
	Cllr Alby Walker (BNP) (1)		Cllr A Simmonds	
Telford & Wrekin (3)	Cllr E J Carter (C)		Cllr I Fletcher	
	Cllr K Austin (L)	✓	Cllr C F Smith	
Shropshire Council (5)	Cllr M Pate (C) (3)		Cllr J Gillow	
	Cllr Peter Francis (LD) (1)		Cllr Nigel Hartin	✓
	Cllr Alan Mosley (L) (1)		Cllr Philip Box	
Staffordshire County Council (8)	Cllr Philip Atkins (L)	A	Cllr M Lawrence	✓
	Cllr Rex Roberts (C)	A	Cllr Mike Maryon	
Cannock Chase DC	Cllr N Stanley (LD) (1)	✓	Cllr T Williams	
East Staffordshire BC	Cllr Richard Grosvenor (C) (1)	A	Cllr David Brookes	
Lichfield DC	Cllr D Smith (C) (1)	✓	Cllr N Roberts	A
Newcastle-under-Lyme BC	Cllr Simon Tagg (C) (1)		Cllr Robin Studd (LD)	
South Staffordshire DC	Cllr B Edwards (C) (1)	✓	Cllr Billson	
Stafford BC	Cllr J Highfield (C) (1)		Cllr W Davis	✓
Staffordshire Moorlands DC	Cllr S Ralphs (C&IA) (1)	✓	Cllr A Forrester	
Tamworth BC	Cllr Jeremy Oates (C) (1)		Cllr Danny Cook	
Warwickshire County Council (5)	Cllr Alan Farnell (C) (2)	A	Cllr Peter Fowler	✓
	Cllr Bob Stevens (L) (2)		Cllr Martin Heatley	✓
	Cllr Gerry Roodhouse (LD) (1)		TBC	
North Warwickshire DC	Cllr Colin Hayfield (C) (1)	A	Cllr Les Smith	✓
Nuneaton & Bedworth BC	Cllr David Bryden (C) (1)		Cllr Marcus Jones	
Rugby BC	Cllr Craig Humphrey (C) (1)	A	Cllr D Poole Cllr Neil Campbell	A ✓
Stratford-on-Avon DC	Cllr C J Saint (C) (1)	✓	Cllr L Topham	
Warwick DC	Cllr John Hammon (C)	A	Cllr Alan	

	(1)		Rhead Cllr Illingworth	✓
Worcestershire County Council (6)	Cllr George Lord (C) (3)	A	Cllr A Hardman	✓
	Cllr Liz Tucker (L) (2)		Cllr Tom Wells	
Bromsgrove DC	Cllr R Hollingworth (C) (1)	✓	Cllr Geoff Denaro	
Malvern Hills DC	Cllr Philip Grove (C) (1)	✓	Cllr Joe Smith	
Redditch BC	Cllr Carole Gandy (C) (1)	A	Cllr Michael Braley	✓
Worcester City	Cllr S Geraghty (C) (1)	A	Cllr Roger Knight	A
Wychavon DC	Cllr Paul Middlebrough (C) (1)	✓	Cllr Judy Pearce	
Wyre Forest DC	Cllr J Campion (C) (1)		TBA	
WMBC	David Caro	A	Prof. Gerald Bennett	
WMBC	Prof. Michael Clarke		Martin Chambers	
WMBC	Barrie Williams	A	Prithvi Choprah	
WMBC	Arthur Hill		Hilary Hall	
WMBC	Mike Hill	✓	Malcolm Smyth	
WMBC	Frances Beatty	✓	Deborah Walsh	
WMBC	Geoff Minshull		Gary Saunders	
WMBC	Richard Moxon		Parminder Singh	
WMBC	Paul Kalinauckas		Bruce Undy	
WMBC	Laura Cohen		Tony Rodger	
WMBC	Michael Mason		Sir William Lawrence	✓
WMBC	Sarindar Singh Sahota	✓	Roger Culcheth	✓
WMBC	Roger Stone	✓	Julian Dolman	✓
WMBC	Brian Summers	✓		
WMBC	Roger Trotman	✓		

WMBC	Sarah Faulkner			
OSG	Roger McKenzie	✓	Valerie Broom Retired	
OSG	Revd John Hall	✓	Alan Weaver	
OSG	Marcia Lewinson			
OSG	Elisabeth Buggins	A		
OSG	Howard Farrand		Donald Mackintosh	
OSG	Natalie Hall		Vaughan Owen	✓
OSG	Chris Welch		Anna Sterckx	
OSG	Paul Tennant	✓	Richard Quallingham	
OSG	Mike Barnes	✓		
OSG	Patricia Fairclough			
OSG	Roger Evans	A		
OSG	Gerald Kells	✓		
OSG	Mike Kinghan	✓		
OSG	Elizabeth Newman	✓		
OSG	Ranjit Bansal	✓		