

WEST MIDLANDS REGIONAL ASSEMBLY  
8 July 2009

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Decision Notes of the West Midlands Regional Assembly Meeting  
Held on 22 April 2009  
At Staffordshire County Council

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. **Chairman and Vice Chairs reports**

***The Chairman:***

Gave thanks and gratitude to Cllr Terry Dix who would be retiring from Staffordshire on 18 June 2009.

He had known Cllr Dix for over 30 years and gave, not only his personal thanks, but that of West Midlands Local Government Association, the West Midlands Regional Assembly and the County Council – all of which Cllr Dix had served loyally. He wished Cllr Dix a long and happy retirement.

Olwen Dutton, Chief Executive also gave thanks to Cllr Dix on behalf of the Secretariat for his valued support to the Assembly over many years.

Advised members of Shropshire CC becoming a unitary and the absence of Cllrs from Shropshire Districts who would be re-seeking election to Shropshire Council in June.

***The Vice Chair - Cllr Terry Dix - Local Government Sector:***

Thanked the Chairman and expressed his enjoyment at working with Assembly members from the Assembly's inception. He applauded the partnership working strength of the Assembly and hoped that this would continue long into the future under any new arrangements.

He advised that, though retiring from the County Council and his Councillor duties, he intended to continue his work as a member of the Other Stakeholder Group.

***The Chairman:***

Continued by also giving thanks to:

- Valerie Broom for the contributions she had made to the Assembly and partnership working. He advised that she would be retiring next April but, in the meantime, she will be Managing a National Project looking at Women's Participation in UNISON.
- Nick Paul (Chairman, Advantage West Midlands) for his valuable contributions to the work of the Assembly. Nick had completed his term of Chairmanship at AWM and would be replaced by Sir Roy McNaulty.
- Cllr Richard Hyde (Stratford/Warwickshire) who would not be seeking re-election. Cllr Hyde had also been a Member on the AWM Board.
- Reminded Members that the RSS Phase Two EiP would commence on 28 April 2009. Emphasised that the RSS was the most important piece of work done by the Assembly in collaboration with all Partners who had provided invaluable contributions.
- Highlighted the continued need for a yearly conference with the Welsh Assembly to continue the discussions regarding health, highways, leisure and tourism.

***Vice Chair - Business Sector: Mr Sarindar Sahota***

Endorsed the Chairman's and Vice Chair's words regarding Partnership working and also gave the Business Sectors thanks to those Members retiring/standing down.

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

Informed Members that the Business Council had received a letter from the construction sector who had written to WMBC to thank them for their contributions to the Construction Action Plan.

***The Vice-Chair – OSG Sector: Elizabeth Newman (for Roger McKenzie)***

Advised Members that the OSG were currently considering their work commitments and member organisations and working on a discussion paper that would go to their Transition Team.

**4. Draft Decision Notes of the Assembly Meeting held on 14 January 2009**

**AGREED**

**5. Matters Arising**

To include the following Members on the attendance list for 14 January 2009:

Cllr Brian Ward (Stoke-on-Trent)

Mike Barnes (OSG)

Marcia Lewinson (OSG)

Patricia Fairclough (OSG) and

Frances Beatty (WMBC)

Brian Summers (WMBC)

***Item 12 – Eco-Towns, Middle Quinton Judicial Review***

Members requested that an amended recommendation be made and should read: -

“Agree in principle unless it is not in agreement with the RSS, ***but the inclusion of Middle Quinton is not sustainable.***”

***Item 7- Company Secretary's Report***

**d)** Roger Stone and Roger Evans queried the Membership of the Assembly Board and asked whether they will still be Directors on the Board.

They were advised that Membership to the Board had not been altered. Clarification of any outstanding queries regarding Memberships could be sought at the next meeting of the Board on 10 June 2009.

**6. Progress on SNR Change Management Programme**

Members received a report and were requested to comment and endorse the proposed SNR Change Management Programme and Time Line. The Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Bill was still working its way through the House of Commons – Royal Assent is expected in late Summer or early Autumn 2009.

In-depth discussion followed and the following comments were made: -

- Reinforcement of the benefits of partnership working needed to continue. It was requested that partnership working continues on the 'top table'.
- The policies outlined in the report around partnership engagement were welcomed.
- The report only made a small mention on communications – more emphasis is needed regarding this. Members requested that the notes from the JSIB be made available on the Assembly Website.
- Members queried the way forward regarding consultation and engagement and were advised that, at this stage, no new 'architecture' would be set up until the Bill has gone through Parliament but the key message would be to keep communicating. Government will advise us how to do things and would be premature to set up anything in stone now. However, the transition team are continuing to have conversations with the OSG and Business Council and the importance to continue to canvass these views is recognised.
- The liaison and support from Partners is a continuing issue – partners need the reassurance that this will continue; show that partnership working is successful and has helped gain valuable expertise.
- The Business sector can provide an independent voice on business issues, local authorities have a political perspective and AWM has a Government perspective.

Following discussion Members **NOTED** the progress of the SNR Change Management Programme.

## 7. **Chief Executive and Company Secretary's Report**

The Assembly was provided with an update on general issues:

- 2008-09 Year End Progress Report
- 2009-10 Business Plan & Budget
- Retrofitting for the Future – Low Carbon Housing
- The Strategic Forum for Central Wales and the West Midlands
- Equality & Diversity Team

The Assembly **NOTED** the report.

## 8. **Economic Downturn**

Members received reports from the Chief Executive, WMBC and the OSG which outlined the implications for their Sector arising from the Economic Downturn.

The reports also updated Members of the work each Sector is undertaking around the Economic situation:

### **Chief Executive, WMRA**

Advised that the economic downturn had formally moved into recession with the West Midlands being particularly badly hit. This was in part due to the relatively high presence of automotive, construction and manufacturing businesses in the West Midlands compared to other regions.

While forecasts varied as to the depth and length of the recession, it was likely that it would have profound impacts around the region and require an extended recovery period.

### **WMBC**

Reported that the Business Community welcomed the report of the West Midlands Local Government Association, and supported the steps being taken by local government to help local communities during this very difficult period. WMBC supported this work and made the following recommendations for further action.

Close partnerships with business are essential if investment in public works can be developed in such a way that there was pump priming in local economy. By working with businesses, the areas of investment can be identified that would do the greatest good to the local economy.

Local authorities could work with other agencies so procurement plans had a big and positive impact on the economy. This was technically called Forward Commitment Procurement or FCP and the Government had produced detailed guidance to help councils and others deliver greater 'bang' for the public sector

### **OSG**

Highlighted that Cannock and Staffordshire had the highest level of unemployment. Green employment needed to be sustainable – biofields meant that the price of food was increasing. The introduction of electric cars was also a concern – with the increase in electricity prices.

Advised that there are approximately 1390 charities within the region at risk of closure due to the recession, skilled workers are at risk when they are most needed for rebuilding.

At the end of March RAWM with the Regional Minister had launched their 'Economic Footprint'. They had a conference arranged in April which was now fully subscribed.

The Assembly **NOTED** the reports.

**9. Parliamentary Regional Accountability – West Midlands Select Committee**

The Assembly was provided with an update on progress in establishing the West Midlands Select Committee.

The Assembly **NOTED** the position to date.

Members requested and it was **AGREED** that this be reported back to the July meeting of the Regional Assembly.

**FOR INFORMATION**

The following items were for information only and were **NOTED**.

**10. Regional Policy Partnerships Activity**

The Assembly were updated on key issues undertaken by the Secretariat on behalf of the Board and Assembly Partnerships over the last quarter.

**11. RSS Phase Two Revision and Phase Three:**

The Assembly were informed of the arrangements for the RSS Phase 2 Examination in Public and were updated on RSS Phases 2 and 3.

The Members of the Assembly requested that their thanks and appreciation be conveyed to the Planning Team, Local Authorities and all Partners for all of their hard work and commitment over the last 4 years with regards to the RSS Phases One, Two and Three.

**12. Decisions of the Board of Directors:**

- a) **Special Meeting 25 February 2009**
- b) **25 March 2009**

**13. Advantage West Midlands Non Confidential Board Report**  
Noted

**14. Any Other Business**

There was no other business stated.

**15. Date of Next Meeting: 8 July 2009 – Solihull MBC**

Noted and Agreed

## Appendix

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

<b>Authority</b>	<b>Full Member</b>	<b>ATT</b>	<b>Alternate Member</b>	<b>ATT</b>
<b>Birmingham City Council (21)</b>	Cllr Mike Whitby (C) (9)	<b>A</b>	Cllr Len Gregory	
	Cllr Sir Albert Bore (L) (6)	✓	Cllr Ian Ward	
	Cllr Paul Tilsley (LD) (6)	<b>A</b>	Cllr Ray Hassall	
<b>Coventry City Council (7)</b>	Cllr Ken Taylor (C) (4)	✓	Cllr Kevin Foster	
	Cllr John Mutton (L) (3)	✓	Cllr George Duggins	
<b>Dudley MBC (7)</b>	Cllr Ken Turner (C) (4)	✓	Cllr Adams	
	Cllr David Sparkes (L) (3)	✓	Cllr S Ali	
<b>Solihull MBC (5)</b>	Cllr K Meeson (C) (3)		Cllr Sleigh	
	Cllr Corser (L) (1)		Cllr Hill	
	Cllr N Davies (LD) (1)	✓	Cllr T Hodgson	
<b>Sandwell MBC (7)</b>	Cllr S Eling (L) (5)	✓	Cllr W Thomas	
	Cllr A Ward (C) (1)		Cllr M Docker	
	Cllr S Smith (LD) (1)		Cllr J Underhill	
<b>Walsall MBC (7)</b>	Cllr O'Hare (C) (4)		Cllr Andrew	
	Cllr Chambers (L) (2)		Cllr Oliver	
	Cllr D Shires (LD) (1)		Cllr I Shires	
<b>Wolverhampton City Council (6)</b>	Cllr N Patten (C) (4)		Cllr B Findlay	
	Cllr Bilson (L) (2)	✓	Cllr T Singh	✓
<b>Herefordshire Council (4)</b>	Cllr Roger Phillips (C) (2)		Cllr H Bramer	
	Cllr Terry James (LD) (1)	✓	TBA	
	Cllr J BWilliams (I) (1)	✓	TBA	
<b>Stoke-on-Trent City Council (5)</b>	Cllr Joy Garner (L) (1)		Cllr Mark Davis	
	Cllr James (City Indep.) (1)	<b>A</b>	Cllr Brian Ward	✓*
	Cllr Ibbs (C and I A) (1)		Cllr Lee Wanger	
	Cllr Jean Bowers (LD) (1)		Cllr Paul Billington	
	Cllr Alby Walker (BNP) (1)		Cllr A Simmonds	

<b>Telford &amp; Wrekin (3)</b>	Cllr E J Carter (C)		Cllr I Fletcher	
	Cllr K Austin (L)	✓	Cllr C F Smith	
<b>Shropshire Council (5)</b>	Cllr M Pate (C) (3)		Cllr J Gillow	
	Cllr Peter Francis (LD) (1)		Cllr Nigel Hartin	✓
	Cllr Alan Mosley (L) (1)		Cllr Philip Box	
<b>Staffordshire County Council (8)</b>	Cllr T Dix (L)	✓	Cllr J Taylor	
	Cllr R Roberts (C)	✓	Cllr P Atkins	✓
<b>Cannock Chase DC</b>	Cllr N Stanley (LD) (1)	✓	Cllr T Williams	
<b>East Staffordshire BC</b>	Cllr A Fox (C) (1)		Cllr David Brookes	
<b>Lichfield DC</b>	Cllr D Smith (C) (1)	✓	Cllr N Roberts	
<b>Newcastle-under-Lyme BC</b>	Cllr Simon Tagg (C) (1)		Cllr Robin Studd (LD)	
<b>South Staffordshire DC</b>	Cllr B Edwards (C) (1)		Cllr Billson	
<b>Stafford BC</b>	Cllr J Highfield (C) (1)		Cllr W Davis	✓
<b>Staffordshire Moorlands DC</b>	Cllr S Ralphs (C&IA) (1)		Cllr A Forrester	
<b>Tamworth BC</b>	Cllr Jeremy Oates (C) (1)		Cllr Danny Cook	
<b>Warwickshire County Council (5)</b>	Cllr Hyde (C) (3)	✓		
	Cllr Mick Jones (L) (2)	✓	VACANT	
	Cllr Heatley			
<b>North Warwickshire DC</b>	Cllr Colin Hayfield (C) (1)		Cllr Les Smith	<b>A</b>
<b>Nuneaton &amp; Bedworth BC</b>	Cllr David Bryden (C) (1)		Cllr Marcus Jones	
<b>Rugby BC</b>	Cllr N P Campbell (C) (1)	✓	Cllr D Poole	
<b>Stratford-on-Avon DC</b>	Cllr C J Saint (C) (1)	✓	Cllr L Topham	
<b>Warwick DC</b>	Cllr John Hammon (C) (1)	<b>A</b>	Cllr Alan Rhead	
<b>Worcestershire County Council (6)</b>	Cllr George Lord (C) (3)	<b>A</b>	Cllr A Hardman	✓*
	Cllr John Buckley (L) (2)		Cllr Peter Pinfield	✓

	Cllr Liz Tucker LD (1)	<b>A</b>	Cllr Tom Wells	
<b>Bromsgrove DC</b>	Cllr R Hollingworth (C) (1)		Cllr J Griffiths	✓
<b>Malvern Hills DC</b>	Cllr Serena Croad (C) (1)		Cllr R Madden	
<b>Redditch BC</b>	Cllr Carole Gandy (C) (1)	<b>A</b>	Cllr Michael Braley	
<b>Worcester City</b>	Cllr S Geraghty (C) (1)		Cllr B Mackenzie-Williams	
<b>Wychavon DC</b>	Cllr Paul Middlebrough (C) (1)	✓	Cllr Judy Pearce	
<b>Wyre Forest DC</b>	Cllr J Champion (C) (1)		TBA	
<b>WMBC</b>	David Caro	✓	Prof. Gerald Bennett	
<b>WMBC</b>	Prof. Michael Clarke		Martin Chambers	
<b>WMBC</b>	Barrie Williams		Prithvi Choprah	
<b>WMBC</b>	Arthur Hill		Hilary Hall	
<b>WMBC</b>	Mike Hill		Malcolm Smyth	
<b>WMBC</b>	Frances Beatty	✓	Deborah Walsh	✓
<b>WMBC</b>	Geoff Minshull		Gary Saunders	
<b>WMBC</b>	Richard Moxon		Parminder Singh	
<b>WMBC</b>	Paul Kalinauckas		Bruce Undy	
<b>WMBC</b>	Laura Cohen	✓	Tony Rodger	
<b>WMBC</b>	Michael Mason		Sir William Lawrence	✓
<b>WMBC</b>	Sarindar Singh Sahota	✓	Roger Culcheth	<b>A</b>
<b>WMBC</b>	Roger Stone	✓	Julian Dolman	✓
<b>WMBC</b>	Brian Summers	✓		
<b>WMBC</b>	Roger Trotman			
<b>WMBC</b>	Sarah Faulkner			
<b>OSG</b>	Roger McKenzie	<b>A</b>	<del>Valerie Broom</del> Retired	
<b>OSG</b>	Revd John Hall		Alan Weaver	

<b>OSG</b>	Marcia Lewinson	✓	Yann Lovelock	<b>A</b>
<b>OSG</b>	Elisabeth Buggins			
<b>OSG</b>	Howard Farrand		Donald Mackintosh	<b>A</b>
<b>OSG</b>	Natalie Hall		Vaughan Owen	
<b>OSG</b>	Chris Welch		Anna Sterckx	
<b>OSG</b>	<del>Richard Bubb Retired</del>		Richard Quallingham	
<b>OSG</b>	Mike Barnes	✓		
<b>OSG</b>	Patricia Fairclough	✓		
<b>OSG</b>	Roger Evans	✓		
<b>OSG</b>	Gerald Kells	✓		
<b>OSG</b>	Mike Kinghan	✓		
<b>OSG</b>	Elizabeth Newman	✓		