

WEST MIDLANDS REGIONAL ASSEMBLY

Assembly Board of Directors – 30 September 2009

Regional Spatial Strategy Phase Three

Supplementary Report

1. This was considered by the Regional Planning and Environment Executive at their meeting on the 22nd September 2009. Under the changes to the Assembly's operating arrangements agreed last year, the matter is now referred to the Assembly Board for decision, as the decision about Phase 3 takes the matter outside the Assembly's existing policy.
2. The Executive felt that the advice to be given to the Board should emphasise a reluctance to abandon the Phase 3 Revision process. The Board will note that this is contrary to the officer advice contained in the report, which recommended the curtailment of the Phase 3 process and the taking forward of the individual topic areas as Interim Policy Statements or as advice to the future 'Strategy for the West Midlands'. The Executive, however, felt that weight must be given to the fact that the Phase 3 Revision was well advanced and the policy areas within it were of concern to the region's local planning authorities who are looking for early guidance for their Local Development Frameworks and would accordingly regret any delay in progressing regional policy in their key areas.
3. The Executive meets again on 14th October by which time we would expect to have received the RSS Phase 2 Panel Report. In terms of taking this forward, the advice from the Executive to the Board is that clarification should be sought from CLG (via GOWM) on the following matters:

- a) That work undertaken to date through the Phase 3 Revision can be 'banked' and counted as part of the preparation process for the new strategy; and,
- b) In the interim, weight will be given to Interim Policy Statements (for individual topic areas covered by Phase 3) in decisions on Local Development Frameworks and major planning applications.

Finally, the Executive would ask the Board to confirm that when the matter of Phase 3 is raised at the JS&IB the Assembly provides their view that priority should be given to the preparation of the new Strategy for the West Midlands instead of completing the Phase 3 Revision Process.

Recommendation

That the Board endorse this approach.

Cllr Rex Roberts
Chairman
Regional Planning and Environment Executive

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