

WEST MIDLANDS REGIONAL ASSEMBLY

Assembly Board of Directors Notes of a meeting held on 15 January 2010 at the Regional Partnership Centre

Attendance: Cllr David Smith, Chairman (Staffordshire)

Cllrs: Rex Roberts, OBE (Staffordshire), Chris Saint (Stratford-on-Avon), Bob Badham (Sandwell), David Sparks (Dudley), Beris Williams (Herefordshire), Keith Austin (Telford & Wrekin) and Albert Bore (Birmingham)

Business Sector: Roger Stone

OSG: Roger McKenzie

In attendance:

Olwen Dutton (WMLB/WMRA), Sharon Britton (WMLB/WMRA), Sharon Phillips (WMLB), Mark Middleton (WMRA), John Pattinson (WMLB/WMRA), Joe Bates (Clement Keys) and Steve Horrocks (Clement Keys)

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Barrie Williams (Business Voice WM), Cllr Roger Phillips (Herefordshire), Rvd John Hall (OSG), Sarinder Sahota (Business Voice WM), Cllr John Lines (Birmingham), Elizabeth Newman (OSG), Cllr Ken Taylor (Coventry) and Frances Beatty (Business Voice WM)

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest stated.

3. Chairman and Vice Chair's Verbal Reports

The Chairman

Welcomed members to what was possibly the last Board meeting and thanked them for their continued support and attendance.

Advised that they were going forward to the final meeting in March at Lichfield where he hoped that all outstanding business would be finalised in good order.

Roger Stone for Sarinder Sahota - Vice Chairman, Business Sector – advised:

Business Voice WM had launched the Regional Construction Plan in December, Clothing and Textiles and reducing levels of crime

Roger McKenzie, Vice Chairman OSG had nothing further to report from the last meeting.

The Chairman went on to advise that Agenda Item 6 would be moved up

the agenda to be presented before Item 5.

Congratulated Alison McClean and Trudi Elliott for their recent OBE's in the Queens New Years Honours list and also to Cllr Peter Box, his counterpart in Yorkshire and Humber.

Advised that Rvd John Hall would be resigning and he would write to formally thank him on behalf of the Assembly for the active and consistent role he had played in the work of the WMRA.

Roger McKenzie added that he would like to give his personal thanks and those of the OSG to John, especially for his outstanding role as the Chairman of the Review Group on Equality and Diversity.

4. Notes of the last meeting

Amendment to spelling on Page – change quorum to quorate.

The notes were **AGREED** as a true record subject to above amendment being made.

Matters Arising

Page 2 Paper on Achievements of the WMRA

Members were advised that a journalist was gaining individual interview and the Head of Communications was putting these together. The work is progressing steadily.

6. Proposal for Winding up the Regional Assembly

The Board received a report, the purpose of which was to:

Consult on a proposed process for winding up the West Midlands Regional Assembly and other related issues and to provide them with an opportunity to seek the advice of the auditors, Clement Keys, and agree the most appropriate method for wind up.

Following discussion, the Board **APPROVED** the process for the wind up of the Assembly including **Members Voluntary Liquidation**

AGREED to delegate to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairs any general decisions arising during the process of winding up including whether to put in place run-off insurance and;

PASSED a resolution not to enter into any new contracts after 1 April 2010 in preparation for winding up the affairs of the Assembly

5. Company Secretary's Report

The Board were provided with an update on the following general corporate and financial issues:

Potential Redundancy Liability for Living Well

The Board was asked and Members **AGREED** the principle that any sum not covered by the BIG Lottery project funding should be transferred from Assembly reserves to WMLB. This sum would be held on account by WMLB to meet the potential liability should it fall due at the end of the project. If this sum was not required in the fullness of time, then the funds would be transferred to the WMLB reserves and treated as a transferred asset of the Assembly.

Cessation of remaining Portfolios

The Board was recommended and **AGREED** to **NOTE** that the remaining portfolios detailed in the report would cease as of 31 March 2010 and that accordingly, the associated posts of Portfolio Holders would also cease.

Memorandum of Understanding

It was requested that the Board **NOTED** the report.

7. Regional Spatial Strategy Phase Two – Verbal Update

The Board received a verbal update from Mark Middleton, Director of Policy.

He advised that the proposed changes were still awaited. This was due to the Minister seeking legal advice on the process arrangements. Mark was confident that any work carried out on behalf of the Assembly was correct and that Officers had assisted GOWM in producing a dossier of documents. It was hoped that the proposed changes would be ready by February 2010.

The Board **NOTED** the verbal report.

8. Regional Spatial Strategy Phase Three

The Board was updated on the process and timetable for developing Interim Policy Statements and Policy Recommendations for the RSS Phase Three workstreams and were provided with Draft Interim Policy Statements and Policy Recommendations for their consideration and approval in principle.

The Board was advised and agreed that difficult decisions were required in respect of both Gypsy and Travellers and Aggregates provision. The former would come, following a further round of consultation, to the Assembly for a final decision in March 2010. In respect of the latter, the Board recognised the difficulties and noted the strong opinions expressed by Staffordshire authorities that the current aggregates apportionment placed an undue burden on that County area. The Interim Policy Statement for Aggregates would be considered by RPEE but this too may require final approval in March 2010 by the Assembly.

The report recommended and the Board:

- (a) **Noted** the updated timetable for developing Interim Policy Statements and Policy Recommendations
- (b) ***Considered and approved** in principle the broad thrust of the Draft Interim Policy Statements and Policy Recommendations – the proposed guiding principles are outlined in Appendices C to U.
- (c) **Delegated** to Regional Planning & Environment Executive (RPEE) on 23rd February 2010 to consider and approve refined versions of the Interim Policy Statements and Policy Recommendations, except Appendix D, and subject to the point made above about Aggregates.
- (d) **Agreed** a further round of consultation on Appendix D (Gypsy & Travellers) Interim Policy Statement with a view to a final decision being taken by the full Assembly in March 2010.
- (e) **Agreed** to forward the final package of Interim Policy Statements and Policy Recommendations to Joint Strategy & Investment Board (JSIB) on 23 March for their ratification in anticipation of its new role from April 2010.

***Roger Stone abstained from this recommendation.**

9. Date of Next Meeting

TBA – July 2010

For Information:-

The following reports were for information and were duly **NOTED** by the Board.

10. Policy Activity Report

11. Notes of the last Assembly meeting held on 23 October 2009

12. Draft Agenda for 17 March Assembly Meeting

13. AWM Non Confidential Board Notes

14. Any Other Business