

## Notes of European Strategy Board meeting held 19 February 2010 at the Regional Partnership Centre

### PRESENT:

#### Members

Cllr Sir Albert Bore (WMLB/CoR) – Chair, Denise Craig (FSB), Cllr Pauline Dee (CLRAE/Shropshire Council), Rebecca Harding (representing Malcolm Harbour MEP), Andrew Illsley (representing Mike Natrass MEP), Cllr Roger Lawrence (WMLB), Doug Mahoney (UKTI WM/AWM), Isabella Moore (COMTEC), Cllr Ken Taylor (WMLB), Cllr Paul Tilsley (WMLB), Simon Topman (CWMCC)

#### Officers

Jon Bloomfield (AWM), Alan Durham (Coventry and Warwickshire Chamber), Olwen Dutton (WMLB/WMRA), Paul Hanna (Birmingham Chamber/EASN), Esther Knight (WMRA), Dally Panesar (WMRA), Richard Tuffs (WMiE), Louise Chilton (WMLB)

Item	Discussion and Decision	Action
1.	<p><b>Apologies</b> Apologies had been received from: Cllr Philip Atkins (WMLB), David Brown (Chair, West Midlands in Europe), Mike Cherry (FSB), Chris Crean (WMRSF), Tim Gebbels (AWM), Malcolm Harbour MEP, Cllr Martin Heatley (WMLB), Steve Kennett (GOWM), David Llewellyn (WMHEA), Liz Lynne MEP, Mike Natrass MEP, Cllr Judy Pearce (CoR), Julie Robson (LSC), Nikki Sinclair MEP, Cllr David S Smith (WMLB), Patrick Willcocks (Chair REFPG).</p>	
2.	<p><b>Notes of 27 November meeting and matters arising</b> The notes were <b>agreed</b> as a correct record of the meeting subject to one alteration: <u>Item 11 the West Midlands Regional Strategy: Learning from European Best Practice</u> - line 3 to be changed to read "...to improve the language skills of the Region".</p> <p><b>Matters Arising</b> <u>Item 4 Significant Events: European Automotive Strategy Network Conference (Meeting the Challenges and Opportunities of a Post-Copenhagen World) held in Birmingham on 28 January:</u> The EASN brings together clusters and regions across Europe with significant automotive industry, particularly at supply chain tier 2 and below. The Conference had gone very well. Issues addressed included environmental challenges and the effectiveness of support during the current economic crisis. A full written Conference report would be available. Outputs included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Profile</b> – 110 participants had attended. Speakers included Jon King (Director of Corus Automotive Engineering), Josef Frank (CLEPA - the European Association of Automotive Suppliers) and Wolf Jäcklein (Policy Advisor at the European Metalworking Federation). Some speakers had stayed to participate in the conference following their own speaker slots. There had been good quality input question and answer sessions.</li> <li>• <b>SMEs</b> - EASN provides advice to and support for the tier 2 and below supply chain and the conference examined developing collaboration with SMEs.</li> </ul>	LC

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Bidding</b> – Following EASN’s successful INTERREG IV bid on electric vehicles (ENEVATE), a workshop took place on future bidding priorities.</li> </ul> <p>The conference had been filmed with live comment available, a different approach that had been successful and had demonstrated both the change in the automotive industry and its willingness to embrace modern communications.</p> <p>ESB members agreed that there was a need for a common understanding on employers’ requirements with regard to levels of skills and on how to engage and be responsive to employers. This long term difficult problem requires organisations to work with others and engage others on their behalf.</p> <p>It was also reported that the CARS21 (Competitive Automotive Regulatory System for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century) high level group would be relaunched with a wider stakeholder group and this may be an opportunity for EASN to put forward its candidature.</p> <p><u>Item 11 The West Midlands Regional Strategy: Result of ESPON Priority 2 call (Identifying and Exchanging Best Practice in Developing Regional Integrated Strategies in Europe (RISE):</u> A press release giving details of this successful ESPON bid was tabled. The funding provided would enable the hire of consultants for advice and guidance. AB reported that the Commissioner for Regional Policy had taken a keen interest in this.</p> <p>Working with other regions and identifying best practice would assist the development of a strong regional strategy for the West Midlands. Although the West Midlands and its partners (Randstad in the Netherlands, Sjaelland in Denmark and Västerbotten in Sweden) would receive the funding, it was also planned to involve other regions that had provided assistance but for various reasons could not sign up to the bid. This would help to give the project greater breadth.</p> <p>All involved were congratulated on the success of the bid.</p>	
	<p><b>For Discussion</b></p>	
<p><b>3.</b></p>	<p><b>Update on Developing Regional Priorities and New Structures for Regional European Working</b></p> <p>The Regional Assembly’s final meeting would take place on 17 March. The Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 requires that local authorities working collectively through Leaders Boards and regional development agencies work together to develop , deliver and monitor the new single regional strategy. In the West Midlands this had resulted in the agreement to establish a Joint Strategy and Investment Board (JS&amp;IB) made up of six leaders of local authorities in the Region and up to six members of the RDA Board. Future working arrangements would be focused more strongly around subregional arrangements; it was also important to have a regional framework within which regional working could continue.</p> <p>JSIB work is concentrated around the economic position of the West Midlands and a strategy is needed to meet the Region’s serious challenges which date back to the 1970s. To assist with this it will be necessary to maximise the benefits available from Europe in the forms of both structural</p>	

	<p>and non-structural funding. As Europe is not yet embedded in regional working the reality that for example 70% of legislation coming from Europe is not widely appreciated; the ESB must continue under the JSIB to drive forward the organisation around European working and maximise and develop the European agenda, taking the lead role and recommending actions. Local Government must take the lead in driving the agenda forward; this would be helped by the success of the ESPON bid.</p> <p>The Leaders Board was also in the process of establishing a single European team which would also include a virtual team of the most appropriate officers to maximise the benefits available for the Region. A new Head of European Services had been appointed to lead that team.</p> <p>During discussion the following comments were made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It was emphasised that local authorities must take the lead in looking at European legislation rather than the RDA, which is briefed by Government specifically not to focus on European legislation</li> <li>• The Region was beginning to reap the benefits of the success of EU Connects. EU Connects were asked to make it clear in their evaluation report for 2009 that ERDF support for previously approved training activities for EUC staff was no longer allowed due to a change in the regulations (see p 23).</li> <li>• It would be helpful to indicate the value of each bid as well as the number of bids in the table showing the number of submitted and successful bids supported by EU Connects in 2009 (see p 27). Some bids are easier to go forward than others which experience problems due to the economy (eg LIFE+, INTERREG and Marie Curie bids).</li> <li>• The same point applies for ERDF and ESF – the Region must be more intelligent and think more strategically as to how to utilise funding.</li> <li>• The issue about legislative output from Europe needs to be addressed before it gets to Parliament. One way would be to maximise whatever resources there are, eg representation at the Committee of the Regions. Another suggestion was for constituent members to examine different sections of legislation.</li> <li>• There were some good opportunities for SMEs; however, although EUC provides an excellent service, bidding is a difficult process for SMEs. EU Connects is aware of this and is examining methods used by other regions regarding SME engagement.</li> </ul> <p>It was <b>agreed</b>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• OD to discuss with AB and KT re how to develop the Board and take these issues forward.</li> </ul>	<p>EK/EUC</p> <p>EK/EUC</p> <p>EUC</p> <p>OD/AB/ KT</p>
<p><b>4.</b></p>	<p><b>EU2020 Group agenda and Timetable for Engagement in European Policy Agenda</b></p> <p>The Region needs to increase its focus on policy developments in Europe and also decide how to practically engage in these deliberations, particularly on cohesion policy. The EU is poised to produce a new strategic framework under the EU2020 strategy with the proposed key priorities of creating value by basing growth on knowledge, empowering people in inclusive societies and creating a competitive, connected and greener economy. These three priorities match three out of the four priorities set out by the West Midlands in the European Strategy, within the context of the fourth priority, the Single Market. The Region has responded to the consultation.</p>	

	<p>Some of the key policy issues will be discussed by the RDI Group and some, such as the Fifth Cohesion Report, by the EU 2020 Group led by Patrick Willcocks.</p> <p>Awareness must be raised in the Region about the debate over the future of structural funding and the potential loss of over €500m to the Region post 2013. ESB Agreement was therefore sought to a single joint approach to do this.</p> <p>The Region's membership of the Lisbon Regions Network (LRN) is also a way to take this work forward. It had been proposed to change the network's name to the EU2020 network. At its forthcoming annual conference the network will discuss getting a regional dimension into EU2020 via the network and ensuring sharing best practice examples of influencing EU2020.</p> <p>It was <b>agreed</b>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That the Region has an overall approach to lobbying for the future of structural funding based on the Region's response to EU 2020 and the EU 2020 Group needs to take this forward reporting to the ESB/JS&amp;IB as appropriate.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>5.</b></p>	<p><b>Climate KIC: A Significant Step Change for Regional European Engagement</b></p> <p>Following a presentation on the successful KIC bid ESB members put forward and received answers to the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who are Pioneers in Practice and what do they look like?</li> <li>• Will rural areas be catered for as well as cities?</li> </ul> <p>Board members were assured that the KIC would be looking for a mixture of settings including urban and rural, private, public and university research, large and small companies. It is an elite programme to attract the best companies that can take advantage of it, whether in a rural or urban setting. Concerns were expressed regarding how to ensure that SMEs could benefit and how to track down the right companies. Although a win for the Region, JB explained that it is not a mass wholesale programme and the KIC team does not want to raise false hopes. It was important that everyone would be made fully aware of the opportunities as a result of the regional launch on 9 March. DC to discuss with JB.</p> <p>It was <b>agreed</b>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to welcome the Region's success in winning the bid</li> <li>• to ensure that efforts are made to maximise the KIC's potential</li> <li>• to publicise the KIC's potential and to promote the regional launch on 9 March</li> <li>• OD to discuss with JB how the KIC fits in with regional priorities, how to use it and how the ESB can assist.</li> </ul>	<p>ALL ALL ALL OD/JB</p>
<p><b>6.</b></p>	<p><b>Update on European social Cohesion Group (verbal) and Presentation on the OPEN Project</b></p> <p>The Social Cohesion Group had met once since September and revised the group action plan and group membership. Seven people from the first stage of the OPEN project had been invited to join the group</p> <p>OPEN is a two year transnational project with European partners to raise and encourage debate at local, national and European level on how to</p>	

	<p>tackle issues around social exclusion and to encourage European policy makers to take action and develop the agenda around social exclusion. All European partners had completed the first stage of the project, and partners were now starting work on an action plan. People had been very willing to engage and to talk about good work being done. Reports would be available shortly on the WMLB website.</p> <p>Results from OPEN in the Region mirror those from Europe. It was hoped to establish an overarching report of recommendations. The Assembly was working with RAWM on this project – some of the work would feed back into the JSIB.</p> <p>Stage 2 (policy engagement) would begin with an event in Dresden on 19-22 April at which case studies would be presented to EU Commissioners. There would be a West Midlands Regional event on 27 April targeting 80 people, 30 from a grass roots perspective.</p> <p>The Region had also been successful in a bid to EY2010 in which Europe was looking at combating poverty and social exclusion. The Lead partner was Birmingham City University, with the ESCG partnering with them. There were different stages of this with the European level being an awareness raising campaign. Each region was allowed to apply for funding, with €30,000 allocated to the West Midlands. Focus areas included child poverty and disabled people and other vulnerable groups.</p> <p>Several events would take place between the end of August and the end of October to raise awareness.</p> <p>Further details can be found on:  <a href="http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&amp;catId=637">http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&amp;catId=637</a>  <a href="http://www.wmleadersboard.gov.uk/projects">http://www.wmleadersboard.gov.uk/projects</a></p>	
	<p><b>For Information</b></p>	
<p><b>7(a)</b></p>	<p><b>Update on Committee of the Regions working arrangements (verbal)</b>  West Midlands Members for the new term are AB, Cllr Judy Pearce (Wychavon) and Cllr Martin Heatley (Warwickshire) as Alternate. The CoR met on 9/10 February for its inaugural meeting. Commission (committee) workplans were not yet in place but would be discussed at ESB when available.</p>	
<p><b>7(b)</b></p>	<p><b>Final CoR Discussion Paper on Urban Mobility Future</b>  The draft opinion was circulated as an illustration of how European institutions work and how regions can use their resources such as the CoR to influence policy and thereby to help themselves – eg points 42 and 43 of the report encourages the Commission to bring forward a directive that requires large urban areas to put in place sustainable mobility plans.</p> <p>It was <b>agreed</b> to note the Draft Opinion.</p>	
<p><b>8.</b></p>	<p><b>Significant Events for the Coming Six Months</b>  The Board was updated on events related to the delivery of the European Strategy, in particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An EU Sustainable Energy Week seminar on green car infrastructures on 23 March 2010 would include a speaking slot for Coventry University on</li> </ul>	

	<p>the CABLED project</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An ERRIN Climate Change and Energy Seminar on 25 March 2010</li> <li>• An event focused on climate change with KIC partners on 4-7 October 2010 as part of Open Days 2010</li> <li>• An event in September 2010 on European funding and opportunities that would be held during the Festival of Science and badged as an Open Days local event.</li> </ul> <p>WMIÉ had been working closely with the Belgium Permanent Representation to the EU to submit an event on 'Science in the City' – WMIÉ had applied for a Belgian Presidency label for this event that would be co-organised with ERRIN.</p> <p>It was <b>agreed</b> to note the report and take part in the events.</p>	
<b>9.</b>	<p><b>Update on the allocation of the 73<sup>rd</sup> European Parliamentary Seat for the United Kingdom</b></p> <p>OD had written to Bridget Prentice, Under Secretary of State at the Ministry of Justice, regarding this matter and was awaiting a reply.</p>	
<b>10.</b>	<p><b>Summary of Priority Working Group Progress since 27 November European Strategy Board meeting</b></p> <p>The report was <b>noted</b>. Additional points to note were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ESERG had also launched an online survey of its members to identify communication channels and how the dissemination of policy developments and funding opportunities could be enhanced.</li> <li>• ESERG had also written to the chairs of the other three Priority Groups with a short questionnaire about how they are mainstreaming rural issues within the European Strategy. The outcome from those responses would be used to inform and direct ESERG's work on how rural mainstreaming could be better embedded.</li> </ul>	
<b>11.</b>	<p><b>Any Other Business</b></p> <p>There was no other business.</p>	
<b>12.</b>	<p><b>Next Meeting (confirmed)</b></p> <p>Friday 25 June 2010 at 1100</p>	
<b>13.</b>	<p><b>Future Dates (confirmed)</b></p> <p>The following future meetings were <b>noted</b>:</p> <p>Friday 17 September 2010 at 1100 Friday 26 November 2010 at 1100</p>	