

**Notes of European Strategy Board meeting
held 27 November 2009 at the Regional Partnership Centre**

PRESENT:

Members

Cllr Allan Andrews (representing Cllr Ken Taylor WMLB), Cllr Philip Atkins (WMLB), Cllr Sir Albert Bore (WMLB/CoR) – Chair, Denise Craig (FSB), Tim Gebbels (AWM), Malcolm Harbour MEP, Andrew Illsley (representing Mike Natrass MEP), Cllr Roger Lawrence (WMLB), David Llewellyn (WMHEA), Isabella Moore (COMTEC), Cllr David S Smith (WMLGA), Simon Topman (CWMCC)

Officers

Jon Bloomfield (AWM), Olwen Dutton (WMLB/WMRA), Esther Knight (WMRA), Richard Tuffs (WMiE), Glynis Whiting (WMiE), Louise Chilton (WMLB)

Item	Discussion and Decision	Action
1.	<p>Apologies Apologies had been received from: David Brown (Chair, West Midlands in Europe), Mike Cherry (FSB), Chris Crean (WMRSF), Cllr Pauline Dee (CLRAE), Cllr Martin Heatley (WMLB), Liz Lynne MEP, Doug Mahoney (UKTI WM/AWM), Mike Natrass MEP, Julie Robson (LSC), Nikki Sinclair MEP, Cllr Ken Taylor (WMLB), Cllr Paul Tilsley (WMLB), Patrick Willcocks (Chair REFPG).</p>	
2.	<p>Notes of 18 September meeting and matters arising The notes were agreed as a correct record of the meeting.</p> <p>Matters Arising <u>The European Strategy Board Annual Conference on 2 October</u> Board Members present at the Conference commented on the level of engagement shown by delegates. Kishor Pala's presentation on the EASN was particularly praised.</p>	
	For Information	
3.	<p>Ratification of the Lisbon Treaty The ratification of the Treaty has ramifications for the extra parliamentary seat (discussed at the September ESB meeting). The Treaty introduces a new balance of representation in the European Parliament, however because the new allocation of seats is not effective until 2014 there must be a separate protocol with provision made for the number of MEPs to be increased in the meantime.</p> <p>The Electoral Commission must decide which UK region will get the extra seat and how that member will be chosen. Campaigning for the West Midlands to have the extra seat will continue.</p> <p>It was expected that agricultural policy and intellectual property would be of particular significance in this Parliament. Universities had a lot of expertise in this area and needed to engage more strongly in EU2020.</p> <p>It was noted that some of the aspects in the LGA position as stated on the leaflet, such as the duty to minimise administrative burdens of EU law,</p>	

	<p>would have big effects on all sectors, not just Local Government. It was now important to work with the LGA and regional organisations to understand how ESB views can be put forward to the European Union.</p> <p>It was also noted that the terms of office of appointees to CoR and the European Economic and Social Committee would extend from 4-5 years.</p> <p>It was agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to note the report • OD to write to the Ministry of Justice regarding the additional European Parliamentary seat. 	OD
4.	<p>Significant Events for the Coming Six Months</p> <p>The Board was presented with a summary of forthcoming events in the Region and Brussels. The main event highlighted was the European Automotive Strategy Network conference taking place on 28 and 29 January in Birmingham, together with details of OPEN project events and EU Connects events.</p> <p>The past few months had seen a significant stepping up of engagement for West Midlands partners in Brussels, much of which had centred around the Higher Education sector.</p> <p>There was discussion regarding appropriate communication to a wider audience. Events are publicised using a variety of mechanisms including the newly launched WMLB website, and assistance in publicising these free events to networks was welcomed. Although events were generally well attended it was essential to attract the right delegates to events. Other suggestions made included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language used must be jargon free to make it relevant • More use must be made of AWM channels • Attention was drawn to the Single Market Group’s February seminar on the Services Directive, which is due for completion on 28 December. This should be top priority for the European Strategy as a great opportunity for the Region’s financial and legal sectors and must be publicised adequately • The possibility of conducting a survey asking people why they do not attend events • Although efforts are made to ensure that publicity is circulated, the main problem in the business sector is the jaundiced attitude to everything European. <p>EU2020 – this paper was tabled</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation is taking place until 15 January 2010 on the future “EU2020” Strategy, the successor to the current Lisbon Strategy. Professor Mario Monte has been charged by President Barroso to undertake a short sharp exercise on relaunching the single market. It was suggested that the West Midlands make a response via the Lisbon Regions Network response by 20 December, with the ESB Chair signing this off. <p>It had been thought that the new Strategy would be approved in the Spring Council although it is likely to be put back to April to give the new Commissioners time to respond.</p> <p>It was agreed</p>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to submit specific comments to OD within the week which would then be submitted either directly or via the LRN response • to note the report. 	ALL
9.	<p>Developing Regional Priorities and New Structures for Regional European Working</p> <p>This item was brought up the agenda. The new regional European working structures must be set in the context of the other structural regional changes with the development of the broader agenda against these. Although European working should be embedded into all other work there is the need of a European Strategy and a vehicle like the ESB that focuses activity in this area.</p> <p>Communication of European work is vital as “Europe” can seem very complicated and must be made more accessible. Investigations into supporting work currently being funded by WMLB and AWM are going on including proposals to bring together WMiE, EUC and strategy work to ensure joined up delivery. This includes funding and ways in which to influence policy by involving regional policy officers.</p> <p>There therefore needs to be a strong ESB to own the European strategy and bring together partners to drive it forward, and involvement of both European and non European regional officers as a virtual team to prepare for the years ahead and ensure that the Region is prepared to tackle priority issues.</p> <p>It is also intended to strengthen SEOG as a group that can advise ESB about direction for the European Strategy and working with core agencies.</p> <p>During discussion the following points were made:</p> <p><u>Regional Development Agency</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AWM would like activity focused on mainstreaming so that the clusters and others understand the relevance of European work to their work and vice versa. Any new structures must therefore be built into these existing structures <p><u>Business</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There must be a campaign to make business colleagues less jaundiced about Europe and to convince them that Europe offers realistic opportunities • Events etc must be relevant for micro businesses (with less than 10 employees) as well as larger ones • It is also important to show the bottom line benefits at events and make the economic case, perhaps through workshops where case studies are worked through in lot of detail. There must be a lot of “handholding” • Language must be right – in the first sentence make it clear who the target audience is • Businesses have many ideas but find it difficult to move onto the next stage – they need to know what opportunities are available and where to obtain information. <p><u>Education</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WMHEA to continue sharpening its engagement in regional European working <p><u>Local Government</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The WMLB is to concentrate on engaging with members, building capacity and harnessing specialisms so that it can play the 	

	<p>encompassing role it needs to play as the Lisbon agenda comes through. European working needs to be better understood and practical help offered eg funds to help people visit their customers in Europe</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The mentality of thinking of Europe purely as a funding source must be changed to include Europe as a huge source of learning. There is a substantial European dimension to key local government policy areas and also a mass of European regulation that has impact. There is therefore a huge amount of influence that the ESB can bring to bear <p><u>Strategic considerations</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ESB must be more strategic to make decisions as to the areas where most effort is needed • Some mechanism is needed to report back on ESB activity to wider regional players • The JSIB must continue to harness expertise from all partners and sectors, keeping as wide a range as possible of advice and involvement; it is therefore essential to have a vehicle where all can have input so that the work eg lobbying re structural funds etc can continue • In the area of research and development, there is a critical period coming up regarding the content of the FP8 programme and the complexity of managing programmes around 28 member states. <p><u>Next Steps</u></p> <p>It was agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OD to revisit ESB Terms of Reference and membership schedule in consultation with AB, then forward to JSIB • New Terms of Reference to include change in name from West Midlands Business Council to Business Voice West Midlands • PA and others to champion the Strategy and new structures in the JSIB – JSIB statement of intent needs to be strengthened in this regard. To receive further reports as the agenda develops. 	<p>OD/AB</p> <p>WMRA</p> <p>PA</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p>Future of European Social Fund</p> <p>The report was noted, particularly the fact that the West Midlands was ahead of other regions in the way in which it manages European Social Fund.</p>	
<p>6.</p>	<p>Summary of Priority Working Group Progress since 18 September European Strategy Board meeting</p> <p>The summary was noted.</p> <p>PA gave a brief account of the PURPLE annual general meeting in Brussels on 12 October. PURPLE can be used as a vehicle to engage partners – the mechanism for reporting back is key. More details can be found on the PURPLE website: http://www.purple-eu.org/en/</p> <p>It was agreed to bring a report on PURPLE to the 19 February ESB meeting.</p>	<p>WMRA</p>
	<p>For Discussion</p>	
<p>7.</p>	<p>European Commission Action Plan/Committee of the Regions Discussion Paper on Urban Mobility Future</p> <p>AA to report back to Cllr Ken Taylor who had received a copy of the report as Chair of WMLB. AB as Chair of the COTER Committee has until mid January 2010 to put together the final draft.</p>	

	<p>It was agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ESB members to send comments to AB by early January • The report to be forwarded to the shadow JSIB's Transport Advisory Group as context for their work programme • To recognise the need to ensure a continued dialogue between those working in this field at the regional level, and the need to create political opportunities to press the issue at the EU level. 	ALL WMRA
8.	<p>Update on European Research Development and Innovation (EU RDI) Group /KIC</p> <p>JB provided an update on the Group's progress. He also informed the ESB that there had been no further official news on the KIC bid but it was known that there would be six bids at the final in Budapest on 16 December and two or three proposals chosen.</p> <p>It was subsequently made known that the KIC bid had been successful n reaching the last stage of six bids.</p> <p>Points to note were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The group's time had been spent bringing people together for the European Research and Development Awards (ERDA) awards, with three direct successes and many other knock-on effects from the first phase of the scheme. The second phase where the group focused on the Industry Academia Partnership Pathway resulted in 11 applications. New universities were encouraged to apply for the first time, as well as the big research universities • The small travel grants ERDA scheme had been widely used • A number of FP7 bid writing events had been organised with excellent attendance • Two group members had attended a major conference in Brussels in October on the future of the European Research Area and a working group was being developed to secure the Region's thinking on the research framework • The group is also developing the climate change area which will be used to consolidate linkages built with European regions. This will be a thematic theme for work over next year. <p>It was agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to endorse the group's concentration on the policy area in relation to European Research • to endorse the group's wish to maximise the opportunities open to the Region on climate change related calls and consolidate the linkages made with other European regions and partners. 	
10.	<p>Draft EU Budget Review Communication and the Future of Cohesion Policy Post 2013</p> <p>The draft communication "A Reform Agenda for Global Europe (Reforming the budget, changing Europe)" forms part of the 2008/2009 EU Budget Review. Although the communication had been leaked and its credibility questioned, the ideas behind it form the basis of thinking in the Commission. Within the proposed Sustainable Growth and Jobs axis it advocates redoubling efforts regarding research and development and a comprehensive European employment initiative including Lifelong learning and the need for skills.</p> <p>The most important area is cohesion spending of the future. Issues for the West Midlands include the fact that the draft Communication does not</p>	

	<p>sufficiently address social cohesion and social inclusion and implies a focus on the poorest Member states. There is new emphasis on the transnational and cross border dimension of cohesion policy and the growing trend for macro regions, an issue for the West Midlands which is unclear about its location in a macro region and which also cannot access INTERREG funds under the cross-border strand.</p> <p>It is therefore suggested to enter the debate and to work closely with the Regional Funding and Policy Group (REFPG) in order to do this.</p> <p>It was agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to note the report • to acknowledge the importance of the debate regarding future European Cohesion policy for the West Midlands • to task the REFPG to follow and contribute to the debate on Cohesion policy and jointly develop regional responses at relevant points in the future discussions through relevant UK and Brussels based networks • to take up the point regarding the macro region. 	
<p>11.</p>	<p>The West Midlands Regional Strategy: Learning from European Best Practice</p> <p>WMI work on identifying and analysing other Integrated Regional Strategies has resulted in a project bid led and submitted by the West Midlands to the ESPON Priority 2 call. This would mean a substantial amount of money (to be paid to a consultant to work on the Region's behalf) with no matchfunding required. It was confirmed that OD had raised this matter at JSIB.</p> <p>IM is chairing a committee of business and education colleagues convened by Aston University to look at how to improve the language skills of the Region. This will mean influencing the education sector at a regional level. ESB members were invited to give their comments.</p> <p>The report was noted.</p>	
<p>12.</p>	<p>Any Other Business</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional response to the Committee of the Regions Survey on "The European Economic Recovery Plan in Regions and Cities: One Year On" <p>It is important to respond to this survey as the West Midlands has been badly affected by the economic downturn. It must also be noted that there are projects that must be developed across the Region.</p> <p>DSS warned colleagues regarding the position of Chasewater Dam near Lichfield which needs £3 million of work. This was flagged as a regional issue potentially affecting the region's tourism network. Colleagues to look into possibilities of funding.</p> <p>It was agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To approve the report for submission • To encourage collaboration between the European Strategy working groups to enable the Region to maximise the benefits from those programmes being delivered by the European Economic Recovery Plan, in particular the public private partnerships for Green Cars, Energy Efficient Buildings and Factories of the Future. 	
<p>13.</p>	<p>Next Meeting (confirmed) Friday 19 February at 1100 at the Regional Partnership Centre</p>	

14.	Dates for 2010 (confirmed) The following future meetings were noted: Friday 19 February 2010 at 1100 Friday 25 June 2010 at 1100 Friday 17 September 2010 at 1100 Friday 26 November 2010 at 1100	
------------	---	--