

EUROPEAN AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS PARTNERSHIP

Notes of meeting held 29 June 2007 At the Regional Partnership Centre

PRESENT:

Members

(Please note: following the acceptance of proposals regarding membership at the 16 June 2006 EIAP meeting, a distinction is no longer made between formal and ex-officio members of the Partnership)

Cllr Sir Albert Bore (WMLGA) – Chair, Cllr Philip Atkins (WMLGA), David Burton (CWMCC), Philip Bushill-Matthews MEP, Prof Michael Clarke (WMHEA), Denise Craig (FSB), Chris Crean (Friends of the Earth), Pauline Dee (CLRAE), Olwen Dutton (West Midlands Regional Partnership), Tim Gebbels (AWM), Neena Gill MEP, Malcolm Harbour MEP, Cllr Martin Heatley (WMLGA), Jerry Hutchinson (North Warwickshire Borough Council (WMIe Secretary)) Cllr Roger Lawrence (WMLGA), Doug Mahoney (UKTI), Isabella Moore (AWM), Julie Robson (LSC), Cllr David S Smith (WMLGA), Cllr Paul Tilsley (WMLGA), Graham Watt (GOWM)

Observers

Richard Bindless (Consultant), Paul Richards (WMHEA, WMIe Management Board Member)

Officers

Jon Bloomfield (AWM), Esther Knight (WMRA), Helena Muskett (Chair REIOG), Glynis Whiting (WMIe), Louise Chilton (WMLGA)

Item	Discussion and Decision	Action
1.	Apologies Apologies had been received from: Members: Philip Bradbourn MEP, Mike Cherry (FSB), Phil Davis (RAWM), John Edwards (AWM), Trudi Elliott (GOWM), Liz Lynne MEP, Roger McKenzie (Midlands TUC), Mike Natrass MEP, Cllr Ken Taylor (WMLGA), Cllr Milner Whiteman (CoR), Patrick Willcocks (Chair REFPG)	
2.	Notes of 23 February 2007 meeting and matters arising The notes were agreed as a correct record of the meeting.	
	For Discussion	
3.	Region to Region Review A Task and Finish Group had been set up in February 2006 to find a modus operandi in selecting and continuing regional partnership arrangements according to the criteria which had already been identified by the Regional Criteria Group. The Task and Finish Group had also suggested reviewing the five existing regional links for assessment of current activity and future potential; this was carried out by a cross sectoral panel which met in March 2007. The conclusion of the Panel was that the three most strategic relationships with the most potential to continue to develop were Shandong, Lodz and Lower Silesia; Shizuoka and Flanders should not have formal status. An ongoing budget would also need to be identified in order to maintain the links.	

	<p>EIAP members agreed with the broad thrust of the recommendations and in particular that resources, financial and otherwise, were crucial to success. Links must be well embedded in the regional review and support regional priorities. It was suggested that regional champions could be “enthusiastic amateurs”.</p> <p>Its was agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To support the 3 links identified, with an addition to point 2.1 regarding the added value the Region could bring to links already established by sub regional organisations • To establish a Regional Database of transnational links for identification of region to region links • That the outcome of this work would feed into implementing the recommendations of the Strategic Review • That to succeed, individual links would need a champion • That to succeed, individual works would need a work plan • That EIAP would receive an annual report of activity from each link. 	<p>WMRA</p> <p>WMRA</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p>West Midlands Economic Strategy Review – Key Issues for EIAP</p> <p>EIAP members were informed of the potential European dimension of the WMES by the examination of where European activity could add value to regional priorities. Engaging in Europe in a strategic and focused manner would enable the West Midlands to become a more effective European player and the EIAP was well positioned to champion and support delivery of the European dimension to the WMES. Attention was drawn in particular to the nine key actions in section 15.</p> <p>During discussion the following points were made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was necessary to ensure that issues were integrated within the RES and were not set apart • There should be constant contact with the media to ensure greater understanding of regional work; West Midlands Regional Observatory could track references to collective work • Advocacy should be separated out from strategies • Transition to the low carbon economy should be included • Links should be made to innovation at pan European level • References to the “Lisbon Strategy” in the final version of the WMES should be replaced by the “Jobs and Growth” agenda • There should also be references to sustainability. <p>It was agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That WMES could be supported in many of its key aims by European policies, funding and international partnership and project opportunities • That the contents of the report and proposed action points in section 15, which should include comments made during EIAP discussion, would be taken into consideration in any future drafts of the RES and future action plans • To pass onto AWM reflection of EIAP discussion • To consider whether/how continuing support for and monitoring of the European dimension of the RES could be developed through ongoing 	<p>WMRA</p> <p>WMRA</p>

	work in response to the Strategic Review of European working.	
5.	<p>Lisbon Regions Network Conference and General Assembly, Stockholm 7-9 June 2007</p> <p>Members were updated on the Network's recent annual conference and general assembly, at which the Region was represented by Cllr Ken Taylor, and were asked to consider formalising the Region's involvement in the Network by agreeing to a further 12 months membership, for which political representation would be needed. WMiE would be willing to pay half the subscription rate of €1000.</p> <p>Cllr Taylor had written to the EIAP setting out the benefits to the Region of the conference and urging the Partnership to continue membership for a further year.</p> <p>It was agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To remain a member of the Lisbon Regions Network for the next 12 months at a subscription cost of €1,000 • To review membership and benefits before the end of the 12 months • To nominate one political representative to represent the Region at the General Assembly and other political meetings as appropriate • To encourage regional participation in joint EU-funded transnational projects via the Network • That active engagement of the Region in the review of the Lisbon Strategy and work related to the Lisbon Regions Network would be built into the new European Strategy, thereby also providing greater focus to and support for the Region's participation in the Committee of the Regions' Lisbon Monitoring Platform. 	<p>WMRA</p> <p>EK/JB</p>
6.	<p>European Commission's 4th Cohesion Report on Economic and Social Cohesion – Proposal for West Midlands Response</p> <p>EIAP members were alerted to the European Commission's recent publication of the 4th Cohesion Report and to the influence the Region could have on the budget review procedure. The Cohesion Forum would take place in Brussels on 27/28 September and a West Midlands presence would demonstrate the Region was serious about the future. As the UK had only been allocated 32 places for the Forum and therefore it was unlikely that the West Midlands would be given more than one place, other avenues of attendance must be explored. The deadline for delegate nomination was 27 July, to be chosen by the DTI and the DCLG.</p> <p>It was agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To note the content of the report summarised in annex 1 • To agree to submit a West Midlands response from the EIAP (drafted by REFPG) to the report • To put two names forward to attend the Cohesion Forum in Brussels on 27/28 September 2007 • To explore other routes for obtaining places at the Forum. 	<p>REFPG</p> <p>WMRA</p>
7.	<p>News from</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • European Parliament 	

	<p>Philip Bushill-Matthews reported that the next elections would be held in 2009, subject to ratification; enlargement meant that there would be likely to be six rather than seven West Midlands MEPs. PBM was likely to stand down.</p> <p>Neena Gill reported on the German Presidency coming to an end and the institutional changes and issues around energy supply.</p> <p>Malcolm Harbour spoke of the focus on encouraging member states to implement legislation. International mobile phone roaming had been dealt with. The Directorate General Internal Market and Services would produce two reports regarding how member states provide information to companies wishing to access the market for services.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee of the Regions <p>Cllr Martin Heatley reported that the UK had lost about a third of its CoR members. There is a complex method of replacement and nothing would be done until the autumn. A few may be able to change commissions.</p>	
	<p>For Update</p>	
<p>8. (a)</p>	<p>European Strategic Review Taking forward recommendations</p> <p>It was reported that WMRA had appointed Professor Michael Clarke to chair the working group tasked with taking forward the recommendations of the Strategic Review Panel. EIAP members were now asked to consider resources and debate the key areas where the Region could concentrate its activities and resources at the European level.</p> <p>It was agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To note the progress to date in addressing all the recommendations of the Strategic Review • To note the timescales proposed • To note the resources required • To have the review progress as a standing item on EIAP agendas until the work was completed • To note and contribute to the draft strategy document. <p>(b) Draft European Priorities for future European Activity</p> <p>Members were asked to consider the four suggested priority areas and how it was proposed to develop the action behind the priorities. The areas suggested were the opportunities for the single market, development of research and innovation, response to the challenge of climate change and environmental protection, and engagement with the social cohesion aspect of the European agenda.</p> <p>It was proposed to bring a further report to the 21 September EIAP meeting. This would be followed by consultation in September/October, production of the final document by 16 November EIAP meeting and its launch in January 2008.</p> <p>EIAP members considered this to be the correct approach and a major step forward. There was strong support for the principle of prioritising and further discussion regarding priorities.</p> <p>It was agreed:</p>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To approve the principle of a strategy with a limited number of priorities To approve the annual monitoring mechanism proposed. 	
	For Information	
9.	WMRA/WMiE Annual Event Copies of the draft programme were tabled.	
10.	The Impact of Languages on the European Economy Members were asked to note this report prepared for the High Level Group on Multilingualism, in particular the link between language skills and productivity as demonstrated on page 6. The report was noted .	
11.	Regional Competitiveness and Employment Programme (ERDF) 2007-2013 – response to consultation The report was noted . The ESF Regional Framework had been endorsed by the Regional Skills Partnership Board. JR to send a link for circulation. <i>Please note that the link is http://www.wmskillspartnership.co.uk/regional-esf-framework-2007---2010.pdf</i>	JR
12.	The Revision of the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy and the review of the West Midlands Economic Strategy The report was noted .	
13.	Meeting with Jerzy Buzek MEP Professor Buzek gave a presentation on “Will Europe win the Lisbon Strategy? – Regions of Knowledge and Innovation in the 7 th Framework Programme”.	
	Future Meetings: Friday 21 September at Light House Wolverhampton (meeting and annual event) Friday 16 November at 1100 at Advantage West Midlands	

Signed.....
Councillor Sir Albert Bore, Chair of West Midlands European & International Affairs Partnership

Dated