

**EUROPEAN AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS PARTNERSHIP/
WEST MIDLANDS IN EUROPE MANAGEMENT BOARD**

**Notes of joint meeting held 21 September 2007
at Wolverhampton Civic 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 David S Smith – Chair, Cllr Pauline Dee (CLRAE) (items 1-5), Louise Bennett (CWMCC – for David Burton), Cllr Sir Albert Bore (WMLGA), Olwen Dutton (West Midlands Regional Partnership), John Edwards (AWM), Tim Gebbels (AWM), Jerry Hutchinson (North Warwickshire Borough Council/WMiE Management Board Secretary), Cllr Roger Lawrence (WMLGA) (items 1-5), Doug Mahoney (UKTI) (items 1-5), Chris Marsh (GOWM), Isabella Moore (AWM), Paul Richards (WMHEA), Julie Robson (LSC) (items 1-5), Cllr Paul Tilsley (WMLGA)

Observers

Thom Oliver (University of Birmingham/WMRA) (items 1-5), Julia Speht (EU Connects) (items 1-5)

Officers

Jon Bloomfield (AWM), Esther Knight (WMRA), Helena Muskett (Chair REIOG) (items 1-5), Glynis Whiting (WMiE), Patrick Willcocks (Birmingham City Council) (items 1-5), Louise Chilton (WMLGA)

Item	Discussion and Decision	Action
1.	<p>Apologies Apologies had been received from: Members: Cllr Keith Austin (WMLGA), David Brown (AWM), David Burton (CWMCC), Philip Bushill-Matthews MEP, Mike Cherry (FSB), Professor Michael Clarke (WMHEA), Chris Crean (Friends of the Earth), Trudi Elliott (GOWM), Neena Gill MEP, Malcolm Harbour MEP, Cllr Martin Heatley (WMLGA), Liz Lynne MEP, Roger McKenzie (West Midlands TUC), Mike Nattrass MEP, Cllr Ken Taylor (WMLGA), Cllr Milner Whiteman (CoR)</p>	
2.	<p>Notes of 29 June 2007 meeting and matters arising The notes were agreed as a correct record of the meeting. There were no matters arising.</p>	
	For Discussion	
3. (a)	<p>Taking forward the Strategic Review of Regional European Working: Progress to date The Project Board chaired by Professor Michael Clarke had met to discuss the next steps in taking forward the recommendations of the Assembly's strategic review of Regional European working. It had been agreed that a</p>	

<p>(b)</p> <p>(c)</p>	<p>short draft strategy document would form the basis of a publication setting out the Region's strategic European priorities, actions and key contacts which would be subject to wide stakeholder consultation. This document would be supplemented by a more detailed document for practitioners.</p> <p>Engaging with Europe: the West Midlands Regional European Strategy – Draft for Consultation</p> <p>The draft strategy document had been set out following discussions with key agencies and significant input from the Brussels Office and AWM's Corporate Management Team. There had also been wider discussions with the Region's European Policy and Funding Group (REFPG) regarding priorities. The four agreed priorities were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engaging with the single market Initiatives would be led by UK Trade and Investment, delivered through the Confederation of West Midlands Chambers of Commerce (CWMCC) and local Chambers of Commerce and supported by the appointment of a 'Single Market Supremo' for the Region. • Engaging with Europe's research and innovation agenda AWM and WMHEA would operate in partnership to take this work forward. This was viewed as the Region's core priority; the recent announcement that a Midlands consortium including the University of Birmingham had been chosen to host the Energy Technologies Institute, a new £1 billion national institute to develop cleaner energies, would impact massively on this work. • Tackling Climate Change and Ensuring Environmental Protection The West Midlands Regional Assembly would lead this priority with the help of other identified partners. • Social Cohesion It was proposed that this work be led by REFPG. <p>Each priority had a policy, people and programmes dimension. Mechanisms to deliver these priorities would include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using EU networks to influence key policy • Developing region to region links in a practical manner • Setting initial areas for the new EU Connects project to explore • The need to streamline governance arrangements in the Region • Consideration of how to maximise benefits of West Midlands in Europe. <p>Principles for Governance</p> <p>The Project Board was also considering delivery and the best use of the Region's limited resources.</p> <p>EIAP members generally welcomed the proposals and made the following points during discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receipt of fewer structural funds would mean using the money in a strategic way and working smarter with the new ESF programme and in work with co-financing bodies. New programme activity must be integrated, with the key being employment and skills focus. • Clarity for the remit of WMiE was welcomed. • It was requested that the Principles for governance paper be supplemented with 'terms of engagement' in due course. 	
-----------------------	---	--

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commitment must be maintained by moving on timescale outlines in the following few months – clarity was requested regarding the way forward in the New Year. There was an urgent need to ensure that partners took ownership of the draft strategy. <p>The Partnership noted that the Project Board would meet on 7 November; there was a need to develop the principles for approval at the 16 November EIAP meeting in order to keep up the momentum.</p> <p>It was agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To note progress made by the Project Board To approve the Strategy document for consultation To note the principles upon which the Project Board intends to approach new proposals for the governance and management of Regional European working. 	
	For Information	
4.	<p>Regional European Working: Improving Future Relationships and Engagement Workshop</p> <p>Following the Strategic Review’s identification of the need for closer working with the Region’s European Elected Representatives (MEPs/CoR Members/CLRAE Members), WMRA and AWM would present an afternoon workshop on 12 October at the Priory Rooms, Birmingham that would explore more effective engagement with Representatives. The workshop would cover such topics as how to influence at the right time and how to make the best use of resources. Thom Oliver from Birmingham University would carry out interviews on behalf of the Regional Assembly with MEPs, CoR and CLRAE members regarding their views of the current situation, channels of communication and examples of best practice. Long term planning now would prevent replication of work.</p> <p>It was agreed to note the report.</p>	
5.	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>Helena Muskett who was attending her final EIAP meeting before leaving the employment of Staffordshire County Council in October was thanked for her contribution to regional working, particularly her work as Chair of the Regional European and International Officers Group (REIOG) over the past 6 years.</p>	
	Items for Members of WMiE Management Board only	
6.(a)	<p>Notes of 29 June WMiE Management Board meeting</p> <p>The notes were agreed as a correct record of the meeting.</p>	
(b)	<p>Matters arising</p> <p>WMiE had been recently been exploring a formal link between the Lifelong Learning Group (LLG) and the Regional Skills Partnership (RSP). Following discussion it was agreed that no formal link be progressed until after the publication of the European Strategy consultation and review of structures. It was noted that the skills agenda would be part of a future integrated regional strategy and would</p>	

	not sit as a separate document.	
	For Discussion	
7.	<p>West Midlands European Centre – Prospectus for Business and income generation</p> <p>David Burton had been tasked with chairing a group to explore how WMiE could support West Midlands business participation in the single EU Market and how further income could be generated for this. Board members were now asked to endorse the approach put forward. Two levels of support were suggested:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level 1 - the provision of facilities in the European Centre and • Level 2 - a more bespoke service. <p>The Brussels Connect Card would be the initial entry point for business. The draft strategy is entitled "Doing Business in Europe" and this would be presented at the next CWMCC Board meeting in October.</p> <p>It was confirmed that this was a pilot action testing the water in three areas: the Belgian market place, the international arena in Brussels eg NATO and using Brussels as a hub in which to develop joint ventures.</p> <p>It was agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To endorse the draft strategy. This must, however, be evaluated with criteria and timescales, examining demand impact on the office with a view to generating income. 	WMiE
	For Information	
8.	<p>West Midlands in Europe Business Plan – Annual Review 2006-2007</p> <p>The Annual review was tabled.</p>	
	For Information	
9.	<p>Director’s Quarterly Report</p> <p>(a) Highlights June-September 2007</p> <p>(b) Calendar of events July-December 2007</p> <p>(c) EU funding – Calls for Proposal Deadlines</p> <p>There had been constructive feedback following production of the AWM newsletter. A newsletter geared specifically to the HE sector, with a potential focus on the Framework programme would be explored by PR and GW regarding the HEA newsletter’s content.</p>	PR/GW
10.	<p>Report from FAC Chair – Quarter 1 report and follow up to audit 2006-2007</p> <p>Following the 6 June FAC meeting action steps had been put in place in the Brussels office regarding accounting, legal and tax issues to ensure improvements to financial management and reporting. The Director had also asked to be provided with additional reassurance by letter from DRT and Partners, the accountants, which confirmed that once this programme had been implemented and executed a satisfactory and reliable accounting and reporting system would be in place for financial control and management of WMiE and WMEC.</p>	

	<p>The next FAC meeting would take place on 16 November.</p> <p>It was agreed to note the report.</p>	
11.	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>There was no other business.</p>	
	<p>Dates of next meetings:</p> <p>EIAP – Friday 16 November at 1100 at Advantage West Midlands</p> <p>WMiE Board – Friday 14 December in Brussels</p> <p>Provisional dates</p> <p>Friday 22 February 2008</p> <p>Friday 27 June 2008</p> <p>+</p>	

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

Dated